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Region 5 h 30 min by car from Tbilisi 2 h 20 min by car from Kutaisi Population 354,900 2,919 km²

Ajara is a region — a region of Georgia, about 5 h 30 min by car from Tbilisi, 2 h 20 min from Kuta
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Ajara

By [Mariam Lomidze](#), GTour desk · Fact-checked against the sources listed · Last checked 17 October 20

Overview

Ajara (also spelled Adjara) is an autonomous republic in Georgia's southwest corner, running from the Black the Lesser Caucasus. Its capital, Batumi, is a subtropical port city of palm-lined boulevards, belle-époque bui it serves as the gateway for the whole region, covered in more detail in GTour's [Batumi guide](#). Ajara covers a home to roughly 354,900 people, making it one of Georgia's most densely populated and most visited region:

Ajara matters because it holds two very different Georgias side by side: a warm, humid coastline of beach res remains, and a highland interior of stone arched bridges, terraced tea gardens and villages where Georgian an This mix of geography and history, combined with Batumi's international airport and direct highway and rail Ajara an easy region to combine with a wider Georgian itinerary; see GTour's [private tours](#) for ways to join tl trip.

History

The coast of Ajara formed part of ancient Colchis, and by the Roman period it held a garrison fort, Apsaros, a eastern Black Sea frontier; archaeological work there has uncovered Roman, Byzantine and later Ottoman bu [Cultural Heritage Preservation](#), which lists the site among its protected monuments. Through the medieval pe kingdoms and principalities before falling under Ottoman control from the sixteenth century, a period that lef highland districts of Keda, Shuakhevi and Khulo.

Russo-Ottoman wars in the nineteenth century redrew the border repeatedly; under the Treaty of San Stefano coast passed to the Russian Empire, which developed Batumi into an oil-export port linked by rail to Baku. A Treaty of Kars (1921) confirmed Ajara's borders and the Soviet government established the Adjarian Autonom

the Georgian SSR, a status intended partly to recognise the region's Muslim population. Ajara retained autonomy and independence in 1991; from the early 1990s to 2004 it was governed semi-independently under Aslan Abashidze. The Adjara crisis of May 2004 and the region's full reintegration into the Georgian state. Since then Batumi has seen rapid redevelopment as a tourism and casino destination, while the mountain districts have been promoted for hiking.

What to see

Gonio-Apsaros Fortress

Just south of Batumi near the village of Gonio, this Roman-era fort was later rebuilt by Byzantine and Ottoman forces. Excavations have uncovered towers and excavated foundations from several periods. It is one of the region's oldest documented sites and is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Batumi Old Town and Boulevard

The historic centre mixes nineteenth-century Russian-period architecture with a seafront promenade, the Batumi Boulevard, which stretches for several kilometres along the pebble beach. Evenings bring crowds for the musical fountains, the Ali and Nino moving sculpture, and the dancing in the Square.

Mtiral National Park

Rising directly behind Batumi, Mtirala is one of the wettest parts of Georgia and protects dense Colchic rainforest. It is managed by the [Agency of Protected Areas](#), which maintains visitor infrastructure near the park entrance.

Makhuntseti Waterfall and Arched Bridge

On the road toward Keda, a stone humpback bridge popularly associated with Queen Tamar's era spans the river. There are also several arched bridges scattered through the Ajara highlands and a standard stop on the route inland.

Goderdzi Pass and the Khulo Highlands

The road from Khulo climbs through forest and alpine meadow toward the Goderdzi Pass at over 2,000 metres. The area around Khulo, and, in winter, a modest ski area. The route is normally open from late spring to autumn; conditions should be checked independently.

Ureki and Kobuleti Beaches

North of Batumi, Kobuleti and Ureki offer gentler, shallower beaches favoured by families, with Ureki known for its pine forests.

sand.

Getting there

From Tbilisi, Ajara is reached via the Rikoti Pass highway, a drive of around 5 hours 30 minutes by private car. Georgian Railway also runs day and overnight trains between Tbilisi and Batumi, taking roughly 5 to 6 hours. From Kutaisi, the coastal highway to Batumi takes about 2 hours 20 minutes by road or m. coastal and mountain sights of Ajara are short excursions of 20 minutes to 2 hours. Road conditions, especially weather, can be checked via GTour's [road status page](#) or the [Roads Department](#).

When to go

Ajara has a warm, humid subtropical climate on the coast. The sea season runs from June to September, with busiest months in Batumi, Kobuleti and Ureki. Spring and autumn are better suited to the mountain districts, where Keda road are clear of snow and hiking conditions in Mtirala and the highlands are at their most comfortable.

Where to stay and eat

Batumi offers the widest choice of accommodation in the region, from boutique hotels to international chains. [Gardens](#), [Le Port Boutique Apart Hotel](#), [Hotel Retro](#), [Next Green](#), [Piazza Epigraph](#) and [Wyndham Batumi](#). For the region, [Jeo Event](#) and [Visit Adjara](#) are listed in GTour's register alongside hotels and restaurants; GTour's [vegetarian eateries](#) below, covering both the Batumi coast and the highland districts. For broader regional recommendations see [destination guides](#).

Practical notes

The currency throughout Ajara, as in the rest of Georgia, is the Georgian lari, and no separate visa or entry fee for the republic. English signage and menus are common in Batumi but thinner in the mountain villages of Keda, Shida Kartli, and, in places, Turkish are more useful. The region's population includes both Christian and Muslim Georgians. Modest dress is appreciated when visiting mosques or village churches. Mobile coverage is reliable on the coast and sections near Goderdzi Pass.

Questions travellers ask

Is Ajara the same place as Batumi?

No. Batumi is the capital and largest city of Ajara, but the region also includes the coastal towns of Kobuleti, Keda, Shuakhevi and Khulo.

Do I need a separate visa or permit for Ajara?

No. Ajara is an autonomous republic within Georgia, and standard Georgian entry rules apply with no additional requirements.

Is Ajara safe for travellers?

Ajara is generally considered safe, including Batumi's tourist areas and the highland roads, though mountain roads should be driven with care in poor weather.

What is the best time to swim in the Black Sea here?

The swimming season runs roughly from June to September, with the warmest sea temperatures in July and August.

Can I visit the Turkish border town of Sarpi easily?

Yes, Sarpi sits on the coastal road a short drive south of Batumi and can be visited as part of a coastal excursion. Standard border formalities apply.

Is the Goderdzi Pass road passable in a regular car?

In dry summer and early autumn conditions it is usually manageable, but sections are unpaved and steep, and can be closed by snowfall, so checking conditions beforehand is recommended.

Is Ureki's black sand really magnetic?

The sand at Ureki contains a high concentration of magnetite, which gives it its dark colour and a mild magnetic pull. It is a popular attraction locally for its beach resorts.

How many days should I plan for Ajara?

Two to three days allow time for Batumi's old town and boulevard, a day trip to Gonio and Mtskheta, and at least a day for the Svaneti highlands; a week allows a fuller loop through the mountains.

Can the coast and the mountains be combined in one day?

It is possible to combine a morning on the coast with an afternoon in the nearer highlands around Keda, but not comfortably usually needs a dedicated day.

Sources

- National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation
- Agency of Protected Areas
- Georgian Railway
- Roads Department of Georgia

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Ajara is Georgia's Black Sea coast and the mountains that rise straight behind it. Batumi, the capital, is a city of palm trees, white buildings, and a modern skyline, with a long stone beach and a boulevard that follows the coast.

inland, the same region becomes a world of stone arched bridges, alpine villages and terraced tea, pass climbs above two thousand metres.

The coast runs from the Turkish border at Sarpi past Gonio, with its Roman fortress, to the family magnetic black sands of Ureki. The mountain districts of Keda, Shuakhevi and Khulo are the plac distinct highland cuisine built on cheese, honey and corn.

Ajara has a warm, humid climate: the sea season runs from June to September, while spring and a airport and the fast road from Tbilisi make it easy to combine the coast with the rest of the countr

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ATTRACTION Argo Cable Car	CITY Batumi	ATTRACTION Batumi Dolphinarium
ATTRACTION Batumi Piazza	ATTRACTION Batumi Yacht Club	ATTRACTION Batumi's Miracle Park
RESORT Chakvi Village	ATTRACTION Dancing fountains	VILLAGE Gobroneti

RESORT Gonio	VILLAGE Keda	VILLAGE Khelvachauri
VILLAGE Kvariati	RESORT Makhinjauri	VILLAGE Sarpi
ATTRACTION The Astronomical Clock	ATTRACTION The Panoramic Wheel	

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Hotel Black Sea Panorama

HOTEL

Le Port Boutique Apart Hotel

GASTRONOMY

Iveria Cafe Batumi

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Facts and travel times: Georgian National Tourism Administration. Text and selection: GTour.

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