

"The Cheese Road"

Cultural Cheese Odyssey Options (quick guide)

The Kakheti region is a proud producer of an amazing variety of artisanal, traditional cheeses! Combine this with great weather, superb wines, breath-taking scenery and you'll soon wonder why you haven't tried this experience years ago!

The Cheese Road provides you with a unique opportunity to try traditional cheeses at their origin; to get up close and personal with the people committed to the art of traditional cheese making for future generations! Join us on a cheese odyssey, experience their passion, and find out what makes these cheeses so unique!

Cannot decide which route to choose first? No wrong choices, we promise!
As the saying goes, appetite comes with eating! You'll probably want to taste a few more options after the first one!

Here is a sneak preview of the route options -

Two-day Taste of Cheese tour - for cheese lovers who are short on time

Day I- a road trip from Tbilisi to Alaverdi (optional) and local sightseeing, Alaverdi Monastery

Day II- Quiet Zemo and Qvemo Alvani, Ilto Valley

Or

Day II- Spectacular Pankisi Gorge



Three-day Beyond Cheese tour - for cheese and mountain lovers with a little more time on their hands

Day I- trip from Tbilisi to Alaverdi (optional) and local sightseeing, Alaverdi Monastery

Day II- Zemo and Qvemo Alvani, Ilto Valley

Day III- Pankisi Gorge

Five-day Height of Cheese odyssey (including trip back to Tbilisi) – for cheese aficionados with a love of heights

Day I- trip from Tbilisi to Alaverdi (optional) and local sightseeing, Alaverdi Monastery

Days II to IV- High in the Tusheti region (with a few options for days II and III)

Combination of Two-day and Five-day tour options – For cheese connoisseurs

Combination of Three-day and Five-day tour –the complete Tour for Champions

Day I

Optional: We'll pick you up at 9:00 after breakfast and travel from Tbilisi via the lovely winding Gombori pass to the historic village of Alaverdi in the Kakheti Region, the heart of Georgia's wine country. The two-hour road trip passes through small villages and beautiful natural settings.

Arriving at Alaverdi Blue, we'll check in and learn about the itinerary for the next few days. We'll start with the cold room (cool storage facility), an important part of making local cheeses; then, we can wander over to our "best cheese-making practice" demonstration barn followed by an overview of our organisation's activities. We'll take a break for a traditional Georgian lunch with a regional twist.



Alaverdi is known for our next stop, Alaverdi Monastery and cathedral a UNESCO World Heritage site- one of the most beautiful and second largest cathedral in Georgia.

Alaverdi Monastery is the main cathedral of Kakheti. It was founded in the 6th century by the Assyrian monk Joseph Alaverdi from Antioch and its fortified walls were built in the 11th. Since its beginning, the monastery complex has survived countless raids and destruction. Throughout its history through to this day it remains a functioning monastery, which includes the main cathedral of St. George, the bell tower, bath, refectory, winery and ancient Kvevri where wine is made. There is also a vine museum and about 500 grape varieties growing in the monastery's vineyard. The monastery also produces its own honey which can be purchased along with its wine.

After the visit to the monastery, we will return to Alaverdi Blue for dinner and a good night's sleep before we leave on the second day of journey.

Day II (option I-Qvemo and Zemo Alvani and Ilto Valley)



After a Georgian breakfast we'll visit the Khatuna Svimonishvili farm in the lovely village of Sabue. The host will tell us about the main activities of the farm and you can even try to milk a cow - or just watch - and see the process of making [dambal khacho \(hyperlink\)](#)

Our next stop will be Kvetera Church - UNESCO Tentative world heritage site. The Church in Kvetera tops the hill within the boundary of the 10th century Kvetera Fortress. The architect designed the church as a graceful, miniature, and decorative building. Within the framework of 10th century the Kakhetian architectural capacities, without any ornamental carving, its architect succeeded in creating a fascinating, small, and elegant building which reproduces, with innovative and creative modernization, earlier achievements of Georgian ecclesiastic architecture.

Sopho Beladidze will be our next host in Zemo Alvani. She will tell us about the main activities of her farm and explain the dairy production techniques. You can watch - or take part in - milking a cow and watch the process of making [matsoni \(hyperlink\)](#), the grandmother of modern yoghurt, and local cheese. Enjoy a complimentary cheese tasting after which we'll head back to Alaverdi Blue for a delicious dinner and relaxation after a busy day.

Day II (option II-Pankisi) or Day III



Our journey will start around 9:00 after breakfast and the first stop will be at Zanda Gamiashvili's farm in Kutsakhta. We will explore the farm and those wanting to participate in farm activities can help make cheese and cottage cheese under the guidance of the host. The farm tour also includes a presentation of locally handcrafted pshav-khevsurian traditional clothes and accessories. A fun culinary masterclass is available upon request. We'll also taste traditional Ossetian delights.



Next, we have two exciting options:

We can head off to visit Bela Mutoshvili in the village Djokolo, where Bela will give us a short tour followed by a culinary masterclass. We can also participate in the butter making process. After a lovely lunch at Bela's place a horseback ride along the beautiful Pankisi Gorge is on the agenda for those interested.

Or

We pay a visit to Aza Khangoshvili from the village of Duisi. Aza will give a guided farm tour, and you can take a shot at cheese making and participate in her culinary class.

A horseback trek in the Pankisi Gorge is still an option after a hearty local lunch at Aza's.

We will then return to Alaverdi Blue.

Day IV (Tusheti)



We begin journey at 7:00 today as it is a scenic, five-hour drive to the spectacular Tusheti region - one of Georgia's highest and most remote mountain areas. The historic region of Tusheti is often considered the Holy Grail of Georgia travel. If you haven't been to Tusheti, you haven't been to Georgia!

Our stop will be at Omalo farm in the village of the same name. We will taste traditional mountain cuisine at a lovely local café "Khavitsi" and then head to the village of Dartlo for sightseeing.



After a short drive back to Omalo, we will settle in at the lovely Mirgvela hotel next to Omalo to rest after a long and adventurous day.

Day V (Tusheti, option I for the day)



The excitement begins very early in the morning. At 06:00 we embark on a half-day sightseeing-and-tasting tour in the village of Diklo. First, we will pay a visit to Devi Butsunaidze at his farm, where you can try your hand at milking sheep and making goat cheese - [Gouda \(hyperlink\)](#)

Our next stop is castle Diklo and the fascinating views of the Tusheti region framed by mountains and valleys.

Then, the oldest female resident of Diklo - Masho - will host us for a home prepared lunch and she'll give a knitting and embroidering class for us.



Our next stop will be St George's Church, built in the 19th century on the outskirts of the tiny village of Shenako.

After the Shenako, we will then return to our hotel for dinner and a well-deserved night's rest.

Day V (Tusheti, option II for the day)

Right after breakfast at 8:00 we'll begin our day by exploring Tsovata Valley and visiting Tsaro- an historic fortress village. Since ancient times, natural fortifications and grouped settlements were preferable for villages and the fortress village of Tsaro is a good example. Burial crypts are visible above the village

Our next destination will be the farms of Paata Qogorishvili and Martha Bequridze.

It will be a fun and informative visit. We will have an opportunity to help the hosts care for their animals and take part in the cheese making process. We will also see an actual, traditional and natural cool storage for cheese!



To make the most of the day, we will then visit ruins of the multiple villages of the Tsovata community -Mozarta, Saghirta, Indurta, Etelta, where we can see ancient pictographs and enjoy wonderful views of the beautiful surroundings.

We will then settle in at one of the lovely hotels nearby- either Jvarboseli or Iliurta

Day VI (Horseback tour- option I for the day)



This day begins early - 5:00 in the morning with a road trip to the village of Iliurta followed by an hour and a half on horseback, the only way to reach our first destination - the village of Vestomt. We will visit with Giorgi Qarsamauli, who will offer various entertaining activities from cow and sheep milking to production of cheese and [kalti](#) (hyperlink). We will then

move to our host's agritourism farm for a short tour and mountain lunch.

On our way back to Mirgvela hotel we will make a photo stop at St George's Church in Iliurta, concluding our mountain village and cheese tour for Day VI.

Day VI (Horseback trek-option II for the day)

After breakfast at Mirgvela we will head off to Omalo followed by horseback to the jewel of Oreti Lake, where Giorgi Ichirauli will welcome us at his farm. Giorgi will tell us about the main activities of the farm, and you can watch - or participate - in farm activities. After a nice lunch at Giorgi's, we will travel via Omalo again and back to the hotel.



Day VII

Create Your Own Itinerary!

Tell us your preferences and we will schedule another exciting day for you!

Day VIII

It's time to return to Alaverdi. On the way we will stop to eat and make several photo stops, exploring areas that are off the usual tourist path.

All that's left for you to do is pick the dates and enjoy!

Cheese and Other Dairy Products Descriptors-

Tushuri guda



Produced in the remote mountainous region of Tusheti, Tushuri guda takes its name from the sheepskin sack in which the raw-milk cheese is traditionally ripened. The skin is turned inside out, so the wool is in direct contact with the ripening cheese. Archaeological evidence suggests that sheep cheese made in a similar way existed in present-day Georgia as long as 6,000

years ago; and a particular native breed of Tusheti sheep on which guda relies for its unique richness, flavor, and aroma has been continuously raised and grazed on the lush mountain grass here for almost 1,000 years.

Dambal Khacho

Moulded cottage cheese, famous for its traditional making techniques and unique flavor and taste. The preparation process is extremely time-consuming and cheese is difficult to make.

Dambal Khacho has been around for almost two centuries, it officially originates from Pshavi and Tianeti,

North-East Georgia. In 2014 by National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, was declared the technique of preparation and culture of Dambal Khacho as a monument of intangible cultural heritage.



Kalti



When the shepherds make Tushuri guda, the whey leftover from this work is not thrown out. It is poured into a container placed over a flame and, while it cooks, the shepherds stir it continuously to make sure it does not stick to the bottom of the pan. The result is a product known locally as kalti, which is placed inside a cloth bag while still hot and squeezed. Small balls are shaped from this squeezed mass and left to

rest on a grate, which is set in a place out of the direct sun, so that the kalti will dry.

Matsoni

Fermented milk product, very similar to yogurt. It is smooth and creamy with a mild,



slightly tart flavour. Popular in Georgia and throughout the Caucasus region it is rich in mineral content, protein and calcium and renowned for its health-giving properties.

"The Cheese Road Tours"

General Terms and Conditions

Tour fees

Regardless of the option you select the daily rate per person is 200 USD

General Requirements

Number of participants per tour: 2 to 5

Each participant must have a travel insurance for the whole duration of the selected tour. Please read and agree to our Terms and Conditions when you make your booking.

Tour Cost Inclusions

- ✓ Accommodation in Kakheti
- ✓ Transportation in Kakheti
- ✓ Half Board Meals Plan (Breakfast, Lunch)
- ✓ Private Tour Guide
- ✓ Sightseeing and activities (including masterclasses)
- ✓ Horseback ride (where applicable)
- ✓ All Tour Fees

Optional:

- ✓ Transportation: Return Drive Package (returning the participants back to the starting point in Tbilisi)

Tour Cost Exclusions

Travel insurance
Accommodation in Tbilisi
Transportation
Evening meals
Flight tickets

Booking Tips

1. Determine the dates you plan to have your tour.
 2. Determine number of guests joining your group.
 3. Choose your package.
 4. Email or txt us about your tour date, number of guests in your group, package choice.
- We will provide you with the price quote. Don't forget to ask our promo rates.

All rates are subject to change without prior notice

Your booking request will be considered as a consent to use of your personal data required to process you order