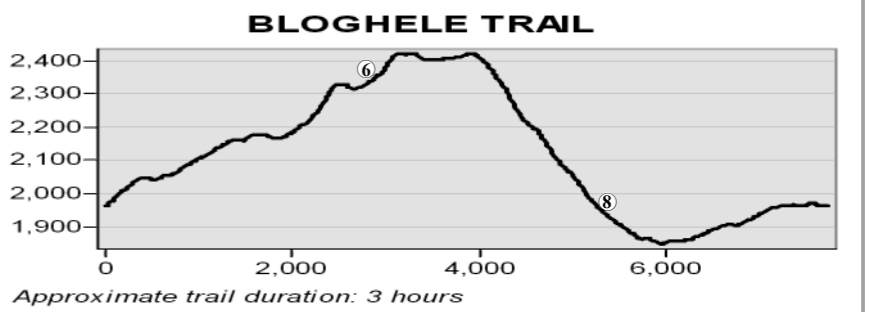
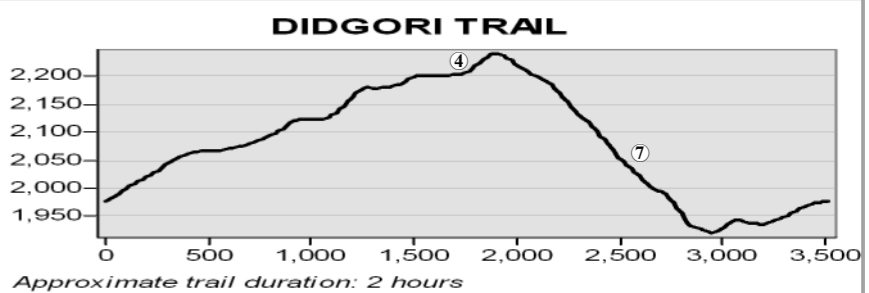


The map was designed in frame of the project Enhancement of Tourism Potential of Mountainous Regions in Georgia as a Means of their Development (donor Czech Development Agency, implementor Agora CE) 2017

ROSHKA TRAILS

LEGEND

- Mountain and Elevation
 - River
 - Local Road
 - Path
 - Buildings and Settled Area
 - Village
 - Abandoned Village
 - Topography
 - Forest Area
 - Grass Area
 - Shrine
 - Pass
 - Church
 - Rock
 - Guest Houses
-
- ### ROSHKA TRAILS
- Didgori trails** - Length: 3.5 km
Duration: 2 hours
- Bloghele trails** - Length: 6.9 km
Duration: 3 hours
- BLOGHELE TRAIL
 - DIDGORI TRAIL
 - Roshka (start/end point)
 - ① Sajorobo
 - ② Saeliao Klde
 - ③ Iakhsari Stone
 - ④ Sarokis Vake (plain)
 - ⑤ Arkovnis Sarevi
 - ⑥ Bloghele (2318 m)
 - ⑦ Pitsarklde
 - ⑧ Archangel (Mtavarangeloz)
 - Roshka (start/end point)
 - ① Sajorobo
 - ② Saeliao Klde
 - ③ Sadutsis Moedani
 - ④ Kvrivi
 - ⑤ Kardanaulta Sadgheobo
 - ⑥ Droshat Sabdzana
 - ⑦ Didgori St. George
 - ⑧ Gugulmanaklav Klde (rock)



If you are hiking from Juta Village in Sno Gorge (Khevi Region) to Khevsureti, after coping with a mountain pass next to Chaukhi peaks, you will definitely enjoy a one day rest in Roshka, one of the most scenic villages of Piraketa Khevsureti. If you are going to spend a weekend hiking with your family on alpine meadows with splendid vistas, than Roshka is one of the best options as well. It is well known for its famous hospitality of proud and friendly Roshkions and stay overnight in one of two guesthouses, to get acquainted with their excellent cuisine. Discover the village environment through several so far neglected, yet attractive trails. Roshka surroundings are equally rich in cultural and cultic traditions, as well as in the beauties of nature.

Piraketa Khevsureti

Roshka (app. 50 inhabitants, main family Tsiklauri) is one of the most vivacious villages in the Piraketa Khevsureti region. Historically, the mountainous region of Khevsureti was divided by the Greater Caucasus range in two halves: The northern one, called Pirikita (literally “on the other side of mountains”), whereas the southern part was referred to as Piraketa (literally “on this side of mountains”) Khevsureti.

Yet the alternative name for Pirikita Khevsureti – *Bude Khevsureti*, i.e. Core (“Nest”) Khevsureti, suggests that precisely this part along the Khevsureti Aragvi River and its tributaries was the place where the Khevsurs originated. The same fact is indicated by the presence of main Khevsur shrines in Core Khevsureti (Gudani and Khakhmati). Also, the most vigorous tradition bearers of East Georgian mountain syncretic religion are Khevsurs. In this cult, older traditions of venerated heroic deities intermingle with Christian saints, both prayed for the abundance and luck of the community. The Khevsurs were the bravest combatants among Georgian mountaineers and – maybe partly due to so many wounds delivered – the best folk chirurgs and healers as well.

Nevertheless, the extremely harsh natural conditions, blood feuds between the clans, self-sacrificing military duty for Georgian kings, insurrections against the Soviet regime, followed by forced resettlement to the lowlands lead to on-going depopulation of Piraketa Khevsureti. As a result, nowadays only 600 inhabitants live in 38 villages of Core Khevsureti, out of which 200 in the central village of Barisakho.

The region is visually dominated by the Chaukhi peaks (the highest one 3842 m). From 2018, Piraketa Khevsureti should become a part of the newly established Aragvi Protected Landscape.

ROSHKA TRAILS

Our routes are two circles starting and ending near the bridge and the spring in the center of Roshka Village. Either route can be easily done during one day stay in Roshka for light family hiking or during a rest before/after more demanding track to Abudelaury and Sno Valley.

Didgori Trail

From the bridge over Roshkis Khevi stream we walked for a while through the hiking route (which eventually leads to Abudelaury Lake). Above the bridge, we ascended to a small grassed plain called *Sajorobo*. Here, before the main Athengenoba feast, one of local family branches (the Kibalauris) performed the prayers for forgiveness of the sins, committed against deities (namely cutting of the tree branches in the sacred grove). From this point, the panorama of Roshka environment could be easily seen, full of huge boulders, glacial erratic's brought historically by the glacier, which used to cover almost all the valley (length of 11 km). These about 10 m high boulders are composed by volcanic rocks (diabase), and are among the biggest worldwide. One of the best examples is the *Saeliao* Rock on our route. It's name should be

connected to Elia (i.e. Elijah thr Prophet), which was revered by Georgians as one of the weather patrons, practiced influence especially on the rain and drought. Just beyond the rock, on the meadow called *Sadutsis Moedani* (i.e. ground of Agasyllis - “dutsi” in Georgian), we left the signed Abudelaury trail, forking sharply to the left, ascending the Didgori ridge through a moderate traverse path. On the ridge the track passes several cultic structures, connected do Didgori Shrine, namely *Kvrivi* (“firm place”, i.e. small stone tower without a cavity, unapproachable due to it's special holiness – *kvivi* is perceived as a place where the deity set down on the ground for the first time), *Kardanaulta Sadqheobo* (with a bell; sacred place of Kardanauli family branch from Kmosti), *Droshat Sabdzana* (structure where the sacred banners are stored) and finally the *Didgori St. George Shrine*. *Didgoris Tsminda Giorgi* (i.e. “Big-Hill St. George”) is the main shrine of all Tsklisikiti Community, especially of the villages Kmosti and Roshka. Here the main summer *Atengenoba* feast is held, with sacred beer brewed and sacrifices performed.

Pay attention to the proper behavior in the environs of the shrines, which is common for all East Georgian sacred places. Women are not allowed to enter the precincts of the shrine. The men are permitted to enter the yard of the shrine and to light there a candle, but even for them it's prohibited to touch the sacred structures or to enter the interior.

From the Didgori Shrine the path will lead us down the hill and back to the village. As we enter Roshka, we notice another interesting erratic boulder, so called *Gugulmanaklav Klde*, connected with a legend about an unfortunately killed cuckoo.

Bloghele Trail

The first part of the trail up to *Saeliao Klde* is identical with the Didgori trail. From *Saeliao Klde* we will pass the plain in the direction of the Abudelaury stream, crossing it by wading, just behind the most impressive erratic stone (height – 25 m), namely the *lakhsari Rock* with a crack in the center. It's connected with a legend about the fight between hero/deity *lakhsari* and a demon (see below). After crossing of the newly constructed road we pass the *Sarokis Vake* (“Gnarl Plain”) meadow, walk down to the Roshka stream, passing it through a ford, called *Arkovnis Sarevi* (“Birch Grove Ford”). Thereafter the path will lead us quite moderately uphill to *Bloghele* (pass leading to Blo village), having the slope of *Nakerali* (“place, where barley was sowed”) on our right. From the pass we turn right and proceed along the ridge, passing the mound of *Pitsarklde* (literally “Plank rock”). The ridge is continually descending, leading us to the main sanctuary of Roshka village proper – the *Mtavarangelozhi* (Archangel) Shrine, composed by several structures (*Atengenoba* is held here too). Under the shrine we notice the remnants of *Gaghma Roshka* (one of historical Roshka neighbourhoods). From here the path leads us back to present-day village.

Once upon a time the warrior deity (*ghvtisshvili* – “son of God”) *lakhsari* was pursuing a demon (*devi*) from Pshavi Region through the Roshka Valley towards Chaukhi Mountains. The demon hid himself behind a large boulder. The whip thrown by *lakhsari* struck the boulder and split it in two. The *lakhsari* Stone is still visible above Roshka. The *devi* fled further and this time hid himself in the Abudelaury Lake. *lakhsari* followed him to the water and killed him in the combat. The blood of the demon curdled on the surface of the lake, bounding *lakhsari*'s arms and preventing him to swim out. A *kadagi* (“preacher”, i.e. oracle, shaman) advised to the serfs of *lakhsari* to sacrifice a four-horned and four-eared sheep. Only after this sacrifice *lakhsari* was set free and flew out of the lake in the shape of a pigeon.