



Common borders. Common solutions.

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISTIC ROUTES

IN THE SOUTH-EAST REGION

Project “Development of Sustainable Cultural Tourism
in the Black Sea Basin - CULTOUR-BSB”, eMS code BSB -117

Common borders. Common solutions.

04



Paths of faith in Georgia

Religious objects of Georgia

Contents

Introduction	5
Technical features	6
Part I - Capital of Georgia - Tbilisi and Old Capital – Mtskheta	7
Tbilisi.....	8
Tbilisi hiking route map	9
Saint Trinity Cathedral	10
Metekhi's Mother Mary's namesake Church	11
Narikalas Saint Nicholas Church	12
Tbilisi Jumah Mosque - a Muslim shrine	13
Surfgevorqi Gregorian Church	14
Tbilisi Synagogue	15
Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin.....	16
Sioni Cathedral Church	17
Saint Alexandre Nevel Church.....	18
Mtatsminda Father Daviti Church	19
Part II - Religious sites of Mtskheta-Mtianeti region of Georgia	20
Mtskheta.....	21
Mtskheta route map	22
Svetitskhoveli Cathedral	23
Antioqia Church	24
Samtavro St. Nino's Monastery.....	25
Shio Cave Monastery Complex	26
Jvari monastery	27
Zedazeni Monastery	28
Tbilisi – Stepantsminda route map	29
Tbilisi – Stepantsminda.....	30
Tsiliani Cathedral of the Mother of God	31
Ananuri Architectural Monastery Complex.....	32
Gergeti Trinity Church.....	33
Dariali monastery complex	34
Part III - Religious sites of Eastern Georgia	35
Historical Kakheti.....	36
Map of the I day route in Kakheti	37
David Gareja - Monastery Sculpted in a Cliffside	38
Sighnaghi	39
Map of the II day route in Kakheti	40
Bodbe St. Nino Mothers' Monastery	41

Nekresi Monastery.....	42
Gremi Monastery	43
Map of the III day route in Kakheti	44
Alaverdi Monastery	45
Ikalto Monastery	46
Old Shuamta Monastery	47
New Shuamta Khakhuli Mother of God Monastery	48
Martkopi Divine Monastery	49
Part IV - Religious sites in the south of Georgia	50
Map of the route in Samtskhe-Javakheti region	51
Road from Tbilisi to Akhaltsikhe.....	52
Uplistsikhe cliffside town.....	53
Green Monastery - the same monastery of St. George of Chitakhevi	54
Rabat Castle – Complex.....	55
Vardzia monastic ensemble.....	56
Vani Boilers/Pots	57
Part V - Religious sites in the western regions of Georgia.....	58
Map of the route to Kutaisi	59
Route of Western Georgia	60
Ubisa Monastery.....	61
Martyr's Monastery	62
Gelati Monastery Complex	63
Jewish Great Synagogue.....	64
Bagrati Church	65
Adjara route map	66
Martvili Monastery	67
Prometheus Cave.....	68
Part VI - Religious sites of the Georgian seaside.....	69
Map of Batumi route	70
Adjara - border from western Georgia.....	71
Batumi Trinity Church	72
St. Nicholas Church in Batumi	73
Batumi Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary	74
Batumi Synagogue	75
Armenian-Gregorian Church of Batumi.....	76
Batumi Catholic Church.....	77
Batumi Mosque - Muslim Shrine	78
Gonio Castle and the Tomb of the Apostle Matata.....	79
TYPES OF CLIENTS TARGETED.....	80
TRAVELLER PROFILE.....	80
MARKETING STRATEGY	81

Paths of faith in Georgia

Introduction

From ancient times to present day Georgians consider Mother Mary as saint protector of the country, she sent apostles to preach the word of god in Georgia: Andrew the Apostle, Simon the Zealot, Bartholomaeus and Matthias. According to the ancient scriptures, Hebrews brought Seamless robe of Jesus to Georgia, which is buried in Mtskheta, under the main supporting column of Svetitskhoveli (Dzeli Tskhoveli).

Christianity was announced as a country's religion around 337 AD (4th century). The effort to introduce and cement Christianity as the nation's religion was led by St Nino of Cappadocia. Soon near handcrafted wooden churches, beautiful stone churches would be built which were defined in two categories: Basilica and Dome. Master craftsmen were summoned from Greece to help with the process. In the 6th century Georgia would welcome Thirteen Assyrian Fathers, who would integrate Christianity and church values deep into the roots of Georgia. Kartli and Kakheti were covered with a network of monasteries.

As for today, Georgia's church is an inseparable part of Christian religion. Most of the population in Georgia are Christians, the faith is a big part of the culture and history for this small but beautiful country.

The route offers the possibility to explore the buildings, monasteries and temples belonging to different religions and cultures, scattered in different regions of Georgia - this is a sun-kissed land with ancient history and distinct culture, breathtaking nature, majestic mountains. From Alazani valley and Davit Garejis deserts to shores of the Black Sea, this tiny hospitable country has it all.

Technical features

Administrative Geography : Different regions of Georgia: Central (Kartli), East (Kakheti), South (Samtskhe), West (Imereti, Samegrelo and Adjara). Tour starts in Tbilisi and ends in Batumi.

Seasonal Availability : All (During winter some mountain passes might be closed due to snow / avalanche / blizzards (Gombori, Jvari and Rikoti))

Transport accessibility: Auto-tour, with any type of vehicle (Sedan, minivan, minibus and etc.)

Types of tourists: Gen X + Gen Y + Gen Z + BB Gen

Group structure: **Any:** Solo travelers, couples, groups etc.

Tourist profile: Cultural, Educational, Religious, Cognitive.

Duration of the tourist route: 11 days (number of days can be changed according to the travelers' preferences)

Main goals:

- Getting to know countries ancient culture
- Getting introduced to every religion and their unique qualities
- Improving tourism/tourist routes.

Tour consists of 6 parts:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Tbilisi | (1 Day, 1 Night in Tbilisi) |
| 2. Mtskheta - Stepantsminda (Northern Georgia) | (2 Days, 2 Nights in Tbilisi) |
| 3. Kakheti (Eastern Georgia) | (2 Days, 2 Nights - Telavi and Signagi) |
| 4. Samtskhe (Southern Georgia) | (2 Days, 2 Nights- Akhaltsikhe) |
| 5. Kutaisi (Western Georgia) | (2 Days, 1 Night- Kutaisi) |
| 6. Adjara (Black sea coast) | (2 Days, 1 Night - Batumi) |

Useful information:

- Necessary documents: passport and travel insurance, if required a valid visa.
- Free WIFI is provided at the hotels, bars, and restaurants, even in the streets of Tbilisi (Tbilisi Loves You).
- The currency of the country is the GEL, Georgian Lari. Exchange rate for 2020: 3.00 GEL=\$1.00 (needs to be double-checked, since the rates often change)
- Exchange: at the airports, border checkpoints, banks, and in the cities, at the exchange points.
- WC Stops - at the petrol stations (approximately in every 50 km)

Transport

- Car rentals: transportation and private companies offer leases/rentals on cars.

Hotels

- 2,3,4,5* hotels, boutique hotels, guest houses, hostels.
- In provinces guest houses are recommended, to learn about the lifestyle of each region.
- You can find the detailed information on the following websites: www.booking.com www.tripadvisor.com

Caution:

When visiting monasteries please don't forget that, they are functioning churches in the first place and tourist hotspots after. There is a certain dress code, consult your guide for further information.

Part I

Capital of Georgia - Tbilisi and Old Capital – Mtskheta

Tbilisi - Capital of Georgia.

85% of the population is Christian (orthodox), there is a considerable amount of Russian orthodox church followers as well as Armenian Gregorian faith. Catholics, Lutherians, Baptists and other Christian faiths are a minority. Big part of the religious minorities are followers of Islam (8%). In Tbilisi about 2% follow Judaism, there are around 20-30 kurds 61% of them are followers of Yazidism. Capital was famous for its religious tolerance which is reflected in many different religious churches in Old Tbilisi.



Tbilisi



Activities and points of interest:

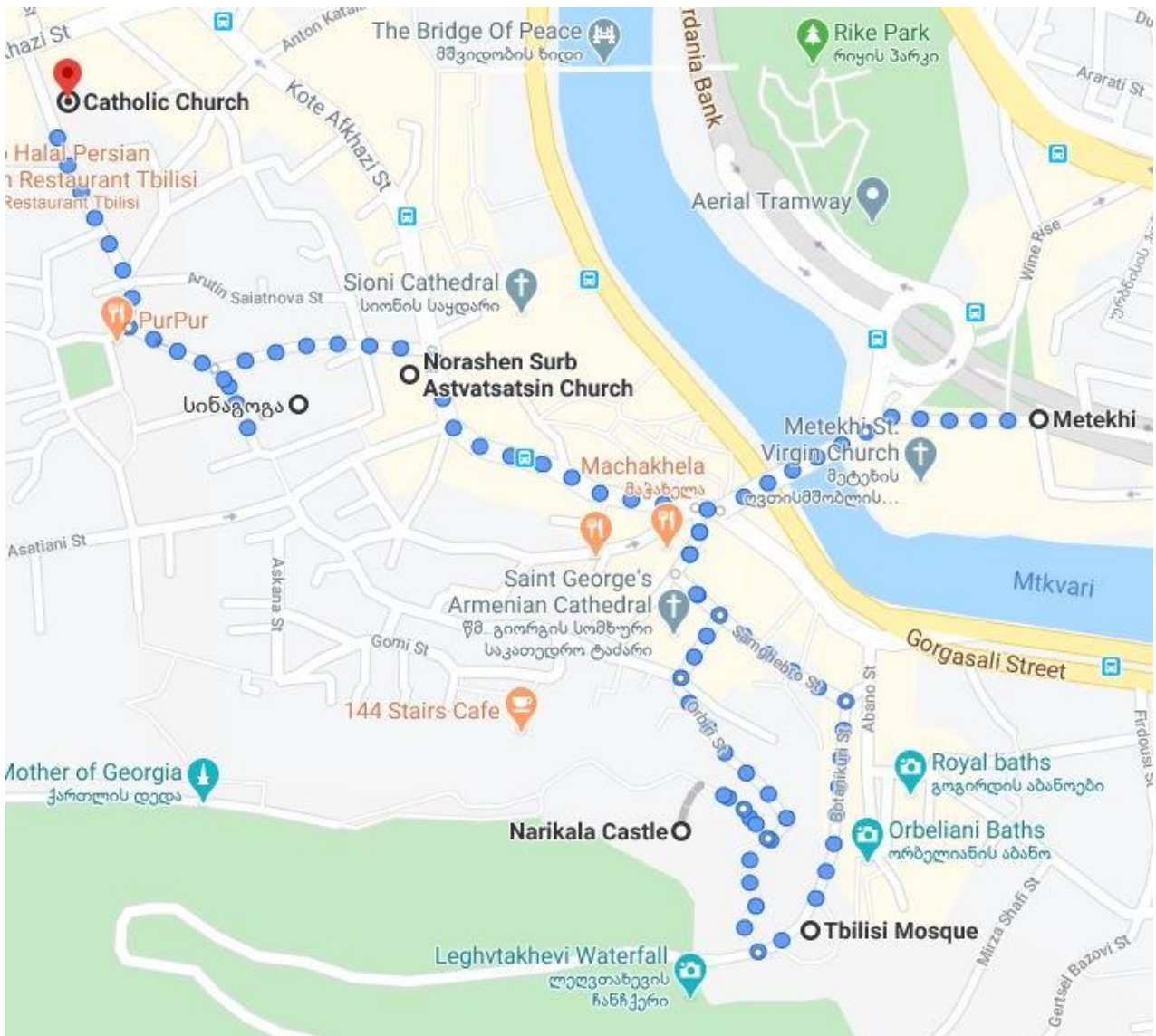
Panoramic Views	Narikala Fortress, Mother of Kartli, Leghvtakhevi Waterfall and canyon, Shardeni str; Bridge of Love, Gabriadze Theater, Mtatsminda park - funicular Botanic garden, Monument- Glory to Georgia
Museums	Ethnographic - Open air; Georgias National Museum
Archaeological leftovers	Leghvtakhevi archeological excavation sights; Wall for City's defense.
Sulfur Bathhouses	("Chreli", "Royal", "Gulo")

The route will consist of current and old capital of Georgia's religiously significant places: The tourists can start the sightseeing by going to humongous Sameba Cathedral on the Elia Hill, follow downwards they'll come across Metekhi Cathedral, Saint Abos Church, nearby there is a Aerial lift/Cable Car which will lead them to Narikala Fortress. From the cable cars tourists will experience the aerial view of tbilisi, its ancient architecture, beauty of upper and lower level churches, they'll see Metekhi bridge which is related to 100000 christian martyrs.

From Narikala tourists can go west and follow along a road to discover a Mosque, shortly thereafter they'll pass Armenian Gregorian church, in 200 Meters there's a synagogue and there are catholic churches nearby as well. There are a lot of restaurants and cafes in this area.

After this tourists can go down to Mtkvari shore line (on foot, bike or a car) where they'll come across: Anchiskhati, Sioni and Russian churches, They can end the tour by visiting Father Daviti church on Mtatsminda.

Tbilisi hiking route map



Tbilisi - Capital of Georgia: Population 1 200 000, founded 455BC, timezone: UTC+4, height from the sea level 480-770 meters, area - 720 KM²

Common borders. Common solutions.

Saint Trinity Cathedral

(Main theme)



Saint Trinity Cathedral Main and biggest orthodox church in Caucasus region. It mainly consists of two parts under and above ground complexes, Height: 86 meters (including the cross 7.5 meters in height).

The cathedral is a symbol of christianity to the country and one of the most popular out of tourist hotspots. This is a dome style church which is a fusion of old and new architecture styles, combining modern techniques and ancient traditions to create an unique church which seamlessly blends with cities style which is also fusion of Old and New.

Construction of the cathedral began during 1989 and was finished in 2004 with the blessing of Georgia's Catholicos Patriarch. Cathedral can be seen from most of the Tbilisi's elevated regions, it wows everyone with its beauty, majesty and scale.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Elia Hill, Avlabari

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday



Metekhi's Mother Mary's namesake Church

(Main theme)



Metekhi's Mother Mary's namesake Church is located in Old Tbilisi's historically significant region on the left shore of Mtkvari river. It's one of the oldest churches built in Tbilisi. It is dated to 6th century, constructed by the orders of King Vakhtang Gorgasali The First, church, fortress and a castle was built and was used as a king's residence.

Over the centuries the church's architecture went through a lot of changes and a trail of different techniques and masters can be clearly seen. It's a dome style church, the walls are built with cut green greyish stone.

The cathedral houses Saint Shushanikis grave (7th century), according to tales, Metekhi cliffside was one of the places Martyr Abo was tortured, a small church is built at the base of the cliff honoring him.

There's a bridge connecting Metekhi to Old Tbilisi, which was built in 1951 in place of two older bridges. Gorgeous view is displayed from Metekhi church, you can see Narikala, Abanotubani, Peace Bridge and Etc. This is the old Tbilisi in all of its glory.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Metekhi №1

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday



St. Abo Tbileli

Narikalas Saint Nicholas Church

(The main theme)



Narikala Saint Nicholas Church was built on one of the oldest fortresses of Georgia (4th Century) in the 13th century. The church is in Cross-Dome style, it resembles Metekhis architecture, but its style has been refined a bit later than Metekhi. Also reconstruction of the king's palace is going on, the first floor is preserved with its walls, secret tunnels and watch towers.

Currently it is one of the tourist hotspots, it can be seen from mostly anywhere from Tbilisi, church overlooks river Mtkvari and is in between sulfur baths and botanic garden.

Useful Information:

Address.: Narikala Fortress,
Saiatnova St, №1

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Tel: 032 2 72-30-64.

Tbilisi Jumah Mosque - a Muslim shrine

(The main theme)



Tbilisi Juma Mosque is located at the foot of Narikala Prison at the end of the current Botanical Street. It is the only Muslim shrine in the city.

In 1723-1735, the Ottomans, who held Tbilisi, built a Sunni mosque at the foot of Narikala. In the 1740s, Persians destroyed it. In 1846-1851 it was rebuilt by architect Giovanni Scudier project, and in late 1895, the mosque was completely repaired by Azerbaijani Muslims, which changed its eastern part markedly.

The mosque stands on the slope. There are arch panes on longitudinal walls. Neo Gothic and Islamic elements are combined in their architecture. The eight-year-old minaret was erected at the gate, which attracts attention from afar and is perceived differently from different points of view.

Currently, Muslim believers living in Tbilisi are two parts – Sunnis and Shiites. The Sunni mosque is the only operating mosque in Tbilisi. It serves both Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

Useful information:

Adr.: Botanik Str. 32

Tel.: 032 253 16 30

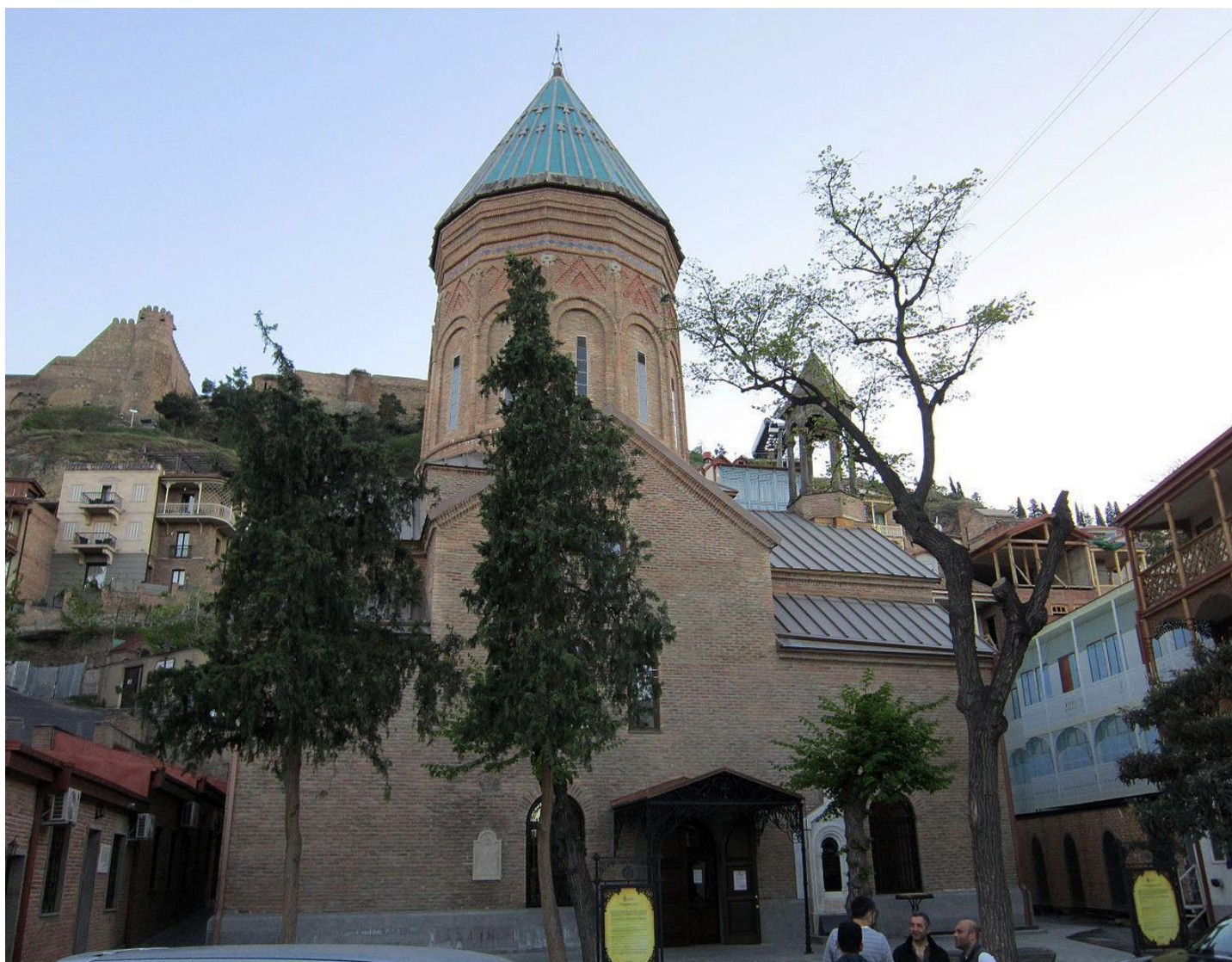
577 62 30 02

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday



Surfgevorqi Gregorian Church

(The main theme)



Surfgevorqi Saint George Cathedral - famous Armenian church and main armenian-Gregorian church in Tbilisi. It is located in Old Tbilisi under Narikala fortress, it was built in the 7th century, it was ransacked often during the invasions, the version which was preserved was 15th century recreation which was restored in 1779 and after that we can see paintings appear in the chapel.

The modern facade of the church was determined by 18th century minimalist style, which gave it primitive and plain walls without any ornaments.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Samgebro str .№5

Status: active



Tbilisi Synagogue

(The main theme)



According to old history sources, hebrews arrived in Georgia 70AD. Hebrews were trying to build a community and Synagogue in Tbilisi, Which as we see was quite a success.

Tbilisi Big Synagogue - was built in 1910, abolishing feudalism helped hebrews to urbanize, the synagogue is wide, high and built with red brick, it has two floors.

It is one of the biggest tourist hotspots in Tbilisi, there are more than 500 visitors per day in the church.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Kote Apkhazi str. №45

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 Everyday

Status: active



Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin (The main theme)



After Russia's assimilation of Georgia (1801), permit was given to catholics to build the church, in 1804 money and land was given to catholics to build it on Kapucini Str, the church is 23 meters in height. Even austrias monarch had a part to play in the construction, and in the 19th century the church was expanded.

In 1937 the church was disbanded, in 1999 15th August it resumed functioning after Pope John Paul II visited Georgia.

The liturgy is read in Georgian, with roman Kontakion. There are a lot of statues and vitrages of saints in the church.

Useful Information:

Adr.: G. Abesadze str. №4

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active

Sioni Cathedral Church (The main theme)



Sioni cathedral is one of the most important churches in Georgia's and orthodox church's history, it is in the central part of Tbilisi. Sioni church is on the right shore of the Mtkvari river. Name Sioni is derived from the holy mountain in Jerusalem. It's a Hebrew word meaning sunny. The Sioni complex consists of an outer wall, Mother Mary's church and two bell towers.

Construction began in the 6th century and was going on for around 100 years, it was over in the 2nd half of 7th century. The church is central dome variety and architecture is classic style of mid century craftsmen.

The church was ransacked during invasions and this was the reason for its several restorations and architectural changes.

Hundreds of tourists are visiting Sioni cathedral today.

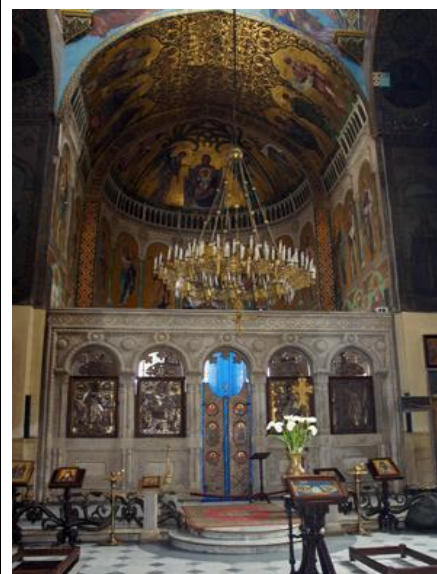
Useful Information:

Adr.: Sioni str. №3

Tel.: 032 298 89 53

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active



Saint Alexandre Nevel Church

(The main theme)



The church was built in 1864, it was built from donations of the churchgoers, it was constructed using brick as a main material.

In 1886 the church expanded and doubled in area, it added a belltower, entryway and stone paved stairs. With help of Exarch Paule the eparchy architect was sent to oversee the development.

There's a praying corner in the yard built in 1913 for theodoric saint Mary, which was dedicated to Romanov dynasty's 300th anniversary.

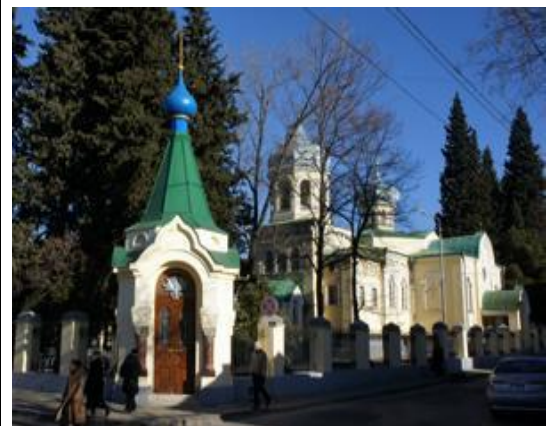
Useful Information:

Adr.: K. Marjanishvili str. №38

Ph.: 032 295-63-14

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active



Mtatsminda Father Daviti Church

(The main theme)



Mtatsminda or Father Daviti Hill, is west from Tbilisi center, 770 meters above sea level. Cathedral is dome style with Georgian traditional architecture, built with brick. Father Davit Garejeli was one of the Assyrian fathers who, while working in Tbilisi, carved a small sanctuary and built a chapel, so the Georgians called the mountain "Mtatsminda" (Holy Mountain).

In fact, the construction of a new and larger temple began in 1857 and was completed in 1871. The height of the temple (crosswise) is 25.7 meters, the length is 17.2 meters and the width is 10.7 meters. The building can accommodate up to 400 people. The building is not distinguished by its unique architecture. In 1915, a special cemetery would be set up in front of the nation on Mtatsminda. And here a pantheon of Georgian writers and public figures was established, who were crucial and distinguished for their nation. It can be climbed by several types of vehicles, among which the funicular and ropeway are especially popular. Mtatsminda currently has the largest recreation park and TV tower in Georgia.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Shio Chitadze str. .

Tel.: 032 299-70-39

Status: Active



The funicular and Cathedral on the mountain "Mtatsminda"

Common borders. Common solutions.

Part II

Religious sites of Mtskheta-Mtianeti region of Georgia



Georgia's border to the north.

Tour to the east of Georgia. In the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, Dusheti and Kazbegi municipalities are interesting both in terms of scenic nature and various religious monuments.



Mtskheta



Activities and points of interest:

Panoramic Views: Jvari monastery;
Zedazeni monastery

Boat ride routes: River Mtkvari

Archeological remains: Samtavro Cemetery

The route continues west of Tbilisi and 25 km away, tourists will stop in the small, colorful and unique city of Mtskheta, which From 4th century BC and 6th century AD was the capital of Iberia. There are many places of worship here and in the nearby area- only Orthodox churches, including the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. To the east of it, a few meters away, you will visit the ancient church of Antioch, and to the west, a hundred meters away, tourists will visit the Samtavro Mothers' Monastery, in the north to the mountains tourists will continue their route by car and in 12 kms they will see the unique Shio Cave monastery complex.

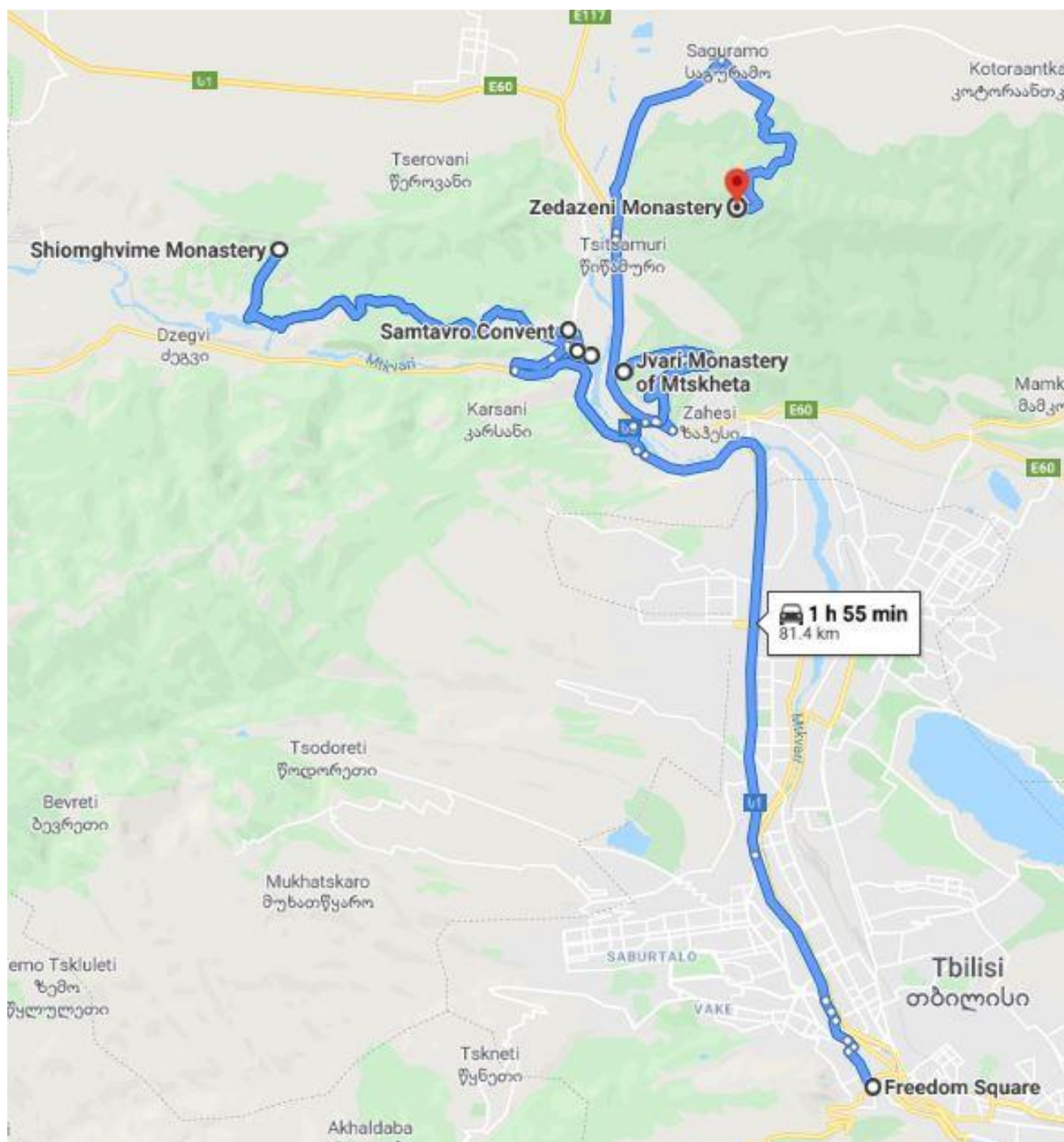
From here, tourists will flock to the east of Mtskheta, at the confluence of the rivers Mtkvari and Aragvi, on the top of a rocky mountain, where the temple cross overlooks Mtskheta.

Tourists returning to the highway will be fascinated by one of the oldest monuments of Georgian architecture located on the left bank of the Aragvi River, northeast of Mtskheta (8 km), there is unique architectural masterpiece of Georgia, Zedazeni monastery from there a breathtaking view of Mtskheta can be seen.

Historical monuments of Mtskheta are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Apart from temples, tourists can see historical antiquities here: Pompeii Bridge, Bebris Castle, Armazi Castle, etc., boat ride on the Mtkvari...

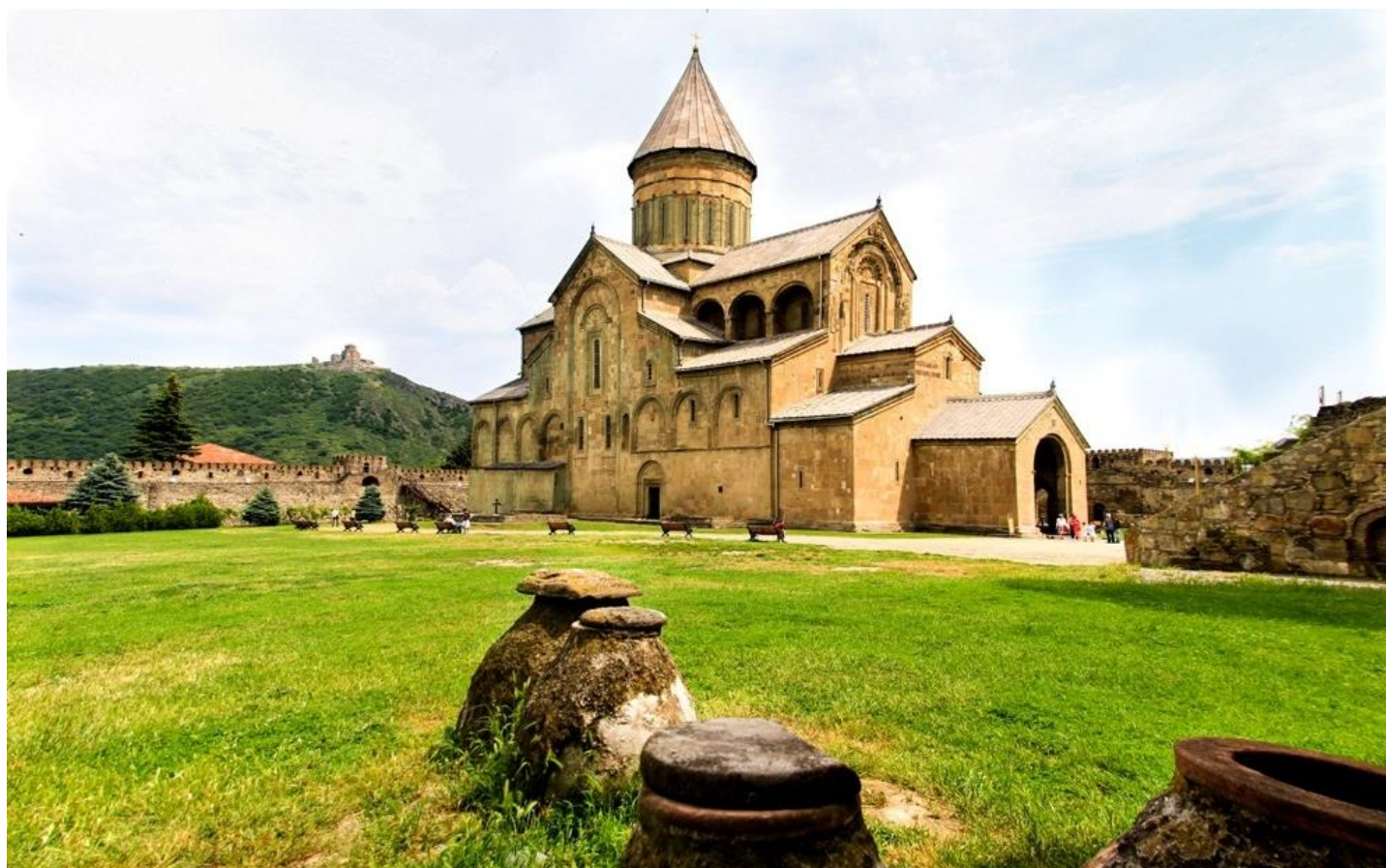
There are many restaurants in Mtskheta, with amazing views on scenery, unique designs and tasty menu, any of them which can also pleasantly surprise guests.

Mtskheta route map



Mtskheta is a city in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region. One of the oldest cities in Georgia and its former capital, it is located about 20 kilometers north of Tbilisi, at the confluence of the rivers Mtkvari and Aragvi. Height: 480 m above sea level. Population: 7940 (2014). Until the 6th century, the capital of Georgia was Mtskheta. The missionary Nino, who came from Jerusalem at the beginning of the 4th century, preached Christianity here in Mtskheta. Mtskheta is also called the Second Jerusalem. Part of the robe of Christ in Svetitskhoveli and the robe of the prophet Elijah are buried. Due to the importance of Svetitskhoveli, there are many Georgian king's tombs in the temple. From the 6th century the capital was moved from Mtskheta to Tbilisi.

Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (The main theme)



The main patriarchal cathedral of the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Mother Cathedral of Georgia, the place of enthronement (enthronement) of Georgian Catholicos-Patriarchs, the burial place of many Georgian kings, their family members and patriarchs, the monument of Georgian architecture of the XI century is located 20 km from Tbilisi. In Mtskheta. The robe of the Lord is buried in Svetitskhoveli and the robe of the prophet Elijah. The construction of the temple is associated with many miracles. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Svetitskhoveli Cathedral is a rectangle extending from east to west. The face of the cross is created in space with four arms outstretched on all four sides of the dome. There are 16 windows in the dome. Temple with its sharp lines, It is a perfect example of a Georgian church with a stone roof and reliefs of light columns. Although the temple has undergone many changes, a large part of the old frescoes have been destroyed, and the whitewashing of the walls has deprived the interior of the necessary organic elements for its artistic integrity, it still leaves a glorious impression today.

The Svetitskhoveli temple is surrounded by a square-shaped fence. It was built in 1787 by order of King Erekle II, as evidenced by the inscription carved on the top of the south entrance.

Svetitskhoveli Church is always full of locals and tourists. The Svetitskhoveli temple is surrounded by a square-shaped fence.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Mtskheta

Tel.: 032 299-70-39

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active



Tskhoveli Pillar, under the pillar robe of Jesus Christ is buried, it is still weeping myrrh and giving off pleasant aroma.

Antioqia Church (The main theme)



Antioq, the Church of St. Stephen the First Martyr, stands on the right bank of the Aragvi River in Mtskheta, at the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari rivers. It is one of the oldest in Mtskheta (built in 4-5th centuries). In the 8th century, during the ruthless conquest of Murvan-Krus in Georgia, the temple was burnt down. In the 15-18th centuries it was thoroughly repaired.

In the 90s of the 20th century, with the charitable work of the United Georgian Bank, the interior of the temple was repaired and painted (iconographer Irakli Tsintsadze), the yard was fenced and a residential house was built.

In 2002, the Antioch Cathedral was transferred to the St. Nino's Convent in Samtavro. In the same year, the convent of St. Stephen the First Martyr was founded here. Currently, there are several sisters in the monastery. The monastery has a small farm, an orchard, icon-painting and embroidery workshops, and is engaged in translation work.

Useful Information:

Adr.: S-1, Mtskheta

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active

Samtavro St. Nino's Monastery

(The main theme)



St. Nino's Convent is located in the ancient city of Mtskheta, Georgia. In the yard of the temple there is a church dating back to the 4th century, Nino's small church, where she prayed.

In the south-west corner of the temple there are the tombs of the first Georgian Christian king Mirian and Queen Nana, who St. Nino converted to Christianity.

Especially noteworthy is the interior decoration of the temple. A five-day composition is used on the east façade. The south and north facades are painted with utmost mastery. The temple was completely re-painted from the beginning, but the situation has deteriorated over time.

The surviving painting dates back to the 14th century. The nunnery has been operating here since 1811.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Mtskheta, Samtavro Valley

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active



Resting place of St . Father Gabriel

Shio Cave Monastery Complex

(The main theme)



Shiomghvimi monastery complex is located 12 km from Mtskheta. On the left bank of the Mtkvari. The monastery was founded in the middle of the 6th century by Shio, a disciple of his thirteen Assyrian fathers, St. John. In the 11th century, a cave church was built, which was later joined by the Church of St. John the Baptist. The Shiomghvimi monastery complex includes: a domed church, an upper church and a chapel near the monastery. The Temple of the Crucifixion (XII c.) Is located on a high mountain southeast of the monastery, from where beautiful views unfold.

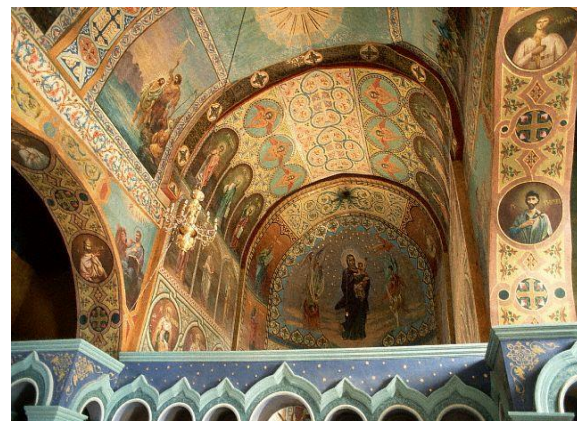
Shiomghvime was also an old Georgian cultural-literary center. Many manuscripts have been recovered from Shiomghvime's largest library. Today there is a monastery of the Fathers operating here.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Mtskheta

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Status: Active



Monastery interior

Jvari monastery (The main theme)



Jvari Monastery is located 15 kilometers from Mtskheta (10 minutes drive), stands on a rocky mountain (656 m high) at the confluence of the rivers Mtkvari and Aragvi, overlooking Mtskheta. Here tourists can enjoy both the natural environment and the cultural heritage.

On the top of the mountain at the confluence of the Mtkvari and Aragvi stands the masterpiece of Georgian architecture - Jvari Monastery. In the 4th century, at the behest of St. Nino and by order of King Mirian, a large wooden cross was erected on the site of the temple as a symbol of the Christian faith. This is a sixth century Georgian Orthodox monastery. Along with other historical structures in Mtskheta, it is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The cross belongs to the rare buildings that have remained almost unchanged since the Middle Ages. The dimensions of the temple are: 22.3 m long, 19 m wide and 25 m high.

The monastery is the best example of harmonious blending with the natural environment characteristic of Georgian architecture.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Mtskheta

Tel.: 555 34 64 38

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active



Zedazeni Monastery (The main theme)



Zedazeni is one of the oldest monuments of Georgian architecture, located in the north-east of Mtskheta (8 km) on the left bank of the Aragvi, on the Saguramo ridge, at 1170 meters above sea level. In the 6th century (the forties) a Georgian monastery was founded by one of the Assyrian fathers. At first the road is asphalt, but after the village the dirt road continues. The three-nave basilica of the church, which was built at the end of the 8th century, has survived to this day. In the northern part of the temple there is a well, the water of which is considered to have healing properties. Mtskheta and Jvari Monastery can be seen from the yard of the monastery, which is very eye-catching and makes for a great view.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Zedazeni Rd

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Status: Active



Zedazeni Cross

Tbilisi – Stepantsminda route map



Northern border of Georgia to the east of Georgia Mtskheta-Mtianeti region - Dusheti and Kazbegi municipalities

District center - Stepantsminda
164 km from Tbilisi

Population - 1326 (2014)

Height a. s. l. - 1570 m high

Variability - from 380 - 550 m (Tbilisi) - up to 2379 m (Jvari Pass)

Toilets - at gas stations (free) - in Gudauri, Stepantsminda

Tbilisi – Stepantsminda



Activities and points of interest:

Panoramic views:

Jvari mountain pass; Gudauri; Pasaunauri White and Black Aragvi confluence, Gergeti Trinity

Tourists will leave Tbilisi from the north. On the way, you will turn off the highway and within 10 km you will visit the Tsilkani temple founded by the Assyrian father in the village of Tsilkani. Tourists then return to the highway and head north, along the Aragvi River.

After a few kilometers, the gorge narrows sharply, begins to rise and overlooks the beautiful view of the Zhinvali Reservoir, which overlooks (60 km from Tbilisi) the complex of Ananuri Fortress of the 16 - 17th centuries (open 9AM - 8PM).

From here the road leads north to the Aragvi gorge. There are many restaurants along the road. It is recommended to experience local dishes. Near the town of Pasaunauri, at the very beginning of it, you can stop and see the confluence of the rivers - White and Black Aragvi.

The road crosses Aragvi and then a noticeable ascent begins. You will pass Gudauri (mountain resort) and on the way you will meet "Gudauri View". It has been granted the status of a natural monument. After that, the road leads to the river Tergi and enters the small town of Stepantsminda.

From the town of Stepantsminda there is a magnificent view of Mount Kazbegi and Gergeti Trinity Church, which is why this place attracts many tourists.

The main road passes through the Dariali gorge and goes to the Georgian-Russian border. Near the border there is a temple built in this century, which is gracefully embedded in the mountain landscape. It is best to stay overnight in Stepantsminda.

Tsilkani Cathedral of the Mother of God

(The main theme)



Tsilkani Episcopal Cathedral was founded in the 4th century. The complex includes the Church of the Assumption and a 8th century castle-fence. The temple combines three buildings of different eras: the hall church (end of IV century), the three-nave basilica (V-VIII centuries) and the domed temple. Calligraphers worked here at different times, scribes and poets.

Cliff stones, bricks and ornamental frames are used in the decoration of the facade walls, the unique ornaments of the Basilica period are especially interesting from the decoration of the temple, the painting is preserved only in the dome.

There is a road leading to monastery complex.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Mtskheta region, village Tsilkani

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Status: Active



Tsilkani Church Dome

Ananuri Architectural Monastery Complex

(The main theme)



The architectural ensemble of the 16-18th centuries architecture is one of the most important monuments of the late feudal period of Georgia. It houses cult, military and secular monuments. Although the monuments of this epoch can be found on the territory of Georgia, only a few of them are gathered together and relatively well preserved.

The beauty of Ananuri Castle is the large domed church.

The complex includes the following buildings: the upper and lower castles, the fence, the towers, the Church of the Assumption, the Church of the Deity, the Church of the Healer, the bell tower, the octagonal cell and the reservoirs.

The road leads directly to the citadel, there are many counters, where various Georgian souvenirs and handcrafted gifts are sold.

The beautiful views from the towers overlook the Zhinvali Reservoir, which leaves an unforgettable impression on tourists.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Dusheti municipality,
Village Ananuri

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Status: Active



Ambion



Common borders. Common solutions.

Gergeti Trinity Church

(The main theme)



Gergeti Trinity - an architectural complex located at 2200 meters above sea level. The fence bounded by the fence includes the domed temple of the Trinity, the bell tower and the council room (14th c.). The plan of the temple is simple, It is based on the cross.

The temple is built of well-smoothed Andesite squares. The facades are carved.

It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Georgia. Gergeti Trinity Church with its history and location is the face of Georgia - a Christian oasis hidden in beautiful nature but harsh mountain.

Today, the Fathers' Monastery is being built here and the monks are working. The access road is well maintained and can be accessed by most means of transportation, and the walk takes about 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Kazbegi municipality, village Gergeti.

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active



Church dome

Dariali monastery complex

(The main theme)



Dariali Archangel Fathers Monastery Complex is located at 1300 meters above sea level near the Russian-Georgian border. The complex includes several churches. Construction of 12 temples is finally planned in the monastery complex of the Fathers.

Construction of the monastery began in 2005 at the initiative of the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, and in 2011 he consecrated the Church of the Holy Archangels.

The monastery complex is 10 km away from the center of Stepantsminda (Kazbegi).

Useful Information:

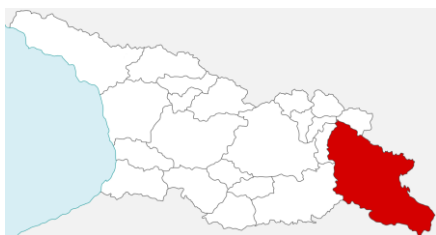
Adr.: Kazbegi municipality, Russian-Georgia border.

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

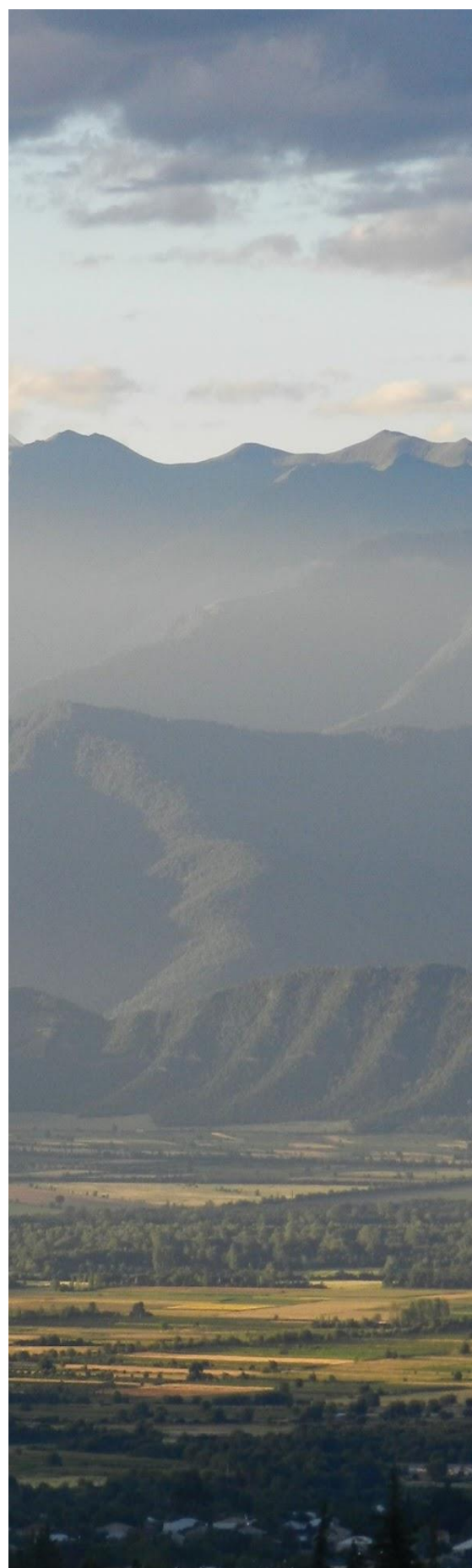
Status: Active

Part III

Religious sites of Eastern Georgia



The region in eastern Georgia, **Kakheti**, includes an area from the Greater Caucasus Range to Gombori Pass, where it is located in the Alazani Valley. In particular, the region is rich in historical and cultural monuments. Numerous churches, monasteries and castles attract the attention of tourists. Each of them is a carrier of the old tradition, original and original, which is the best factor for pilgrims or just those interested in cultural tourism. The area is 11310 sq. Km., Population - 318 583. Religious composition - Christians (major) and Muslims; National composition - 85.16% of the population is Georgian, 10.16% is Azerbaijani, 4.68% is of other nationalities. The administrative center of the region is the city of Telavi.



Historical Kakheti



Activities and points of interest:

Panoramic Views: Gombori Pass, Nadikvari Park, Bodbe Monastery, Nekresi Monastery Complex, Ujarmi Castle, Martkopi Tower

Museums Erekle II Palace-Museum; Sighnaghi Ethnographic Museum

Ranch Horseback riding near Sighnaghi

The route includes a visit to the religious monuments of Kakheti: it starts with the Davit Gareji monastery complex, one of the strongest religious centers in Eastern Georgia, from where it leads to Sighnaghi. They will rest here and start visiting the following religious sites in the morning: the Bodbe Monastery, which offers a magnificent view of the Alazani Valley. The next interesting object is the monastery of Nekresi. It is located 60 km from Bodbe, on a mountain slope. 15 km from Nekresi is the temple of Gremi. Gremi was the capital of Kakheti until the 16th century. From here, tourists will flock to Telavi, where Erekle Castle is located in the center of the city. It is a 17th century defensive structure and the residence of King Erekle II.

After visiting Telavi, it is desirable to spend the night here.

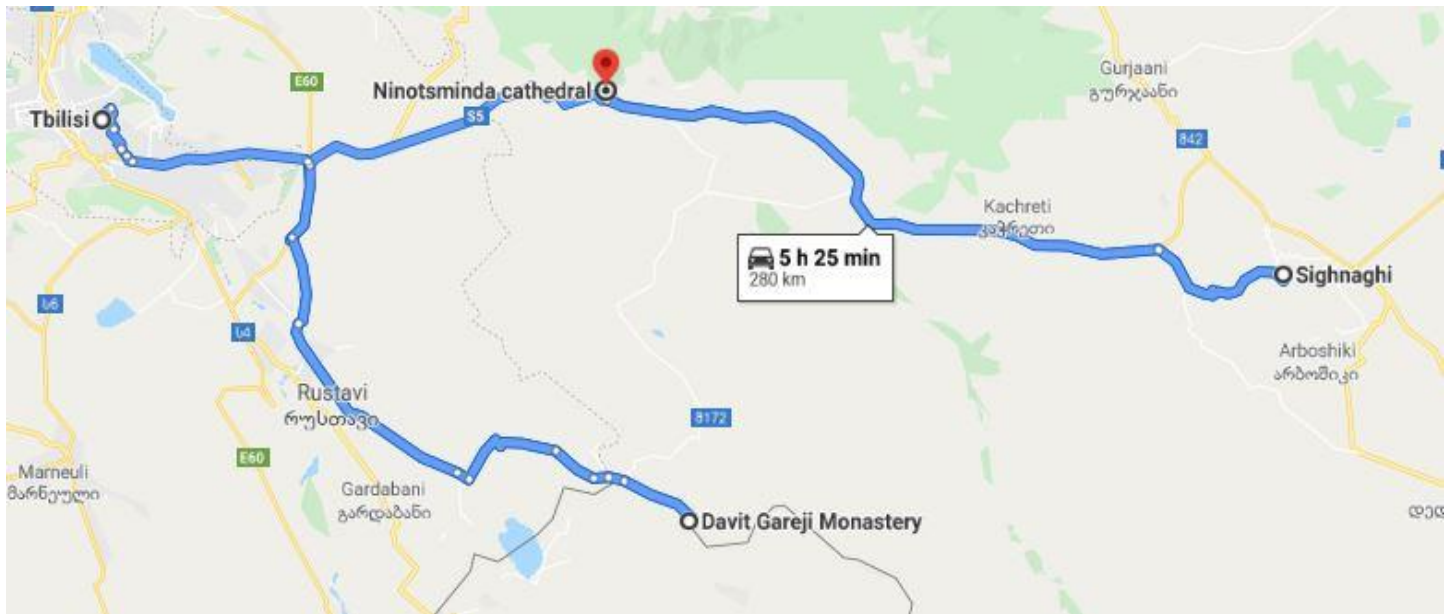
Departure in the morning, from 20 km from the city to Alaverdi Monastery. A magnificent 11th-century temple founded by an Assyrian father. From here, tourists will head to Ikalto Monastery. The monastery complex consists of several churches and an academy building.

On the way to Tbilisi you can visit the 16th century, the new Shuamta temple, where there is now a nunnery. The road to Tbilisi passes through Gombori Pass (1600 m). Here it is possible for tourists to stop and enjoy spring water or local herbal tea and take in the beautiful views around it.

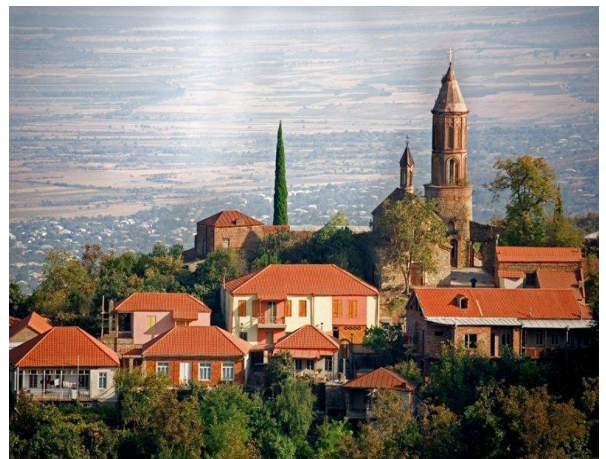
24 km from the pass to Tbilisi is the Martkopi Fathers' Monastery, hidden like a jewel in nature.

Accommodation in Tbilisi after visiting these places.

Map of the 1 day route in Kakheti



Davit Gareji



Sighnaghi

David Gareja - Monastery Sculpted in a Cliffside

(The main theme)



Sculpted in the cliffside, Davitgareji monastery complex is located 60-70 km southeast of Tbilisi, in outer Kakheti. It stretches for 25 kilometers on the semi-desert slopes of Gareja Mountain and includes 22 small monastery complexes, 3 of which are located on the disputed land (on the border with Azerbaijan). According to the position of the Georgian Orthodox Church, it is inadmissible to divide the Davit Gareji monastery complex.

Monastery of Davitgareji was founded in the 6th century, which belonged to the "Thirteen Assyrian Fathers" who came to Georgia to spread Christianity.

Often the church was raided and looted, many times it was abandoned and rebuilt. In the 16-18th centuries a large construction was carried out here. A rich fund of manuscripts was preserved in Davitgareji. Davitgareji is visited by many tourists and pilgrims every day.

You can get here either by a group tour bus or by car. After visiting Davit Gareji, tourists can continue their journey in the direction of the beautiful Signaghi. On the way there are restaurants on the highway, where you can taste delicious food and stay in Signaghi.

Common borders. Common solutions.

Signaghi

(The main and additional theme)



Before continuing on the route, guests can enjoy stunning views of East Georgia - a small town in Kakheti, Signaghi. Signaghi is one of the smallest and most popular tourist destinations in Georgia, as it is located in the center of the wine-rich region of Georgia with beautiful landscapes, colorful houses and narrow cobbled streets, which is truly a sight to behold.

There are two Georgian Orthodox churches in the city - named after St. George and St. Stephen. The famous Bodbe Monastery is located 2 kilometers from Signaghi, where the 4th century Apostolic Church of St. Nino of Georgia is located. The saint himself is resting here.

The local ethnographic and archeological museum, built in 1950, was renovated in 2007 and became an exhibition of modern standards - a museum.

Signaghi is known as the "City of Love", where many couples get married every year.

Useful Information:

Area: 2.978 კმ²

Population: 1550 (2019)

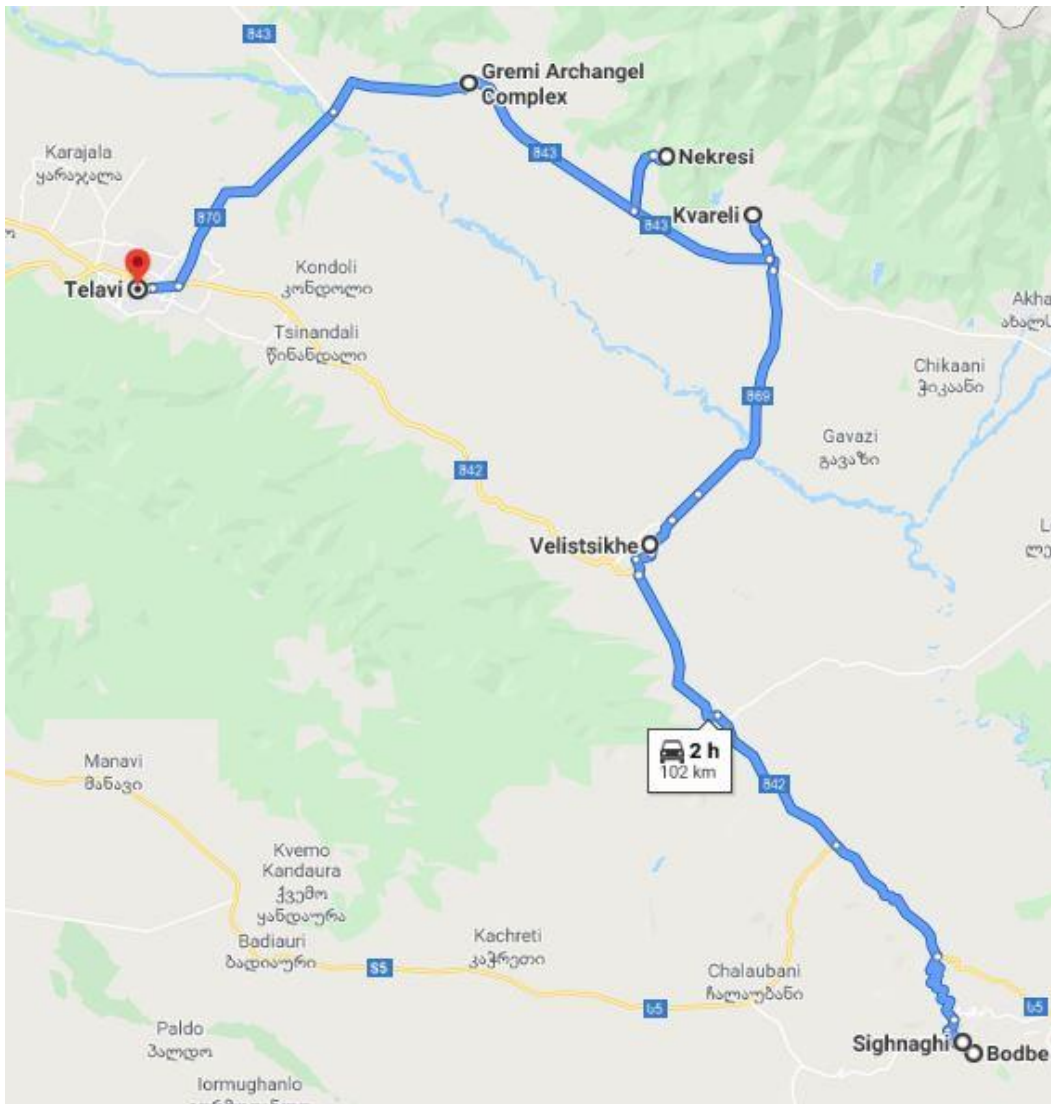
Height from the sea level: 836 M

Web: www.signagi.com.ge



Fountain in the city center

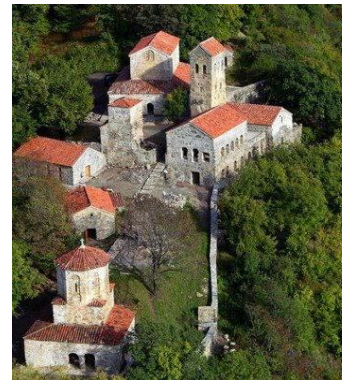
Map of the 11 day route in Kakheti



Signaghi



Bodbe



Nekresi



Gremi



Telavi

Common borders. Common solutions.

Bodbe St. Nino Mothers' Monastery

(The main theme)



Bodbe Monastery was built in the 5th century by King Vakhtang Gorgasali at the burial place of St. Nino, the Georgian educator, and the face of the three-nave basilica was built in the 8-9th centuries. In the Middle Ages, the kings of Kakheti were blessed in this temple.

Bodbe Monastery has long been not only a spiritual, but also a cultural-educational and secular-scientific center.

The Bodbe Convent was opened in 1889, and currently employs about thirty nuns. The result of their sweat and blood is turning the monastery yard into the Garden of Eden, which will delight the visitor with its spiritual tranquility and the beauty of nature.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Village Bodbe Signagi region

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Tel. (8 255) 32 752

Status: Active



Bodbe St. Nino Mothers' Monastery (XX c.)

Nekresi Monastery (The main theme)



The ancient temple of Nekresi is located about 8 km from Kvareli, on Mount Nekresi. Nekresi is on the left bank of the Alazani River. Its magnificent location and the beauty of the temple itself amazes many visitors.

The Nekresi monastery complex consists of various buildings. Some of them date back to the 4-5th centuries, some belong to the 8-9 centuries. It is of the basilica type. The temple is covered with uncut stone slabs. The internal area of the temple is 12 square meters. The painting of the temple is very damaged. Most of the inscriptions have also been destroyed. The main temple is dated back to the 6th century, built by St. Abibo Nekresel.

The temple is built with high architectural standards and is distinguished by the peculiarity of its forms. The church bell tower also appears to have been used as a watchtower. It has several floors and is surrounded by artillery pieces.

Useful Information:

Adr.: in between Kvareli and village Shilda

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday
Arriving at the monastery is done by a special car, which is waiting for tourists at the foot of the mountain. The cost of the climb is 1 GEL.

Tel.: 599 55 89 50

Status: Active



Temple frescoes

Gremi Monastery

(The main theme)



Useful Information:

Adr.: Kvareli municipality, village Gremi

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Status: Active

Gremi - Georgian Orthodox Church, built in 1565. The Grammy Architectural Complex consists of a variety of buildings. Here is the most eye catching part - the Church of the Dome of the Archangels, which stands at the end of a rocky ridge, a three-storey palace-bell tower, agricultural buildings, a fence, a secret exit to the river Intsoba. There are baths, a market and a caravanserai.

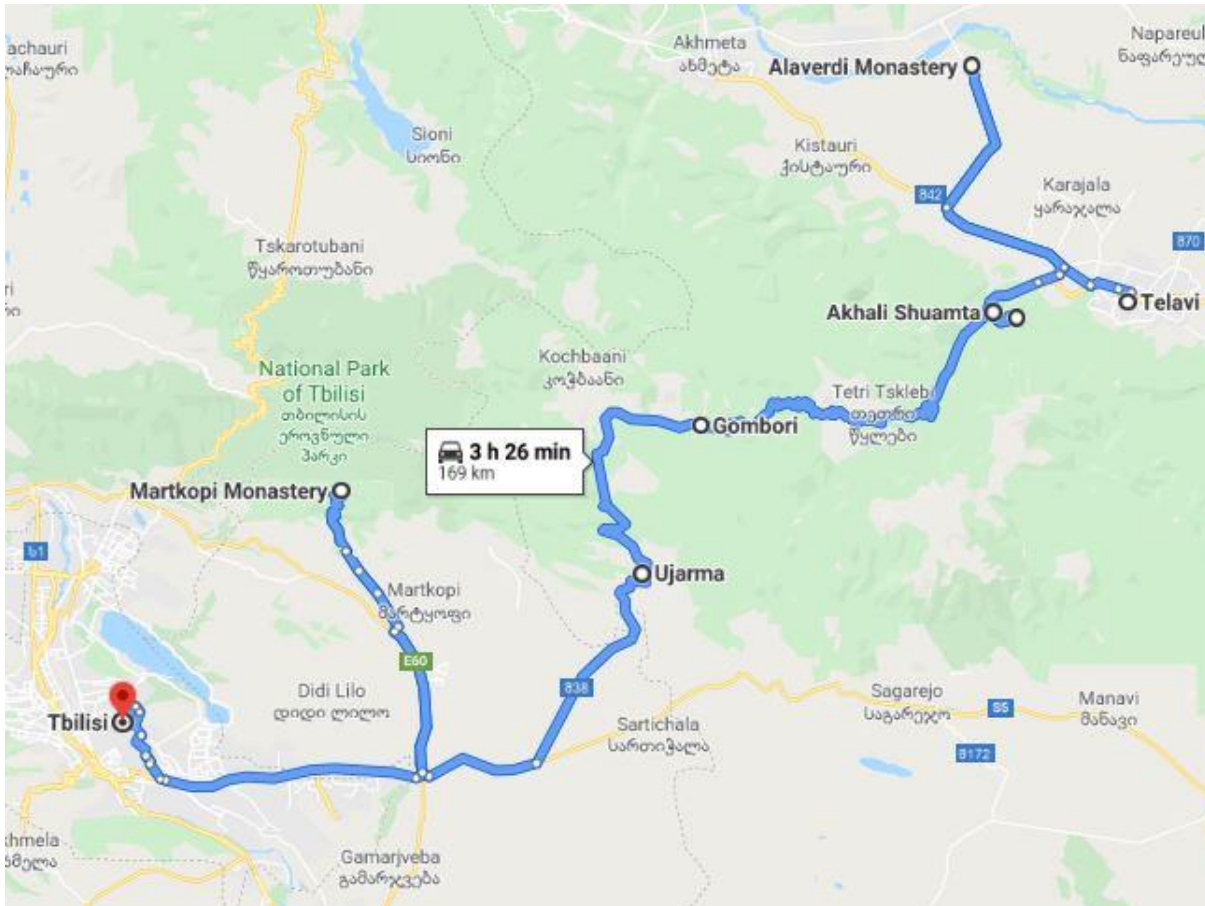
The historic Grammy Complex has been a museum-reserve since 1975. The palace-bell tower exhibits ethnographic material and artefacts excavated (a total of 2,056 exhibits).

The Cathedral of the Archangels in Grammys is one of the most magnificent buildings in the landscape.



Temple frescoes

Map of the 3 day route in Kakheti



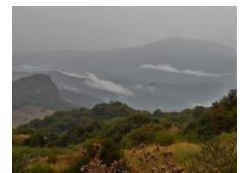
Alaverdi



New Shuamta



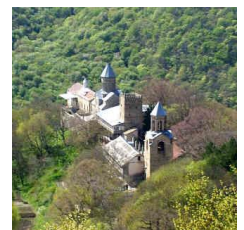
Old Shuamta



Gombori



Ujarma



Martkopi

Common borders. Common solutions.

Alaverdi Monastery

(The main theme)



The Alaverdi Monastery, located 20 km from Telavi in the Alazani Valley, founded in the 6th century by Joseph Alaverdeli, one of the 12 Assyrian fathers. At the beginning of the XI century, King Kvirike of Kakheti visited St. Alaverdi. A cathedral, known as Alaverdi, was built on the site of St. George's Little Church.

The church is one of the largest church buildings in Georgia. Its height is - more than 50 meters.

The buildings included in the complex are: Alaverdi St. George's Cathedral, fence, bell tower, chamber, Feikar-Khan Palace, cellar and bath.

From the 11th century, the Alaverdi Cathedral became the crypt of the Kakheti Royal House.

Monks make excellent wine in the cellar of the Alaverdi Monastery, which was founded in the 11th century. There is a vineyard in the temple area where tourists can see the exhibition of 120 varieties of grapes.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Akhmeta municipality, village Alaverdi

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Status: Active



Temple Frescoes

Ikalto Monastery

(The main theme)



Ikalto Monastery, founded in the second half of the 6th century, the monastery was an important cultural and educational center not only in Kakheti, but throughout Georgia. The higher education academy was founded here, where the famous Georgian philosopher Arsen Ikaltoeli worked. There are three churches on the territory of the monastery: Deity, All Saints and Trinity. Also, various buildings, the ruins of the academy. The main church is the Church of the Transfiguration of the 8-9th centuries "Deity". The building is built of cobblestone.

It is noteworthy that in the yard of the academy there is a tunnel under the Trinity Church, which according to the oral tradition is connected with the old Shuamta.

Useful Information:

Adr.: West of Telavi 7-8km

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 Everyday

Tel.: 577523738

Status: Active



Monastery Ambion

Common borders. Common solutions.

Old Shuamta Monastery

(The main theme)



Old Shuamta - Georgian Orthodox monastery complex includes: 5th century basilica, 7th century domed church. According to the plan, it is also of the cross type, all three churches are built with cobblestone, and shirim is used for the corners. In the 16th century, the old Shuamta monastery was emptied.

The wife of Tinatin Gurieli, the daughter of Levan II, King of Kakheti (1520-1570), founded a new Shuamta Monastery near it. The monastery is named after its location - it is surrounded by mountains on three sides, and is built on a plain in the mountains, hidden refuge from harsh mountains.

Rehabilitation of old and new Shuamta has been started since 2015 and tourist infrastructure improved as well.

Useful Information:

Adr.: West of Telavi 5km

Status: Inactive

New Shuamta Khakhuli Mother of God Monastery

(The main theme)



The New Shuamta Khakhuli Mother of God Monastery was founded in the 16th century (fifties) after the old Shuamta Monastery was emptied. The new monastery was founded by Tinatin, the wife of King Levan of Kakheti, who was ordained as a nun and is buried in the New Shuamta Monastery.

One of the main shrines of the monastery is the icon of the Virgin of Khakhuli. It was placed in front of the temple iconostasis, on the right side. The painted face of the infant Virgin is encrusted with gold and precious stones (jasper, turquoise, diamonds and pearls). The icon has 44 sacred parts on its back. Today, this icon is preserved in the treasures of the Georgian State Museum of Art in Tbilisi.

Useful Information:

Adr.: West from Telavi 5-6 Km

Open: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Status: active



Icon of the New Shuamta Khakhuli Mother of God

Martkopi Divine Monastery

(The main theme)



The monastery of the Deity of Martkopi was founded in the 6th century by Anton Martkopol, one of the 13 Assyrian fathers. He was called Martkopeli, deriving from Georgian word "Marto " which means alone, and his lifestyle earned him the title.

The temple was damaged and destroyed many times. The monastery also had a military purpose, it was surrounded by an artillery fence, the circumference of which reached 1400 meters.

To the east of the monastery, on the mountain, stands the column of Anton Martkopi, where he spent the last 15 years of his life.

In addition to the cultural value, the monastery, which is hidden in the trees, also has extensive, panoramic views, which creates a beautiful synthesis of nature and architecture.

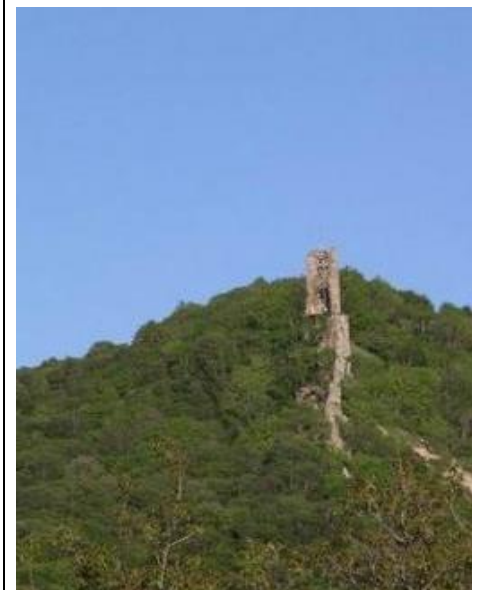
There's a road which leads to monastery, most of the cars can access it.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Gardabani municipality, village Martkopi.

Day: 08.00 - 20.00 everyday

Status: active



Column by Anton Martkopeli on the mountain

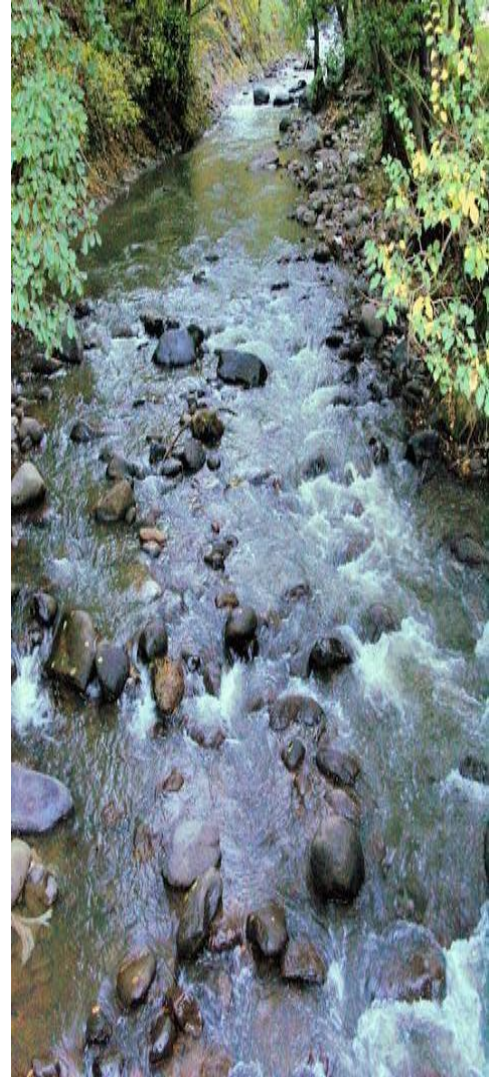
Part IV

Religious sites in the south of Georgia

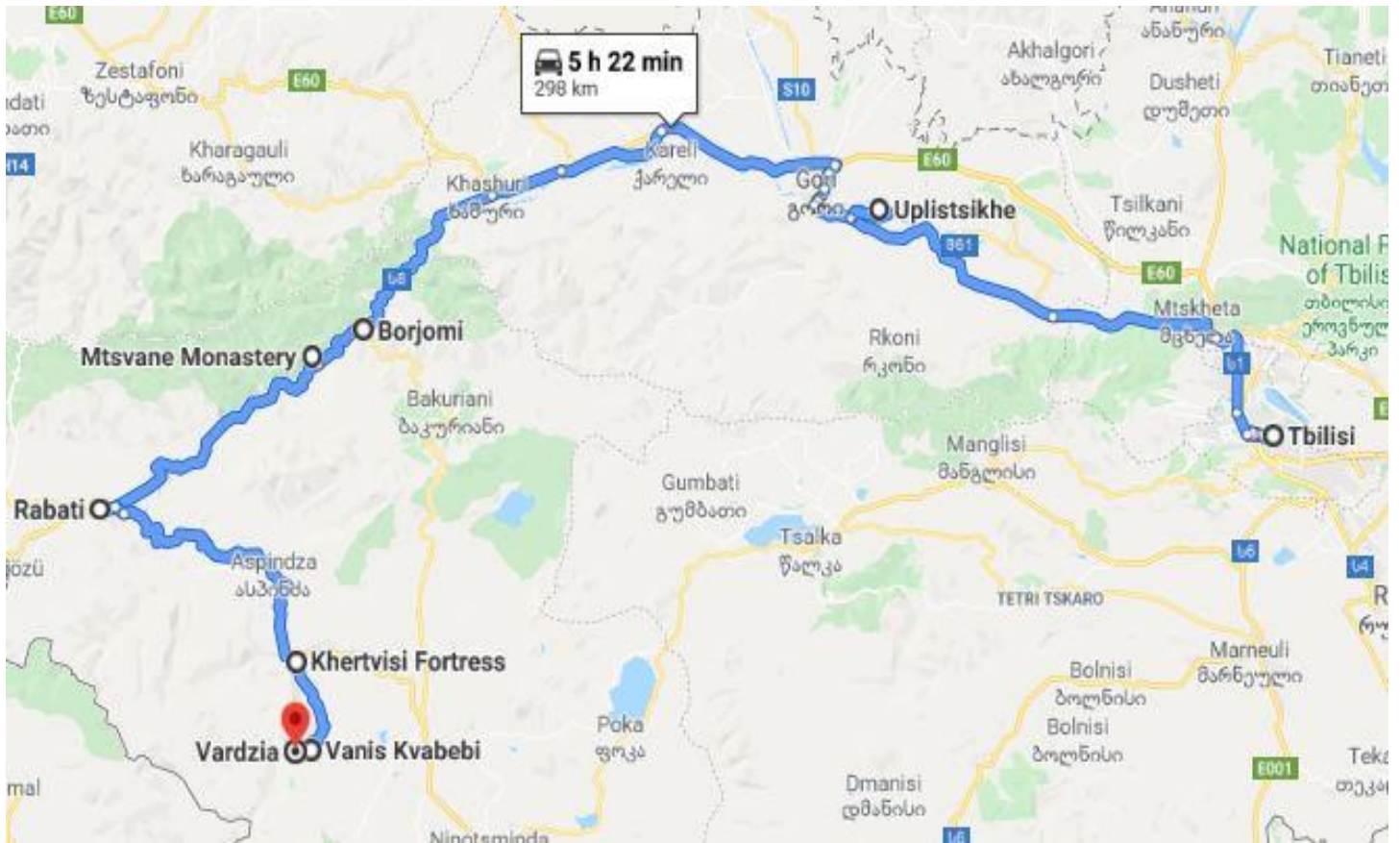


Samtskhe-Javakheti is a region in southern Georgia and includes the territories of the historical-geographical provinces of Samtskhe, Javakheti and Tori. Its administrative center is Akhaltsikhe. The region has a distinct geographical location that has contributed to its economic and cultural relations with neighboring states over the centuries.

Samtskhe-Javakheti is a place of great historical and cultural importance and has preserved many Christian or pre-Christian monuments. It is also rich in a variety of nature monuments, minerals and resorts



Map of the route in Samtskhe-Javakheti region



Akhaltsikhe, (old name Lomsia) - a city in Georgia, founded in the XII century; Samtskhe-Javakheti Region and Historical Samtskhe Center Administrative Center. Height at sea - 1000 m; Religious composition - Christians; Population - 17,903, including 71.7% Georgians and 26.7% Armenians.



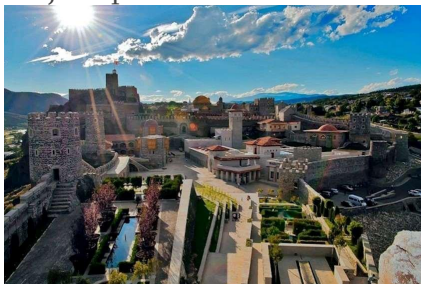
„Borjomi“ mineral water in Borjomi park



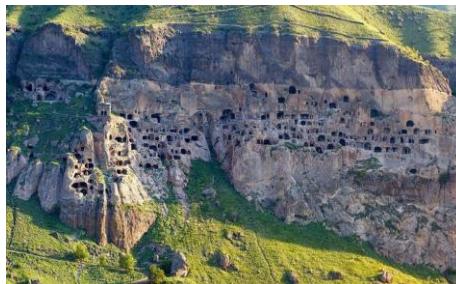
Uplistsikhe



Green monastery



Rabati



Vardzia



Vani boilers/pots

Common borders. Common solutions.

Road from Tbilisi to Akhaltsikhe



“Borjomi” mineral water in Borjomi park

Activities and points of interest:

Tourists from Tbilisi will travel by bus to the west, cross the Mtskheta and turn 80 km to the city of Gori, and another 14 km to the rock-cut pagan city of Uplistsikhe.

Panoramic views

Uplistsikhe;
Rabat;
Khertvisi;
Tmogvi Castle;
Van boilers;
Vardzia

After the tour, they continue on their way to the left side of Khashuri, pass Borjomi (home of the world-famous mineral water - "Borjomi"), from where there will be a turn to the forest road and in 2 km you will see a green monastery hidden in green pastures of nature.

This is a good place for a picnic after that tourists will take the main route to Akhaltsikhe, where it will be a pleasant experience to visit the amazing - fortress Rabati.

Museums

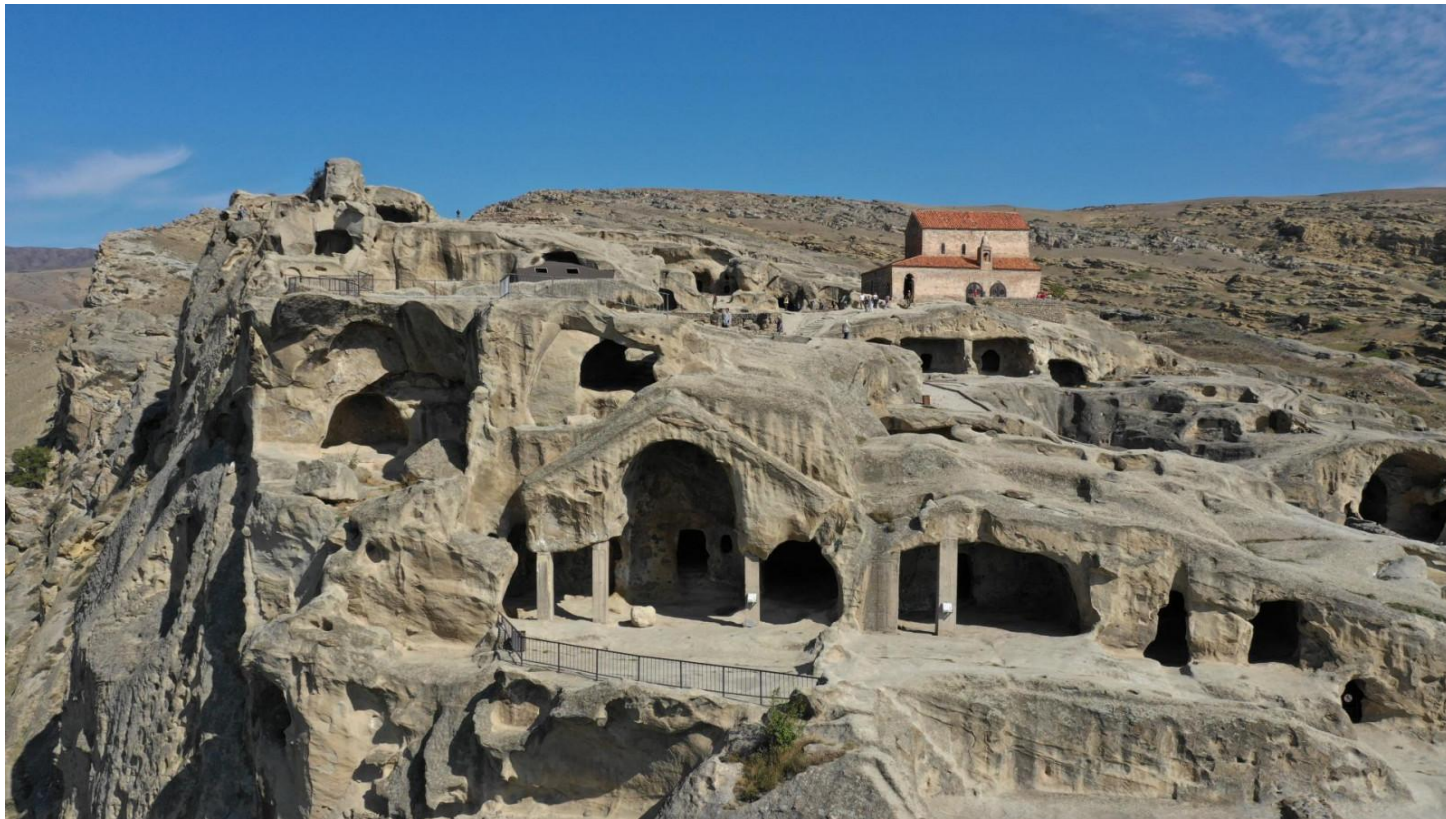
Fortress Rabati

It is also possible to stay in a hotel or a guest house.

From morning, tourists will head to Vardzia. On the way you will meet: Khertvisi, Tmogvi castle, Vani boilers.

There are restaurants and diners near Vardzia, Where tourists can have a delicious dinner. They will return to Akhaltsikhe in the evening to spend the night.

Uplistsikhe cliffside town (The main theme)



There are three large rock architectural formations in Georgia: Uplistsikhe, Davit Gareji (shown in Kakheti) and Vardzia (which is waiting for tourists). The oldest of them is Uplistsikhe. Which is located on the left bank of Mtkvari, 10 km from Gori, it is located in an easily processed sandstone massif, with an area of 9.5 ha.

Uplistsikhe is the only monument of antiquity in Georgia, which is currently preserved above the ground. It is an ancient city with ancient streets, squares, water canals, various buildings, four gates, a secret tunnel leading to the river, a fence, and more.

At the turn of the 2nd and 1st century BC, one of the strongest communities in Uplistsikhe used natural caves.

In the second half of the 6th century, a large three-aisled basilica was carved into the rock in the central part of the city, and in the northern part of the castle, in the second half of the 10th century, the Prince's Church, a three-aisled basilica. According to legend, the interior of the temple was painted with frescoes of the second half of the X century, which was whitewashed by the Russians in the XIX century.

The tunnel was one of the entrances to Uplistsikhe. It is a plot of rock and is 41 meters long. During the floods, the city was fortified with water and provisions. The once magnificent castle-town is now an open-air museum.

Useful Information:

Adr.: Near gori 10Kms

Open: 10.00 - 17.00 everyday

Tel.: 595 52-07-78; 595 52 07-79

Entry Fee - 15 Gel

Guide services - 45 Gel.

Microbus ticket - 2 Gel.

Status: active



Uflistsikhe Tunnel

Green Monastery - the same monastery of St. George of Chitakhevi

(The main theme)



St. George's Monastery in Chitakhevi, which people affectionately call the Green Monastery, is built out of stones, all of which are green, some dark and some light. The monastery complex of the Fathers' Monastery of the 9th century includes a basilica-type church and a later built bell tower. The bell tower has two floors, the first floor is a chapel, and the second floor is a hand carved masterpiece. It is built of rough-hewn stone and has almost no decor.

During the invasions of Shah Tamaz in the 16th century, the monastery was raided, the monks were tortured, killed and thrown into the river. The bloody stones are still covering almost the entire length of the river flowing through the monastery grounds. Lots of pilgrims and tourists come here to see this miracle.

There is a sarcophagus in the temple where the fathers found the bones.

The church was restored in the 80s of the 20th century, and in 2002 the Fathers' Monastery was restored.

Useful information:

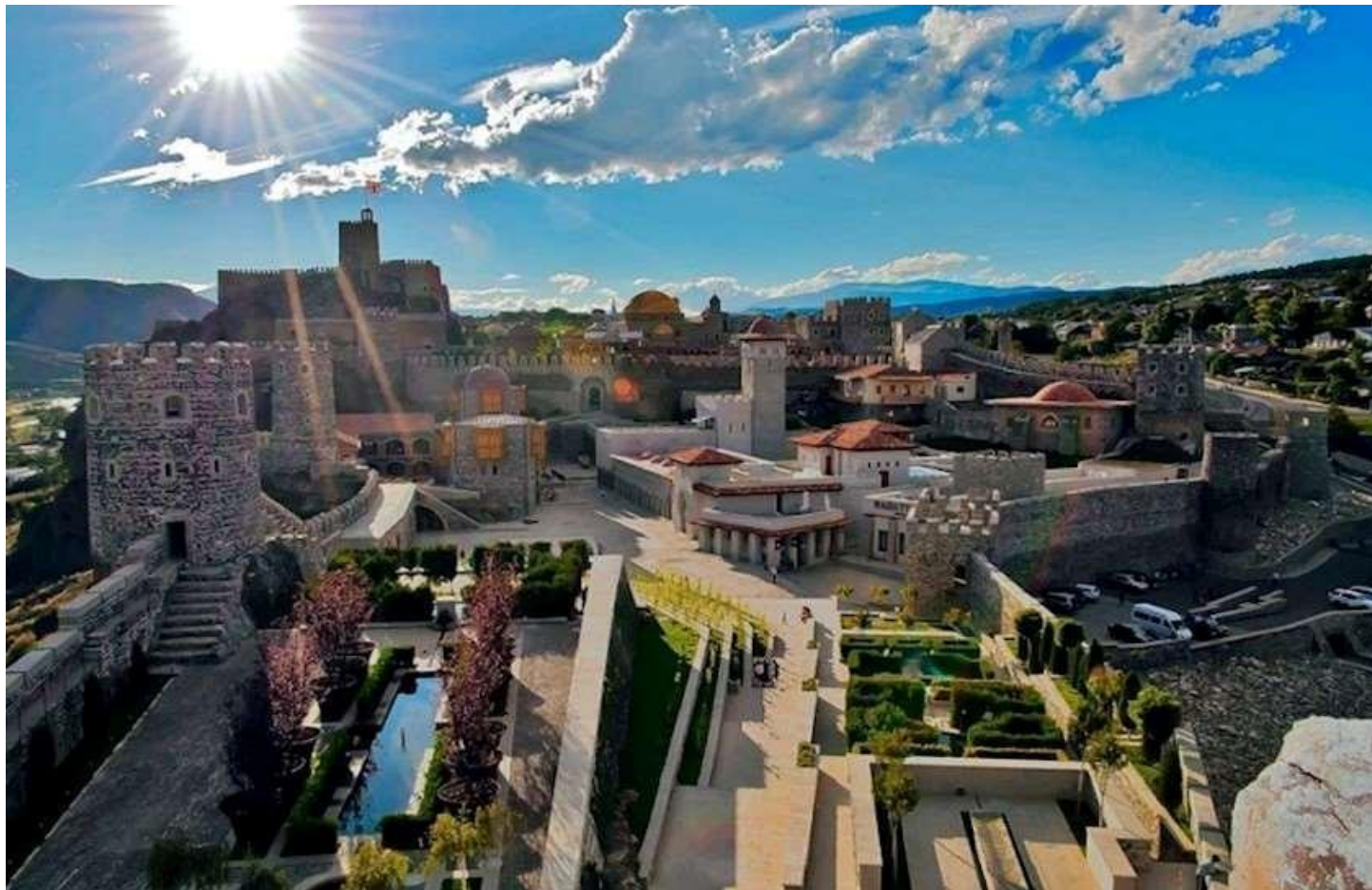
Address: Chitakhevi village of Borjomi municipality

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Status: active

Rabat Castle – Complex

(The main and additional theme)



The history of Rabat Castle-Complex dates back to the 9th century. In the 12-13 centuries the castle became the residence of the noble family of Jakeli, it was rebuilt and expanded. It is from this time that the toponym "Akhaltsikhe" appears. The castle complex consists of buildings from different periods of the Middle Ages. It was the most important defensive structure in the region, its walls remember many hard battles. For centuries, it has been the residence of Akhaltsikhe owners. The fortress was surrounded by three fences and the surrounding area was connected by an underground tunnel.

Nowhere in Georgia is ethnic and religious diversity felt as it is here. In Rabat, which is also called the symbol of tolerance, there are samples of Georgian, Turkish and Russian architecture. This seemingly eclectic sight reflects the history of southern Georgia.

Rabat Castle (1000 m above sea level) is spread over 7 ha, as a result of the restoration of the prison in 2011-2012 the fence was renewed, in the upper part of the castle there are mainly historical buildings: Samtskhe-Javakheti Historical Museum, Mosque, Madrasa, 9th century Orthodox Temple, synagogue, Catholic church, Pasha's resting place, citadel, dilapidated and amphitheater. The lower castle is mostly occupied by service facilities: hotel, restaurant, cafe-bars, wedding house, wine cellar and shops. There is an information center for tourists and an administration building.

Useful information:

Address: Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Administrative Center, Akhaltsikhe City, Rabati Historical District

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Entrance fee: 6 GEL

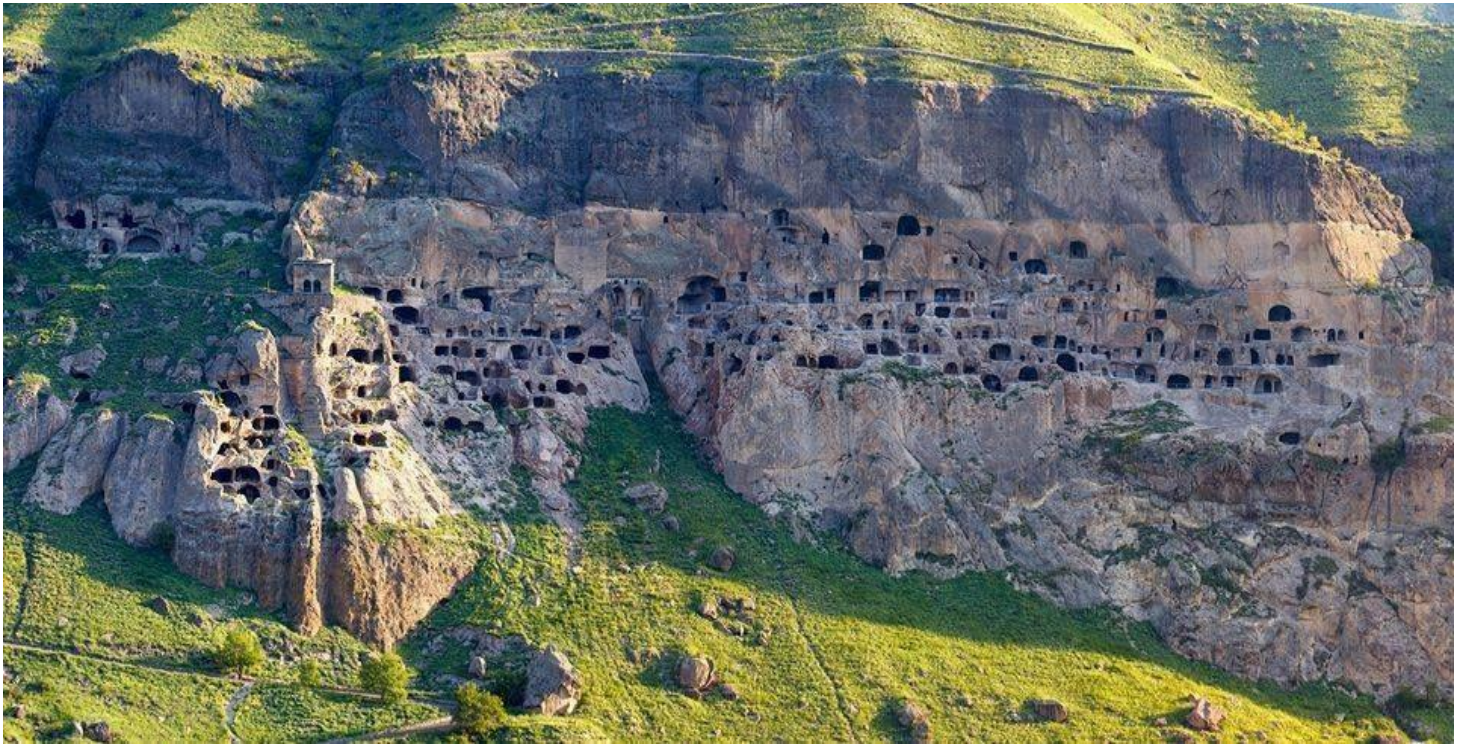
Status: Active



View from Rabati hotel

Vardzia monastic ensemble

(The main theme)



Vardzia - a rock-cut monastic ensemble, a monument of Georgian artistic culture of the 12-13th centuries, located 30 km from the historic Aspindzin River. On the left bank of the Mtkvari (1300-1462 m above sea level).

Vardzia Fortress-City is located spread through 13 levels. It has more than 600 storerooms. There are dining rooms, sinks, pantries, auxiliary storerooms and a 25 cellar with 185 pitchers.

During the reign of Queen Tamar, the purpose of the original military fortress of the prison was changed and it was presented as a huge fortified monastery. The ensemble was founded mainly in 1156-1203, with 15 churches in the complex. The most important of these is the Church of the Assumption. Excellent painting on the wall is also preserved here.

In the 16th century, Vardzia was overthrown by the Shah of Iran. The Persians stole many famous treasures. Then Vardzia was conquered by the Turks. It was ransacked again. The monks were killed but some of them managed to escape in different places and the place was abandoned.

In the 20th century, first a tourist base and then a museum were established here. 1989 With the blessing of the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II, worship was restored in Vardzia, and since 1999 the monastic life has been renewed.

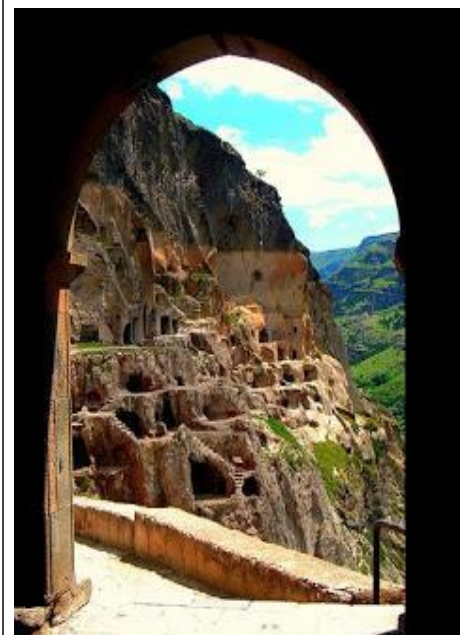
Useful information:

Address: Javakheti, Aspindza district (30 km from Aspindza)

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Entrance fee: 15 GEL

Status: Active



Vani Boilers/Pots

(The main theme)



Vani Pots/Boilers, - Cave Complex and Desert-Monastery, a monument of Georgian architecture and culture of the 8th century in historical Javakheti, in the 9-11th centuries Vani boilers were expanding. In 1089, a strong earthquake destroyed the central part of the Van Boilers. In the 12th century the pots of Vani were in the hands of Queen Tamar and reconstruction began, the monastery was rebuilt, St. George's Cathedral, the gate of the church, the bell tower and the church were built. Monastic life was revived here in the 14th and 16th centuries, but in the 16th century it was first raided by the Persians and then by the Ottomans, after which it was abandoned.

The rock plot of Vani boilers is located on 16 floors with up to 200 slopes. The monastery complex includes rock-cut stalls, agricultural storehouses, a crypt, a shelter, tunnels and 6 churches. Remains of 3 waterways and reservoirs, fragments of paintings and important inscriptions of historical nature are preserved.

Archaeological excavations have uncovered a cellar, pottery workshops, and an oval defensive tower on the terrace that guarded the border.

Useful information:

Address: Javakheti, Aspindza district (27 km from Aspindza)

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Status: Active



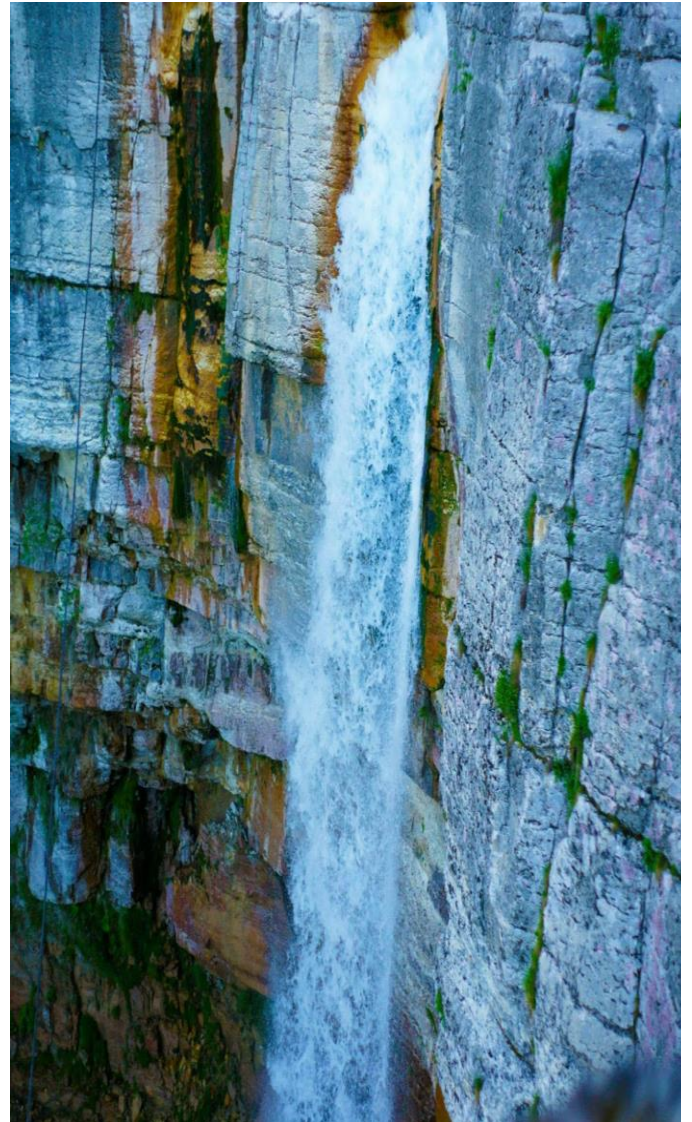
Part V

Religious sites in the western regions of Georgia

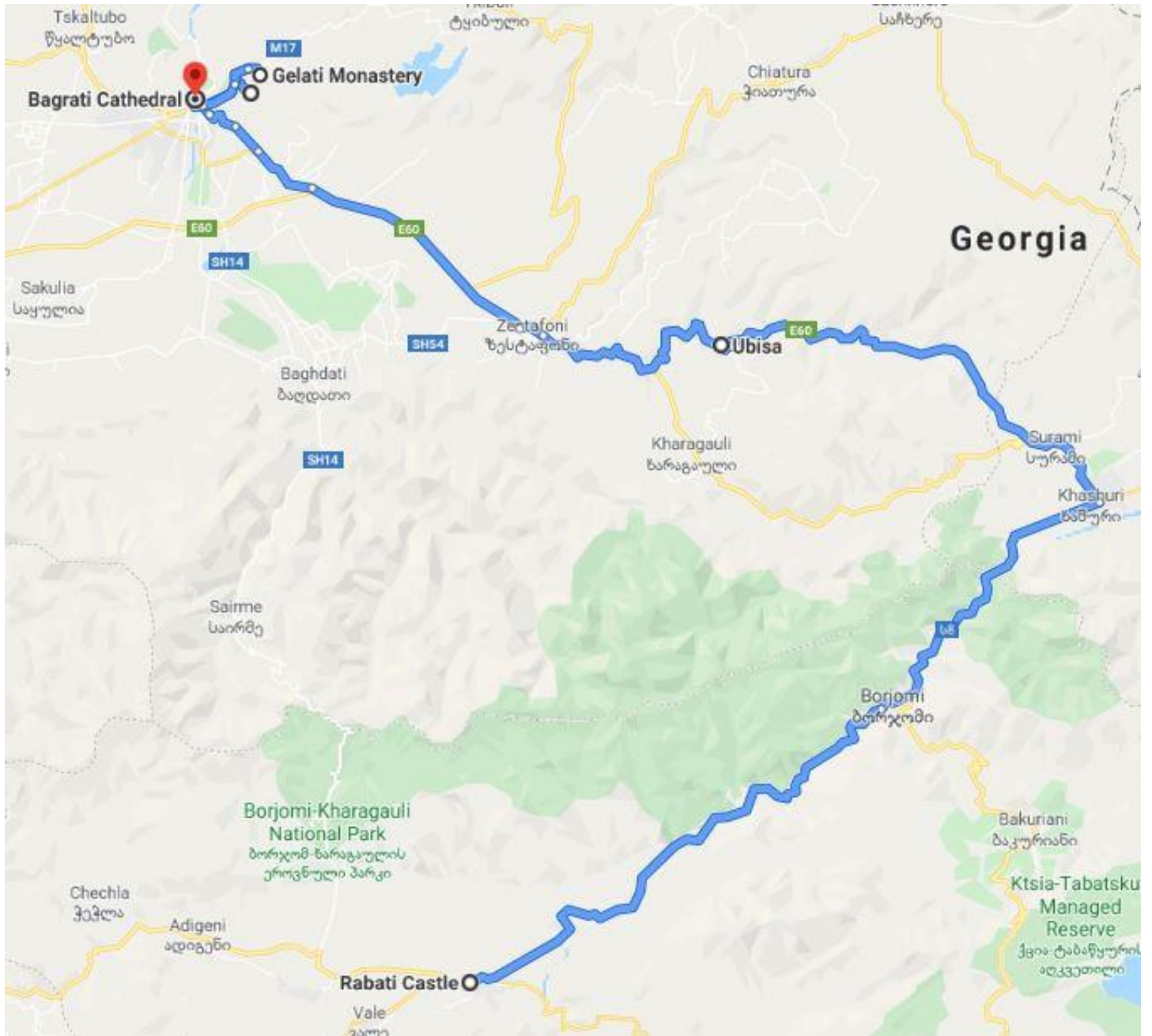


The Imereti region is located in western Georgia and covers the territory of the historical-geographical province, Imereti. Imereti is a country with an ancient culture. It is also known for its beautiful and diverse nature. Remains of the glory of old Colchis, temples, waterfalls, mystical, numerous caves will take you to the magical world.

Samegrelo is also the historical-geographical part of western Georgia, which includes the area between the river Rioni and the Black Sea. Throughout its history, the region has been of great strategic importance, making it the site of numerous invasions by the armies of the Romans, Byzantines, Mongols, Turks, Persians, Russians, and others. This side is rich in cultural monuments of different eras and impressive nature, with lush blue lakes or beautiful canyons.



Map of the route to Kutaisi



Kutaisi is the most important city after Tbilisi. Located 221 km (137 miles) west of Tbilisi, on the Rio River, it is the capital of the western region of Imereti. Historically, in the Middle Ages, it was the capital of Georgia, with an area of 67.7 km²; Height: 200 m above sea level; Population: 147 500 (2016).



Ubisa



Motsameta



Gelati



Synagogue



Bagrati

Common borders. Common solutions.

Route of Western Georgia



Activities and points of interest:

Panoramic views	Bagrati Temple, Pass, Nadikvari Park, Bodbe Monastery, Martvili Canyon
Museums	Martvili museum
Caves	Prometheus Cave

The route will introduce tourists to the religious sites of the Imereti region of western Georgia: from Akhaltsikhe, tourists will return to Khashura, from where they will continue their way to the west. They will bypass Surami Castle. Then they will pass a tunnel that separates Eastern Georgia from the West. In this way they find themselves in western Georgia. On the way, 28 km from the tunnel, on the left side of the road there will be a descent to the Ubisa temple, which will amaze visitors with the magnitude and beauty of the frescoes.

On the way back, those returning to the highway will come across restaurants, after which they will arrive in Kutaisi by the main road. Temples: Motsameta and Gelati will be visited 12 km from Kutaisi. They will return and spend the night in Kutaisi.

The next day, tourists can visit Bagrati Temple.

There is also a synagogue in the city. After visiting the city, head west to the region of Western Georgia - Samegrelo. The first object here will meet tourists 50 km from Kutaisi. In Martvili - Martvili Monastery. On the way you can visit Prometheus Cave. Tourists can stay overnight in martvili or continue to Batumi

Ubisa Monastery (The main theme)



Ubisa - St. George's Church and monastery complex was built in the 9th century. In the 14th century, the temple of Ubisi was painted. The temple presents a magnificent composition of all the sacred feasts: the Annunciation, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Epiphany, and more. Among the frescoes are the "fresco of St. George of Ubisi" and the "Secret Supper".

The main temple is of the hall type. Its core is the main building erected in the center of the fence, which has buildings from the south, west and north.

The monastery also has the tower made in the 12th century - a four-storey building, each floor has one room. According to a special examination of the column, the entrance to the column was from the first floor. On the first floor there was a pantry (2,2X2,2 m), with a deep and wide staircase. They went up the stairs to the second floor, which was the living room (2,55X3.00 m), with a large fireplace and a toilet. It was well covered with three windows and a wide door. From this room they climbed a convenient stone staircase to the upper room (3,05X3,30 m), which was to be used for prayer and work.

Useful information:

Address: Kharagauli district,
The village. Ubisa

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Status: Active



Tower- pillar

Martyr's Monastery

(The main theme)



Motsameta (Martyr's) Monastery is one of the important monuments of ancient Georgian culture. The monastery, surrounded by a fence, is located on a rocky outcrop on a cliffside.

In the early Middle Ages, there was a church of the Annunciation in the fortress of Tskaltsiteli, which was destroyed by the Arab army under the command of Murvan Krush in 735-737. The princes of Argiveti, who were martyred during the invasion, buried David and Constantine in the crypt of the ruined church of the Annunciation. Presumably, King Bagrat IV built a monastery here and arranged a tomb for the holy martyrs in his church. This place was later renamed to Martyrs church. The current church was built to immortalize the holy brothers David and Konstantine Mkheidze.

Useful information:

Address: Tkibuli municipality, village of Motsameta

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 everyday

Status – active



Gelati Monastery Complex

(The main theme)



The monastery was founded by King David IV the Builder of Georgia (12-13th centuries). Restricted by a fence. The ensemble includes buildings of different times (mainly 12-13th centuries). Included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

According to historical sources, Gelati was the crypt of the kings of united Georgia and all the kings of the 12-13th century are buried here.

Gelati Monastery Complex includes Gelati Academy, the main center of education in medieval Georgia. Along with teaching at the academy, translation and scientific activities were carried out, original works were created.

Gelati was a royal monastery in the 12-15th century and was directly subordinate to the king and the scribe (the first minister).

The life of Gelati Academy was renewed under the leadership of the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, His Holiness Ilia II in the 20th century, when the Gelati Scientific Academy was established.

Gelati mosaic is preserved in the main temple of Gelati monastery complex. This is a highly artistic, sophisticated technique of painting and an example of virtuoso mastery. The north wall depicts a fresco of David the Builder.

Useful information:

Address: 9 km northeast of Kutaisi

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Status: Active



Jewish Great Synagogue

(The main theme)



Useful information:

Address: Kutaisi, Boris Gaponov St. # 57-59.

Open: 08.00 - 10.00 in the morning; 20.00 - 22.00 in the evening

Status: Active

The Great Synagogue is one of three synagogues in the city. The Great Synagogue was built in 1885 and is the second largest synagogue in Georgia after the Tbilisi Synagogue. Today, it serves the local Jewish community. It is designed to accommodate 350 worshippers.

For the Passover (a holiday dedicated to the Lord's deliverance of the Jews from the bondage of the Egyptians), Matsa will be sent from Israel to Matsa Fesakh for the Jews of Kutaisi today. The rabbi manages to arrive in Kutaisi from Tbilisi only during important holidays.



Common borders. Common solutions.

Bagrati Church

(The main theme)



Bagrati Temple - built by the King of Abkhazia and Georgia, Bagrat III (10 - 11th centuries) in the name of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which with its architectural and artistic dignity occupies a special place in the history of Georgian culture. Historically, it has been a symbol of a united Georgia. It is a symbol of the unity and strength of the country.

Until the end of the 17th century, the monument stood intact. In 1692, the Ottomans demolished the dome of the temple. Over time, its destruction continued. Currently, the `Bagrati Temple Restoration Foundation is established with the aim of reconstructing the temple in all of its glory. Since 1994, the Bagrati Temple has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List. In 1995, the temple was restored. In 2009, the Georgian government began a full restoration of the monument.

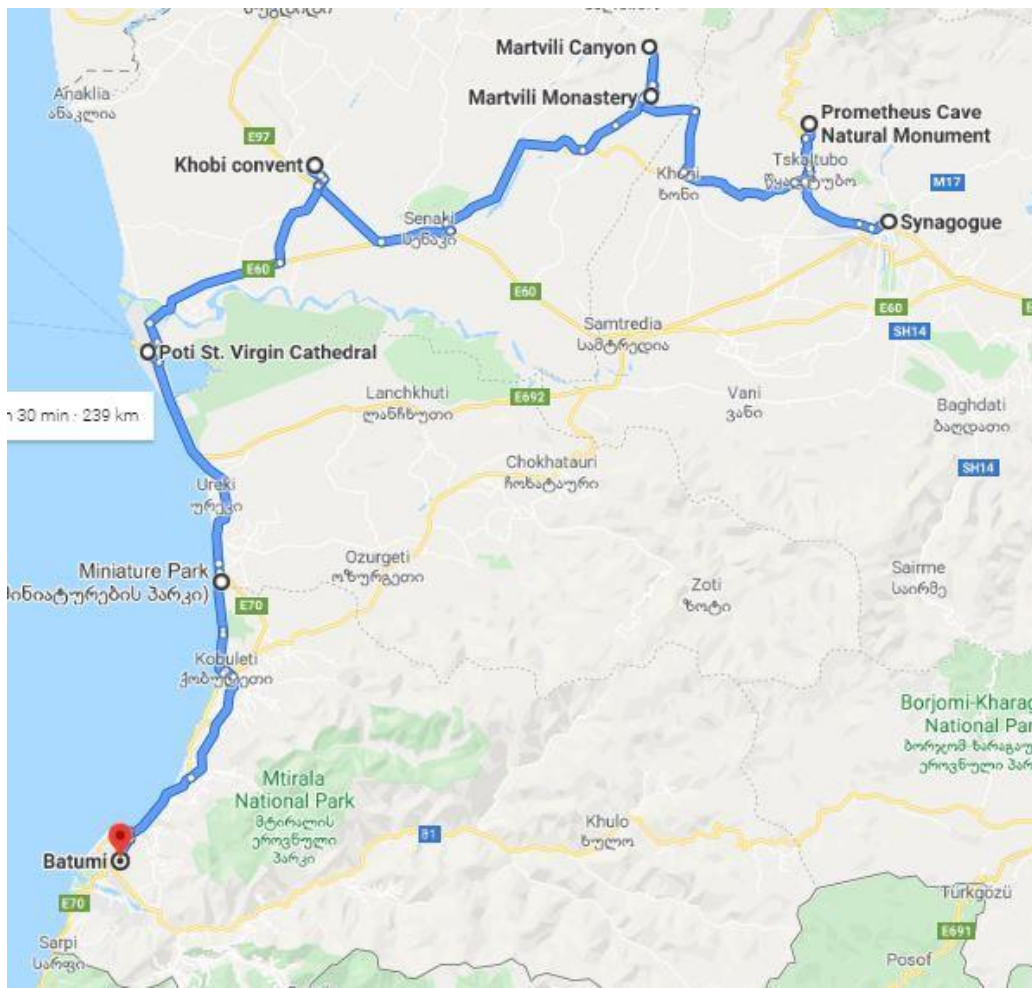
Useful information:

Address: Kutaisi, Bagrati st.

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Status: Active

Adjara route map



Synagogue



Promethe cave



Martvili Monastery



Martvili Canyon

Martvili Monastery

(The main theme)



Martvili Monastery Complex - an early medieval Christian church and monastery complex, located on a high hill in a convenient geographical and strategic location. At the foot of the mountain the plains of the river Tskhenistskali and the river Abasha are widely spread. Almost the whole of Imereti and Samegrelo can be seen from the monastery, which sits nestled in the lap of scenic greenery. The main temple is named after the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The buildings included in the Martvili monastery complex are: fence, rectangular storeroom, main church, church, bell tower and equator.

The monastery complex was a large cultural and educational center in the Middle Ages. Paintings from 14-17th centuries are preserved in the temple. Next to the main temple is a two-story church built in the 10th century. To the west, near the main temple, stands a tall pillar with a Mesvet church.

The main church of the monastery complex - the Church of the Assumption (21 x 17.5 m) - is built in the middle of a small fence. The temple has been painted many times, Ransacked and raided many times as well. To the south-west of the main temple there is a pillar built in 10-11 centuries, at the bottom of which there was a staircase, and at the top - the church.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Fathers' Monastery was opened in Martvili, which existed until the 1920 s.

Useful information:

Address: Martvili Municipality, village. Martvili

Open: 09.00 - 19.00 every day

Status: Active



Temple frescoes

Prometheus Cave

(The main and additional theme)



Prometheus Cave is a natural monument in the Imereti region, its length is 1.8 km and it is formed at a depth of 40 m from the ground level.

Prometheus Cave is a world-famous monument and distinguished by beauty. Its age is about 60-70 million years. This karst cave, adorned with amazing gallant forms of stalactites and stalagmites, will once again convince you of the boundless possibilities of nature and take you on a journey into a fabulous world. Also, while walking in the cave, tourists are greeted by "petrified waterfalls", "hanging stone curtains", "helixes", "calcite" and other organic remnants, which leaves the impression of a fabulous environment for visitors.

A total of 22 halls have been discovered in the cave, of which 6 halls have been opened for tourists so far. In the cave it is possible to hike for 1420 meters, look at the halls and take a boat tour of the river.

Useful information:

Address: Tsaltubo Municipality, Kumistavi village, Kumi river basin

Entrance fee: 20-25 GEL,

Boat ride - 15 GEL.

Open: 10.00 - 17.00 every day

Tel: 577 10 14 17



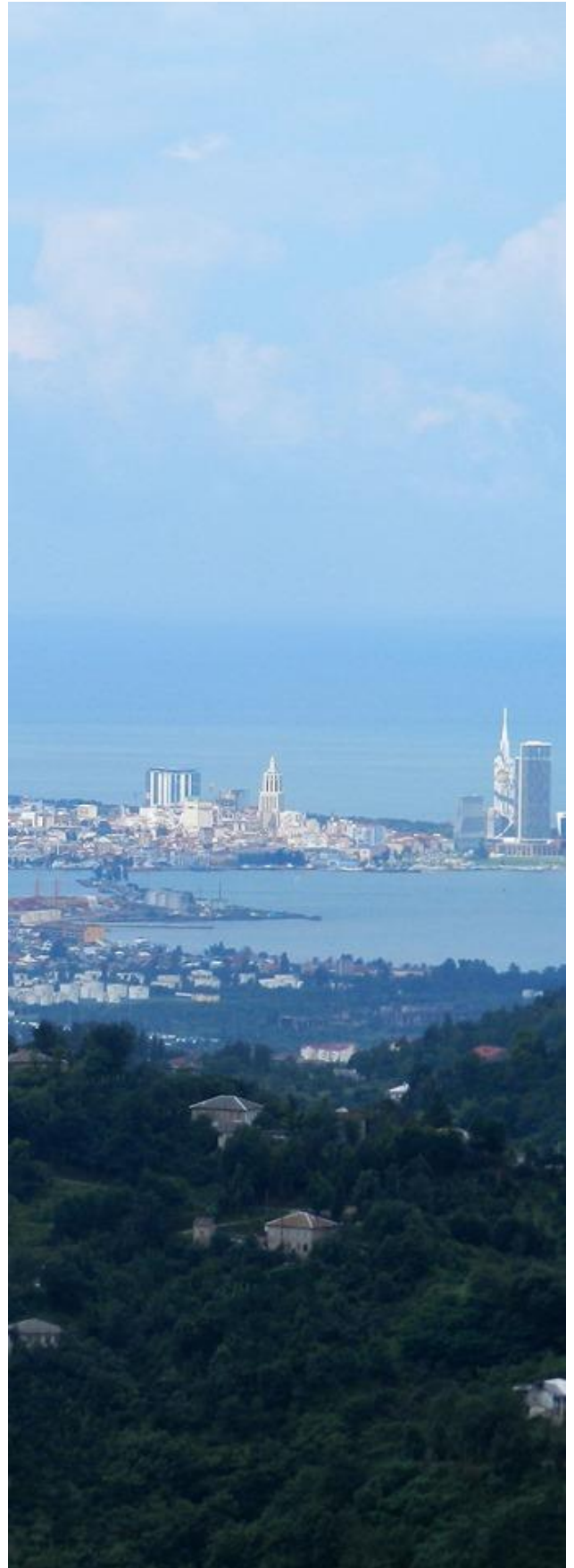
Part VI

Religious sites of the Georgian seaside

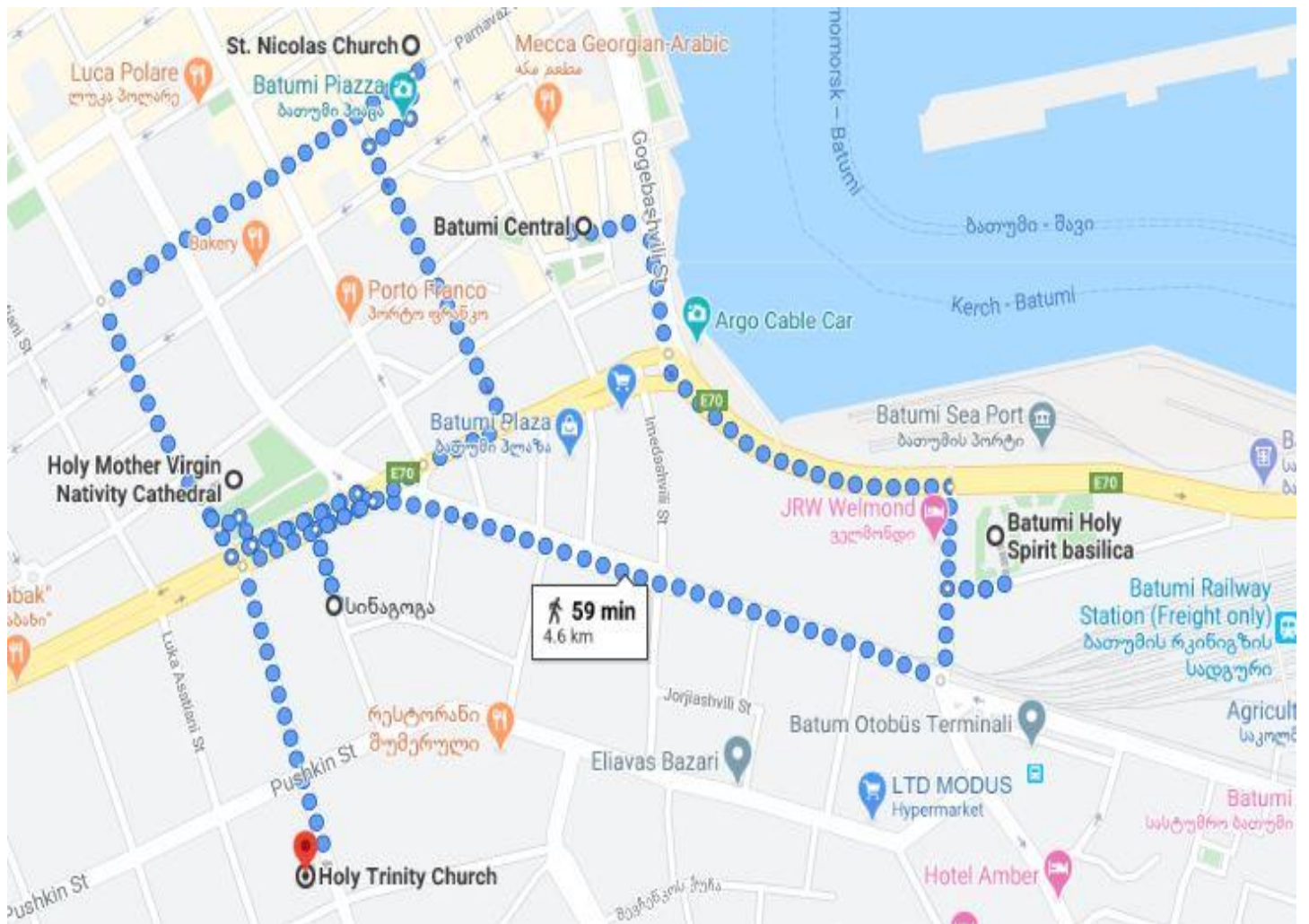


For centuries, faith in Adjara has changed depending on who was influencing the region. In the first century CE, the apostles of Christ gradually converted it to Christianity. In the time of St. Nino, Christianity was declared the state religion, Adjara became one of the centers of Christianity. Bishops were established in it and a number of churches were built.

Later, after the Ottoman Empire captured the region, the Muslim faith gained a foothold in Adjara. The situation changed after the region came under the influence of the Russian Empire. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Christian Orthodox Church reclaimed its religious buildings, and Muslims built mosques for their parishioners.



Map of Batumi route



Adjara is one of the oldest parts of Georgia, which was geographically part of Meskheti. Church historians believe that Christianity entered Georgia and spread from Adjara. The name Adjara dates back to the 7th century; Administrative center - Batumi. The majority of the population of Adjara has always been Georgian. At different times, there were also small Armenian and Greek populations living in Adjara, whose main activity was trade. Area - 1873.4 km, altitude - 1 m to 3000 m (mountainous Adjara); Religious composition - Christians, Muslims; National composition: population - 376 000, including 92% Georgians and 8% - Russians, Armenians, Ossetians, Ukrainians, Azerbaijanis ...

Adjara - border from western Georgia



Activities and points of interest:

Panoramic views

Batumi Botanical Garden, Gonio Castle, Batumi Trinity Church ..

Museums, Archeological reserves

Gonio Museum-Reserve

The route will introduce tourists to the religious sites of the region of Western Georgia - Adjara (capital - Batumi).

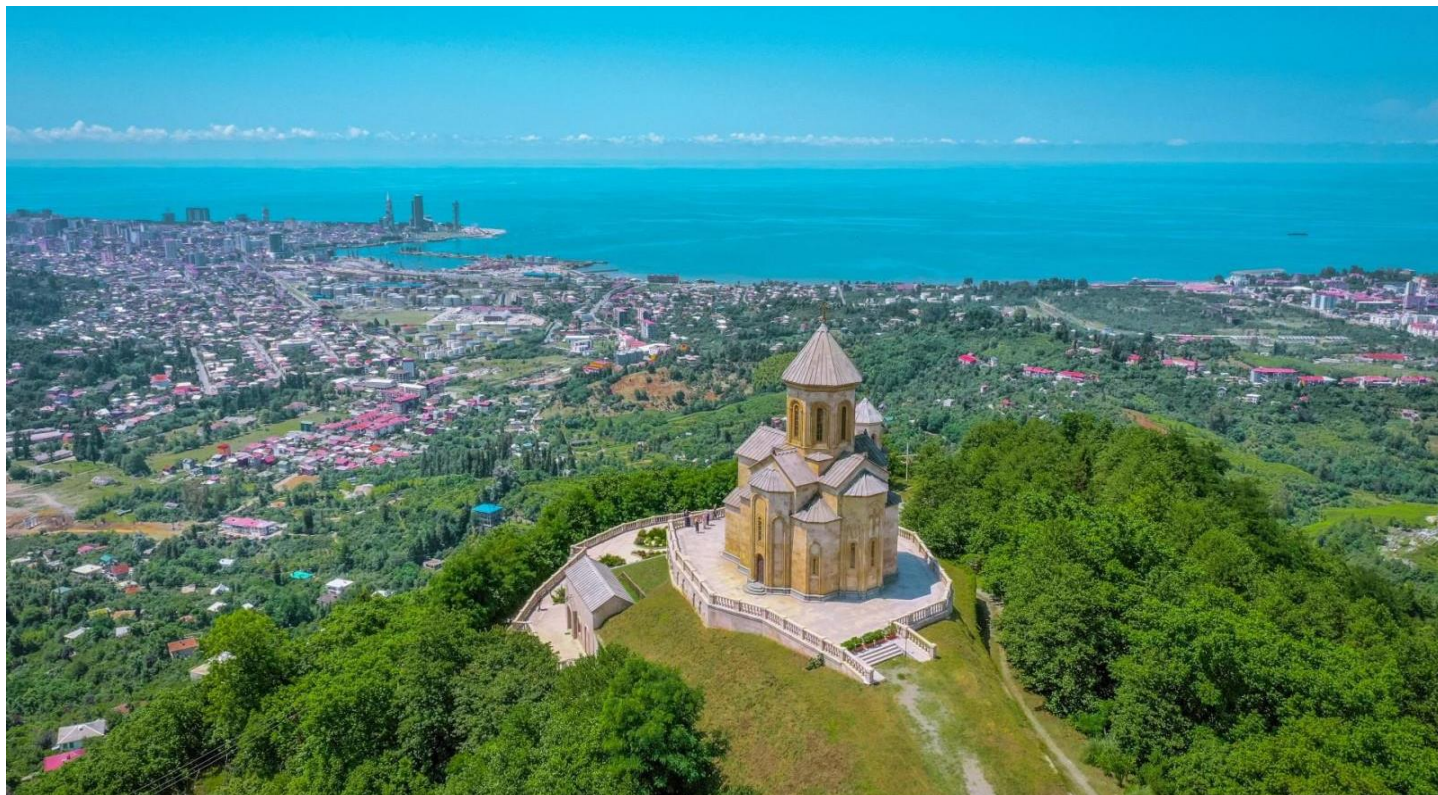
Batumi is represented by Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim churches. There is also a synagogue. It has to be remarked that the apostles Andrew the First-Called and Svimon Kananeli, Bartholomew and Matata preached here. St. Andrew founded the first church in Greater Adjara in the name of the Mother of God, and established the first priests and deacons in Adjara. He arrived in Atskuri (ancient Sosanageti) from Great Adjara, where he founded the first episcopate in Georgia. There was one bishop and several priests-deacons. The apostles left the hand-painted icon of the Mother of God in Atskuri, which is why this icon was called "Atskuri" and which is currently preserved in the Georgian National Museum.

Tourists can visit Matata's tomb 10 km from Batumi, in Gonio Museum-Reserve, where, in addition to visiting the shrines, they will visit the museum-reserve with ancient artefacts and enjoy the beautiful nature of Adjara.

There are mostly Orthodox churches in Batumi, but the mountainous region of Adjara is mostly populated by Muslim Georgians, which explains the abundance of mosques.

Batumi Trinity Church

(The main theme)



Batumi Holy Trinity Church was built in the second half of the 19th century. It has been considered a cemetery area for years. In the 1930s, services were suspended. It was used as a warehouse - agricultural inventory was stored.

In 1947, the All-Holy Trinity Cathedral was opened. The temple had a choir of 30 people. However, in the summer of 1976, the temple caught fire and was completely destroyed. Soon the restoration began, the roof work was done so the service continued in 1979, but its not fully complete, the restoration is still going on to this day.

Construction of the All-Holy Trinity Monastery Complex began in 2002. It consists of two temples. Amazing views of Batumi and seaside will mesmerize every guest. Behind the temple is the Trinity Convent.

Useful information:

Address: 8 km from Batumi, on Trinity Mountain

Open: 09:00 - 19:00 every day

Status: Active



St. Nicholas Church in Batumi

(The main theme)



The construction of St. Nicholas Church in Batumi in the sixties of the 19th century turned out to be the signal of the fading grasp of Turkish rule in this ancient Christian region. The first liturgy took place in 1871. In 1894-1898 it was transferred to the ownership of the yard-area church, after which boys' and women's schools were opened on the territory of the temple.

During the Soviet era, the church ceased to function for 10-12 years, and in 1946, with the donation of an Orthodox parishioner, the church was restored and so was the priesthood.

Restoration works of the temple have been carried out since 1998. The exterior of the temple was repaired, the yard was expanded and improved. The church is currently being painted.

Useful information:

Address: Batumi, Parnavaz Mepe St. 18

Open: 09:00 - 19:00 every day

Status: Active



Common borders. Common solutions.

Batumi Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary

(The main theme)



The Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary - the Georgian Orthodox Church in Batumi, is a cultural heritage site of national importance. Built at the end of the 19th century, the temple has both architectural and artistic value. The building is built in Neo-Gothic style and has three domes. During the Soviet era, an archive was housed here, followed by a high-voltage laboratory. Later, by the decision of the government of Adjara, the building was transferred to the Georgian Orthodox Church.

In 1989, the church was consecrated by the Catholicos Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II. A solemn baptism was held on this day, where about 5,000 people shared the true faith of Christ. The Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Batumi was named the Cathedral. Today, the Church of the Mother of God in Batumi is the main cathedral of the Diocese of Batumi and Lazeti.

Useful information:

Address: Batumi, N. Baratashvili st.

Working hours: 09:00 - 19:00

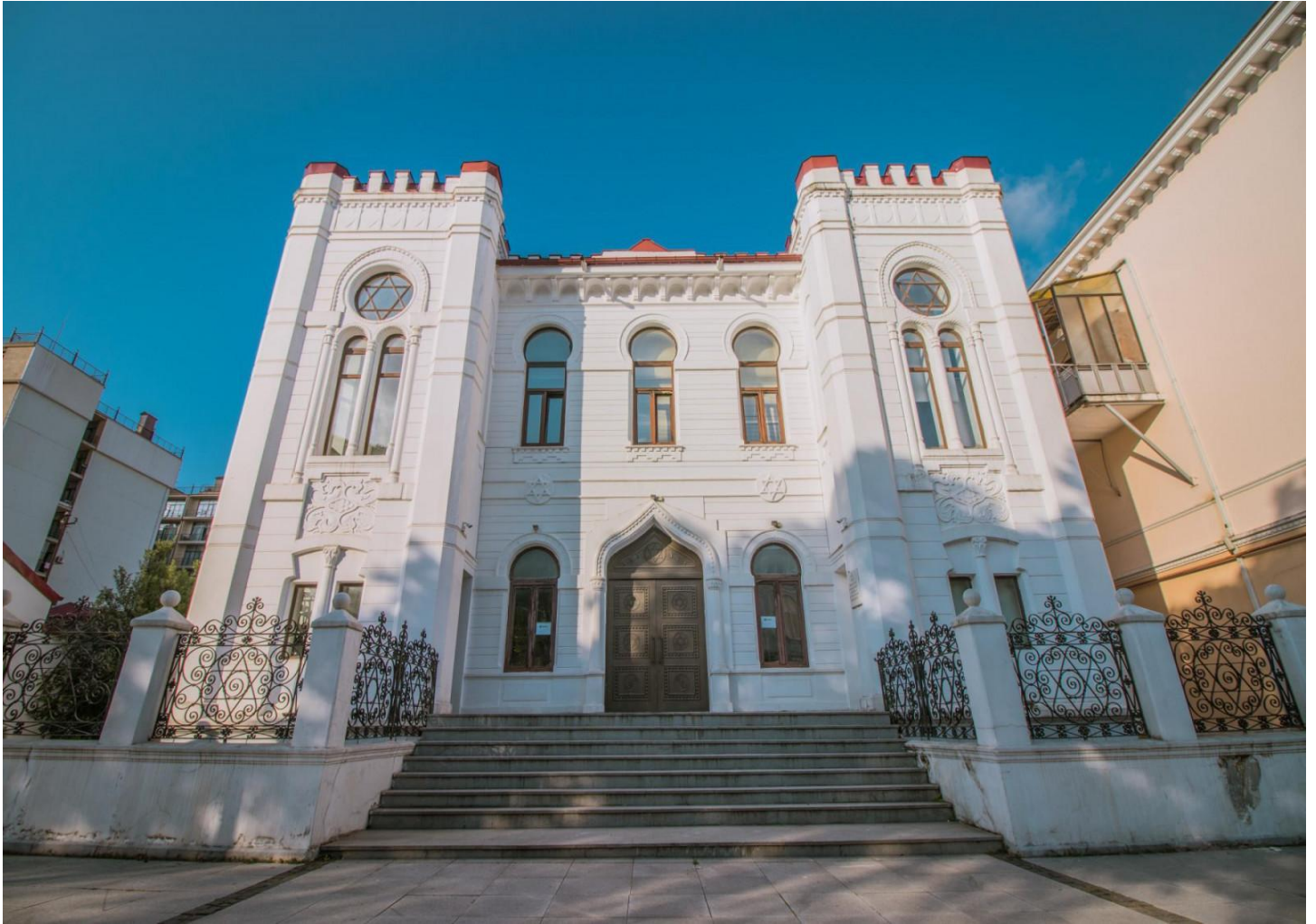
Status: Active



Common borders. Common solutions.

Batumi Synagogue

(The main theme)



In the early twentieth century, local Hebrews petitioned the then-Russian Emperor Nicholas II for permission to build a synagogue. After obtaining permission, the construction of a stone synagogue began, which was completed in 1904, and it was analogous to the synagogues of Amsterdam and The Hague.

During the Soviet era, the building was used for various purposes. In 1993, the synagogue was again handed over to the Jewish Diaspora.

Useful information:

Address: Batumi, Vazha-Pshavela Street # 33

Working hours: 09:00 - 19:00 every day

Tel: 555 36 66 99

Status: Active

Armenian-Gregorian Church of Batumi

(The main theme)



Useful information:

Address: Batumi. K. Gamsakhurdia st. 23

Working hours: 09:00 - 19:00 every day

Status: Active

The Armenian-Gregorian Church in Batumi was built in 1873. It was a wooden building that had long served as a follower of this faith.

In 1885 a wooden church was demolished and a new temple was built by the design of the Austrian architect Malfred.

During the Soviet era, the planetarium was opened in the church building, and in 1992, at the request of Armenians and the Armenian diaspora living in Batumi, the church returned to its old functions.

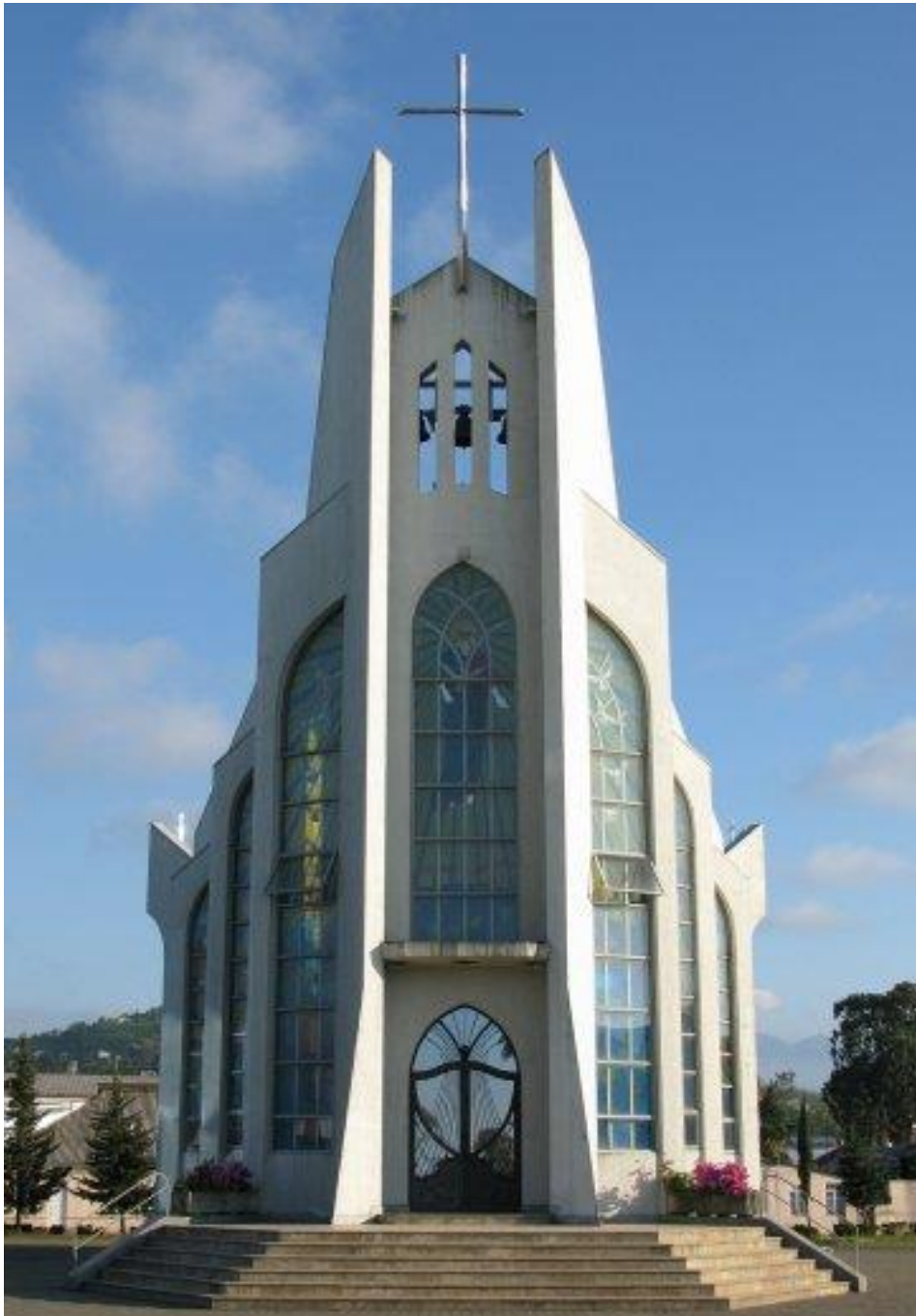


The interior of the church

Common borders. Common solutions.

Batumi Catholic Church

(The main theme)



Batumi Holy Spirit Catholic Church - located in Adjara, Batumi. It was built in 2000 by Catholics in Batumi.

The church was consecrated by Transcaucasian administrator Reverend Giuseppe Pazotto. The Vatican Ambassador to Georgia often visits the church and a solemn service is held.

Useful information:

Address: Batumi, Gogebashvili st. 60 a
Working hours: 09:00 to 20:00 every day
Tel: 599 539 744
Status: Active

Batumi Mosque - Muslim Shrine

(The main theme)



The history of Batumi mosques dates back to Ottoman times. The first, the so-called The Aziziye Mosque was built in 1863 in Batumi. The second mosque became known as the Ahmediye Mosque. This mosque was made of wood and soon burned down. Soon in 1866, Orta-Ahmed Jame was built on its site, which will be painted by a Laz master. This mosque was mainly intended for Georgian Muslims.

From 1878, when Batumi became part of the Russian Empire, its ethnic and religious composition gradually changed. Due to this, the mosques, due to the reduction of the population of this category, gradually lost their function and only one functioning mosque in the city - Akhmedie remained.

The mosque hosts daily as well as festive prayers, sermons, and petitions. For festive prayers, believers will be called by Muezzin. Due to its status and importance, the mosque is often visited by government officials, representatives of various organizations and confessions, and tourists.

Useful information:

Address: Batumi, Kutaisi st.
Open: 09:00 - 19:00 every day
Status: Active



The interior of the mosque

Gonio Castle and the Tomb of the Apostle Matata

(The main and additional theme)



Gonio Castle is associated with the Roman era. It was founded by the Romans (by Pompey), It was built in the 70s of the 1st AD. Its length is 228 meters and its width is 195 meters. The area of the prison is 44,460 square meters. The fence is fortified with 18 towers.

There is a museum-reserve in Gonio prison, where the exhibits dating from the 19th century are kept.

According to the Holy Father of the 4th century, Epiphanius Kvipreli, the second apostle, Matata, was buried in Georgia. According to him, "Matata preached the gospel in Colchis, where the fortress of Apsari (now Gonio) is located, where he died and is still buried". At the initiative of the Patriarch of Georgia Ilia II, St. Matata's tomb was completely renovated in 2015 for the proper appreciation of the Holy Apostle.

Gonio Museum-Reserve hosts several hundred tourists throughout the year, both lovers of antiquities and pilgrimages, and this historic site is an important center for recreation and cognition in the Adjara region.

Useful information:

Address: Gonio settlement

Website <http://adjaramuseums.ge>

Entrance fee: 5 GEL

Working hours: 10:00 - 18:00 every day

Tel: 595 35 21 20 577 59 19 18

Taxi - 20-25 GEL from Batumi

Minibus - price 1 GEL



Tomb of St. Matata

TYPES OF CLIENTS TARGETED

ORIGIN

local
national
international

AGE

18-70 years old

BUDGET

medium budget
high budget

TRAVELLER PROFILE

- Medium and high-income
- Considerable interest in religion / culture / architecture
- Considerable interest of social status, object location and national values
- Tourists who love extreme recreation
- The Typical Tourist

MARKETING STRATEGY



ONLINE

1. Promotion through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Rambler)
2. Google ads
3. Tourist agency web pages

OFFLINE

1. Promotion via billboards, leaflets
2. Tourist agencies communication materials