
emotions are
Georgia
GEORGIAN CULTURE:
AGES IN THE MAKING,
Timeless in Appeal
საქართველოს კულტურული მემკვიდრეობის ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL AGENCY FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION OF GEORGIA

A COUNTRY AND ITS CULTURE

What is it that makes Georgian culture...well, Georgian? Certainly the first place to look is Georgia's physical environment. Georgia's rich and diverse topography--from the Caucasus Mountains to the Black Sea shore--has played a major role in shaping Georgian society and its culture. Traveling from region to region, you can't help but admire how well material culture is integrated into the landscape. Cultural elements vary from west to east, from south to north, from lowlands to mountains. They are unique to a single region, yet at the same time are integral to the national culture.

Georgians have been cultivating land since ancient times and are said to be the first growers of wheat and vine. They also extracted and worked copper, gold and iron, eloquent expression of which can be found in Georgian art.

Another critical element to the evolution of Georgia's culture is its place on the map--at the crossroads of east and west. For thousands of years, traders and adventurers have passed through here via the historic Silk Road, contributing their influences on Georgian art, architecture, music, cuisine and more. Diversity and multi-culturalism is a centuries-old phenomenon in Georgia.

While there have been many factors that helped shape Georgian culture, there's one element that has remained steadfast over the centuries, the legendary hospitality of the Georgian people. And that's a cultural tradition you'll feel right down to your bones.

1 The medieval monastery Sapara is located in Samtskhe-Javakheti



CULTURAL TREASURES

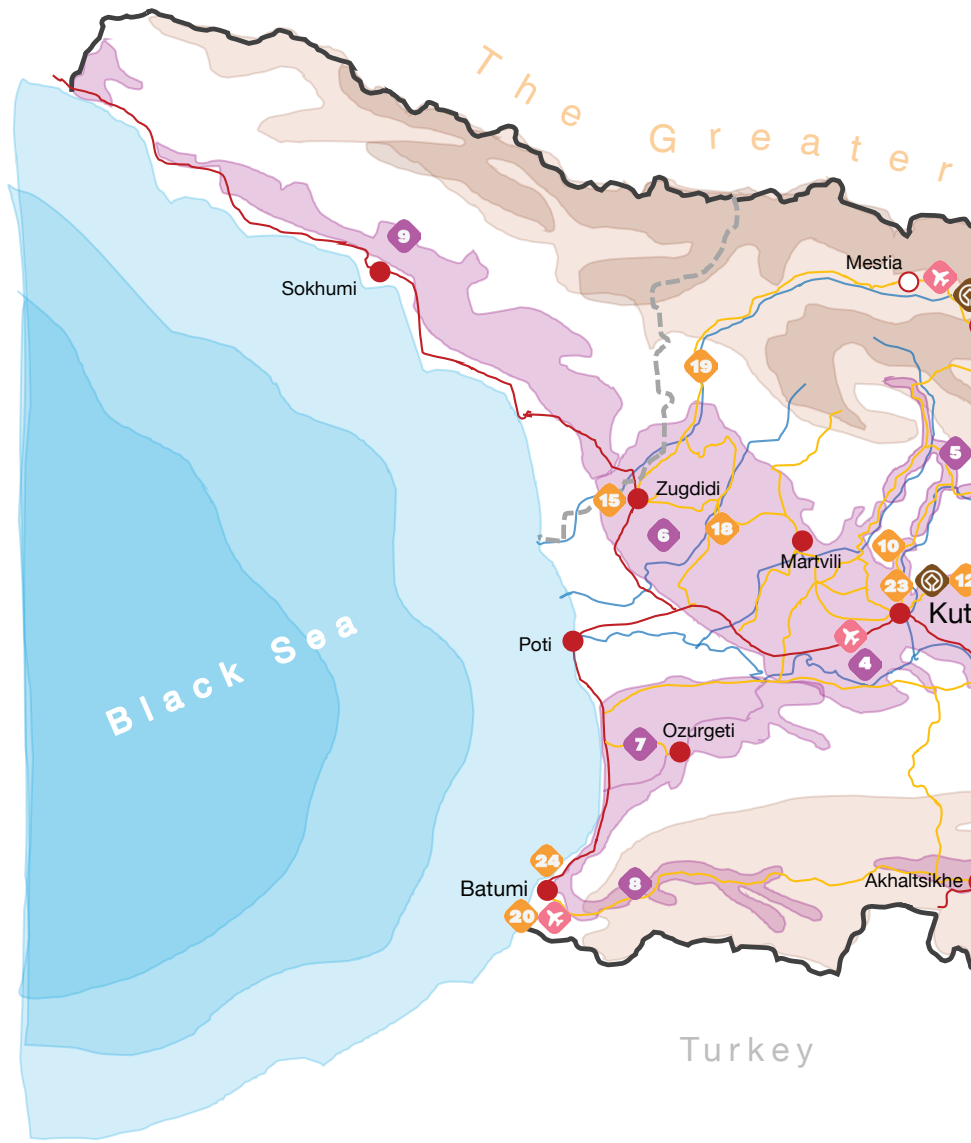
კულტურული საგანძური

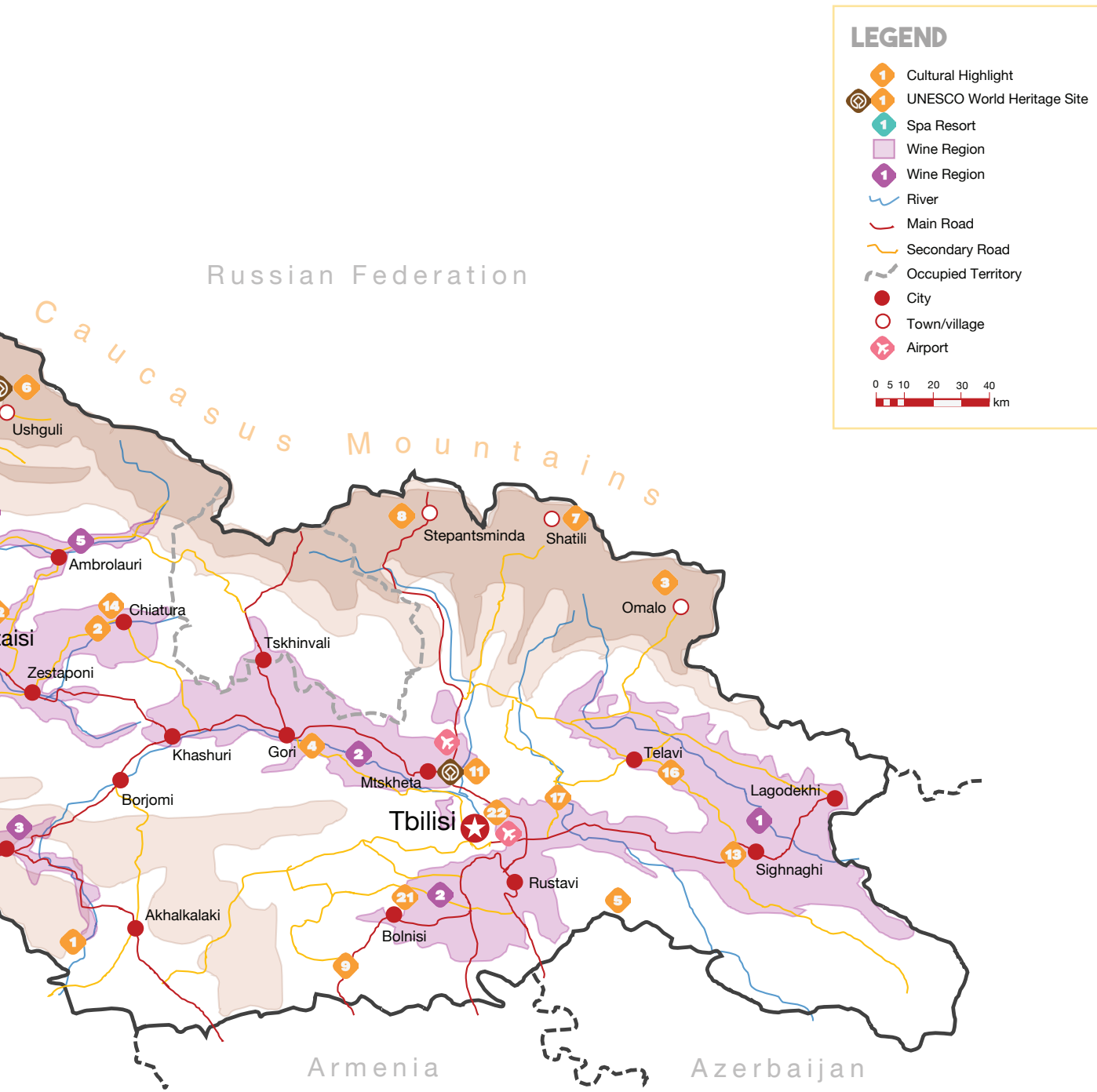
Cultural Highlights

1. Vardzia Cave City
2. Katskhi Pillar
3. Tusheti National Park
4. Uplistsikhe Cave Town
5. Davit Gareja Monastery Complex
6. Upper Svaneti
7. Shatili and Mutso Fortified Settlements
8. Gergeti Trinity Church
9. Dmanisi Archeological Site
10. Abandoned Soviet Sanatorium
11. Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
12. Gelati Monastery
13. Sighnaghi “City of Love”
14. Cable Cars of Chiatura
15. Dadiani Palace and Park
16. Aleksandre Chavchavadze Complex (Tsinandali Park)
17. Ujarma Medieval Fortress
18. Nokalakevi Archaeological Complex
19. Enguri Hydroelectric Dam
20. Gonio-Apsaros Archaeological Complex
21. Asureti and Bolsini Historic Towns
22. Old Town Tbilisi
23. Old Town Kutaisi
24. Old Town Batumi

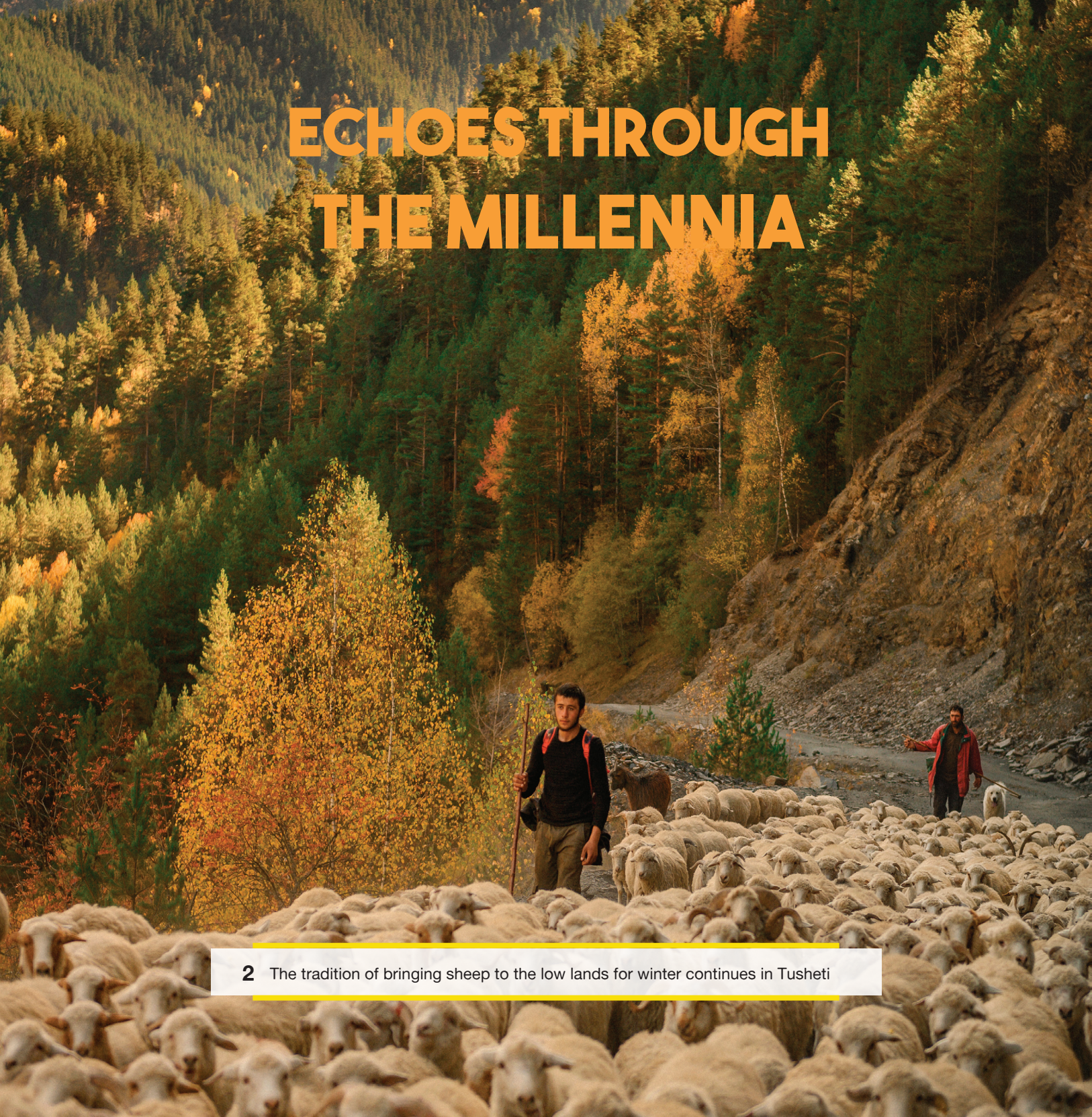
Wine Regions

1. Kakheti
2. Kartli
3. Meskheti
4. Imereti
5. Racha-Lechkhumi
6. Samegrelo
7. Guria
8. Adjara
9. Abkhazia




LEGEND
Cultural Highlight
UNESCO World Heritage Site
Spa Resort
Wine Region
Wine Region
River
Main Road
Secondary Road
Occupied Territory
City
Town/village
Airport
0 5 10 20 30 40
km
Russian Federation
Caucasus Mountains
Ushguli
Ambrolauri
Chiatura
Zestaponi
Tskhinvali
Stepantsminda
Shatili
Omalo
Khashuri
Gori
Mtskheta
Borjomi
Tbilisi
Telavi
Lagodekhi
Sighnaghi
Rustavi
Akhalkalaki
Bolnisi
Armenia
Azerbaijan

ECHOES THROUGH THE MILLENNIA



2 The tradition of bringing sheep to the low lands for winter continues in Tusheti



3 The megalith of Tejisi Church in the Kvemo Kartli region



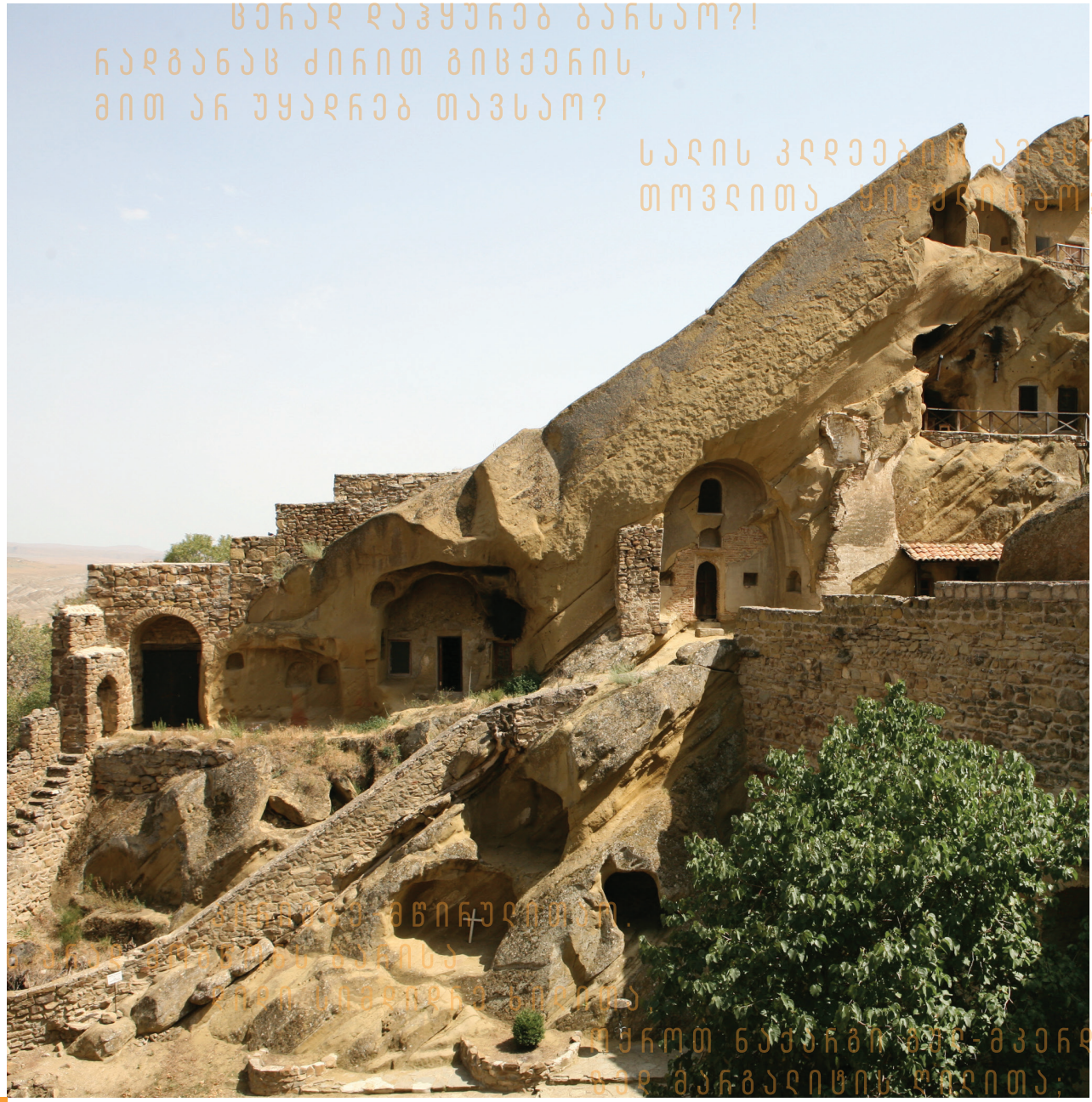
4 ©GNM / Ancient relics in the Vani Archaeological Museum

The Stone Age. That's when evidence of civilization in Georgia first appears. The remains of what are believed to be the first Europeans were found just outside Tbilisi--hominids estimated to be over 1.8 million years old. Since 1999, five skulls have been found in the Dmanisi range.

The region of Imereti has been populated since prehistoric times. For the ancient world it was part of the Kingdom of Colchis, the setting of the legend of Jason and the Argonauts and their quest for the golden fleece.

მთაო, რად აგრე ჰგუდიდრობ,
ცერად დაჰყურებ ბარსაო?!
რადგანაც ძირით გიცქერის,
მით არ უყადრებ თავსაო?

სადის კედელის აშენება,
თოვლითა ...



...წერილნი წმიდანთანი,
შეხედე ...
... სიდიდე ბუნების,
... ნაკაბი ...-მკერდი,
... მკანგალიტის ...თა;



6 Katskhi Pillar



7 Ancient frescoes in Gelati Monastery, Imereti

Georgia officially adopted Christianity in 326 AD, one of the first countries in the world to do so. This resulted in the construction of some spectacular cathedrals and monasteries that still stand tall today.

These include the Gelati Monastery Complex in Imereti, which was founded by King David Aghmashenebeli in 1106; Bagrati Cathedral in Kutaisi; the Davit Gareja Monastery Complex (Kakheti); and the mind-boggling Katskhi Pillar, where two churches, dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries, sit atop a 40-meter-tall column of rock.

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სადის კლდეებით ამაყობ,
თოვდითა, ყინვდითაო;



ბირიქზა ცრემლიანი
შენ არად მოგწონს ბარისა
დიდი სიმდიდრე ხიდითა,
ოქროთ ნაქარგი გულ-მკერდი,
ზედ მარგალიტის ღილითა;

 Keselo, a small medieval fortress just above the village of Omalo in Tusheti



9 Traditional farming methods endure



10 The recently renovated Village Mutso in Khevsureti

Thousand-year-old stone towers dot the Caucasus Mountains throughout the Tusheti historic region, where ancient villagers used the defensive structures to fend off hostile invaders. You can feel the echoes of history reverberating through these towers, especially in the villages of Dartlo and Omalo.

The story of the cave-town of Vardzia is connected with King Tamar, the great female monarch of Georgia (1184 to 1213). According to legend, young Tamar was lost in the caves and screamed, “Aq var Dzia,” meaning, “I am here, uncle.” Her uncle’s joy and relief of finding young Tamar led to the name “Vardzia.”

One of the most recent achievements in the field of cultural heritage preservation is the rehabilitation and revitalization of the Mutso fortified settlement, one of the outstanding medieval rural settlements of Georgia. Dramatically perched on the slope of a high rock, the site is one of the most visited places in Georgia.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Being designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site is an extraordinary honor. It means that The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) believes a landmark or area is "...of outstanding universal value," and has cultural, historic or scientific significance. Besides being an honor, being designated a World Heritage Site provides legal protection by the United Nations. Georgia is blessed to have three UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

11 Frescoes in Gelati monastery, Imereti

12 Jvari Monastery of Mtskheta



13 Gelati is a medieval monastic complex near Kutaisi in the Imereti region of western Georgia

The Gelati Monastery Complex in Imereti, was founded by King David Aghmashenebeli in 1106. One of the largest medieval Orthodox monasteries in the world, it is considered a masterpiece of the Golden Age of medieval Georgia.

Located only 25 kilometers northwest of Tbilisi, the historic churches of Mtskheta, rest at the confluence of the Aragvi and Mtkvari Rivers, and consist of the Jvari Monastery, the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and the Samtavro Monastery. This is where Christianity was proclaimed as the official religion of Georgia in 326 AD.



14 Panoramic view of medieval towers in the town of Mestia, Upper Svaneti



15 The high altitude community of Ushguli in Svaneti

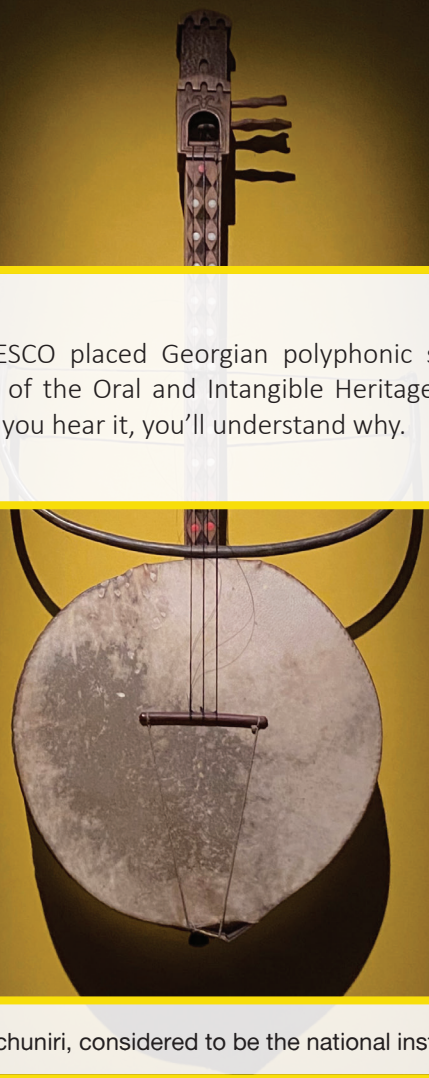


16 Ushguli in July

The Upper Svaneti region is an exceptional example of Caucasus Mountain scenery with medieval villages and tower houses. The origins of Svaneti tower houses go back to prehistory, and were used both as dwellings and as defense posts against invaders.

The community of Ushguli is one of the highest continuously occupied settlements in Europe, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

EXPERIENCING THE CENTURIES



In 2001, UNESCO placed Georgian polyphonic singing on its Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity list, and once you hear it, you'll understand why.

17 A traditional chuniri, considered to be the national instrument of Svaneti



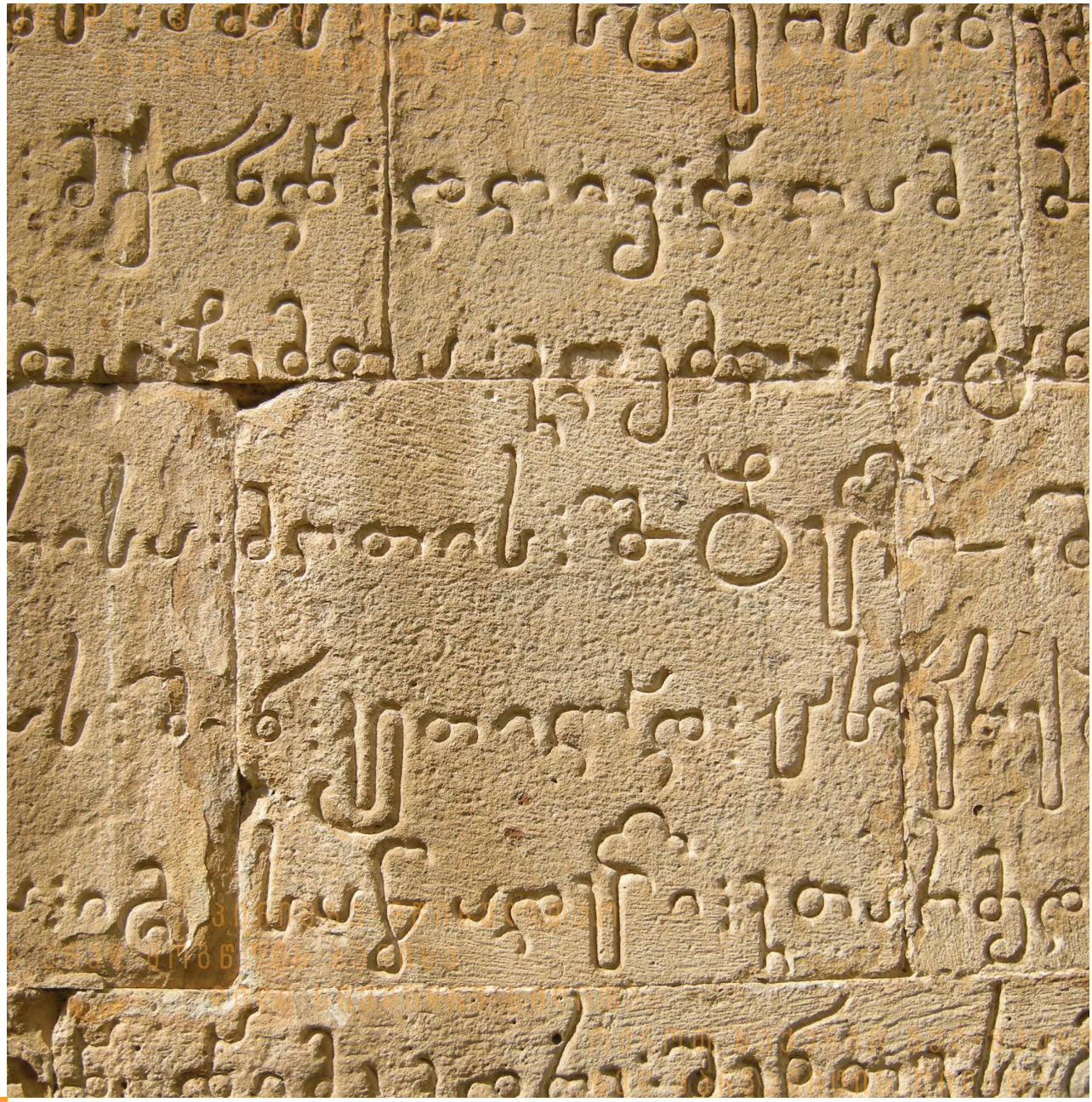
18 Georgian polyphonic singers in traditional costumes



19 Georgian tablecloths have been granted UNESCO material monument status

Perhaps you'll encounter polyphonic singing in the midst of another revered Georgian tradition, the supra, or feast. A supra is a multi-dish, multi-hour affair that is Georgian hospitality in its purest form. It is considered rude for a guest to be left wanting, so expect a table full of more food than you could ever eat. Khinkali, meat-filled dumplings; Khachapuri, cheese bread; and Mtsvadi, barbecued meat are supra staples. Every supra is led by a Tamada. Part toastmaster, entertainer and historian, the Tamada keeps the toasts coming, the laughs echoing, the songs ringing and the wine flowing.

Wine, of course, is yet another ancient Georgian tradition you can very much enjoy today. With a wine-making heritage that's over 8,000 years old, Georgia is the Cradle of Wine, so it's hardly surprising that the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list also includes the Georgian qvevri wine-making method.



20 Georgian calligraphy on an exterior church wall



21 Moving a qvevri into in the wine cellar



22 Underground wine cellar

The qvevri is an egg-shaped clay vessel used for making, fermenting and storing wine, often underground. Visiting a wine region during the Rtveli (grape harvest) season let's you take part in the wine-making process, taste wine and traditional foods, and hear local folk music.

The Georgian alphabet is yet a third item cited on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Seeing the alphabet around town, you can't help but feel a connection to a cultural tradition that has survived for centuries.

Georgian wrestling, Chidaoba is another item on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This ancient form of martial art is a complex phenomenon that also involves elements of music, dance and special garments, known as Chokha.

A HUB OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE



23 Modern architecture in the outskirts of Tbilisi



24 Up and coming artists bring fresh creative energy to Tbilisi



25 A Tbilisi Metro escalator becomes a catwalk in a fashion show

Given its dynamic cultural heritage, it can hardly be surprising to see contemporary culture flourishing in modern day Georgia. The streets of Tbilisi virtually crackle with a creative energy that you can feel. Increasingly, public spaces are becoming filled with markets, festivals and other events that embrace the enthusiasm of the moment.

Fashion shows demonstrate how the designers and fashion houses of Georgia have established themselves in the international arena. International film festivals continue to grow in significance on a worldwide scale, while art fairs generate international visibility for emerging artists.

The underground soul of Tbilisi can be seen in the collections of designers such as Situationists or on the colorful murals that every year appears on the gray soviet blocks sponsored by Tbilisi Mural Festival and Niko Movement.

მთაო, რად აგრე ჰგუდიდობ,
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რადგანაც ძირით გიცქერდა,
მით არ უყვარდა თავსაო.

სალის კლდეებით ამაყობ,
თოვლითა, ყინულითაო;

პირიმზე-მწირულითაო!
შენ არად გთვლის ბარისა
დიდი სიმდიდრე ხილითა,
ოქრო-ვაზიანი გულ-მკერდი,
ზედ მარგალიტის ღილითა;





27 Where there once were factories, now are hotels, bars and restaurants



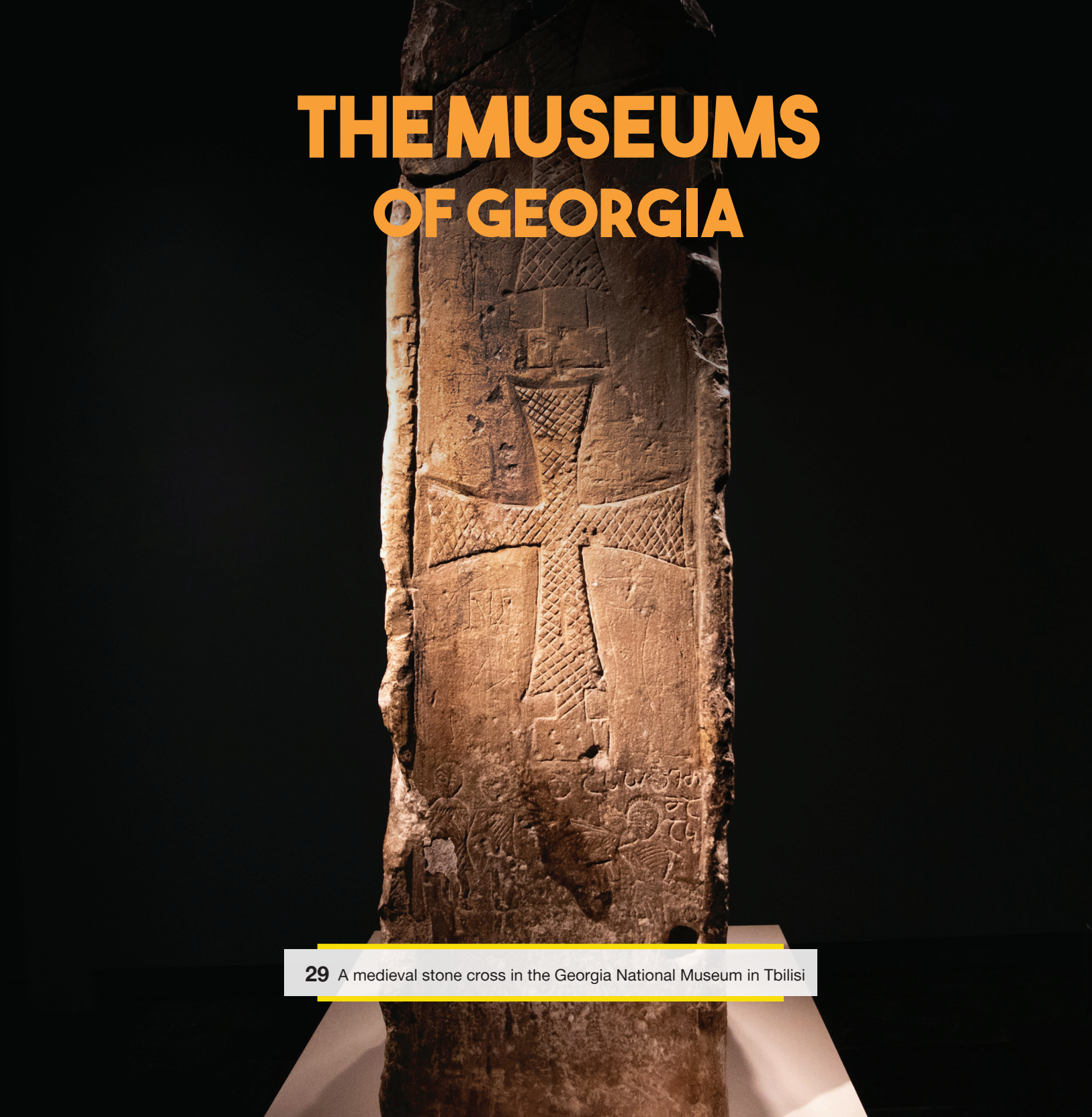
28 A neighborhood cafe in the city center

The Tbilisi restaurant scene has undergone a renaissance in recent years as innovative chefs put their own spin on Georgian classics. Eateries of all sorts--from white linen formal dining, to intimate cafes, even speakeasies--have been popping up in historic, but now hip neighborhoods such as Vera, Sololaki and Mtatsminda.

New restaurants and bars are embracing the traditional architecture of Old Tbilisi, incorporating much of the hand-crafted detail found in the area's beautiful older homes.

Tbilisi's much-vaunted dance music scene carries on deep into the night. In its dance clubs, techno is the soundtrack to social change, and its underground clubs are emblems of tolerance and progressiveness.

THE MUSEUMS OF GEORGIA



29 A medieval stone cross in the Georgia National Museum in Tbilisi



30 ©GNM / Ancient stone carvings at the Bolnisi Museum

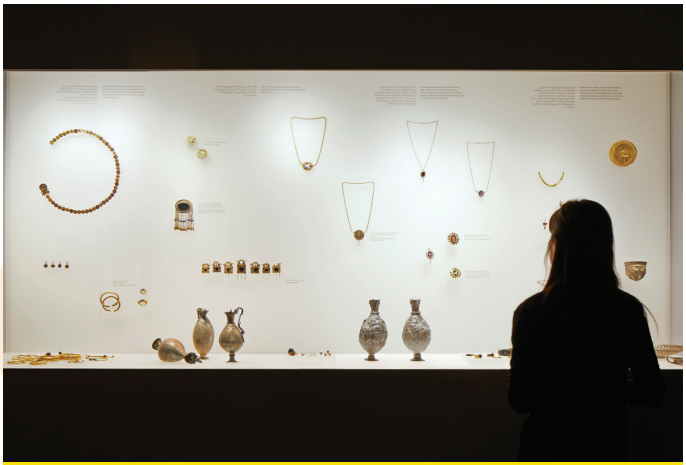


31 ©GNM / 15th-century Cloisonné enamel on gold plaque portraying St. George slaying the dragon

Given Georgia's millennia of history, the vast amount of historic natural and cultural wonders could leave you feeling overwhelmed. The Georgian National Museum, founded in 2004 as the largest museum association in Georgia, consists of 12 museums, the National Gallery, 4 house- museums and 2 scientific centers.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia offers another portfolio of heritage sites across the country. The dynamic 12 museum-reserves and 6 museums introduce visitors to the wider spectrum of Georgian culture throughout the centuries.

The collections are astounding: ancient human remains of the first Europeans, unique archeological discoveries, and materials celebrating Georgia's early Christian culture. There are world-class Asian monuments, a rich collection of numismatics, delicate gold and silver jewelry from ancient Colchis, spectacular examples of legendary Georgian Cloisonné enamel and renowned works of various Georgian and European artists that span centuries.



©GNM / **Museum of Georgia**

(3, Sh. Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi)

Originally founded in 1852, the museum sets the standards for the preservation of Georgian heritage.



Museum of Fine Arts

(7, Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi)

Opened in 2018, the museum houses over 3500 artworks, created by over 80 artists during the last 70 years.



©GNM / **National Gallery**

(11, Sh. Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi)

Originally a prison, the gallery now has eight modern exhibition halls.



Open Air Museum of Ethnography

(1, Turtle Lake Road, Tbilisi)

This sprawling museum presents 14 distinct historic-ethnographic areas of Georgia.

MUSEUMS OF TBILISI

Here are just a few highlights of
Georgian National Museum sites in Tbilisi



©GNM / **E. Akhvlediani House-Museum**

(12, Leo Kiacheli Street, Tbilisi)

The home of Georgian painter Elene Akhvlediani represents a typical Georgian interior, filled with many of the artist's works.



Tbilisi History Museum - Karvasla

(8, Sioni Street, Tbilisi)

Located in a restored caravanserai, the museum houses over fifty thousand artifacts reflecting Tbilisi's history.

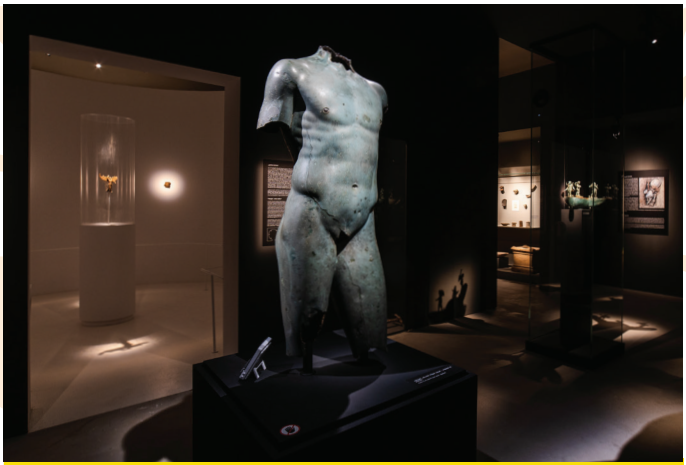




Mestia Museum

(7 A. Ioseliani Street, Mestia)

This sprawling complex was renovated in 2015, and is recognized as a world-class facility.



©GNM / **Vani Archaeological Museum**

(32 O. Lordkipanidze Street, Vani)

A spectacular facility in a Caucasus settlement which covers the first millennium BC, and is of global importance.



Parmen Zakaria Nokalakevi Architectural-Archaeological State Museum-Reserve

(Village Nokalakevi, Distrct of Senaki)

The massive ruins of a medieval city in the region of Samegrelo.



©GNM / **Bolnisi Museum**

(95, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani Street, Bolnisi)

A model of the 21st century regional museum, where science, culture, education and tourism can coexist in one space.



Ujarma Museum Reserve

(Village Ujarma, District of Sagarejo)

This 9 hectare fortress-city includes a palace, church, battle towers residential and agricultural buildings from the 10th through 13th centuries.



Vardzia Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve

(Village Vardzia, Municipality of Aspindza)

A vast and fascinating cave monastery complex from the 12th century.

REGIONAL GEORGIAN MUSEUMS

A number of equally fascinating museums and museum-reserves can be found across the country.

Borjomi Local Lore Museum
(5 Tsminda Nino Street, Borjomi)

Dmanisi Museum-Reserve
(Patara Dmanisi Village, District of Dmanisi)

Dzalisa Museum-Reserve
(Village of Dzalisa, District of Mtskheta)

George and David Eristavi House-Museum
(Village Odzisi, District of Dusheti)

Gremi Museum
(Village Gremi, District of Kvareli)

Kutaisi Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve
(7, Nazarishvili Street, Kutaisi)

Niko Nikoladze House Museum
(Village Didi Jikhaishi, District of Samtredia)

Niko Pirosmanashvili State Museum
(Village Mirzaani, District of Dedoplistskaro)

Kolkheti Culture Museum
(26 May Street, Poti)

Samtskhe-Javakheti History Museum
(1, Kharischirashvili Street, Akhaltsikhe)

Sighnaghi Museum
(8 Rustaveli blind-Alley, Sighnaghi)

The Great Mtskheta Museum-Reserve
(51 Agmasghenebeli Street, Mtskheta)

Uplistsikhe Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve
(Village Kvakhvreli, District of Gori)

More informations about museums and museum-reserves across Georgia is available at:
http://georgianmuseums.ge/en/museums/



AN INEVITABLE IMMERSION

It has been said geography is destiny. It could be argued geography is culture. Georgian culture has been shaped by the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea. And by the Silk Road traders who traversed the country linking east and west. Influences both natural and man-made have shaped Georgian culture into a unique and ever-evolving experience.

Once here, feeling the deep beauty and genuine warmth of Georgian culture is inevitable. It's in the art, architecture, music, dance, fashion, food, wine and more. A simple stroll down the street immerses you in it. We invite you to come feel it for yourself.

GERGETI TRINITY CHURCH

Gracefully perched in the shadow of Mkinvartsveri (Mount Kazbegi) sits one of Georgia's most iconic structures, Gergeti Trinity Church. Approaching from a winding access road, you can almost feel the power of human determination behind this 14th century creation. Once on the church grounds, you can take in sweeping views of the town of Stepantsmida (or Kazbegi) below.

TRAVEL INFORMATION SECTION

#EmotionsAreGeorgia

Visa Requirements

The visa policy of Georgia became comparatively liberal, allowing citizens of 98 countries to enter, reside, work and study in Georgia without the necessity to obtain either a visa or residence permit. In addition, the Georgian Government approved the list of 50 countries whose visa and/or residence permit holders may enter Georgia without a visa for an appropriate period and under appropriate conditions.

For more information please visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

www.mfa.gov.ge

Connectivity

Georgia, with its strategic location at the crossroad of Europe and Asia, features itself as regional logistics and transit hub offering easy access to key markets. There are modern international airports operating in different parts of the country which accelerate the increase of tourists flows. Flights are operated by various airlines from over 50 directions from/to Georgia. www.kutaisi.aero; www.tavgeorgia.com

Climate

The climate of the country is extremely diverse. Average temperatures in summer range from 19°C to 22 °C, and in winter from 1.5 °C to 3 °C.

Currency

The currency in Georgia is the Georgian Lari. ATMs can be found in major towns and cities. Credit and debit cards are widely used in major cities.

Electricity

Electrical current - 220 volts, 50 Hz. EU standards plugs work throughout Georgia.

Communication

The country code is +995. Georgia's mobile operators are present in most parts of the country, and there are many Wi-Fi zones that enable visitors to use the internet for free.

Health

For emergency services, please call 112.

For more information, please visit:

www.georgia.travel

Hotline 0 800 800 909

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