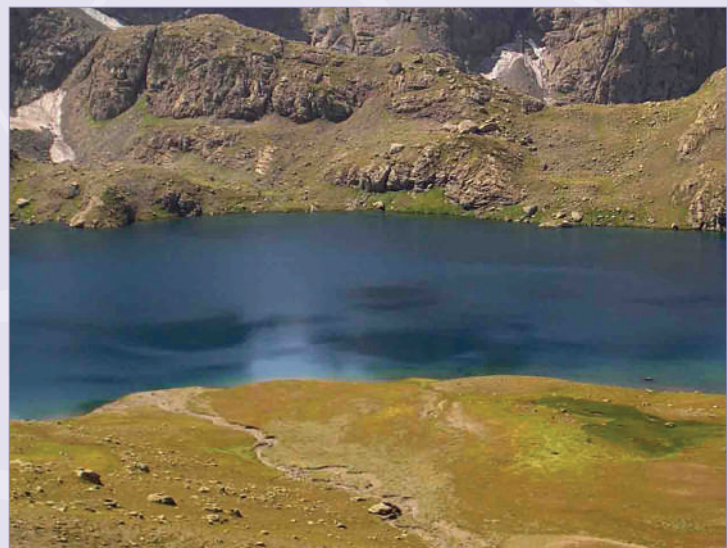
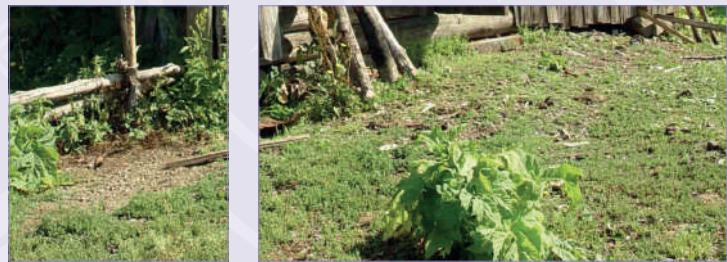
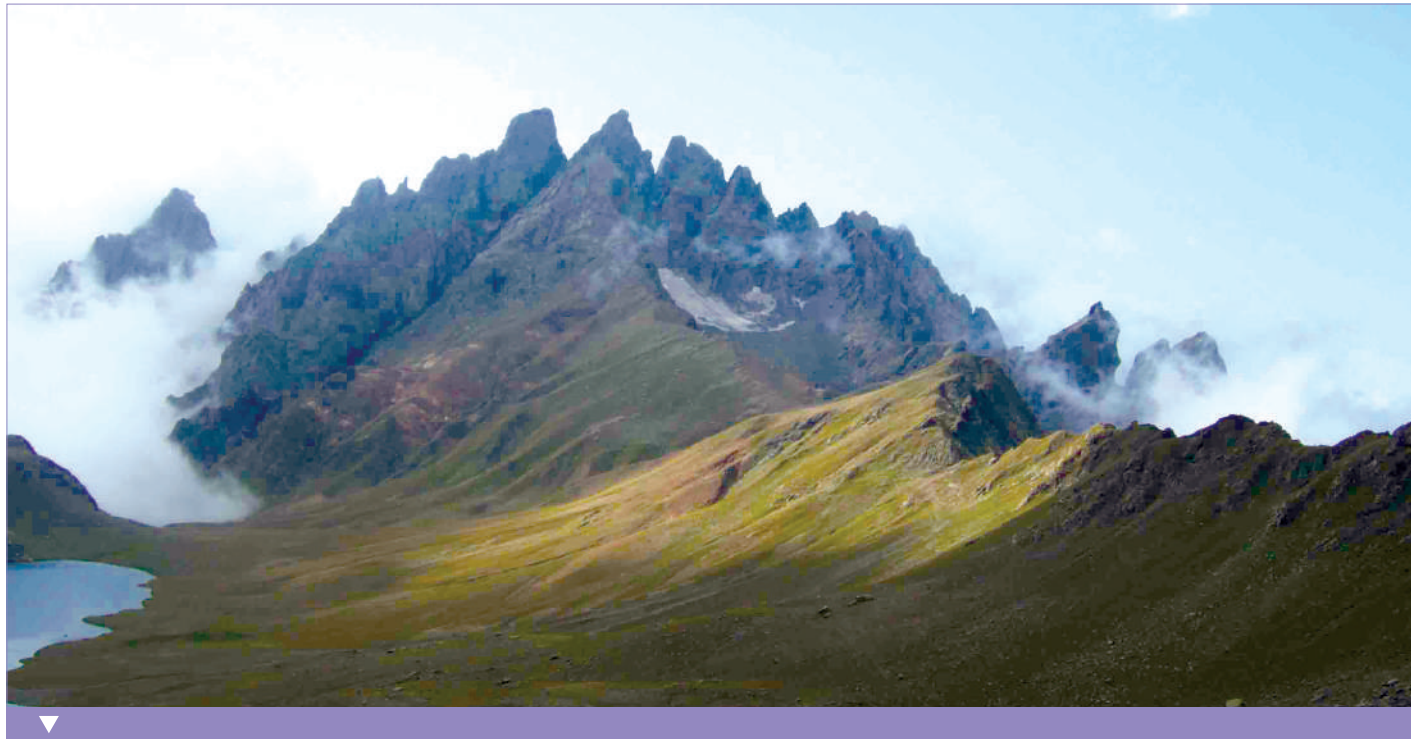


A rustic wooden cabin with a steep, shingled roof, nestled in a lush green mountain landscape with dense evergreen forests. The cabin is constructed from weathered logs and has a steep, shingled roof. It is surrounded by a dense forest of evergreen trees, and a grassy mountain slope is visible in the background. The scene is captured in a wide-angle shot, emphasizing the natural setting.



Samegreto

Also known as Mingrelia or Mengrelia, this western region is kept warm and humid by the Black Sea, and is home to the Megrelians, a distinctive sub-group of Georgians who have their own language. The north side of Samegrelo is landlocked by the region of Svaneti and the Caucasus Mountains. The region's administrative centre is Zugdidi.



Travelling through this region you'll find not only rich Georgian culture, but also the Greek legend of the mythical King Aeetes – the son of the Sun God Helios, who ruled the Kingdom of Colchis. The pre-Christian Kingdom of Colchis was the first Georgian state mentioned in Greek history and mythology, as the country where the Argonauts came to find the Golden Fleece.



The Kolkheti National Park and Paliastomi Lake are famous throughout the Caucasus for their abundant birdlife and unique scenery.



Poti, or "Phasis" is mentioned as far back as the 8th Century BC when the ancient Greek historian Strabo wrote: "In Phasis there are people speaking 60 different languages." Today the city is as lively and busy as it was centuries ago. Thanks to its location on the Silk Road at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, it was one of the world's busiest ports and the bustling activity in the city has not changed for centuries. It is still the main port and trade centre of Georgia.

Anaklia is a rapidly developing Black Sea resort located in the Zugdidi municipality, where the Enguri River flows into the Black Sea. Many of its sun-worshipping visitors come to see the ruins of the old fortress, which dates back to 1703. Today Anaklia's beauty attracts much interest from international and local investors.



Samegrelo is rich in karst caves and many of them are located in the Migaria mountain system. They include Zesnakhe, Potoltsvena or "Fall of the Leaves", and the Velvet Caves which are the most well-known. The caves are a paradise for cave enthusiasts due to the numerous explored and unexplored caverns. The glacier lake Tobavarchkhili (2,643m) is worth a special mention, as it is only possible to reach this glacier lake after a 20km hike from Chkhoroetsku.

Archaeological excavations have found several different layers of civilization in the Nokalakevi territory. The oldest layer dates back to the 8th-7th century BC. Various valuable items have been unearthed here, including wine vessels, golden, silver, bronze and glass adornments, diverse pottery and ceramic objects. The ruins of ancient palaces, Christian churches, baths, and tunnels have also been identified and preserved.

In the 7th century the monastery named in honour of Saint Andrew was built in the village of Martvili. Its foundation is a huge oak tree that for centuries served as a pagan idol. People used to worship this tree as a God of fertility, fruitfulness and prosperity. In the 1st century one of Christ's Apostles – Andrew the First called, converted the natives to Christianity who then cut down the oak tree and in its place built a church. The church is cross-domed, and paintings on the walls date back to the 6th and 7th century. A two-storey cathedral was built next to the church in the 10th century. In the Middle Ages the Martvili Monastery was a centre of culture and education, attracting many writers, translators and philosophers.

The Rukhi Castle is located in the village of Rukhi, on the left bank of the Enguri River. It was built in the 17th century by the duke of Samegrelo, Levan Dadiani II, and served as the major fortification for the Dukes of Samegrelo. The castle consists of a citadel and an inner courtyard with two impressive towers.

The Dadiani Palace, located in Zugdidi, belonged to the former Dukes of Samegrelo. In 1921 a museum was founded in the palace housing items and archives of the palace's rulers. The museum complex consists of the palaces of Ekaterine Chavchavadze-Dadiani and Niko Dadiani (19th century.), a church and a decorative garden laid out by the Dadianis. Niko Dadiani's palace contains the largest ballroom in all of Georgia and the palace garden is planted with unique trees and bushes from all over the world.

In 1850 Prince David Dadiani, opened a museum in the palace. It housed a collection of ancient stone-age items, European military weapons of the Middle Ages, paintings, and fine works of art.



Today more than 50,000 rare exhibits are on display at the museum. Among its collection of relics of European monarchs and imperial families there is a death mask of Napoleon Bonaparte. The museum also houses the relics of Christian saints, including the Shroud of St. Mary, which was brought to Georgia in 1453. The protected arm of St. Marine, parts of St. Kvirike, St. George and John the Baptist are also housed here.

The Tsaishi Cathedral Church of St. Mary is administered by the Zugdidi and Tsaishi Eparchy of the Georgian Orthodox Church. The domed church was built in the 12th-14th centuries but was destroyed by an earthquake and rebuilt in the 17th century. The oldest building of the church complex is located outside of the walls and judging by its interior dates back to the 11th century.

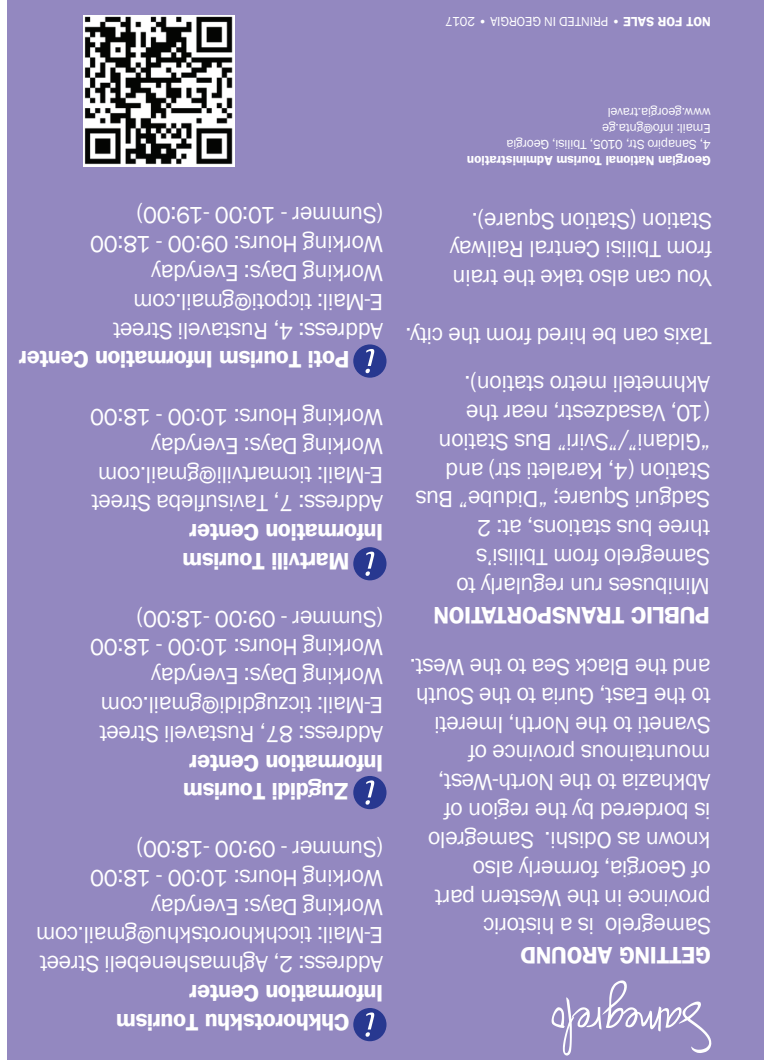
The Tsalenjikha Cathedral Church (10th century,) stands on a hill outside Tsalenjikha. A bilingual Greek-Georgian inscription on the South-Western pillar of the church reveals that the interior of the church was frescoed by Cyrus Emanuel Eugenicus, a Byzantine artist from Constantinople. The Megrelian Prince Levan Dadiani I and his wife Nestan-Darejani are buried in the Western area of the church.

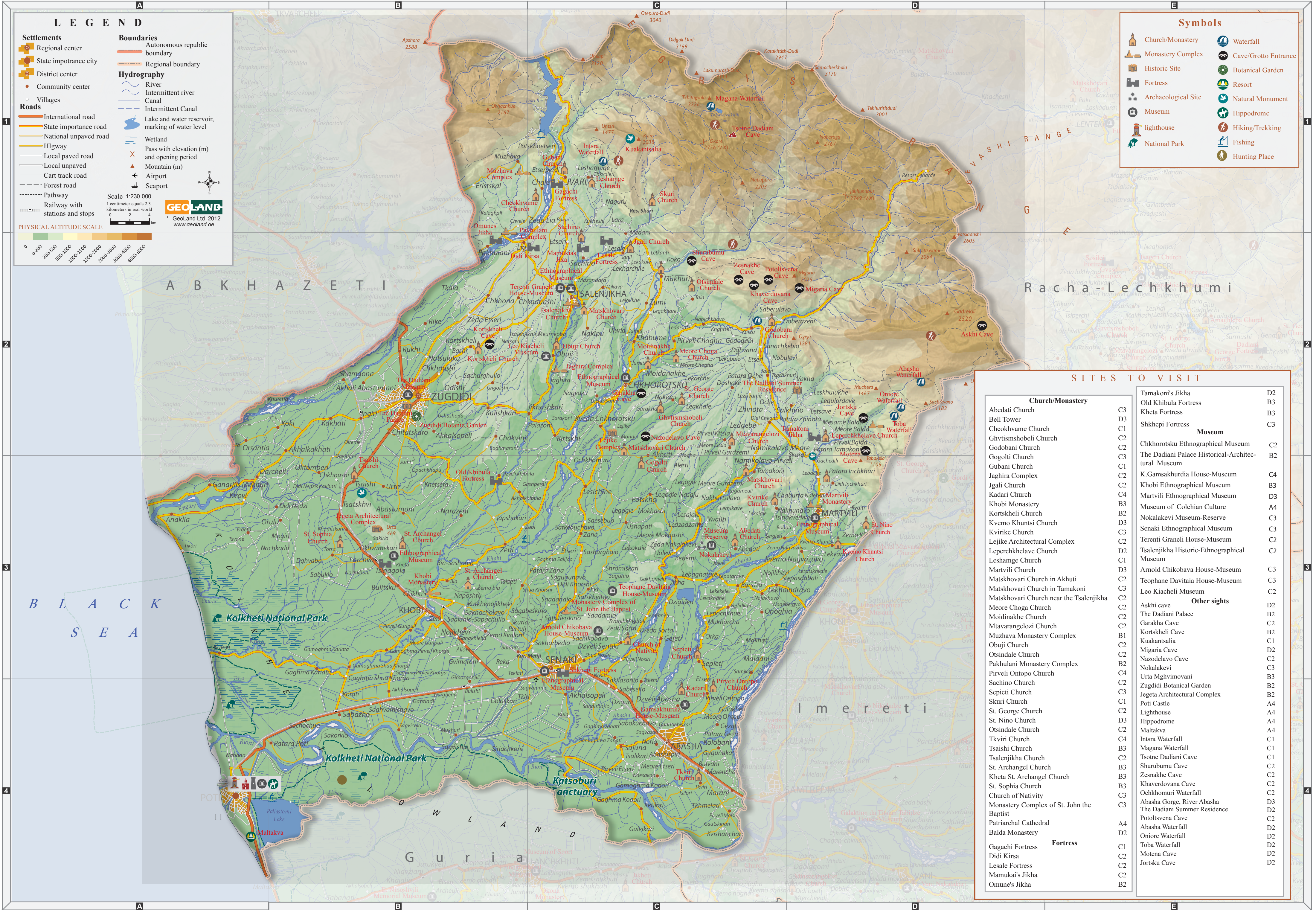
The Khobi Monastery is an architectural complex consisting of a church, a palace, a bell tower and the ruins of buildings. The stone church tower, with seven windows, is one of the biggest bell towers in Georgia and was once covered in frescoes. Inside its walls stands a 13th century church, decorated with ornaments and frescoes.

The Kortsikheli Church stands on a hill eight kilometres North-East of Zugdidi on the road to Tsalenjikha. From there visitors can see the mountains of Svaneti and Abkhazia, Samegrelo, the lowlands of Kolkhети, and the Black Sea. According to historical documents the church was built and frescoed in the 17th century by Levan Dadiani II.

This church was built especially for an icon of the Virgin Mary of Vlakerni. The icon, as well as the waistband of the Virgin Mary, was regarded as the most sacred items of Samegrelo. The icon was taken to Russia and given to Alexander I with the hope that the Emperor would one day return this relic to Georgia. Later, the Emperor did return the icon along with the finances for building a church to Levan Dadiani.

The Guria-Samegrelo eparchy church was established in Poti during the 19th century. The military governor of Kutaisi established a committee for the building of a Cathedral on June 17th 1895 with the permission of the Russian Commander. The church was meant to be built in a Georgian architectural style, but the Russian government rejected this project and the architects Zelenko and Marfeldi had to submit a new design. According to that proposal, it was intended for the church to be a small version of the Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople with enough room for 2000 parishioners. On the North side of the church icons were made in the Greek-Byzantine style; the South side icons were in a Georgian-Byzantine style, and the central side icons were in a Russian-Byzantine style. Saint Nikon and Saint David the Builder were featured amongst these icons. In 1932 the communist governors of Poti turned the church into a theatre. It was given back to the patriarchy in 2005 and it has now returned to its original function.





L E G E N D

- Settlements**

 - Regional center
 - State importance city
 - District center
 - Community center
 - Villages

Roads

 - International road
 - State importance road
 - National unpaved road
 - Hlgway
 - Local paved road
 - Local unpaved
 - Cart track road
 - Forest road
 - Pathway
 - Railway with stations and stops
- Boundaries**

 - Autonomous republic boundary
 - Regional boundary

Hydrography

 - River
 - Intermittent river
 - Canal
 - Intermittent Canal
 - Lake and water reservoir, marking of water level
 - Wetland
 - Pass with elevation (m) and opening period
 - Mountain (m)
 - Seaport
- Scale 1:230 000
1 centimeter equals 2.3 kilometers in real world

PHYSICAL ALTITUDE SCALE

0 200 500 1000 1500 2000 3000 4000 6000
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Symbols

- Church/Monastery
- Monastery Complex
- Historic Site
- Fortress
- Archaeological Site
- Museum
- Lighthouse
- National Park
- Waterfall
- Cave/Grotto Entrance
- Botanical Garden
- Resort
- Natural Monument
- Hippodrome
- Hiking/Trekking
- Fishing
- Hunting Place

SITES TO VISIT

Church/Monastery			
Abedati Church	C3	Tamakoni's Jikha	D2
Bell Tower	D3	Old Khibula Fortress	B3
Cheokhvame Church	C1	Kheta Fortress	B3
Ghvtismshobeli Church	C2	Shkhapi Fortress	C3
Godobani Church	C2	Museum	
Gogolti Church	C3	Chkhorotsku Ethnographical Museum	C2
Gubani Church	C1	The Dadiani Palace Historical-Architectural Museum	B2
Jaghira Complex	C2	K.Gamsakhurdia House-Museum	C4
Jgali Church	C2	Khobi Ethnographical Museum	B3
Kadari Church	C4	Martvili Ethnographical Museum	D3
Khobi Monastery	B3	Museum of Colchian Culture	A4
Kortskheli Church	B2	Nokalakevi Museum-Reserve	C3
Kvemo Khuntisi Church	D3	Senaki Ethnographical Museum	C3
Kvirike Church	C3	Lejike Architectural Complex	C2
Lejike Architectural Complex	C2	Tsalenjikha Historic-Ethnographical Museum	C2
Leperchkhelave Church	D2	Arnold Chikobava House-Museum	C3
Leshame Church	C1	Teophane Davitaia House-Museum	C3
Martvili Church	D3	Leo Kiacheli Museum	C2
Matskhovari Church in Akhuti	C2	Other sights	
Matskhovari Church in Tamakoni	C3	Askhi cave	D2
Matskhovari Church near the Tsalenjikha	C2	The Dadiani Palace	B2
Meore Choga Church	C2	Garakha Cave	C2
Moidinake Church	C2	Kortskheli Cave	B2
Mtavarangelozhi Church	C2	Kuakantsalia	C1
Muzhava Monastery Complex	B1	Migaria Cave	D2
Obuji Church	C2	Nazodelavo Cave	C2
Otsindale Church	C2	Nokalakevi	C3
Pakhulani Monastery Complex	B2	Urta Mghvimovani	B3
Pirveli Ontopo Church	C4	Zugdidi Botanical Garden	B3
Sachino Church	C2	Jegeta Architectural Complex	B2
Sepieti Church	C3	Poti Castle	A4
Skuri Church	C1	Lighthouse	A4
St. George Church	C2	Hippodrome	A4
St. Nino Church	D3	Maltakva	A4
Otsindale Church	C2	Intra Waterfall	C1
Tkviri Church	C4	Magana Waterfall	C1
Tsaishi Church	B3	Tsotne Dadiani Cave	C1
Tsalenjikha Church	C2	Shurubumu Cave	C2
St. Archangel Church	B3	Zesnakhe Cave	C2
Kheta St. Archangel Church	B3	Khaverdovana Cave	C2
St. Sophia Church	B3	Ochkhomuri Waterfall	C2
Church of Nativity	C3	Abasha Gorge, River Abasha	D3
Monastery Complex of St. John the Baptist	C3	The Dadiani Summer Residence	D2
Patriarchal Cathedral	A4	Potoltsvena Cave	C2
Balda Monastery	D2	Abasha Waterfall	D2
Fortress		Oniore Waterfall	D2
Gagachi Fortress	C1	Toba Waterfall	D2
Didi Kirsia	C2	Motena Cave	D2
Lesale Fortress	C2	Jortsku Cave	D2
Mamukai's Jikha	C2		
Omune's Jikha	B2		