

Trekking in Georgia and the High Caucasus

Trip Code: GHC

Version: GHC Trekking in Georgia and the High Caucasus



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Outstanding views of Mt Kazbek (5047m) the highest peak in Georgia
- Explore the historic fortified villages of Mutso, Shatili and UNESCO Mtskheta city
- Trek across mountain passes, by lakes and through flower strewn meadows in the Caucasus

- Fully supported trekking and all meals included

AT A GLANCE

- 6 days trekking and walking
- Max altitude 3330m
- Join at Tbilisi

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 7 nights Camping
- 1 nights Hotel

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

East of the Black Sea and bordered in the north by the long chain of the Caucasus Mountains, Georgia is one of the most exciting adventure travel and trekking/walking destinations in Europe. From the capital Tbilisi, we travel north to the striking Mount Kazbek (5047m). On trek we will walk across the Abudauri, Barbalo and Khidotani passes and deep into the remote Khevsureti Range. Crossing open ridges, with far-reaching views, we descend through flower-filled mountain pastures into steep-sided and forested valleys, where we find the fortified medieval villages Mutso and Shatili. Close to the northern border, this is Georgia's most traditional region, home to animist shrines, friendly villages, hidden churches and impressive stone-built defensive towers. After our 'loop' northwards into the mountains, we will add to our understanding of this fascinating country with sightseeing in Tbilisi and in the nearby town of Mtskheta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and former Georgian capital.

LOOKING to extend your holiday? Fancy the ultimate Caucasus experience? For a complete experience, why not combine KE's Trekking in Georgia and the High Caucasus Holiday with [Armenia's Trekking Highlights](#).

Is this holiday for you?

This is an adventurous trekking holiday through the remote south side of the Caucasus Mountains. However, it is not a particularly high-level trek, and with its maximum elevation only a little above 3000 metres, the effects of altitude will be a minor consideration. Our route follows trails between valleys and villages, and the underfoot conditions should prove straightforward for the most part, although there are a couple of steep ascents and descents as we cross the passes, and some paths which are through much vegetation. Most of the trekking days involve hiking for 5 or 6 hours, but we have two longer days with around 10 hours of walking. This trek is supported, so you will only need to carry your day pack each day.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at Tbilisi hotel, single airport transfer provided. Drive to Kazbegi. Short walk Gergeti Trinity Church. Drive to camp (2300m).

On arrival in Tbilisi those arriving on the group flight, in the early hours of the morning, will have access to room in order to get some sleep/rest and freshen up before breakfast. After breakfast we drive up the famous Georgian Military Highway (leading to the Georgian-Russian border). On the way we will make a stop to visit the Ananuri architectural complex. Built in the 17th century, the two churches and the fortress overlook the Zhinvali water reservoir. Continuing our stunning drive along the Tergi River will bring us to Kazbegi the main town in the region. From Kazbegi a leisurely uphill 2 hour walk up through beautiful valleys and woodland leads to Gergeti Trinity Church located at 2170 m. Weather permitting we may catch a glimpse of one of the highest peaks in the Caucasus - Mt Kazbek (5047m). Returning to Kazbegi, we drive to the village Juta, cut off from the rest of the country for 6 months a year by snow. We camp at the end of the road in the remote valley (2300m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 475M		Descent 475M		Time 3 - 4 hrs walking		Distance 14KM
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DAY 2

From Juta to our camp at the foot of Mt. Chaukhebi (2550m), via Tetu Peak (3210m).

From village Juta we trek up to our next camp site at 2550m, crossing the beautiful flower strewn meadows in the shadow of the impressive Mount Chaukhebi. En route we will break off from our trail to climb Tetu Peak (3210m). It will take around 2hrs of walking, through rhododendron fields and wildflower meadows to reach the ridge of Tetu Peak, we will want take our time as we adjust to the altitude, another 100m takes us up on to the top from where we can enjoy breath-taking views for the Great Caucasus Mountains, with mighty Mt Kazbegi to one side of us and Mt Chaukhebi to the other. Returning down the way we came, we then walk the short distance up the valley to our camp at the foot of Mt Chaukhebi.



Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1100M		Descent 1000M		Time 7 - 8 hrs walking		Distance 15KM
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DAY 3**Over the Abudelaury Pass (3330m) and via Abudelaury Lakes (2500m) to Roshka (2000m).**

A long day today with a reasonable amount of ascent as we head up and across the Abudelaury Pass (3330m) and down to our camp near the village of Roshka (2000m). We begin following a noisy mountain river up onto the Abudelaury Pass (3330m). As we approach the pass the landscape opens up before us and we witness the full amazing panorama of the Great Caucasus. From the top of this high pass we will usually see snow drifts and cornices up on the mountains, even in summer. From here we descend to the colourful Abudelaury Lakes. These beautiful lakes appear to be different colours, one green, one blue and one white. From the lakes we will walk pick our way down among stones and boulders for around 2 hours, until we reach the village of Roshka where we will have our next camp.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 925M		Descent 1450M		Time 8 - 9 hrs walking		Distance 16KM
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DAY 4**Descend through meadows, forest and along the river our camp at Guli Village.**

We have a lovely walk today, mostly down hill, on a pleasant trail that passes through flower-filled meadows. We then descend to the Khevsuri Aragvi River via a steep forest trail to reach our camp at a small Guli village located in the forest. We may want to stop along the way to take a refreshing dip in the river!). Just 3 families live in the tiny village near our camp and we will be able to buy local honey, homemade Matsoni (yoghurt) and delicious Khachapuri (cheese bread) from them.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 120M		Descent 200M		Time 3 - 4 hrs walking		Distance 7KM
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DAY 5**Trek across the Barbalo pass (3000m) and descend to the Arghuni River (2000m) and our camp at Kistani (2050m).**

We begin today with a short vehicle transfer of around 30 mins to reach Gudani village. Today's hike starts with a long steady climb over a fantastic ridge with great views to reach the summit of the Barbalo pass (2996m). We then make a steeper descent, dropping almost 1000 metres to Kistani village on the Arghuni River. A beautiful days walk, descending through another maze of flowers to our campsite (2050m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1150M		Descent 950M		Time 8 hrs walking		Distance 17KM
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DAY 6

Visit the ancient villages of Shatili and Mutso.

This morning we jump in our 4x4s and drive for 1 hour to reach Shatili, a fortified village at the historical centre of Khevsureti Province. Located in the deep Arghuni Gorge, Shatili is a unique complex of medieval and early modern fortified dwellings. There are approximately 60 stone-built towers that cluster together to create a single chain of fortifications. Inaccessible by road in the winter, the village is home to just a dozen or so families. Some restoration work has been done on the village to bring back to life its former glory. Its dramatic architecture is a testament to the troubled history of this border region. Another hour's drive takes us to Mutso, an atmospheric deserted ruin of towers and tombs. The village lies on a high plane and from there a view of the valley unfolds. From Mutso we walk for 2 hours to our camp near Ardoti village (1700m). If we wish we can walk from camp up into the village to take a look around. This fortified village now only has 1 or resident families.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 50M		Descent 50M		Time 2 hrs walking		Distance 6KM
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DAY 7

Trek over the Khidotani Pass (2463m) to Khonischala Village.

Today we begin by walking uphill beside the Andaki River, which we must cross several times, before we branch off and ascend up into the Khidotani Range and over the Khidotani Pass (2463m), from the pass we will have a fantastic view of the Tebuto Glacier (4000m). We then descend down the other side of the range and follow the Khonistskali River to Khonischala village where we will camp for the night.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 800M		Descent 700M		Time 6 hrs walking		Distance 10KM
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DAY 8

Return to Tbilisi. Sightseeing in Mtskheta and Tbilisi.

We set off early for the 5 hours drive back to Tbilisi via Mtskheta. Mtskheta is the ancient capital and religious centre of Georgia, which is reputedly 3000 years old. Here we can visit the 6th century Jvari church and 11th century Svetitskhoveli Cathedral where the Robe of Christ is supposedly buried. Both Jvari and Svetitskhoveli are UNESCO World Heritage sites. Returning to Tbilisi in the afternoon, we have time for a short walking tour of the old town, where we learn about its rich history and architecture. There is a wealth of religious and secular buildings from across the centuries including the famous 19th century houses with wooden multi-coloured balconies. In the evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner at a traditional Georgian restaurant.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 9

Departure day. Early morning single transfer to Tbilisi Airport is provided.

An early morning single timed transfer to the airport is provided, where your holiday ends. For those with later flights, the hotel will provide a breakfast and can also arrange taxis to the airport.

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed Tbilisi Airport transfers at the beginning and end of the trip
- Accommodation as described (includes a hotel 'night' for early morning arrivals on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary)
- All land transport throughout the trip
- Baggage transfer by vehicle whilst trekking
- 6 nights full-service camping
- Entrance fees to tourist sites which are part of the itinerary
- Meals as per the Meal Plan

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tbilisi Airport transfers (other than the single group transfer at the beginning and end of the trip)
- Tips for local staff
- Entrance fees at tourist sites which are not part of the itinerary
- Breakfast on the final day if departing earlier than 8am
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at our hotel in Tbilisi at breakfast on the morning of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. A transfer will be provided for those arriving on the preferred Turkish Airline flight in the very early hours of the morning of Day 1.

You will also have access to a hotel room where you can take some rest before meeting the rest of the group at breakfast. Anyone arriving into Tbilisi earlier than Day 1 can (by prior arrangement only) check into this hotel room on the afternoon of the previous day.

At the end of the holiday there will be a single timed group transfer back to Tbilisi Airport timed to meet the check in of the preferred Turkish Airline flight departing in the very early hours of the morning.

Additional nights and transfers to/from Tbilisi Airport can be arranged at an additional cost.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price.

Food & Water

Many places on this holiday have drinkable water from the tap to fill your personal water bottles. Please check with the leader at the various locations. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) for days when drinking water out of the tap is not available. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Georgians have a great culinary tradition and national specialties include the following: walnuts used in all sorts of ways, bean salads, aubergines and spinach dishes, layered bread and melted cheese, cured meats, fresh and pickled vegetables. They also have 500 varieties of local wines. Breakfast are continental style, with cereals, bread and jam, tea, coffee and sometimes eggs. Packed lunches are provided and will consist of bread and a variety of meats, cheeses, tomatoes and cucumber. There will also be fruit and biscuits. Dinner at camp are usually a traditional soup followed by vegetable and meat dishes with potatoes, rice or pasta.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

Included in the holiday are 2 hotel nights in Tbilisi. The first hotel night is to enable clients on the preferred flight (arriving in the early hours of the morning of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary) to have the use of a hotel room to rest/sleep and freshen up prior to breakfast. Note that it will also be possible for clients arriving a day earlier than Day 1 of the land Only itinerary to use this hotel night.

During the trek there are 7 nights camping. Whilst camping we will sleep in two man tents. There will also be a kitchen tent, a dining tent, and a toilet tent.

All accommodation is on a twin share basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single traveller of the same sex. Single rooms and/or single tents are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

This group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. There will be a city guide and translator who also accompanies the trek as well as a local mountain guide and full camp crew. In addition, the group will be supported by one or more drivers as required.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to moderately high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 2500 metres. Most people will have no difficulty with this level of altitude but before coming on the holiday, we recommend you read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude.

Spending Money

Approximately £150 (or equivalent US dollars, Euros etc.) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including your bar bills and reasonable tips to the support crew. If you intend to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly (credit cards can be useful in this respect). Georgia's unit of currency is the Lari. By far the easiest way to obtain your travel cash is from ATM's using a credit card or a debit card. ATM's are available in Tbilisi close to the group hotel or at the airport. Credit cards can be used to purchase goods and services in some shops, hotels and restaurants in Tbilisi.

Guidance on Tipping

Tips do not form part of the wages of local staff but they are very much appreciated. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. It is best if the tip is given at the end of the trip by the group as a whole. We recommend that each group member contributes around £30 and that tips are then distributed between the local guide and support staff as the group feels is appropriate.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft duffle bag and a day pack. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Visa Georgia

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Currency

The unit of currency in Georgia is the Lari.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with 6 - 8 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

Daytime temperatures in the lower valleys will vary between 20°C/68°F and 25°C/77°F at the times of year we operate this holiday. The weather in summer is generally excellent - with hot days, clear skies and little rain. In the mountain villages at around 2000 metres elevation, the night time temperature will fall to 10°C/50°F. As with any mountain region, cooler conditions and stormy weather cannot be ruled out at any time of year. In Tbilisi temperatures are much hotter in the summer months and can reach well into the 30's.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](https://www.travelaware.gov.uk)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Georgia: A Sovereign Country of the Caucasus - Roger Rosen
- Bread & Ashes - Tony Anderson

Maps

Georgia: Geoland 50K Trekking Maps 1:50,000. Sheets 2, 3 and 4

These maps have contours at 20m intervals, with additional relief shading and numerous spot heights, plus colouring and graphics to indicate different types of terrain. The road network distinguishes between local paved or unpaved roads, dirt tracks, forest roads and footpaths. Sheets 2 and 3 cover the main walking area, whilst sheet 4 covers Kazbegi. Note that it is possible to obtain good maps from the tourist information office in Tbilisi.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

You SHOULD bring the following items:

- Daypack 30 litres
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated 0°C)
- Sleeping bag liner
- Hiking boots
- Gaiters*
- Trainers for camp
- Sandals for river crossings **
- Walking socks (2 or 3 pairs)
- Spare laces
- Trekking trousers*

- Waterproof over-trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Underwear
- Thermal baselayer - leggings
- Thermal base layer shirts (2 short sleeve, 2 long sleeve)
- T-shirts / Long sleeved tops *
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Sunglasses
- Thermal or fleece gloves
- A selection of dry bags (to keep the contents of your luggage dry)
- Antibacterial handwash
- Washbag and toiletries
- Trekking towel
- Sunhat
- Fleece hat
- Headscarf for ladies (for church visits)

- Fleece jacket or warm jumper

Basic First Aid Kit including: Insect repellent (DEET); antiseptic cream; throat lozenges; diarrhoea

- treatment (Diocalm or Immodium); painkillers; plasters/band-aids and blister treatment; and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose sweets and vitamin tablets are a useful addition.

The following items are optional:

- Thermarest (a foam mat is provided)
- Shorts* (shorts are not allowed in many church visits)
- Travel clothes
- Trekking poles
- Camera
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

*Note that on some days you will have to walk through areas of undergrowth and full-length trousers & long sleeved tops will be necessary. You may also wish to wear gaiters on these days. Your trip leader will advise when this is necessary.

** There are several river crossings encountered on the trek. The most suitable footwear is a pair of open sandals that can be securely fastened and remain comfortable to walk in when wet. Crocs and flip flops are not suitable footwear for river crossings.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary, joining at the hotel in Tbilisi. A single transfer is included from/to Tbilisi Airport.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Tbilisi airport. The flight will depart the UK afternoon and arrive in the early hours of the following day (day 1 of the land only itinerary). The return flight will depart early morning on the last day and arrive morning of the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

KE's trek will take you off the beaten track to experience the real Georgia, visiting remote traditional villages, cut off for 6 months of the year by snow.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 05/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change