

[Destinations in Georgia](#) › Guria

Region 4 h 55 min by car from Tbilisi 1 h 30 min by car from Kutaisi 1 h by car from Batumi Population

Guria is a region — a region of Georgia, about 4 h 55 min by car from Tbilisi, 1 h 30 min from Kutaisi, about 178,900 people.

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Guria

By [Mariam Lomidze](#), GTour desk · Fact-checked against the sources listed · Last checked 17 October 2026

Overview

Guria is a small region of western Georgia, wedged between Imereti to the east, Adjara to the south, Samegrelo to the west. Its administrative center is Ozurgeti, and the region covers roughly 2,958 square kilometers with its location naturally on the route between Kutaisi and Batumi, yet most travellers pass straight through on the highway. It has a unique appeal: fewer crowds, slower rhythms, and a landscape of tea terraces, hazelnut orchards and forested hills rising from the coast.

The region matters for several reasons beyond scenery. It gave Georgia a distinct branch of polyphonic singing, still performed at ordinary family feasts rather than only on stage. Its beaches at Ureki and Shikhi Dzveli, with their rich sand, long marketed for a reputed therapeutic effect, while Bakhmaro, a wooden-house summer settlement, has attracted Georgians uphill for clean mountain air since the early twentieth century. For visitors building a west-Georgian itinerary, Guria sits between [the Kutaisi region and the Adjara coast](#).

History

Guria emerged as a distinct political unit in the late medieval period, after the breakup of the unified Kingdom of Georgia. In the fifteenth century it was governed as a principality by the Gurieli dynasty, nominally under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire but effectively autonomous, with Ozurgeti and the fortified monastery centers of the region serving as seats of power. The Gurian churches such as Shemokmedi and Jumati, which remain among the region's most important architectural monuments, are managed by the [National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation](#).

The Principality of Guria was abolished in 1829, when the Russian Empire formally annexed the territory and reorganized its administrative structure that later became the Kutaisi Governorate. Resentment at new taxation and conscription produced the Gurian Revolt of 1860.

larger peasant revolts against Russian rule in western Georgia. Decades later, between 1902 and 1906, peasant parallel system of self-government that bypassed imperial administration during the unrest of the 1905 Russian Revolution, referred to as the “Gurian Republic” and noted by contemporary observers as an unusually organized rural municipality.

Under Soviet administration Guria was developed as a center of tea, citrus and tobacco cultivation, with state farms near Ozurgeti and Chokhatauri; tea plantations still mark the landscape today, though production fell sharply after the scattering of herders’ huts into an organized highland resort through the twentieth century, prized for its altitude and independence, the region has focused on reviving small-scale tea production, hazelnut export and coastal tourism promoted by the [Georgian National Tourism Administration](#).

What to see

Bakhmaro

A summer village of timber houses scattered across a ridge at about 2,000 meters above sea level, Bakhmaro is located about 10 km from Chokhatauri. Georgians have come here for clean air and views over seas of clouds since the early twentieth century. It has a permanent winter population. Short walks lead to surrounding meadows and forest edges with wide views to the mountains.

Ureki and Shekvetili beaches

The Guria coast is known for its fine, dark magnetite sand, unusual on the Black Sea and long reputed locally for children. Ureki has been a modest family resort for decades, while Shekvetili has developed more recently as a resort with a long promenade. The sea here shelves gently, making the beaches popular with families.

Shemokmedi Monastery

Shemokmedi, near Ozurgeti, was a principal seat of the Gurieli princes and houses medieval churches with colorful frescoes. It functioned as a spiritual and political center of the principality for several centuries. The complex is on the national heritage list.

Jumati Monastery

Jumati, set on a hill above Ozurgeti, was the seat of the Bishops of Guria and another key religious center until the 19th century. It preserves portions of medieval wall painting. The site offers a quiet view over the surrounding tea hills.

Ozurgeti

The regional capital has a compact old center, a historical museum covering the Gurian principality and the 1 small but active market culture. It is a convenient base for day trips into the hills and toward Bakhmaro.

Shekvetili Dendrological Park

A large botanical park on the coastal plain near Shekvetili brings together mature trees relocated from across amusement park and open-air areas. It is one of the larger organized gardens on the Georgian coast and make

Getting there

From Tbilisi, Guria is reached by the main west-Georgia highway via Kutaisi, a drive of roughly 4 hours 55 r minibuses run from Tbilisi's Didube station with a similar journey time, and the railway line toward Batumi, through the Samtredia junction from which onward transport reaches Guria. From Kutaisi, the drive to Ozurg or marshrutka along the Kutaisi–Samtredia–Ozurgeti road. From Batumi, Guria's coastal towns and Ozurgeti it a realistic day trip. Road conditions can be checked through the [road status page](#), and GTour arranges priva English-speaking driver; see the [tours](#) section for itineraries.

When to go

Late spring through early autumn, roughly May to September, suits the coast and Bakhmaro, when the mount beaches at Ureki and Shekvetili are at their best. July and August are the busiest months for the coast and for holidaymakers. Spring and autumn are quieter and pleasant for visiting the monasteries and tea plantations, tl inaccessible or empty outside summer.

Where to stay and eat

Guria has limited but growing formal accommodation, concentrated around Ureki, Shekvetili and Ozurgeti, v open only in summer. For food, regional cooking relies on corn bread, local cheeses, beans and the region's o verified option in the GTour register is [Taberne in Guria, Atsana](#), offering regional dishes in an informal setti hotels, guesthouses and restaurants in the [Guria region hub](#), and the [guides](#) and [best-of](#) sections cover wider v

Practical notes

Mobile coverage is reliable in Ozurgeti and the coastal towns but patchy on the Bakhmaro road and in the high mountain passes. In the main towns, as card acceptance is inconsistent in small guesthouses and roadside cafes. The Bakhmaro road, which is unfamiliar with mountain roads should allow extra time and avoid the route after heavy rain or early and late in the day. Some road sections, a condition worth checking via the [road status page](#) before travelling.

Questions travellers ask

Is Guria the same as Adjara?

No. Guria and Adjara are neighboring but separate regions of western Georgia. Guria lies north of Adjara, with its main city is Batumi.

How far is Guria from Batumi?

The Guria coast and Ozurgeti are about one hour from Batumi by car, making the region an easy day trip from Batumi.

Is the sand at Ureki really magnetic?

The dark sand at Ureki and Shekvetili contains a high concentration of magnetite, which gives it its color and has been marketed locally for a reputed therapeutic effect, though this is a traditional rather than clinically established claim.

Is Bakhmaro open all year?

No. Bakhmaro functions mainly as a summer resort, roughly from June to September, and most houses and guesthouses close for the winter. The snow and the difficulty of the access road.

Can Guria be visited as a day trip from Kutaisi or Batumi?

Yes. Ozurgeti and the coast are about 1 hour 30 minutes from Kutaisi and about 1 hour from Batumi, which means that reaching Bakhmaro and returning in a single day requires an early start.

What is Guria known for in Georgian culture?

Guria is particularly known for its style of polyphonic singing, noted for fast tempo and complex vocal ornamentation.

for wit and quick humor.

Are there direct trains to Guria?

There is no direct mainline passenger station in central Guria; travellers generally take the train toward Batumi or Samtredia, or travel the whole route by marshrutka or private car.

What historical sites should not be missed?

Shemokmedi and Jumati monasteries, both former seats of the ruling Gurieli princes and the Bishops of Guria, are important historical monuments and are within easy reach of Ozurgeti.

Is Guria good for families?

Yes. The shallow, gently sloping beaches at Ureki and Shekvetili are considered particularly suitable for children. Shekvetili offers an easy outing combining nature and a small amusement area.

What was the “Gurian Republic”?

Between 1902 and 1906, peasants and local intellectuals in Guria organized an informal system of self-government, defying imperial Russian administration during the unrest surrounding the 1905 Revolution, an episode remembered as the Gurian Republic or organized self-rule.

Sources

- [National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation](#)
- [Georgian National Tourism Administration](#)
- [Georgian Railway](#)

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Guria is a small, quiet region between Imereti and the sea — a land of tea plantations, hazelnut groves, and singing is still an ordinary part of a feast. Georgians know it for its wit, its horsemen and its fast, its traditions mostly pass it on the highway to Batumi without realising what they are missing.

The coast at Ureki and Shekvetili offers unusually gentle beaches of dark magnetic sand, popular for their therapeutic effect. Inland, Ozurgeti and Chokhatauri lead up to the highland resort of Bakhmaro, at two thousand metres, famous for its clean air and sunsets over a sea of cloud.

Guria is a region for slowing down: a tea-house tasting, a walk among the hills, a village lunch of honey and cheese naturally between Kutaisi and Batumi on a west-Georgia itinerary.

PLACES TO VISIT IN GURIA · 24

ATTRACTION

“Skijis Sakhli”

TOWN

Abasha

VILLAGE

Bakhmaro Resort

TOWN Chokhatauri	VILLAGE Danisparauli	RESORT Ghorjomi Village
RESORT Grigoleti	TOWN Khobi	VILLAGE Khulo
VILLAGE Menji	VILLAGE Nabeghlavi	TOWN Ozurgeti
TOWN Senaki	RESORT Shekvetili	VILLAGE Sujuna
VILLAGE Tkhilvana	ATTRACTION Tsitsinatela Amusement Park	VILLAGE Ureki

VERIFIED PLACES IN GURIA

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GASTRONOMY

Dolabi

HOTEL

**Paragraph Resort & Spa
Shekvetili**

GASTRONOMY

Lekura Winery

WINE

Kobidzeebis Marani

WINE

Lekura Wines

HOTEL

Ritsa Resort

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

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