

INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY

INFO PACK

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1. About Georgia

Some facts about Georgia

Location: South Caucasus

Area: 69,700 sq. km

Bordering: Southeast - Azerbaijan, Southwest - Turkey, North - Russia, South - Armenia.

Geography: mountain ranges and hills comprise 80% of Georgian territory. The country is situated between 40 - 47 degrees E and 41 - 44 degrees N

Capital: Tbilisi (2002 population: 1,092,900)

Country code: + 995

Ethnic groups (2002 census): Georgians - 83.8%, Azeris - 6.5%, Armenians - 5.7%, Russians - 1.5%

State language: Georgian

National currency: Georgian Lari (GEL). For current exchange rates, please check with:

<https://www.nbg.gov.ge/index.php?m=2&lng=eng>

Religion: The great majority of the population belongs to the Georgian Orthodox Church, an Eastern (Greek) Orthodox church. Despite the huge influence of Christianity in Georgia they are very tolerant and respectful toward the representatives of other religions. The majority of Georgians in Ajara are Sunni Muslims, as are a few inhabitants of the Meskheti region. There are also Shiite Muslims among the Turkic inhabitants in the southeast (Azeris) and Sunni Muslims among the Abkhaz, Ossetians, and Greeks.

Climate: The climate is dry and continental in eastern Georgia with hot summers and mild winters. The climate in western Georgia and on the Black Sea coast is warm and semitropical.

- The range of average monthly temperatures in Summer is 23 °C
- The warmest average max/ high temperature is 35 °C in June, July & August
- The coolest average min/ low temperature is -7 °C in December & January
- The months with the driest weather are September, October, May, June, July and August.
- The months with the wettest weather are March & April.

Georgian Character: The Georgians are one of the most hospitable peoples in the world. They greatly respect their traditions and customs and believe that "guests are envoys of God". The Georgians treat

friendship to be of paramount importance and value it above all else. Georgians are a proud and freedom-loving people who highly value individuality.

Etiquette: Both men and women may kiss one another on the cheek in public places. Kissing on the lips and intimate hugging in public are not approved. Shaking hands is common, but women shake hands less often than men do. Either the person with higher social status or the woman is supposed to initiate greeting and define its form.

1.1. About Tbilisi

Founded in the 5th century by Vakhtang Gorgasali, the monarch of Georgia's precursor Kingdom of Iberia, Tbilisi has served, with various intervals, as Georgia's capital for nearly 1500 years and represents a significant industrial, social, and cultural center of the country.

Historically, Tbilisi has been home to peoples of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, though it is now overwhelmingly Eastern Orthodox Christian. Tbilisi's varied history is reflected in its architecture, which is a mix of medieval, classical, and Soviet structures. Notable tourist destinations include cathedrals like Sameba and Sioni, classical Freedom Square and Rustaveli Avenue, medieval Narikala Fortress, pseudo-Moorish Opera Theater, and the Georgian National Museum.

Sources:

<http://www.info-tbilisi.com/tbilisi/>

http://government.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=193

What to do in Tbilisi

- **Old Tbilisi.** Perhaps one of the most distinctive pleasures of walking through the Old City, with its old-style balconies, ancient churches, winding streets, and charming shops. Be prepared to see a number of eclectic sights, from the abandoned streetcar near Erekle Street to the art galleries of Chardini Street to the stunning modern art lining Sioni Street. Sub-neighborhoods include Sololaki, with its elegant restaurants and art nouveau architecture, Old Tbilisi proper - with sites ranging from churches to mosques to sulfur baths, Betelmi - housing two of the city's oldest churches and the stunning vistas of the Narikala Fortress - and Mtsasminda, just up the mountain from Rustaveli Avenues

- **Climb up to the Narikala Fortress.** The crumbling ruins of this once-great fortress, standing alongside the Upper Betelmi Churches and the stunning Botanical gardens, offer panoramic views of the city below. But be warned - it's quite a steep climb - and while the lack of bureaucracy and guard-rails can be liberating for some, you may want to pay extra care to watch your step. Now, the best way to visit is by aerial tramway, a exciting experience with stunning views of the city, only for 1 Lari. And you can enjoy the way down walking to the mosque and the baths. The usual metro card can be used.
- **Botanical garden.** National botanic garden of Georgia, lying in the Tsavkisis-Tskali Gorge near Narikala Fortres, has not only collection of plants, but is also a lovely park with with scenic waterfall which is great for a dip on a hot summers' day, although you need to avoid the guards. 1 GEL
- **Sulfur Baths.** The bath district is called Abanotubani and is on the south side of the Metekhi bridge. It is easy to spot with its small domes on ground level. There are several small baths offering different levels of comfort. The baths are relatively small, and you may have to wait for a pool to become available.
- **Turtle Lake** (Take a taxi or walk up from Saburtalo). This lake is located in the hilly outskirts of Tbilisi. A popular weekend getaway for families, the lake offers pedal-boat rentals as well as swimming (deckchairs optional) for reasonable prices (swimming entry, without deckchair, is about 3 Lari). Allright for a hot summer day, and offering views of both the mountains and the city below. Snackbars, restaurants and fruit cocktail shakers are available overlooking the lake.
- **Lake Lisi.** Much further out than Turtle Lake (a cab will set you back about 10-15 lari each way), Lake Lisi is much larger and more remote, with long, winding mountain walks surrounding the lake.

2. Choosing IBSU: Getting started

2.1. Eligibility

With the purpose of facilitation of mobility of high-school graduates/graduate student candidates and students, the study at the higher educational institutions of Georgia without passing unified national examinations/general graduate examinations, in accordance with the rules and the terms defined by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, is allowed to:

1. high-school graduates, citizens of foreign countries or without citizenship who received complete general education or its equivalent abroad;
2. high-school graduates, Georgian citizens who received complete general education abroad or its equivalent and the last two years of complete general education had studied abroad;
3. graduate students who received relevant certificates of completion of higher education abroad;
4. students who studied/are currently studying and have received credits abroad in higher educational institutions recognized by the legislation of the host countries.
5. graduate students who have enrolled at the higher educational institutions by Article 52 para 3 of the Law of Georgia “On Higher Education”;

Order №224/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia (December 29, 2011) approved “The Rule for submission and review of the documents required for high-school graduates/graduate students/students with the purpose of study in the higher education institutions of Georgia without passing uniform national entrance/general graduate examinations”.

The persons listed above have the right to submit an application to the legal entity of public law – National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement of Georgia.

For more information about the guidelines and procedures of admission, please visit:

<http://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=1131&lang=geo>.

2.2. Rules and Procedures for Prospective Students

In addition to application submitted to NCEQE, applicants should apply for a program of their choice to IBSU. Therefore, we suggest you to consult with university's international relations department until you submit an application to NCEQE. Please see IBSU_R03F60 for admission requirements.

2.3. Practical Information

2.3.1. Visa Information For Foreign Citizens

For up to date information: <https://www.geoconsul.gov.ge/en/visaInformation>

2.3.2. Accommodation

Students, scholars and visitors to IBSU will have to seek housing off-campus. There is no dorm provided by the University at this time. Many students prefer to find shared housing close to campus in Didi Dighomi, Dighomi, Didube, Isani and Varketili. Housing close to IBSU campuses can take a few days to arrange, particularly in September and January. It is best to arrive 1-2 weeks before classes start to allow time to look for suitable accommodation. Renting a room in Tbilisi may run up to 600\$ in the center of the city. Suburbs cost cheaper, possibly around \$500, the rent fees may be less in the neighboring areas of the Business Management Faculty Campus of IBSU, which is built on the Kakheti Highway, on the way to Tbilisi International Airport.

There are many rent agents around. Yashar knows Turkish, for instance: +995 557 96 79 67

There is a private hostel (Istanbul): mobile: +995 555 40 38 72; work: +995 322 36 30 13

Another hostel: +995 592 33 21 21 (Abdurrezzak); +995 557 29 05 95 (Nino)

2.3.3. Transportation

There is an underground train (metro) and municipal buses network that connects most major areas around the city of Tbilisi. The city is also serviced by a network of mini buses that drive set routes around Tbilisi. Taxis are one of the best ways of getting around the immediate city, as they can be found almost anywhere. Fares are very affordable, and should never cost more than a few dollars USD.

The bus and subway fare is paid via control-cash devices. Paying straight to the driver is banned. Every passenger is using the travelling card "Metromoney" at a discount. The traveling cards are sold in every subway stations. The passenger pays 2 GEL and recharges the card according to the desired amount (0.50

GEL at least). The travelling card enables you to travel as by bus and minibus so by subway. Mini bus rides within Tbilisi are 80 tetri¹ (0.80 GEL) and the Tbilisi Metro (underground) as well as city buses cost 50 tetri per ride.

First route fee by bus and subway is 50 tetri (within 1.5 hours you may use as many routes as you wish, there will not be extra fee charged). After an hour and a half there will be a 50 tetri cut again.

2.3.3.1. Subway fare (Metro)

Tbilisi has a two-line metro system, which operates 06:00-23:59.

All signs inside the metro are in Georgian and English. Station names are announced in both English and Georgian as well. There are a few system maps in carriages, usually located above one of the carriage doors. spoken. Take a bilingual map with you if you are not proficient with the local alphabet/pronunciation.

A trip with the metro and bus system in Tbilisi costs GEL0.50, but you will have to buy a Metromani card (GEL2) at the counter.

2.3.3.2. Bus

City buses are yellow, and come in various sizes. The bus number and a description of the route are usually listed on signs in the bus windows, but only in Georgian. The city recently installed electronic arrival boards, with reasonably accurate estimated arrival times, at bus stops on major roads. The signs are in English and Georgian, and display the bus number, minutes to arrival, and destination.

Board through any door you like, usually the double doors in the middle are easiest. A journey costs GEL0.50, and exact change is required if you don't have a touch card (which can be purchased at metro stations). If you have a Metromani card, touch it on the top of the card machines and make sure you wait for a paper ticket to be issued. Hold onto the ticket you receive on the bus; you will need to present it to the yellow-shirted ticket checkers.

2.3.3.3. Transportation to IBSU Campuses

IBSU Dighomi Campus, which is located in the Davit Aghmashenebeli Alley 13 km, #2, Tbilisi, is close to the Tbilisi Mall.

¹ 100 Tetri = 1 GEL

IBSU New Campus, which is located on Kakheti Highway is close to Tbilisi International Airport.

DIGHOMI CAMPUS			NEW CAMPUS ON KAKHETI HIGHWAY		
BUS	#	Route	BUS	#	Route
	38	Didube Metro Station – Agrarian University		37	Isani Metro Station – Tbilisi International Airport
	84	Station Square – Small Dighomi			
MINIBUS	44	Ilia Chavchavadze Str. - Tbilisi Mall	MINIBUS	152	Station Square – Ltd “Lilo Mall”
	51	Politkovskaia Str. – Tbilisi Mall		154	Samgori Metro Station – Kakheti Highway Bazaar
	116	Akhmeteli Metro Station – Tbilisi Mall		221	Station Square – Lilo Settlement
	117	Vazisubani 1 st Micro Region – Tbilisi Mall			

2.3.4. Food in Georgia

Georgian food includes a surprising number of unique and delicious dishes, and this should come as no surprise as Georgians are traditionally known for being as passionate about food as they are about their guests. Depending on where and what you would like to eat, the daily catering can range between 10 and 20 USD in Tbilisi.

For some prices of the products please refer to the following website: http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/city_result.jsp?country=Georgia&city=Tbilisi

Food you have to try for sure:

- Khinkhali - Georgian dumpling filled with either meat, potatoes, mushrooms, etc. Do **not** eat the doughy pinched part (it's seen as very rude and cheap), but do use it to hold up the khinkali whilst you eat from the bottom (and be sure to catch all the gravy from the meat khinkali). The pinched part is also used to keep count of how many khinkhali are eaten by each person.
- Khachapuri - Georgian circular bread often filled with cheese.
- Mtsvadi - grilled skewered meat.
- Kababi - chopped and seasoned meat which is grilled on a skewer. Often served wrapped in a thin flat bread in Georgia.

2.3.5. Stay safe

Tbilisi is very safe after the Rose Revolution. The police system was reformed completely and the recent polls show that public's trust in police shifted from nearly 10% to 88%. The police are usually quick to respond, though usually only Georgian and Russian are spoken.

While walking is generally fine, even for solo women, it makes sense to take a bus or taxi home at night. Use common sense and big-city awareness. Night time at the clubs and bars are safe, and taxi service is safe as long as it's a company taxi like "009" or others. The public bus is also a good, safe option for 0.50 lari.

Police Tel: 022. or 112 from Mobiles.

Ambulance tel: 022 or 033 or 031.

2.3.6. Contact

There are 3 GSM operators of mobile phone service:

- Magticom: provides 3G
- Geocell: provides 3G, covers all of Georgia, packet data deals available for prepaid. 2 GEL for the SIM, 10 GEL for 1 GB of data. There is a Geocell office in the Marjanishvili metro station.
- Beeline: Russian company, the cheapest of all sim cards, but does not get the best reception in some areas. buy a sim card at the office on Rustaveli Avenue or Ortachala international bus station (help-line number for Beeline mobile: 110101 from Georgia).

2.3.7. Medical Facilities

Tbilisi is home to the majority of Georgia's large hospitals. Medical institutions, staffed with some English speaking doctors, include MediClub Georgia, IMSS (there are also clinics in Poti and Batumi), David Tatishvili Medical Centre, Oxford Medical Georgia and Interclinic.

Please visit Tbilisi Municipal Portal for the list and contact of the hospitals in Tbilisi:

http://www.tbilisi.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=4258

2.3.8. Drugstores

Wide range of products, possibility of selecting the form of payment and ordering, policy of discounts, and working schedule for 24/7 drugstores correspond to requirements of consumers as much as possible.

GPC

Tel: (+995 32) 2940740

<http://www.gpc.ge/>

AVERSI

Tel: (+99532) 2967227

<http://www.aversi.ge/>

PEOPLES PHARMACY

Tel: (+995 32) 2485959

<http://www.publicpharmacy.ge>

2.3.9. Banks

TBC Bank:

7, Marjanishvili St. 0102 Tbilisi

Tel: (995 32) 2272 727; Fax: (995 32) 2772 774

Email: info@tbcbank.com.ge ; Website: www.tbcbank.com.ge

Bank of Georgia:

29a Gagarin Str. Tbilisi 0160, Georgia

Tel: (995 32) 2444 444

Email: customerservice@bog.ge ; Website: www.bankofgeorgia.ge

Liberty Bank:

74 Chavchavadze Ave 0162 Tbilisi

Tel: (995 32) 2555 500

Ziraat Bank - Tbilisi Branch

148 Agmashenebeli Ave 0164 Tbilisi

Tel: (995 32) 2943 714; Fax: (995 32) 2943 078

Email: tbilisi@ziraatbank.ge; Website: www.ziraatbank.com.tr

3. Academic Calendar

The academic year at IBSU consists of two semesters: Fall (Autumn) and Spring. The exact dates for the start and end of each semester may vary from year to year (<http://www.ibsu.edu.ge/Content.aspx?ID=11>).

4. Programs

Programs and the tuition fees are available from the link below:

<http://www.ibsu.edu.ge/en/index.php/en/study/admissions/tuition-fees>

5. Contact

For further information, please contact International Relations Office of International Black Sea University.

Address: 2, David Aghmashenebeli Alley, 13th km, 0131, Tbilisi, Georgia (Republic of)

Phone: (+99532) 2595005/ Ext. number: 133

Email: iro@ibsu.edu.ge