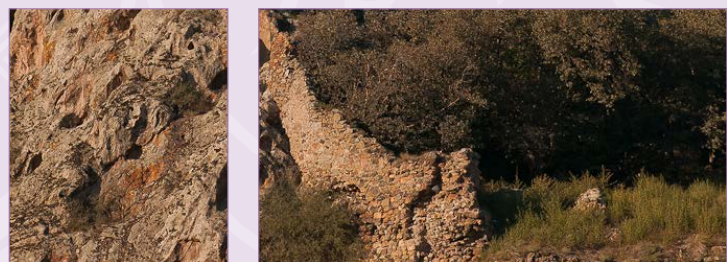
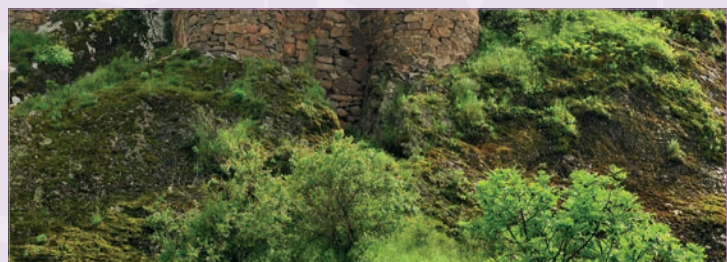


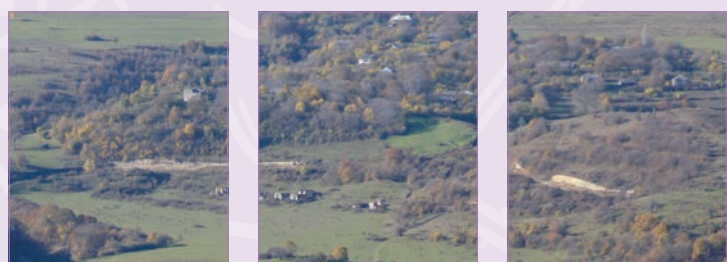
You really must see...



...Fortress Qveshi...



...the ruins of Berdika Castle...



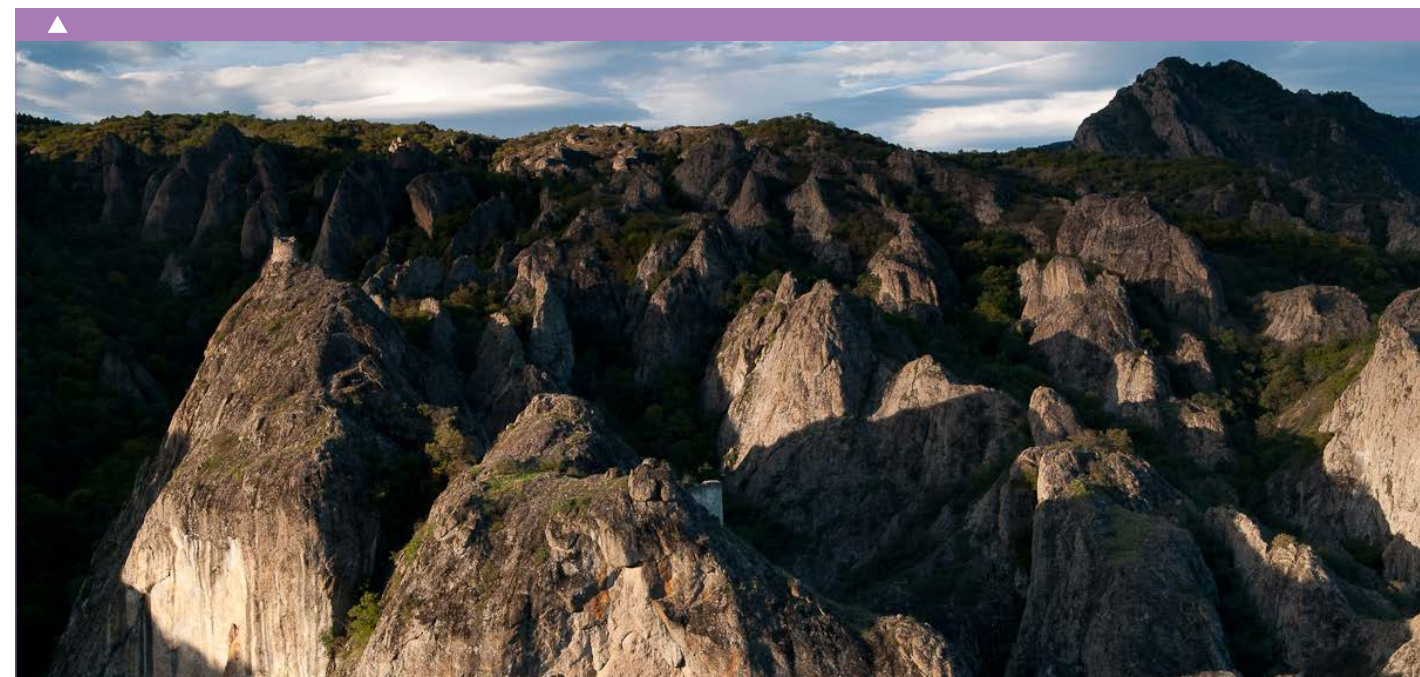
...the nature around Algeti reservoir

Kvemo-Kartli

WELCOME TO KVEMO-KARTLI

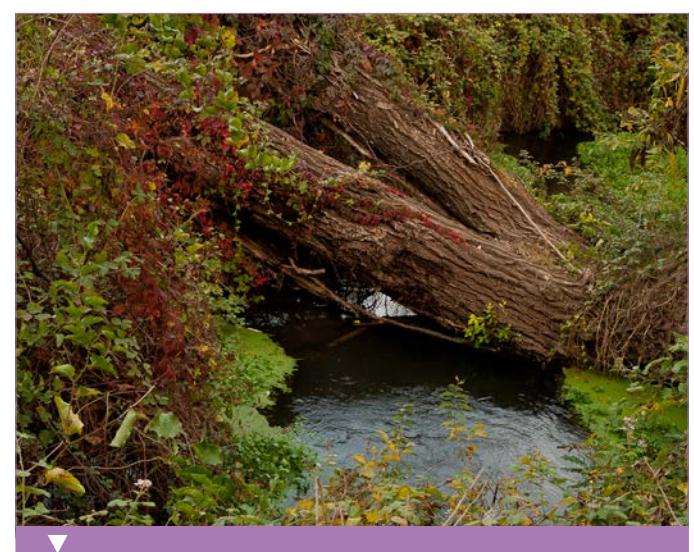
The South Georgian region of Kvemo-Kartli is one of Georgia's most overlooked treasures. Full of natural beauty and magnificent ancient monuments, as well as archaeological sites and remains, there's so much for history buffs to absorb.

The region is characterized by continental climate, with a landscape ranging from lush, forested steppes to semi-desert lowlands. Nature lovers, veteran hikers, canyoners and adventurers, will enjoy the massive natural complex of limestone crevasses and ravines providing one of the most spectacular hiking destinations in Georgia. Just an hour from Tbilisi, the hidden valleys of Birtvisi contain secret castles, springs and waterfalls, all set in the most amazing limestone massif. There is enough to explore here to keep you busy for weeks, but it might be worth taking a guide, as the place really is a maze!



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Region of Kvemo-Kartli has one of the greatest archeological histories in the world outside of Africa. It was here in Dmanisi that archaeologists discovered human bone fragments dated 1.7 million years – possibly the oldest known human beings in Europe and Asia. Other key archeological findings of world importance include: grape pips found in Shulaveri and a pre-historic Qevri (wine vessel) from Mt. Khrami both dating back to the 6th century B.C; and the Bolnisi Sioni Cathedral, famous for its inscription of the oldest written Georgian ever found, dated to 478-493, which now resides in the State Museum.



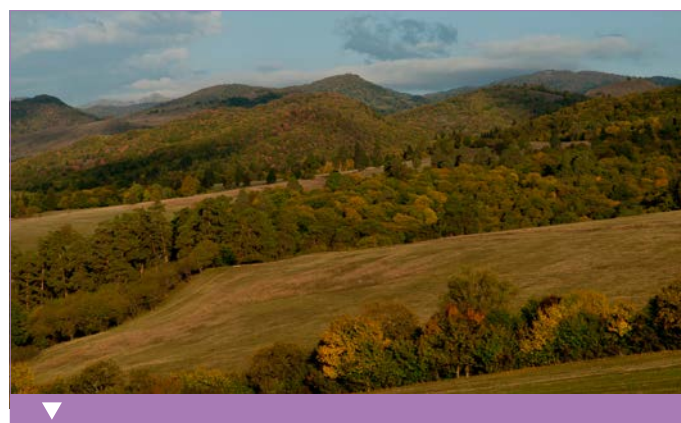
ADVENTURE

Although a semi-desert, there is much water to be found in the Kvemo-Kartli lowlands, home to some of the biggest rivers in the area, the Mtkvari, Khrami and Algeti. There are also numerous volcanic lakes – the Kumisi Lake is particularly interesting as its mud is used for curative purposes in Georgian spas and resorts. If you're looking for mysterious and spectacular views, visit the Khrami and Birtvisi Canyon – as you pass through forested walkways you'll discover hundreds of rocks, some more than a hundred metres high, and crowned with the remains of an old fortress.

The Region has a great deal to offer for the extreme adventurer too, with rafting, canyoning, kayaking and paragliding.

CULTURE

Kvemo-Kartli region is one of the most important cultural centers of Georgia. Populated over the centuries by countless diverse ethnographic groups, you can explore monuments and cultural treasures starting from the 1.75m year old remains in Dmanisi to the more recent 13th century Pitareti monastery. There are literally hundreds of monuments to visit.



PROTECTED AREAS

The Algeti National Park

The Algeti National Park is a spectacular combination of rugged mountain landscape, small rivers and deep ravines. Its highest point is Kldekari at 2000m and the Algeti River flows through the area, giving life to over 1600 species of plants. With 80 types of trees, 800 grasses, 150 medicinal plants, (as well as 43 poisonous ones), there's plenty for the keen botanist to explore.

Gardabani Protected Area

The Gardabani Managed Nature Reserve is vast, with almost 3,500 hectares of land. The main treasure of the reserve is the flood plain forests covered with indigenous plants and fragments of nippelwort, which are characteristic to this area. Established in 1996, it's located just 39km from Tbilisi, close to the Azerbaijan border.

CULTURAL MONUMENTS

Dmanisi

There's so much history to discover in Dmanisi. As the largest fortified town in the region, and located on a crossroads of trading routes, Dmanisi grew into a major commercial center of medieval Georgia. An amazing number of ancient buildings still exist today, like the medieval tower and citadel with its cellars, baths, halls and jails, as well as the stunning three-church basilica, built in the 6th century. The tunnels dating back to the 12th century are definitely worth a visit. Dmanisi has a great archaeological significance, as human remains dating from 1.75 million years ago were discovered here.

At the Historical and Architectural Museum, you can see a medieval town with its citadel, public and religious buildings. Of special interest is Dmanisi Sioni, built in the 5th century with ornamental gates added in the 12th century.

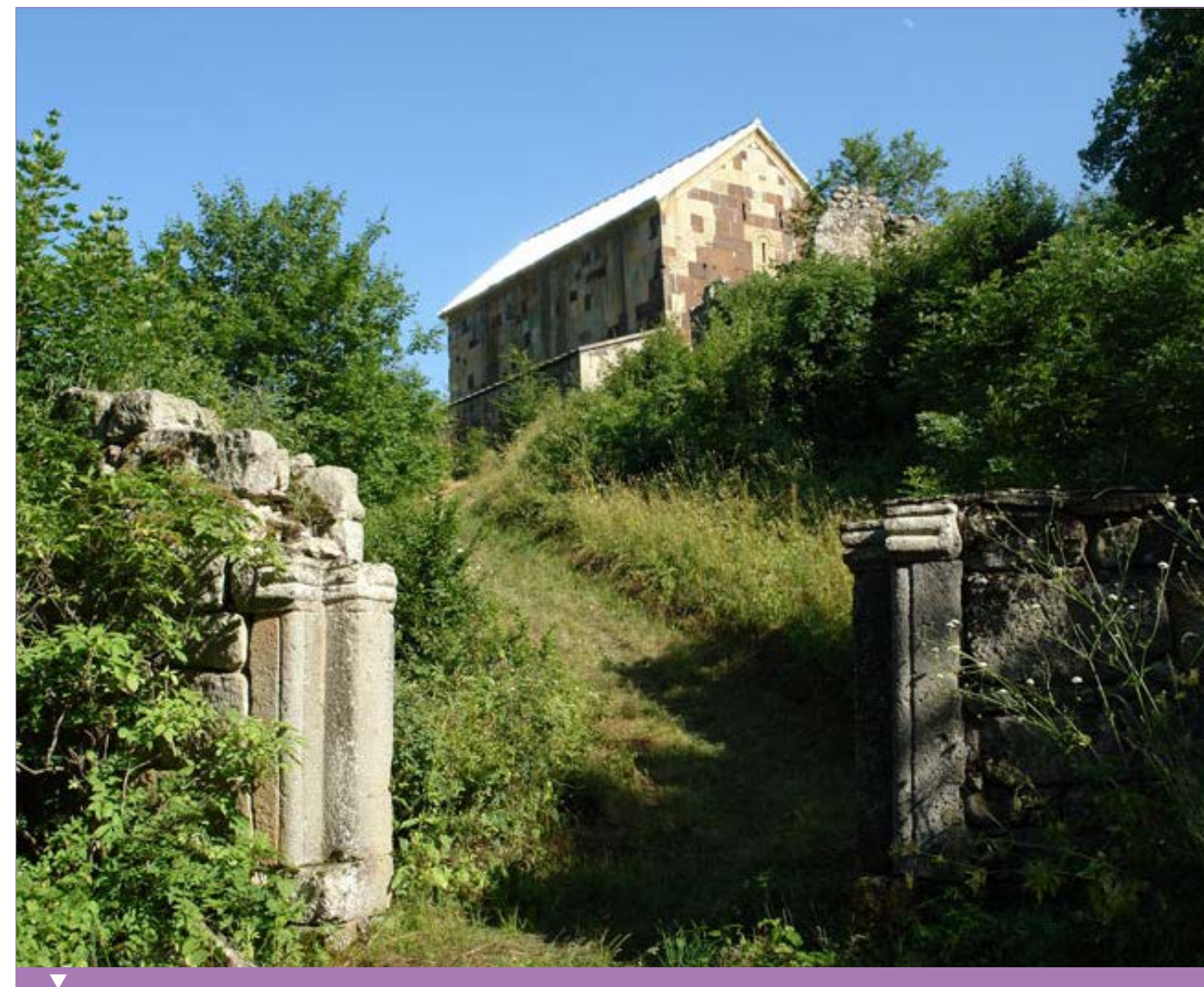


Birtvisi Fortress

Located on the Algeti gorge of Tetrtskaro district, Birtvisi Fortress was built before or during the 11th century and sits between inaccessible cliffs and surrounded by high walls so it's not surprising that Birtvisi was considered an impregnable fortress. The 'Sheupovari' tower, meaning 'unbeatable', is located on the highest wall of the fortress.

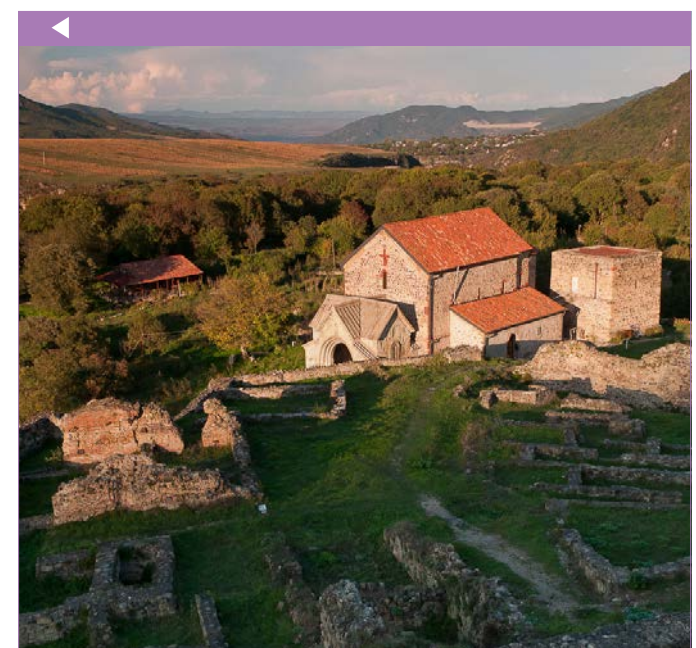
Khuluti Fortress

The Khuluti Fortress is an excellent example of Georgian architecture. Built in the early to mid 18th century, the palace was constructed with local stones and lies in the narrow pass of a deep river gorge. The central fortress has two sections and is defended by a surrounding wall containing five towers, though these were mainly used for living purposes.



Gudarekhi

The village of Gudarekhi dates back to the 13th century and includes an architectural monument, a large monastery, and the ruins of an ancient settlement. The monastery complex is surrounded by a high wall and includes a church and a belfry constructed during the reign of Queen Rusudan. One of the most interesting structures in the complex is the belfry that was constructed in 1278, the earliest built in Georgia, during the period of Demetre the Hero. Coins from the reigns of George III, Rusudan, and Lasha-Giorgi, as well as Mongolian coins, have also been found here.



Bolnisi Sioni

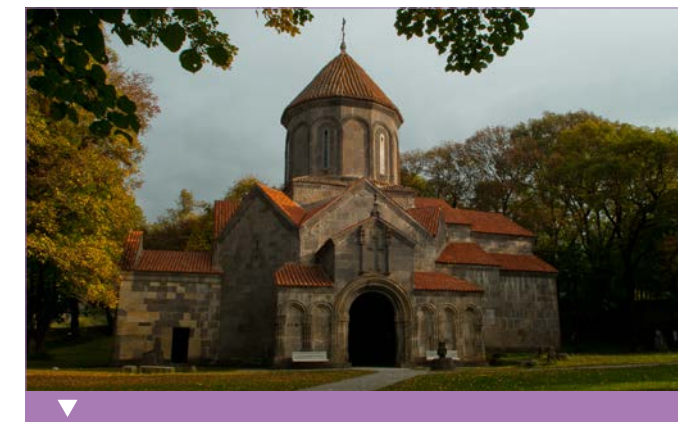
The Bolnisi Sioni church is the only remaining three-nave basilica in Georgia. It was constructed using carved stones and the temple is decorated with beautiful, clear, turquoise-hued stones. The decorations on the pillars are of particular interest and one of them includes the famous Bolnisi Cross. The church is the first known monument of Georgian architecture that uses relief sculptures related to the pre-Christian period, but adopted by the Christian era as well. The church is also famous for its oldest Georgian inscription dating back to the 5th century.

Samshilde Fortress

The historical fortress of Samshilde is located at the junction of the Khrami and Chivchavi rivers, on a naturally fortified peninsula. During the 4th-3rd centuries B.C. the fortress was the center of Samshilde. The fortress also included the Samshilde Sioni Temple, which dated back to 759 - 777, and is now in ruins. A medieval church and three-part basilica, constructed from the old temple's stones, still remain.

Pitareti Monastery

On the outskirts of Pitareti village lies the Monastery of Pitareti. One of its key treasures is the Church of the Mother of God, one of the most significant examples of Georgian architecture, constructed from 1213-1222. Pitareti Church contains paintings dating back to the 13th century, with some very diverse pieces of beautiful art work and intricate engravings.



Manglisi

In the times of antiquity there was a significant settlement on the territory of Manglisi. During the reign of Giorgi I, from 1014-1027, the Sioni Church dedicated to the Virgin was expanded and remodeled. The engraved dome is noteworthy, along with the 11th century gates depicting a starry sky. The church has fragments of wall paintings dating back to the beginning of the 11th century. There is also a medieval belfry, but the date of its construction is unknown.



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Georgia National Tourism Administration

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Free hotline (24/7)

BOLNISI TOURISM INFORMATION CENTER

Kvemo-Kartli is located in East Georgia. It shares a border with the Abkhaz, Abkhaz, Saba em Georgia. Its address: 115, Sulikhan-Saba Street, Bamnashvili Mountain range. Phone: (+995 358) 22 23 19. E-Mail: bolnisi@bolnisi.com

Working Days: Everyday

Working Hours: 10:00 - 18:00

(Summer - 10:00 - 19:00)

Lower Kartli.

Mtibus run regularly to Kvemo-Kartli from Tbilisi: "Express" 91, "Bus Station (31, Pirosmiani str.); "Ertsoba" Bus Station (2, Moscow Ave).

Taxis can be hired from the city.

Kvemo-Kartli

ENGLISH

Georgia

Country of life