

Shovi → Buba Glacier

18 km return · 1 day · easy · Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti, Oni municipality

Why Go

The simplest way to reach a real glacier in Georgia without ropes or crampons. The ascent is spread across nine kilometres.

What Matters

In August 2023 a mudflow came down in this area and people died. Check the state of the road and any current restrictions before you travel.

The Route Stage by Stage

1

Shovi to the Chanchakhi Bridge

2 km · 40 min

Coniferous forest and a level path along the river. You still meet holidaymakers from the resort here.

2

Bridge to the Summer Camps

3 km · 1 h 20 min

The valley widens, the trees thin out, shepherds' huts appear. The dogs react to strangers.

3

Camps to the Moraine

2.5 km · 1 h 30 min

A chaos of boulders begins. The path is harder to follow, so navigate by the stone cairns.

4

Moraine to the Glacier Snout

1.5 km · 1 h

The ice is grey with rock dust. Do not approach closely or step onto it: the edge collapses without warning.

What to Take With You

- ✓ Stiff-soled boots for the moraine
- ✓ 1.5 litres of water per person
- ✓ Cash in lari
- ✓ Waterproof jacket: the weather turns quickly
- ✓ First aid kit with blister plasters
- ✓ Power bank for the navigation app

Route Reference

5 points · elevation · coordinates · season · transport

Route Points

Point	Elevation	What It Is	GPS (latitude, longitude)
Shovi	1520 ♂	resort, start of the route	42.6975, 43.6845 approximate
Chanchakhi bridge	1560 ♂	start of the riverside path	42.7080, 43.6900 approximate
Summer camps	1750 ♂	pastures, water, shepherd dogs	42.7280, 43.7020 approximate
Moraine	1980 ♂	boulders, path becomes unclear	42.7450, 43.7130 approximate
Buba Glacier snout	2100 ♂	viewpoint on the moraine	42.7550, 43.7200 approximate

Season

June to October, with July and August the peak. After heavy rain it is better to call the walk off.

Getting There

Marshrutka from Kutaisi to Oni, then a taxi to Shovi. From Tbilisi a car is easier, about 5 hours.

How to Use the Coordinates

The format is latitude, longitude and pastes into a maps search exactly as it appears. Navigation apps do not always recognise these villages by name, so save the points in advance and download an offline map of Georgia. Coordinates point in a straight line, but you walk the path.

Emergency services in Georgia: 112

The same number reaches mountain rescue. Tell someone in town your route and the time you promised to be back.