

# 5. Tourist attractions in the countries of Eastern Europe



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Předmět:

**The Tourist Attractions in  
the Czech Republic and in  
the World**

# Geography of Bulgaria

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- ❑ Noted for its diversity, Bulgaria's landscape ranges from mountainous peaks covered in snow to valleys and lowlands giving way to the coast of the Black Sea.
  - ❑ The Balkan Mountains cut across the central part of the country, while the Rhodope Mountains run through southern Bulgaria, along its border with Greece.
  - ❑ The highest point in the country, located in the Rila Mountains, is Musala Mt., at (2,925 m).
  - ❑ Moving on north of the Balkan Mountains the fertile lowlands of the Danubian Plain slope gradually down to the Danube River.
  - ❑ The south-eastern lowlands (Maritsa Basin), drained by a series of small rivers, slope to the Black Sea.
  - ❑ Major rivers include the Danube River, as it forms the northern border with Romania, and the Iskur, Maritsa, Struma, Tundzha and Yantra rivers.
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# The main tourist attractions in Bulgaria

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- ❑ **The Rila Monastery** is one of the most important religious and cultural sites in Bulgaria and is one of the most popular places to visit in the country. With its stunning location in the forested valley of the Rila Mountains, the Rila Monastery - Bulgaria's largest and most famous monastery – ranks among the most famous Bulgarian tourist attractions. On top of its epic size and surrounds, the Monastery models a colourful, almost kitsch exterior alongside vibrant wall paintings in its striking interior. The site dates back to the 10th century, though most of what's displayed today is from the 19th century, when the site was rebuilt following a devastating fire. It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983 and we can definitely see why. It's a visual feast.
- ❑ **Belogradchik Fortress**, also known as Belogradchik Kale or as Kaletto, is an impressively well-preserved fortification in north-western Bulgaria. Situated amid a cluster of strange shaped rocks, and almost blending in with them, the Belogradchik Fortress is one of Bulgaria's top visitor attractions and among the most famous. Originally built by the Romans, it was later expanded by the Byzantines, Bulgarians and Turks.

# The main tourist attractions in Bulgaria

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- ❑ One of Bulgaria's most fascinating places and UNESCO-listed, **Boyana Church** definitely highlights that it's what's inside that counts. A relatively dark, lacklustre church hides some of the most spectacular medieval frescoes in the whole of Europe. They're an historical treasure and a brilliant example of the art of the period.
  - ❑ An imposing fortification, **the Baba Vida Fortress** is probably the best-preserved Medieval castle in Bulgaria. It only needs some real-life knights and our medieval fantasy would be complete. It was first built in the 10th century and has withstood a variety of attacks and sieges over its lifetime.
  - ❑ With stunning views that will live long in the memory, the medieval Rozhen Monastery - whose history stretches all the way back to the 9th century AD - is arguably one of Bulgaria's best tourist attractions.
  - ❑ **Tsarevets Castle** is one of Bulgaria's most interesting tourist destinations. Located in the city of Veliko Tarnovo, this medieval fortress was the centre of the Second Bulgarian Empire from the 12th century AD.
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# Geography of Romania

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- ❑ Romania's natural landscape is almost evenly divided among mountains, hills and plains.
  - ❑ As for mountains, the medium-sized Carpathian's extend through the center of the country in a wide arc, and they are the source of several rivers.
  - ❑ The Transylvanian Alps, a range of the Carpathian's, divide central and southern Romania. The country's highest point, Mt. Moldoveanu, is located there. It stands at 2,544 m.
  - ❑ Beyond the Carpathian foothills, the land slopes down into rolling hills and plains. The low-lying Romanian Plain, to the south of Craiova, extends east to the Black Sea.
  - ❑ The country's lowest land is found along the Danube Delta, an area of marshes, floating reed islands, and sandbanks.
  - ❑ The Danube River travels some 1,075 km through or along Romanian territory, forming much of the southern borders with Serbia and Bulgaria. The Danube itself is Europe's second longest river after the Volga. It rises in the Black Forest in Germany, then flows southeastward for a distance of some 2850 km.
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# The main tourist attractions in Romania

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- ❑ **Bran Castle** is often associated with Dracula as his home, though there's no indication that author Bram Stoker even knew of this medieval castle. The castle, a Romanian landmark, has a fairy tale quality, peeking out from forested a hillside near Brasov in Transylvania. With roots dating to the 13th century, this medieval castle today is a museum showcasing art and furniture collected by Queen Maria. It also is home to an open-air museum featuring Romanian peasant buildings from around the country.
  - ❑ If you have preconceived notions of what medieval life was like, **Sighisoara Historic Center** will certainly fulfill them. Old Town Sighisoara is definitely medieval at its finest. Found by 12th century Transylvanian Saxons, Sighisoara is a great example of a fortified medieval town.
  - ❑ In a country where medieval buildings abound, there's nothing medieval about the **Palace of Parliament** in the capital Bucharest. It is a thoroughly modern complex that is considered the largest administrative building in the world. It took 20,000 workers, working around the clock, 13 years to build it.
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# The main tourist attractions in Romania

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- ❑ **Peles Castle** doesn't have a history of sieges and warfare but it does have something other European castles don't: spectacular beauty, sitting as it does on a Carpathian hillside. This Neo-Renaissance castle was built by King Carol I who vacationed here in the 1860s. Fairytale-like in appearance, it's considered one of the most stunning castles in Europe.
- ❑ **Merry Cemetery** in the town of Sapanta isn't your ordinary run-of-the-mill cemetery. It's more like a folk art gallery, with colorful tombstones, crosses and statuary celebrating the lives of the deceased. This colorful tradition began with a 14-year-old boy who began carving crosses in 1908.
- ❑ Surrounded by medieval buildings, the **Plata Mare**, or Big Square as it's known in English, is a must-see sight in the Transylvanian city of Sibiu.
- ❑ **Biertan Fortified Church** stands head and shoulders above the other buildings in Biertan, It was originally a Catholic church built when the region belonged to Hungary.
- ❑ **The Transylvanian Alps**, also known as the Southern Carpathians, aren't as high as the Rockies or the Himalayas, usually under 2,000 meters in elevation.

# Geography of Lithuania

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- ❑ Smoothed by glacier retreat during the last Ice Age, Lithuania is mostly flat lowlands in the west, with some low hills.
  - ❑ In the east and southeast, bogs, numerous small lakes, and the rolling hills of the Baltic Highlands dominate the landscape, where much of the land is covered by dense forest.
  - ❑ Its highest point is near the Belarus border where the Juozapine stands at (294m).
  - ❑ Important rivers include the Neman (Nemunas), Neris and Venta.
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# The main tourist attractions in Lithuania

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- ❑ **Vilnius city**, a vibrant capital with its extensive old town and countless baroque church spires.
  - ❑ **The Curonian Spit**, a 98 km long narrow Baltic Sea peninsula covered by sandy dunes and pine forests where fishermen huts and upscale hotels exist side-by-side.
  - ❑ **Hill of Crosses**, a unique-in-the-world place where millions of people erected millions of these Christian symbols.
  - ❑ **Kaunas city**, a boomtown in 1880s-1930s when it served firstly as major Russian fortress and then as the seat of Lithuania's government. Kaunas medieval district is more intact than that of Vilnius and the 19th-century military buildings still surround the city center, while the Baroque Pažaislis monastery crowns the suburbs.
  - ❑ **Trakai town** with its impressive island castle, many lakes and Karaim ethnic minority.
  - ❑ **Rumšiškės open-air museum** inspired by Stockholm's Skansen. Old wooden buildings have been moved here from all over Lithuania and the main ethnic holidays are celebrated the traditional way.
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# The main tourist attractions in Lithuania

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- ❑ **Plokštinė Soviet missile base**, a unique opportunity to enter the shafts where nuclear missiles once waited to be launched.
  - ❑ **Druskininkai** 19th century mineral springs resort, revitalised by a large indoor alpine skiing arena and a water entertainment park. Grūtas park, where all the demolished Soviet statues ended up, is not far away.
  - ❑ **Palanga seaside resort** with its lively Basanavičiaus street. But the calmness is never far away in a large manor park, centered at a palace that now houses a major amber museum.
  - ❑ **Visaginas town** built by Soviets in 1980s for nuclear power plant workers - but the plant has since closed down. This somewhat eerie town is what Pripyat (near Chernobyl) would have looked if not for the disaster.
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# Geography of Latvia

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- ❑ Latvia is generally a very flat country of low-lying plains, largely covered by forest. There are some low hills in the west and far southeast.
  - ❑ A few high hills are found to the east of Riga, with the highest point being the Gaizinkalns at 311.6 m.
  - ❑ Small lakes and swamps dot the countryside. Important rivers include the Daugava, Gauja, Lielupe, Venta and Salaca.
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# The main tourist attractions in Latvia

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- ❑ **Riga** - The largest and most exciting metropolis in the Baltics, Riga will inspire you. Architecture from Gothic cathedrals to world-class Art Nouveau, buzzing cafes and bars and delicious dining from haute cuisine to local market produce are all yours for a price tag that will add to the pleasure.
  - ❑ Nicknamed the Baltic Versailles, **Rundale Palace** (Rundāles pils) will transport you to an age of splendour. Designed by Francesco Rastrelli, the architect who also created St. Petersburg's Hermitage, Rundale is a superbly restored Baroque and Rococo masterpiece packed with art treasures and surrounded by a delightful rose garden.
  - ❑ Just 20 minutes' drive from Riga, **Jurmala** (Jūrmala) is a seaside resort like no other. If you're looking for fun, there's vibrant life on the beach and in the unique spas, offering a tempting menu of mud packs and massages. But Jurmala is also a great place to get back to nature, strolling the miles of pine-fringed shore or admiring beautiful timber summer cottages.
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# The main tourist attractions in Latvia

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- ❑ **The Gauja National Park** is the perfect place to destress. Wander miles of stunning hiking trails, explore fascinating medieval castles or thrill to bungee jumping, bobsleighbing and other adventurous activities.
  - ❑ Drift back to a gentler age in **Kuldīga** (Kuldīga), an ideal destination for a romantic weekend or family vacation. This beautiful town offers a mixture of Baroque splendour and soulful timber houses, Europe's widest waterfall and enchanting restaurants and guesthouses to ensure a magical stay.
  - ❑ Latvia is a land of ancient traditions, and the best place to experience them is the **Turaida Museum Reserve** near Sigulda. Explore the medieval castle and its intriguing museum, connect with Latvia's musical heritage on Folk Song Hill and take in sweeping views of the lovely Gauja River Valley.
  - ❑ **Cēsis** (Cēsis) is a town with an intriguing mixture of hipness and history. Savour the timeless ambience of the old town, get into medieval life at the ancient castle, enjoy cute cafes and soak up diverse artistic and musical events.
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# Geography of Estonia

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- ❑ Almost completely surrounded by water, much of Estonia's land is low and flat (close to sea level).
  - ❑ Estonia has 3,794 km of coastline indented by numerous bays, straits, and inlets. The number of islands and islets is estimated at some 1,500; most are small with a few large islands off the western coastline.
  - ❑ Central and south, the land is hillier, rising to its highest point - the Munamagi - at (318m). The country's average elevation reaches only 50 meters (164 ft).
  - ❑ Over 1,400 small lakes dot the western parts of the country. The largest lakes includes Peipus and Pskov, (shared with Russia) and Lake Vorts-Jarv.
  - ❑ Rivers of size include the Emojogi, Manamagi and Parnu.
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# The main tourist attractions in Estonia

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- ❑ The most popular place to visit in Estonia is **Tallinn**, the capital and the hub of medieval architecture. The heart of the city is called Toompea, a hill that retains a historic atmosphere thanks to cobblestone streets and 15th century buildings. The area is amazingly preserved and accessible on foot. From the top of Toompea, you can look out over much of the Old City. Some highlights of the Old City include the bustling shops on Viru Street, the 14th century Town Hall and the opulent 19th century Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.
  - ❑ The city of **Tartu** is considered the intellectual hub of the country, thanks to the impressive and well-known University of Tartu. Between the university and the fact that Tartu is the oldest city in the nation, this city is clearly an interesting destination. Its handsome centre is lined with classically designed 18th-century buildings, many of which have been put to innovative uses. One of the coolest attractions in Tartu is the soup neighborhood. In the soup neighborhood, every street is named after soup ingredients like potatoes, beans and peas.
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# The main tourist attractions in Estonia

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- ❑ One of the most popular national parks in Estonia is **Lahemaa**. Since it is just an hour's drive from the capital, it is the ideal day trip. Viru Raba, or Viru Bog, is a must-see part of the park. Trees poke from the swampy ground, and there is a definite ethereal quality. To make it easy to explore Viru Bog, there is a 5-km boardwalk that is usually dry, keeping you out of the water but close enough to admire the scenery.
  - ❑ The largest Estonian island is called **Saaremaa**, and it is located in the Baltic Sea. The island has an 8,000-year-old history, and was ruled by Danes, Swedes, Germans and Russians in that time. Today, most visitors spend their time in the island's capital city of Kuressaare. In Kuressaare, you can explore the completely intact medieval castle. You can tour the castle and the grounds, which now serve as home to the Regional Museum of Saaremaa.
  - ❑ Where the Parnu River meets the Gulf of Riga, you'll find the coastal resort city of **Parnu**. Parnu is known as the summer capital, because it is where so many Estonians choose to take their summer vacations. The biggest reason to come to Parnu is the beach, which boasts fine, white sand and gorgeous dunes.
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# Geography of Moldova

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- ❑ Moldova is hilly with a subtle slope south toward the Black Sea. Moldova has a relatively rugged topography, however elevations never reach beyond 430 m - which is the country's highest point, Balanesti Hill.
  - ❑ These hilly regions are part of the Moldavian Plateau, a part of the Carpathian Mountains. Accounting for much of the terrain along that plateau are steep forested slopes interlaced by valleys and ravines.
  - ❑ While the Dniester river forms only a small part of Moldova's border with the Ukraine, the Prut completely makes up the entire western border with Romania.
  - ❑ Other important rivers of note include the Nistru and Byk.
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# The main tourist attractions in Moldova

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- ❑ **Soroca** - This medieval town is known as a fortified city. Due to its magnificent and strong walls, Soroca played a huge role in protecting Moldova from invasions like Tartars, Polyaks, Cossacks, Ottomans and Slavs. The town is also known as being home of the largest Gipsys community in Moldova.
  - ❑ **Orheiul Vechi settlement** - The town of Orhei was established in 15th-16th Century. The excavations showed that the ancient town of Orhei was rich with a mosque, two mausoleums and a bath. Orthodox church from 17th Century, still stands on the top of the rock, having splendid views over the vineyards. The road, which goes to Orhei, passes some of the most beautiful and picturesque Moldovan villages, showing a true image of Moldova daily life.
  - ❑ **Saharna Monastery** - The monastery lies in one of the most beautiful gorges of the river Dniester in Moldova. From the top of the Orthodox church leads a path to the very bottom and ends by the river.
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# The main tourist attractions in Moldova

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- ❑ **Milestii Mici wine cellar** - The fact that we can drive with a car around this wine cellar says it all. The Milestii Mici wine cellar has few more surprises in its sleeve – it is known after the largest wine collection in the world, which even got a place in the Guinness Book of Records.
  - ❑ **Chisinau** - The capital of Moldova is interesting for its vibe. You can easily spot two worlds here – rich and poor, mixing together. The modern architecture and lifestyle want to cover the communism era, but it will take a while to really succeed. When visiting Chisinau, do as the locals do and start your day with a coffee and a glass of local Kvint cognac.
  - ❑ **Republic of Transnistria and Tiraspol** - The self-proclaimed Transnistrian Republic is an adventure of its own. Just crossing its borders is something you will not forget. Visit its capital Tiraspol and be amazed over the so called open-air museum of soviet times.
  - ❑ This impressive Ottoman fortress, outside the centre near the **Bendery–Tiraspol bridge**, was built in the 16th century and saw keen fighting between Turkish and Russian forces before falling to Tsarist Russia permanently in the early 19th century.
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# Geography of Ukraine

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- ❑ Ukraine, the largest country totally in Europe, has many diverse and interesting geographic features.
  - ❑ As for mountains, the northern reaches of the Carpathian Mountains stretch across western Ukraine. The country's highest point is located there; Hoverla Mountain, at 2061 m (6762 ft) tall.
  - ❑ The Crimean Mountains front the southern edges of the Crimean Peninsula, and some lower, heavily-eroded mountains extend into Russia just north of the Sea of Azov.
  - ❑ Much of central Ukraine is covered by plateaus, and fertile plains (steppes), somewhat hilly areas of grasslands and shrub lands. The Black Sea Coastal Lowlands cover the southern edges of the country.
  - ❑ Ukraine is bordered by the waters of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Major rivers include the Desna, Dnieper, Dniester, Donets and the Southern Bug. Numerous waterfalls are found in both the Carpathian and Crimean Mountains.
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# The main tourist attractions in Ukraine

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- ❑ **Crimea RESORTS** - Crimea is a fascinating region to explore, as well as a great place to spend a vacation. Across the centuries it has attracted settlers such as the Greeks, the Venetians and the Genoese - all of whom founded cities along the coast and inter-married with the local people.
  - ❑ **Carpathian Mountains** are considered to be the Green Pearl of Ukraine. It is one of the most popular resorts and tourist centers of the country. A beautiful mix of natural areas, forests, meadows, shepherds and humans living in harmony with nature is what makes the mountains so attractive to tourists.
  - ❑ **Kyiv** (also known as Kiev), a scenic city of close to 3 million people situated on the Dnieper River, is the bustling capital of Ukraine. Ancient Kievan Rus, which reached its greatest period of ascendancy during the 11th and 12th centuries, was a center of trade routes between the Baltic and the Mediterranean. The art and architecture of Kyiv are world treasures.
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# The main tourist attractions in Ukraine

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- ❑ **Lviv** is a very poetic city steeped in legends both ancient and relatively new. Narrow medieval streets paved with stones, architectural decoration done in different styles. In ancient times
  - ❑ **Odessa** is referred to as the "Pearl of the Black Sea" is the 3rd largest city in Ukraine, the largest city along the Black Sea, and the most important city of Ukraine for trade. Odessa's mild climate, warm waters and sunlit beaches attract hundreds of thousands of people year around..
  - ❑ **Kamyanets-Podilsky**, one of the oldest cities in Ukraine, is considered a phenomenon of great cultural importance. A rocky island skirted by the tight loop of the Smotrich River flowing in a picturesque canyon, served as a unique pedestal on which over more than a thousand years both well-known and anonymous masters created a miracle in stone.
  - ❑ **SOPHIEVKA PARK, UMAN** - Uman dendro park Sophievka is the real world landscape architecture masterpiece of the end of the XVIII-th century and the beginning of the XIX-th..
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# Geography of Belarus

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- ❑ Belarus is a heavily forested, flat, low-lying country that includes the Poltsk Lowland (north) and the Dnieper Lowland (south).
  - ❑ A few areas of rolling hills in the west blend into the lowlands. The extensive Pripyat marshes cover the southern reaches of the country.
  - ❑ The country's highest point, the Dzerzhinsky Hill, stands at (346m). Its lowest point is on the Neman River at 90 metres.
  - ❑ And as for rivers, the Dnieper is the most significant. Others of importance include the Dvinar, Neman and Pripyat. Many streams and over 10,000 small lakes are scattered about.
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# The main tourist attractions in Belarus

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- ❑ **Nyasvizh Castle** - Over a causeway leading away from the town with lovely lakes on either side lies this palace-like castle and park complex.
  - ❑ **Marc Chagall Art Center**- The first museum on every itinerary should be the excellent Chagall Art Center, which was established in 1992 and has about 300 of Chagall's works, of which less than one-third are on display at any given time.
  - ❑ **Mir Castle** - Rising majestically above the town, the 16th-century Mir Castle overlooks a postcard-perfect lake and resembles something straight out of Disney.
  - ❑ Unesco World Heritage Site **Belavezhskaya Pushcha National Park** is the oldest wildlife refuge in Europe and the pride of Belarus. At the National Park headquarters in Kamyanyuki, 55km north of Brest, you can arrange to tour the park by bus, bicycle or private car, and you can spend the night at one of several comfortable hotels near the park entrance.
  - ❑ The hamlet of **Khatyn**, 60km north of Minsk, was burned to the ground by the Nazis on 22 March 1943. Of a population of 149 (including 85 children), only one man, Yuzif Kaminsky, survived.
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# Geography of Russia

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- ❑ Making up the natural border between European Russia and Asia, the Ural Mountains extend from the Arctic Ocean to Kazakhstan's northern border.
  - ❑ Russia has more than 100,000 rivers with a length of 7 miles, or greater. Some of the world's longest rivers flow through the vast lowland plains that dominate the Russian landscape.
  - ❑ Significant rivers include the Volga, Dnieper and Dvina (west), the Lena, Ob, and Yenisey (central) and the Amur in the far east.
  - ❑ At 1,642 m, Lake Baikal is the deepest and among the clearest of all lakes in the world. Baikal is home to more than 1,700 species of plants and animals, two thirds of which can be found nowhere else in the world.
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# Geography of Russia

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- ❑ As the world's largest country in total area, Russia showcases a wide diversity of landforms. In general terms, it is divided into some very specific geographical zones.
  - ❑ The broad European Plain, or Volga River Plain extends from the Ural Mountains to its western borders with Europe.
  - ❑ The central and southern areas of Russia include large fertile areas, marsh, steppes (plains without trees) and massive coniferous forests.
  - ❑ Siberia is a combination of frozen tundra, with rolling hills rising to plateaus, punctuated by scattered mountain ranges.
  - ❑ Mountain ranges are found across Russia, with many of the major ones stretching along its southwestern, southeastern and eastern borders
  - ❑ In the far southwest the Caucasus Mountains slice across the land. The country's highest point, Mt. Elbrus at (5,633 m), is located there.
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# The main tourist attractions in Russia

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- ❑ Built between 1554 and 1561 and situated in the heart of Moscow, **St. Basil's Cathedral** has been among the top tourist attractions in Russia. It is not the building's interior artifacts that attract visitors, but rather the cathedral's distinctive architecture. Designed to resemble the shape of a bonfire in full flame, the architecture is not only unique to the period in which it was built but to any subsequent period. There is no other structure on earth quite like St. Basil's Cathedral.
  - ❑ Founded in 1764 by Catherine the Great, **the Hermitage Museum** in Saint Petersburg, Russia is a massive museum of art and culture showing the highlights of a collection of over 3 million items spanning the globe. The collections occupy a large complex of six historic buildings including the Winter Palace, a former residence of Russian emperors.
  - ❑ **The Kremlin** is a must-see attraction for anyone visiting Moscow. Home to the nation's top governmental offices, the walled enclosure also houses four cathedrals built in the 15th and 16th century as well as several notable museums.
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# The main tourist attractions in Russia

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**SLEZSKÁ  
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- ❑ Once the capital of several Russian principalities, **Suzdal** is the jewel of Russia's "Golden Ring," ancient cities that the country has preserved as living museums of Russia's cultural past. Those who wish to experience the best of Russia's historic architecture, full of onion-dome topped kremlins, cathedrals and monasteries, will find it in Suzdal. Dating back to 1024, the entire city is like a large open-air museum that transports visitors back in time.
  - ❑ Many travelers on the Trans-Siberian railway make plans to stop at **Lake Baikal**, the deepest and oldest lake on Earth. Lake Baikal holds around 20 percent of the world's fresh water. Located in Siberia, the 25-million-year-old lake is surrounded by mountain ranges. The lake is considered one of the clearest lakes in the world. Known as the Pearl of Siberia, Lake Baikal is home to several resorts, making the area a popular vacation destination.
  - ❑ Located in Novgorod, Russia's oldest city, **Saint Sophia Cathedral** is situated within the grounds of the city's Kremlin. Standing 125 feet high and adorned with five spectacular domes, the cathedral is the oldest church building in Russia.
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# The main tourist attractions in Russia

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- ❑ Located in Karelia, a region in Northwestern Russia that borders Finland and the White Sea, **Kizhi Island** is best known for its incredible open-air museum. Karelians have lived in the region since the 13th century, torn between the cultures of the East and the West.
  - ❑ Situated on the Kamchatka Peninsula in the Russian Far East, the **Valley of Geysers** is the second largest geyser field in the world. The Valley of Geysers was discovered in 1941 by local scientist Tatyana Ustinova..
  - ❑ **Mount Elbrus** is located in the Caucasus Mountain Range in Southern Russia. At 5,642 meters (18,510 ft), Elbrus is included as one of the Seven Summits, the highest summits on each of the planet's seven continents, attracting both experienced and novice mountain climbers.
  - ❑ Part of the longest railway system in the world, the classic **Trans-Siberian railway** runs from Moscow to Vladivostok, a city near Russia's borders with China and North Korea.
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# Geography of Georgia

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- ❑ Georgia is a very mountainous country, with the rugged Caucasus Mountains stretching across the northern third, and the Lesser Caucasus Mountains dominating the central and southern landscape.
  - ❑ The country's highest point, (100% within its borders) is Mt. Kazbek, rising to (5,047 m).
  - ❑ Mt. Shkhara, is a few meters higher, and its southern slopes front Georgia, but it's mostly located in Russia, just to the southeast of Mt. Elbrus. It rises to 16,627 ft. (5,068m).
  - ❑ Europe's highest point, (Mt. Elbrus) is located just over Georgia's northern border, and reaches (5,633m).
  - ❑ The Kolkhida Lowlands front the Black Sea in the west, and numerous small rivers drain the area. The most significant rivers include the Kura and Rioni.
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# The main tourist attractions in Georgia

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- ❑ Georgia's summer city reminds me of what would happen if you mixed Singapore with Atlantic City, shrunk it down ten sizes and plopped in onto the Black Sea's pebble beaches. **Batumi**, Georgia offers modern architecture (Donald Trump once had plans to build a skyscraper here), an enormous and gorgeous botanical garden, and access to the pebble beaches of the Black Sea. In summer, Russian, Georgian, and international visitors descend on the city, with its beaches crowded by day and its nightclubs throbbing through the night.
  - ❑ **Mestia** is the main town in the mountainous region of Svaneti. Svaneti isn't easy to get to (unless you can snag one of the few flights from Tbilisi to Mestia), but it's well worth a visit to this stunning but isolated mountain region. There you'll find a unique but fierce culture that has managed to ward off invaders ranging from the Mongols to the Persians to the Ottomans. With the government of Georgia heavily promoting tourism to Svaneti.
  - ❑ **Ushguli** is a tiny collection of villages high in the Caucasian mountains. You can only access it via a single dirt road from Mestia, or via a four day trek on foot, but it's well worth the journey.
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# The main tourist attractions in Georgia

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- ❑ Almost every tourist traveling to Georgia will make a visit to **Tbilisi** at some point — and the city, despite being a popular tourist place, won't disappoint. This incredible city contains a charming old town situated on a dramatic cliff-side. It offers first-class dining options at cut-rate prices (at least by European standards), vibrant nightlife, affordable accommodation, and easy access to day trips through large parts of the country.
- ❑ Perhaps the most recognizable icon of Georgia, the Gergeti Trinity Church stands guard over the **Kazbegi** region from its perch on a hillside just under Mount Kazbegi.
- ❑ Georgia is unusual in that it technically has two capital cities, with its legislature sitting the central **city of Kutaisi**. The town of Kutaisi is much smaller than Tbilisi, but is still charming and offers enough to do – monasteries, churches, and restaurants.
- ❑ This one is going to be a bit controversial as an inclusion on a list of places to visit in Georgia Europe. That's because **Lake Ritsa** is located in Abkhazia – an area that is a self-proclaimed independent nation whose borders are largely controlled by Russia.
- ❑ About 70 kilometers north of Tbilisi lies the unbelievable **Ananuri castle complex**.



# Geography of Armenia

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- ❑ Armenia is a very mountainous country, almost totally covered by the Lesser (or Little) Caucasus Mountains.
  - ❑ The highest point is Mt. Aragats at (4,090m).
  - ❑ Rivers flow fast down through the mountains, and although much of Armenia's land remains at or above (2,000 m) at least 3% form the valleys of the Araks and Debet rivers.
  - ❑ Lake Sevan is the largest lake and it sits (2,000 m), above sea level. Significant rivers include the Aras, Debet and Razdan.
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# The main tourist attractions in Armenia

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- ❑ By far the largest city in Armenia, the capital **Yerevan** is a great place to start for anyone wishing to explore Armenia. The city is home to the grand Republic Square, while climbing the Cascade to see the city's monument to Soviet victory in the Second World War is a must. Yerevan is a deeply historic city and visiting the Armenian Genocide Memorial is a must to learn more about the nation's troubled past. Vernissage flea market is worth visiting too – it is open at the weekend – while a walk through the Hrazdan gorge is also highly recommended.
  - ❑ **Matenadaran** - This is an amazing museum which is steeped in history and culture. It is a virtual treasure-house of ancient Armenian manuscripts and books covering a variety of subjects such as art, literature, history, medicine and much more! There is also a fantastic collection of historical documents in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Russian and other languages. It is believed that Matenadaran has close to 17,000 manuscripts and 30,000 other documents in its collection.
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# The main tourist attractions in Armenia

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- ❑ **The History museum on Republic Square** is considered as the national museum of Armenia. It is a huge museum with separate departments dedicated to archaeology, numismatics and ethnography etc. The museum was set up in 1920 and now has an astounding collection of some 400,000 objects. It is actively involved in the preservation and restoration work of ancient relics as well.
- ❑ **Lover's Park** - This park has been given many different names from time to time, which are closely related to its history. Originally called the Kozem Park, way back in the 18th century, it was basically known for its chapel and cemetery.
- ❑ **Katoghike or Church of the Holy Mother of God** is the only surviving medieval church in Yerevan. It dates back to the 13th century. Although the church itself was demolished in 1936, during the Soviet regime, miraculously the ancient chapel within the basilica complex was unearthed intact, having withstood the onslaught of the demolition.
- ❑ Named after its founder Gerard Cafesjian, **Cafesjian Centre for Arts** is also known as the Cafesjian Museum. It is the hub of culture and art in Armenia.

# Geography of Azerbaijan

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- ❑ Azerbaijan is a mountainous country, with the Caucasus Mountains covering the north and central regions.
  - ❑ Many snow-capped peaks exceed 12,000 ft., with Baza-Dyuzi the highest point, at (4,480m).
  - ❑ Moving southwest, the Lesser Caucasus cross the land, stretching on into Armenia, and in the far-south, the Talish Mountains help form its border with Iran.
  - ❑ A low flood plain covers the south-central and east, ending at the Caspian Sea; much of it below sea level.
  - ❑ Baku, the capital city, sits on the Abseron Yasaqligi (or Apsheron Peninsula), that juts hook-line into the Caspian Sea
  - ❑ Significant rivers include the Alazani, Aras and Kura, and the Mangachevir Reservoir is the largest inland body of water.
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# The main tourist attractions in Azerbaijan

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- ❑ **Gobustan National Park**, officially Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, is a hill and mountain site occupying the southeast end of the Greater Caucasus mountain ridge in Azerbaijan, mainly in the basin of Jeyrankechmaz River, between the rivers Pirsagat and Sumgait. **Dadivank also Khutavank** is an Armenian monastery in the Shahumian Region of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, de jure Kalbajar District in Azerbaijan. It was built between the 9th and 13th century.
  - ❑ **Gandzasar monastery** is a 10th to 13th century Armenian monastery situated in the Mardakert district of de facto Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. "Gandzasar" means treasure mountain or hilltop treasure in Armenian. The monastery holds relics believed to belong to St. John the Baptist and his father St Zechariah.
  - ❑ **Tigranakert** is a ruined Armenian city dating back to the Hellenistic period. It is one of several former cities in the Armenian plateau with the same name, named in honor of the Armenian king Tigranes the Great.
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# The main tourist attractions in Azerbaijan

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- ❑ **Plane Tree of Skhtorashen-** Tnjri is a 2033 years old giant Oriental plane tree situated nearby the village Skhtorashen, Martuni Region of Artsakh. The hollow of the tree is 44 sq.m., where more than 40 people can stand. The area covered by the foliage of the tree is 1400 sq.m.
  - ❑ Something of a misnomer, the **Caspian Sea** is actually the largest lake in the world, and measures a whopping 371,000 square kilometres.
  - ❑ **Baku**, the capital city of Azerbaijan, lies along the Caspian Sea, and is a somewhat curious mix of the old walled city of Icheri Seher, and a modern building craze that has led a boom in skyscrapers, many of which are studded with LCD screens. Of all of these, make sure that you don't miss the Flame Towers, three towers built to resemble fire that cast a bronzed glow over the city at night.
  - ❑ Known as “Old City” and “Fortress”, **Icheri Seher** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the centre of Baku, and you will find amazing architectural feats all over this protected quarter of the city.
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# The main tourist attractions in Azerbaijan

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- ❑ Sitting in the Azizbeyov region of the city of Baku, **Absheron National Park** spans 783 hectares of protected land and is the perfect place to come to witness the stunning flora and fauna of Azerbaijan.
  - ❑ Many visitors to Azerbaijan may not know that the country has the highest number of mud volcanoes in the world. 350 to be exact! One of the best known is *Garasu Volcano*, that has been known to spew mud over 1,000 metres into the air.
  - ❑ **Naftalan resort** is famous due to the Naftalan crude oil found here that is said to have healing properties, and has sparked a boom in medical tourism to the region.
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