

Churches and Monasteries of Imereti

22 sites: history, coordinates and routes

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routes

madloba.info/blog/religion-of-georgia/churches-of-imereti

A compact reference guide to the churches and monasteries of Imereti. All 22 objects from the Madloba catalogue: coordinates, brief history, access level and links. Save to your phone for offline use.

All monasteries are active. Modest dress and headscarf required. Free entry everywhere.

Objects by area

01 Gelati Monastery

Coordinates:	42.29460, 42.76520	Period:	1106, 11th-12th c.
Location:	Kutaisi Municipality, 11 km from Kutaisi	Access:	Easy — taxi or minibus
Preserved:	Three churches, 12th-c. mosaic, royal tombs		

Key fact: Founded by David the Builder. Academy of sciences.

Tip: UNESCO 1994. Visit in the morning.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/gelatskii-monastyr/

02 Bagrati Cathedral

Coordinates:	42.26970, 42.70680	Period:	Early 11th century
Location:	Kutaisi, Ukimerioni Hill	Access:	On foot from city centre, 10-20 min
Preserved:	Restored 2012; original 11th-c. carvings visible		

Key fact: Built by Bagrat III. Restoration controversial.

Tip: UNESCO 1994. Active cathedral.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/kutaisi/tserkvi-i-sobory/hram-bagrata/

03 Motsameta Monastery

Coordinates:	42.28220, 42.75900	Period:	11th century
Location:	6 km from Kutaisi, above Tskhaltsiteli River	Access:	Taxi; easy to combine with Gelati
Preserved:	Reliquary of David and Constantine		

Key fact: Relics of 8th-century martyrs David and Constantine.

Tip: Feast day: 15 October.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/monastyr-motsameta/

04 Mgvimevi Monastery

Coordinates:	42.29730, 43.30060	Period:	13th century
Location:	Eastern edge of Chiatura	Access:	Staircase and tunnel entrance
Preserved:	Frescoes with named builders, 13th c.		

Key fact: Natural cave, 35 m deep. Unique in Georgia.

Tip: Active convent. Morning visit recommended.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/monastyr-mgvimevi/

05 Ubisi Monastery

Coordinates:	42.11500, 42.92000 *	Period:	9th century
Location:	15 km from Zestaphoni, near highway	Access:	Visible from highway
Preserved:	14th-c. frescoes by master Damiane		

Key fact: Only surviving works by Damiane.

Tip: Caretaker on site. Best before noon.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/blog/sights-of-georgia/ubisa/

06 Ilemi Church

Coordinates:	see catalogue	Period:	Medieval
Location:	Zestaphoni Municipality	Access:	Check locally
Preserved:	Isolated church		

Key fact: Rarely visited.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/tserkov-ilemi/

07 Tabakini

Coordinates:	see catalogue	Period:	7th-8th century
Location:	Zestaphoni Municipality	Access:	Check locally
Preserved:	Early structure		

Key fact: Catholic church of St George in a gorge.

Tip: One of the earliest in the catalogue.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/tabakini/

08 Katskhi Pillar

Coordinates:	42.28748, 43.21584	Period:	Medieval
Location:	Chiatura Municipality	Access:	Viewing area below. No public climb.
Preserved:	Church of St Simeon on summit		

Key fact: 40-metre rock. Climb forbidden.

Tip: Best light at sunset.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/stolp-katskhi/

09 Katskhi Nativity Monastery

Coordinates:	42.26949, 43.21306	Period:	Early 11th c. (988-1014)
Location:	1 km from the Pillar, Chiatura Municipality	Access:	Visible from road
Preserved:	Chrysanthemum dome — unique in Georgia		

Key fact: Built by Bagvashi princes.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/blog/sights-of-georgia/skrytaia-zhemchuzhina-imeretii-monastyr-rozhdestva-khrista-v-katskhi/

10 Tskhradzhvari

Coordinates:	see catalogue	Period:	Medieval
Location:	Nakeral Pass, Tkibuli Municipality	Access:	Serious mountain hike
Preserved:	Ridge church with views both ways		

Key fact: Panoramic views across Imereti.

Tip: Not for the unfit.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/tskhradzhvari/

11 Okono Argveti Church

Coordinates:	see catalogue	Period:	Medieval
Location:	Sachkhere Municipality	Access:	Check locally
Preserved:	Small church		

Key fact: Rare dedication.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/tserkov-bogoroditsy-okono-argveti/

12 St George, Zemo Abasha

Coordinates:	see catalogue	Period:	Medieval
Location:	Samtredia Municipality	Access:	Check locally
Preserved:	Active		

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/tserkov-imeni-vydaiushchiisia-sviatogo-georgiia/

13 Simoneti Convent

Coordinates:	see catalogue	Period:	Medieval
Location:	Terjola Municipality	Access:	Check locally
Preserved:	Active convent		

Key fact: Very secluded.

Catalogue: madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/convent-in-simoneti/

Route options

One day from Kutaisi	Bagrati on foot + Gelati (11 km, taxi) + Motsameta (6 km). All three in one valley. No car needed.
One day with a drive	Bagrati + Ubisi on the way east + Mgvimevi near Chiatura. Or Bagrati + Katskhi sites. Car required.
Two days: Kutaisi and Chiatura	Day 1: Bagrati + Gelati + Motsameta. Day 2: Ubisi en route, Mgvimevi + Katskhi. Overnight in Kutaisi or Chiatura.

Historical context

Gelati, Bagrati and Motsameta were built in the 11th century under the united Georgian kingdom. After its dissolution, Imereti became a kingdom from 1463 to 1810. Later sites were built by feudal lords and monastic communities. In 1810 the Kingdom of Imereti joined the Russian Empire. Some churches fell into disrepair; others were restored in the 20th-21st centuries.

Visiting rules

Dress	Covered shoulders and knees. Women: headscarf.
Photography	No flash. Avoid shooting during services.

Behaviour	Keep voices low during services.
Entry	Free everywhere. Donations welcome.
Remote sites	Check directions in advance for Ubisi, Tskhradzhvari and Ilemi.

Useful links on Madloba

All Imereti churches (catalogue)	madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/
Hub: Churches of Imereti (article)	madloba.info/en/blog/religion-of-georgia/churches-of-imereti/
Gelati Monastery	madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/gelatskii-monastyr/
Bagrati Cathedral	madloba.info/en/kutaisi/tserkvi-i-sobory/hram-bagrata/
Mgvimevi Monastery	madloba.info/en/region-imereti/churches/monastyr-mgvimevi/
Ubisi Monastery	madloba.info/en/blog/sights-of-georgia/ubisa/
Katskhi Nativity Monastery	madloba.info/en/blog/sights-of-georgia/skrytaia-zhemchuzhin-a-imeretii-monastyr-rozhdestva-khrista-v-katskhi/
Kutaisi History Museum	madloba.info/en/kutaisi/muzei/kutaisskii-gosudarstvennyi-isto-riqueskii-muzei-im-nino-berdzenishvili/