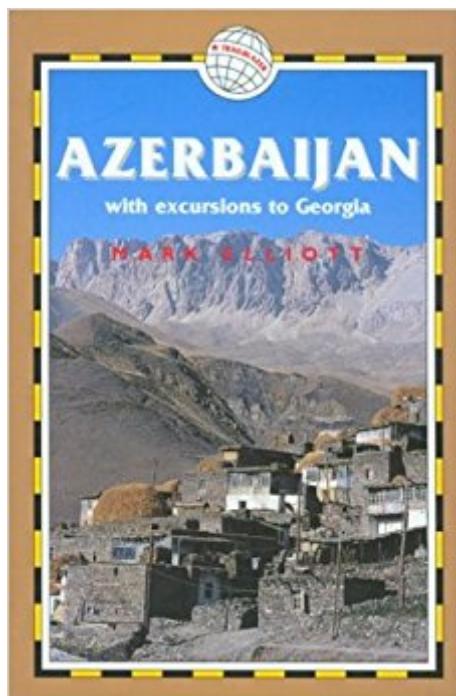


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Azerbaijan, 2nd: With Excursions To Georgia



Synopsis

"Trailblazer lives up to its name! A monumental task of coverage." The Shoestring Traveler The first English guide to this fascinating country, this book helps the traveler with the practical details of visiting Azerbaijan while also discussing its history and geography. Azerbaijan, a small country where few speak English, has been little traveled in the past, and very little is known about the area beyond the metropolitan capital of Baku and its oil production. That can change with this guide which fills those information gaps with advice for motorists, as well as facts regarding visas, lodging, eating and more. The book even includes native versions of commonly used words, essential in doing virtually anything in Azerbaijan. The guide uses hand drawn, detailed maps to help the reader with geography, but the maps are also invaluable in their inclusion of points of interest and comments on each site. The entire country is covered, with its desert moonscapes, tropical forests, volcanoes and snow-capped mountains and its history steeped in myth and magic. Azerbaijan's equally neglected neighbor, Georgia, is outlined in this guide as well, leading readers to a unique and exciting travel experience.

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Customer Reviews

'Recommended' The Independent on Sunday 'Very comprehensive coverage' Caspian Business News 'As the first modern guide to Azerbaijan it is a real tour de force... meticulous research and evident affection for Azerbaijan...' - Daily News

In 1999 the first edition of this book put Azerbaijan on the travel map. Packed with practical, cultural and culinary information as well as scores of maps it helped visitors and residents alike to make the most of this beautiful, varied and much under-estimated country. This guide provides practical information for all visitors and foreign residents on visas, getting to Azerbaijan, hotel and restaurant reviews, language and cultural tips, comprehensive information for motorists, landmarks at key turnings, gas stations, four-wheel drive routes, city transit plus bus and train services. This expanded, thoroughly-updated second edition includes ever wilder excursions into mystical mountains and reveals quaint old Pensar mosques, little-known 6th century church ruins, more bubbling mud volcanoes and bizarre natural flares in the land where even water catches fire. Find a field full of rusting soviet-era tanks and armored vehicles near Puta, take idyllic Caucasian hikes from the timeless village of Xinaliq, explore four-wheel drive routes to remote Allar and secret Sim. Even more off-beat curiosities are pinpointed including the Perigala "fairy castle", the hand tree in Goychay, a cowpie pyramid near Agdash and a grand disemboweled Lenin statue at Yevlax. You will find 182 maps and 176 diagrams, revised spellings better reflect the current Azerbaijani transliteration system plus excursion to neighboring Georgia.

If you're going to Azerbaijan you must have this book - in fact, several companies issue this book to their international staff here. It is extremely comprehensive and thorough and very accurate (though there have been some changes). As someone that has lived in Azerbaijan for the past year and a half, I continue to be impressed with this book and have relied on it many times. It is an essential guide to exploring Azerbaijan - a country that has a lot more to offer than most would expect. Buy this (and avoid the Lonely Planet one - it does a really bad job for Azerbaijan!).

This book has more information than you could possibly imagine. It was written for both tourist and foreigners living in Azerbaijan. Be sure to pre-read as much as you can and take it with you, as you will refer to it over and over again. It's loaded with maps and useful information about history and current events. As well as local customs and day-to-day information that is very handy for foreigners who are stationed in Baku and can't seem to find the shoe repair shop. It's an invaluable source of information.

I picked up this book shortly before I left to come to Azerbaijan for a year. It has been my constant companion while living in Baku (the capital) and in making countless excursions out of the city. Having been here almost a year, I can safely say it's the best travel book I've ever read for any

place. It is delightful to read and its author's warm and quirky sense of humor make it a constant source of entertainment. Perhaps the best recommendation for this book comes not just from the many expatriots who rely on it, but from the native Azeris who are astounded at how well Mark Elliott (native of UK) knows their country. Azeris are famous for assuming (perhaps rightly so) that the rest of the world knows nothing about their country. So, when Azeris recommend a book about their country, written by a foreigner, it is a pretty good endorsement. By far the best aspect of the book are the scores of maps and illustrations--all done by the author. As a trained geographer, I appreciate the excellent maps loaded (almost overloaded) with information. They are easy to read maps that make it difficult for the traveler to get lost. I am particularly impressed by how a map can simultaneously accurate and amusing! My favorite entry is the map of the fascinating town of Quba that includes "Old Men" sitting in the park. Damned if they weren't still sitting there. On another map, the author suggests looking for grey beards at the point where you're supposed to make a particular turn. Sure enough, there they were. Living in Baku, my family and often make use of Elliott's recommendations for restaurants. Of course restaurants come and go, but the information is nearly always accurate and detailed. My eight-year-old son and I have enjoyed taking his "scavenger hunt" for artistic architectural oddities in the city. I think we've now found all the objects in the second edition, but a third one is already on the drawing boards. Mark Elliott has a delightfully respectful attitude towards Azerbaijan and the Azeris. This is different from many travel books (Including the Lonely Planet Guide to the South Caucasus) which often take on a preachy attitude which tends to poke fun at the local cultures rather than respectfully describing them as Elliott does. In addition to being a good travel book, this book also is a worthy source of information on the country for anyone interested in learning about it. Having lived or traveled extensively in over fifty countries I can recommend this book most highly.

Before this book there was nothing written at all to help people travel around, enjoy and get a cultural understanding of this place. But thanks to this guide, a lot of us that thought Azerbaijan was going to be an oil-hardship posting have discovered that it's a really beautiful, varied and incredible place. The book is stuffed full of maps and little pictures. Even shows sketches of bus stops where you need to turn (there aren't many road signs) and has pages and pages of food words which has helped us venture into some of the non-expat restaurants. The title is Azerbaijan with Georgia, but the Georgia section is relatively small - again lots of maps, but seems to be included just for people going there on weekends from Baku. The Azerbaijan section - the overwhelming majority - is very comprehensive. I heard that a Lonely Planet book for the Caucasus is coming out later this year, but

it's hard to imagine that it would really compete - has to cover three countries. I would suggest that anyone coming to Baku / Azerbaijan seriously considers getting this 'bible' before they come - it is difficult to find a copy here in Azerbaijan.

Mark Elliott's guidebook is more than the bare-bones "here's where you can stay and eat" sort of volume. Sure, he gives you all of that necessary information (prices, best value, etc.) but the true worth of this book lies in the pleasure reading it. Let's face it: If you're not planning on visiting a certain destination, you'd never pick up, much less buy, a guidebook on that locale. But Mark writes very well, with a sure-handed knowledge of the history and cultures that he comes across, and effortlessly works it into his background descriptions. The book is actually fun to read, and I suspect that if Richard Burton (not the actor!) were alive today, he'd pretty much be writing the same sort of thing. Don't know if I myself will ever make it to Azerbaijan, but I came away from reading this book -- actually reading! -- feeling like it's one of the places I'd really like to see in this world. Baku or bust!

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