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Region 2 h 10 min by car from Tbilisi 4 h 55 min by car from Kutaisi 7 h by car from Batumi Population

Mtskheta-Mtianeti is a region — a region of Georgia, about 2 h 10 min by car from Tbilisi, 4 h 55 min by car from Kutaisi, 7 h by car from Batumi. Home to about 94,573 people.

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Mtskheta-Mtianeti

Guide last checked by the GTour desk on 16 October 2026. Latest news for this region is listed below automatically.

Why go

Mtskheta-Mtianeti stretches from the old capital just outside Tbilisi to the high peaks of the Caucasus on the border with Russia. It takes in a UNESCO-listed monastic town, a reservoir-side fortress, a ski resort above the clouds, and a mountain range including Mt. Kazbek. No other region packs this much contrast into so short a distance, which is why the Georgian Military Highway is a must out of the capital.

When to go

- **Late spring to early autumn (May-October):** best for Kazbegi hiking, Juta, Truso valley and the Khevsur region, including Roshka, which are reachable only in summer over the Datvisjvari pass.
- **Winter (December-March):** the season for Gudauri skiing and snowboarding, with reliable snow from autumn to spring.
- **Mtskheta and Ananuri** are year-round destinations, though the lower town gets crowded with day-trippers.
- Weather on the pass changes quickly at any time of year; check [live road status](#) before heading north, especially in winter.

Getting there

The entire region sits along or just off the Georgian Military Highway, which runs north from Tbilisi through the Jvari Pass to Stepantsminda and the Larsi border crossing with Russia. Mtskheta is a short run from Tbilisi, while Gudauri is a longer drive on a road that climbs to nearly 2,400 metres and can close in storms. Self-driving is possible but

by season; many visitors prefer a guided transfer. See the dedicated route notes in [Tbilisi to Kazbegi](#), and broader two-day itineraries that handle the driving and border-zone logistics.

What to see

Mtskheta and around

- **Svetitskhoveli Cathedral** — the historic seat of the Georgian Orthodox Church, in the centre of town.
- **Jvari Monastery** — on the hilltop above the confluence of the Mtkvari and Aragvi rivers, with views over the valley.
- **Samtavro Monastery** — a quieter convent complex a short walk from the cathedral.

Aragvi valley

- **Ananuri Fortress** — a fortified church complex on the Zhinvali reservoir, a standard stop on the way north.
- **Pasanauri** — regarded as the home of khinkali, worth a stop for lunch.

Gudauri and the high pass

- **Gudauri** — a ski resort spanning roughly 2,000 to 3,300 metres, with paragliding and hiking in summer; check the weather conditions and timing.
- **Jvari Pass (2,395 m)** — the highest point on the highway, marked by the Russia-Georgia Friendship Monument.

Kazbegi (Stepantsminda) and beyond

- **Stepantsminda** — the regional base, at 1,740 metres, under Mount Kazbek (5,054 m).
- **Gergeti Trinity Church** — at 2,170 metres, reached on foot or by 4×4, with Kazbek as a backdrop.
- **Gveleti waterfalls and the Dariali Gorge and monastery** — near the Larsi border.
- **Juta valley and the Chaukhi massif** — for day hikes and multi-day trekking.
- **Truso valley** — mineral springs and abandoned villages along a former trade route.

Khevsureti (summer only)

- **Shatili, Mutso and Roshka** — fortified mountain villages reached via the Datvisjvari pass, accessible only in summer.

Altitude affects several of these sites. Read the notes in [altitude in Georgia](#) before planning strenuous hikes and drives.

A three-day plan

Day 1: Mtskheta and Ananuri

Morning in Mtskheta — Svetitskhoveli, Jvari, Samtavro — then a short drive to Ananuri on the Zhinvali reservoir. Overnight in Gudauri (roughly two to two and a half hours' driving in total for the day).

Day 2: Gudauri to Stepantsminda

Morning at leisure in Gudauri (skiing, hiking or paragliding depending on season), then the drive over the Jvari Pass to the Friendship Monument viewpoint (around one hour's driving). Afternoon hike up to Gergeti Trinity Church.

Day 3: Kazbegi valleys

Choose one: a half-day trip to the Gveleti waterfalls and Dariali Gorge, a drive into the Truso valley, or a day massif. Return to Tbilisi in the afternoon or evening (around three hours' driving from Stepantsminda).

For visitors short on time, GTour's Kazbegi day tour covers the highlights of days two and three in a single or overnight in Stepantsminda. Both are listed under [tours](#).

Where to stay

- **Mtskheta:** guesthouses and small hotels in the old town, suited to a half-day or overnight stop close to Tbilisi.
- **Gudauri:** hotels of all categories clustered around the ski lifts, busiest in winter.
- **Stepantsminda (Kazbegi):** guesthouses and mid-range hotels, many with views of Mount Kazbek, serving breakfast and Dariali.
- **Khevsureti villages:** limited guesthouse accommodation in Shatili and Roshka, open in summer only.

GTour's verified register lists hotels and guesthouses for the region below.

Eat and drink

- **Khinkali** — the soup dumpling associated with Pasaunauri and the mountain regions generally.
- **Khinkali with mountain lamb or mushroom fillings** — more common here than the beef-and-pork version.
- **Kubdari** — a meat-filled bread from the wider mountain tradition, found on menus in Kazbegi and Gudauri.
- **Khachapuri** — widely available, with regional variants worth trying alongside the local bread.
- Local guesthouses often serve homemade wine and chacha; mountain regions are less associated with viticulture, but family-made wine rather than estate production.

Practical notes

- **Money:** card payment is standard in Gudauri and Stepantsminda; smaller villages and roadside stalls may not accept cards.
- **Connectivity:** mobile coverage is generally reliable along the highway and in Stepantsminda, but patchy in the Khevsureti villages.
- **Roads:** the Georgian Military Highway crosses the 2,395-metre Jvari Pass and is subject to winter closure; check [road status](#) before travelling between November and April.
- **Border zone:** parts of the Kazbegi area near Larsi and Dariali lie within a border zone; carry identification and follow instructions.
- **Altitude:** Gergeti Trinity Church, Juta and the high passes sit above 2,000 metres; pace hikes accordingly.
- For more planning resources across Georgia, see the full list of [guides](#).

Quick answers

How far is Mtskheta from Tbilisi? About 20 km, a short drive from the capital.

Can Khevsureti be visited in winter? No, the Datvisjvari pass to Shatili, Mutso and Roshka is open in summer.

Is a 4×4 needed to reach Gergeti Trinity Church? It can be reached on foot or by 4×4 taxi from Stepantsmunda.

What is the best time for Gudauri skiing? Winter months, generally from December through March; see the [Gudauri ski resort](#) page.

Does the Jvari Pass close in winter? It can close temporarily during storms; check live road status before travelling.

What is Pasanauri known for? It is widely regarded as the homeland of khinkali and a popular lunch stop on the way to Gudauri.

Latest news for Mtskheta-Mtianeti



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Mtskheta-Mtianeti is the region that starts fifteen minutes from Tbilisi and ends at the Russian border. It contains the two images most people carry home from Georgia: the Jvari church above the meeting of the Mtkheta and Gergeti Trinity church on its ridge beneath the glacier of Mount Kazbek.

Mtskheta, the ancient capital and seat of the Georgian church, is a UNESCO site and an easy half-day drive from Tbilisi. Highway 1 then climbs north past the Ananuri fortress and the Zhinvali reservoir to Gudauri, the cozy town at the Jvari pass to Stepantsminda, the base for Kazbegi. Off the main road lie the tower villages of Imereti, reachable only in summer and among the most remote inhabited places in Europe.

The region suits every season: skiing at Gudauri from December to April, hiking at Juta and Truska in winter, and its most dramatic in autumn snow.

PLACES TO VISIT IN MTSKHETA-MTIANETI · 16

VILLAGE
Ananuri

VILLAGE
Chargali

VILLAGE
Chokhi

TOWN Dusheti	RESORT Gudauri	VILLAGE Juta
VILLAGE Mutso	VILLAGE Pankisi Gorge	RESORT Pasanauri Village
VILLAGE Shatili	VILLAGE Sioni	TOWN Stepantsminda

VERIFIED PLACES IN MTSKHETA-MTIANETI

WINE Cellar Mirioni	WINE Monastris Marani	TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER Mtskheta Tourist Information Center
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