



IMERETI:

THE HEART *of*
HISTORY

 **KUTAIISI**
AIRPORT

A LAND OF LEGEND

If you want to feel like you've stepped into the heart of Georgian history, welcome to Imereti. Welcome to a region known for its abundance of gold, where legend has it the Argonauts came to find the Golden Fleece. Welcome to a place where historic monuments date back to the Stone Age, and dinosaur footprints turn the clock back millions of years.

You only have to go back 8,000 years, however, to find the origin of Georgia's wine-making tradition right here. Not surprisingly, Imereti remains one of the country's premier wine regions.

Imereti is where you can feel the energy of the Georgian renaissance in two masterpieces of Georgian architecture: the Bagrati Cathedral and the Gelati Monastery Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Yes, you'll feel connected in Imereti, but not just to history. The region is home to Kutaisi, Georgia's third largest city and site of Georgia's third international airport. There are mountains to explore, as well as verdant forests, wild canyons, mysterious caves and roaring waterfalls.

So when you're ready to feel inspired by Georgia's past, present and future, welcome to Imereti.

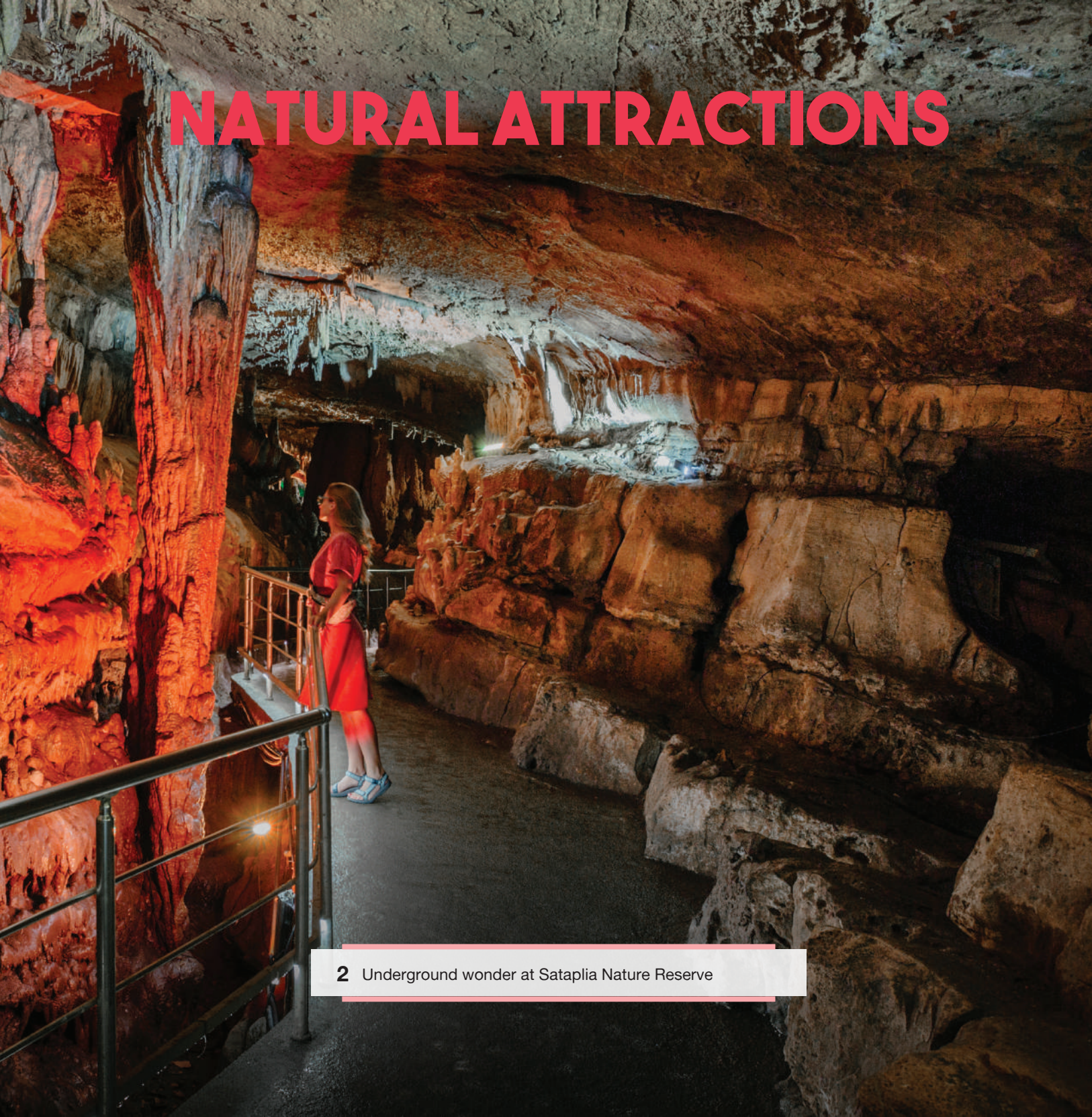
- 1 Bagrati Cathedral a masterpiece of medieval Georgian architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage Site







NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a red dress and blue sandals, stands on a metal walkway with a railing inside a cave. She is looking towards the right. The cave walls are covered in large, layered rock formations and numerous stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The lighting is warm and focused on the rock formations, creating a dramatic effect. The floor is dark and reflective.

2 Underground wonder at Sataplia Nature Reserve

მთაო, რად აზრად ჰგონებოდა,

მეზარდ დაჰყურებდა ბაგსაო?

რადგანაც ამოიღო გოგონის,

გოგონა და დაჰყურებდა მანქანაო?

სადღის ვრდებოდათ ამაყობა,

მომვლითა, ყოველითაო

დავამოვა მანქანა-ქვემოთა,

პირიგზა-მხილავითაო.

შენ ანად მომხმონს ბაგისა

მოდო დაჰყურებდა ხილითა,

მოქროთ ნაქანგო გულ-მკანდი,

გულ მანგვანობის ღილითა;





6 A cliffside stroll at Okatse Canyon



7 Okatse (Kinchkha) Waterfall

On the topic of caves, Imereti is where you'll find Georgia's most famous cave, Prometheus Cave. One of the most beautiful caves in Europe, neon lights and classical music bring a unique ambiance to stunning curtains of stalactites and stalagmites. A one-hour tour ends with a boat ride on the River Kumistavi.

A visit to the Okatse Canyon Natural Monument is a must for nature lovers. The Okatse Canyon itself is spectacular, a 14 kilometer-long segment of the Okatse River that at points is 100 meters deep. Add to that the heart-racing experience of the natural monument's hanging cliff trail--a metal bridge that clings to the side of the canyon walls before ending with a 20 meter extension over the canyon--and you've got a uniquely thrilling experience. While there, be sure to take in the majesty of the Kinchkha Waterfall Natural Monument, as well.

მთაო, ჩად აბრე ჰბუდრიდოზ,

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9 Winter hiking in Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park is an unforgettable experience



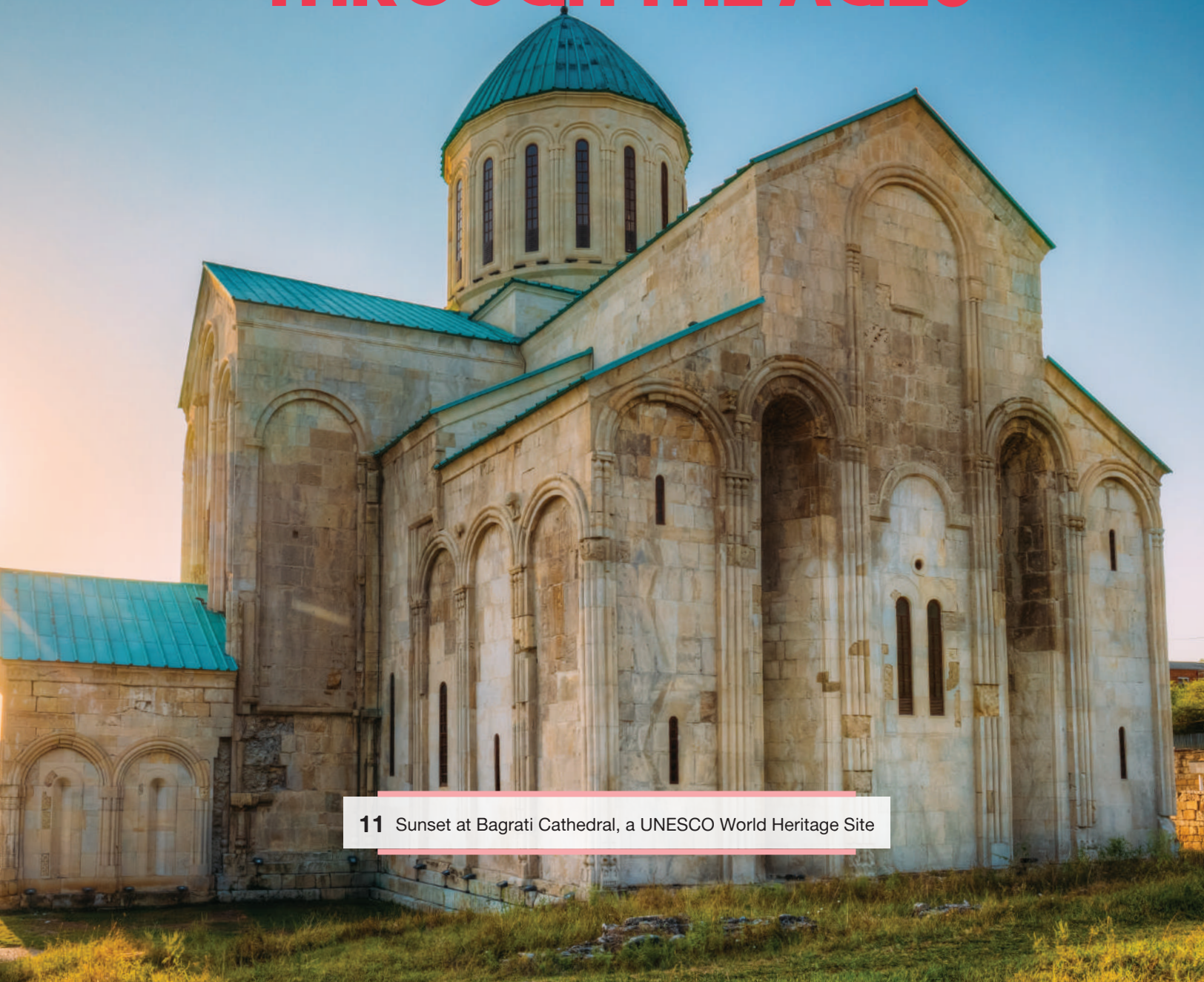
10 Saddle up to explore Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park

Nestled in the Lesser Caucasus, Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park is one of the largest in Europe, and a hiker's dream. Come feel energized by the fresh air, mineral waters, and spectacular mountain vistas.

Should all this outdoor activity make you feel a bit worn down, you can recharge in one of several spas that feature thermal mineral springs. Try Tskaltubo, Sairme or Nunisi.

When in Imereti, step outside. Breathe the forest air. Embrace the freshness and freedom.

AMAZEMENT THROUGH THE AGES



11 Sunset at Bagrati Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site



12 The Motsameta Monastery stands through the centuries



13 Frescoes inside the Gelati Monastery church date back to the 12th century

What does it feel like to have a brush with history? In Imereti, you will find out. From the Stone Age, through the Bronze Age, the ancient Colchis kingdom, and the Georgian renaissance, Imereti's cultural and historical monuments shine like a beacon through the past.

Founded by king David Aghmashenebeli in 1106, the Gelati Monastery Complex was one of the largest religious, educational and philosophical centers of Georgia. Almost 1,000 years later, much of the complex is still intact.

Bagrati Cathedral proudly watches over Kutaisi and the Rioni River. Considered a masterpiece of medieval Georgian architecture, the cathedral has been the home of Colchis kings since ancient times, and imparts an undeniable feeling of grandeur.

საქართველოს ისტორია და კულტურა
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მცხეთის მთაწმინდა
საბა-ბარბაქადის მონასტრის
მონუმენტები
საქართველოს ისტორია და კულტურა
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საბა-ბარბაქადის მონასტრის
მონუმენტები

მთაწმინდა, ჩვენი ღმერთი,



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15 Katskhi Pillar (note the ladder to the top)



16 Statues adorn the roof of the Kutaisi Opera House

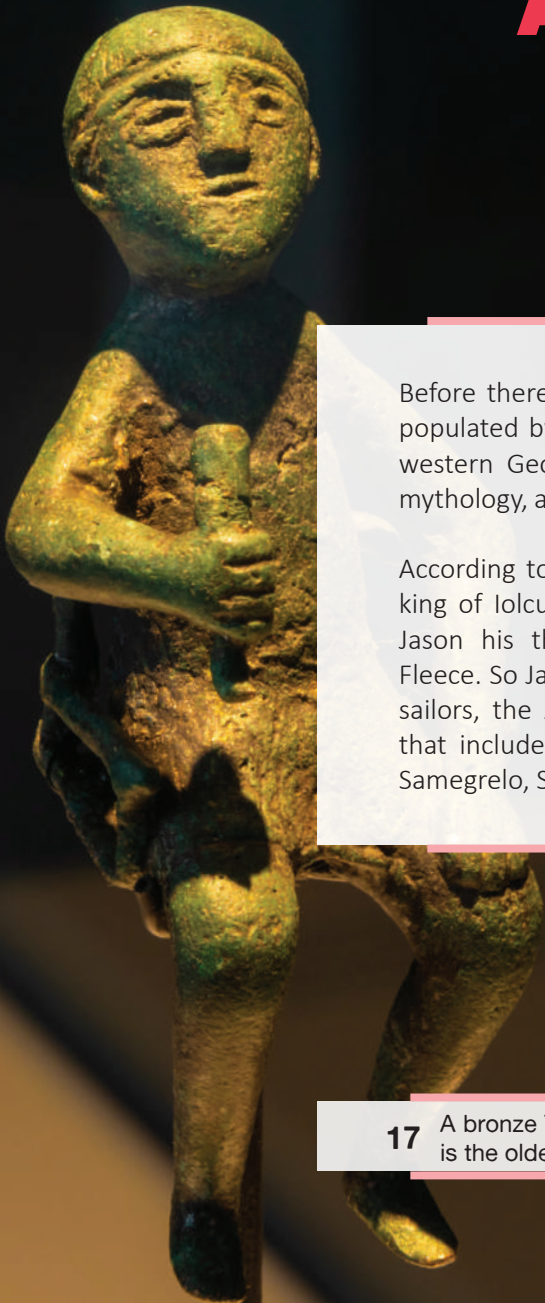
Just outside of Kutaisi sits Motsameta, a complex of monasteries picturesquely perched above the Tskaltsitela River, where David and Constantine from Argveti were martyred by Arab occupiers in the 8th century.

To feel a sense of awe and bewilderment, look no further than Katskhi Pillar. Atop a 40-meter-tall column of rock are two churches, dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries, making them among the earliest surviving churches in the world. The only way to reach them is by climbing straight up a metal ladder.

Of course, there is no shortage of contemporary culture in Kutaisi, where ballet and opera performances are filling seats, and new Georgian artists fill gallery walls.

History and culture spring to life in Imereti, giving you the chance to feel connected with a deep and rich past.

THE ALLURE OF THE ANCIENT



Before there was Georgia, there was Colchis. This area, populated by Colchians takes up much of what is today western Georgia. Colchis figured prominently in Greek mythology, as the home of Medea and the Golden Fleece.

According to Greek mythology, Jason's uncle Pelias, the king of Iolcus, a city state in eastern Greece, promised Jason his throne if he could bring him the Golden Fleece. So Jason took his ship, the Argo, and 50 powerful sailors, the Argonauts, and sailed for Colchis-- an area that includes present day Georgian regions of Imereti, Samegrelo, Svaneti, Racha, Adjara and Guria.

17 A bronze Tamada (toastmaster) figurine from the 6th century BC is the oldest evidence of Georgian supra traditions



18 The intricate work of Vani's ancient goldsmiths



19 The Vani Archeological Museum houses artifacts that date back to 8th century BC

While in Colchis, Jason becomes romantically involved with Medea, who uses her magical powers to help Jason capture the Golden Fleece, which he brings back to Iolcus only to find Pelias not willing to give up his throne. Blood is spilled, and ultimately Jason and Medea get married and move away.

The best way to experience his history, and walk in the footsteps of the legendary Jason is to visit the ancient city of Vani, now an extensive archeological site in Imereti, 40 kilometers southwest of Imereti. The excavation at Vani is expansive, and the site has been added to the list of Immovable Cultural Monuments of National Significance.

სანაპიროს მდებარეობის გამო, აქაა მდებარეობს მდინარეებისა და მთების სისტემა, რომელიც აქვს დიდი მნიშვნელობა. აქაა მდებარეობს მდინარეებისა და მთების სისტემა, რომელიც აქვს დიდი მნიშვნელობა. აქაა მდებარეობს მდინარეებისა და მთების სისტემა, რომელიც აქვს დიდი მნიშვნელობა.



LEGENDARY FOOD AND WINE

20 Vineyard in Imereti region



21 Local imeruli cheese with herbs, vegetable and oil



22 Wine aging underground in qvevri

Imereti is known for its spicy, delicious food, its crisp white wines and the friendliness of its people. Much of traditional Imereti cuisine is cooked in clay pots with plenty of fresh herbs and walnuts.

The region is also one of Georgia's five renowned winemaking regions. Because of Imereti's diverse range of climates, and soil conditions, the wines from here are equally diverse. Most, however, adhere to the Georgian tradition of using qvevri, large clay vessels that are buried in the ground, where the wine ferments and ages (though in Imereti, they're known as Churi).

There are several gastronomic traditions you owe it to yourself to discover in Imereti. Cheese lovers will want to try imeruli, a traditional, white cow's milk cheese that originated here. To feel the warming comfort of a stick-to-your-ribs meal, you can't beat Chashushuli, a hearty beef and tomato stew loaded with spices.

მთაო, ჩად აბრე ჰბუდრიდოზ,

შინად დავუბრუნებ ბარსონ?

ჩადგანდუ ძირით ბიზმანონ,

მით არ უყარდებ თანონაო?

მადონ ჰდრეხებით ამაყობ,

თუზრითა, ყიბუდითაო;

აბგვინა, ურქან-მუროთა,

პირიბეზა-მეორეზითაო.

შინად ჩად მომგონს ბარონა,

მოდრი სიყვარულა-სიღიბთა,

ჩადრით ჩადგანდუ შად-მეზარდო,

ჩადგანდუბრუნებ ზიბრითა.





24 Imeruli Khachapuri

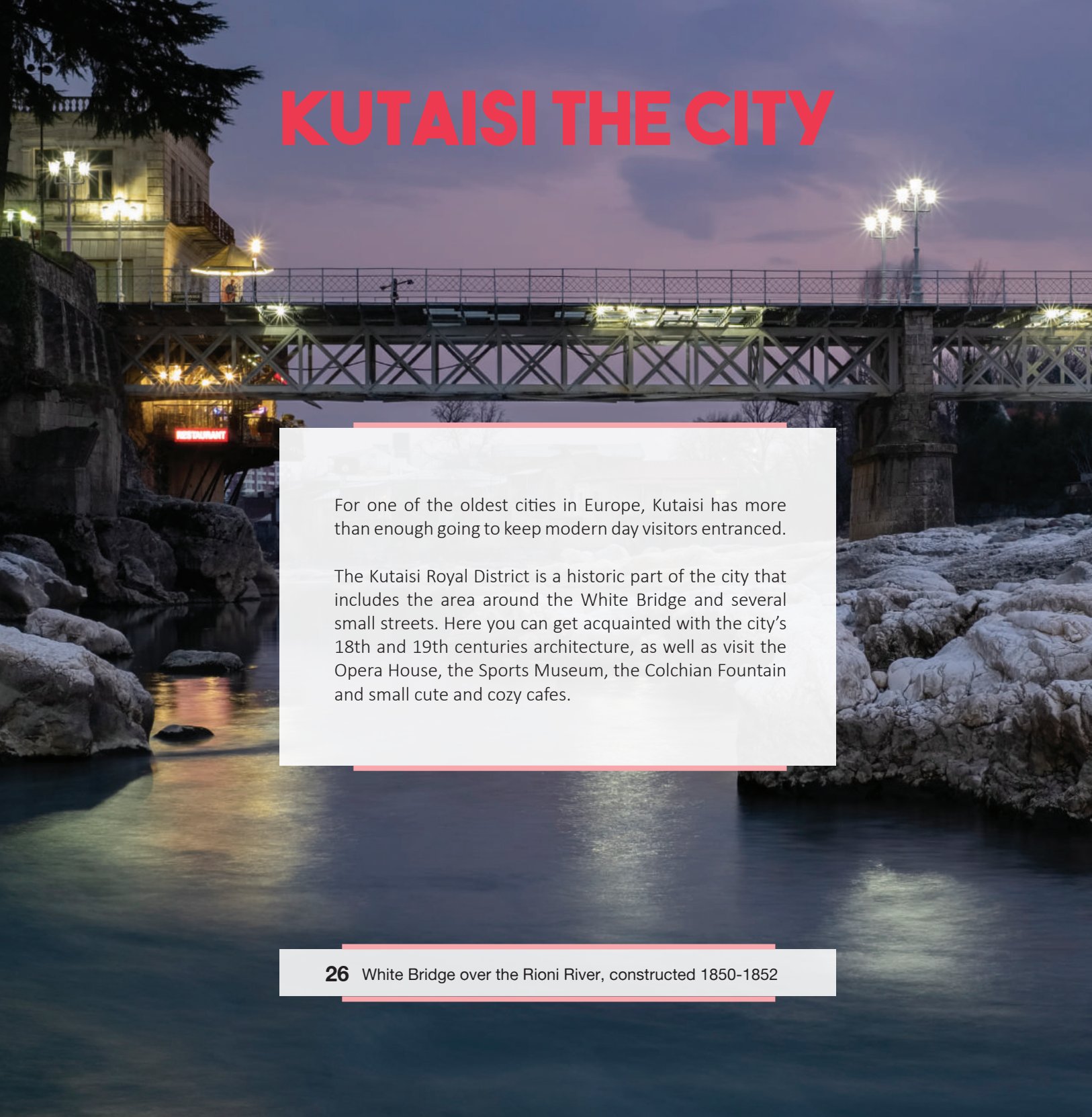


25 Pkhali is a traditional Georgian dish of minced vegetables, combined with ground walnuts, vinegar, garlic, and herbs

Every region of Georgia has its own take on Khachapuri, a bread and cheese dish. Here in Imereti, Khachapuri features a flat, circular, flaky crust, filled with cheese (imeruli, of course), baked and served hot. Vegetarians will delight in trying pkhali, chopped and minced vegetables seasoned with ground walnuts, vinegar, onions, herbs and spices.

There are numerous scenic wineries, and even more well-stocked wine bars in Imereti. A good way to get an introduction to some is a one-day wine route tour out of Kutaisi.

KUTAISI THE CITY



For one of the oldest cities in Europe, Kutaisi has more than enough going to keep modern day visitors entranced.

The Kutaisi Royal District is a historic part of the city that includes the area around the White Bridge and several small streets. Here you can get acquainted with the city's 18th and 19th centuries architecture, as well as visit the Opera House, the Sports Museum, the Colchian Fountain and small cute and cozy cafes.



27 Picasso sculpture of a boy who jumps into the river after stealing the hat of a passer-by



28 The elaborate and engaging Colchis Fountain at David Agmashenebeli Square

While in the Royal District, be sure to visit the Kutaisi Historical and Ethnographic Museum. Especially interesting is the Archaeological Department

Nowadays more than 150,000 exhibits are kept in the Kutaisi museum. The Archaeological Department which boasts an extensive collection of Bronze Age discoveries, including Colchian axes, and bronze statues.

Kutaisi's Jewish District was first documented in 1644, and continues to thrive today. There are three synagogues to visit, the oldest having been built in 1853.

Pay a visit to Marionette Theater, founded by native son Rezo Gabriadze, and catch a puppet performance designed for audiences of all ages.

მთაო, ჩად აბრე ჰბუდრიდოზ,

ცხად დამუხრეზ ბარსაო?

ჩადმანეზ ძირით მიხუარის,

მით არ უყარეზ თავესაო?

სადის ჰდუვენიო მუხუო,

თოვრიო, ყოვერიოთაო;

პევეში, პევე-ძირითა,

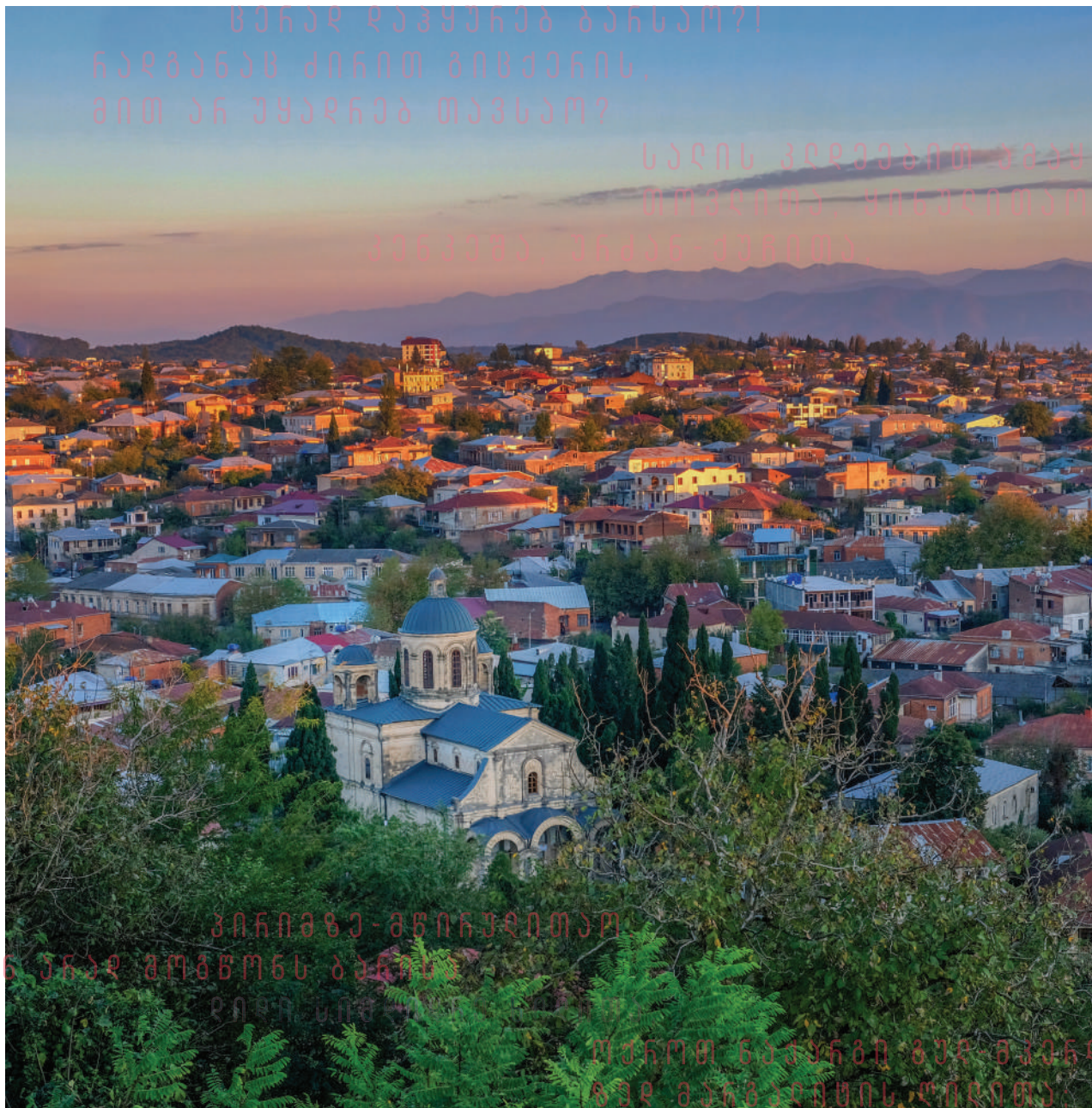
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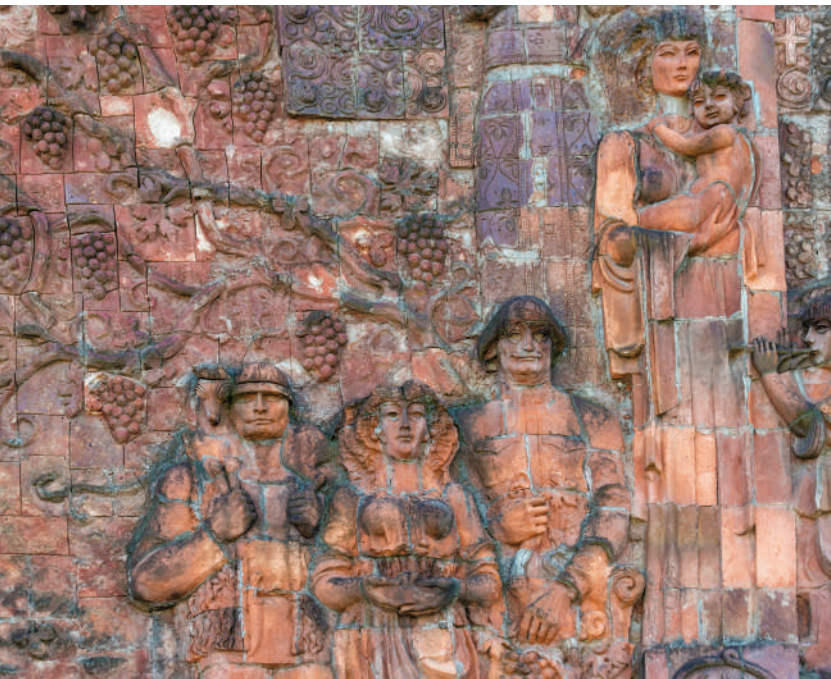
თქნოთ ნაპარევი ზე-მეორეო,

ჩად მანვენიოთ, ღირითა.





30 Cable Cars cross the Rioni River, providing great views of the city



31 Historic figures carved into the exterior wall of Kutaisi Market

Should you feel you need a respite from the vibrancy of urban life, you can find peace in the Kutaisi Botanical Garden. The flora here represents about 700 species of plants, trees and shrubs from around the world.

But if you really want to rise above it all, take a ride on the Kutaisi Ropeway, a cable car that traverses the Rioni River, offering spectacular views of the city.

The city of Kutaisi is home of ancient kings, poetry, mythology, literature, music, and is ready to make sure you feel welcome.

GETTING AROUND

David The Builder Kutaisi International Airport puts you right in the heart of Imereti. From there, you can venture in any direction, and discover the many wonders of the Imereti region.

32 The recently renovated terminal

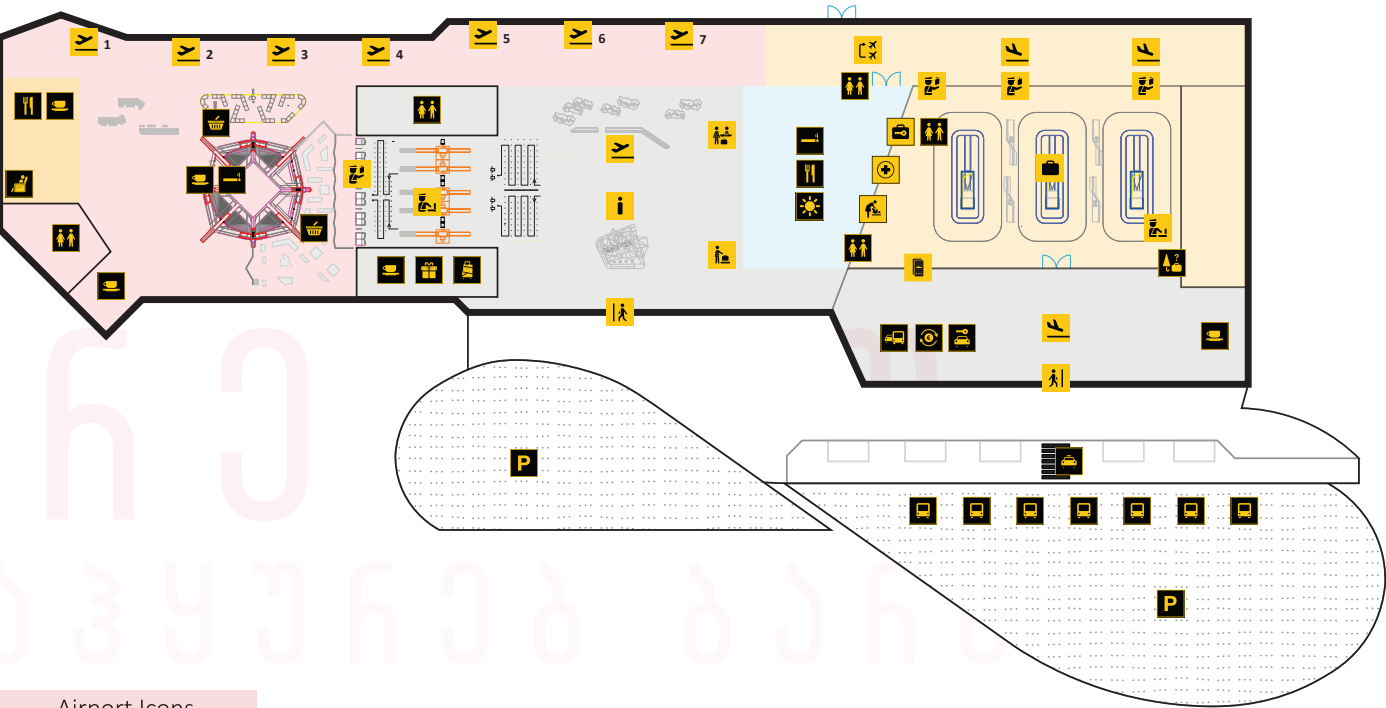


Airports Council International has consistently ranked Kutaisi international Airport among the top five fastest growing airports serving up to 5 million passengers in Europe.

34 The renovated check in area

KUTAISI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ქუთაისის საერთაშორისო აეროპორტი



Airport Icons

 Information	 Security / Customs	 Lockers	 Currency Exchange	 Cafe	 Entrance
 Departures	 Passport Control	 Taxi	 Car Rental	 Restaurant	 Toilet
 Arrivals	 Ticket Desk	 Bus	 Duty Free	 Lounge	 Nursery
 Check In	 Baggage Reclaim	 Parking	 Gift Shop	 Smoking Area	 Baggage Wrap
 Self Bag Drop Off	 Lost & Found	 Transportation Services	 First Aid	 Exit	 Terrace

WHERE LEGEND COMES TO LIFE

It's a unique thrill, walking amongst the rich history and natural beauty of Imereti. Feeling a bit overwhelmed by it all is not an uncommon sensation. From the old town section of Kutaisi, to the tranquil silence of the Lesser Caucasus, the region serves up a wide variety of delights.

Of course, any feelings of being taken aback by Imereti will be quickly dissipated by the warm welcome you will feel from the local people. Traditional foods and wines, along with hospitality that is itself legendary, will soothe your soul and foster memories that will last a lifetime.



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.

Information

Kutaisi International Airport contact details:

Tel: 0431 23 70 00
0431 23 70 01
infodesk@airports.ge
www.kutaisi.aero

Tourism Center of Kutaisi and Imereti
9 a Rustaveli Avenue, Kutaisi 4600, Georgia
Tel: +995 431 24 11 03

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.

Scan to download the Kutaisi/Imereti touring map

Check out all the attractions around Kutaisi and Imereti with this fun, interactive map. It's integrated with Google Maps so it's easy to use on your phone, and features a variety of driving routes filled with plenty of interesting sights and activities along the way.



For more information, please visit:

www.georgia.travel
Hotline 0 800 800 909

The views expressed in the publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

With the financial support from the USAID Economic Security Program



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