

## **Georgia**

### **Facts and Statistics**

**Location:** Southwestern Asia, bordering the Black Sea, between Turkey and Russia

**Capital:** T'bilisi

**Climate:** warm and pleasant; Mediterranean-like on Black Sea coast

**Population:** 4,661,473 (July 2006 est.)

**Ethnic Make-up:** Georgian 83.8%, Azeri 6.5%, Armenian 5.7%, Russian 1.5%, other 2.5% (2002 census)

**Religion:** Orthodox Christian 83.9%, Muslim 9.9%, Armenian-Gregorian 3.9%, Catholic 0.8%, other 0.8%, none 0.7% (2002 census)

**Government:** Republic

### **Language in Georgia**

Georgian is the primary language of about 3.9 million people in Georgia itself (83% of the population) and of another 500,000 abroad (in countries such as Turkey, Iran, Russia, USA and Europe). It is the literary language for all ethnographic groups of Georgian people, especially those who speak other South Caucasian languages (or Kartvelian languages): Svans, Megrelians, and the Laz. Gruzinic, or "Kivruli", sometimes considered a separate Jewish language, is spoken by an additional 20,000 in Georgia and 65,000 elsewhere (primarily 60,000 in Israel).

### **Georgian Society and Culture**

#### **Religion in Georgia**

- o Most Georgians belong to the Georgian Orthodox (65%), Russian Orthodox (10%) or Armenian Apostolic (8%) churches.
- o Although religion does not overtly impact the culture, behavior or etiquette, the values do on a subtle level appear in outlook and also areas such as treatment of guests.

#### **Hospitality**

- o Warm hospitality a very Georgian trait.
- o Guests are seen as a gift and foreigners are therefore guests of the country.
- o Expect to be invited to a home for a meal and try to take up the offer.
- o The supra is a large dinner party involving many toasts. The toastmaster or "tamada" selects people to make long toasts and for special toasts, a horn full of wine is passed around the table.
- o Beer is only used to toast the enemy! So don't toast with beer.

#### **Hierarchy**

- o Georgia is a hierarchical society.
- o Age, position and power usually earn respect.
- o Elders are generally held in high esteem and thus the reason they are introduced first when greeting.
- o Along with respect comes responsibility and those at the top of the hierarchy (whether the head of a household or business) will be expected make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.