

Mestia to Adishi



A church in a stunning alpine setting near Ugviri Pass.

Photo credit: Claire Noble

OVERVIEW

Distance: 27.9 km

Approximate Time: 1-2 days

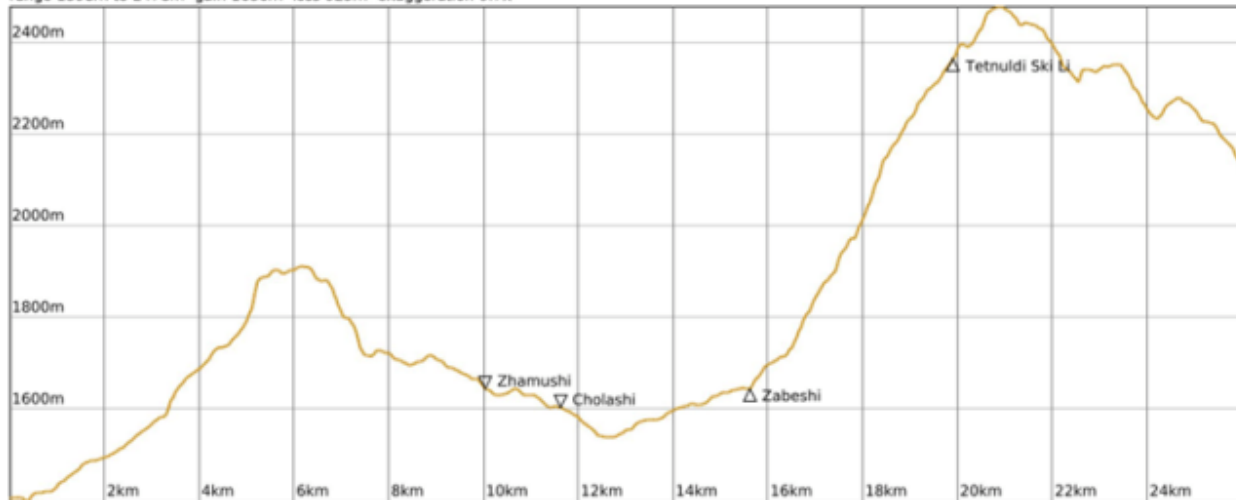
Elevation Gain/Loss: 1969 m / 1269 m

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Max/Min Altitude: 2480 m / 1396 m

ELEVATION PROFILE

range 1398m to 2478m gain 1636m loss 925m exaggeration 9.7x



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This is the beginning of the popular Mestia-Ushguli hike, and you will likely see far more hikers on this half of the trail than on the earlier stages.

From the park in Mestia's town center, walk southeast down the road leading toward the river. Cross the bridge just past the Turkish restaurant and Dissident Kitchen, Bar & Hookah, and turn left at the map and signpost immediately after the river.

At the first fork, turn right in the direction of Hotel Tetnuli, which is above on your right. Continue on the road for about another 500m and bear right at another fork, toward Hotel Banguriani. Follow the road straight for another 2 km as it turns to dirt, leading gently away from civilization.

Near the end of the road, a white sign points to a footpath that leads steeply up to the right. If you reach the abandoned Soviet alpine resort, you've gone too far. The climb here is steep but brief, which is reflective of the hike as a whole. Follow the markings as the trail bends up the ridge. Before you reach the top of the ridge, you will pass a large open meadow on your left, which makes a spectacular spot for exploring and picnicking.

Continue on the path as it goes up and over the ridge. As you enter the valley, a white sign appears left of the trail and points vaguely east. There are two options: Option 1 through the villages and Option 2 above the villages. Option 1 is shorter and has less elevation gain than Option 2, and both routes join at the village of Zhamushi.

Option 1 (the trail marked on the map; 2.8 km): Turn right at the fork and follow the jeep track to the first village of Zardiashi. Turn left on the road, and continue following it through the village of Murshkeli. Cross the stream, and continue to Zhamushi.

Option 2 (3.7 km): Take the trail to the left to walk above the villages. There are several routes through the valley, and it is well-worth getting off the beaten path and finding your own way. Staying high is advisable early in the season, when the stream crossings are more difficult. You will pass through the village of Lakhiri, and come down to Zhamushi, where you will meet up with the main trail.

At the outskirts of Cholashi, you will see the road descending to the bridge over the Mulkhura River and continuing to Zhabeshi. The trail, however, continues straight before the road descends (a yellow sign points the way). The trail follows the river east, and soon you will see a small hut and a bridge leading across the river to Chvabiani. If you are staying in Chvabiani or Tsaldashi, take this bridge. If you are continuing to Zhabeshi, however, continue straight along the trail for another 1.5 km until you reach another bridge crossing the river to Zhabeshi.

From Zhabeshi, the trail is marked with red and white blazes following the road south from the village, which soon becomes a path. (If you are staying in Chvabiani or Tsaldashi, there are also shortcuts that connect with the trail going southeast.) Bear left next to an iron-rich mineral water spring, where a white sign points the way. Turn left at the first intersection of paths. Continue through the forest into a meadow, at the end of which is another water source. Another 1.5 km of forest trekking, with many camping spots along the way, leads to the ridge.

Here the trail exits the forest next to the Tetnuldi Ski Resort. Cross the road to follow a smaller road with a white sign on it. Follow this as it loops south, then east and connects back with the main road you just crossed. About 500 meters further is a white sign. Turn here onto a path on the right, which heads south along a small creek. Bear right at the first fork, and continue following the blazes along the path, passing through bits of forest and meadow. The path bends around the ridge, and soon the village of Adishi will appear below.

You will find several guesthouses in Adishi and a few places to eat. If you intend on camping for the night, however, you may wish to continue past the village and up the Adishchala River, where there are several excellent camping spots.