



Discovering Azerbaijan

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**TO THE PEAKS
OF THE GREATER
CAUCASUS:**
a route to the highlands
of Khinalig



Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Azerbaijan boasts a remarkable diversity of natural landscapes. Mountain ranges occupy a special place in the country's geography, shaping its topography and determining the region's tourism potential.

Azerbaijan has two main mountain ranges: the Greater Caucasus and the Lesser Caucasus. The Greater Caucasus stretches along the country's northern border and includes the country's highest peaks, while the Lesser Caucasus, located in the west and southwest, is characterized by a more gradual topography and significant forest areas.

All of Azerbaijan's peaks above 4,000 meters are located within the Greater Caucasus. The most famous of them are Bazarduzu (4,466 m), which is also the highest peak of the country, Zafar (4,301 m), Shahdag (4,243 m), and Tufandag (4,191 m).

These peaks are of interest to both professional climbers and organized tourist groups. Climbing Bazarduzu is a classic high-altitude trekking route and requires appropriate physical fitness.

The expedition starts in Baku. The route then passes through the northern regions of the country toward Khinalig, one of the highest and historically isolated settlements in the Caucasus.





Due to its proximity to the state border, visiting this area requires prior permits. After passing checkpoints, the route continues through the Shahdag National Park.

The vehicle portion of the route ends in the Yatig-dara valley, after which the hiking portion begins. A base camp is established at an altitude of approximately 3,100–3,200 meters, where participants acclimatize and prepare for the ascent.

The Caucasus Mountains are characterized by highly variable weather conditions. Temperature, cloud cover, and visibility can change dramatically within a single day.

These factors significantly impact both route planning and the visual perception of the landscape. Light conditions, cloud movement, and snow cover create a constantly changing panorama.

After climbing Bazarduzu, the route can be continued by traversing towards Zafar Peak. This section requires particular attention to weather conditions and group coordination.

Reduced visibility due to fog or precipitation is typical for this region. However, it is precisely these conditions that allow climbers the opportunity to fully appreciate the scale and morphology of the high-altitude terrain.

After reaching the summit, the descent to base camp begins.

Among the moderately difficult routes, the ascent to Mount Kharibulbul (2,783 m), which is located in Khinalig, is worthy of note.

The route can start from various points, including Khinalig itself and nearby mountain villages. It doesn't require specialized mountaineering equipment, but it does require a good level of physical fitness.

Azerbaijan's mountainous regions are gradually integrating into international tourist routes. At the same time, they retain a key advantage: their relative unexplored status and the absence of mass tourism.

The availability of a regulated access system and the presence of professional guides ensure the necessary level of safety for foreign visitors.

Thus, the Greater Caucasus routes from the Bazarduzu peak to the high plateaus of Khinalig represent a promising direction for the development of active tourism in the region. 🌄







