



Visit.
Borjomi
Municipality



Location of Borjomi

Borjomi is a resort town in South-Central Georgia in Samtskhe-Javakheti region, covering the area of 1.189 sq.km. on the slopes of the Lesser Caucasus, at the medium alpine zone (810-850 m. above sea level). Most of its territory is covered by forests, represented mostly with coniferous and some of precious deciduous species, making its climate clear and healthy. But the main asset that made Borjomi a famous resort destination is natural mineral springs the amount of which reaches 150 all around the municipality.

Photo by Bakur Gelashvili

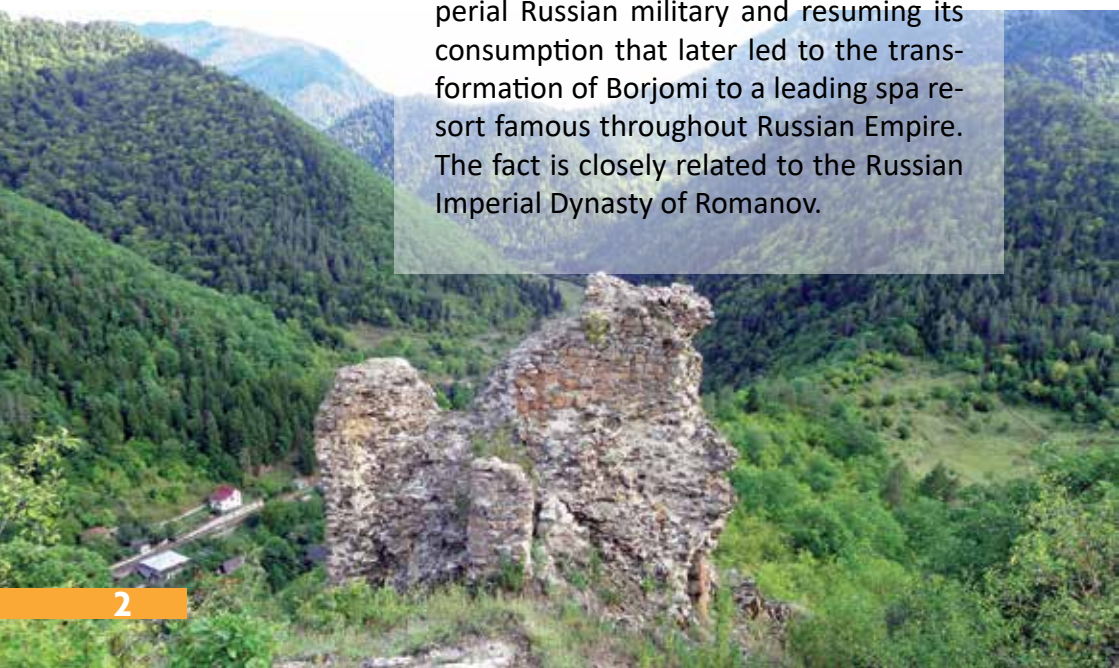


History



The ancient history of the area starts in the 2-4 cc. when the name Tory, recording not a single famous pages in the history if the country for its heroic deeds and famous and outstanding patriots of the homeland. The remains of the period are still scattered in the mountains attracting the loves of antiquity and history. Middle Ages spotted with numerous invasions and battles left us the witnesses of the heroic past, some of important forts – “Gogia”, “Petre”, and “Sali” – still overlook the town from nearby hills.

The 19th century brought a new life to the settlement that is associated with the re-discovery of mineral waters by the Imperial Russian military and resuming its consumption that later led to the transformation of Borjomi to a leading spa resort famous throughout Russian Empire. The fact is closely related to the Russian Imperial Dynasty of Romanov.



Mineral Waters



The springs rise to the surface without pumping at different altitudes throughout the municipality and have the arrangement like amphitheater. The water's curative effects were well known to the people of the ancient epoch. This is known because excavations in the area have found a stone tub dating back to the 1st century. It was used for taking thermal mineral water baths.



The mineral water industry is the number one export of Georgia, largely consumed by holiday-makers on the spot as well, all by themselves or through spa and recreation centers, as the best medicinal and table waters.

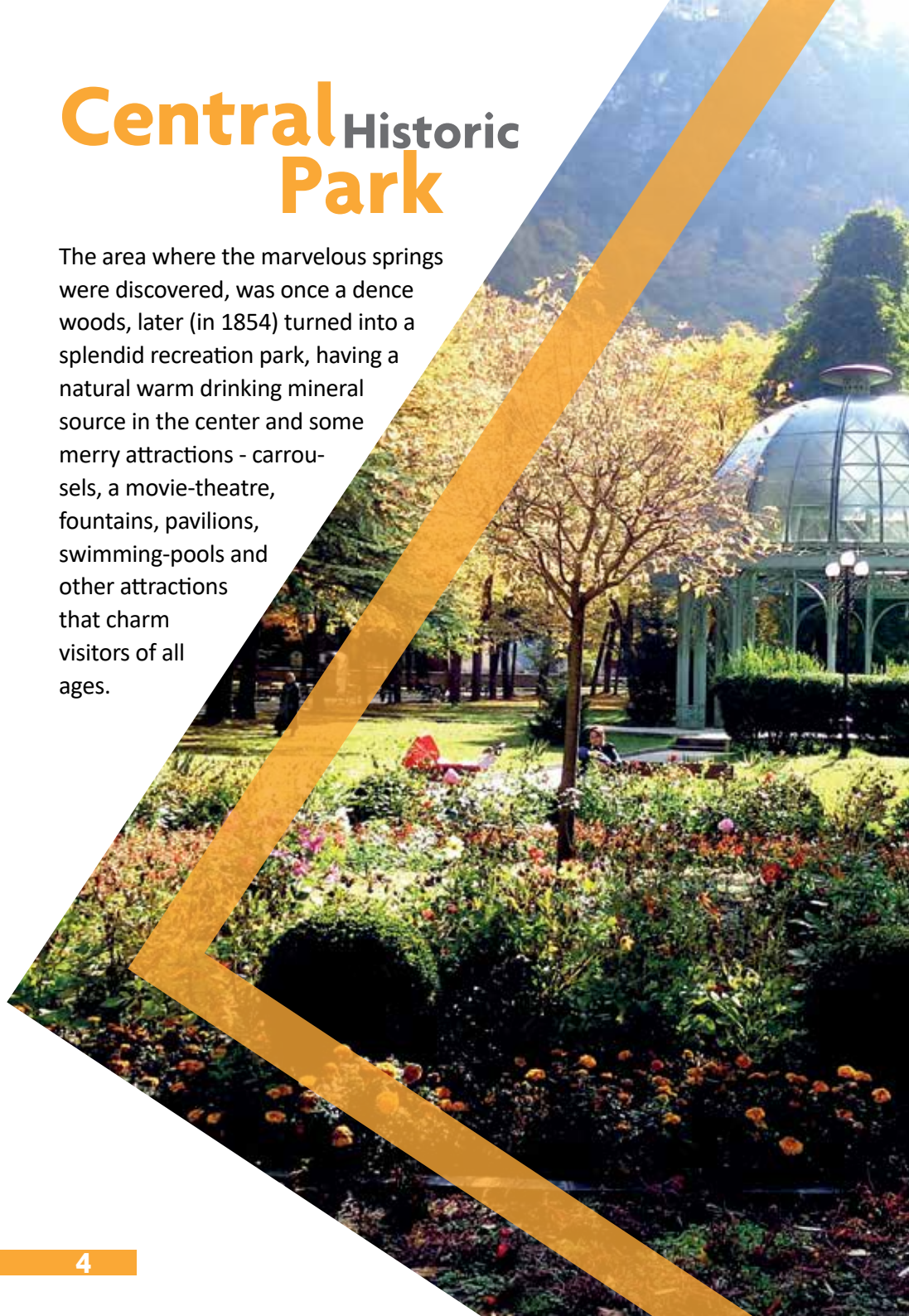
In terms of chemical compositions the mineral waters are acidulous, hydro-carbonate, sodium variety containing 0,5 to 1,0 - 1,5 g/l of free carbon dioxide. They also contain ions of chlorine and a small amount of bromine, lithium, barium and some other spring substances. Temperature of waters in various spring ranges from + 17 °C to + 38 °C.

Medical factors of the water is its high effect on treating and preventing diseases related to digestive system (chronicle gastritis, functional diseases of stomach, bilious and urinary tracks, ulcer on stomach or duodenum (not acute form), intestines, liver, pancreases, metabolism, etc.)

There are also thermal Sulfur Mineral Springs with the temperature over + 30 °C. healing some chronicle diseases such as rheumatism, joints, peripheral nervous system, skin and others. The treatment is carried out by taking medical baths.

Central Historic Park

The area where the marvelous springs were discovered, was once a dense woods, later (in 1854) turned into a splendid recreation park, having a natural warm drinking mineral source in the center and some merry attractions - carrou-sels, a movie-theatre, fountains, pavilions, swimming-pools and other attractions that charm visitors of all ages.



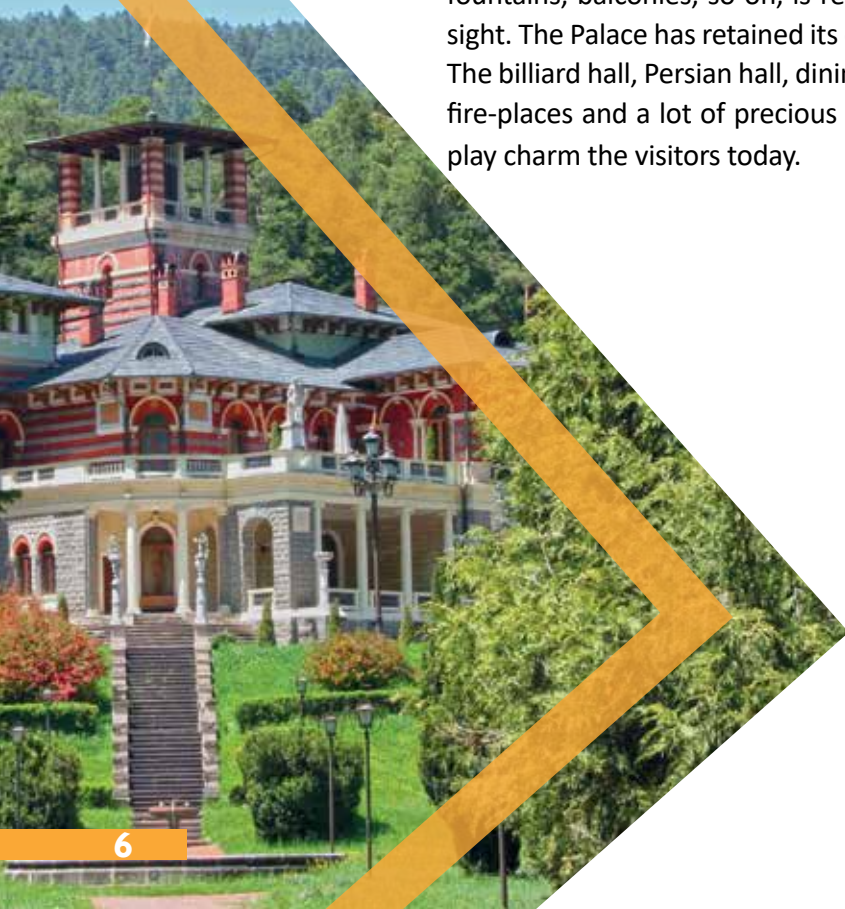


Sulphur Baths

The park path leads alongside the small, noisy river Borjomula, and continues its way among the dense valley. After 2,5 km it reaches a warm sulfur spring that gathers in three pools - for adults and for kids. This area is former Tsar's Baths (in the 19th c.), now the most crowded destination, even in winter for those who would like to bathe is the steaming pool with snowy woods all around.

Likani palace

Borjomi's renaissance in the 19th century left us a lot of exciting heritage of material culture. One of them is inevitably the elegant residence of the member of Russian Royal Family – the Grand Duke Mikhail Romanov. Once you enter the beautiful garden, walk along the shaded paths among the decorative plants and squares, you find yourself in the coquette 19th century. The Mauritanian Palace in the middle of the garden decorated with statues, fountains, balconies, so on, is really the royal sight. The Palace has retained its original style. The billiard hall, Persian hall, dining hall, exotic fire-places and a lot of precious items on display charm the visitors today.





Museum

One of interesting and catching sights in Borjomis is the Museum of Local Lore functioning more than 90 years already. The building which hosts the Museum was built in 1890 and represents itself a monuments of cultural heritage. There are more than 36.000 items in the collections of the Museum. Displayed are archeological excavations in the area, such as: armours and agricultural tools of primitive men and of the Stone and Bronze Age, rich samples of the flora and fauna of the Borjomi gorge, Georgian traditional items, artistic accessories of the 18-19th c. that once belonged to the Russian Royal Family and a lot of other interesting things.



Kvabiskhevi Church of the Virgin

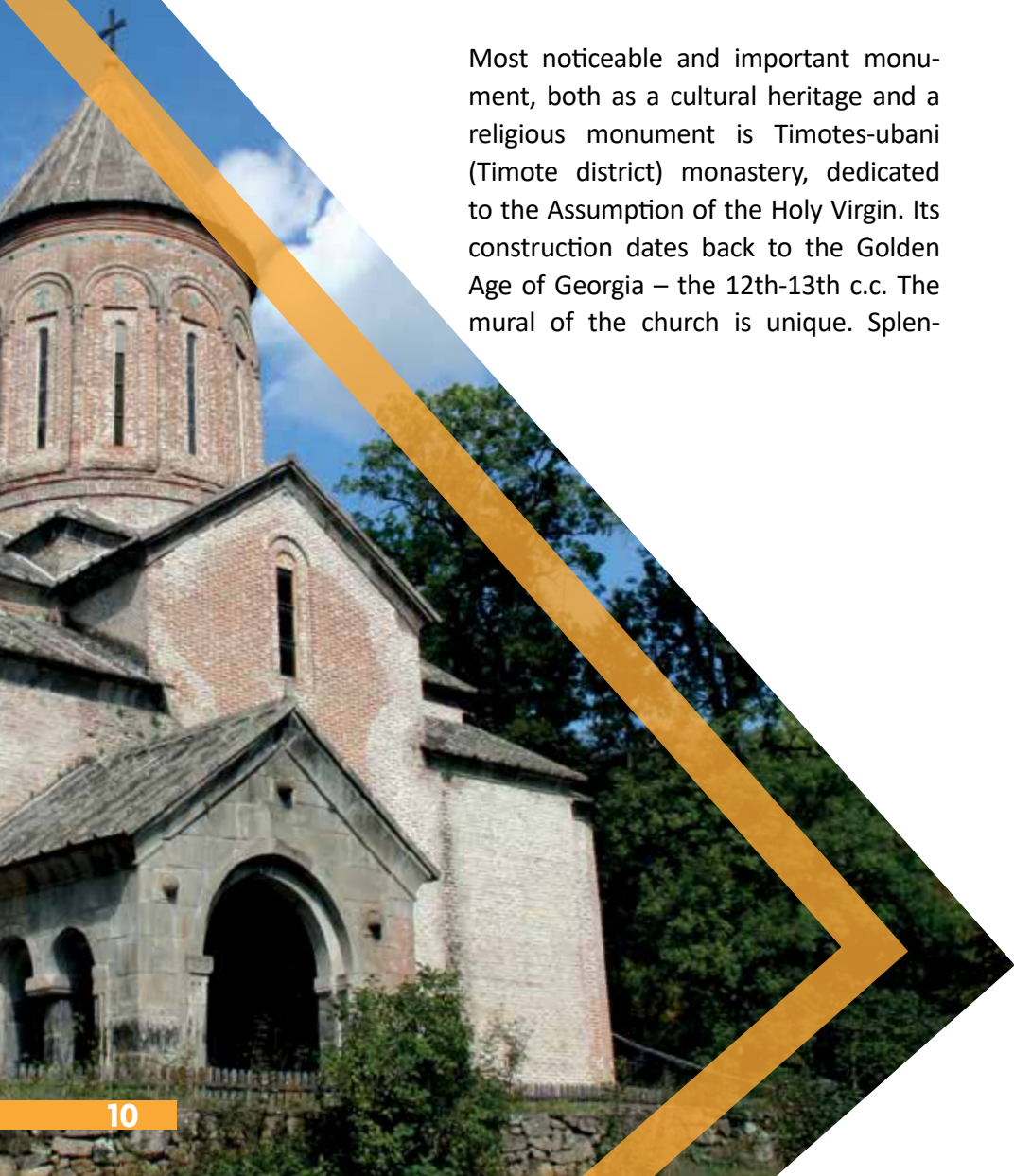
The Holy Virgin of Kvabiskhevi is a small three-basilica church of the 8-9th c.c., but the paintings belong to the 12-13th c.c. The most noticeable frescos are the figures of a man and a woman dressed in rich garments. The inscription in Old Georgian - "Shotai" and "Iai" might indicate, that the man is the outstanding poet of the 12th c. Shota Rustaveli, the author of famous *The Night in a panter's skin*, and the woman - his mother called Ia. The village Kvabiskhevi itself is in the historical region of Meskheti, which, due to common deliberation, was the native country of the Great Poet.





Timotesubani church

Most noticeable and important monument, both as a cultural heritage and a religious monument is Timotes-ubani (Timote district) monastery, dedicated to the Assumption of the Holy Virgin. Its construction dates back to the Golden Age of Georgia – the 12th-13th c.c. The mural of the church is unique. Splen-



did painting of the Last Judgment Day attracts attention. From alter the whole figure of the Holy Virgin looks mercifully down. There are frescos of saint warriors all around the walls and columns of the church. This fact seems not to be just by accident. The monastery is considered to be constructed by the commander of the Georgian Military, the legendary hero of the Golden Age Shalva Torely (Shalva from Tori where Tori is an olden name of the province). The saint is supposed to be buried in the territory of the monastery.

The cloister is situated in a really marvelous place. As you walk along the canyon-like gorge, you suddenly find yourself in a valley surrounded by dense forest, where the reddish-pink brick (of old Georgian make) building of the church is erected. In this mysterious and holy place ere monks still serve, pray and glorify the Creator.



Daba Church



One has inevitably heard a Georgian blessing – Bless you 365 Saint George. The saying is derived from the idea that Georgia has built as many churches or chapels dedicated to the Saint, or - each day of a year Georgians celebrate the memory of their Patron Saint Giorgi (George). So, it is natural that Borjomi Gorge also has a number of churches of Saint George, and each one has some marvelous and miraculous legends.

The Village Daba has a powerful chapel of religious worship dedicated to the Saint. The building is not visible from the road, but is partly hidden in the rock cave and has a really miraculous looks. There is an inscription on the wall informing us about the date and the donor of building - the church was constructed in 1333 by the treasurer of the Georgian King Giorgi V Brtskhinvale (the Brilliant).



The Green Monastery



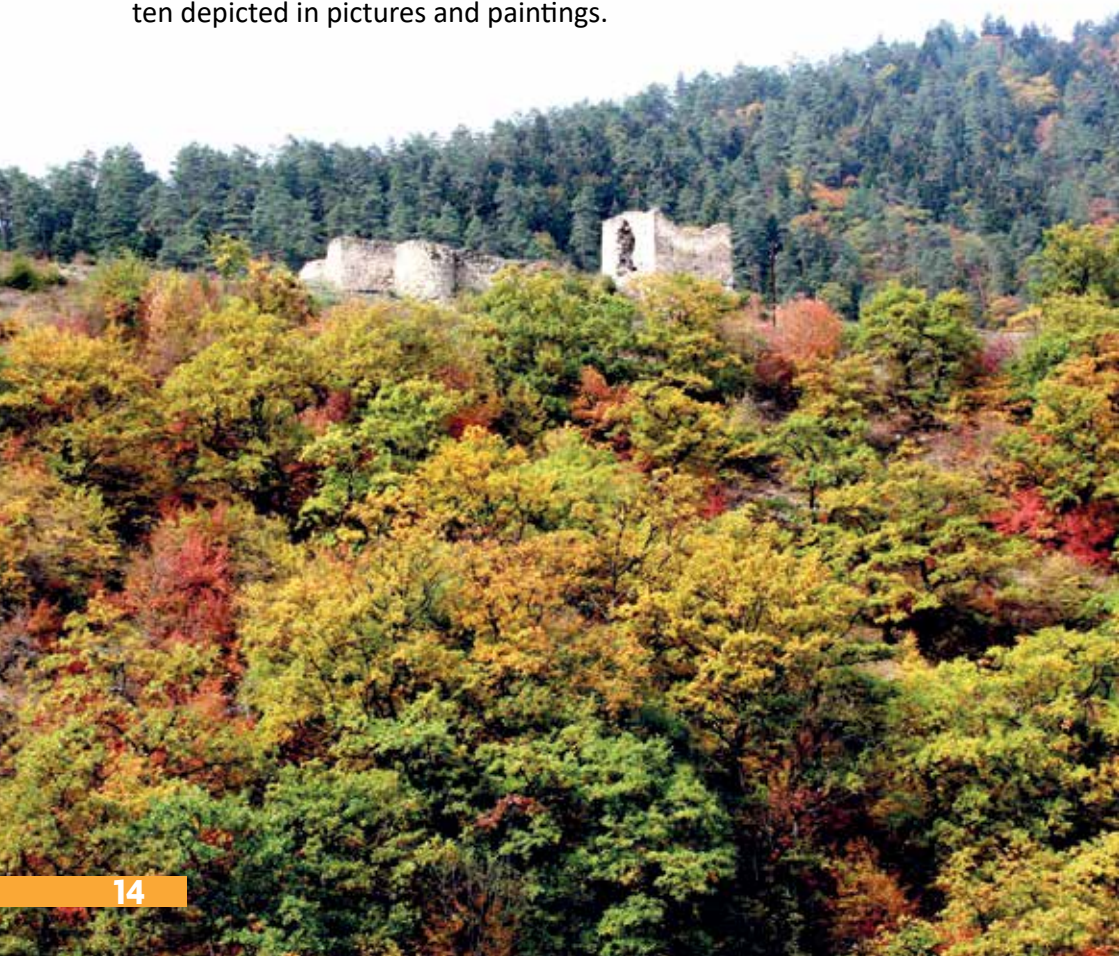
In the countryside of Borjomi town if you take a turning to the woods and follow a narrow, dense valley, you will come across a monastery – just in the middle of the forest, in what feels like a green paradise. It justifies its name – Green Monastery.

This monastery is devoted to Saint George and comes from the 9th-10th centuries. It was built by Christophore and Tevdore – the apprentices of the outstanding religious figure in Georgia – St. Grigol of Khandzta. The church consists of three basilica of rough-hewn stones and a bell-tower, where one can still see typical delicate ornaments of Georgian stone-carving.

The trace of hard past and numerous attacks is vivid. Especially moving sight is the blood-spotted stones kept in the monastery and the nearby brook. As people say, it is the relics of the great invasion of the 16th century when the monks were brutally murdered and thrown in the river. Time and the current of water have not had the power to remove the blotches of blood of the martyred monks that are the most sacred aspect of the cloister.

Gogia Fortress

An ancient fortress is erected on an adjoining hill to the north-west of Borjomi town. The Fortress with its uniquely shaped walls and square towers is assumed to date from the Early Middle Ages. The fortification bears the name of Gogia - a famous member of the feudal family of ruling Borjomi Gorge during the 15th-19th centuries. The fortress area offers most fantastic scenery over the town most often depicted in pictures and paintings.



A photograph of the Petre Fortress, a medieval stone structure with crenellated walls, perched atop a lush, green hill. The hill is covered in dense forest. The sky is clear and blue. The image is framed by a large, stylized geometric shape composed of a light blue triangle and a yellow triangle, with a thick yellow border.

Petre Fortress

To the south of Borjomi, in a picturesque countryside, there stands a medieval fortress, that once belonged to and up-to-day bears the name of Petre Avalishvili - a feudal lord of Borjomi Gorge, who was a brother of the owner of another similar stronghold within the town area, called Gogia Fortress.

Lakes in Borjomi Municipality

Borjomi Gorge is rich in lakes. Lake Tabatskuri is situated in the sub-alpine zone is at the altitude of 1990,6 meters above sea-level, in about 60 km distance from Borjomi, adjoining the villages of Tabathkuri and Molity, and the reserve of Ktsia-tabatskuri. The average depth is over 15 meters, and the deepest point is 40, 2 m. It has 14,2 sq. km surface that turns into ice in winter. The lake has deli-





cious fish and holidaymakers can easily catch it with a fishing-rod, and then spend a night in tents or rent a room in a local village cottage.

There are some smaller lakes in the middle mountain zone amidst the forests (in the vicinity of Vellage Chobis-khevi): Lake Tsero (1.802 m. above sea-level, surface 0,02 sq. km. deepest point - 6,6 m) and Lake Kakhisi (1.752 m. above sea-level) - perfect areas to arrange horse tours and to relax on the shores in the shade or in the nearby settlement.





Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park

The National Park was established in 1995 on the bases of protected areas. The Park covers more than 85 000 hectares of alpine and sub-alpine zones that makes it the biggest protected area in Europe. The largest territory of the National Park is preserved in its pristine and virgin state. There are a number of endemic and relic species of flora and fauna found here.

The National Park caters with all the possibilities for comfortable and challenging tours among its scenic areas: At present 16 marked tourist trails are officially functioning allowing hikers to arrange trips from one day up to one week; there are picnic- and campsites at the entrances, and tourist shelters alongside the trails. Guided trips, horse riding, tents, sleeping bags, mountain bikes, snow-shoes, etc. are available there. Most of the trails function between April – October and in winter when the snow blanket covers the hill-sides.





Bakuriani

Among the slopes of the Lesser Caucasus, on the sides of the Trialeti range, at 1650-1700 m. above sea level, there is the most beautiful mountain-ski resort Bakuriani, in some 29 km. form Borjomi. The summits of hills in Bakuriani reach 2.369 m. (Didveli), 2,155 m. (Kokhta Gora) and 2,255 m. (Tatra Poma) above sea level. The hill-sides are covered by evergreen coniferous wood that makes the air clear, fresh and healthy all year round. A medium alpine climate is dominated in Bakuriani.

Due to its perfect location, Bakuriani was made a ski-resort now with well-developed infrastructure, that include: ski tracks of different difficulty enable the skiers of different level - amateurs or sportsmen - to take their best rides. There are blue, red



and even black tracks, ski jumps, chair lifts and gondolas, a skating rink, toboggan, hors-drawn sleighs, snowmobiles, lots of attraction for kids and so on. A number of hotels and guesthouses, café-restaurants, modern conference halls, a cinema create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere for the visitors.



In Bakuriani there is a possibility for camping, hiking, horse-riding etc. in the vicinity of the settlement and as far as Tabatskuri Lake, through Tskhra-thkaro Pass (2.462 m above sea level), from where, when the sky is clear and blue, the sight reaches the glacial summits of the Great Caucasian Range.

Should be noticed the coniferous pollination period: end of May – beginning of June. Because of its curative effect on bronchial system, Bakuriani is visited by a numerous visitors, especially by kids.

To travel to Bakuriani from Borjomi is possible by bus or car (30-40 min to drive), by train (2 hours) – the Borjomi-Bakuriani narrow-gage railway by-line.

The distance from Borjomi to Bakuriani is 29 km. (approx.18 miles)

Tbilisi - Bakuriani - 187 km. (approx. 117 miles).

Botanical Garden of Bakuriani

In Bakuriani one of the interesting places to visit is a high-mountainous botanical garden of alpine and sub-alpine vegetation. It has been functioning since 1910. There are about 1500 species of plants represented here. The garden covers 17 ha Best time to enjoy the flowering is May-July period.







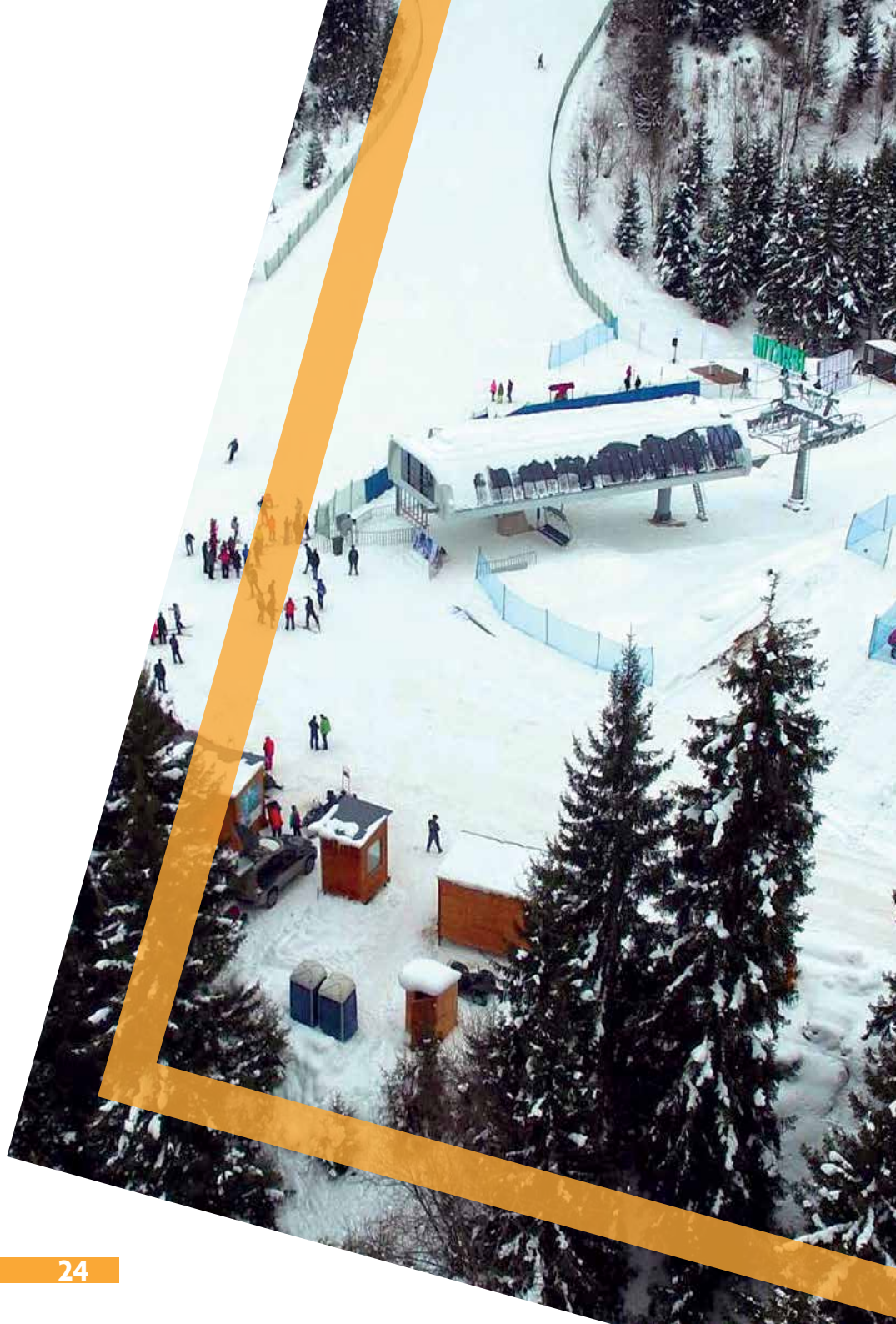
The Cuckoo Train

A special attraction is a lovely, small train - The Cuckoo Train, that moves regularly on the narrow-gauge railroad joining Borjomi- Bakuriani since 1902. The name was given to the train because of its special signal that sounds: Coo-coooooo...

The road winds through the narrow gorge and on the hill-sides, in the most breathtaking nature that has its splendor and beauty in every season: pink and white blossoms, green valleys, golden-reddish woods or the shining white snow blanket.

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An interesting fact is that in Tsagveri Settlement, over the River Tsemis-tskali (Tsemi-water), the Cuckoo Train passes over the "Eiffel Bridge" (1902). It was constructed by Gustave Eiffel, a French civil engineer and architect, best known for the world-famous Eiffel Tower in Paris (1889), by the order of the Grand Duke Romanov. The length of the bridge is 9, 5 m., height 34 m. The weight of the bridge is 900 tones. Population still calls it "Eiffel Bridge".



Mitarbi Resort



In Bakuriani community there a resort area called Mitarbi, situated at the altitude of 1.480 m. above sea level on the Trialeti Range. It has developed splendid ski trails and gondolas on its slopes. Another way to reach Mitarbi is through Bakuriani, over the hills via ski tracks.

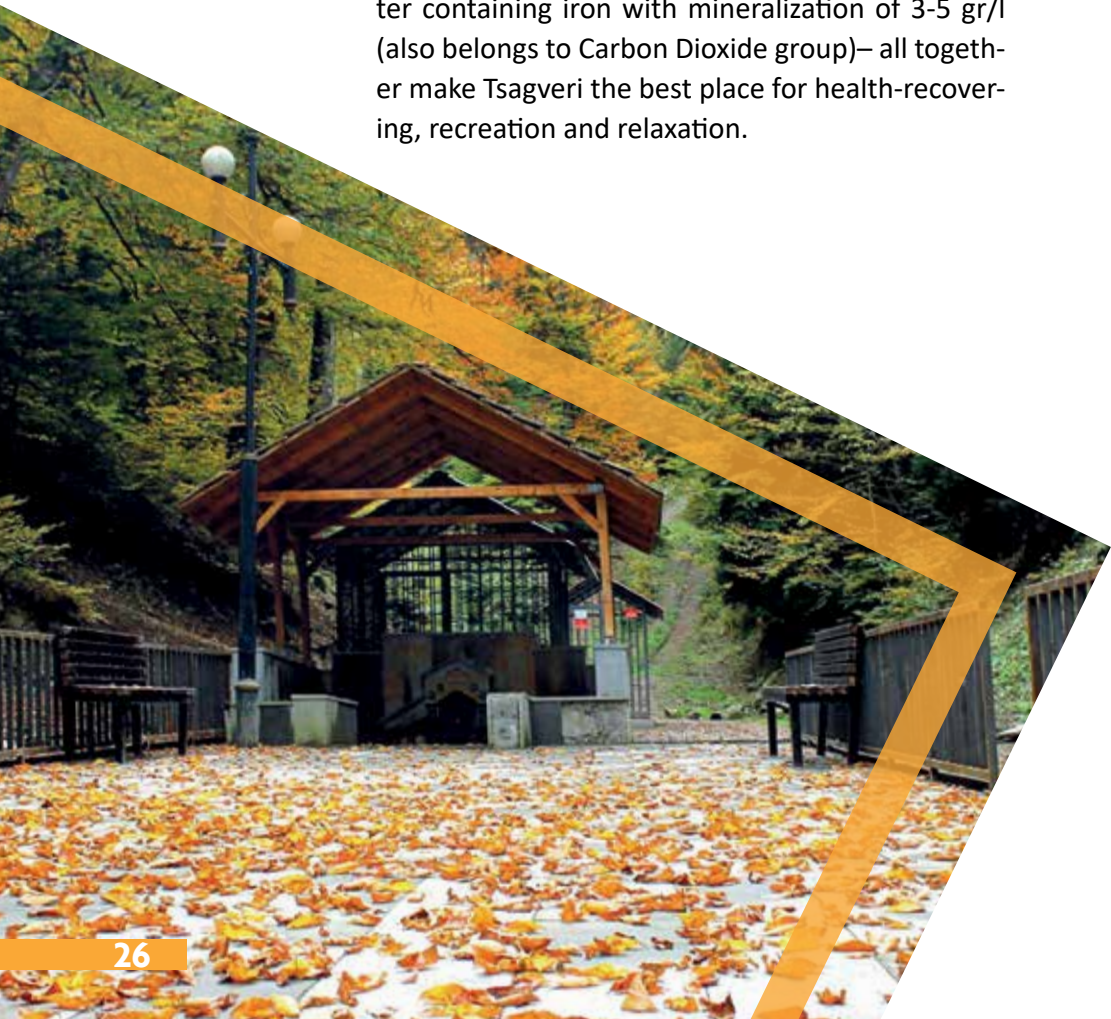
To the south of Mitarbi in about 2 km there is a a typical carbon dioxide mineral water that is also bottled locally.

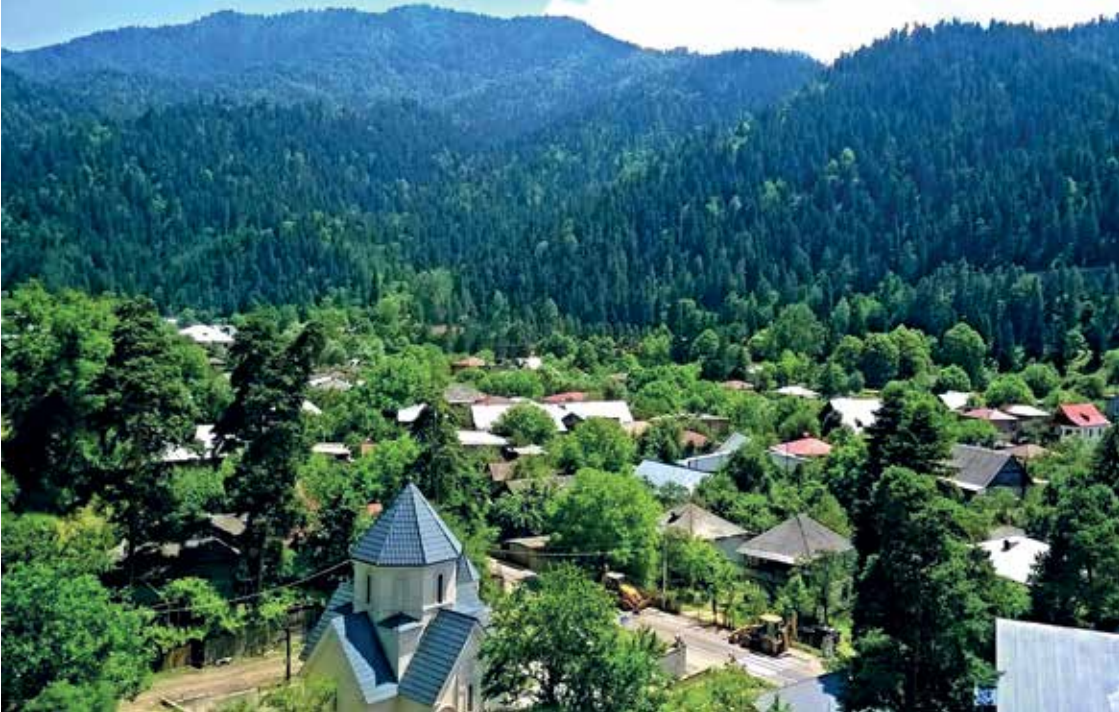


Tsagveri Resort

Tsagveri is a balneo-climatic resort on Borjomi Gorge, situated on the Northern slopes of the Trialeti Range (the Lesser Caucasus), at 1020-1050 m above sea level.

Attractive village area with picturesque views, pure crystal air and the tasty curative mineral water containing iron with mineralization of 3-5 gr/l (also belongs to Carbon Dioxide group)– all together make Tsagveri the best place for health-recovering, recreation and relaxation.





There are a lot of things for active recreation in Tsagveri: first of all, there are local country hotels with their own farms where guests can enjoy Georgian village life and their involvement in any agricultural activity. Holiday-makers can explore the vicinity walking along the seven marked trails, can visit ancient ruins or tasted natural mineral water right on the spot in the woods. A culture house, medical center, library, agricultural market of local, eco-friendly products, tourist information center, office for Rural Development Association The Green Valley (foundation by UNDP and Government of Finland) are all available in Tsagveri resort area.

Transportation to Tsagveri is possible by car (15 km from Borjomi), or by train (Borjomi-Bakuriani branch-line, takes 40 min.).

Tori



Most amazing and adventurous sight-seeing is the remains of the ancient civilization of the historical Tori (2nd- 4th c.c.). The territory is spread over more then 3-4 square kilometers in the now wild countryside. You will find foundations of some constructions, a stone hut, a church in ruins, underground tunnels (not safe to enter!), vivid footprints of a wolf or a bear and other interesting things. For a better look take a guide from the nearby settlements. The area is near village Tori (populated only in summertime), in approx. 16 km. from Bakuriani. You can have a bike ride here following the signs.



Traveller's information

Getting to Borjomi

Public transport from Tbilisi to Borjomi is a mini-bus (every hour, takes 2 hours only), and a train (two times a day, takes 4 hours)

Climate

The climate in Borjomi is mild. The resort is situated at 810-850m. above the sea level and is surrounded by high hills. Bakuriani - a mountain ski resort is at 1700-2000 m above the sea level in the sub-tropical zone. Municipality never has severe winters or very hot summers.

Money

Georgia's currency is GEL (Georgian Lari), sub-divided into 100 Tetri. Currency can be changed easily across the city and there is no quantity limit. Credit & debit cards are accepted in hotels. Cash point machines are available in Borjomi - and Traveller's Check can be exchanged in banks.

Telephone codes:

Country code: +995. Area code for Borjomi: 0 367. Emergency call: 112. Coverage is good and extends the whole region.



BORJOMI MUNICIPALITY

Call Tourism Information Centers every day

in Borjomi: (+995 367) 22 13 97

in Bakuriani: (+995) 593 33 50 58

