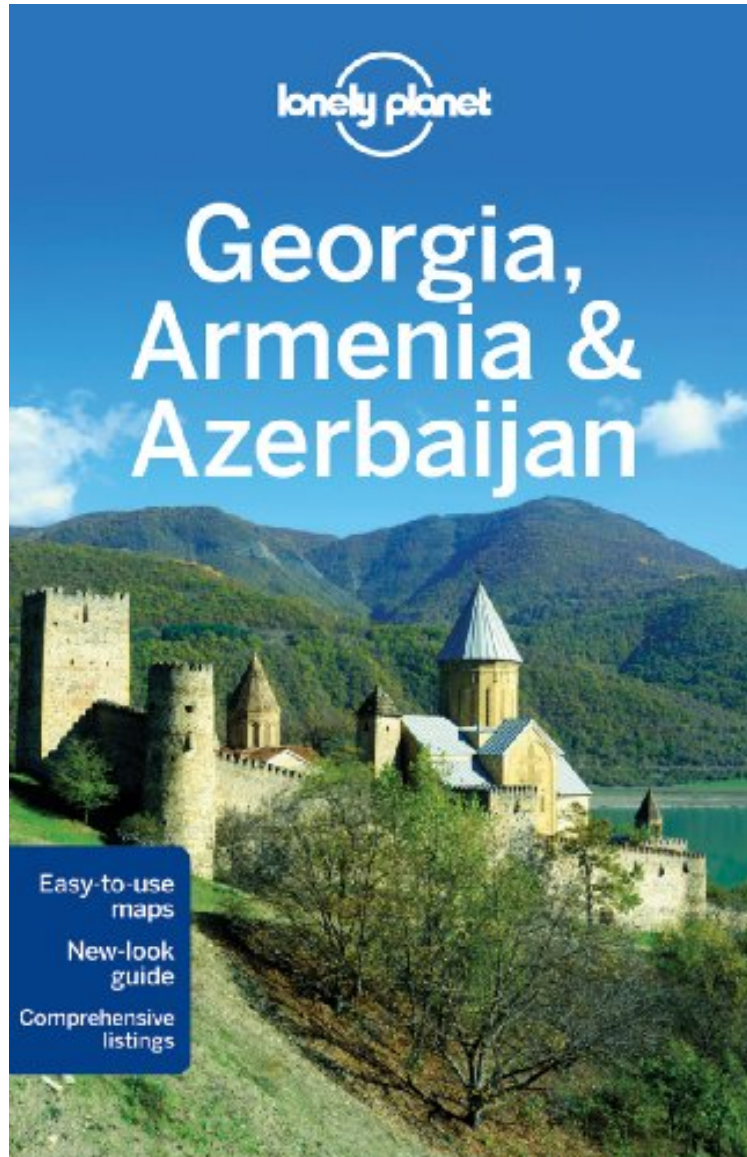


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Lonely Planet, John Noble, Michael Kohn, Danielle Systemans : Lonely Planet Georgia, Armenia Azerbaijan (Travel Guide) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lonely Planet Georgia, Armenia Azerbaijan (Travel Guide):

26 of 27 people found the following review helpful. LP: Definitely Necessary and Almost SufficientBy kmirThis is a review for the 4th edition of the Lonely Planet "Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan".All-in-all, this is a positive review.

To put it in perspective: I have not used the previous editions of this book, or any other travel guides for the region. I travelled all three countries in two weeks, actually using the route (Tbilisi, Baku, Seki, Yerevan, two monasteries, Tbilisi, Kazbegi) suggested by the book for such an endeavor, even if decided independently from the book. The LP proved to be quite useful, in particular when it comes to the maps and information on transportation (departure sites and times). Of course, some timetables change, so if you tend to plan tightly, try to inquire ahead of time. The map material was generally sufficient, though sometimes slightly inaccurate, which may also be caused by the vicious construction activity particularly in Georgia. A separate map for the Kazbegi area would be helpful. It would be nice to have some information on hiking Debed Canyon in Armenia. It is almost essential for information on some sights, as occasionally there is no or very sparse information in English at the actual sight. So if you want to read a little about the history of the place you are looking at, the LP provides some. At this point, I would like to make a suggestion for future editions, though: Some of the sights *do* have information in English, sometimes more elaborate than the LP. If the intention is to keep the book at a reasonable travel size, one could leave out information on the sites that do have their own and include some more info on the sights that don't have a lot for people not knowing the languages of the region. The way things are now, the history sections in the LP are quite brief. The writing style tends to be slightly sarcastic, which seems to be a matter of taste. I would also include a little more information on the languages, in particular the alphabets for Georgian and Armenian, respectively. I printed those out separately, and while I did not have time to learn the Armenian alphabet, I did learn about 60% of the Georgian (the most important letters), which is extremely helpful when reading road signs for locations (often in Georgian only) or menus at non-tourist eateries. (Tip: Print out a few essential words, such as Tbilisi, one, two, three, your name in the original script and transliterated. Learning the letters by memorizing a few common words makes it a lot easier and more fun. Also, you can make the locals happy if you learn a few words such as hello, how are you, my name is ..., and thank you.) For the most important locations, the LP does include the name in Georgian with the description of the place in the book, but I believe it wouldn't hurt to do this with almost all locations. Here are a few more specific issues: The marionette theatre in Tbilisi at the time of writing only has shows on Fri, Sat, and Sun. This is not posted outside the theatre, you need to ask an employee. There seems to be no operational post office in Tbilisi (or Georgia in general). We and multiple other travellers had no luck finding one at the various suggested locations. Train 372 from Yerevan to Tbilisi leaves Yerevan at 15:15 in the summer; the train number may be different as well. There is no overnight train to Tbilisi. Mugam Club in Baku is closed on Monday nights. To get to the main bus terminal in Baku, leave the subway at 20 Yanvar, then take a bus to avtovagzal (about 20 minutes). The exchange rates for Dram (Armenia) and Manat (Azerbaijan) are incorrect. The hike up mount Kazbeg to the glacier takes a little longer than the LP seems to suggest. We left Gergeti at 10 am, spent about 30 minutes at the monastery, and then climbed the mountain with essentially no breaks. We had very little to carry and overtook almost all other hikers, which were, without exception, multiple day hikers trying to climb past the glacier. Yet, at 3:50 pm, being within 500m of the glacier, we decided to turn back without having reached it, in fear it might get dark before we hit the main road again. I estimate it to be a good 1h 45m - 2h from the rest point at 2960m until you reach the glacier. In total, we hiked for 9h 45m, including a few 5 minute breaks, but did not make it. Be aware and start at 8 am. Bring water. Note: We are in our early 30's and in decent shape, I run 8 miles a week, my friend swims 2 or 3 km a week, both at a decent pace. One final note: I also bought the 'International Travel Maps' map "Azerbaijan Armenia" Azerbaijan Armenia 1:560,000 including inset of Baku and Yerevan, which also includes a good portion of Georgia (except Kazbegi). I cannot recommend this map. The transliteration of names into English is quite bad, to the point where you cannot recognize them sometimes, and names in the original scripts are not included. Further, some towns and villages are shown on the map that don't seem to exist, while existing ones are excluded. In total, I found the small maps within the LP a lot more helpful than this map. The best maps at various scales are available from Geoland (in Tbilisi and online: geoland.ge). Addendum 01/26/13: We experienced very little corruption or attempts at double-crossing. The occasional taxi driver may claim that you agreed with him on a price of 50 Manat or Lari instead of the 15 you clearly remember, but in the two cases we experienced this, we firmly repeated the originally agreed upon price once or twice and the attempts were stopped (one of the taxi drivers even made a slightly embarrassed face right away). One thing happened, however, in Baku: When we descended the steps from the monument for WW2 as well as the war in 1992 at dusk, we were approached by two men who claimed to be police and flashed some kind of ID in front of our faces. They claimed to have seen us kissing on top of the stairs, close to the memorial and a mosque which is also located up there, and said this was a serious impermissible act. My friend and I have never exchanged a kiss in the 12 years that we have known each other. They proceeded to threaten us with taking us to the "police station". We kept stating that we did not kiss and were willing to accompany them to the police station to make a statement. Eventually, they left us with a warning and vanished. We are fairly certain that these gentlemen were interested in obtaining money from us in exchange for not taking us to the police station. We have experienced similar situation several times in formerly Soviet occupied countries and can only recommend showing the same readiness to be taking to "the authorities" to other travelers. 20 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Most useful Caucasus guide book for an odd reason By Sharon We have just returned from a month-long trip through the three countries of the Caucasus and found, sadly, that they (to

paraphrase the old Kingston Trio song) don't like each other very much. While Georgia is on good terms with both neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan, the latter two seem to be on a collision course... reinterpreting history to suit their own current political ends. If you visit Armenia first and travel to occupied Karabagh, forget getting into Azerbaijan. You will even be hassled at the airports of both capitals if your passport contains a visa from the other country. This whole bit of nastiness between the two even extends to guidebooks a traveler might be carrying upon entering one or the other. If authorities notice in Baku that you have an "Armenia Guidebook" they will confiscate it... and visa versa in Yerevan if you have an "Azerbaijan Guidebook." This, therefore, makes the Lonely Planet Guide that covers all three countries a good choice for a guidebook to be carrying through the region...if for a sad reason. While other guidebook might provide more detail on history and places to see, as usual, this Lonely Planet Guide manages to do a good job covering things in all three countries in one slim volume. Well done, again, Lonely Planet! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fine for the basics. By stairclimber I used this book just for Georgia. It was fine for the most part. But for hiking in Tusheti and Mestia areas, it is of very limited value. Definitely inadequate for those purposes. Unfortunately, I could not find any good info on hiking in the Georgia Caucasus. The National Park office in the Tusheti area is also of limited value without useful maps or expertise. There are topo maps at a nice shop in Tbilisi, but these maps do not show the trails. Maybe because there really aren't any, especially in Tusheti. If you go off the road to climb the passes, which I did, it is very difficult. Give yourself many hours to figure out where you're going. Mestia was better organized with more information, but still very very tricky.

Lonely Planet: The world's leading travel guide publisher Lonely Planet Georgia, Armenia Azerbaijan is your passport to all the most relevant and up-to-date advice on what to see, what to skip, and what hidden discoveries await you. Experience the romance of Georgia's past at Tbilisi Old Town, take a long trip to the Svaneti villages, or hear your voice echo in Geghard; all with your trusted travel companion. Get to the heart of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan and begin your journey now! Inside Lonely Planet Georgia, Armenia Azerbaijan Travel Guide: Colour maps and images throughout Highlights and itineraries show you the simplest way to tailor your trip to your own personal needs and interests Insider tips save you time and money and help you get around like a local, avoiding crowds and trouble spots Essential info at your fingertips - including hours of operation, phone numbers, websites, transit tips, and prices Honest reviews for all budgets - including eating, sleeping, sight-seeing, going out, shopping, and hidden gems that most guidebooks miss Cultural insights give you a richer and more rewarding travel experience - including customs, history, literature, cinema, music, dance, architecture, politics, landscapes, and cuisine Over 46 local maps Useful features - including Top Experiences, If You Like (activity guide), and Month-by-Month (annual festival calendar) Coverage of Baku, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Svaneti, Quba, Kazbegi, Abkhazia, Adjara, Kakheti, Naxcivan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ismayilli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, the Great Caucasus, Gyumri, Zaqatala, Telavi, Geghard, Lahic, Haghpat, Sanahin, and more Authors: Written and researched by Lonely Planet, John Noble, Michael Kohn, and Danielle Systemans. About Lonely Planet: Started in 1973, Lonely Planet has become the world's leading travel guide publisher with guidebooks to every destination on the planet, as well as an award-winning website, a suite of mobile and digital travel products, and a dedicated traveller community. Lonely Planet's mission is to enable curious travellers to experience the world and to truly get to the heart of the places they find themselves in. TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards 2012 and 2013 winner in Favorite Travel Guide category 'Lonely Planet guides are, quite simply, like no other.' - New York Times 'Lonely Planet. It's on everyone's bookshelves; it's in every traveller's hands. It's on mobile phones. It's on the Internet. It's everywhere, and it's telling entire generations of people how to travel the world.' - Fairfax Media (Australia)

About the Author Oliver Berry is a writer and photographer based in Cornwall. His first trip abroad was to the south of France at the tender age of two, and since then his travels have carried him to Corsica, New Zealand, the South Pacific and the midwestern USA. Along the way he has learned a few useful skills, including how to catch Fijian sand crabs with your bare hands, the best way to avoid falling into a crevasse on the face of a glacier, and an excellent Samoan recipe for home-made mosquito repellent. Oliver first started writing for Lonely Planet in 2002, and has written for many titles including France, Great Britain, England, Western Europe, Rarotonga the Cook Islands and South Pacific Micronesia. He graduated with a degree in English Literature from University College London in 1999 and has written for a wide range of national newspapers, magazines, books, journals, encyclopedias and webzines. His writing has won several awards, including The Guardian Young Travel Writer of the Year and the TNT Magazine People's Choice Award.