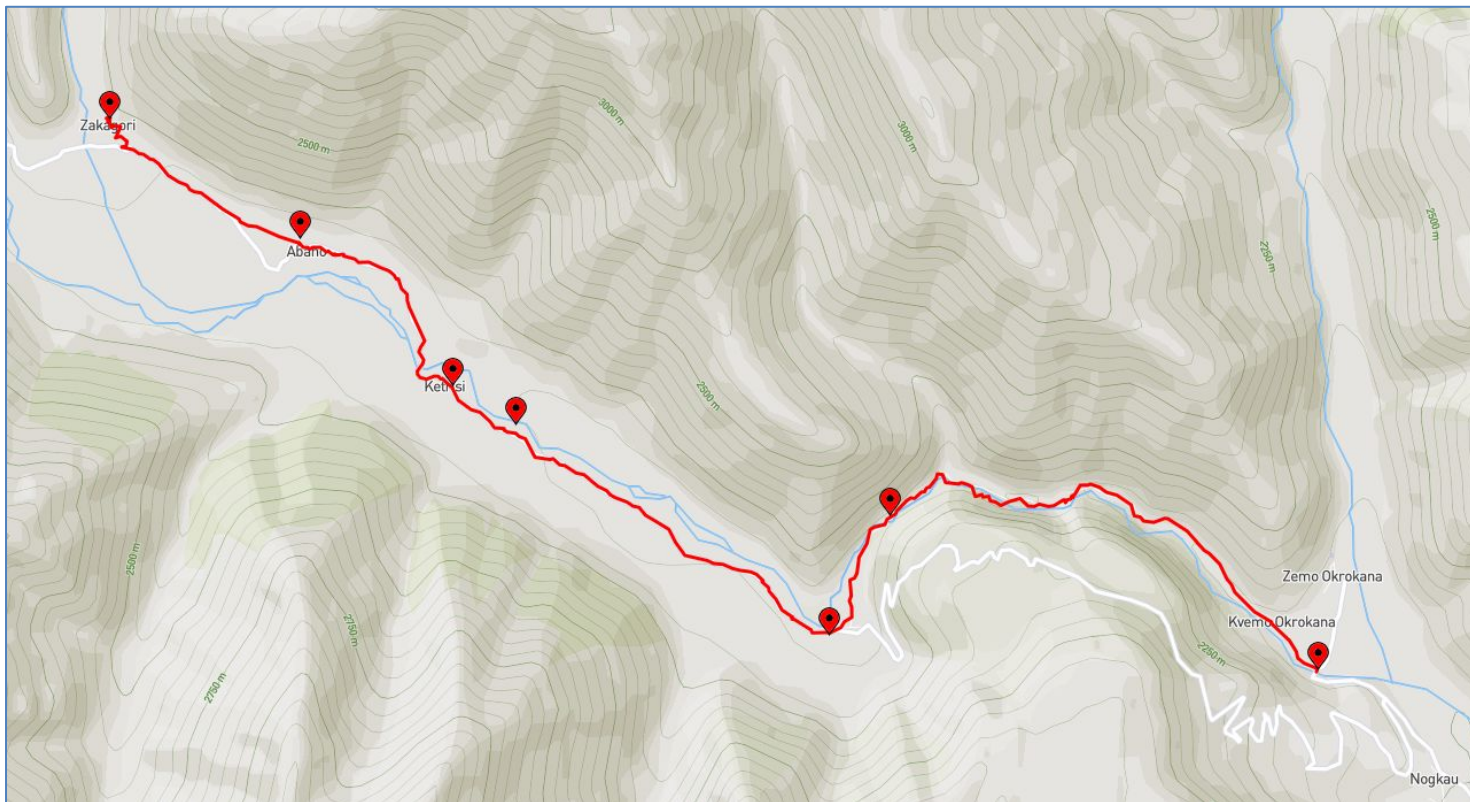


## Truso valley : Kvemo Okrokana - Zakagori fortress : 11 km



The walk starts at the almost deserted village **Kvemo Okrokana**. Follow the road by the river - you will pass several abandoned houses and eventually enter beautiful **Kasari canyon**. After a few kilometers, you cross a **bridge to the right bank** (orogr.) of the river.

Shortly behind the bridge, the trail turns to the west and the whole valley opens up before you. Here you can see the first **travertines**, formed by local **mineral springs**. The ones here are mostly orange and white. There are also several small mineral springs emerging in the area. On the opposite bank, you see a **small basin** filled with water - looks inviting, but the water is icy. Still, it could be a nice option on a sunny day.

Follow the main road and you will soon come to another group of forming travertines, this time of mostly red color. The mineral water here bursts from a pipe (the place is also known as a “geyser”).

Further down the road lies **Ketrisi village**, mostly in ruins, but few houses are still occupied. At the end of the village, cross the bridge to the left bank of the river. Here you will find several monasteries. First, you see a pink one, then you will come to a very nice, newly reconstructed nun’s monastery. Nuns are friendly, it’s even possible to rest in the garden.

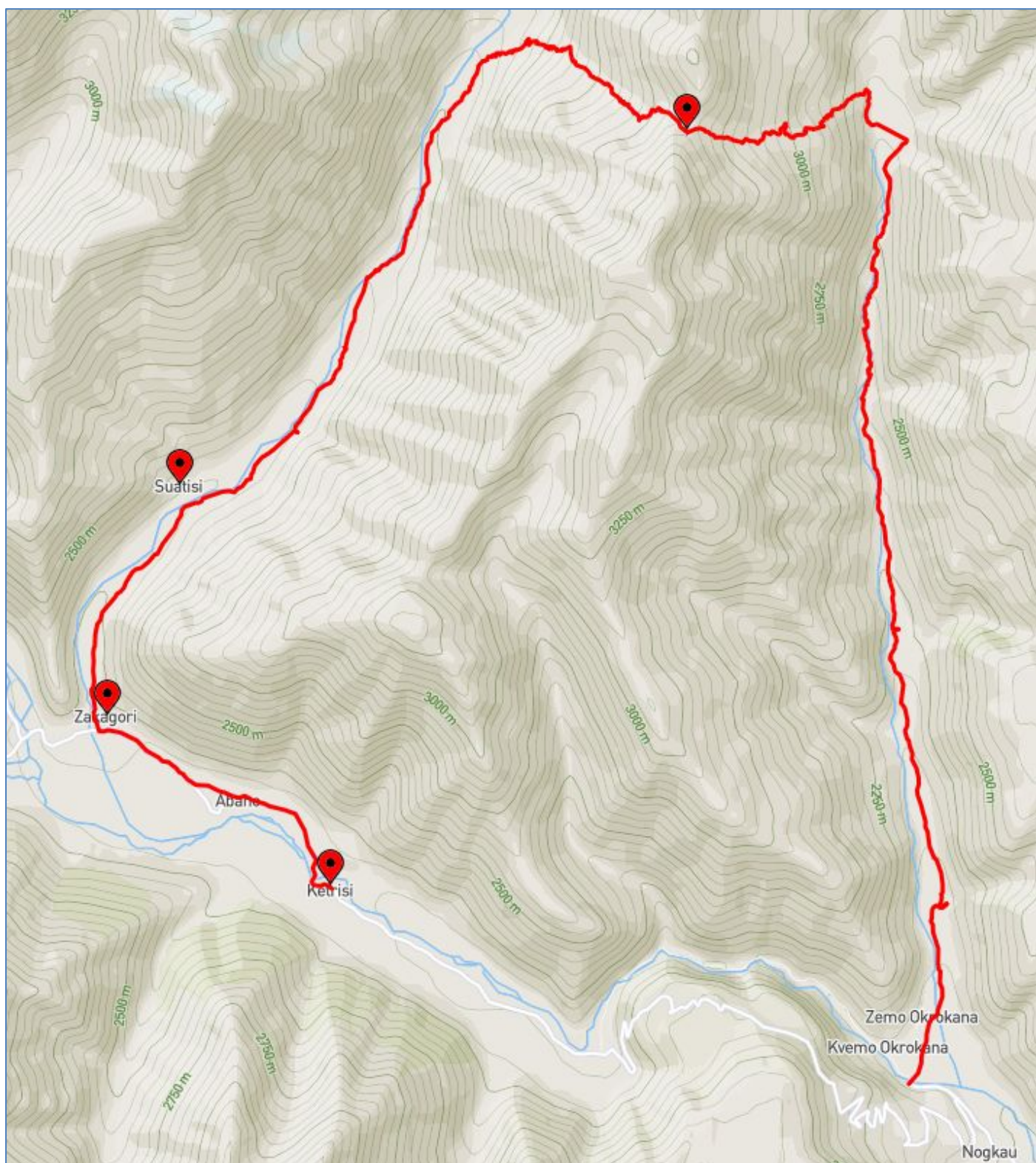
Then it’s only a short walk to the ruins of **Zakagori fortress**. There is a soldier’s post below the fortress - you cannot venture deep into the valley, but you are allowed to climb the hill and explore the ruins. There is no reason not to - view from the top is pretty nice.

You can't continue any further unless you have a permit (the procedure to get is described under treks exploring the area more deeply [such as here](#)). If you don't have it, you will have to return the way you came. It could be a good idea to make an arrangement with your taxi driver to pick you up at Kvemo Okrokana village or even deeper in the gorge.

Max. elevation: 2251m

Min. elevation: 2014m

## Ketrisi – Zakagori – Suatisi – pass (3380) – Mna - Kvemo Okrokana : 27 km



### Day 1: Ketrisi - Upper Suatisi valley : distance 11.6km, 704m and 180m

Trail starts in **Ketrisi village** ..... Cross the bridge **to the left bank of Terek river** and follow the main road towards the **Abano village**. There you will find two small monasteries, one for men, the second one for women ..... One mile behind Abano, at the confluence of Terek and Suatisi rivers you will meet border guards who will inspect your permits.

Dirt road following the **left bank of Terek** smoothly turns into **Suatisi valley**. At the mouth of the valley stands the interesting ruin of **Zakagori castle**. Not much later, the dirt road turns into a pleasant, slowly

rising footpath. From time to time, it splits - one trail follows the river, the other one goes further to the right.

On the opposite bank appears Suatisi village, the only settlement in the valley - a few people are living there during summer month. Behind the village, path following the river crosses swampy meadow so it's better to bypass it by climbing higher on the slope. Water in the river is muddy, but there are many clear smaller springs. You will find also several thermal springs.

Soon in the distance in front of you appear massive rock closing the upper part of the valley. It's called Ulchandzarau-choch (I haven't made this name up, I swear :)). Walk towards the rock and break a **camp in front of it (elevation 2700m)**. You can either camp near the confluence of two streams bypassing the rock or on one of the grassy terraces higher on the slope.

## **Day 2: Suatisi valley - upper Mna valley : distance 5.7km, 754m and 825m**

In the morning, get enough water as there will be none till the afternoon. Then start climbing to the east - the route is obvious as you will be following a depression (don't want to call it a valley) between surrounding hills. Slopes are grassy and very steep, up to 30-35 degrees. As you climb higher and higher, grass gradually disappears and is replaced by shales and screes. Behind you, you see a gorgeous panorama of Gimara massif.

At the elevation of 3200m, you see a **small saddle** in front of you (**don't confuse it with Iriston pass**, it can't be seen yet). Climbing to this saddle is harder than the actual pass, as the terrain here is very steep and loose - but fortunately, this section is quite short, only some 70m.

After you climb to the saddle, you need to overcome the last rocky section to the pass - the terrain is not too steep so could even build tents here (but there is no water). Then comes the last steep climb and you are at **the pass**. It lies at the elevation of **3385m** - it takes about 2,5 hours to climb there from the bottom of the valley.

Now you have to descend to the **Mna valley**. As there is no trail, you need to head directly to the bottom of the valley. The gradient of terrain is 20-30 degrees - steep, exhausting, but doable. On the left side, you can see an unmistakable rock spire called "**Mna needle**". Once you make it to the bottom of the valley, ford the **Mna river to its left bank** (or don't, it's up to you) and break a camp. If you have an extra time, I recommend visiting a **nice waterfall** not far to the north.

## **Day 3: Upper Mna valley - Kvemo Okrokana : distance 10.5km, 161m and 759m**

Follow the left bank of the river, the terrain is pretty easy, there is even something resembling a path. After an hour, you come to the spot when your path was destroyed by a landslide. You need to cross to the right bank and then back (if you want, here it's totally feasible to walk also on the right bank.)

Continue walking down the valley, your trail will gradually turn into the dirt road. Then you will come to the major left tributary of Mna river. If you walk up this valley, you would come to another waterfall and later to small glacier lake. This valley will also lead you to Sherkhota pass (1A) or even to **Betlemi Hut** (in this case, you will have to cross the glacier)....

But that's another hike, we just follow river Mna. Soon we pass few inhabited houses, then meet border guards who check our permits again. Not too much later, we come to the **Kvemo Okrokana village**.

Max. elevation: 3377m

Min. elevation: 2015m

## Stepantsminda - Gergeti - Meteostation : 12 km



Cross the Tergi river and enter **village Gergeti**. Follow the main road; you should see several signs showing the way to Tsminda Sameba (Gergeti Trinity church).

The **marked path** will eventually leave the main road and turn left into the hill. After a short walk between the houses, you will end up on a meadow. Shortly, your path will cross jeep track, but don't let it disturb you and walk straight to the information panel you can see from the crossroad.

Then follows a pleasant walk in the forest and not so pleasant steep ascent on a rocky road. Your path will cross jeep track again, but don't follow it for too long and turn left into the forest. The trail will eventually lead you out of the woods, within sight of **Gergeti Trinity Church**.

Pathway now leads uphill into some , and after few minutes you will end up on a ridge, facing west. Walk straight as there is nowhere to get lost, the path is pretty obvious.

After some pretty long and steep ascent, you will come to the small pass with the stone cairn (elevation 290m) - this place is called an **Arsha pass**. From here you have a **nice view of Gergeti glacier and Mt. Kazbeg**.

Now path descends a little, crosses several streams forming **Sabertse river** and ascends again to the foot of the glacier. You can try a small walk on a glacier, take a few pictures and its time to go back the way you came. It is also possible to reach meteostation **Bethlemi hut at elevation 3600 meters** (route also on the map), but to make it there and back to Kazbegi in a day is very exhausting (11 hours of walk). At the station, you can sleep (booking recommended) or camp nearby for 10 GEL.

Max. elevation: 3265m

Min. elevation: 1770m

Source: <https://www.caucasus-trekking.com/treks>