

# My Green Imagination



Machakheli Valley

2017

**The Brochure was elaborated by Georgian Ecotourism Association. This is an independent publication commissioned by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Global Environmental Facility (GEF), with support from the Agency of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia.**

The views expressed in this publication are those of Author and do not necessarily represent those of GEF and UNDP.

Authors:

**N.Bakhtadze-Englaender, N. Marjanidze, I.Okromelidze, N.Robitashvili.**

Editor:

**J.Megrelishvili**

Designer:

**R.Robitashvili**

Photos:

**I.Tabatadze, I.Okromelidze, Administration of Machakhela National Park**



Only 28 kilometers from Batumi, the city overcrowded with visitors, there is the valley of Machakheli yet undiscovered but appealing place that holds number of mysteries through its unique history, ethnography and nature.

Be our guest at historical Machakheli. Visit amazing villages scattered on the slopes of the mountains, and discover your own little paradise on the verge of the sky and the ground.





## Did you know that...

- Machakheli valley has complex and diverse geographic features of the landscape. Its main area is covered with mountains and deep ravines. Average height of the mountains
- is between 760 and 2151 meters above the sea level. Important peaks among them are: Mt. Khedi — 2151 m, Mt. Bashniurki — 1712 m, Mt. Muratnana — 1888 m and Mt. Qvakibe — 1937 m. above the sea level.
- Machakheli valley has humid subtropical climate. The average temperature during the year is between 13–15 °C. The coldest month is January when the temperature drops to approximately 4–6 °C. While in August, the warmest month, temperature rises to 21–24 °C. The annual precipitation fluctuates between 1200 to 2500 mm.
- Main river of the valley is Machakhlistskali.
- Machakheli bee is a rare variety of Caucasian bee. In the beginning of 20th century it was also known as Euphrates bee.
- The upper part of Machakheli valley is located on the territory of Turkey and represents Camili Biosphere Reserve. There are six villages in this part, which have both official Turkish and unofficial Georgian names. These villages are: Camili (Geo: Khertvisi), Düzenli (Geo: Zedvake), Kayalar (Geo: Kvabistavi), Maralköy (Geo: Mindieti), Uğurköy (Geo: Akria) and Efeler (Geo: Eprati).



**Discover the unique part of Adjara region, captivating with its waterfalls, well known symbols of Colchic mountainous landscape and wild fauna.**

The main merit of the Machakheli valley is its biodiversity. Here we have relict Colchis flora of the tertiary period. The valley is known for its variety of vascular plants, the high number of rare relict plants and endemism. Among the woody species that emerge on the area, we may name: chestnut tree (Lat. *Castanea*), maple (Lat. *Acer*), beech (Lat. *Fagus*), hornbeam (Lat. *Carpinus caucasica*), oriental spruce (Lat. *Picea orientalis*), chorokhi oak (*Dzhorochensis*), yew (Lat. *Taxus baccata*), colchis bladdernut, / "jonjoli" (Lat. *Staphylea colchica*) etc. Within the evergreen understory of the valley more widespread species are: boxwoods (Lat. *Buxus colchica*), cistus (Lat. *Cistus*), common hazel (Lat. *Corylus avellana*), Privet (Lat. *Ligustrum*), rhododendron (Lat. *Rhododendron ponticum*) and eglantine (Lat. *Rosa*). Among the lianas, here can be found: colchic and common ivy (Lat. *Hedera colchica*/*Hedera*), clematis (Lat. *Clematis*), catbriers (Lat. *Smilax excelsa*) and common grapevines (Lat. *Vitis vinifera*).





As soon as you pass by the populated areas and discover many spectacular landscapes and views, do not be surprised if you encounter the family of badgers, roes or bears on your way. In addition, if you thoroughly observe the sky, there is a high chance to glimpse eagles, kites and hawks.

Plenty of fish variety in the depth of the river Machakhlistskali and its tributaries: Colchic barbell (Lat. *Barbus tauricus escherichii*), khramuli (Lat. *varicorhinus*), herring (Lat. *Clupea*), goby (Lat. *Gobiidae*), river perch (Lat. *Perca fluviatilis*), Black Sea salmon (Lat. *Salmo trutta labrax*), brown trout (Lat. *Salmo*) and etc. As for reptiles and amphibians, most probably along with the Caucasian salamander (Lat. *Mertensiella caucasica*), Caucasian toad (Lat. *Bufo verrucosissimus*), marsh frog (Lat. *Rana ridibunda*), Georgian lizard and Aesculapian snake (Lat. *Elaphe longissima*), you might also discover Colchis large-headed water snake (Lat. *Natrix megalcephala*), nose-horned viper (Lat. *Vipera ammodytes*) and Caucasus Viper (Lat. *Vipera kaznakovi*).

If you carefully listen to the sounds of the nature during your journey and perceive existing surrounding, you will be amazed with an interesting hospitality that the valley can offer you.

Machakheli valley, with its gushing rivers and ravishing orchards, shares life with you, while pairing waterfalls of Chkhutuneti, Dunga, Chkheri and Kokoleti will induce you into a sway of the nature.

## **Machakheli and People of the Valley**

Indigenous population of the valley is regarded as its one of the most important treasures. During the journey you will explore districts and quarters belonging to authentic families from Machakheli. Many of those people nowadays live on the Turkish territory. Once an important transit route, was roughly torn apart in 1921; thus villages, families, and friends appeared on the opposite sides of the border. And so beyond limpid springs, twisted forest tracks and amazing views, a major charm of the valley emerges — the phenomenon of cultural crossroads that is vividly conveyed to each family and each person of the valley.

Georgian part of the valley currently counts 10 villages. Old traditions related to agriculture or other activities still exist here. A Machakheli peasant from the very start lived in harmony with the surrounding nature. It proves an ancient tradition of beekeeping. That tradition originates from gathering honey of wild bees. "Kavrani", "Jara", "Geja", those are names of artificial beehives, made particularly for wild bees and later placed on the trees. By the end of the summer a peasant equally shares the honey between wild bees and himself, leaving sufficient amount of gained honey to wild bees and taking half of the honey for own purposes. Till today apiculture remains one of the leading fields of agriculture in Machakheli valley. Acacias, linden and chestnut honey, today, as well as in the past represented special product in Georgia and in Turkey. While visiting Machakheli you will regularly come across this great nectar in the form of honey vodka, which will be offered in villages, or in the form of delicious honey cakes. In addition, a late guest of the family was always guided under the light of honey candles.





## Machakheli valley – Smithy of Georgian Weapon

Travelers from XVIII–XX centuries always mentioned Machakheli weapon masters among other Georgian craftsmen. Skilled armorers from Machakheli valley were famed in Georgia and in Ottoman Turkey as well. The old tradition of forging, which descended from fathers to offspring, is related to famous families of the region. Kakhidzes' Kavtaradzes' Nagervadzes' Gorgadzes' and Dzeladzes' were known as the best armorers of the valley.

A firearm, a pistol, a dagger or a yataghan (double-curved blade), forged in Machakheli were regarded as a praiseworthy legacy for the progeny in Georgia, as well as in Turkey. "Topkhane" and "Nalfara" are famous rifles, made by famous gun masters in smithy centers throughout Machakheli valley.

Z. Chichinadze (famous Georgian researcher, who traveled to Machakheli valley in the early 20th century) describes decoration and regalia of Machakheli weapon as following: "artfully carved niellos, flowers and letters of the arms may astonish the viewers. Rare arms, forged during the reign of Georgian kings particularly attract attention and those arms are always inscribed with Georgian letters". To follow these words, visit an old smithy, still firmly standing in the valley and meet Kavtaradze family members, who will willingly introduce to you the story of their ancestors, forging famous battle weapon. They will reveal another

story of Machakheli craftsmen, who by cause of communistic influence equipped whole population of the region with labour instruments using best blacksmith traditions.



---

<sup>1</sup> Machakheli valley, N. Kakhidze, Publishing House "Soviet Adjara", 1974



## **“Adornment” of Machakheli valley**

A “chakhraki” (spinning wheel for yarn) kept in hanging granaries or a house attic of the valley up to the present days indicates another old and endangered tradition. According to the custom in Machakheli the dowry was prepared by the bride’s family since the birthday of a girl. This dowry mostly consisted of traditionally embroidered tablecloths, carpets, rugs, lampshades and headscarves. A woman without dowry was supposed to grow old in her parental house.

While looking at old embroideries, colorful meadows and unique nature of Machakheli will be revived before one’s eye.

Visitors have opportunity to view and even purchase masterfully crafted samples in historical-ethnographic museum and embroidery house of Zeda Chkhutuneti.

## **Machakheli – A History of Wine Battle**

Georgia, as the cradle of wine culture, is rich with histories and legends about this divine drink. Though the wine history unfolded in Machakheli is still remarkable. Hanging wine-press (Geo: Satsnakheli) on the edge of ravines, or wine-press carved in the rocks, wine cellars of X–XII centuries, Gurian wine-jars along with Anatolian pithos represent evidence, that Machakheli valley was a large wine producing center. Considering the circumstances that a trade route of the Silk Road passed through the valley, most presumably the wine produced in Machakheli was distributed to Byzantium and to other regions of Georgia. Wine cellars of Sindieti, Tskhemlara, Zeda Chkhutuneti and Chikuneti represent chronicles of a long battle for wine, and grapevines allocated on high trees, hidden wine-jars in the middle of meadows, or winepresses built in remote and inaccessible places tell an amazing history of survival.



## **Tangible Cultural Heritage of Machakheli valley Traversed Through Storms of History.**

Ruined remnants of Gvara and Kalivake fortresses testifies unbearable burden of locals during the centuries. A three century-long reign of Ottomans and later Soviet governance had greatly affected the intangible and tangible culture of the region. In spite of interdiction and taboos, remains of Georgian-Laz ornaments can be found till today in mosques, scattered throughout the valley, such as grapevines and Borjgalo.

Massive construction of bridges, cellars and wine-presses are often related to the name of Queen Tamar and her golden era. Though some of those structures might be dated back to much earlier centuries as no well-grounded scientific study was conducted yet.

### **Gvara Fortress:**

At the confluence of the rivers Chorokhi and Machachlistskali, there are ruins of once significant fortress, dated back to I-III centuries. Strategic location of the fortress, spread over roughly 150 square meters of area, indicates historical importance of the object.

### **Kalivake Fortress:**

A fortress of XI-XIII centuries is located in the depth of the valley. The main building is noticeably damaged; walls are fully covered with wild plants, that complicates to precisely trace remnants of the fence and other objects enclosed in the fortress territory. A nearby tunnel is relatively well sustained.





### **Arch Bridge of Tskhemlara:**

The well-famed arch bridge of the valley crosses the river Machakhlistskali and represents significant touristic object. The monument dating back to late middle-ages was reconstructed in 2012.

### **Arch Bridge of Chkheri:**

The bridge built approximately during IX-X centuries crosses the river Chkheri. Due to its diverse abutments, which were constructed above the water surface, the object survived its primary shape till today.

### **Arch Bridge of Kokoleti (Chomakhisuri):**

Arch bridge from the late middle-ages is situated on river Kokoleti – the right tributary of river Machakhlistskali. The bridge is comparably small, but quite well-preserved.

### **Wine Cellar of Zeda Chkhutuneti:**

The building dates back to XI-XIII centuries and is located in the village of Zemo Chkhutuneti, in a private courtyard of a local dweller. Currently the cellar does not function, as it is not equipped with applicable winemaking tools and accessories.

### **Wine-press of Zeda Chkhutuneti (Chonchko):**

A noteworthy “wine-press”, located on the steep slope, several hundred meters away from the village Zeda Chkhutuneti, represents a rock-cut architecture. This particular structuring has contributed to survival of the object and let it reach present days almost undamaged.



### **Wine Cellar of Tskhemlara:**

Cellar of Tskhemlara is located in the garden of a local inhabitant; the object supposedly represents 12th-century architecture. Currently the cellar functions as a cattle stall.

### **Wine Cellar of Chikuneti (Amiran Malakmadze):**

In the village Chikuneti, there are two historic wine cellars. One is set in the house yard of a local inhabitant Amiran Malakmadze. The cellar and its “Qvevris” (clay vessels) supposedly date back to XII century.

### **Wine Cellar of Chikuneti (Meri Khinkiladze):**

Second cellar of Chikuneti is located in the courtyard of Meri Khinkiladze. The building belongs to XII century. During Soviet epoch it was transformed into a storage for household items. Some important clay vessels are preserved in the historic cellar.

### **Machakhela Museum:**

One of the most visitable sights is ethnographic museum of Machakhela. The Museum preserves variety of ethnographical and historical samples. The museum is located in the three-storied building of former mosque. First floor is made of stone, while second and third floors are wooden. Each story comprises thematically sorted exhibits. Even the building itself represents antique piece due to its rare architectural ornaments and features. The museum was officially opened on 9th of June in 1984. Initiator of its establishment and opening was Zurab Nagervadze, a local from the village Zeda Chkhutuneti.





## **The Cannon:**

The so called “embrasure” is placed on the main road of the valley, near the turn point to the village Skurdidi. The cannon, once utilized for defense purposes, is kept in the valley since the World War II. Nearby is a bunker. Nowadays former military object has lost its primary function but represents an interesting exhibit for tourists.

## **On the Watch for the Nature – Machakhela National Park**

Machakhela National Park was established in 2012. It covers Khelvachauri and Keda municipalities. Total area of the park is 7,333.18 hectares. Main purpose of its creation was to maintain and sustain unique biological and landscape diversity and to support long term preservation of Colchic forests, including such important plants as Colchic box-tree, chestnut, Colchic hazelnut, Georgian walnut, pontic rhododendron, elm, etc. Machakheli valley and National Park offers unforgettable pedestrian touristic routes to adventurous visitors:

### **“Mtavarangelози” Trail**

**Region:** Autonomous Republic of Adjara

**Municipality:** Khelvachauri

**Recommended travel period:** April – October

**Route length:** 9.1 km

**Route duration:** 2 hours

**Route Type:** one way

**Route category of complexity:** simple

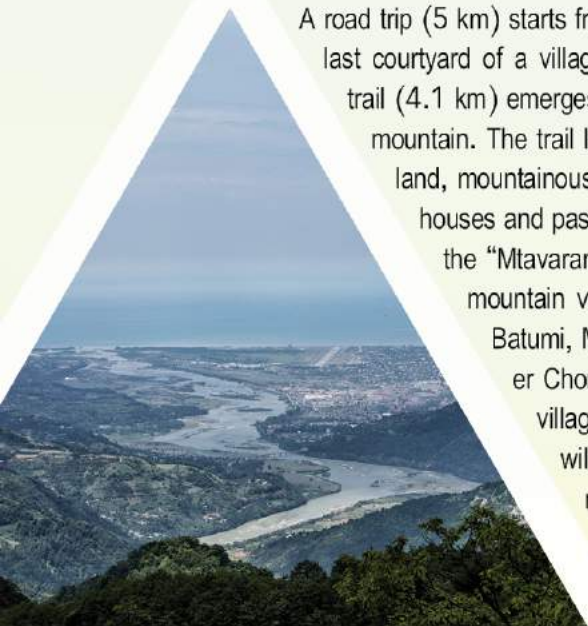
**Recommended transportation:** driving road integrated with pedestrian trails.

**Mobile coverage:** full

**Intersection with another route:** no

**Major tourist attractions within the route:** spectacular views, Colchic forest variety, “Mtavarangelози” mountain.

## Trail Description



A road trip (5 km) starts from the village Sindieti and ends at the last courtyard of a village dweller. From this point pedestrian trail (4.1 km) emerges and heads towards “Mtavarangelози” mountain. The trail leads along beech and chestnut woodland, mountainous streams and springs, old abandoned houses and passes through alder lane before reaching the “Mtavarangelози” mountain. From the top of the mountain visitors can enjoy spectacular views of Batumi, Machakhela National Park and the river Chorokhi valley. The visitors return to the village Sindieti via the same route. Those, willing to camp overnight, can set up tents near the mountain, by the spring on the open hillock.

## Kokoleti Trail

**Region:** Autonomous Republic of Adjara

**Municipality:** Khelvachauri

**Recommended travel period:** April – October

**Route length:** 15 km.

**Route duration:** 3 hours

**Route Type:** one way

**Route category of complexity:** simple

**Recommended transportation:** driving road integrated with pedestrian trails.

**Mobile coverage:** full

**Intersection with another route:** no

**Major tourist attractions within the route:** spectacular views, Coldic forest variety.



## Trail Description

The road trip starts from the visitor center and terminates at the end of the village (9 km) where the pedestrian route begins (6 km). Pedestrian trail goes through mixed deciduous and coniferous forest and heads to the view point, from where visitors may enjoy panorama of Camili Biosphere Reserve of Turkey and 5 villages of Upper Machakheli. On the territory of Turkey there are several villages located among branching river gorge, that create shape of “maja” (a wrist) and “kheli” (a hand) and exactly from this feature derives the name of the whole valley “Majakheli” or Machakheli.

The route goes back via same way.

800 meters away from the view point a camping place is set, where all camping lovers can find a shelter.

**Remark:** Visitors wishing to follow this route, should inform visitor center about their arrival in advance to notify the Border Police.

## Pairing Waterfall Trail

**Region:** Autonomous Republic of Adjara

**Municipality:** Khelvachauri

**Recommended travel period:** April – October

**Route length:** 11.7 km.

**Route duration:** 1.30 hours

**Route Type:** one way

**Route category of complexity:** simple

**Recommended transportation:** driving road integrated with pedestrian trails.

**Mobile coverage:** full

**Intersection with another route:** no

**Major tourist attractions within the route:** Colchic forest variety. A cannon, Tskhemlara bridge, waterfalls, wine cellar of Chikuneti.

## Trail Description

The route starts in the village Acharisagmarti, namely from the visitor center, passes 11 km of asphalted road and heads to village Kokoleti (Ialikari). From this point a pedestrian trail descends to pairing waterfalls. While following the route, amazing views and beautiful little villages of the valley surround the travelers, making ineffaceable impression with affluent landscapes or monuments of diverse ethnographic and cultural heritage. Visitors have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with local traditional food and taste unique and delicious dishes characteristic especially of Adjara region.

900 meters away from the visitor center in the village Acharisagmarti tourists can visit a World War II cannon and bunker that used to be a shelter for soldiers and storage for ammunition. In the village Tskhemlari, there is a famous bridge crossing the river Machakheli. The bridge, also known as arch bridge of Queen Tamar, was built in XII century and firmly stands till today.

A narrow twisted path embarks in the village Kokoleti entwined by mixed broad-leaved and needle-leaved trees, represented with spruce, hornbeam, beech, alder, linden, including trees such as from the red list: chestnut and walnut. In about 700 meters from the start point an amazing scene is revealed: a noisy river with small streams and enormous rocks, and 47 meters long pairing waterfall flowing between green cliffs, with its constant din heard from quite a distance, if one listens carefully.

Approximately 800 meters away from the view point a special camping place is set up for those wishing to spend overnight outdoors

## Dunga Waterfall Trail

**Region:** Autonomous Republic of Adjara

**Municipality:** Khelvachauri

**Recommended travel period:** May – October

**Route:** Pedestrian

**Route category of complexity:** medium

**Route type:** one way

**Intersection with another route:** no

**Route length:** 1 km.

**Route duration:** 30 minutes

**Route elevations above sea level starting/ highest/ending:** 605/622/579

**Recommended transportation:** only pedestrian trails.

**Mobile coverage:** full

**Major tourist attractions within the route:** Small and large waterfalls of Dunga

### Description of the route:

It is quite rare that a region's nature is so richly represented, in all its beauty, in such small area.

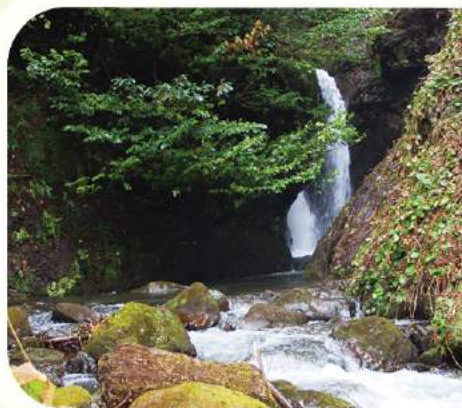
The local inhabitants of Chkhutuneti will proudly tell you about the Dunga waterfalls. On the road to reach it you will find yew trees (*Taxus baccata*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and other long-standing trees and plants characteristic of Colchic forest landscapes.

The chestnut honey, cherry-laurel jam and marinated jonjoli (Colchic bladder nut or Georgian caper – *Staphylea colchica*), which are characteristic for Machakhela valley cuisine, are generously supplied by this splendid environment.

The path of Dunga waterfalls enables the visitor to experience the unique nature of the valley.

The route starts from the centre of Zeda Chkhutuneti village. After passing several streets it goes to a narrow gorge and beautiful Colchic type forest. The travelers on the footpath will hear sounds of different birds, while rocks and trees covered with moss and leaves of Colchic ivy make your journey even more impressive.

At the point where the route splits into two paths, each leading to waterfalls, you can clearly hear the falling water. The path leading to the small waterfall is quite easy, the picnic area is arranged near the waterfall. The foot path leading towards the big Dunga waterfall is of medium difficulty, which requires hiking skills. However, it is worthy to spend time and energy to reach it.





Along the path one can see scenic views of Machakhela valley. Both waterfalls offer charming environs with a high diversity of plants.

Остановись и прислушайся к щебетанию птиц, отдохни в тени дуба, вяза и липы, и насладись великолепными видами!

**To explore intangible culture of Machakheli valley follow its ethnographic and gastronomical routes. Visit touristic sights of the valley and interact with local population to get to know better everyday life of the valley, taste natural products and enjoy delicious, traditional dishes prepared by Machakheli hostesses.**

### **Ethnographic Tour “Machakheli”**

**Region:** Autonomous Republic of Adjara

**Municipality:** Khelvachauri

**Recommended travel period:** April – November

**Route length:** 23.2 km.

**Route duration:** 1 day

**Route elevations above sea level starting/ highest/ending:** 59/698/698 m.

**Recommended transportation:** vehicle, bicycle

**Mobile coverage:** full

**Major tourist sights within the route:** Rizali’s workshop, Kavtaradzes’ Ethnographic corner, Malakmadzes’ folk family, historical-ethnographic museum, embroidery house “Sitva”.



## Route Description

Ethnographic tour “Machakheli” is an exclusive opportunity to embrace valley’s past and present lifestyle within local atmosphere in a short period of time, to observe unique traditions preserved till today, and personally meet people, who managed to convert ancestors’ knowledge into contemporary daily routine.

Your ethno trip starts from the little village Tsiagi. There, in the high village, scattered on the slopes of Machakhelistskali gorge, is located Rizal Mortuladze’s workshop. The master learned how to wattle from his grandfather in the age of 7 and more than 50 years he devotedly follows his craft. He interweaves wild hazelnut branches and creates various agricultural tools, such as Godori (cylindrical basket), Gideli (vintage basket), Orkhapo (fruit picker), fruit baskets, souvenirs, etc. The master has set his workshop in a wooden shed, near his own house, where visitors can purchase hand-made souvenirs, as well as witness wattling process and, in case of interest, even practice in crafting.

Machakheli valley has always been famous for the best blacksmiths. High quality military and household items were forged in the valley for centuries. Next destination in the ethnographic tour will bring you to village Skurdidi, in a little ethno corner, where the family of Kavtaradze has preserved the old tradition of forging and apiculture.

Kavtaradze family represents a significant part of smithery tradition and history in Machakheli valley. According to an old saying they possessed incomparable forging skills and were crafting various military or household tools for centuries. Their family smithy called “Dukani” maintains appearance of old days until present. Bellows, anvil and hammer are still inseparable tools of a blacksmith. You can witness forging process yourself and even take part in iron making. After entering this old looking smithy and closing its door you will suddenly appear in past times and experience exceptional tradition. Blacksmith Tengiz Kavtaradze will willingly guide you to travel into revived history. Kavtaradze family will introduce you to another tradition of the valley and accompany you to a special honey tour.

Kavtaradze family also fosters significant tradition of wild honey gathering. They run cooperative “Machakhela Bee” and offer to their guests a biologically clean product, produced in their grange, within the fascinating environment. You can taste chestnut honey, chacha made of honey and honey-based confectionary goods made by Kavtaradze family traditions. The Kavtaradzies are always eager to tell you the captivating story of their family occupation and “Jara” — accustomed Georgian apiculture. Artificial beehives, which



were used to gather honey from wild bees the host has inherited from their ancestors. You will get acquainted with the details of main principles of Jara and of honey gathering.

Later on, visitors have an opportunity to observe modern techniques of honey producing. In case of your interest the host may show you “Jara” placed on the trees.

Traditional singing and dancing is an integral part of Machakheli valley. Ethnographic tour will lead you to the village Kveda Chkhutuneti, namely to the amazing Malakmadze family and their folk ensemble. The family where every member simultaneously sings, dances and plays on the traditional musical instruments will host you eagerly. Genuine hospitality, cuisine, joyous musical performances and reading “shairi” (traditional Georgian poem) is a partial agenda of the activities to expect while guesting the Malakmadze family. In addition, a brief master class in traditional music, dancing and instruments will be offered. Do not miss one of main attractions of the trip – a traditional dance “Machakhela Gun” specially staged and performed by the head of the household.

To fully comprehend ethnographic features of the valley, you can visit a historical-ethnographic museum in the village of Zeda Chkhutuneti. It was established in 1984 by local inhabitant – Zurab Nagervadze. The museum is set in old three story wooden mosque. The wooden interior of the mosque is decorated with distinguished architectural elements and Georgian — Laz Picturesque ornaments. Museum has 774 archaeological, household and ethnographic exhibits. One of the types of antique Machakheli firearm is also preserved in the museum. The director of the museum will give you a brief tour on the history and ethnography of the valley.

At the end of the tour a must-see is embroidery house “Sitva”, one of the most prominent ethnographic attractions of the valley. Demo space for this traditional craft is designed in the hall of an Adjarian chestnut wooden house. The visitors can familiarize themselves with the craft, participate in the embroidery process, view handmade items, and purchase various souvenirs and accessories. The hostess of “Sitva” the master of embroidery craft Natia Nagervadze will introduce you to the history of traditional embroidery and related crafts, legacy of dowry culture and what other functioning items were created through those crafts.





## Gastronomical Tour Machakheli Nobati

**Region:** Autonomous Republic of Adjara

**Municipality:** Khelvachauri

**Recommended travel period:** April – November

**Route length:** 18,6 km.

**Route duration:** 1 day

**Route elevations above sea level starting/ highest/ending:** 59/413/395 m.

**Recommended transportation:** vehicle, bicycle

**Mobile coverage:** full

**Major tourist sights within the route:** Fish farm “Machakhela Garden”, restaurant “Machakhela”, honey tasting “Putkara”, cheese tasting “Machakheli”, “Ilia wine cellar”

### Tour Description

Gastronomical tour of Machakhela valley offers a unique opportunity to explore assortment of tastes enclosed in a small valley. The tour provides an occasion to familiarize yourself with distinguished food and beverages, typical not only for Machakheli valley but also for whole Adjara region. The guests can at firsthand observe traditional food cooking and winemaking processes and personally experience famous hospitality of creators of “Machakhela Nobati”.

An unforgettable trip to the “world of tastes” starts with fish tasting, in the fish farm “Machakheli Garden”. Guests of the farm are welcomed to cast and catch salmon or red-dotted, golden or black river trout. Visitors are offered to grill the fish on the BBQ and later taste it with other traditional Adjarian dishes and natural farm products.

The route continues along the valley and leads visitors to the restaurant “Machakhela”, located just next to the historical bridge “Queen Tamar”. The restaurant is run by three generations of Salvaridze family. Family members will host the visitors and present the trademark dishes, made by bio products from the agro farm.

The rest of the gastronomical tour is devoted to three major products of the valley: honey, cheese and wine. Agricultural farm “Putkara” located across the bridge “Queen

Tamar” in the village Tskhemlara, offers to its visitor’s distinct honey varieties during all seasons of the year. Visitors can taste chestnut honey with local hazelnuts and also purchase decorative honey candles, wax, and other souvenirs labeled by “Putkara”. Bee-keeper Giorgi Salvaridze with his 40 beehives can demonstrate process of honey extraction from 10th to 20th of July every year.

After honey tasting, the time is to credit another praiseworthy product of the valley — cheese. A common cheese tasting corner, placed in the village Kveda Chkhutuneti invites the visitors to taste traditional Adjarian cheese varieties, get acquainted with ethnographic artifacts illustrating local life of the valley and enjoy Ms Nariko’s amicable hospitality. Cheese corner “Machakhela” produces dry, shredded and soft cheeses, always served with the freshly baked homemade bread.



Gastronomical tour ends at an amazing one-thousand-year-old (X–XII cc.) wine cellar in village Chukineti that has been preserved in good shape up to these days. In front of an old stone cellar a wine tasting corner is located, designed in traditional architectural style. The wine cellar is named after Iliia Malakmadze, who used to be a famous winemaker in the valley. Currently his son Amiran continues the family tradition and hosts the visitors. The host will narrate about old techniques of winemaking, how this “divine drink” was hunted by various enemy forces during centuries, and how courageously the locals have fought to foster important traditions. All the guests are welcome to taste wine and chacha in classical and traditional wine tasting stemware; have a look through the ancient cellar, enjoy magnificent views from the vineyards and in case of pre-order taste exceptionally delicious Adjarian food prepared by the hostess of the house.

Please take into consideration that if you plan to visit objects of ethnologic and gastronomic tours, inform the hosts in advance to prepare facilities for your visit, otherwise you may not receive the exact service.

### **Machakhela National Park, Visitor Center**

Address: Village Acharisagmarti, Khelvachauri municipality

Tel: 5 95 08 60 75

Contact Person: Nana Baujadze

### **Machakhela Historical-Ethnographical Museum**

Address: village Zeda Chkutuneti, Khelvachauri municipality

Tel: 593 75 46 00/ 595 95 86 62

Contact Person: Malkhaz Nagervadze

### **Accommodation**

#### **Hotel Chveneburi**

Offer: 13 Standard double and one Suite room. On the first floor of the hotel there is a restaurant with traditional Adjarian, Georgian and European cuisine. Conference hall for 80 persons. Best place for various events and celebrations.

Add: village Qedqedi

Tel: 593 42 25 25

Contact Person: Vardo Beridze

#### **Guest House Tkupi chanchkeri**

Offer: lodging and food made by natural products from the guest house private agro farm.

Add: village Zeda Kokoleti

Tel: 555 47 39 12

Contact Person: Umian Mikeladze

#### **Guest House of Nato Malakmadze**

Offer: lodging and food with local natural products.

Add: village Tskhemlara

Tel: 555 76 06 71

Contact Person: Nato Malakmadze



### **Guest House Mari**

Offer: lodging and full food service with local natural products

Add: village Qveda Chkhutuneti

Tel: 568 41 58 65

Contact Person: Mariam Kakhidze

### **Guest House Tsiskari**

Offer: lodging and full food service with natural products produced in a private farm.

Add: village Qveda Chkhutuneti

Tel: 555 60 09 08

Contact Person: Fati Nagervadze

### **Guest House Machakheli**

Offer: lodging and full food service with natural products produced in a private farm.  
Also available traditional Adjarian cheese tasting.

Add: village Qveda Chkhutuneti

Tel: 595 50 66 16

Contact Person: Nariko Mopinadze

### **Guest House Mancho**

Offer: lodging and full food service with natural products produced in the private farm.

Add: village Zeda Chkhutuneti

Tel: 595 99 36 72

Contact Person: Manana Kobuladze

### **Guest House Zuka**

Offer: lodging and full food service with natural products produced in a private farm. In case of interest you can enjoy Georgian traditional folk songs and dances performed by local folk ensemble.

Add: Zeda Chkhutuneti  
Tel: 593 75 46 00; 595 95 86 62  
Contact Person: Malkhaz Nagervadze

### **Guest House Noe**

Offer: lodging and full food service with natural products produced in private farm. Also available wooden replicas of famous Machakheli rifle for purchase.

Add: Zeda Chkhutuneti  
Tel: 593 11 38 51  
Contact Person: Noe Nagervadze

### **Food Facilities**

#### **Restaurant Chveneburebi**

Offer: Traditional Adjarian, Georgian and European cuisine. Working hours from 9:00 am to the last guest. Live music from 19:00 — 24:00 Additional services available: accommodation facilities at the hotel and event organization.

Add: village Qedgedi  
Tel: 593 42 25 25  
Contact Person: Vardo Beridze

#### **Restaurant Machakheli**

Offer: Traditional Adjarian, Georgian and European cuisine. Working hours from 9:00 am to the last guest. Additional services available: accommodation facilities at the guest house or in the camping area of the yard.

Add: village Tskhemlara  
Tel: 598301273  
Contact Person: Lela Salvaridze

## **Trout Farm Machakhelis Tsalkoti/ Machakheli Gardens**

Offer: Catching river trout, BBQ, tasting with other Adjarian and Georgian dishes. Farm is open from May to October.

Working hours: 12:00–23:00

Add. Village Sindieti

Tel: 591055270; 557234042

Contact Person: Eduard Dzneladze

## **Kompositoris Patskhebi**

Add: village Qedqedi

Tel: 555 20 68 76

Contact Person: Vaja Khinkiladze

## **Beer house Mtis broli**

Offer: Beer brewed in Batumi and snacks.

Add: village Acharisaghamarti

Tel: 555 63 38 30

Contact Person: Temur Kakhidze

## **Patskhebi – Huts**

Add: village Sindieti

Tel: 558 12 28 28

Contact Person: Tamaz Zakaridze



## Huts Alibaba

Add: village Sindieti

Tel: 593 31 20 89

Contact Person: Irakli Gorgadze

## Agro Tourism Farms

### Machakheli Bee

Offer: Honey tour in agro farm, including degustation of honey vodka, honey, hazelnut and special honey cakes.

Add: village Skurdidi

Tel: 557 60 40 20

Contact Person: Jimsher Kavtaradze

## Futkara

Offer:

- Honey tasting (chestnut honey, honey with hazelnut;
- decorative souvenirs – honey candles;
- participation in honey gathering process and tasting

Add: village Tskhemlara

Tel: 558 19 52 74

Contact Person: Giorgi Salvaridze

## Tasting Rooms

### Ilia's wine cellar

Offer: wine and chacha tasting with traditional Adjarian dishes.

Add: village Chikuneti

Tel: 557 531 176

Contact Person: Amiran Malakmadze

## **Cheese tasting corner Machakheli**

Offer: Tasting Adjarian cheese with other local products. Chestnut honey, honeycomb, hazelnut, seasonal fruit, home baked bread by the hostess, cherry-laurel and fig jam, honey chacha and etc.

Add: village Qveda Chkhutuneti

Tel: 595 50 66 16; 558 25 79 26.

Contact Person: Nariko Mofinadze

## **Craft Workshops**

### **Embroidery House Sitva**

Offer:

- Purchasing handmade samples and souvenirs;
- Familiarization with craft, participation in embroidery process. Approximate length of the visit 45 min — 1 hour.

Add: village Zeda Chkhutuneti

Tel: 595506634

Contact Person: craft master Natia Nagervadze

### **Rizali Workshop**

Offer:

- Showing wattling process and participation
- products for sale: Orkhapo, Gideli, Godori, souvenir godori,

Add: village Tsiagi

Tel: 593 18 52 63

Contact Person: Rizal Mortuladze

## **Kavtaradze Family Workshop**

Offer: Familiarize with centuries old tradition of blacksmiths in Machakheli valley, participation in the forging process.

Add: village Skurdidi

Tel: 591 97 89 08 / 0 790 618280

Contact Person: Master Tengiz Kavtaradze

## **Local Folklore**

### **Malakmadze Family Folk Ensemble**

Offer: Genuine hospitality, cuisine, joyous musical performances and reading “shairi” (traditional Georgian poem). The shortest performance takes about 3 hours. Visitors can plan to celebrate birthday parties, or other important events at Malakmadze’s. If you wish to visit the object you should inform the hosts 3–4 hours before.

Add: village Qveda Chkhutuneti

Tel: 595 95 86 57; 595 95 86 74.

Contact Person: Emzar Malakmadze

## **Folk Ensemble Machakheli**

Tel: 595 08 60 72 /593 23 13 51

Contact Person: Ednari Kakhidze/Marina Dzneladze



# TOURISTIC ROUTES OF



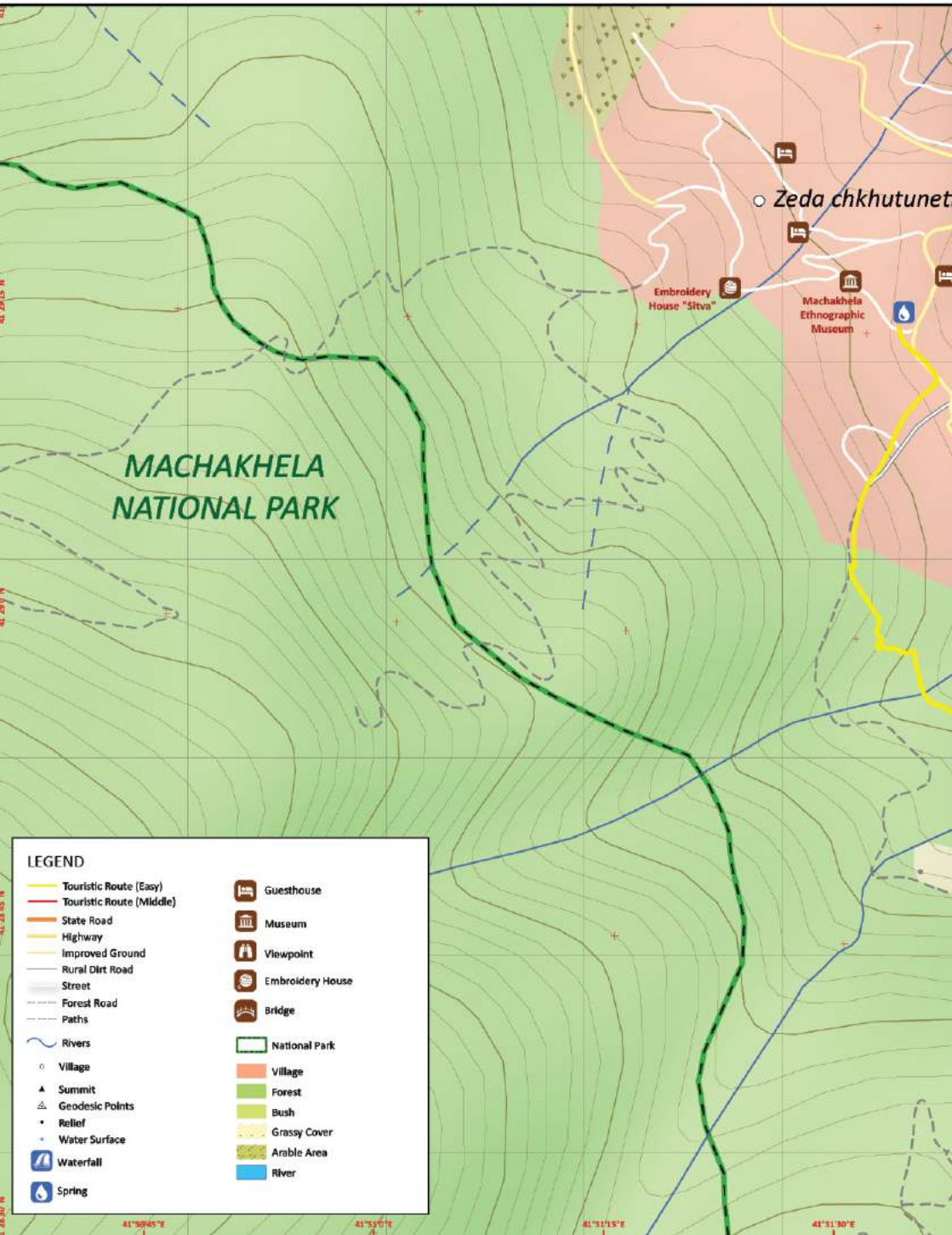


# F MACHAKHELI VALLEY



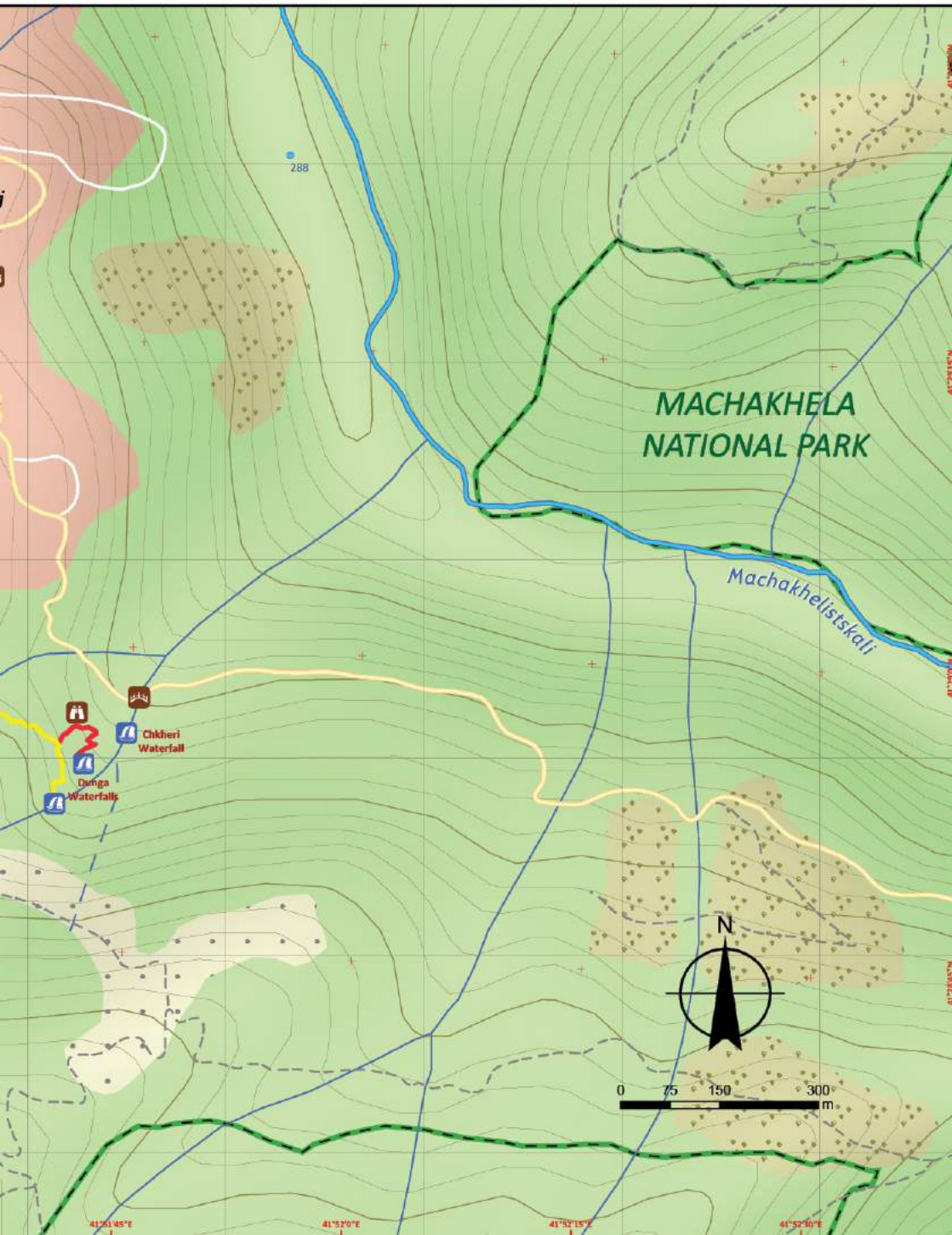


# DUNGA WATER





# WATERFALLS ROUTE



# ETHNOGRAPHIC ROUTE





# ROUTE - "MACHAKHELI"





# GASTRONOMICAL ROUTE -



## LEGEND

- Touristic Route
- State Road
- Highway
- Improved Ground
- Rural Dirt Road
- Street
- Forest Road
- Path
- River

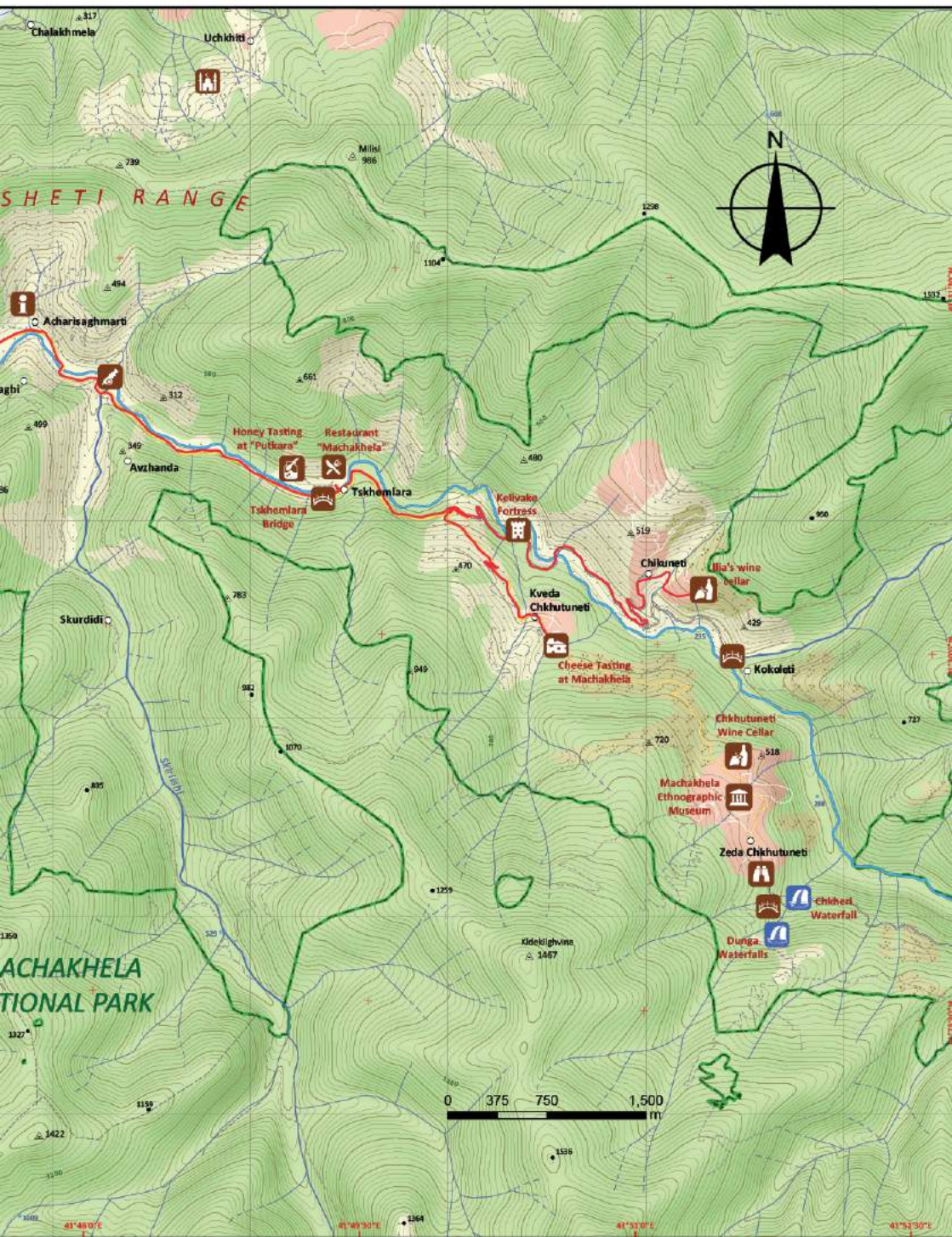
- Visitor's Centre
- Bridge
- Wine Cellar
- Restaurant
- Cheese Tasting
- Fortress
- Mosque
- Ruin
- Picnic Area
- Trout Farm
- Ambrazura

- Museum
- Waterfall
- Spring
- Honey Tasting
- Gun Monument
- National Park
- Village
- Forest
- Bush
- Grassy Cover
- Arable Area
- River

- Village
- Summit
- Geodesic Point
- Relief
- Water Surface



# - "MACHAKHELI'S NOBATI"



## Literature:

1. „მაჭახლის ხეობა“. ნ.კახიძე. გამომცემლობა „საბჭოთა აჭარა“, 1974.
2. „მაჭახელას ეროვნული პარკისა და დამხმარე ზონის დამატებითი საბაზისო კვლევები და კარტოგრაფირება“. Geographics. 2016.
3. „თემების დახასიათება და განსახლების თანამონაწილეობრივი განვითარების დაგეგმვა აჭარის რეგიონის დაცული ტყის დამხმარე ზონის მიმდებარე ტერიტორიებზე“. შავი ზღვის ეკოაკადემია. 2015.
4. სამეცნიერო - პოპულარული ჟურნალი „მაჭახელი“. ბათუმი 2008, 2009-10.





