

Adishi to Ushguli



Adishi Glacier. Photo Credit: Tanel Tilk

Overview

Distance: 28.8 km

Approximate Time: 1-2 days

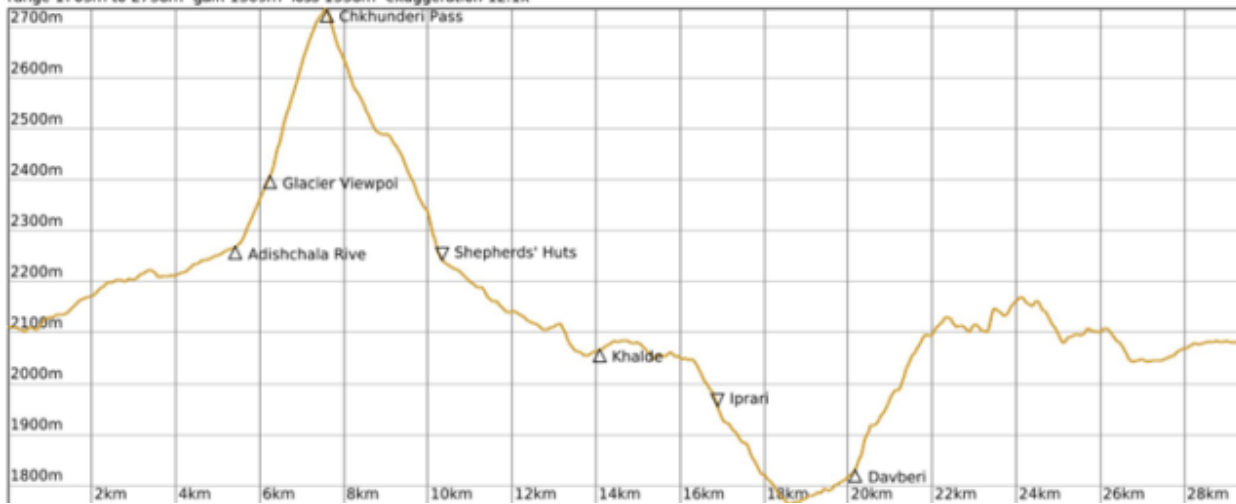
Elevation Gain/Loss: 1424 m / 1448 m

Difficulty Level: Moderate to Difficult

Max/Min Altitude: 2712 m / 1765 m

ELEVATION PROFILE

range 1763m to 2738m gain 1309m loss 1338m exaggeration 12.1x



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The trail leaves Adishi heading east, following the Adishchala River on a flat plain. After approximately 4 km, it intersects the river. There is no bridge here, so crossing can be done on foot or on horse in various places. Regardless of which crossing method you choose, crossing early in the morning when the water is at its lowest is a good idea. Early in the season (before late July), it is challenging or impossible to cross by foot. Many people cross on foot with great care, but it is not advisable in early summer because the water is high and powerful even in the morning, and the rocks are slippery.

In peak trekking season, local men usually sit around the river on their horses, and they will carry you and your packs across on horseback for about 30 lari per person (cash only; prices may vary). It costs a bit more to hire horses in Adishi and ride all the way to the river. If the river is low, crossing on foot is possible, but if the crossing looks dangerous, a horseback crossing is worth the investment.

Across the river, the trail leads up to Chkhunderi Pass. It is steep and can be muddy if there has been a lot of rain, so walk carefully. You will have excellent views of the Adishi Glacier as you

ascend to the pass. From the pass itself, you can take the trail leading left and up to a small peak, which offers a slightly better view of the glacier.

From the pass, follow the trail descending along switchbacks to the valley below, where you will meet a jeep track and several shepherds' huts. From here, you can choose to take the traditional route or for experienced hikers, the alternate route across Lagem Pass.

Traditional Route: Turn right at the yellow sign at the jeep track, and follow the track along the north side of the Khaldeschala River and through the village of Khalde. From Khalde, continue another 3 km to reach Iprari, the first village in Kala, the collective name for the villages here.

At the village of Lalkhori, turn left at the T-junction, and follow the road for about 700 m until you reach another road turning left towards Davberi. Take this road west through the town. Right before you reach the church, you will see a gate with a ladder propped against it. Climb over the gate, and follow the path right and uphill. It is a rather steep climb, but levels out after about 2 km for an enjoyable, relatively flat hike. The trail takes you through forests and meadows, and eventually descends and meets the road to the villages of Ushguli. Follow the road about 1 km to the fork, and take the road turning right, passing through the village of Murkmeli. After the village, the road rejoins the main road for the 350 m remaining to the other villages comprising Ushguli.

Alternate Route: Only experienced hikers should attempt this unmarked route to Ushguli over the Lagem Pass. The route is steep and the trail is not always visible. Therefore, having a GPX track of the route is essential.

At the yellow sign and junction with the jeep track, continue straight through a marshy field, north of the shepherds' huts, to the river. There is a trail down to the bridge over the river, and up again through a field and forest. Continue through the forest through rhododendron bushes and heavy vegetation. Beware of hogweed here. The trail crosses a stream, then follows it until it reaches another branch of the stream. Cross over the first branch, and walk up on the ridgeline between the two branches. The trail ascends steeply through rhododendrons and tall, but flattened, vegetation. It can be muddy and slippery even in dry conditions, so take caution as you climb. When you reach the ridge, you are rewarded with views of Shkara ahead and Tetnuldi and Ushba behind you. Be careful of possible snow on the ridge itself early or late in the season.

The trail descending from the ridgeline is easier to navigate than that ascending to the ridge and descends gently. Generally, this section is less muddy and easier to traverse than the ascending trail. Follow the trail down and across a dry streambed. The trail enters fields of rhododendrons and other vegetation, then opens into a field suitable for a rest spot. Continue descending through rhododendrons and vegetation, and at around 2550 m of elevation, the trail ascends a short distance before leveling out again and continuing to descend more gradually.

Here, the trail turns south and crosses marshlands, so be prepared for muddy conditions. The path crosses a few dry streambeds as it takes you across the grasslands above the road to Shkhara Glacier. You'll be able to see the road and at times Ushguli itself in front of you. The trail eventually meets the road from Ushguli to Shkhara Glacier. From here, continue walking south towards Ushguli, and you will reach the outskirts of the villages in approximately 1.5 km.