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GEORGIA'S 365-DAY VISA-FREE STAY

What Digital Nomads and Expat Investors Need to Know

GEORGIA REPORT

July 2026

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Summary

Georgia does not actually have a "365 day visa." What it has is a visa free entry policy. Citizens of 98 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, all of the EU and EEA, Canada, Australia, and Japan can enter Georgia with nothing more than a valid passport and stay for up to one full year. There is no application, no fee, and no income requirement. When that year is up, leaving the country and legally re-entering resets the clock, which is why "border runs" have become common practice among long term nomads.

This is a separate thing from the "Remotely from Georgia" program that some people still ask about. That was a COVID era workaround from 2020, and it is now essentially defunct. Most nomads never need it, since the standard visa free year is already more generous.

It is also important to note that Georgia is tightening its rules. **Overstay fines jumped sharply in late 2025, a new database now tracks illegal presence in the country, travel insurance became mandatory at the start of 2026, and a new work permit system rolled out in 2026 as well.** All of this is unfolding against a backdrop of real political instability in Georgia, along with sanctions from the EU and US on the ruling party. None of this changes the core opportunity, but it does mean the "just fly in and figure it out" era is coming to an end.

Who Qualifies and How It Works

The list of eligible countries is set by government ordinance, and it is updated periodically. It was most recently in February 2026. **The official Georgian legal text says that citizens of the listed countries "may enter and stay in Georgia without visa for one full year."**

As of the most recent update, 98 countries qualify, including every EU and EEA country, the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Israel, and Ukraine, among others. Because this list can change at any time, anyone planning a trip should confirm their specific passport is still covered by checking the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website directly, rather than relying on older blog posts or outdated guides (including this one).

Not everyone gets the full year. Citizens of countries like India, China, Nigeria, and Pakistan are not on the open list. Some of these travelers can still get 90 days visa free if they already hold a valid US, UK, Schengen, or GCC visa, though as of May 2025 that option has got stricter. These countries now require a multiple entry visa or a residence permit valid for at least a year.

For everyone who does qualify, the process is simple and straightforward. There is no application and no minimum income to prove. Officers at the border may ask about onward travel, accommodation, or funds, but this is discretionary rather than required. The one real new requirement, in effect since January 1, 2026, is **travel medical insurance**. Every entrant now needs coverage of at least **30,000 GEL**

(~\$11,400/~€10,000) for the length of their stay. This is confirmed by the US Embassy in Georgia, and while enforcement at the border has reportedly been inconsistent so far, it is now the law, and the fine for not having it has been reported at around 300 GEL.

The Rules of the 365 Day Clock

The 365 days is counted per entry, not per calendar year and not on a rolling basis. The day you cross the border is day one, and you get a fresh year from that point. This is different from the Schengen Zone's 90 out of 180-day rule. Confusing the two leads people to miscalculate how long they can actually stay.

Leaving and re-entering resets the clock, and there is no required minimum time spent outside the country. In practice, this means people can cross into Armenia, get their passport stamped, turn around, and come right back, sometimes in the same day. The most common route is Tbilisi to the Sadakhlo border crossing into Armenia, a round trip of about four to five hours. Crossings into Turkey near Batumi or into Azerbaijan work as alternatives. Once the year is up, there is no automatic extension. A traveler either leaves and re-enters to start a new year or applies for a residence permit.

Enforcement has changed the most in recent years. Enforcement used to be extremely relaxed, but this is **no longer the case**. An illegal presence database was launched in October 2025 to track foreign nationals, and overstay penalties increased dramatically the same month. The old fines, which were only a few hundred GEL with no entry ban attached, have been replaced with fines in the range of 1,000–3,000 GEL, along with entry bans that can run anywhere from six months up to several years depending on how long the overstay lasted. Two well-known relocation law firms report slightly different cutoffs for exactly where each tier begins, but they agree on the fine amounts. The takeaway for anyone planning to stay long term is simple: overstaying is no longer a minor inconvenience you pay your way out of. **Overstaying carries real risk to future entry.**

What You Can and Cannot Do

On the visa free stay, you can work remotely for a foreign employer or foreign clients without needing a work permit, since this falls outside any active enforcement against genuine remote work. You can open a bank account with just your passport, no residency required. Bank of Georgia and TBC are the two of the most popular options. You can buy residential or commercial property with essentially the same rights as a Georgian citizen, though agricultural land is restricted and generally requires either a Georgian LLC or government approval. You can register a business, including a simple Individual Entrepreneur structure, often in about a day at a local Public Service Hall. You can also drive on a foreign license, valid for one year from your last entry, meaning a border run resets this too.

What you cannot do is take a job directly with a Georgian employer without a work or residence permit, and you generally cannot access public healthcare or other public services, since those are reserved for

residents. Time spent on the visa free stay also does not count toward permanent residency. Only time spent on an actual residence permit counts toward that, and it typically takes six to ten years.

One more change worth flagging for 2026: a new "Right to Work" labor permit regime has taken effect, and it applies not just to foreigners employed by Georgian companies but also to self-employed foreigners and those using the Individual Entrepreneur structure. The exact effective date and scope for people doing pure foreign source remote work is still being clarified, but this is a real and evolving change that affects freelancers who rely on the Individual Entrepreneur setup, not just people taking local jobs.

Taxes: The Part Most People Ignore

You become a tax resident in Georgia once you spend 183 or more days in the country within a twelve-month period. Georgia uses a territorial tax system, meaning residents are only taxed on income sourced within Georgia. Genuinely foreign sourced income is exempt, which includes foreign dividends, interest, and capital gains.

It is important to be clear about one of the biggest myths circulating online right now. Many people assume that if they are physically in Georgia but working remotely for a foreign company and getting paid into a foreign bank account, that income counts as foreign and is therefore tax free. **This is false.** Under Georgian tax law, work physically performed while physically in Georgia counts as Georgian source income, regardless of where the client is based or where the payment lands. Getting this wrong can expose someone to the standard 20% tax rate.

However, the solution that most freelancers and nomads actually use is registering as an **Individual Entrepreneur** and applying for **Small Business Status**. This brings the tax rate down to just 1% on turnover, up to a threshold of 500,000 GEL (around \$190,000 US/€150,000). Turnover above that is taxed at 3% and exceeding the cap for two consecutive years results in automatic loss of Small Business Status. Below 30,000 GEL in turnover, an even lower Micro Business Status brings the rate to zero. This structure does come with some conditions. Monthly declarations are required, certain regulated professions like law and medicine are excluded, and certain income types such as rent, capital gains, and dividends are always taxed at standard rates regardless of business status.

For investors specifically, Georgia offers no tax on foreign dividends, interest, or capital gains for residents, no capital gains tax on crypto, an Estonian-style corporate tax system where retained earnings are untaxed and only distributed profits face a 15% rate, and a Virtual Zone status offering a 0% profit tax for IT export companies. There is also a High Net Worth Individual tax residency route that does not require the standard 183 day physical presence test, for those meeting asset or income thresholds.

One important note: **Georgian banks participate in the Common Reporting Standard and report account information to a person's country of tax residency.** US citizens in particular remain taxed on worldwide income no matter where they live. Anyone taking this seriously should properly deregister

from their home country's tax system and consider a one-time consultation with a cross-border tax professional, which typically runs a few hundred dollars.

Living in Georgia: Cost and Quality of Life

Georgia is consistently described as one of the easiest countries in the world to relocate to. Banking is straightforward, business registration is fast, and the one-year stay removes most of the usual immigration stress.

However, it is no longer a place where you can go and live well on just \$500 a month as it was a decade ago. An influx of Russian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian residents since 2022 has pushed rents up significantly in popular parts of Tbilisi, though prices did soften somewhat in 2025. A realistic solo budget now requires around \$800–\$1500 a month depending on comfort level, with a one bedroom apartment in central Tbilisi running \$700.

People consistently praise the food, the wine, the hospitality, and the access to nature, along with a genuinely active nomad social scene centered around neighborhoods like Vera and Vake and the diverse range of coworking spaces available. Some common complaints include chaotic traffic and poor pedestrian infrastructure, air pollution in Tbilisi, inconsistent cafe Wi-Fi, and grey winters with unreliable heating in some buildings.

Tbilisi remains the main hub for infrastructure and social life, while Batumi on the Black Sea coast offers a cheaper, quieter, more resort-style alternative, and Kutaisi appeals to budget travelers thanks to cheap flights.

The Political Context

Since the October 2024 parliamentary election, Georgia has been in a state of sustained political tension. The ruling party's claimed victory has not been recognized by the EU, and the government's decision to suspend EU accession talks triggered mass protests that continued for over a year. In response, the US has sanctioned a key figure tied to the ruling party, and both the UK and EU have sanctioned other officials. The EU also suspended visa free travel for Georgian diplomats and officials starting in March 2026.

For the average tourist or nomad, day to day life in Tbilisi remains safe and largely unaffected. But there have been reported cases of foreigners being denied entry in connection with the immigration crackdown, particularly those linked to protest activity, and the broader geopolitical drift away from the EU and toward Russia and China introduces real policy uncertainty. Anyone planning to build a long-term base in Georgia should keep an eye on how this develops.

Conclusion

Georgia's visa free year remains one of the most generous and low friction options available to remote workers and digital nomads anywhere in the world. Ninety-eight nationalities can show up with just a passport and stay for a full year, no paperwork required. But 2025 and 2026 mark a serious shift away from the loosely enforced, anything goes era of the past. Mandatory insurance, a tracking database, steep overstay penalties, and a new work permit regime are all signs that the country is professionalizing its immigration system. Although the country has become stricter, this really just means anyone relying on this pathway should base their stay with the current rules in mind rather than on outdated advice. They should also consider a professional cross-border tax consultation as a worthwhile investment rather than an unnecessary expense.

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