Dear Alumni and Friends,

Booklets have been written about Georgian hospitality and the abundance and savor of its foods and wines. As a matter of fact, our Study Leader, Professor Darra Goldstein, authored one of the best of them, *The Georgian Feast: The Vibrant Culture and Savory Food of the Republic of Georgia*. She has learned that Georgians believe travelers are sent by God and treated accordingly. An ancient country filled with fruitful valleys and saw-toothed mountains, Georgia is famed for its culinary traditions and rumored to be the place where wine originated. Its benevolent climate, fertile soils and faithful stewards produce the fruits, flowers, grains, nuts and herbs of the Mediterranean, and its people have long experience combining and appreciating them.

Learn the secrets of chefs and grandmothers with visits to bakeries, regional cooking demonstrations, and Memory Foods, traditional Georgian dishes flavored with vanilla, figs, and honey from the local apiary. En route there are a few days each are more delicious than the last.

Sincerely,

Bob Behr
Coordinator, Williams College Alumni Travel-Study Program

P.S. - For more information, please call the Williams College Alumni Travel-Study Program at (413) 597-4011 or email RBehr@Williams.edu.
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Learn the secrets of chefs and grandmothers with visits to bakeries, regional cooking demonstrations and hands-on classes. Travel down back roads and up mountain passes, sampling cheeses, local honey, varietal wines, crusty breads baked in clay ovens, and savory chopped meats sauced with walnuts and figs. Be a guest at a “Georgian Table,” a celebratory feast where the dishes are stacked three deep and each is more delicious than the last.

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**Culture and Cuisine of Bountiful Georgia**

with Professor Darra Goldstein

August 29-September 8, 2012
Tour Highlights
- Experience the overflowing wine and sumptuous cuisine at a “Georgian Table” feast.
- Visit with a local family in Georgia’s winemaking heartland, Kakheti, hearing their music and tasting their homemade wine.
- Experience a hands-on cooking class of traditional Georgian dishes.
- Observe vodka distillation, bread baking and the process of making churchkhela, the typical Georgian sweet made from grape juice and walnuts.
- Sample the naturally fermented wines at the Pheasant’s Tears Winery.
- Enjoy lectures on Imeretian culture and cuisine by the hostess of your guesthouse.

August 29-31
Tbilisi
Depart the U.S. on the 29th and arrive late on the 30th. Check in to the hotel for overnight and begin touring on the morning of the 31st. Tour the 16th-century Metekhi Church of the Virgin, visit Tbilisi’s sulfur baths and stroll Rustaveli Avenue, noticing the elaborately carved wooden balconies. Explore the Georgian National Museum with its 1.7 million-year-old hominin skull. Attend a champagne reception at the House Museum of influential artist Elena Akhmediani, enjoy Prof. Darra Goldstein’s introductory lecture on Georgian history—the first of several—and experience your first Georgian feast. Marriott Courtyard Hotel (B, L, D)

September 1
Tbilisi • drive to Signagi
Drive to Kakheti, Georgia’s wine country. In the beautiful hill town of Signagi, sample some ancient varietals at Pheasants’ Tears Winery. Visit the cellars where the wines are macerated in huge ceramic vessels called qvevri. Enjoy a feast of khachapuri (cheese-stuffed bread) roasted over grape vines with singing, dancing and a traditional zakuska to lead the toast. Piro mania Hotel (B, L, D)

September 2
Tbilisi • drive to Dzalisi
On the way to Tbilisi, observe vodka distillation, bread baking and the process of making churchkhela, the typical Georgian sweet. Arrive in Tsinandali Village and the restored family estate of Alexander Chavchavadze, one of the founders of the first and foremost winery in the country. Visit a winery on the estate and enjoy lunch with musical entertainment and a private wine tasting. Marriott Courtyard Hotel (B, L)

September 3
Tbilisi • drive to Gudauri via Mtskheta, Dzalisi and Ananuri
Set off for Gudauri on the scenic Georgian Military Highway. Discover UNESCO-listed Mtskheta, capital of the early kingdom of Iberia and converse with an archaeologist at Dzalisi archaeological site. Hotel Sport Club Gudauri (B, L, D)

September 4
Gudauri • day trip to Kazbegi
Kazbegi, at over 6,000 feet, is a small alpine village near the Caucasus’ highest peak, Mt Kazbek. Enjoy lunch in a private home and participate in making khinkali, juicy dumplings filled with a mixture of ground mutton and pork. Hotel Sport Club Gudauri (B, L, D)

September 5
Gudauri • drive to Kutaisi via Uplistsikhe and Gori
Discover the cave town of Uplistsikhe, once one of the most important towns along the trade route linking Byzantium with India and China. Stop to explore Gori, Stalin’s hometown, before continuing to Kutaisi, capital of the Imereti region. Georgia’s favorite snack, khachapuri, is believed to have originated here. Dine with local hosts renowned for their hospitality and humor. Lali’s Guesthouse (B, L, D)

September 6
Kutaisi
Visit different Imeretian villages today, sampling regional dishes, including Imereti cheese-stuffed khachapuri, said to be the “original” khachapuri. Enjoy a hands-on cooking class followed by a lunch that includes your culinary creations. This evening, your hostess, Lali, will give a lecture on Imeretian culture and food. Lali’s Guesthouse (B, L, D)

September 7-8
Kutaisi • drive to Tbilisi
Visit UNESCO-listed Gelati Monastery, representing the flowering of art and architecture in Georgia’s “Golden Age,” and 11th century domed Bagrati Cathedral. Stop on route to Tbilisi at the home of a villager to taste the local honey. On your last night in Tbilisi, enjoy a farewell dinner, to toast the successful completion of your journey, as renowned Georgian singers perform. Tbilisi Marriott Courtyard (B, L, D)

Land Program Rate: .................................................. $4,495
(per person land tour based on double occupancy)

Single Supplement: ................................................ $795

Included: All accommodation, hotel taxes • Most meals, as noted on the itinerary • Arrival/departure transfers for passengers arriving/departing on scheduled start/end days • All land transportation per itinerary by private motor coach • Special cultural events, concerts and extensive sightseeing, including entrance fees • Welcome reception and farewell dinner • Services of a tour manager throughout the land program • Guides to tour manager; guides, drivers • Baggage handling • Comprehensive pre-departure packet • Culture and Cuisine lecture series by Professor Darra Goldstein of Williams

Not Included: Travel insurance • Roundtrip international airfare from/to your home city; MIR can assist you with reservations • Passport and visa fees • Food, beverages not included in group meals • Personal items such as telephone calls, alcohol, laundry, excess baggage fees • Single supplement

Air Arrangements: Program rates do not include international airfare. Because there are a number of flight options available, there is no group flight for this program. Information on recommended flight itinerary will be sent by our tour operator upon confirmation.

What To Expect: This trip is moderately active due to the substantial distances covered and the extensive walking and stair climbing required. To stop the full rewards of this adventure, travelers must be able to walk at least a mile a day; flexibility and a willingness to accept local standards of amenities and services are highly recommended as well.

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- Sample the naturally fermented wines at the Pheasants’ Tears Winery in Signagi.
- Join a family making their own khinkali, juicy meat-filled dumplings, in mountainous Kazbegi Village.
- Enjoy lectures on Imeretian culture and cuisine by the hostess of your guesthouse.

### August 29-31

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**August 29-September 8, 2012**

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**Study Leader:**

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