

# The U.S. Citizen Guide to Georgia

A 3,000-year civilization at the crossroads — five essentials before you dive in

This handout summarizes five key sections of the full guide — chosen by the guide itself as the fastest path to understanding Georgia (Sakartvelo). The complete 786-page reference, with 56 chapters, is free online — see the QR code on the back.

NEW TO GEORGIA? · 5 MIN READ

## Not a State. Not a Satellite. A Civilization.

Georgia sits at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia in the Caucasus Mountains, bordered by Russia, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Black Sea. Americans often confuse it with the U.S. state, and 70 years of Soviet absorption (1921–1991) obscured its distinct identity — but Georgia is an ancient civilization with over 3,000 years of recorded history, not a former Soviet satellite still finding its footing.

GEORGIAN WINE · 16 MIN READ

## 8,000 Years of Winemaking

Archaeological evidence places the origin of wine production in Georgia at 8,000 BCE — the oldest in the world. The traditional qvevri method, aging wine in buried clay vessels, is recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage and remains in active use today.

THE FLASHPOINT: 1991–2026 · 12 MIN READ

## From Independence to the Present

Georgia restored independence in 1991 after the Soviet collapse, survived civil conflict and the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and has more recently pursued EU accession while navigating a contested "authoritarian pivot" — including a foreign agents law that mirrors legislation in Russia and Hungary.

THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE · 23 MIN READ

## A Linguistic Isolate

Georgian belongs to the Kartvelian language family, unrelated to any other language on Earth, and uses one of only 14 unique alphabets still in active use. In 1978, mass protests forced a rare Soviet concession to preserve Georgian as the republic's official language.

OCCUPIED TERRITORIES · 15 MIN READ

## Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Roughly 20% of internationally recognized Georgian territory — Abkhazia and South Ossetia — has been under Russian-backed occupation since the 2008 war, a frozen conflict with no resolution in sight and real consequences for the civilians who live there.

# Discussion Questions

For classrooms, book clubs, and curious minds — open-ended, no "correct" answers.

## New to Georgia?

- Georgia has been occupied by Persia, the Ottomans, Russia, and the USSR, yet kept its own alphabet and language. What does that suggest about the relationship between political sovereignty and cultural survival?

## Georgian Wine

- How does the qvevri winemaking tradition reflect broader Georgian cultural values around continuity, craftsmanship, and identity?
- The supra (feast) transforms wine from a beverage into a social institution. What parallels exist in other cultures?

## The Flashpoint: 1991–2026

- What factors distinguish democratic backsliding from temporary political turbulence, and how can outside observers tell the difference in real time?

## The Georgian Language

- Georgian is a linguistic isolate with no proven relatives. How does linguistic isolation shape cultural identity and the preservation of heritage?
- The 1978 language protests showed the political power of linguistic identity. Why does language provoke such intense feelings of national belonging?

## Occupied Territories

- How do frozen conflicts differ from active wars in their long-term effects on civilian populations and national development?
- What ethical considerations arise when weighing the rights of populations in breakaway regions against a state's territorial-integrity claims?



### Read the Full Guide — Free

All 56 chapters. History, culture, geography, and current affairs. PDF & ePub, always live.

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