



GEORGIA SKI EXPEDITION

DURATION: 11 DAYS

LOCATION: GEORGIA

SKILL LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

ALPENGLOW
expeditions



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Expedition Details

DURATION: 11 DAYS

LOCATION: GEORGIA

SKILL LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

SEASON: FEBRUARY - MARCH

DIFFICULTY LEVEL DESCRIPTION:

This expedition is designed for intermediate skiers and snowboarders who are comfortable on groomed and variable terrain.

PREREQUISITES:

Participants should be able to ski confidently on intermediate to advanced runs at their home resort, handle changing snow conditions, and manage a full day of skiing at moderate altitude. Minimum of 10 days of prior backcountry experience required.



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[ALPENGLOWEXPEDITIONS.COM](https://alpenglowexpeditions.com)

Expedition Introduction

Georgia is on the cusp of becoming one of the great ski destinations in the world.

The Svaneti region is one of the most culturally remarkable mountain destinations in the world. Stone Svan towers that date to the 9th through 12th centuries rise from every village. The people here have been farming this valley and fermenting wine in clay pots for thousands of years — Georgia is widely regarded as the birthplace of winemaking, with a tradition going back 8,000 to 10,000 years. Tbilisi, where the trip begins, is a major historical crossroads between Europe and Asia, with an old city that rewards a full day of walking.

After two days in Tbilisi, the group drives eight hours into the Svaneti valley and settles into Mestia, the base town for the ski portion of the trip. The southern flank of the Caucasus has a lot of skiable aspects, which means guides can always find a workable zone regardless of what the weather is doing.

The trip covers the full range of what Svaneti has to offer: a mix of backcountry terrain through excellent local resorts, a glacier descent beneath the mythic pyramid of Mount Ushba, and two days of ski touring above the UNESCO World Heritage village of Ushguli.



Hatsvali offers a different character: tighter tree runs and a more intimate feel, with a base village that has retained its traditional Svan architecture. Skiing between the two mountains over the course of the week gives participants a full picture of what the Svaneti region offers.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Svaneti region has been continuously inhabited since the Bronze Age. The tower houses that define the Mestia skyline were built between the 9th and 12th centuries, constructed by Svan families as fortifications and storage for precious religious artifacts during periods of invasion. Over 200 of them still stand. Ushguli, perched above 5,000 feet at the head of the Enguri River gorge, is the highest of the Svan communities and one of the most remote inhabited villages in Europe.

Georgia as a whole carries 8,000 years of winemaking history, the oldest continuous wine tradition in the world. The food and hospitality culture is inseparable from this history. Evenings in Tbilisi and Mestia offer a direct experience of Georgian cuisine and the Svan tradition of gathering around a shared table.





11-Day Itinerary

To ski Georgia is to enter one of the most visually compelling and culturally rich mountain regions in the world. The Caucasus are serious mountains, Tetnuldi is a serious ski objective, and Svaneti is a place that stays with you.

- Our aim is to build an itinerary that combines full ski days at two distinct mountains with genuine cultural immersion in the Svaneti valley.
- 11 days allows us to spend quality time in both Tbilisi and the mountains, with a full rest day built around the Ushguli excursion.
- Our goal is to leave Georgia with a personal, unique connection to the terrain, the towers, and the people who have called this valley home for over a thousand years.

11 days allows us to spend quality time in both Tbilisi and the mountains, with a built-in rest day mid-week and two to three full days of ski touring above Ushguli to close the trip.

This expedition is built for skiers who are ready to move well beyond the resort. Whether you are an experienced backcountry skier looking for serious terrain in a genuinely remote cultural setting, or an alpinist who has added skis to your toolkit, Georgia offers a progression of objectives that builds day by day.



Georgia is a natural starting point for skiers who want serious mountain terrain in an unexpected setting. Many participants leave with their eyes on Ecuador, Japan, Bolivia, or Patagonia.

See more trips at ALPENLOWEXPEDITIONS.COM



About Alpenglow Expeditions

Alpenglow creates and fosters a community of climbers prepared to achieve their dreams in the world's greatest mountain ranges.



About the Company

Alpenglow Expeditions is an AMGA accredited business, and prides itself on working with guides who uphold and exemplify the highest standard in the profession of mountain guiding.

Led by IFMGA mountain guide Adrian Ballinger, Alpenglow focuses on creating expeditions that reflect our high standards in mountain guiding by providing precision logistics, cutting edge technology, and thoughtful itineraries that combine for successful climbs.

History of Alpenglow Expeditions

Founded in 2004 by IFMGA mountain guide Adrian Ballinger, Alpenglow Expeditions began as a boutique guide service that focused on high altitude climbing. In those 20+ years we've expanded our offerings, both internationally and in the United States. We are now proud to offer courses and expeditions ranging from a climber's first experience on the Tahoe Via Ferrata, to basic backcountry education for those interested in exploring winter landscapes, to climbing the world's highest mountain for those on the Road to Everest.



Who We Are

MISSION

TO INSPIRE ADVENTURERS THROUGH POWERFUL MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCES

VISION

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF THE MOUNTAINS TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE WORLD

VALUES

Alpenglow Expeditions facilitates epic mountain expeditions. From Via Ferrata to summiting Mount Everest – our innovative climbing techniques, premier logistics, experienced & accredited guides, and smaller, curated teams result in an inspiring, powerful experience for every client.

Our logistical team is focused on quality and detail at every step resulting in a higher level of personal comfort with fewer delays and a better chance at success. As an AMGA accredited business, we surpass industry norms, guaranteeing that our guides are the best of the best, which includes requiring all international guides to have their IFMGA and/or AMGA certifications.

Our guides are extensively trained across every route encountered - knowing the mountain inside and out makes for a smart, safe decision process resulting in efficient, seamless trips. This training also allows our guides to focus on facilitating the best experience for our clients, including educating and teaching while on the mountain.

Our guides and logistics ensure professionally managed and enjoyable expeditions, cohesive group dynamics, and an optimal trip for all. Attention to detail extends to group dynamics and team size as well. We believe that the right people on the right mountain results in a unique and memorable adventure.

We spend time understanding each participant, precisely matching them with the rest of the team. Small team size enables us to focus on each team member's goals for the trip, maximizing success and safety, which results in an outstanding curated experience.

Alpenglow Expeditions is a group of passionate adventurers with a love for the high alpine. Our mission is to inspire adventurers through powerful mountain experiences because we know the transformative power they hold. Our clients feel empowered, surprised, delighted, and changed by the possibilities and promises of the mountains.

About Alpenglow Expeditions



Founder — Adrian Ballinger

Adrian Ballinger founded Alpenglow Expeditions in 2004 envisioning a more holistic climbing experience for his clients than the status quo.

Adrian is the only American who has skied two 8,000 meter peaks, was the first person to ski Makalu and Manaslu, the 5th- and 8th-tallest peaks in the world. In 2011 he became the first person to summit three 8,000 meter peaks in only 3 weeks (Everest twice and Lhotse once).

Adrian holds both an AMGA and IFMGA guide's certifications and has achieved more than 15 summits of 8,000 meter peaks (including 10 summits of Mt. Everest).



Partner / Chief Guide — Logan Talbott

Logan has been guiding professionally for over a decade in the disciplines of Rock, Alpine and Ski Mountaineering. When not out guiding, Logan spends time in the office helping the team with the day-to-day operations of the business. From one day ascents of El Capitan to big Alpine climbs in the Himalaya, or from ski descents on Denali to backyard ski tours in Lake Tahoe, he can't help but smile when out running around the hills.

Logan is an AMGA/IFMGA mountain guide, an Avalanche course leader with AIARE, as well as a wilderness EMT. In addition to guiding, Logan has extensive experience in mountain rescue, having worked for rescue teams in both Yosemite and Denali National Parks, and volunteering locally for Tahoe Nordic SAR.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, LOCAL PARTNERS

We partner with local logistics companies in each country and region that we operate in. Often we have partnerships that have been with us since the beginning of Alpenglow. Whenever we bring on a new operator, we have them thoroughly vetted to ensure their reliability and quality. Our local and regional logistics partners are the backbone of our in-country logistics and help us achieve the success that we're known for.

The Alpenglow Difference

EXPEDITION DOCTOR ON CALL

Dr. Monica Piris, has been on fifteen+ 8,000-meter peak expeditions. She is in daily communication with our teams during the entirety of the expedition and is available for client consultation at any time.

OUR GUIDES

Alpenglow's guides are a fundamental part of our operation and your experience. Your trip will be led by one or more of our AMGA Certified guides who have intimate knowledge of their craft and the terrain. AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) certification is the highest possible training available to guides, and only the most experienced and dedicated attain it.

PRECISE LOGISTICS

Time is a scarce resource in all of our lives. To maximize the value of our time we work with a local logistics team and have relationships with the services we use.

HIGH-QUALITY FOOD

Breakfast is included daily at Hotel Mercer and Hotel Posta. Both hotels are known for the quality of their dining, and Mestia has a number of excellent local restaurants for group dinners. Georgia's culinary tradition is one of the most distinctive in the world.

FULL TIME OFFICE STAFF

We understand that scheduling and booking an international expedition is a large step. Therefore we maintain a full-time office staff to provide peace of mind and support you throughout the process.





Route Description + Itinerary

The trip begins in Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, at a hotel in the old city. Day 1 is arrival. The sulfur bath houses in Abanotubani, the Narikala fortress above the river, and the local restaurants are all worth exploring if you land with time.

Day 2 is a full day in the city — Tbilisi has been a major crossroads of history, culture, and trade for over a millennium, and a day here goes quickly. Guides help the group get oriented and make recommendations. In the evening, gear prep and a review of the days ahead.

On Day 3 the group drives eight hours through the Caucasus Mountains to Mestia. After check-in at Hotel Posta, there is time to walk downtown Mestia and get a first look at the terrain surrounding the valley. The Svan towers are immediately visible from the streets, and the peaks above them are massive.

Days 4 and 5 are ski days at Tetsuldi and Hatsvali. Tetsuldi is one of the newest ski areas in the Caucasus and the host of the 2023 Freeride Tour. The resort sits in a pristine alpine environment surrounded by serious terrain. Touring off the top lift accesses side-country skiing with direct views of Tetsuldi summit at 15,938 feet. Hatsvali, five minutes from town, is the alternative on days when conditions favor tree cover or lower elevations — groomers, off-piste terrain, tree skiing, and chutes that hold snow well in variable conditions.

Day 6 is a scheduled rest day. The Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography in Mestia is one of the most remarkable small museums in the Caucasus. Medieval iconography, jewelry, weapons of war, and ancient coins give real context to the Svan people who have inhabited this valley for thousands of years. The rest of the day is for recovery, Hotel Posta's pool and sauna, and a good meal. The coming days are the biggest ones.

Days 7 through 9 take the group to Ushguli, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the highest continuously inhabited settlements in Europe. Two to three full days of ski touring above the village. Stone Svan towers rise from the snow, the surrounding peaks are enormous, and the skiing above the village is expansive, uncrowded, and deeply satisfying. The group stays in a local family guesthouse and eats together. This is the week finishing the way it deserves to end.

On Day 10, a morning shuttle to Kutaisi, Georgia's second city, with a few hours to take in the surroundings before boarding an overnight sleeper car on the Georgian Railway for a relaxing journey back to Tbilisi.

The group arrives early in the morning of Day 11 and heads to the airport for departing flights home.



Daily Itinerary Overview

DAY 1 — Arrive at Tbilisi International Airport. Transfer to hotel in the old city. Evening free to explore.

Activity: Arrive in Tbilisi
Lodging: Hotel Mercer
Meals: None

DAY 2 — A full day in Tbilisi before heading into the mountains. Tbilisi has been a major crossroads of history, culture, and trade for over a millennium, and a day here goes quickly. Your guides will help the group get oriented and make recommendations. In the evening, prepare gear and review the plan for the days ahead.

Activity: Tbilisi exploration and gear preparation
Lodging: Hotel Mercer
Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 — After an eight-hour drive through the Caucasus Mountains, we check into Hotel Posta, walk through downtown Mestia, and get our first look at the terrain surrounding the valley. The Svan towers are immediately visible, and the peaks above them are massive.

Activity: Drive to Mestia
Lodging: Hotel Posta, Mestia
Meals: Breakfast

DAYS 4-5 — Tetnuldi is one of the newest ski areas in the Caucasus and the host of the 2023 Freeride Tour. The resort sits in a pristine alpine environment surrounded by serious terrain. We tour off the top lift for side-country skiing with direct views of Tetnuldi summit at 15,938 feet. On days when weather moves in, Hatsvali offers groomers, off-piste terrain, tree skiing, and chutes that hold snow well in variable conditions.

Activity: Ski Tetnuldi / Hatsvali
Lodging: Hotel Posta, Mestia
Meals: Breakfast

Daily Itinerary Overview

DAY 6 — A scheduled day off from skiing. The Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography in Mestia is one of the most remarkable small museums in the Caucasus — medieval iconography, jewelry, weapons of war, and ancient coins give real context to the Svan people who have inhabited this valley for thousands of years. Use the rest of the day to recover, use Hotel Posta's pool and sauna, and eat a good meal.

Activity: Svaneti Museum visit and rest

Lodging: Hotel Posta, Mestia

Meals: Breakfast

DAYS 7-9 — We drive to Ushguli for two to three full days of ski touring above the village. Ushguli is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and visually unlike anything most skiers have ever seen. Stone Svan towers rise from the snow, the surrounding peaks are enormous, and the skiing above the village is expansive, uncrowded, and deeply satisfying.

Activity: Ski touring above Ushguli

Lodging: Local family guesthouse, Ushguli

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 — Morning shuttle to Kutaisi, Georgia's second-largest city, where we spend a few hours taking in the surroundings before boarding an overnight sleeper car on the Georgian Railway for a relaxing journey back to Tbilisi.

Activity: Shuttle to Kutaisi + overnight train to Tbilisi

Lodging: Georgian Railway overnight sleeper

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 — Depart from Tbilisi.

Activity: Depart

Travel Details

FLIGHTS

Skiers should schedule flights to arrive at Tbilisi International Airport (TBS) on Day 1 of the itinerary. Guides and ground transportation to Hotel Mercer will be arranged. Transportation between Tbilisi, Mestia, Ushguli, Kutaisi, and all other destinations on the itinerary is included.

If you do not have a travel agent, we recommend using [kayak.com](https://www.kayak.com) as a primary source for finding low-fare airfares.

VISAS

US citizens do not require a visa to enter Georgia. Travelers from outside the US should verify entry requirements with the Georgian embassy well in advance of departure. A valid passport with at least six months of validity remaining beyond the trip end date is required.

For visa information, visit [CIBT Visas](https://www.cibtvisas.com).

Please confirm your itinerary with Alpenglow Expeditions before purchasing.





General Trip Information

FOOD

Breakfast is included each morning. Georgian food is exceptional and affordable. Think khachapuri, fresh-baked bread, wheels of local cheese, eggs, fruit, and strong coffee in the mornings. Dinners are not included, but eating well in Mestia is easy and your guides will point the group toward the best options each evening. Georgia has been making wine for millennia, and the local bottles are worth exploring.

MOUNTAIN TRAINING

Several days on this expedition involve ski touring with 3,000 to 5,000 vertical feet of climbing. Consistent, challenging cardio and strength training for several months before departure is the only way to be adequately prepared. For a personalized training schedule, contact:

lynette@alpenglowexpeditions.com.

Lynette Talbott is the owner and operator of [Billy Goat Swift](#). As a full-service expedition trainer, Lynette specializes in sports performance, orthopedic injuries, and endurance event training. Her passion for sports rehabilitation and athletics began in high school as a competitive swimmer and water polo player and followed into her time as a mountain guide in the Sierra Nevada. She works as a Physical Therapist Assistant at the Tahoe Forest Hospital as well as a personal trainer. For the past 10 years she has trained for triathlons, cross country skiing events, cycling events like the Death Ride, and backcountry ski trips.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

All of our expeditions and treks are physically demanding. Regardless of the skill level or experience needed, it is essential that you arrive in good physical shape, and prepared to handle extreme conditions, including cold, heat, and long tiring days. Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC, and its guides reserve the right to remove any member of our trips at any time if we do not believe they are ready for the rigors of the trip.

You are responsible for your own medications, inoculations, and deciding whether you are physically able to participate in an Alpenglow Expeditions trip. You should discuss your participation in this trip, and the dangers involved, with your physician.

On Mountain Medicine

Our guides are certified in wilderness medicine, CPR, and are experienced in client care in remote high altitude locations. However, Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC, is not a medical facility and Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC, assumes no liability regarding medical care.

Our on-call high-altitude expedition doctor, Dr. Monica Piris, has been on more than 15 expeditions to some of the world's highest peaks including Everest, Lhotse, Cho Oyu, and Manaslu. Her work has ranged from monitoring team members' health throughout the expedition, treating locals and visitors for common illnesses, to treating frostbite and potentially fatal altitude-related illnesses and offering diagnostic and therapeutic advice over the radio for unwell climbers being rescued above 8,000m.



Accommodations

All expeditions include double occupancy lodging in town and double occupancy tents on the mountain. No matter where we travel, Alpenglow strives to stay in safe, clean, and comfortable accommodations.

IN-TOWN

Hotel Mercer, located in Tbilisi's old city. Two nights at the start of the trip give participants time to recover from travel and explore one of the most historically layered cities in the Caucasus.

In Mestia, Hotel Posta is a recently renovated property in the center of town, built in the old post office building. The design blends traditional Svan woodwork with a clean, modern interior. There is a fireplace lounge, an indoor pool, and a Finnish sauna. After a long day in the mountains, this is exactly what you want to come back to.

In Ushguli, we'll stay in a family guesthouse for the nights spent in the village. A completely different experience from Hotel Posta, and one of the most memorable parts of the trip.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

If you prefer a single room while we are in hotels, please let us know as soon as possible. There will be an additional cost associated for this.



INCLUSIONS

The cost of your trip includes your land costs (excluding in-town meals). This includes:

- Double-occupancy lodging at Hotel Mercer, Tbilisi (2 nights)
- Double-occupancy lodging at Hotel Posta, Mestia
- Double-occupancy lodging in Ushguli family guesthouse
- Overnight sleeper car on the Georgian Railway, Kutaisi to Tbilisi (Day 10)
- Breakfast daily throughout the expedition
- All ground transportation: airport transfers, Tbilisi to Mestia, Ushguli, Kutaisi
- IFMGA/AMGA-certified guides

CANCELLATION POLICY

View our cancellation policy online at <https://alpenglowexpeditions.com/cancellation-policy-international-expeditions/>

EXCLUSIONS

The cost of your trip does not include:

- Flights to and from Tbilisi (TBS)
- Airport departure taxes
- Lunches and dinners (except breakfast included daily)
- Personal ski or splitboard equipment (skis, boots, poles, skins, beacon, shovel, probe)
- Ski or splitboard rental
- Travel, rescue, or any other type of insurance (required)
- Hospitalization or evacuation costs
- Tips for guides or local staff
- Single supplement charges
- Alcohol or other personal expenses

*The costs of delays or changes to itinerary that are beyond the control of Alpenglow Expeditions or its agents are not included.

**We recommend [Global Rescue](#) for both Rescue and Travel insurance





Expedition of a Lifetime

Summit success is only achievable with your hard work and perseverance, and of course the right team of people around you.

We think of ourselves as your partner in dreaming, planning, climbing and celebrating. Our entire team from Adrian, guides, support personnel and logistics partners are excited to have you along for the expedition of a lifetime.

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BOOKING + INQUIRIES

For booking details, questions, or more information please call or email us:

1 (877) 873-5376

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This expedition is operated by Adrian Ballinger, IFMGA Mountain Guide.

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