

## Becho Valley – Mestia

Distance: 21 km

Approximate Time: 10 hours

(longer when there is snow)

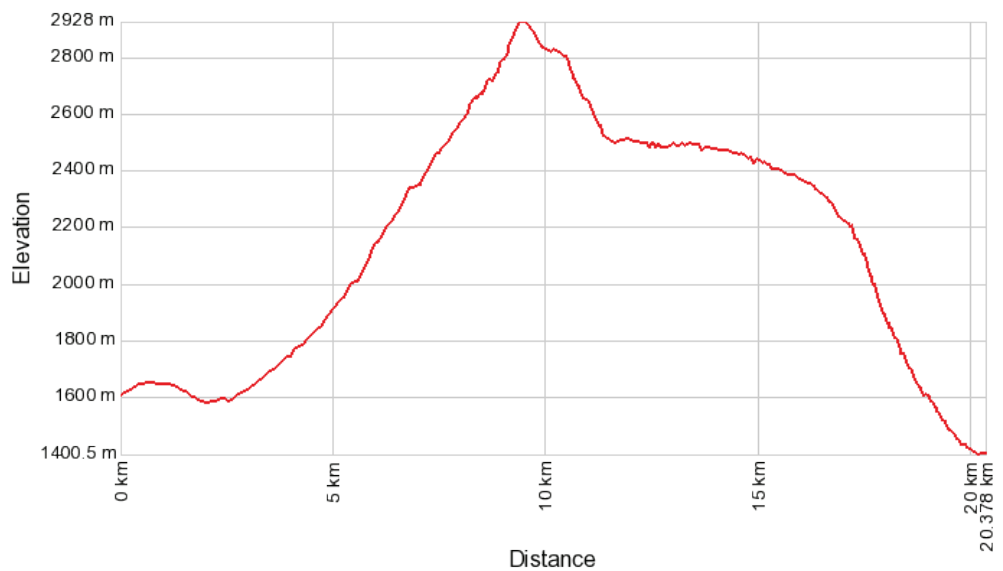
Accumulated Climb: 1627 m

Accumulated Descent: 1806 m

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Max / Min Altitude : 2954 m / 1401 m

**Blazes: Red and White**



**Recommended Season: July– October (snow lingers on Guli pass into July)**

### Route description:

The route from Becho to Mestia can be done by fit hikers in one long day, but you might consider camping on either side of the pass.

The trail leaves the Becho Valley through the village of Bagvdanari up the river toward the ancient ruins of Guli. From Mazeri village, go south on the main road 200 meters and look for a white sign on the left. Turn here and walk up the road to Bagvdanari. After passing a few houses, turn right in the center of the village, crossing over the Gulichala River. 100 meters beyond the river, turn left onto a footpath. It is well-marked with red and white blazes. Follow the path as it ascends alongside the river, passing mainly through meadows at the edge of the forest toward the ancient ruins of Guli.

Follow the path as it winds up toward Guli pass. Early in the season (before July), you are likely to run into patches of snow near the pass, as it is quite high at 2954 meters. The trail disappears a little bit just before the pass, but it is quite obvious that you need to go directly up. The pass is not actually at the lowest point of the ridge, but steep slopes prevent you from going too far left or right. You'll soon reach the north end of the ridge close to a white sign that points the way.

Be careful here – the east side of the pass is steep and rocky, and if there is still snow here it can be dangerous. Some people have evidently gone down directly east of the first white sign – this is not recommended, as it seems quite impossible. Instead, upon reaching the first white sign on the ridge, continue south along the ridge for about a kilometer until you reach a saddle and another white sign – this is the best place to turn east and descend. If you continue straight along the ridge from the saddle, it is possible to reach the summit of Mt. Guli.

Be careful as you descend from the saddle – it is steep and the rocks may move under your feet. Follow the red and white blazes down the mountainside until the grade levels out a bit and you find yourself on the clearly trodden path. The route is again well marked.

From here the path to Mestia is quite distinct. One challenge remains, where the trail meets the headwater of the Pushkueri River which is steep and powerful even in summer. Early in the season there is ice covering it, which should be crossed with great care.

After you have curved southward you will meet a dirt road. If you turn left here there is another path going left and due north which leads to the Koruldi Lakes. The three lakes are small and not too spectacular in and of themselves, but they do make a lovely and peaceful camping spot. It's about two kilometers to the lakes, and another 350 meters of elevation gain.

Where the path meets the dirt road, turn right. There will be some houses visible below. Continue south until the road begins winding downhill. Turn onto a path which continues due south past some buildings. After 500 meters you reach a wooden lookout platform with views over Mestia. From here, turn left and follow the blazes down a series of dirt tracks and hiking trails into center of town.



TCT Svaneti Map 3: Becho to Mestia



# TRANSCAUCASIAN TRAIL

