

17
churches

Hidden Churches of Kakheti

Seventeen hidden churches beyond the big routes: from 5th-century basilicas to a Russian church of 1902

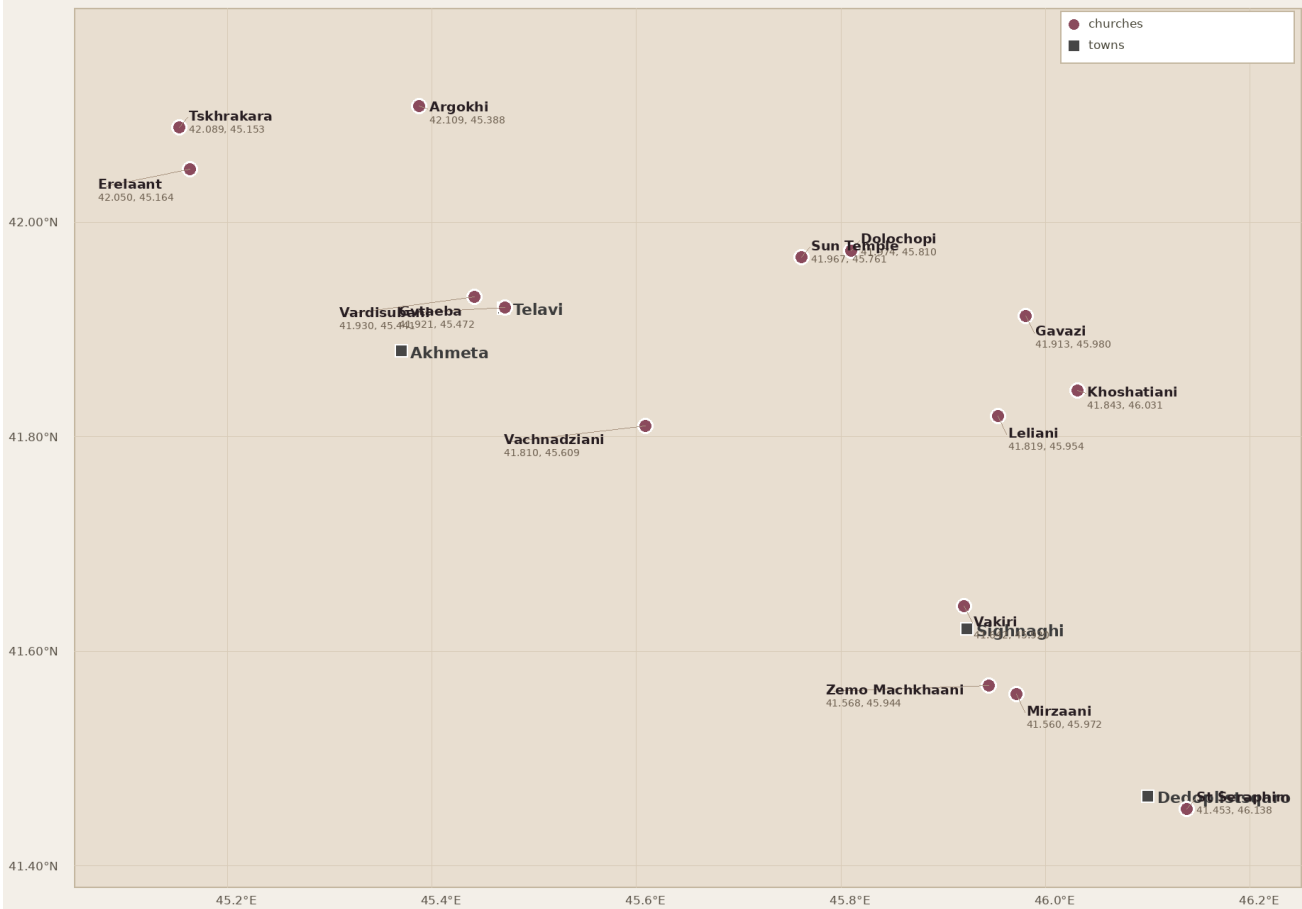
Churches in guide	17 little-known churches
Oldest	5th-century basilicas
Municipalities	6 districts of Kakheti
Signal	Often unavailable on site

About This Guide

Kakheti is known for its great shrines, Bodbe, Alaverdi, Nekresi. But beyond these routes, dozens of almost unknown churches are scattered across the region: early Christian basilicas from the 5th century, late medieval domed halls, and even a Russian church from the early 20th century. This guide brings together seventeen of them with verified coordinates.

Location Map

Hidden Churches of Kakheti: Map



Save this PDF: the coordinates and map work offline when there is no signal on site. Coordinates are latitude, longitude, paste them into an offline map (Organic Maps).

Seventeen Churches

1	Tskhrakara in Matani An early Christian basilica of the 5th century, "nine gates". One of Kakheti's oldest churches, a complex of several churches. GPS: 42.0885, 45.1530	Akhmeta
2	Erelaant near Matani A 5th-6th century "free cross" church with 17th-century frescoes. One of the first cruciform churches in the region. GPS: 42.0497, 45.1637	Akhmeta
3	Archangel at Argokhi A late medieval hall church with three registers of 16th-17th century frescoes, in a village cemetery. GPS: 42.1085, 45.3877	Akhmeta
4	Gvtaeba in Telavi A three-nave basilica of the 5th-6th centuries built of river stone, within the town. Horseshoe arches to the north, pointed to the south. GPS: 41.9207, 45.4717	Telavi
5	Virgin at Vardisubani An active church of traditional Georgian design in a wine village known for its qvevri workshops. GPS: 41.9303, 45.4413	Telavi
6	Dolochopi Basilica A large 5th-century basilica excavated only in 2010. Its scale points to an important early Christian centre. GPS: 41.9737, 45.8098	Kvareli
7	Prechista at Vachnadziani A domed church of the 8th-9th centuries, "All Saints". A transitional-period example, with a smaller St George church nearby. GPS: 41.8103, 45.6091	Gurjaani
8	Virgin at Dzveli Gavazi An old church in Gavazi village, its very name "Dzveli" (old) marking its antiquity. GPS: 41.9130, 45.9803	Kvareli
9	Nekresi Sun Temple A pre-Christian sanctuary tied to a sun cult, on the grounds of the Nekresi complex. GPS: 41.9674, 45.7610	Nekresi

10	John the Baptist at Vakiri A three-church basilica of the 12th century, renewed by King Levan in 1550. A three-storey bell tower to the west. GPS: 41.6421, 45.9199	Signaghi
11	Virgin at Khoshatiani A late medieval hall church among peach orchards, with a bell tower and fragments of frescoes. GPS: 41.8431, 46.0311	Lagodekhi
12	St Theodore at Leliani A three-church basilica of two eras, 11th-12th and 16th-17th centuries, dedicated to Theodore Tyron. GPS: 41.8193, 45.9537	Lagodekhi
13	St Seraphim at Samreklo A Russian cross-domed church of 1902, dome 16 m high. The second in the world dedicated to Seraphim of Sarov. GPS: 41.4533, 46.1379	Dedoplistsqaro
14	Archangels at Zemo Machkhaani An 18th-century domed hall with an unusual mix of semicircular and pointed arches. GPS: 41.5680, 45.9445	Dedoplistsqaro
15	Church at Mirzaani An "Alaverdi" church of the 14th-18th centuries in the home village of painter Pirosmiani, glazed brick in its masonry. GPS: 41.5600, 45.9715	Dedoplistsqaro

⚠ Many churches stand in cemeteries, on hills or in fields, some reached by dirt track. Village churches may be locked, with a keyholder nearby. Check access and the route with locals.

Touring by District

Akhmeta district: three ancient churches

Tskhrakara, Erelaant and Argokhi in the north-west. The first two are early 5th-6th century basilicas near Matani, the third holds 16th-17th century frescoes. An easy half-day loop.

Dedoplistsqaro: from a Russian church to Pirosmiani's village

St Seraphim, Zemo Machkhaani and Mirzaani in the south. The most surprising route: a Russian church of 1902, an 18th-century domed hall, and a church in Pirosmiani's home village.

Before You Go

- ✓ Many churches lie off the paved road, some reached by field tracks
- ✓ There are few signs, confirm the last stretch in the village
- ✓ Village churches open for services or on request, a keyholder holds the key
- ✓ In active churches women need a headscarf and covered shoulders
- ✓ Do not use flash near old frescoes, light harms the pigments
- ✓ Group churches by municipality to save time

Frequently Asked Questions

Which little-known church in Kakheti is the oldest?

The Dolochoopi and Tskhrakara basilicas from the 5th century, plus Erelaant and Gvtaeba from the 5th-6th, contemporaries of early Christianity in Georgia.

What is the Nekresi Sun Temple?

A pre-Christian sanctuary linked to a sun cult that predates Christianity. It sits beside the Nekresi monastery complex.

Is there really a Russian church in Kakheti?

Yes, St Seraphim of Sarov church in Samreklo, 1902, in the Russian cross-domed style. The second in the world dedicated to this saint.

Where have frescoes survived?

In the Church of the Archangel at Argokhi (16th-17th c.), at Erelaant (17th c.), and in fragments at Khoshatiani.

How should I plan the trip?

Group by municipality: Akhmeta, Telavi, Dedoplistsqaro. Some churches are reached by dirt roads.

The full churches section of Kakheti in the catalogue:

madloba.info/en/region-kakheti/churches/

The region's main shrines, Bodbe, Alaverdi, Nekresi, in a separate guide on madloba.info