

# Nakra to Becho Valley (Village Mazeri)



*Horses Frolicking Near Mt. Ushba*

## OVERVIEW

Distance: 35 km

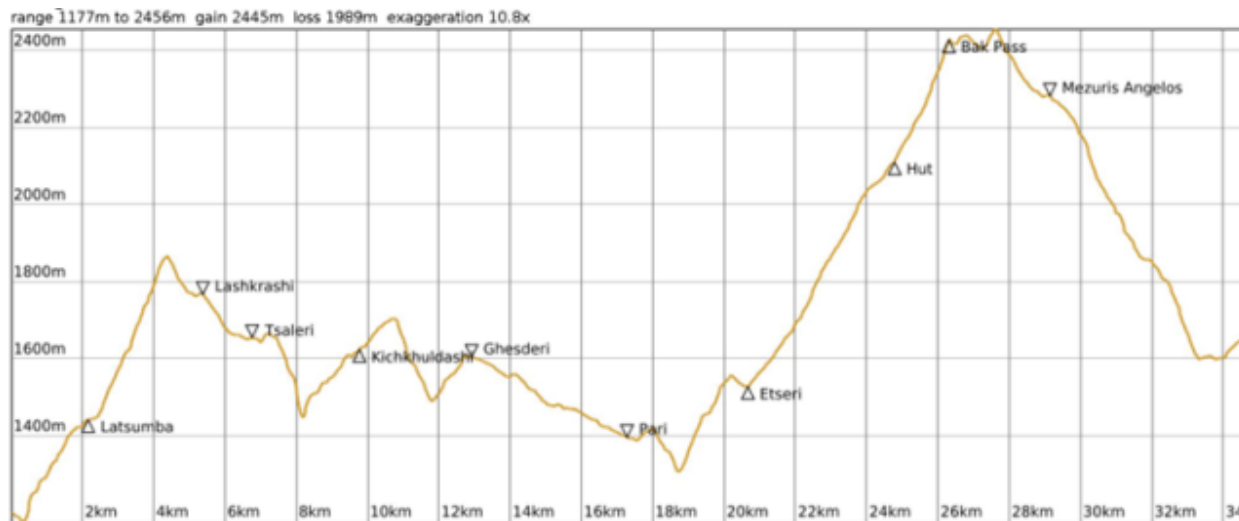
Approximate Time: 1 – 2 days

Elevation Gain/Loss: 2411 m / 2422 m

Difficulty Level: Medium

Max/Min Altitude: 2462 m / 1176 m

## ELEVATION PROFILE



## ROUTE DESCRIPTION

From the mineral spring or school in Nakra, follow the road downriver. Turn at your first right and cross the bridge. From across the bridge, follow the GPX track, as construction hinders the trail's visibility (as of August 2023). Follow the road very briefly before turning left up a small hill. The trail enters the forest and leads you to a small hamlet with a three-way intersection. Follow the road to the right, and turn left shortly on a small footpath leading up the hill. The path is marked with yellow and white blazes, and crosses through the forest. When the trail opens up into a meadow, cross the meadow to a gate. Go through the gate, follow the fence on your right, and go through a second gate, entering the hamlet of Latsumba, where the trail meets a dirt road. Follow the road to a small intersection, from which you will see a fence on your right with an arrow pointing through the gate. Go through this gate, and follow the trail to another fence. The trail turns to the right along the fence, entering the forest once again, where the trail is easier to follow.

The climb goes in and out of meadows but stays predominantly in the forest, up and over a forested pass. (Unlike the other mountain passes on the TCT, this one offers no views.) There is a short side trail to a small church, but the church is unremarkable, and the views from a little

further along the TCT are better than those offered from the churchyard. Descending from the pass, the trail enters a large meadow with views over the Enguri Valley. Look for posts in the meadows to find your way, and aim for the stone buildings ahead. Right after passing the abandoned buildings of Lashkrashi, you will meet a jeep track. This is the junction for the Mt. Kva Side Trail. See the notes below for details.

Turn right on the jeep track. In about 200 m, before you reach the cell towers, make a sharp left, and follow the jeep track about a kilometer to the village of Tsaleri, where you will see a sign with a map on it. Continue on the jeep track for another 50 m, then follow the yellow sign pointing to the path to the right, into the forest. The trail descends steeply to a small but powerful river. Several bridges have been built over this river in recent years, but spring swells often dismantle them. If there is no bridge, cross the river with caution. After the river crossing, the trail ascends steeply across several landslips to the tiny village of Kichkhuldashi, where the Vibliani family, the last remaining family in the village, has beds available for hikers.

The route from Kichkhuldashi follows a jeep track uphill, then enters the forest before descending to the ruins of the abandoned hamlet of Paledi, across the bridge over the Ladlina River, and up to the village of Gheshderi. From Gheshderi, the trail continues on the dirt road for about 4 km. Stay on the main road that hugs the hillside and ignore any offshoots going downhill to other small hamlets. After an hour or so, you will reach the larger village of Pari, where there is a mineral water spring and small market.

Continue along the trail until you come to a junction with a paved road on your right. Go straight at this junction, on a trail that leads uphill toward the tiny village of Zagari. From Zagari, the trail passes through meadows. When you come to a small fork, take the trail leading to the right. You will soon enter the forest, and begin descending through the trees to a river. A wooden bridge crosses the river, and from there, turn left on the trail, keeping the river on your left. When you reach a meadow, turn left and skirt along the edge of it. Before you reach another clearing, the trail turns sharply to the right and up the hill. The turn is not well-marked and can be easy to miss. The trail continues along a fence on your right, and then up on a relatively steep climb through the forest until you reach a junction with a wide cart track. Turn right on this track and follow it to the village of Pkhutleri. When you reach the village, you'll find a water source at the intersection of the cart track and the main village road. Turn right on the main road leading north out of the village. Follow this road about 500 m until you reach the main, paved road in Etseri. Turn left on the main road, and follow it up through the villages of Etseri. After Barshi, the paved road turned into a dirt track. Continue following this track northward and steadily ascend through the valley towards Bak Pass. At the end of the valley, you will pass a couple shepherds' huts and streams before reaching patches of rhododendron and the rocky incline to Bak Pass. The ascent to the pass is not very steep until the last stretch.

Turn right at Bak Pass. The trail crosses a narrow ridge before skirting around the east side of Mt. Detsili. The route has some small up and down sections here, but stays at roughly the same elevation as the pass. A slow descent leads to a meadow, from which Mezuris Angelosi Church, which sits solitarily on top of a hill, is visible. A shelter and small lake are not too far from and just below the church.

After the lake, the trail continues a short distance through the meadow and then turns left into the forest, descending on a well-maintained forest trail. At a small picnic site, the trail turns left and becomes a jeep track. Follow the track until you see a yellow directional sign pointing sharply right to the trail towards Becho Valley. The sign and trail can be hard to see because of their location among the trees. In Becho Valley, you will find many guesthouses in the villages.

When you reach the town of Tvebishi, turn left on the road, and follow it just past the Mineral Water Spring. Cross the bridge over the Dolra River, and continue on past Grand Hotel Ushba. At the T-junction, turn right on the road to Mazeri.

## MT. KVA SIDE TRAIL

This trail offers views of Mt. Elbrus and the Enguri River Valley and is well-worth the side trip. Having a GPX file on hand is recommended for this route, as it is not currently well-marked.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The yellow signs along this route point towards Tsaleri and Kichkhuldashi, creating the impression of a larger loop. While it is possible to reach Tsaleri along this route, **the path to Kichkhuldashi is not viable due to a landslide and should not be attempted.** It is possible to go from Nakra to Kichkhuldashi either by returning along the same route after reaching Mt. Kva, or continuing to Tsaleri and hiking to Kichkhuldashi from there. Please read all of the trail notes and examine the GPX route and your own hiking capabilities before deciding which route to take.

From the Lashkrashi ruins, turn left on the jeep track and continue a short way until you reach a large white cross and a yellow directional signpost for Nakra and Kichkhuldashi. Turn left on the jeep track, and you will almost immediately see a sign for the trail to Mt. Kva and a map. Continue along the jeep road until it meets with a trail leading off to the left. The turnoff is marked with a white and yellow blaze. Continue along the trail, not the jeep track. Soon, you will reach a 5-way intersection. On your left, you will see another yellow sign pointing up towards the Psud Mhash church, 100 m away. This small church is well worth the detour; the door is open, and you can see the icons inside. The church grounds offer a wonderful space for camping.

Back at the intersection, turn left on a track leading upwards. It is not blazed, but if you find yourself not ascending, you have taken the wrong path. From here, the track takes you above the treeline, where the path narrows into a single-lane trail around and up the mountain. There are a couple yellow directional signs along the way to guide you, but the trail is fairly straightforward. The trail appears to be taking you back towards Nakra, but don't worry, you are on the right path! When the trail intersects a small jeep track, turn right and the snowcapped town peaks of Mt. Elbrus will soon come into view. Turn right on another jeep track, and ascend to the several log cabins comprising the hamlet of Lakitanali. A water source is in the center of the hamlet, and offers the last opportunity to replenish your water until you reach Mt. Kva. Go north through the hamlet, and from here, do not follow the jeep track. Instead, make your way upwards along the various cowpaths to the ridge. There is no obvious trail here, but the direction you are aiming for is clear.

Once you reach the ridge, follow it towards Mt. Tsalgmil, keeping Mt. Elbrus towards your left. After a short time, a yellow directional sign marking the summit of Mt. Kva will come into view. From here, you have a stunning view of Mt. Skaukveti, Mt. Elbrus, Mt. Tsalgmil, Mt. Laila, and the Enguri River Valley.

Mt. Kva to Tsaleri: The path to Tsaleri from Mt. Kva is not difficult, but is unmarked. Therefore, only experienced hikers should attempt it with a GPX track. From Mt. Kva, follow the gently ascending trail, and turn slightly right on a trail hugging the ridgeline. After about 1 km, begin descending. There is a trail, but it can be quite difficult to see at times. After descending to approximately 2360 m, follow the ridgeline over a mountain stream and continue to a cluster of four wooden huts. Take caution of the dogs that live here, as they appear aggressive (although the lady who

lives here claims they won't hurt people). From here, descend on the wide jeep road for approximately 1 km before turning left on an small, easy-to-miss trail that quickly connects to the path to Tsaleri that consists of jeep tracks and forest trails. Turn right on this trail and continue until you reach Tsaleri. As soon as you reach the town, you will find a water source on your right. To reach the TCT, turn left on the road and descend until you see a yellow sign with a map, and turn left on the TCT to Kichkhuldashi.