Georgia

Location

Georgia is a country in Eurasia flanked by the Black Sea and Russia. Formed from the former USSR, they achieved independence in 1991.

Geography

Georgia is a mainly mountainous country separated into eastern and western Georgia by the Likhi Range. Its borders are made by The Greater Caucasus Mountain range. The landscape in western Georgia ranges from temperate forests to swamp lands with Glaciers in the southern areas, with over 40% of Georgia’s territory consisting of forests. Eastern Georgia is quite different. Its much drier with much of the land deforested or simply too dry for many trees, in the low river plain. In the higher territory of western Georgia much of the land is mainly deciduous forest.

Climate

Like the landscape, Georgia’s climate is varied depending on what side of the Likhi Range you are on but all of Georgia is considered sub-tropical. The Caucasus Mountains moderate the climate protecting it from the extreme cold and extreme heat from the south and the north. Much of Western Georgia
experiences a lot of precipitation throughout the year caused by the moisture from the Black Sea. Eastern Georgia experiences less rainfall during the spring and summer months when the area is influenced by the Asian air masses from the East. In the autumn and winter months moisture is carried from the Black Sea. Due to variations in altitude, temperature is varied all over the country from warm in the low lands to freezing in the area’s of high elevations.

**History**

Georgia was a cradle for the beginning of the human race. Some of the oldest remnants of *Homo Erctius* have been found here, due to surrounding mountains making Georgia’s mild climate and its land fertile. Georgia was the site of some of the earliest civilization and political advancements.

**Current Events**

Although Georgia is now a free country, there is still quite a bit of fighting going on to keep it that way. Georgia has been involved in hostilities with the neighboring country of Abkhazia. Many soldiers were killed but in 1995 they signed a treaty which was a milestone in peace between Georgia and its surrounding Russian countries. Unfortunately in 2000, the tension started building as Russia and other bordering countries began fighting about criminal refugees fleeing to Georgia because of the anti-death penalty law. In 2002,
Georgia began an anti-terrorist action and many of the fugitives were rounded up and extradited to their country for prosecutions.

**Population**

There are currently (2006) ~4,677,401 people residing in Georgia. Like most of the world, women outnumber men but not by much. This is mostly due to a longer life expectancy of females. Males usually don’t live past 80, whereas, women tend to live almost 10 years longer. The birth rate of Georgia is very small and has been declining in the past 5 years. Most of the residents are native-born Georgians and a very small fraction of them are Russian which is surprising considering their proximity to one another.

**Currency**

: Lari (GEL)

**Education**

The Georgian government began a program to help educate their people called EDUCATION FOR ALL in 1999 and aids family in paying for education and
helps build schools in many communities. Ninety nine percent of Georgians are literate and there are many universities, most revolving around science and technical fields.

**Language**

The official language of Georgia is Georgian with over 71% speaking it, and using the Mxedruli alphabet.

**Religion**

There is freedom of religion in Georgia and Christianity was introduced very early in Georgian society. Many Georgians have adopted Christianity into their own religion. Over 65% of the population claim Georgian Orthodox as their religion although there is no national religion.

**Agriculture**

Georgia is a mainly agricultural country due to the warm, moist weather. They grow a variety of citrus fruits. The mountainous terrain and acidic soils make most of Georgia’s land very suitable for grapes and vineyards. Much of Georgia’s
land is forested and much of it is used to grow hazel nuts. The long warm seasons and huge amounts of rainfall make this possible along with the cultivation of tea.

**Trade**

Since Georgia has such fertile land, it produces more than they need so they export much of what they produce along with alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages produced from their fruits. Mining magnesium and copper is a very big part of Georgia’s trade. Most of their energy needs are met by the importation of oil and natural gas from other countries so, like most of the world they too are having an energy crisis.

**Food**

Georgia’s food is very Mediterranean using many spices and lots of fresh meats and vegetables. Early settlers to this area were mainly vegetarians. Although Georgia was a very poor country after its independence, many Georgians kept their traditional way of cooking supplementing many of the meats with vegetables and enhancing the flavors with fresh herbs and fresh ingredients.
Georgia’s main Landmarks consist of Castles and monasteries.

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