

RAGIONAL BRAND ASSOCIATION OF GEORGIA



REGIONAL BRANDS
ASSOCIATION
OF GEORGIA

CATALOG OF CERTIFIED PRODUCTS
WINE, FOOD, TRADITIONAL CRAFTS, FOLKLORE, HOSPITALITY,
INTERESTING STORIES AND UNFORGETTABLE IMPRESSIONS FROM GURIA
AND RACHA-LECHKHUM-KVEMO SVANETI

- **Visegrad Fund**

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This catalogue provides information on entrepreneurs certified by the brands: Racha-Lechkhumi-lower Svaneti Regional Brand – “Meet us in Kolkheti Mountain” and Guria Regional Brand – “Home of Life “

The following project partners worked on the creation of the catalogue:



RDA SP – Regional Development Agency Senec-Pezinok, Slovakia



ARB – Association of Regional Brands, Czech Republic



AEC – Association of Carpathian Euroregion, Poland



SGCC – Slovak-Georgian Chamber of Commerce, Georgia

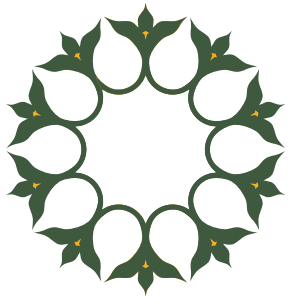
The catalogue includes products of 36 entrepreneurs including works made with authentic and traditional handicraft technologies. There depict the unique nature and tourism potential of each municipality.

Interestingly, there are also stories related to the start-up of certified entrepreneurs.

In addition to comprehensive information, the reader can discover completely new and distinctive products/services that are unconditionally related to the specifics of the region and their belonging to the region is guaranteed.

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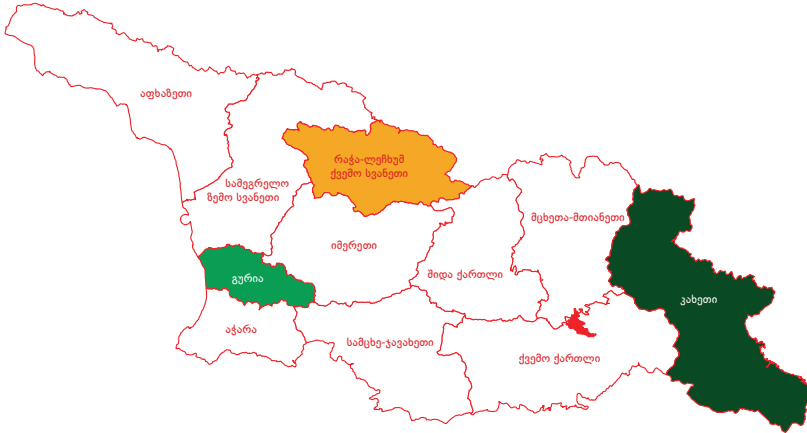
INTRODUCTION



REGIONAL BRANDS
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Racha-Lechkhumi-lower Svaneti Regional Brand – Meet us in Kolkheti Mountain / Guria Regional Brand – Home of Life – the trademark has been awarded since 2023.

It offers of the traditional handicrafts, agricultural products and provides of the touristic services, also folk groups, historical-cultural objects, and narrative stories from the Racha / Guria region. In the catalogue, the reader will be acquainted with the authentic traditions of the region and products made in accordance with the certification criteria. Reader will also get information about the local hospitality and gastronomic diversity.



In regards to the certified products, the „Racha-Lechkhumi-lower Svaneti Regional Brand – Meet us in Kolkheti Mountain” / “Guria Regional Brand – Home of Life” guarantees the following:

- The product is made by local small and medium entrepreneurs.
- The products is eco-friendly.
- The products is distinctive (made from local raw materials and traditional methods).

In certified facilities producing wine, gastro-touristic and accommodation products / services, the following is guaranteed:

- Quality customer service.
- Unique touristic products typical for the region.
- Comprehensive information on the historical and cultural authenticity of the region
- Care for the environment.
- Restaurants will offer you at least 4 (four) traditional dishes.

Certification of handmade items guarantees:

- Product quality.
- Use of local natural raw materials.
- Production is carried out with traditional methods.
- Comprehensive information about the experience.

In the regions, it's possible to acquaint yourself with the colorful folklore of Racha, Svaneti, and Guria. Certified folklore ensembles preserve the experience passed down from generation to generation. Through their introduction and by visiting them, you are guaranteed to get:

- Unforgettable impressions and emotions
- Authenticity of performance;
- Introduction to ritualistic songs;
- Comprehensive information about the origin of each song and, upon request, access to texts and musical scores;
- Historical museums and house museums that create presentations about the past, traditional living, and cultural life of the regions.

Why should you buy local products and/or use services?

Due to the unique connection to the region, local products stand out for their tradition, use of local materials, craftsmanship, motifs, and originality. By purchasing them, you receive a unique and authentic souvenir or gift. Certified tourist services ensure that you're not only satisfied with standard services but always receive "something extra, special, and memorable." The regional brand helps you distinguish genuine products from fakes. Products manufactured by small and medium-sized enterprises in the region are limited in quantity and the quality is guaranteed. A regional branding system prevents misuse of names and symbols associated with the region and, consequently, the uncontrolled exploitation of its cultural and natural wealth. By buying branded products, you support specific small and medium-sized enterprises in rural areas, helping to develop the regional economy, reduce migration from the region, and strengthen environmental conservation efforts.

Try the producers certified by the Guria regional brand.

There are different legends and varying opinions among scientists about the origin of the name Guria. One thing is certain: it is a small region in Georgia with astonishing nature, surrounded by mountains and the sea. Guria is inhabited by cheerful and energetic people, known for their unique folklore and hospitality, as well as their traditional crafts. Historically, Gurulis have always played a vital role in the development of the country across various sectors such as politics, economy, science, education, culture, and sports.

REGION OF RACHA-LECHKHUMI AND KVEMO SVANETI

Who hasn't heard the myth of the "Argonauts"? According to old historical and ancient sources, this is the place where the mystical adventures of the legendary heroes of Greek mythology, the Argonauts, and Heracles, unfolded. The myth is intricately linked to Khvamlı mountain, where, by the order of Zeus, Prometheus was chained and later freed by Heracles (Hercules).



Khvamli mountain continues to stand undisturbed, overseeing the ancient Kolkheti (Egris) kingdom. Today, the Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti region unites the ethno-geographic territories of three ancient cultures: Kvemo Svaneti (Misimia VIII-VII BC), Lechkhumi (Sarkineti BC, later VI century Squimnia and X-XII century Takveri), and Racha (which was part of Takveri principality until the VII century).

Traces of human life in these areas are confirmed from the Stone Age. While all three territories share some similarities in culture and tradition, they also exhibit distinct characteristics in terms of population, folklore, cuisine, traditional crafts, and more.



Archaeological excavations and accounts from ancient travelers confirm the region's richness in iron and arsenic ores, with the best bronze being produced here. The upper reaches of the Rion River was a significant center for bronze production, featuring old copper and arsenic mines in Gona and Ghebi. Bronze age copper mines were discovered in Zagraş and on Mount Lefur, where locally mined arsenic or stilbium was combined with ore to produce high-quality bronze products.

The technology of extracting gold from sheepskin, known as the "golden fleece," is also associated with this region.

Throughout the landscape, ancient legends seem to be preserved in nature: the glacier-fed Rioni Valley, Zhansistskali and Lajanuri rivers, Sarim rock columns, the Latpar pass separating Lower Svaneti from Upper Svaneti, and the proud and majestic Khvamli mountain, which continues to inspire viewers today.



The region has been known for viticulture and grain cultivation since ancient times. Unique grape varieties, such as Alexandrouli and Mujuretuli, are cultivated exclusively in this region. Iconic wines like "Khvanchkara" and "Tvishi" are made here, so as local culinary delights "Rachuli beans and ham," "Kulbaki river trout," "Kubdaris," and more. Here, you'll encounter descendants of master craftsmen skilled in carving unique creations from wood and clay, experience the warmth of hospitality, and explore landmarks like Nikotsminda and Mravaldzali, the Synagogue, and the Khotevi and Muri castles.

Immerse yourself in authentic Rachul-Svanuri folklore, play ancient instruments, and if you appreciate wandering in nature, savoring unique wines and dishes, marveling at handmade items crafted with ancient techniques, and cherishing the harmony between humanity and nature, then a visit to the Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti region is a must.





ANNA JELADZE "RUGS FROM RACHA"



"Rugs from Racha" stands out as the victorious project from the 2021 social innovation ideas competition. This social enterprise, spearheaded by the young entrepreneur Ana Jeladze, is based in Racha, Oni. Ana's workshop is the hub where these exquisite rugs are intricately woven, and interested individuals can witness this craft firsthand.

Completing her studies at the Faculty of Textile Design at the Art Academy, coinciding with the onset of the pandemic, prompted Ana to return to Ghari village in Oni Municipality. Making the most of this period, she engaged in various online training sessions and seminars focused on business development. Her business idea, conceived during her student days - establishing a workshop - gained even more strength. To secure funding, she actively participated in grant competitions and emerged victorious, receiving her first grant. Anna wisely utilized this grant to acquire loom frames of different sizes and yarn.

Today, Anna's workshop specializes in crafting unique natural wool rugs, featuring traditional Georgian/Rachuli ornaments alongside modernist sketches. The workshop utilizes natural wool yarn from the "Tusheti" wool processing enterprise in the Akhmeta district, blended with specially crafted non-toxic dyes. The maximum size of the rugs is 120cm x 60cm. In addition to rug weaving, Anna possesses exceptional skills in felting and hot batik techniques, creating wall panels of various sizes.

Products from "Rugs from Racha" can be purchased online or on-site at the workshop. The workshop welcomes individual orders, offering a diverse selection of designs to choose from.

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EKATERINE TSIKHISELI “ANTILIOS”



“Antilios” finds its definition in the Georgian dictionary as the sun shining from the clouds. This very path mirrors the journey taken by Ekaterine Tsikhiseli before embarking on her entrepreneurial endeavors.

Located in Racha, Oni, specifically in the village of Ghari, is a place immersed in sweetness, fragrance, and a myriad of colors—Eka’s beehive and the enchanting world of decorative wax candles. Here, you can savor and acquire exotic jams crafted from local raw materials, including forest berries and fir cones, such as walnut, rose, cone, raspberry, and more.



Eka specializes in creating candles of diverse shapes, colors, and scents using her own beeswax. Exclusive design options are also available upon request.

The pricing of the products is determined by factors such as the volume of packaging for honey and jams, the intricacy of the candle designs, and the quantity of wax used.



For those interested, the products are available for purchase both online and on-site in the village. Visit Ghari and Oni Town, Rustaveli Street 15, where you’ll find the “Ethnon” shop showcasing Eka’s creations.



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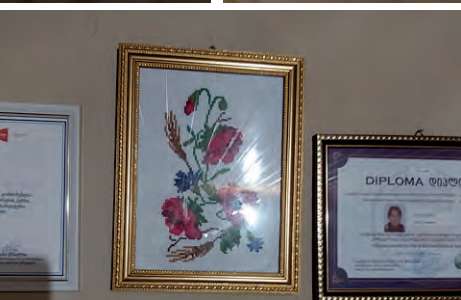
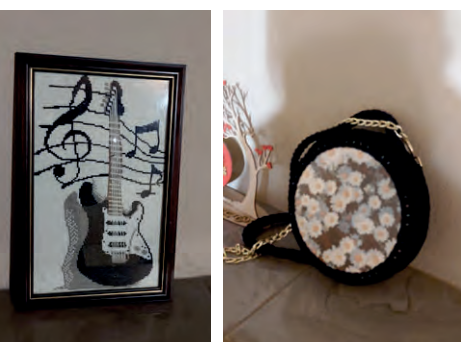
LIKA VATSADZE

Lika has been drawn to needlework since her childhood. She began her journey with embroidery in the 8th grade. Growing up in Makhashi village, where opportunities for learning music, dance, and painting were scarce, she seized the chance to join an art circle in the nearby village of Lasuriashi, just 3 km away. Determined to pursue her passion, she made the 6 km round trip twice a week, even transferring to Lasuria High School in the 10th grade to attend regularly.

Despite facing numerous obstacles, especially during harsh winters, Lika's dedication to her craft never wavered. She continued her embroidery journey after graduating, further honing her skills at the Tsageri seminary and art school. However, she always found herself drawn back to embroidery, her true calling.

Lika exclusively practices hand embroidery, mastering ancient techniques learned in Lasuriash. She embroiders on various fabrics and items, from bags to clothing to bed linens and curtains. Combining her own imagination with traditional motifs, she fulfills individual orders from across Imereti, Tbilisi, and the Racha-Lechkhum-Kvemo Svaneti region.

In recent years, Lika's modern twist on traditional embroidery has garnered significant interest, as she continues to participate in festivals and exhibitions, showcasing her unique creations to appreciative audiences.



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NANIKO IARALISHVILI “NANART” JEWELRY FROM RACHA



During her early childhood, Naniko’s family relocated from Oni to Tbilisi, and she spent the entirety of her childhood and student years in the capital. Summer visits were the only occasions she returned to Oni. Although Naniko aspired to study at an art academy, her family’s wishes led her to enroll to the Business Administration Program at Ilya’s University. She did enroll but opted for applied art, specifically vitreous enamel, as a secondary profession. In 2016, Naniko commenced her career at the Oni branch of the Bank of Georgia. Despite her distinct specialization, she independently decided to return to her native region. Naniko’s dedication to various traditional crafts persisted, solidifying her reputation in Oni as an entrepreneur-artist. Immersed in techniques such as vitreous enamel, felt, embroidery, and epoxy, Naniko’s constant pursuit of adventure led her to a new passion—to immortalize unique Racha flowers and transform delicate blooms into jewelry. This is how Naniko’s miniature creations, crafted from vibrant flowers and leaves, come to life, radiating not just beauty but the timeless spirit of Racha’s forests.

Beyond jewelry, NanArt offers an array of products: refrigerator stickers, mug stands, home decor, wall clocks, keychains. Exclusive designs are available for order. NanArt facilitates ordering and purchasing throughout the year, offering on-site delivery.

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ANRI MUKBANIANI



Travelers journeying from Lentekhi to Ushguli are encouraged to explore the village of Telaki in the Choluri community, where the young and talented Anri Mukbaniani crafts unique traditional Svanuri musical instruments, furniture, and household items from wood. Drawing on ancestral knowledge and his own research, Anri creates pieces deeply rooted in Svaneti's heritage. Despite graduating from the Academy of Arts, his profound love for Svaneti led him back to his roots, where his family's legacy of crafting Svanuri instruments and performing Svanuri songs inspired him from a young age.



Anri's father, Vakhtang Mukbaniani, a soloist in the local folk ensemble, is renowned as the premier performer of the "Svanuri Zari" in all of Kvemo Svaneti. Anri himself focuses on preserving archaic string instruments like the "Chuniri," traditionally associated with mourning rituals, and the "Changi," both unique to Svaneti. Through meticulous research and consultation with elders, museums, and experts, Anri endeavors to revive and extend the legacy of these instruments.

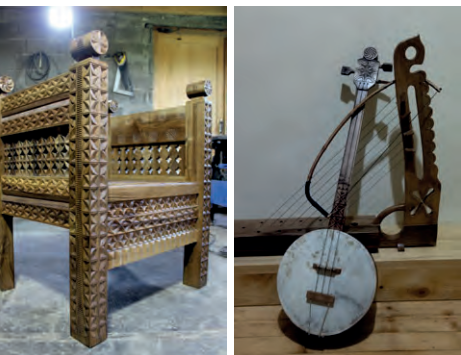


Anri's workshop serves as a time tunnel where he communicates with ancient masters, seeking their wisdom to replicate centuries-old techniques. From forging horseshoes to crafting strings from swan intestines, every aspect of Anri's work is steeped in tradition and craftsmanship. As an old master once quipped, creating these instruments requires not only skillful hands but also a keen ear.

Anri's creations are available for purchase on-site or by order, with transportation arranged for a predetermined fee. A visit to his workshop promises an unforgettable experience, particularly for those intrigued by the culture and rituals of ancient peoples.



Top of Form



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GIORGI KATSITADZE WOODEN PRODUCTS



From childhood, I harbored a passion for working with wood, despite lacking any formal professional knowledge in the field. In 1982, while my uncle collaborated with a carpenter named Lavrenti Daushvili from Shkmeri, my intrigue for woodworking deepened. At the age of 21, I decided to craft cabinets at home, adorned with the distinctive Racha design that still stands the test of time. This is where my journey into woodcraft truly began, shares Giorgi Katsitadze.

A hydro-engineer by profession, Giorgi currently resides in the village Mukhli in the Ambrolauri Municipality. He has a self-built workshop where he breathes life into the Racha gene, creating unique wood carvings. Beyond furniture, his repertoire extends to household items, dishes, and souvenirs tailored for various purposes. Of particular importance to Giorgi is the preservation and rejuvenation of the traditional craft of making transparent curtains, known as “Chviruli,” which are characteristic of Racha Oda House.

Giorgi meticulously selects precious local woods such as walnut, chestnut, oak, linden, ash-tree, and cypress for his creations. He employs environmentally friendly substances for external processing, ensuring the safety of health. What’s remarkable is that his items are crafted using the “segmental” technology, infused with Georgian and ancient Greco-Egyptian influences. The production involves not only the expertise of a seasoned carpenter but also intricate mathematical calculations. Each product, crafted through this method, stands as a unique and irreplicable piece.

Apart from purchasing available items, Giorgi welcomes custom orders for items of desired designs and materials, ensuring a personalized touch to his exceptional woodcraft.

Ready-made works can be purchased online, as well as in Oni, Rustaveli St. Shop “Ethnoon” located at 15.

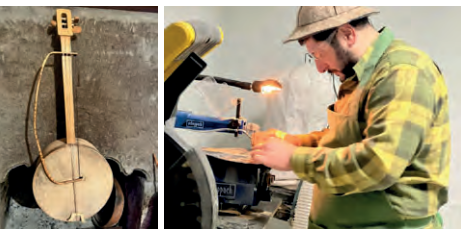
Address: Ambrolauri Municipality, Village Mukhli
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TORNIKE SKHIERELI FAMILY HOTEL “FOLKLORE HOUSE”



In 2013, everything started when Malkhaz Erkvanidze, the teacher of church music and folk songs at the Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Singing Institute, led the first group of people from Ukhvi for a master class at Tornike’s in Oni. Since 2014, Tornike has been transforming his own house into the “House of Folklore.” What began as an idea gradually evolved into a tangible reality — a hotel with three meals catering to foreigners interested in studying Georgian hymns and folk songs.



The offerings at “Folklore House” extend beyond accommodation. Various tours are arranged, including visits to traditional Racha wine cellars, observations of landscape and cultural monuments, master classes, encounters with ethnomusicologists, shared singing experiences, the preparation of hymn texts and notebooks, and instruction in playing traditional Racha and Georgian folk instruments. Visitors can also explore instrument workshops, gaining insight into the production process and even purchasing these unique instruments.



Moreover, the House of Folklore extends an invitation to anyone interested in a dinner accompanied by a concert from the folk group “Dzhiriani,” all within an authentic setting, in villages. “Folklore House” in Oni serves as a repository of more than 200 samples of folk songs and hymns, preserving the rich cultural heritage of the region. It is a place where you can immerse yourself in an environment saturated with magical tunes, gravity of manners, warm hospitality, and the voices of people and villages singing during various cultural events or simply for the joy of singing.

The yearly program is published in advance on Tornike Skhiereli’s Facebook page, allowing interested individuals to reserve a convenient period for themselves and “experience the uniqueness of the spirit of Racha!”



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TRADITIONAL CRAFT – EDENA LILIANA MAISURADZE



Liliana’s interest in handicrafts sparked before she even started school. Her source of inspiration was the environment in which she grew up, surrounded by the natural world of bees, butterflies, hedgehogs, and flowers, which she used to create various crafts for her own amusement. In her childhood, no materials were wasted; even corn husk scraps were transformed into creations, encouraging Liliana to constantly expand her imagination. She vividly remembers her first project—a flower appliqué made from torn fabric scraps. In kindergarten, she had access to a wider variety of materials, further nurturing her love for crafts. Her mother first noticed her talent and passion for handicrafts, and has been her steadfast supporter ever since. Her mother was a skilled craftsperson, constantly creating, and this environment, along with her mother’s encouragement, influenced Liliana to pursue a career in design. She spent her entire childhood learning from professional masters, studying various techniques of traditional embroidery. Parallel to her studies at the Art Academy, focusing on fashion design, she began working at the “Georgian Cloth” studio, where she developed a sense of “quality” and eventually became a master of cloth. After returning to her hometown, she embarked on a new, beautiful chapter of her life—deciding to launch a project that would immerse people in a sea of ideas. In 2015, she founded the studio “Edena”. The name was not chosen by accident—“Edena” is an orchard that enriches the Rioni River, known for making felt hats from wool, traditionally produced only near the Rioni’s source in the village of Lebia. She participated in many projects, understood the importance of preserving traditional craftsmanship, prepared 12 apprentices, five of whom stayed to work with her. Another project trained an additional 45 women, ten of whom remained in the studio, and today, her team consists of 15 qualified cloth masters. The studio operates across five technological directions. The masters’ income depends on the sales of the products, hence there is a high motivation to create top-quality, exceptional pieces.

The material is “Tushetian wool” from the village of Alvani, spun using non-toxic, health-safe dyes. The frames are made from local materials by local wood masters. The studio offers customers various panels, items, and accessories made using textile techniques. Purchases can be made in the studio, at the “Ethno Oni” store at 15 Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi; the “Eski” store at 7 Nato Vachnadze Street; the “Panjara” store at 27 Pekin Street, in “Ethnodesign” at 25 Akhvlediani Street, Kutaisi, and the “Georgian Souvenirs” store at 35 Paliashvili Street and in New York, the “Georgiana” store. The studio also accepts individual orders for exclusive designs.

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MZEVINAR LIPARTELIANI



In the village of Tsana, nestled in one of the picturesque valleys of Kvemo Svaneti, resides Mzevinar Liparteliani, a master of the ancient Svanuri traditional craft—the Svanuri hat. The Svanuri hat is more than just a simple headdress; it symbolizes courage, conscience, loyalty, piety, and strength of a Svani man. In ancient times, the Svan hat held great significance: if a man committed an unacceptable act, it would be proclaimed that he let his hat fall on the ground, as a sign of shame; conversely, a golden hat would be bestowed upon those who performed notable deeds. Thus, the Svan hat carries a profound symbolic weight in the consciousness of a Svan man, and as such, it is forbidden for women to wear it.



Today, traditional handicrafts like hat-making have waned in popularity among the younger generation, leaving only few families, as masters of this time-honored craft. However, in the past, every woman knew how to make a Svanuri hat—it was a necessary skill. Mzevinar belongs to the minority who learned the craft from her mother in childhood and has preserved it to this day.

During the Soviet era, there was a production facility in Lentekhi where local women crafted Svanuri hats using local wool. Mzevinar learned the craft from a young age, helping her mother with every step from wool picking to final sewing. Despite pursuing different activities for many years, economic hardship prompted her to revisit his ancestral craft. Realizing that she was one of the few remaining bearers of this ancient tradition, Mzevinar decided to continue the legacy of the Svanuri hat.



The secret to crafting a quality Svanuri hat lies in its tightness—when filled with water, it should hold it while vodka pass through a hat easily. Traditionally, the hat is gray in color, achieved by blending white and gray wool. For children, a white hat is made. Today, Mzevinar must source materials from outside the region, as sheep are no longer kept locally. Despite the challenges, he manages to produce an average of two hats per day.

Hats can be ordered directly from Mzevinar, who will deliver them to your location. Alternatively, visitors can personally witness the meticulous and time-consuming process of crafting these remarkable hats by visiting him in Tsana.



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HONEY – GVANTSA CHABUKIANI “HONEY FROM LECHKHUMI”



In the picturesque and time-honored village of Dekhvri in Lechkhumi, resides a dynamic duo of siblings: Gvantsa and Giga Chabukianis, aged 25 and 26 respectively. Their grandfather, who once tended to a modest collection of bee families—around 4 to 5—passed down the age-old craft to them at a tender age of 6. Infused with a deep-rooted passion for beekeeping, the siblings nurtured this tradition alongside their formal education, only to return to their ancestral homeland with a fervent desire to carry forth the family legacy while embracing modern entrepreneurial principles.

From the humble beginnings of those initial 4 bee families, the Chabukianis have expanded their apiary to an impressive 100 families. Their enterprising spirit led them to establish a thriving enterprise, complete with state-of-the-art hive printing, adherence to HACCP standards, and the integration of solar technology—all while championing the burgeoning field of bee tourism. Engaging in a multitude of initiatives, ranging from local and international projects to state-sponsored programs supporting small enterprises, their endeavors have yielded remarkable results.

A pivotal decision to specialize in breeding queen bees marked a significant milestone for the siblings, distinguishing their operation from conventional beekeeping practices in the region. Recognizing the intrinsic value of the indigenous Caucasian (Georgian) bee, they now produce an average of 300-400 queen bees annually, catering to both local demand and international markets. Upholding their commitment to community welfare, Gvantsa and Giga impart their beekeeping expertise to local youth, offering free instruction and hands-on training within their apiary.

Emphasizing environmental stewardship and the production of wholesome organic goods, the Chabukianis employ innovative approaches, such as hand-embroidered caps for honey packaging and sustainable export practices. Their dedication to quality caught the attention of an Italian entrepreneur, who personally verified the integrity of their acacia honey and subsequently procured their entire stock.

While Giga delves into the realm of scientific inquiry with his mastery of food technology and thesis on the utilization of bee pollen in confectionery, the siblings remain steadfast in their pursuit of knowledge. Eager to explore apitherapy services, they have constructed and outfitted an apitherapy hut, with plans to undergo specialized training in Slovenia.

With an annual honey production averaging 2-2.5 tons, their premium honey products are available for purchase on-site and can be conveniently delivered by the Chabukianis themselves, ensuring a seamless experience for their valued customers.

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ALPINE NECTAR DEMUR LIPARTELIANI



After completing his studies at the institute in 1992, Demur returned to Lentekhi, where his family had a longstanding tradition of beekeeping. However, by the 1990s, the bee population had drastically declined, leaving only two hives in the family. Determined to preserve this vital aspect of his heritage, Demur made it his mission to save the bees, and he has been dedicated to beekeeping for over 30 years.

Today, he tends to a hundred hives, prioritizing quality over quantity. During the challenging years when bees were scarce, Demur worked tirelessly, and his efforts did not go unnoticed—many veteran beekeepers purchased bee colonies from him. Even now, he continues to mentor aspiring beekeepers, generously sharing the knowledge he has gained through years of informal education and hands-on experience.

Demur remains committed to staying updated with the latest advancements in beekeeping, diligently attending training sessions and staying informed about modern requirements and standards. In fact, he has become a trainer himself, imparting his expertise to others. Over the past five years, he has been focusing on producing bio-honey, removing antibiotics and other additives. He maintains several families in a natural habitat called “Jara,” where bees remain undisturbed in a secluded and peaceful environment.

Despite his dedication to producing organic honey, Demur faces challenges, particularly in differentiating organic honey from non-bio varieties to consumers who may not be willing to pay a premium for the product. Consequently, he is not currently motivated to increase production volume. Presently, Demur’s average annual honey production stands at two tons.

Interested buyers can purchase honey directly from Demur, with delivery available in Tbilisi for those placing orders. The honey is packaged in 1000ml glass jars. Additionally, individuals looking to start their own beekeeping journey can acquire healthy bee families from Demur, with an average of 20-30 bee families available for sale each year.

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NARGIZA ONIANI

Kvemo Svaneti, a region characterized by limited arable land, has long relied on potato cultivation, cattle breeding, and beekeeping. In today's era of significant migration, few individuals remain dedicated to the demanding agricultural work of yesteryears. However, Nargiza Oniani stands out as an exception. Tending to her own herd of cows, she produces homemade cheese, including the renowned "Svanur Sulguni."

Despite the formidable challenges posed by the region's harsh climate, Nargiza also manages beekeeping, yielding ecologically pristine honey from semi-wild beehives nestled in the mountains of Kvemo Svaneti. Renowned for their exceptional flavor, Svanuri potatoes from Nargiza's farm adorn various traditional Svanuri dishes.

Integral to Svanuri cuisine is "Svanuri salt," which imparts a distinctive flavor to dishes like Kubdar, potatoes, and meat. Nargiza meticulously prepares this salt according to time-honored traditions, adhering strictly to precise ingredient selection and proportions. Modern interpretations are deemed unacceptable, as each component of the salt blend must be carefully chosen and balanced.

Nargiza Oniani's farm embodies the traditional ethos of Svan peasant life and agriculture, offering customers access to ecologically sound products. Products are available for purchase via order or on-site, with Nargiza ensuring prompt delivery for orders placed remotely.



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TAMAR KHOMASURIDZE “CHRISTESIS HONEY”

Beekeeping and honey production in Zemo Racha are commonly recognized as a sublime facet of agriculture. However, the harmonious coexistence of beekeeper and bee holds a profound secret—one that, when grasped, enhances the appreciation of this marvel crafted by nature. Tamar is precisely this kind of beekeeper.

Following an extensive quest, Tamar has established her bee haven in the village. Nestled in the mountains of Christes, within an ecologically pristine environment isolated from other beekeepers, this location boasts abundant biodiversity, endowing “Christes Honey” with unparalleled taste qualities.

Typically, consumers purchase packaged products, assessing taste, color, scent, and texture without insight into the realms where bees and beekeepers roam. “Christ’s Honey” stands as an exception, unfolding the narrative of beehives bathed in the golden rays of the sun, sharing the beauty of the surroundings, the mystical fragrance, and the dedication of the beekeeper’s craft.

I highly recommend acquainting yourself with Tamar, visiting this celestial abode without disrupting the bees’ serenity, and indulging in the experience of tasting and acquiring “Honey of Christ.”

The annual honey harvest averages 1000 kg, and it is available for purchase online or on-site in Oni, village Kommandeli and in Tbilisi, near Orbeliani Square.

The honey is meticulously packaged in glass jars of various sizes. For orders, on-site delivery is feasible across the entirety of Georgia.



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ANZOR (ANRI) CHALADZE – “DISCOVER LUKHUMI TOURS”



Anzor (Anri) is a 28-year-old young man residing in Ambrolauri Municipality, Likhumi Valley, in the village of Abari. Two years ago, he embarked on his entrepreneurial journey in the field of tourism services, curating tours in the picturesque Likhumi Valley. Anri serves as a guide, offering tourists a variety of experiences, including hiking, trekking, educational excursions, horse riding, and off-road adventures. His profound love for the beauty of his homeland is evident, and he passionately shares this love with the tourists he guides.

Additionally, Anri is a honey producer, providing tourists with access to ecologically clean “Likhumi honey” for those interested in exploring local products.



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HOTEL – ELLEN MUSHKURIANI “FORREST DREAM”

In Lechkhumi, nestled just 2 kilometers from Tsageri, along the banks of Tskhenistskali rests the picturesque village of Doghura, cradled by towering mountains. The village exudes an air of enchantment, with its homes seemingly veiled by the surrounding forest, offering an ethereal allure to passersby. As you venture away from this verdant stage, an enchanting world unfurls before you, beckoning you into its mystical embrace.

Along the winding path, you encounter the remnants of bygone days — ancient, abandoned houses whispering tales of yore. Despite the short distance, each step feels like a journey, as if time itself has slowed. Then, amidst the dappled sunlight filtering through the trees, a figure emerges — a maiden with cascading golden curls and eyes that shimmer with warmth. It is Ellen, the gracious hostess of “Forest Dream,” who welcomes you with open arms, enveloping you in her realm of tranquility.

“I’ve always yearned to create a sanctuary where people can reconnect with nature,” Ellen shares with a smile. “Forest Dream” embodies this vision, seamlessly blending the rustic charm of a traditional Georgian dwelling with the comforts of modern living. Crafted entirely from wood, the house boasts a lower section fashioned from the timeworn beams of a century-old Svanuri house. The pièce de résistance is the fireplace, crafted from ancient, intricately carved stones, while the balcony showcases traditional Svan motifs meticulously etched into the woodwork.

Yet, the true magic of “Forest Dream” lies in its sustainability — powered entirely by solar panels, it stands as a testament to harmony with the natural world. Surrounded by lush forest and offering vistas of the riverbank, it exudes an aura of serenity. In the morning, the melodious chirping of birds fills the air, while the aroma of freshly brewed coffee mingles with the scent of pine. As evening falls and snow blankets the landscape, the glow of “Forest Dream’s” lamp offers a beacon of warmth and solace against the wintry darkness.

“And how many will be joining you?” Ellen inquires, her eyes brimming with hospitality. “Only 8 guests can experience the magic of ‘Forest Dream’ at a time, ensuring an intimate and unforgettable retreat.”

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IRINA KONDRATIEVA

Irina Kondratieva's guest house is situated in the heart of Lentekhi, nestled in the lower Svaneti region. This charming establishment offers three cozy bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor of a century-old house, complete with Wi-Fi access, affordable prices and hosted by warm and welcoming hosts. The guest house provides picturesque views of the Lentekhi mountains and the surrounding mixed forests, particularly stunning during the enchanting months of May and October.

The serene ambiance of the mountain river, Tskhenistskal, whispers softly through the night, imbuing a sense of tranquility as if the river itself is watching over guests, ensuring a peaceful slumber. Irina Kondratieva, the gracious host, hails from Ukrainian heritage, now in her third generation in Lentekhi. The story of her Ukrainian grandparents is both poignant and romantic, marked by the tragic events of the "Holodomor" in 1932-33.

Driven by adversity, Irina's grandparents embarked on a perilous journey from Ukraine to Georgia, where fate brought them together in Tbilisi. Eventually settling in Lentekhi, they toiled tirelessly, with Irina's grandfather earning widespread respect for his dedication to cattle breeding while her grandmother upheld the household with grace. Despite facing hardships, herself, Irina persevered, raising her two children single-handedly.

Irina embodies the resilience of both Ukrainian and Georgian spirits, showcasing the warmth and hospitality ingrained in both cultures. As one of the finest hosts in Kvemo Svaneti, Irina ensures her guests feel at home, offering traditional Svanuri dishes and delightful surprises, always expressing heartfelt gratitude for their visit.

The Irina Kondratieva Hotel stands as a testament to the harmonious blend of affordability and quality within a century-old residence. However, due to the region's harsh winter conditions, Irina refrains from hosting guests during this time.

Top of Form

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TEMUR AND ELENE GUGESHASHVILI HOTEL “ARTIST’S HOUSE”



The family-run “Artist’s House” hotel is nestled in the heart of Oni, Racha, set against the backdrop of a serene forest in a tranquil and inviting location.

“Artist’s House” offers a diverse range of services, featuring eight well-appointed rooms, two dining areas with fireplaces, a comfortable living room, a cellar adorned with pitchers, an art gallery, a stone collection, and a workshop for art masterclasses. To immerse guests in the breathtaking beauty of Racha, the hotel organizes tours to explore waterfalls, lakes, glacier caves, and other enchanting locales.



The hotel’s service extends to a delightful three-course meal, presenting delectable dishes from both traditional Rachuli and Georgian cuisines. What sets the “Artist’s House” apart is the genuine warmth of its welcoming atmosphere, overseen by a gracious hostess and a distinguished family patriarch. The hotel is also available for hosting personal and group exhibitions featuring local and international artists.

“Artist’s House” is not just a haven for relaxation but also an ideal venue for organizing parties and events, be it indoors or outdoors, depending on the season. Here, guest preferences and individual needs are prioritized to ensure a memorable and tailored experience for every visitor.



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“LENTEKHI MOUNTAIN INN”

The attention of visitors heading to Kvemo Svaneti, Lentekhi, will undoubtedly be drawn to the modern cottage nestled in the mountains on the left side of the Tskhenis Tskali river, high up in the mountains. At first glance, it may seem like just another contemporary trend, but a visit to the “Lentekhi Mountain Hotel” reveals a unique blend of Svanuri and Megruli hospitality, deeply rooted in local traditions rather than modernity.

The owners of the hotel, Nino Fetelava, abandoned her successful career in Tbilisi to follow her husband to Lentekhi. Forced to leave Gali at the age of 2 due to the war in Abkhazia, Nino had forged her future in Tbilisi, where she served as the purchasing manager for a thriving company. However, her husband’s love for Svaneti was unwavering.

Drawn by the allure of Svaneti, Nino, once an unemployed girl from Tbilisi, was captivated by the region, her family’s ancestral home, and the sprawling landscape. She decided to transform this passion into a business venture. With the support of her husband and mother-in-law, Nino embarked on the journey of establishing a family hotel in their spacious residence. Two years ago, they expanded their enterprise by constructing a cottage through the “Enterprise Georgia” grant project.

Today, the “Lentekhi Mountain Hotel” can accommodate 8-9 guests in the main house and an additional 4-6 guests in the cottage simultaneously. The hotel is meticulously furnished and equipped with all amenities necessary for the comfort of its guests. Most notably, it offers a catering service featuring traditional Svanuri dishes crafted primarily from locally sourced ingredients. Additionally, guests have the option to partake in culinary masterclasses. Information about the hotel is readily available on www.booking.com and www.googlemap.com.



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Instagram: https://instagram.com/lentekhi_mountain_inn?igshid=NzZlODBkYWE4Ng%3D%3D&utm_source=qr

Web.: <https://lentekhimountaininn.ehotelspace.com/>



“MARGVELIDZE WINERY”



People interested in Racha’s ethnography and wine culture can have a remarkable experience at “Margvelidze Winery,” situated in the village of Sadmeli, Ambrolauri district. The winery features a two-century-old cellar and a house built in 1925, which now serves as a guesthouse-style hotel. Visitors to this charming establishment can savor local wines paired with delicious traditional dishes in an authentic ethnic ambiance. Additionally, guests have the opportunity to purchase homemade delicacies such as Chireuli, Jams, Tklapi, and Rachuli ham on-site.

The Margvelidze family’s winemaking tradition dates back to the 19th century. What began as a family practice evolved into a full-fledged business in 2014. Today, in addition to offering accommodations in their 7-room guesthouse, the winery welcomes both Georgian and international tourists, including visitors from America and various European countries, during the tourist season. The cellar and the traditional Rachuli house, as they stand today, represent a harmonious blend of old-world charm and modern comforts, curated by the family’s seventh generation. This unique synthesis tells the story of the region’s history and presents different eras as a cohesive narrative within one family.

To locate the winery, simply search for “Margvelidze Winery” on Google Maps. For wine tastings and delightful Rachuli dinners, advance reservations are recommended. Mariam, along with her grandfather, oversees the operations of the winery and will provide English-speaking guidance during your visit. They are eager to share the rich history of their family and the traditional art of winemaking and viticulture with all who visit.



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FAMILY WINERY “ILIASEULI”



Winemaking was not a traditional pursuit for Ilia’s family. Ilia’s father primarily focused on selling grapes grown on the family estate. Like many of his generation, he was more interested in selling grapes than in producing wine.



However, in 2014, Ilia and his brother became the first in the family to venture into winemaking. This decision was spurred by the growing popularity of wine tourism and the increasing number of tourists visiting Racha with a keen interest in local wines from both the post-Soviet region and various countries in Europe and beyond.

Tourists engaged in wine tourism were eager to taste wines from different vintages and to meet the winemakers themselves, often wanting to observe or even participate in the winemaking process. Fortunately, the brothers had certain advantages: they possessed their own cellar, maintained at the optimal temperature for wine production and storage, and had a space where they could host guests. Moreover, their entrepreneurial background since childhood equipped them with the necessary knowledge to embark on this new venture.



Their focus was on local grape varieties that are prominent in Racha’s viticulture and winemaking: the reds, Alexandrouli and Mujuretuli, and the whites, Rachuli Green and Tsojikouri. Not afraid to experiment, the brothers also sought out forgotten varieties such as Rachuli Safere (distinct from Saperavi), resulting in intriguing wines.

Today, the “Family Winery of Iliaseuli” boasts a decade-long wine cellar offering tastings of dry and semi-dry wines crafted using various techniques to suit diverse palates. Visitors are treated to a fascinating journey through the cellar-museum, where artifacts from the Eneolithic era are preserved. Hosted by the knowledgeable proprietor, this experience unveils the intriguing historical narratives of Rion Valley’s prehistoric culture.



A visit to the “Family Winery of Iliaseuli” is a must-see experience! You simply have to try it and feel the essence of Racha’s winemaking heritage firsthand.

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TRADITIONAL RACHULI CUISINE TEKLA JANELIDZE “TEONA YANO”

AMSO
ASGM



“Tone Yano” is situated in the yard of the family home in the village of Bostana, Ambrolauri municipality, nestled in the enchanting region of Racha Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti. Just 7 km from the center of Ambrolauri and approximately 5 km from Ambrolauri airport, our location offers easy accessibility via a well-maintained driveway.

We extend an invitation to our guests to partake in a variety of immersive experiences, including masterclasses on traditional Thonis Lobiani (bean pie) preparation, participation in the crafting of authentic Rachuli dishes and winemaking, all amidst the serene backdrop of our natural environment. Our property boasts domestic fowl, vineyards of Alexandrouli and Mujuretuli grapes, a flourishing vegetable garden, and an array of natural produce grown on-site.

Guests have the opportunity to engage in the culinary process, from baking Tonis Lobiani in the traditional manner to harvesting fresh ingredients from the garden. Depending on the season, they can also join in the wine pressing process and sample our freshly pressed wines. For those interested, we offer performances of traditional folklore, along with the chance to unwind and soak in the breathtaking vistas and crisp mountain air.

What sets us apart is the comprehensive range of services we offer, a unique offering not found elsewhere in our region. The inspiration for our venture stemmed from our family’s passion and expertise in this field. Our mother, a seasoned professional, is often sought after for her baking masterclasses at local and regional events. Encouraged by our natural surroundings and culinary talents, we decided to transform our home into a haven for tourists, and we are delighted with the results thus far. We take pride in the fact that our guests consistently depart fulfilled and enthralled by their experiences.

For the optimal experience, we recommend visiting “Tone Yano” during the spring and autumn months, when our services can be enjoyed amidst the openness of the outdoors.

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INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/toneiano?igsh=NTc4MTIwNjQ2YQ==>





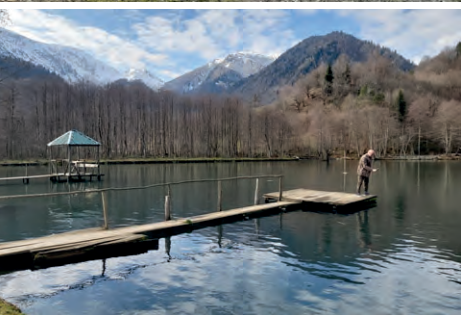
TROUT FARM – KAKHA (BAKHVA) GASVIANI “GREEN LAKE”

“In the area now known as ‘Green Lake’, what once stood as an impenetrable forest and marsh has been transformed. Driven by Kaha’s profound love for fishing and his vision of the site’s potential, he was compelled to convert this land into a trout farm. It began modestly with a single pond. Kaha manually engineered a hydroelectric power source, introduced a batch of 3000-500 rainbow trout fingerlings, only to face initial failure as they perished.

Despite numerous setbacks and moments of doubt, his dedication and the vivid landscape he envisioned spurred him on, gradually overcoming obstacles with renewed vigor and determination. This venture was initiated in 2005, a time when internet access and information were scarce commodities. Kaha, however, diligently acquired a foundational understanding of trout farming through various means, gradually enhancing his expertise through relentless experimentation and observation.

Today, Kaha not only successfully breeds fingerlings but also produces eco-friendly feed for the fish. His primary aim is to achieve sustainable bio-fish production, dedicating all efforts towards the advancement of bio-aquaculture. The natural habitat of the trout, in mountain waters protected from diseases and with a constant temperature of 9 degrees Celsius year-round, negates the need for additional feed supplements, thus promoting the shift towards organic farming.

Green Lake is more than just a haven for fish; it offers unique experiences for tourists as well. Facilities include two well-appointed cottages capable of hosting up to 32 guests, a dining area, and the organization of various events such as weddings, birthdays, and corporate retreats. Activities like water biking, boating, fishing, cross-country skiing, hiking, and horseback riding tours with certified guides are available. Annually, the farm produces between 15-20 tons of fish, operating 11 fully-equipped ponds that allow year-round production, with sales conducted directly or through distributors. However, tourist services are seasonal, with limited availability during the winter months.”



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CHEESE – NUNU AKHVLEDIANI COOPERATIVE “CHRELA”



Everything began from St. Maximus the Confessor Monastery. The monastery’s elder, Father Tsothe, had a connection with Mr. Zurab Papuashvili - a leading specialist in dairy production. Mr. Zurab visited Lechkhumi and noted the absence of any dairy processing facilities in the area. He offered assistance if there was interest in establishing such a facility on their own village territory. The village, primarily engaged in agriculture, had all the prerequisites, and several residents decided to start cheese production. In 2017, the women of the village united around this idea and formed the cooperative “Chrela 2017.”



The “Chrela 2017” cooperative is located in the village of Lasuriani, Tsageri municipality. It owns an agricultural farm with 242 cattle, a dairy processing plant with a capacity of 2-3 tons, and 412 hectares of pasture land on a 25-year lease. The cooperative processes pastures and hay with its own agricultural machinery. The facility is equipped with the HACCP standard, has its own laboratory, and continuously focuses on diversifying its product range.

Alongside traditional Imeretian cheese and sulguni, the cooperative produces artisanal cheese. These artisanal cheeses are made with a unique, proprietary technology and enjoy popularity among gourmets in Georgia as well as visitors from abroad - cheese lovers. The secret of “Chrela’s” artisanal cheese lies in the nuances of Lechkhumi’s pastures, giving it a distinctive flavor.



Initially, the cooperative operated under household conditions and couldn’t meet the regional demand for cheese. Later, within the ENPARD project’s framework, “Chrela 2017” was provided with a dairy processing line. The construction of the factory was financed with their own resources, meeting all standards for cleanliness. In addition to its own livestock, the cooperative has the right to process 30% of the milk from the local population, which is a significant relief for local residents and also facilitates increased production.

Nunu Akhvlediani is the heart and soul of the cooperative. Every program or project in which the cooperative participates is initiated by Ms. Nunu. She writes the projects and leads others by example. Through hard work, all members contribute tirelessly, though Ms. Nunu is responsible for quality and standards in production and livestock. Sometimes she says it’s a challenging and laborious task, but she is also delighted that everyone works together, inspiring others to join the cooperative. She is most pleased that the women of her village have found their own enterprise.

The cooperative prepares products based on advance orders. During the winter season, it’s possible to process an average of 500 liters of milk per day. Customers should contact the cooperative to place orders, and distribution is done through distributors.



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HOTEL, ETHNO-CULINARY KHATUNA GHURCHUMELIDZE “ONCE UPON A TIME IN NASPERI”



Khatuna lives in the village of Nasperi, which belongs to the Gviri community in Lechkhumi. This beautiful village is known for its ancient historical sites: In village Lebia there are remnants of ancient Kolkhic ceramics from the 8th-5th millennia BC; In village Iskelita - a chapel from the Byzantine period, the church of Assumption of Virgin Mary and the Inasaridze’s castle from the 18th-19th centuries. Nasperi is also referred to as a land of legends - the field of Septaria is an extraordinary sight, formed over tens of millions of years during the Jurassic period. After Khatuna, a single mother with three young children, returned to her paternal home, she decided to create a perfect farm. Khatuna’s journey as an entrepreneur began in 2020 when Mr. Bondo Khetsuriani and Anuki Kanteladze accidentally learned about the beauty and diversity of Khatuna’s farming. Mr. Bondo then visited her and even invited her to a festival. For Khatuna, it was the first-time presenting products harvested from her farm, made according to the oldest recipes, homemade Ajika, spices, and cheese, to the broader public. Until then, she had sold products only to meet the minimal needs of her children, without considering turning it into a business. The festival exceeded expectations - Khatuna broke sales records, won an award for successful entrepreneurship, and began considering turning her activity into a business. She increased production, with her children’s help, and as she became well-known, her sales also increased. At the Oni festival in 2021, where she was again invited, she met Ketevan Kvichidze, a gastro-tourism specialist. Together, they planned a visit with French culinary expert Eric Boiard to Khatuna’s farm. They visited, and Khatuna started working on the project “Georgian-French Culinary Roots” with them. Since then, Khatuna hasn’t missed the opportunity to record the oldest culinary recipes from the oldest residents of the community. This became her new mission, to revive authentic Lechkhumian flavors by starting to cultivate plants mentioned in these recipes in her farm. It was a challenging journey, but she learned about seed acquisition, storage, processing, and created her own “seed bank”. Today, these seeds are planted in her farm. During the COVID pandemic, when people from Tbilisi sought refuge in the countryside, Khatuna organized a campaign, giving away unique local seeds for free, enabling them to revive authentic Lechkhumian agricultural cultures. She actively participated in various social projects. Through the “Taso” foundation project, she underwent training and became a community worker in the Gviri community. During her mission, the community financed five women, who are still active entrepreneurs today. With the “Taso” foundation’s help during the pandemic, Khatuna worked voluntarily to distribute humanitarian aid in the community, giving it to needy families living there.

Today, Khatuna offers visitors accommodation in ancient Lechkhumian houses made of wood and stone. Both houses have bedrooms designed for 11 guests, with bathrooms and showers. There’s also an outdoor bathroom and shower in the yard. If guests wish, Khatuna provides catering with only local products, and guests can also cook with ingredients from Khatuna’s farm: use vegetables, dairy products, poultry, etc. Visitors have the opportunity to participate in daily agricultural activities, food preparation, cheese making, pickling, seasonal mushroom picking, and more. Additionally, Khatuna produces and sells spices, Ajika, cheese, yogurt, butter, chicken, duck, corn flour, and natural tea, among others. Products can be purchased on-site and ordered for delivery. The producer herself ensures the delivery of products to the customer.

Location: Village Nasperi, Ghvirishi Community, Tsageri Municipality, Lechkhumi

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GURIA REGIONAL BRAND - “HOME OF LIFE”



In 1892, impresario Thomas Oliver, a representative of the famous American showman Buffalo Bill, visited Georgia, specifically Batumi, with the task of selecting horses for the “Wild West Show.” Ten Gurli horse riders were chosen, and from that point until 1917, 150 Gurli horse riders participated in the “Wild West Show,” including women.

As part of the “Analytical Catalog of Manuscripts” project by the National Archive of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, 300 manuscripts have been described according to the new standard. Among them, several dozen manuscripts, wills, and notes relate to the ongoing construction and educational activities in Guria, including the library of Georgian manuscripts founded by Simon Khoridze in the village of Tskaltsminda and the Georgian school established there.

The presence of Guria and Gurulis is documented in the photo archive of the Nikoloz Sagaradze collection and in the photo albums of Konstantine Zanis. For more information about Guria, please visit:

<https://georgia.travel/regions/guria>

<https://tourguide.ge/places-to-visit/georgia/guria/>





Guruli riders:

<https://georgia.travel/ka/%E1%83%A5%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%97%E1%83%95%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98-%E1%83%9B%E1%83%AF%E1%83%94%E1%83%93%E1%83%A0%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98-%E1%83%92%E1%83%A3%E1%83%A0%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98-%E1%83%90%E1%83%9B%E1%83%94%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%99%E1%83%90%E1%83%A8%E1%83%98>

გურული მეფუტკრეები და გურული სკა ფოტოები დაცულია საქართველოს ეროვნულ არქივში



TRADITIONAL CRAFT BICHIKO CHKHAIDZE KVEVRI



The village of Atsana, where Bichiko Chkhaide lives and runs his own business, has long been known for its master potters. Bichiko's father was also a follower of this craft. An extraordinarily talented man, he was not only a master potter but also worked with wood, was a skilled blacksmith, and a builder. He never shied away from teaching Bichiko everything he knew, hoping that at least one craft would stick. After living in Tbilisi for 14 years during his student years, Bichiko only returned to the village in 2010 to join his father in the nearly lost art of pottery. While his father could create any object on a whim, Bichiko needed detailed drawings, precise measurements, and only then would he begin working. Pottery required knowledge; clay is like silk—if “tamed” improperly, the entire piece could collapse. By this time, only two masters remained in the entire village: Bichiko's father and a neighbor, an old man. As interest in traditional Gurian winemaking grew, so did the demand for traditional Gurian pitchers. Bichiko decided to turn this activity into a family business. He sources his clay (raw material) from the well-known “Sakrametis” quarry in the village of Aketi. He might be the only one left who knows the secrets of pottery. Despite the labor-intensive and exhausting nature of the work, when you see how each layer adds more to the roll, it energizes you. After finishing, the firing process begins in a kiln built by his own hands. This is another tense and nerve-wracking stage—you never know if the kiln will yield the products intact. The joy is indescribable when, after 2-3 days and nights of sleepless anticipation, your creations—pitchers, jars, wine vessels, pots—emerge intact and perfect from the kiln. For Bichiko, this is not just a business; it connects him with his ancestors and he takes pride in being the sole master of traditional Gurian pottery, keeping and revitalizing this ancient art. Today, Bichiko produces various-sized jars, pitchers, pots, and wine vessel heads, aiming to diversify and enrich his assortment.

Due to the technology involved, the best period for production is from May to October. The maximum volume of pottery is 1000 liters. Purchases are made to order, and it's possible to negotiate the delivery of the finished product on site.

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WINE – MEPARISHILI CELLAR “BEKAS WINE”



The house where Beso Meparishvili now lives with his wife Marika Shoshashvili and their three extraordinary children belonged to his grandparents. The grandparents' yard was known for its vineyard of various Gurian grape varieties, and beneath the large walnut trees, a traditional Gurian marani (wine cellar) with pitchers was set up. Beso was very young at that time and does not remember the grape varieties his grandfather had, but he fondly recalls “Chkhaveri” and “Aladasturi.” During the “nut boom” in Guria, vineyards were massively uprooted, including those in his grandfather's yard, as the walnut trees were cut down for timber, giving way to winemaking and viticulture. His grandfather was reluctant to replace the vineyard, but his father opposed him, saying, “Vineyards require a lot of care, if you really want, we could sell the nuts and buy wine barrels instead.” After finishing high school, Beso returned to the village and met a young man named Dato Kobidze, who was eager to build a vineyard, earning him the nickname “Abdali” (a local jargon meaning stupid) among the locals, because of his seemingly unprofitable endeavor at the time. Beso was skeptical, but deep down, he too doubted Dato's venture's success. During the land reform, Beso was allocated a plot for experimental farming, which previously yielded various grape varieties. The family began cultivating the land. One day, Beso and Dato accidentally walked past this plot. Dato exclaimed in amazement, “The owner of this plot must be out of his mind to waste this soil on silica.” Beso revealed it was his, and that very evening, Dato brought 300 Chkhaveri vine cuttings. The family was in shock, taken aback by Beso's decision. Everyone was against it: “You can't be a winemaker and work the land.” Only the grandfather, an 80-year-old man, wholeheartedly supported Beso. The motivation was high—he had to prove to everyone that he could do it! Andro Vashalomidze also offered advice. During this time, Andro handed over Gurian vine cuttings for one of his projects, gifting Beso 1000 “Chkhaveri” and 100 “Chumuta” vine cuttings. Leading up to the vineyard's fruition took so much time, energy, and finances that Beso decided to sell the grapes, but, like a meteor from the sky, Dato Kobidze dropped in, bringing bottles, cork stoppers, and even offered barrels, promising to help with the winemaking. The Meparishvili vineyard story begins in 2013, the same year Beso's son, Beka, was born, and the wine was aptly named “Beka's Wine.” The first wine was barreled in 2018. From 2019, “Beka's Wine” first made its way to export in the USA, in a Georgian restaurant. Dato constantly oversaw Beso, giving him no chance for rest, and one night after a feast, slightly buzzed, they broached the topic of building a marani. By morning, a decision was made to construct Beso's marani. The pandemic posed a serious threat to Beso's business, but again, with Dato's help, the wine was exported to the USA and Australia. Today, Beso jokes, “Fate smiled at me, guiding me along the path trodden by Dato, my mentor.”

Meparishvili's marani is a member of the “Natural Wine Association,” producing both traditional and European technology-based red, white, and rosé “Chkhaveri,” “Tsolikouri,” and “Chumuta.” “Beka's Wine” can be purchased on-site and online. In case of an order, the producer personally ensures delivery throughout Georgia.

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WINE – DAVIT KOBIDZE “THE KOBIDZE’S MARANI (CELLAR)”



After graduating from the Technical University, Davit returned to the village in the difficult '90s. His parents were already elderly, he had a beloved girl and wanted to start a family, but there was no income; agriculture was not profitable, and he started thinking about starting his own business. Today, in the yard of the Kobidze family, stands a towering vine of “Chkhaveri,” over 150 years old, planted by Davit’s great-grandfather - Glakhuna Kobidze. Previously, when Davit’s father went to prune, he would cut down the tree that the vine was twined around, causing the vine to stoop. Davit’s father had a special bond with this vine: he would nurture it, talk to it, and caress it as if it were a bridge connecting him to his ancestors, and Davit too looked at the remaining “Chkhaveri” vine with this sentiment. By that time, “Chkhaveri” was almost extinct in Guria; nobody was cultivating it. This vine became the inspiration for Davit’s new venture; he proposed to his father to multiply the vine, but was refused: “You’ll go back to Tbilisi, and then it’ll be just my headache.” Davit sought help and advice from everyone, but was consistently turned down. Finally, one uncle, a vine and wine enthusiast, offered his help, and in 1996, they began to care for the multiplication, and in 1997, Davit planted his first vineyard. He tirelessly tended to the vine for 5 years and harvested his first yield in 2001. When his father and brother saw, that Davit was not going to give up on his “experiment,” they supported him, and eventually, the entire “Kobidze family” involved, making Davit’s family one of the first to start planting “Chkhaveri” with 40 vines at that time. The vineyard’s yield was exceptionally good, initially intended for wine. However, nobody wanted wine or grapes, and nobody believed in his business idea, until the “nut boom” began in Guria. Davit’s nut trees were cut down, and in their place, he planted a vineyard. Nobody dared to speak to his face, but everyone criticized him behind his back - he had “gone mad,” what did he need “Chkhaveri” for? But Davit didn’t collapse! He took his first wine yield to the capital for sale, where such wine had been forgotten since the Soviet era, produced in small quantities for the “elite.” Only one person offered to buy the wine, and so he sold the first 200 liters. Davit devoted himself to building new vineyards, as if he couldn’t see a future. In 2009, a winemaker, Zurab Topuridze, liked Davit’s vineyard and offered to buy the grapes. This marked the beginning of the search and restoration of indigenous varieties. A good man and agricultural specialist, Korneli Kukulava, offered Davit to “revive” local vine varieties. Thus, began Davit’s career as an ampelologist. From 2013, together with his brother Tato Kobidze, they founded “Kobidze’s Marani” and started building a collection of unique Gurian vine varieties. Today, his vineyards and collection contain nearly 20 ancient Gurian varieties, producing raw materials available for any enthusiast. “Kobidze’s Marani” wines, leading with “Chkhaveri,” “Aladasturi,” “Saperavi,” “Ojaleshi,” are members of the “Natural Wine Association.” His wines are exported to America, Australia, France, Germany, Portugal, Taiwan, and Lithuania. “Kobidze’s Marani” wines can be purchased on-site and in Tbilisi at “G-vino Underground,” “Vin Boutique,” “G Vino,” “Suliko,” and tasted at the restaurant “Daphna.” A special and limited product is “Ancestors’ Wine,” made from the harvest of the 150-year-old “Chkhaveri” vine.



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TEA ROUTE, FAMILY GUESTHOUSE, ETHNIC CUISINE, WINE AND OLD FAMILY STORIES

LIKA MEGRELADZE

“KOMLI”



“Komli” is a Georgian word for a rural homestead. It comes from the word for “smoke” and implies a family hearth where the fire is lit and the house is lively. Lika Megreladze’s “Komli” is an authentic Gurian homestead with a 150 year-old oda-house, a vineyard of unique Gurian varieties, authentic cuisine, tea and bamboo gardens. Here one will find a variety of characteristic items of the Gurian way of life: traditional Ketsi, a stone-carved pan used for baking traditional corn-breads and Gurian cheese-pies; Chamuri (stone mortar) used for crushing millet and other local grains, Tcharika (large wine pitcher), remains of ancient wine cellar and much more. But, more importantly, this homestead is alive and a place where ancient traditions and stories are made vibrant in a family setting.

“Komli” offers unique accommodations to its guests: immense wine barrels transformed into cozy glamping stays. Following the “farm to table” principle, here guests can order traditional Gurian dishes made from home-grown organic vegetables and home-made wine and tea tastings. Guests can also schedule masterclasses on Gurian cuisine, tea-making and wine-making, book in depth tours to hear the story of tea in Georgia as well as the family stories which echo the troubles of the 19th and 20th centuries. Most importantly, the guests of “Komli” have an opportunity to meet the three generations of joyful women-hosts madly in love with Guria, its ancient traditions and who make these traditions and stories come alive for their guests.

Lika’s mother, husband and two daughters help her to manage and develop “Komli.” For Lika, her greatest achievement is the awakening of her community through the example of “Komli” and her new young friends, team-members, partners who support and strengthen each other and often gather to discuss the future development of the region.

Most importantly, for the members of “Komli”, protecting their environment is an uncompromisable principle. This is attested by the newly built eco-friendly earth and straw house and a septic system, which are rare in Georgia. “Komli” is alive! Lika and her children enable their “Komli’s” life to continue and keep telling its story.

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WINE, DRIED FRUIT, JAMS, TRADITIONAL CRAFT, ORAL HISTORIES MAVRA TSERTSVADZE “ARMUNJI”



The Chokhatauri Municipality's village of Goraberezhoulis hosts a dendrological park and a 17th-century castle-fortress, where the oldest amphoras have been preserved. From these amphoras, wine was produced using various endemic grape varieties, specific to the Guria region. The family of Mavra Tsereteli and Guram Tkesheladze resides closest to this fascinating tourist location. After learning about the castle's histories, visitors often expressed a desire to taste the local wines, a desire that often remained unfulfilled. Seeing this as an opportunity, the industrious couple decided to revive the Gurian grape varieties. In 2012, they began planting interesting grape varieties that, according to sources, were used to make wine in these ancient wells. The family's ancestral, centuries-old 0.5-hectare vineyard plot was equipped with a wine cellar, traditional winepress, chacha distillery, and other facilities, reviving the winemaking traditions established by their ancestors.

It's important to note that even in 2012, Guram and Mavra planned the vineyard layout so that it would be accessible for those working with a plough. They started step by step and continue to this day, tirelessly working towards the development and production of high-quality products. Currently, the family's oldest vineyard is under restoration. The wines of Mavra and Guram are bottled. The wines made of the following sorts of grapes and their combinations hold a special place in their production: Tolikouri, Tsitska-Tsolikouri, Sakmiela, Otskhanuri Sapere, Jani, Klarjuli, Tskhilatubani, Chkhaveri.

The company "8000 Vintages" tasting commission highly rated Tkesheladze's wine, and their wines were stored on their own shelves. Interestingly, Jani, Skhilatubani, Sakmiela, and Klarjuli were among the first to be introduced to Tbilisi's wine shops (Wine Kiosk, Wine Gallery, etc.), reminding Tbilisians of the taste and aroma of newly made Gurian wines. "Armunji" wine is also being prepared for export. Turning wine production into a business presented the family with new needs - a tasting space where guests could be offered various accompaniments and experience an authentic Gurian environment during wine tasting. In 2019-2020, Mavra participated in women's economic empowerment projects and received micro financing, which helped diversify the business, creating the complex tourist location "Armunji." "Armunji" is an ancient Gurian word meaning genuine, waterless wine.

Mavra transformed the so-called preparation house in the yard into an interesting space for a new purpose: setting up a wine stand and tasting area, offering guests homemade preserves ("Mavra's Jam") and the opportunity to taste Gurian tea, all in an interior decorated with traditional ornaments. Besides wine and jams, visitors can purchase Georgian national costumes (Chokha and Qabalakhi) made by the family's ladies. The Gurian Qabalakhi is a particularly popular and interesting item, handcrafted and suitable for representatives of all genders. Learning about this family's history, which connects to the world map and describes the tragic life paths of its members, is incredibly fascinating.

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HOTEL, WINE, FOLK, TRADITIONAL CUISINE OF GURIA AVTO TURKIA “TANDILA’S WINE”, “FOLK-TOUR GURIA



After completing his studies at the Technical University, Avto returned to his village in Machkhvareti, within the Lanchkhuti municipality, during the difficult '90s. Avto, a spirited young Gurian man by heart and soul, is a professional singer and chanter. His entire life has been connected to Gurian and, broadly, Georgian folklore, which unsurprisingly also influenced his business. The idea of folklore tours was suggested by a friend – his large family home and its surroundings presented an excellent opportunity to host guests interested in folklore. Avto, a year before the pandemic, welcomed his first guests from Austria. He hosted them in true Gurian and his family tradition, taught them several Gurian chants and songs, showed them around Guria, and even organized masterclasses on uniquely traditional dishes. The guests were so impressed with Avto’s hospitality that they recommended his services, leading to a steady stream of folk-interested tourists. According to Avto, there’s nothing extraordinary in his guesthouse, no stars to boast of, but what captivates the tourists is the warmth of a family home and the genuine joy of hosting guests. This, combined with the unique Gurian folklore and a comprehensive cultural experience of Guria “from head to toe” over 5-7 days, makes for an unforgettable visit. Despite the pandemic’s impact on his newly started business, the last two years have seen uninterrupted groups from the UK, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Australia, and Austria. Local tourists also frequently visit Avto.



The vineyard was started with heartfelt passion. When Avto can’t focus on anything during rehearsals, the vineyard serves as an inspiration. Avto believes that every enemy fought the vineyard because it was integral to the Georgian man’s ability to think and reason. In 2014, Giorgi Vasalomidze’s son, who was also Avto’s lecturer, brought him the idea of building a vineyard. Until then, there was no tradition of viticulture and winemaking in the Turkia’s family. In 2015, Avto built his first vineyard in his yard with 80 vines of Tsolikouri. He worked the land by hand, cared for it, and harvested the next year. In 2020, he built a cellar, and today his yard boasts 200 vines of Tsolikouri and Sakmiela, with another 400 Sakmiela vines planted on his wife’s land. Avto practices entirely organic viticulture, avoiding synthetic fertilizers and systemic medicines, working daily in the vineyard, and producing “Tandila’s Wine” from Tsolikouri and Sakmiela grape varieties. Through self-education, interaction with the right people, and observation, Avto became an excellent winemaker. He believes that viticulture and winemaking have connected his service into a full circle, now even offering tours for tourists interested in Gurian wine.



Tasting and purchasing “Tandila’s Wine” is possible on-site, with orders available from May to September. Avto ensures delivery across all of Georgia. Currently, due to limited production, orders are restricted to the September-March period, with the wine available only to Avto’s guests from September to October.

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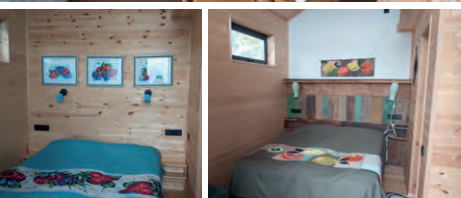
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DRIED FRUIT FACTORY, HOTEL, TRADITIONAL CUISINE OF GURIA, MASTERCLASSES, DOMESTIC TOURISM DAREJAN (DAKA) BERDZENISHVILI „SKIJI HOUSE”



Daka embarked on her entrepreneurial journey at 50, calling herself a product of the communist era. She graduated in 1989 and has since been an active participant in every protest on Rustaveli Avenue, contributing her part in the fight for Georgia's independence and European integration. Her career since the 90s spans various industries, having self-taught through informal education and training everything that was in demand in the market: media business, office management, sales management, design, and financial management. These skills were indeed crucial for the development of her own business, which was never a premeditated plan.

After her parents' death, Daka moved to Tbilisi for work. Her career there was as varied as it was rich, allowing her to meet people from different fields. Over time, the desire to return to the countryside grew stronger. Daka's spouse, also from Guria, resided in Tbilisi, yet the family frequently visited her spouse's parental home, which became the cradle for Daka's multifaceted business, starting from 2006. In 2015, they decided not to return to the city, marking the beginning of a new chapter. At this time, Daka was employed in the civil sector, possessing vast experience in financial reporting to donors. She resolved to leverage her knowledge, experience, network, her spouse's support, and the semi-abandoned family home to inject new life into it.

She began observing the existing opportunities, available resources, and decided to start producing dried fruit. She won her first grant through the "Enterprise Georgia" program and embarked on self-learning the technology of fruit drying. The business name, "Skiji," reflects this ancient Georgian tradition, meaning dried fruits or raisins. The grant was received in February; there were no more persimmons available, in addition a drying apparatus was hard to come by, she quickly substituted persimmons with seasonal mandarins and kiwis, while her spouse set up the apparatus. The result was exceptional - by 2016, Daka was sharing her success story on television as a triumphant businesswoman. This achievement not only uplifted Daka's spirits but also rallied her relatives and friends around her cause. This support wasn't financial but rather professional aid in areas like branding, design, and marketing materials, which Daka found invaluable.

Her first batch of 100kg of dried fruit was ready within a month and sold successfully. Following the dried fruit venture, a guesthouse was launched on the second floor of their house, featuring guest rooms and bathrooms, thereby beginning to host guests with traditional Gurian dishes and masterclasses in authentic Gurian cuisine. The business expanded to include the production of preserves, jams, and dried fruit candies, and she began considering setting up a modern standard factory right in her Gurian yard, complying with HACCP standards. In response to growing demand, the yard saw the addition of three themed wooden cottages designed with citrus, cherry, and currant motifs. Daka explored the surrounding environment and created pedestrian eco-tourist trails.

Daka's "Skiji House" has thus transformed into a sanctuary of Gurian tradition and culture. Everything there is authentically Gurian: the hospitality, raw materials and products, culinary practices and technologies, the house and its surroundings, and the production and tasting areas. Most importantly, Daka herself embodies the Gurian spirit through her talent, generosity, creativity, and resilience.

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HOTEL, TRADITIONAL CUISINE OF GURIA, ORAL HISTORY OF THE FAMILY INGA DUMBADZE “NIKO MAMASAKHLISI’S CELLAR”



Inga Dumbadze’s “Niko’s Family Winery” is a testament to how a series of events in a family can inspire and compel one to deeply explore their own family and ancestral history. Born and raised in Abkhazia, Inga’s father was involved in the partisan movement during the Abkhazian war. Following a heart attack, he had to leave the battlefield and engage in humanitarian work. Inga’s grandmother, Elizaveta Marshania, settled in Guria, became a widow early, and sent her only child, Inga’s father, to Kutaisi for education, later moving to Sukhumi with the help of her brother-in-law, Ioseb Marshania, where she established her family. Here, she married, raised children, and built a successful career, earning great respect among the Abkhazians and Gurians alike. Guests loved visiting the Dumbadzes, coming from Batumi, Guria, and Tbilisi. Inga grew up in this guest-loving environment, not knowing a night without guests even for a single day. While studying at the University of Abkhazia, Inga married Berdzenishvili, and the Dumbadze-Marshania families’ history now intertwined with the Berdzenishvili-Metaksis families’ stories. During the war, Inga and her husband still lived in Abkhazia, later returning to Berdzenishvili’s ancestral home in the village of Bagdati. Unfortunately, this return was profoundly difficult for Inga: unexpectedly widowed, she was left alone with two daughters. At the peak of loneliness and despair, her father reminded her that her grandmother had also been widowed early but persevered, though Inga wondered how education and intellect could substitute for her pain.

Years passed, and Inga decided to immerse herself in researching the stories of the Dumbadze-Berdzenishvili-Marshania-Metaksis families. With no elderly relatives left in the village to narrate the family tales, she queried parents, in-laws, and relatives, seeking and studying historical records, connecting with historians, scientists, and after years, compiled a comprehensive picture of these families with rich and interesting histories. Later, acquaintances asked to host foreign guests, which led to sharing these unique stories, becoming a matter of pride in hosting in such a traditional family. Hosting became a routine part of life in this large family. Six years ago, guides from Adjara’s tourism visited within the scope of an infotour. A few days later, one of the guides contacted her for hosting a Jewish family because a Russian-speaking guide couldn’t assist in Guria. After much insistence, Inga agreed to the offer, hosted them, introduced the family history, and returned them to the hotel in the evening. A satisfied client is better than any advertisement, and the next day, she received a booking from a group of 15 people. Inga realized transforming family culture and history into a tourist product was the right decision. Today, “Niko’s Family Winery” is a serene guesthouse located in a traditional Gurian hut, offering modern perspectives. Beyond relaxation, it allows planning events under the open sky: signing ceremonies with decorative art crafted by the hostess, photo sessions, background music; conferences and seminars, meetings for non-profit organizations complemented by coffee breaks and dinner parties.

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HOTEL, TRADITIONAL CUISINE OF GURIA, ORAL HISTORY OF THE FAMILY KESO MAKHARADZE “TABERNE IN GURIA”



The Chkhaidze family, currently led by Keso Makharadze, is where “Taberna Guria” is located today. Keso’s emotional attachment to this family began in 1994 when she and Nugzar Chkhaidze got married during the challenging ‘90s. Nugzar had entirely different plans, but the young couple returned to the Chkhaidze family’s ancestral home in village Atsana. Following the death of Nugzar’s grandparents, the Chkhaidze ancestral home was abandoned for 30 years. This three-decade period of “absence” led to the loss and damage of many unique items from the family. The Chkhaidzes were known for their intellectual potential, critical thinking, innovation, and consistent opposition to the stereotypes typical of their era. Such were Besarion and Joji Chkhaidze - the grandparents. In the over 150-year-old Gurian “Kukhna-house,” which still stands, the great-grandfather Ivane built it, living there with his wife Marta and their eight children. Besarion was the standout among these eight children. He completed his education in Kutaisi, was fluent in Russian and French, and was an entrepreneur, owning trading posts along the railway line from Imereti to Adjara. He was a veteran of five wars - WWI, the Brusilov Offensive on the Austrian front, the battles for Georgia’s independence (1918-1921), the fight for Batumi (1921), and the 1924 uprising. From 1937 to 1954, Besarion Chkhaidze was exiled to Siberia by the Soviet authorities. His story, as a distinguished Gurian, is preserved in the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia. During the exile years, the family was kept together by Joji, the grandmother, who also preserved the legacy. After her husband Nugzar’s death, Keso’s inspiration and motivation to implement the “Taberna Guria” business idea came precisely from Besarion’s and Joji’s lives. Keso packaged the Chkhaidze family history, remaining unique items, and ancient Gurian recipes into an intriguing and comprehensive tourist product and began welcoming guests. She was assisted in this venture by her two daughters. Despite challenges, she did not give up. Sometimes, during pessimistic times, she was steering at the old crutch of grandma Joji, filling up her with strength and resilience, a symbol of strength and power that remains by the old house’s door to this day. As the sole survivor of the third generation in the family, Keso Makharadze now leads the family in managing “Taberna Guria.” This establishment offers guests a 200-year-old family hosting experience: preparing/ traditional Gurian dishes in the “Kukhna-house” over a fire, viewing all preserved items and documentary materials, listening to history, sharing the tradition of Gurian hospitality, and spending nights by the hearth. A special dish at “Taberna Guria” is “brinjula,” so ancient that practically no one prepares it today. Keso Makharadze’s exceptional warmth, genuine love for guests, and her profound sense of responsibility towards the Chkhaidze family ensure that visitors leave with a uniquely memorable experience and cherished emotions.

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WATERMILL, TRADITIONAL CUISINE EKA SALUKVADZE “GURIAN HUT DOLABI”



Eka Salukvadze restored a 150-year-old watermill in her village, Likhauri, which once belonged to her great-grandfather, Platon Sulakvelidze. After Georgia’s independence from the Soviet regime, which had confiscated the mill from the family, Eka’s father and uncle reclaimed it, and her mother took over its operation. From a young age, Eka helped her mother in the mill, learning the entire process of maintaining and preserving the mill in working condition. The villagers were initially puzzled by the women’s interest in the mill, but the Salukvadze sisters never shied away from work and always stood by their parents in household and agricultural tasks.

Sadly, after the death of Eka’s father, her mother could no longer operate the mill, and it was closed. Eka always thought about reviving the mill. On one hand, there was a high demand in her village as the population had to travel to Ozurgeti to mill their flour. On the other hand, she had always been aware that milling was her ancestors’ occupation and saw it as a way to maintain a connection with them, not to mention the quality of the millstone-floured grain which is ground slowly, keeping the millstones cool and preserving the natural taste of the flour.

As a mother of three, Eka had many responsibilities, managing the household farm herself, being a beekeeper, and adding a new venture seemed daunting. Yet, her indefatigable love for work meant the challenge of reviving the mill did not deter her. Eka brilliantly embraced the role of a miller, and today, the Salukvadze mill is not just a facility for the villagers to mill their grain but also an intriguing tourist attraction where visitors can immerse themselves in the environment, witness the milling process, listen to the symphony of the mill stones, and enjoy a comfortable setting with a library provided for farmers to spend their waiting time interestingly.

Energetic and enthusiastic, Eka has plenty of ideas. Following the milling operation, she established a “Guruli Patskha Dolabi” (Gurian Traditional hut) in her backyard, about 100 meters from the mill. It offers guests traditional Gurian dishes made from products harvested from their farm and masterclasses. The hut, also 150 years old and located under a walnut tree, features stone plates for guests. This agrotourism space extends the joy received from the mill, offering an emotional continuation of satisfaction for guests. Lastly, an unusual day at the Salukvadze’s ends with the family’s singing, sharing their joy with visitors through music.

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HONEY – ZAZA TSINTSADZE “HONEY OF GURIAN BEE”



Following Georgia’s declaration of independence, the difficult 90s led to the shutdown of tea factories, which were primary employment sources in Guria. Zaza’s father, Nukri, who held a managerial position in one of these tea factories, was left jobless. Nukri tried to start his own business several times, including a mini-factory for processing “Nabeghlavi” mineral water and tea, but nothing was stable. Eventually, he decided to turn to beekeeping, despite having no experience in the field. However, since he was determined, he thoroughly researched this new direction. He consulted with professors and lecturers from the Faculty of Beekeeping-Apiculture at the Agricultural University, acquired extensive literature, and bought two families of bees. This marked the beginning of beekeeping in the Tsintsadze’s family. With enthusiastic labor, they acquired eight families in the first year, and by the third year, they had a hundred.



During this time, Zaza was a student. He tirelessly helped his father, studied, and gradually, this activity transformed into a family business. Despite producing high-quality and ecologically clean products, they struggled with sales. Honey stored in barrels sometimes remained unsold for 2-3 years. Zaza thought it over and decided to commercialize the honey, needing a food safety standard to ensure their products could reach store shelves. Zaza had to undergo many procedures. Finally, the family decided to take charge, with Zaza leading the family business. After successfully participating in the “Enterprise Georgia” grant program, they acquired additional bee families, necessary equipment for honey production, and started working on implementing the HACCP standard. Zaza also tirelessly worked towards the permanent certification of the enterprise and now produces honey that meets all national standards. The product is branded, priced, and labeled, opening the path to realization.



Despite being involved in this business for over 15 years, Zaza constantly seeks development, keeps up with new trends, and strives to make his products more appealing and tailored to consumer demands.

Zaza Cincadze’s beekeeping produces three types of honey: acacia, chestnut, and polyfloral, priced at 100ml – 150g, 200ml – 300g, and 720ml – 1000g in jars. The honey is available throughout the season and can be purchased at about 35 locations of the “Deli” market chain in Batumi and Kutaisi, with the option for online orders and delivery to customers. During visits, Zaza offers tastings in a specially arranged degustation space, actively participating in festivals and exhibitions.



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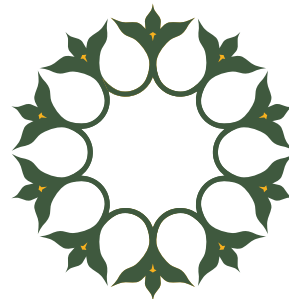
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