

#4

+ JOVEM

Getting to know Georgia



Technical information

+Jovem Magazine
4th edition - March 2023

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(This magazine was produced as part of a local project. It is not meant for commercialization)

This project is co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

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Kristiana Zvezdina

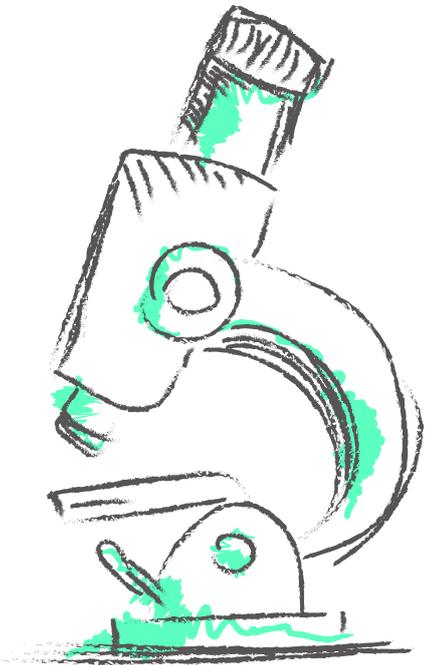
Graphic design and layout

FIVE BENEFITS OF ESC VOLUNTEERING

Hello, I'm Darko Dimitrioski from Prilep, N. Macedonia. I was a long-term(10 months) volunteer at AMC and during my volunteering experience, I shared and also gained new skills. I utilized my existing abilities to support the organization's initiatives, while also being open to learning from them. I was constantly growing and developing, both professionally and personally, as they gave back to their community.

CASE: LEARNING

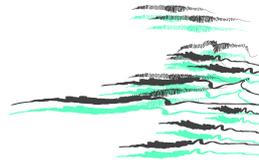
Volunteering gives you the opportunity to really expand your knowledge in the respective field. This can be great, especially in case you also plan to get a job in a similar area afterward. Apart from the hard skills, you will learn, you will also learn how to interact with people and how to treat them with respect. Moreover, all this will really make you a different person who will be much more aware of the struggles that some people have to go through in life.



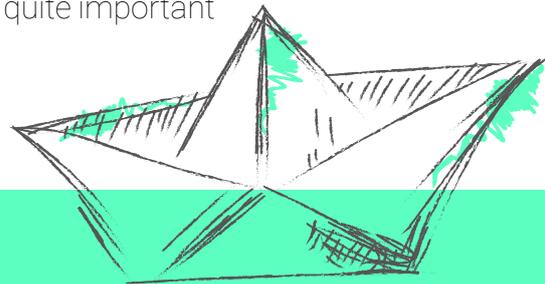
CASE: BROADER PERSPECTIVE

In order to figure out what your passion really is, volunteering can help you in this regard since you will have the opportunity to do many different things and will also often have enough leisure to think about your life. Working in a group is another important skill which you will often need later on in your life. In many professions, group work is on a regular basis and if you want to be successful in a corporate career, you have to learn how to deal with different people and different opinions. Many volunteering programs also offer you the opportunity to stay in touch with your former colleagues. In turn, it will often be much easier to get into some international companies since you already know a person who can connect you to the management and facilitate the job interview process for you. Hence, also if you just want to improve your chances to get a good job in a big corporation, volunteering can also greatly help you in this regard.

CASE: CULTURAL SOCIALIZATION

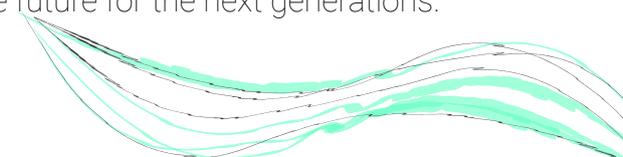
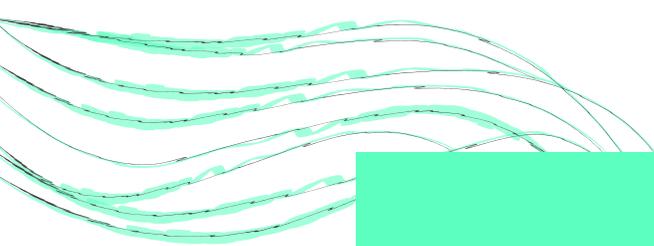


Through volunteering, you will also be able to make many new friends. Chances are that you will be able to meet many like-minded people who are eager to help others and this common trait will be a key driver to making friendships for a lifetime. Thus, especially if you just moved to a new area or don't have too many friends due to various other reasons, chances are that you can find many new friends through volunteering. You will also have the unique chance to explore new cultures. Quite often, you will work hand in hand with locals and thus, you will really get to know each other. In turn, you will get to know different cultural values and will also realize how relative cultural values and social norms really are. You can also learn great levels of empathy towards others. If you volunteer and work in professions that let you talk to those people who really struggle in life, chances are that you will learn a much higher level of compassion, which is also quite important for our society as a whole.



CASE: RESPONSIBILITY

Many young people also lack a sense of responsibility. They often let their parents do all of the work in the household and also expect their parents to guide them. However, this is not a healthy attitude toward life since at some point in time, you have to learn to stand on your own feet, to make your own decisions and to live with the consequences. Volunteering can give you the opportunity to really learn to take on responsibility and to really grow in character, which is quite important for success in various parts of your life. Also if you volunteer in professions that aim to protect our planet, you can raise the awareness and responsibility of people regarding how important it is to make a change as soon as possible in order to assure a livable future for the next generations.



CASE: ME

Many people use volunteering as a way to pursue their hobbies while making a difference. For example, if you're interested in the outdoors, you might volunteer at your community garden or help out at a children's summer camp. Volunteering for organizations or causes also may provide you with a renewed sense of creativity and motivation that carries over into your personal and professional life. It often feels good to contribute to projects and organizations that mean something to you. These good feelings can help lessen the effects of stress, anger or anxiety in your life. Through volunteer work, you may overcome the personal challenges of leaving your comfort zone and doing something new with people you may not know. You may be faced with various problems to solve as a volunteer that require you to exercise critical thinking skills that aid your own personal development.



A BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF FRAGMENTED COUNTRY



Fig. 1 - The Caucasus region.
Image source: BBC News.

Georgia

Sak'art'velo in the local language, საქართველო according to the Georgian alphabet, Georgia is located between Russia and Turkey. It borders Armenia and Azerbaijan, thus forming, together with these two countries, the South Caucasus. Known for its wine-making tradition and alphabet in the shape of symbols, Georgia is a culturally rich country. Historically, it is marked by territorial disputes and geopolitical conflicts that persist until this day.

Historically prosperous, the Kingdom of Georgia is disputed by the Ottoman and Persian empires until the 18th century, when it falls entirely under the rule of the Russian empire. The Russian Empire annexes all regions of the kingdom, including the territories of the north Caucasus, which were already internally separated from the Georgian crown. These territories are characterized by being very rich in resources, given their location between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and the mountainous nature of the region.

In the 20th century, in 1918, during the Russian Civil War (triggered by the 1917 revolution that brought Lenin and the Bolshevik faction of the Communist Party to power), Georgia auto-declares its independence from Russia. It has the support of the international community, that also recognizes the country as independent. At that time, Georgia is in conflict with the neighboring Armenia in a dispute over the control of the border regions, populated mainly by Armenians. Shortly after this period, in 1921, the Red Army takes over the country again and Georgia becomes a Soviet Socialist Republic. So do Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as all the surrounding regions, including the contested territories of the north.

Since the 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and consequently the independence of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1991, ethnic and political conflicts between these countries, Russia and the North Caucasus regions have been reignited, leading to several wars and territorial disputes: on the one hand, the territories that currently constitute the autonomous and semi-autonomous republics of Russia, such as Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria; on the other hand, the separatist and independentist territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. All these territories still have problematic relations with neighboring territories and with the central governments Moscow and Tbilisi.

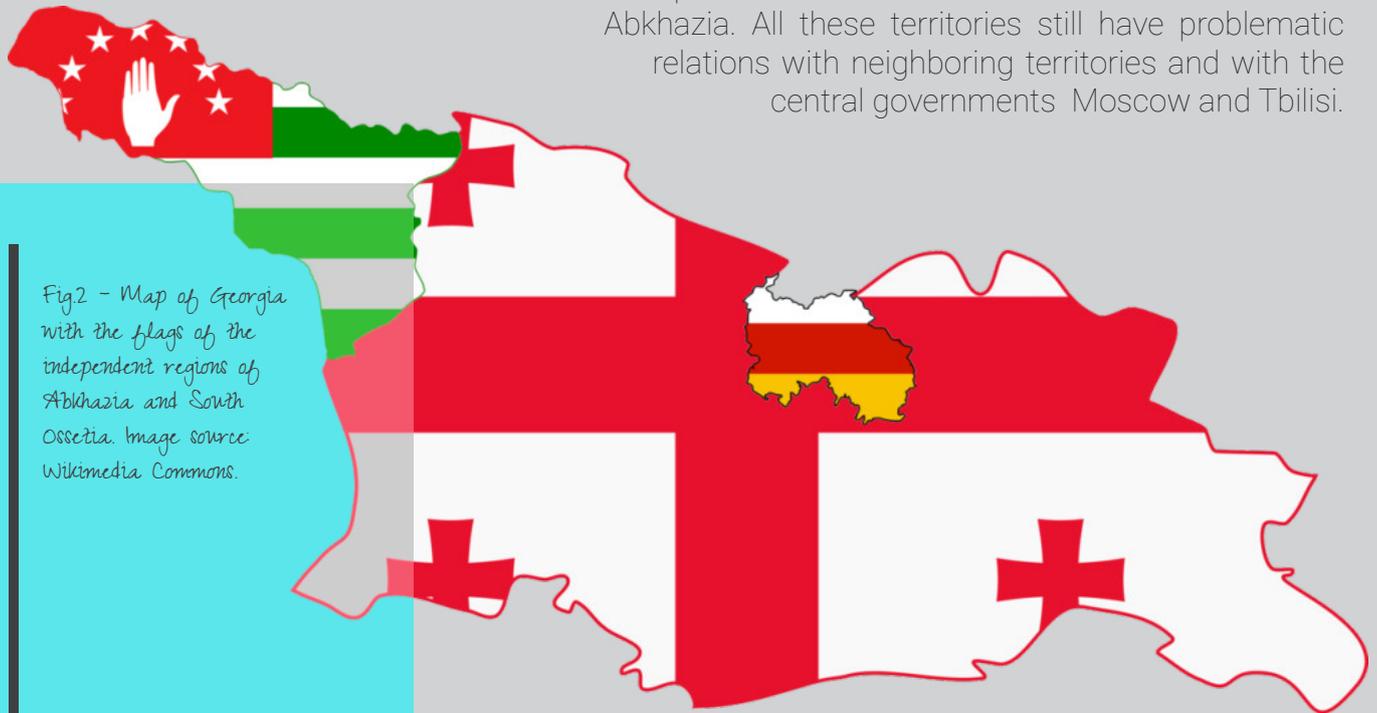


Fig.2 - Map of Georgia with the flags of the independent regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Image source: Wikimedia Commons.

Inter-ethnic violence and the devastation of the country's economy by successive military conflicts leads to constant political crises. As early as 1991, the elected president Zviad Gamsakhurdia is overthrown in a *coup d'état* led by opposition groups. A Military Council was formed under the leadership of Eduard Shevardnadze, former Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, who held the political control and ruled the country until 1995 as a de facto president. Since independence and during the early 1990s, Georgia has seen a Civil War motivated by both inter-ethnic conflicts and clashes between pro-Gamsakhurdia forces and Shevardnadze's supporters. Following the clashes, Shevardnadze's government imposes an increasingly repressive regime, relying on support from Russian troops to contain the people's rebellion. In December 1993, Gamsakhurdia dies under unclear circumstances. At the same time, the conflict in Abkhazia evolves as Georgia is progressively losing jurisdiction over the territory, which provokes in the Georgian opposition parties a violent reaction against the still president Shevardnadze

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE

Already in the 2000s, divergences get worse and disagreements between Georgia and Russia over the contested territories remain unresolved. The United Nations decide to withdraw the peacekeepers from Abkhazia, leading to increasing instability in the region. New presidential elections are held in 2003, with Shevardnadze getting victorious. The results of the polls are contested as suspicions of fraud are raised, being later confirmed,

leading to a popular uprising against the that became known as the "Rose Revolution." The main demands were the resignation of Shevardnadze and the holding of new elections. The 2003 demonstrations called for democratic political reforms and better economic conditions. President Shevardnadze and his party, who had progressively been losing popular support, were also losing the support of their allies, due to political differences. It is in this context that Mikheil Saakashvili, a former supporter of the president, becomes the desired successor and the active voice of the opposition and the revolution. He is seen as the only alternative to Shevardnadze's rule. As a result of the protests, Shevardnadze resigns. The historic presidential elections that followed in January 2004 lead to a landslide victory for Mikheil Saakashvili, who becomes president. A few months later, in March elections, Saakashvili's party wins a majority of parliamentary seats. The new government promises to transform the country.

Fig3 - Eduard Shevardnadze in 1981, when he was Secretary General of the Georgian Communist Party. Image source REUTERS/ Sergo Edisherashvili.



In fact, several measures were implemented that aimed to develop the country and bring it closer to the West, in order to contain Russian influence. Reforms initiated in the health and education systems, and investment was made in infrastructures and the military. However, accusations of corruption in the government continue, so as the separatist claims of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which have Russian military support. It is in this context that in 2008 Russia invades Georgia and an armed conflict between the various factions begins: it is known as the Five-Day War. The consequences of conflict are still present in the current days.

Mikheil SAAKASHVILI

FigA - Mikheil Saakashvili during the Rose Revolution in 2003. Image source: 2Anews.ge.



The following years were marked by protests and acts of civil disobedience against the government, many of them violently repressed by the police. Among the demands were freedom of the press and the media, which were mostly controlled by the government. In 2012, Saakashvili's party loses the elections to the party led by Bidzina Ivanishvili, one of the richest men in the country, who becomes prime minister. The political conjuncture of the next years will be dominated by these two parties, which constantly fight each other in the elections. In 2013, Giorgi Margvelashvili, a member of Ivanishvili's party, becomes president. Successive governments are facing accusations of usurpation of power, fraud and corruption. Protests and demonstrations add up. In 2018, with the election of the first female president, Dalome Zurabishvili, a new constitution is adopted: it transforms the presidential system into a parliamentary system, reserving the president a more symbolic role and granting legislative power to the parliament. In 2021, Saakashvili is arrested upon his return to the country after several years abroad in exile.

Georgia is a complex, multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, characterized by a confluence of geopolitical interests that constantly threaten its integrity and identity. The political class seems unable to free itself from an authoritarian historical legacy and the political chaos of the 1990s and early 2000s. Even with aspirations of integration into Western organizations such as the European Union and NATO, securing political independence and economic stability seems an impossible dream to fulfill.

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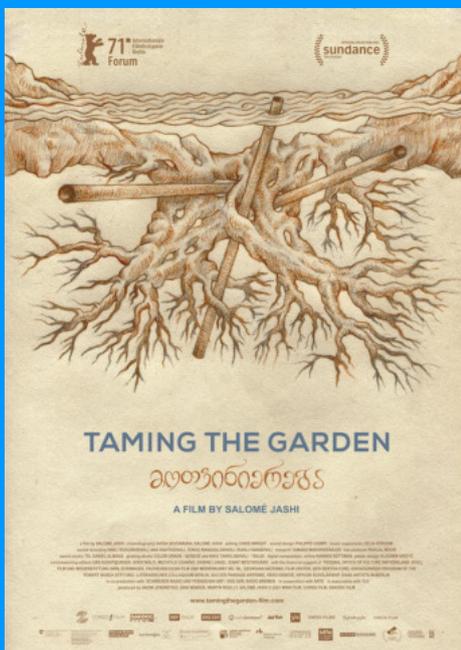
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10 MOVIE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT GEORGIA

Georgian cinema is characterized by its social realism, showing the world the complexity of both Georgian reality and identity. We present you a list of 10 films so you can take a cinematic journey through this country located in the Caucasus and find out more about all the history.

And Then We Danced და ჩვენ ვიცეკვით (2019)

In Tbilisi, a young man named Merab tries his luck as a professional dancer. The arrival of Irakli, a new dancer, transforms his life. In a mix of rivalry and sexual desire, the film is based on the dynamics of their relationship within the conservative society around them. Directed by Levan Akin in 2019, the film was nominated for the Queer Palm award at the Cannes Film Festival in the same year. In an interview, Keti Danelia, the film's producer, mentioned that the Ministry of Culture refused to fund the team's trip to Cannes because it contained homosexual scenes.



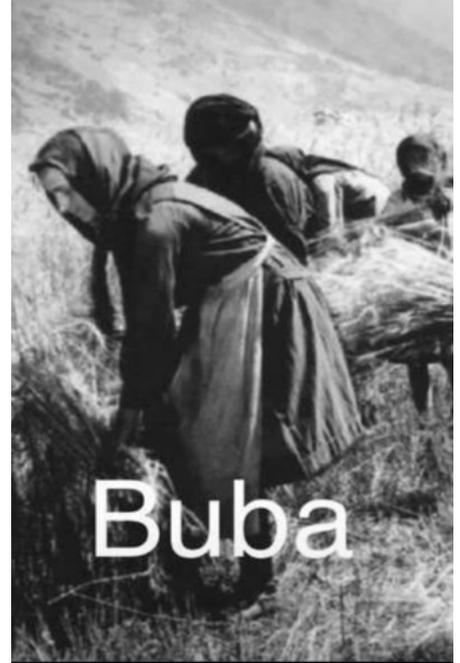
Taming The Garden მოტივირება (2021)

A co-production between Georgia and Germany, this documentary film is about former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili's luxurious hobby: collecting century-old trees. To do this, he removes the trees from their natural habitat in order to replant them in his park. The film is a critique of man's usurpation of power over nature, as much as it is a critique of the abuse of power of political leaders over Georgian society, historically. Trees are completely uprooted from their local communities, representing a political allegory that exposes capitalism and the oligarchic tendencies of the Georgian political elite. Directed by Salomé Jashi, it won several international awards.

Buba

Буба (1930)

Considered by some critics to be an ethnographic documentary, the film depicts life in the village of Buba, located in the mountainous region of Racha in western Georgia. The population is fully isolated and lives in poverty, despite Soviet Union's promises of progress. Buba (1930) results from the collaboration between filmmaker Nutsa Ghoghoberidze and artist David Kakabadze. With this film, Nutsa Ghoghoberidze became the first woman director in the Soviet Union.



film soviético en colores dirección: georgui shenguelala con: avto varazi

PIROSMANI



Pirosmani

ფიროსმანი (1969)

A biography of Georgian artist Niko Pirosmanishvili (1863 - 1918), this film directed by Giorgia Shengelaya depicts the painter's life, marked by dilemmas between artistic integrity and his physical survival. Pirosmani dies of starvation, for not being able to sell his art. The film received several international awards in the following years.

Caucasian Love

Элисо (1928)

The film depicts the story of Eliso, whose family is from a village in Chechnya forced to settle in Turkey in 1864 after the Russian Empire takes this region of the Caucasus and expels the Muslim population. Eliso falls in love with Vaija, from another village, Georgian and Christian. Directed by Nikoloz Shengelaia, the film shows another dimension of the ethnic and religious conflicts that mark the history of this region.





Wet Sand (2021)

In a village on the Black Sea coast, Eliko is found dead. Moe, his granddaughter, arrives to organize his funeral, but is confronted with people who, despite being friendly, hide her grandfather's true life and romantic adventures. Directed by Elene Naveriani, the film is a love story that questions prejudices and conservatism. Winner of the best film award at the Queer Lisbon Festival 2022.

Day Is Longer Than Night დღეს ღამე უთენებია (1984)

Directed by Lana Ghoghoberidze, daughter of the filmmaker Nutsa Ghoghoberidze, the film is a drama that follows Eva, a widowed woman living in a mountain village. Eva's life is marked by the political context of transition to communism and integration into the Soviet Union. The film was in the Cannes Film Festival competition in 1984.



Gogita's New Life გოგითას ახალი ცხოვრება (2016)

This documentary tragicomedy directed by Levan Koguashvili follows Gogita, who has recently been released from prison and is trying to find a direction for his new life: getting married and getting a house. However, Gogita faces some difficulties given his economic and familiar background. He meets Maka on the internet, an older woman with excellent cooking skills who is also looking for love. His mother does not approve the relationship, as Maka is not, in her opinion, a beautiful or attractive woman.



Tangerines

მანდარინები (2013)

The story follows Ivo, who lives in Abkhazia, one of Georgia's breakaway regions, in a village where most of the population is originally from Estonia. During the 1992 conflict, everyone decides to leave the village except Ivo and his friend Margus, in order to take care of the tangerines and eventually sell them. One day, he is confronted with the presence of two wounded fighters, and decides to welcome them into his home. Ahmed, on the one hand, is a Chechen Muslim mercenary; Niko, on the other hand, is a Georgian of the opposite faction. The film won the best foreign film award at the American Golden Globes in 2015.

Shindisi (2019)

It is a war film based on true events of the Russian military intervention in 2008. Shindisi is the name of the town in which Russian forces surrounded Georgian forces after their agreement to create a peace corridor. Locals unite to save the Georgian soldiers who survive despite all the risks. It has won several awards at international film festivals, such as the Transylvania International Film Festival in 2020.



VOLUNTEERING in GEORGIA?

DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE MOST AMAZING PLACES IN THIS COUNTRY!

In September 2022 I did my first international volunteering with Associação Mais Cidadania and the ESC – European Solidarity Corps program – for 2 weeks. After that experience I have to say that Georgia is a country that must be visited. Even if not in a volunteering experience, I believe you should give a chance to this wonderful country, which is completely a different reality than ours. "Andreea, but where to start?" - you ask me. Well, that's not where I started but I would recommend you the center of Tbilisi, the capital.

ANDREEA, BUT
WHERE TO START?



MOTHER OF GEORGIA

– is a monument erected on top of the Sololaki hill, representing a Georgian national character, consisting of a 20-meter sculpted woman, dressed in a typical Georgian costume, holding in her left hand a cup of wine representing greetings to those who come as friends, and in her right hand a sword to fight the enemies. You will find a splendid view and if you are lucky, you can also find musicians who know how to play the national anthem of your country on the accordion – based on my own experience – which made me feel completely amazed and very proud.

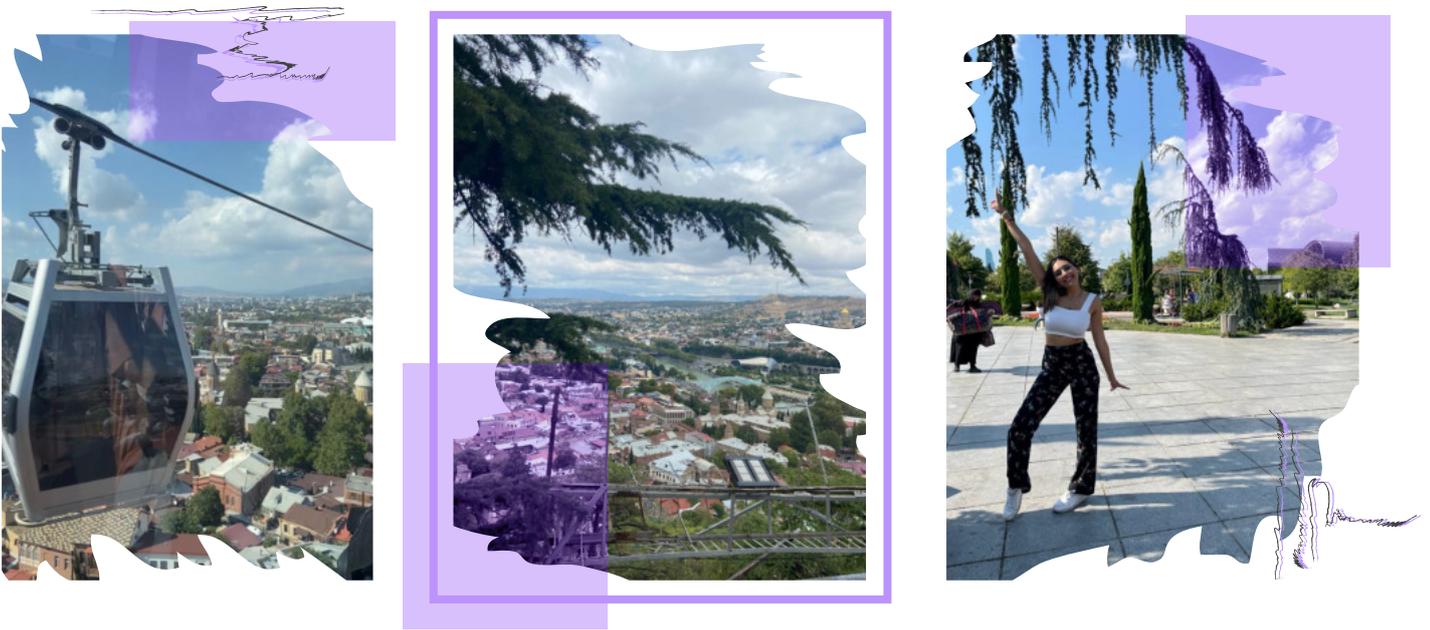
In this monument you can also find the Tbilisi Botanical Garden which has a collection of rare and quite magnificent plants, you can take a walk through this garden in the fresh air and I assure you it will completely invigorate your energies.

I strongly suggest to take the cable car to get to the top of the hill, because besides being accessible, it has an incredible view of the city and it's a unique feeling of flying over the capital.

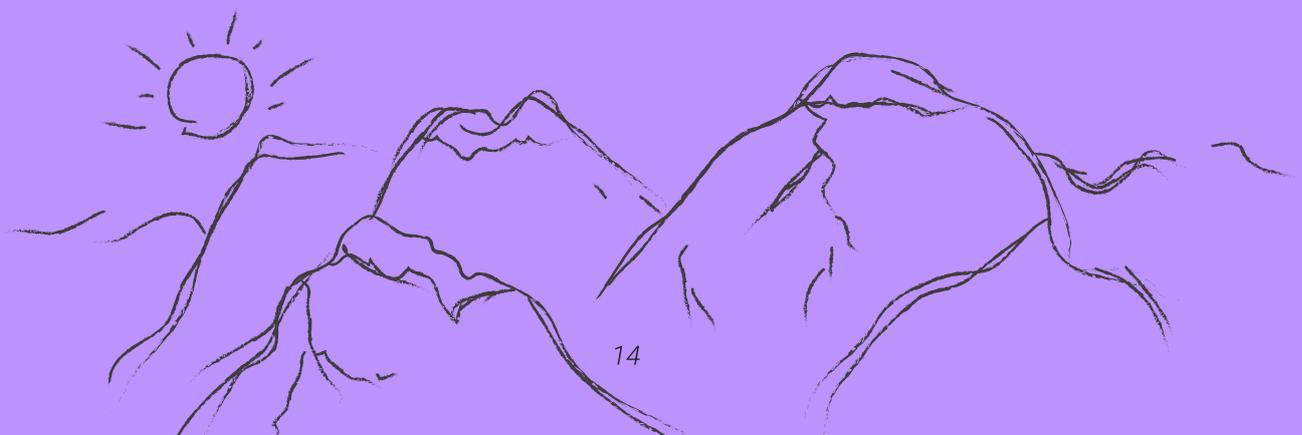


RIKE PARK – and I can't talk about *Mother of Georgia* without mentioning the park where you take the cable car to get there. I personally thought this park was gorgeous to die for. It is giant, super clean and has an impressive architectural beauty. This park, in the heart of the city is connected to the Old Town by *The Bridge of Peace* which is also an advisable place to visit!

You can find plenty of activities in this park, such as playing chess on the tables already set up, playing the grand piano there, and enjoying the many attractions such as the swings, the playgrounds, the artificial waterfalls, play on the climbing wall, getting lost in the labyrinth, or simply enjoying the fresh air in the garden and wandering around its cozy corners. If you want to be a little more adventurous, you can even ride in a hot air balloon and enjoy the Tbilisi air.



FREEDOM SQUARE – how about a visit to Liberty Square? This square is one of the main squares in Tbilisi and is one of the busiest in the city. I have to say that it is an immensely chaotic street, luxury stores, hotels, banks, cars and wedding limousines honking, all at the same time. But it is interesting to see. This street connects you to many sights in the city such as museums, cinemas, galleries, and shopping malls. If you are looking for souvenirs, you are in the perfect place, below this very square is an underground tunnel full of local stores with everything you can imagine, from socks, clothes, watches, to traditional food.



BATUMI

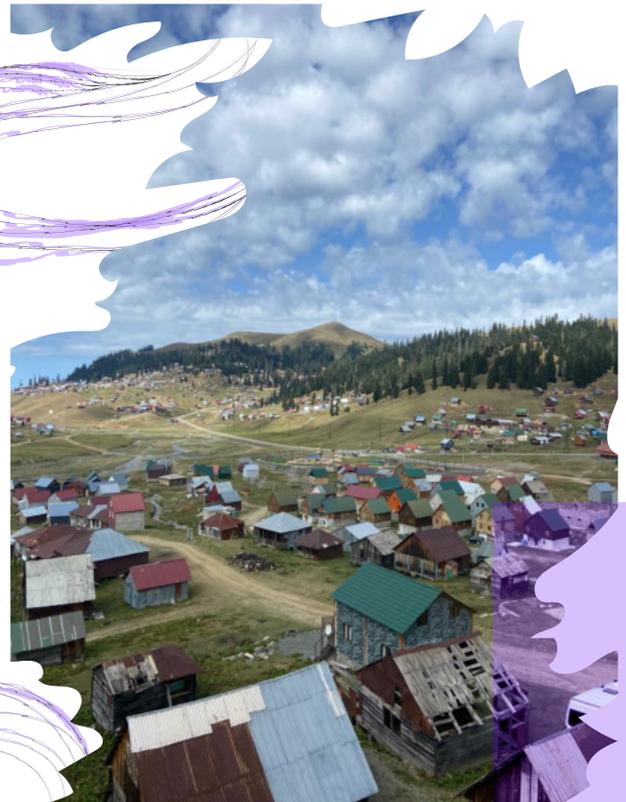
– A wonderful city surrounded by stunning beaches and surroundings to fall in love with. The main attraction here turns out to be the beaches bathed by the Black Sea, but I believe that the light and dynamic architecture of the city (especially the religious buildings) as well as the city's cuisine are aspects to contribute. *Batumi* is an important port on the southeast coast of the Black Sea and you can find a natural lake, which is part of the *Batumi Park*. A somewhat different reality than *Bakhmaro* but this town will leave you wanting more, trust me!

“

In case you take this trip, I hope with all my heart that you will make the most of this little piece of wonderful country with extraordinary people.

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In case you take this trip, I hope with all my heart that you will make the most of this little piece of wonderful country with extraordinary people. If you do, don't forget to send us your feedback and if you need more tips, count on me!



If you can go to West Georgia and enjoy the more rural parts of the country - which I frankly believe everyone who travels this country should do - I advise you to visit the mountains and the Black Sea.

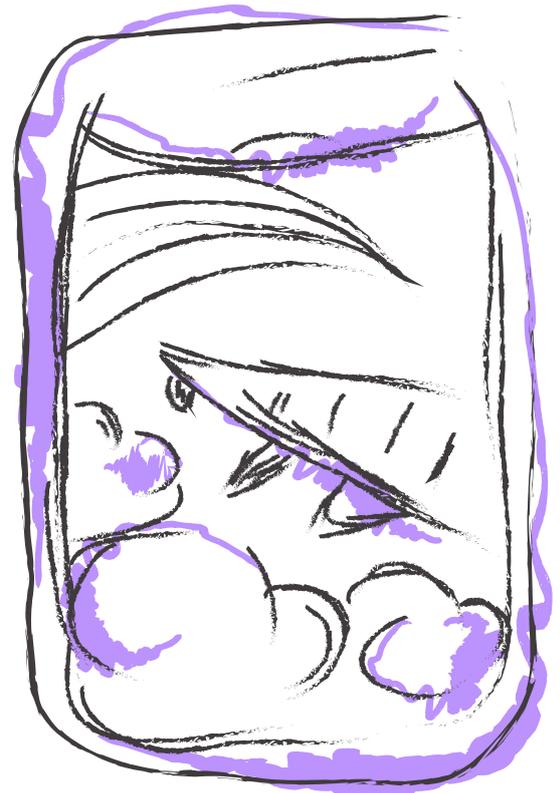


I ADVISE YOU TO
VISIT THE
MOUNTAINS
AND THE
BLACK SEA.

BAKHVARO is a mountain village in the Guria County and is situated near the Bakhvistsqali River. This trip for me was one of the best trips I made while in Georgia, I couldn't not mention this place. A cozy place with an amazing view and a peace of mind. I just wish you good luck until you get to the village, because for those who get carsick, the road can be a little extreme with too many curves.

This small resort is surrounded by forests and green woods and is a real detox for your mental health, I confess that for me it was. I visited the village during the summer, and it was wonderful, but I believe that the ideal time is winter because the village will be covered with snow, which is a considerable aspect to spend the festive seasons.

IT IS A
REAL
DETOX
FOR YOUR
MENTAL
HEALTH



KARTULI SAMZAREULO

JOURNEY TO THE GASTRONOMIC CENTER OF THE CAUCASUS: KARTULI SAMZAREULO

Traveling to Georgia and discovering the local cuisine was a surprise! When I was selected for the volunteering project, one of the first things I did was research about what I should try. I don't know if everyone does this, but I really enjoy discovering a country through its cuisine, the ingredients they use and how they prepare them.

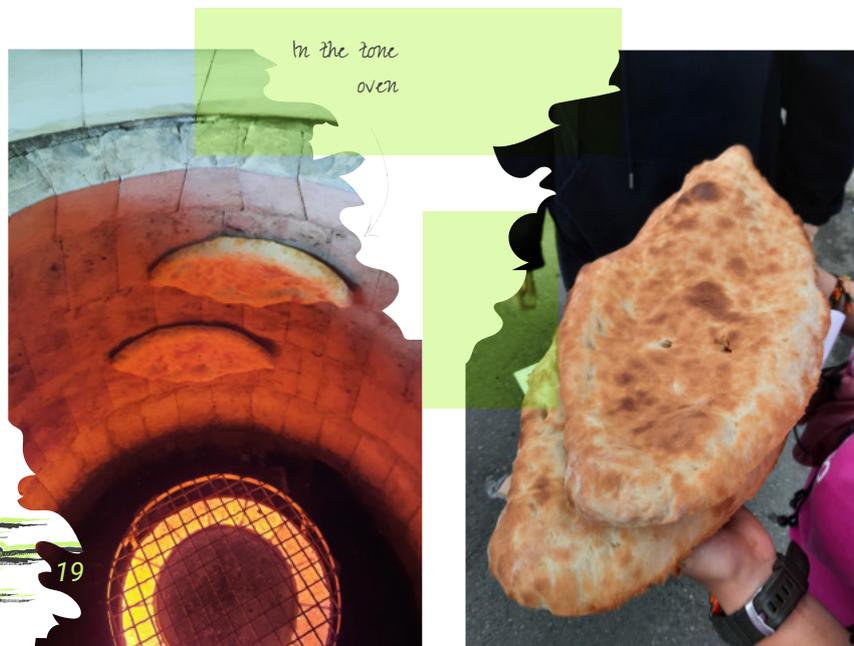
Fortunately I was lucky enough to fall in love with the intense flavor of the spices and the peculiar combinations of ingredients, like combining bread with mashed potatoes; I know the idea sounds strange, but the result is delicious!

Two weeks were certainly not enough to experience everything Georgia has to offer, but I still managed to taste some specialties that I already miss. So, I decided to write this article in the form of a guide (nothing pretentious on my part) and share with those who read this article a little bit of Georgian gastronomy that will certainly help, as it helped me too, to better understand the Georgian culture since gastronomy and mealtimes are such an important element of it.

Let's start with the basics: bread (puri / პური). My opinion here will be totally biased, I love bread! It is one of the best things in the world. However, since I can't write a dissertation on the combination of flour, water and a pinch of salt, I leave my top 4 here:

Walking through the streets of Ozurgeti in the late afternoon, we came across a bakery on one of the main streets in town, right next to the bazaar, that was baking this bread for dinner time and of course we took the opportunity to buy them and also to see how it was made. And why? Because unlike other breads we find in Georgia, this one is baked in a specific oven - the tone oven.

TONIS PURI



Mchadi

The *mchadi*, or cornbread, was given to us to taste by local volunteers, *Tamo* and *Tatuka*, who prepared this delicious bread for our intercultural dinner. The preparation is not very time consuming, the recipe is simple, with the exception of using carbonated mineral water in one of the steps. For cheese lovers I bring good news: the *mchadi* can (and should!) have the famous Sulguni cheese from the Samegrelo region in the dough.

Sulguni cheese

მჭადი



Ready to fry



Mchadi without cheese



Mchadi with cheese

Khachapuri

The simplest way to try to describe a Khachapuri is to call it bread with cheese or else a kind of Georgian pizza? Well, actually it is hard to describe what a khachapuri is because there is not just one way to make it, each Georgian region has its own version. By my count there are at least 7 different types of khachapuri and the one that caught my eye the most was the Achma that I had the opportunity to taste in Batumi when we visited the city. The Achma originates from the Abkhazia region and resembles lasagna in its shape, but is filled only with Sulguni or Imeruli cheese.

ახმა

The best known khachapuri and the one that comes up as soon as you type khachapuri is the adjaruli khachapuri from the Adjara region. It is shaped like a little boat and has a raw egg on top of the cheese. Although it was not my favorite, it is worth a try!

Achma



Preparing the Khachapuri



LOBIANI

Lobiani on the left
and khachapuri on
the right

Lobiani was my lunch for much of the two weeks we spent in Ozurgeti. This bread stuffed with a red bean paste is delicious and very cheap. If you go to a bakery you will find lobiani and other types of stuffed breads, such as kartopiliani (stuffed with potatoes) and even others stuffed with meat or mushrooms. In my opinion you should try them all, but if you can only choose one, I would definitely recommend the lobiani!



ლობიანი

After this tour through the world of Georgian bread, which I felt was pertinent to describe, since bread is an essential food in Georgian gastronomy, I will now talk about my three favorite dishes: khinkali, lobio, and Badrijani. They are three very different dishes and we don't find dishes like this in our gastronomy.

The last two: Lobio and Badrijani are based on beans and eggplant respectively. For those who turn their nose up when they see this type of food in a dish, I urge you to give both a chance, I promise you won't regret it, but be prepared for the intense flavors of the spices used.

KHINKALI

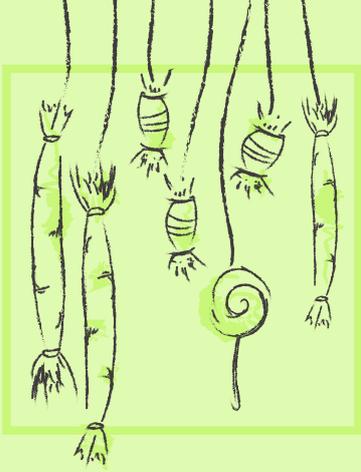
ხინკალი



Khinkali is a dough pastry, similar to a gyoza, in the shape of a little ball, usually filled with minced meat, although it can have other fillings such as mushrooms or spinach, and is then cooked in boiling water.

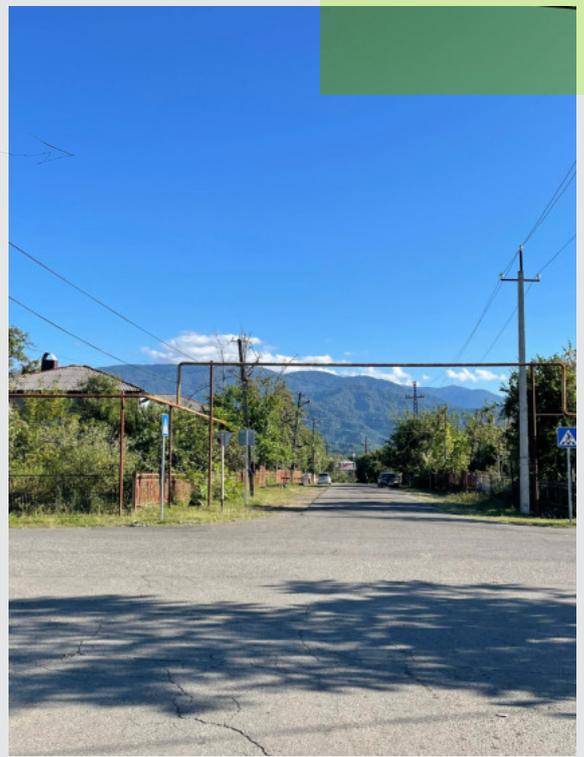
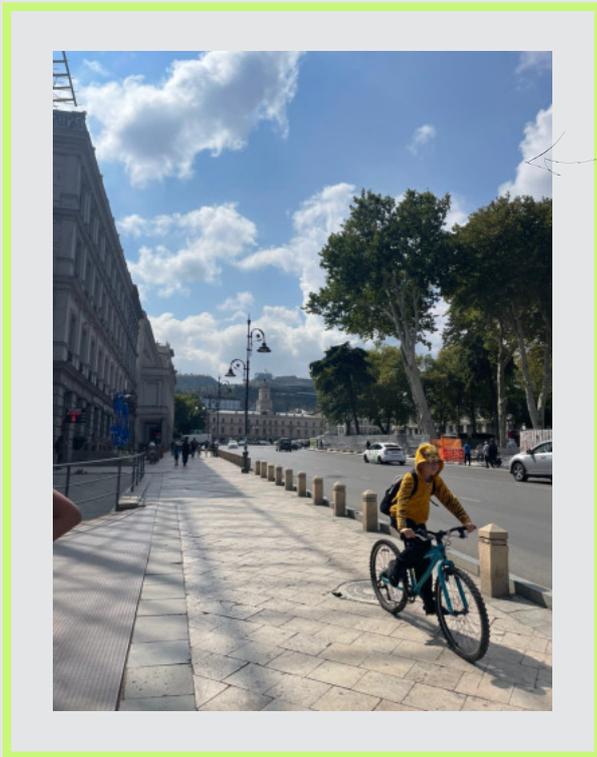
Eating khinkali is a process that should be taken seriously and the Georgian volunteers explained to us step by step how to eat khinkali like a local.

If this explanation does not enlighten you at all, I leave here a picture of my professionalism while trying a classical khinkali for the first time.



In conclusion, I think it makes sense to also mention churchkhela / ჩურჩხელა as it is such an emblematic symbol of both the culture and the Georgian cities themselves. Churchkhela is a candy prepared with dried fruits, usually nuts, that are placed on a string, which are then dipped in a mixture of grape juice and hot flour and set to dry. As you walk around Georgia, especially near markets, you will come across these candies displayed everywhere.

Photos taken by
DÉBORA PARRADO



This little text that turned into a food diary is just a small sample of what Georgia has to offer. In the two weeks I spent there I tried many things, but I missed tasting lots of delicacies, drinking Georgian wine and learning how to make some typical dishes, like the khinkalis, although I was told it takes a long time and a lot of strength. All this makes me really want to go back there one day. Of course, I would like to return not only because of the food, but I admit that it is a very strong aspect of Georgia.

UNTIL
NEXT TIME

Instructions on how to eat khinkali:

1. Making the difficult decision of how many we want and what flavors. Will 3 be enough? Do we play it safe and eat the classic or try a different flavor?
2. Control your enthusiasm while we wait for the order.
3. Wash your hands well.
4. When the khinkali arrives at the table, we grab it in the upper part which we are not supposed to eat (I think), and turn the khinkali upside down.
5. Next you take a little bite and drink all the juice that is inside the khinkali. Only then can you finally eat the khinkali.



khinkali for the first time



Lobio

ლობიო

Lobio (which means beans in Georgian) is a stew of red beans, usually served with *mchadi*. What makes this dish unique and comforting is the intense flavor of the herbs and spices used. Garlic, coriander and bay leaves, fenugreek and black pepper are not to be missed.



BADRIJANI

ბადრიჯანი

The *badrijani* has become one of my all-time favorite dishes even though I've only eaten it twice. I liked this combination of eggplant and walnut paste so much that the day before going home I went around all the supermarkets looking for the right spice mix to make it at home.



Finally... let's move on to the sweets, I'll be honest, I didn't taste many, but the *kada* / ქადა was, without a doubt, the best. It is not very easy to explain what *kada* is because each region has its own way of making it, thus changing some ingredients and the shape of the cookie, but if I tried to describe it with something familiar to our palate it would be the junction between a scone, because of its buttery consistency, and a cinnamon roll because of the filling.

Ponchiki / პონჩიკი, a kind of donuts filled with vanilla cream, are present throughout the Caucasus region and can be found in almost every pastry shop. Although it was not my favorite, I knew my family would like it and so on the day of my return I went to the pastry shop (where I was also going to buy *lobiani*) to bring them some 'fresh' *ponchiki* to taste.

FILLED WITH
VANILLA
CREAM



THE traditional GeORGIAN DANCE

IT'S CHARACTERISTICS AND MY EXPERIENCE WITH IT

In my first international volunteering I had the opportunity to get to know Georgia, and like every country, it has its own cultural specificity, which includes food, language, currency, dance, among other aspects. In this article I will talk about the Georgian traditional dance, its characteristics and my experience with it.

It is important to mention that Georgia is an ancient country, as well as its traditions and folk dancing. There are several Georgian dances, all with different names and purposes, yet they all share a common factor - lack of contact between the dancers, which ends up being very interesting to watch.

AMONG THE VARIOUS DANCES

THE KARTULI: a dance usually performed at weddings that show love and respect between the couple, which makes this type of dance very delicate and romantic. It is one of the oldest dances and that remains until today among Georgian dancing scene. The woman's hands should move slowly and her movements should be divine and full of emotion, as for the man, he should move with dignity and show respect and love to the woman. There are several details that if you pay attention make it more charming, the fact that the husband keeps his gaze on his bride to represent his fidelity, while her eyes are constantly looking down to show her shyness.



THE KHORUMI: a dance that evokes the battlefield and war, as Georgia is a country with many battles. The dancers are dressed in dark clothes and red belts, as well as wearing a red ribbon on their foreheads. The dance itself embodies the quest, the battle, and the celebration of the army's victory. The dancers demonstrate their courage in their fast and agile movements.



THE ACHARULI: this dance is full of energy and joy, and the dancers wear colorful and fun costumes. It is characterized by its elegance, softness, and the seduction between man and woman in its movements. Unlike the first dance I mentioned, this one is more informal and relaxed, a completely festive mood!

THE MTULURI: originated in the mountainous area of Georgia, it consists on a competition between two groups of dancers who "fight" through more difficult, faster, and more insightful movements, such as dancing on their toes or knees. Then there is a moment for the other group of dancers. In the end, there is great unity between the groups as they all dance together.



WE LEARNED THIS DANCE FROM ONE OF THE GIRLS FROM THE ORPHANAGE WHERE WE DID OUR VOLUNTEERING, WHO WHILE TEACHING US SHOWED HER JOY AND THE PLEASURE SHE HAD WHILE DANCING. LEARNING SOME STEPS OF THIS DANCE WAS NOT EASY BECAUSE IT WAS A LITTLE TOO FAST (A BIT LIKE ALL GEORGIAN DANCES), BUT IT WAS A VERY INTERESTING AND PLEASANT EXPERIENCE, WHICH WE WILL CARRY WITH US FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS WITH MUCH AFFECTION.



Photos
taken by
DÉBORA PARRADO



THE PARTSA: started in Guria (the region where I did my volunteering, which is in the west of the country) and this is characterized by faster steps, rhythm, and a festive and colorful atmosphere. So this is also a very fast dance. The dancers are lifted through the air as if they were flying, and they combine movements with each other in a very agile way.



THE KAZBEGURI: this dance is solo performed by a single dancer and portrays the dedication and courage of the people of the Caucasus Mountains, so it resembles the men from mountains in a cold climate and in a harsh environment. It is a very powerful dance, and also involves rigorous movements with the body and the feet themselves. The dancer usually wears a dark suit and a pair of boots and a winter hat.

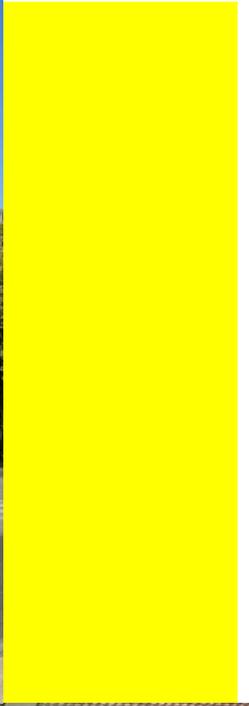
**THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHERS,
OF COURSE. SOME
VOLUNTEERS AND I HAD THE
OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN
SOME ADJARIAN STEPS, A
DANCE IN WHICH THE MAN
TRIES TO GET THE WOMAN'S
ATTENTION BUT SHE
PLAYFULLY AND PROUDLY
AVOIDS HIM.**



Georgia through pictures

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY DÉBORA PARRADO





An online platform of communication

PLATFORM THAT STRENGTHENS THE AZOREAN CULTURE AMONG EMIGRANTS AND THE ARCHIPELAGO

An American project that brings Azorean emigrant families back to the archipelago represents a new milestone in the regional media communication channels. "It is important that Azorean descendants have even more knowledge of other aspects of the Azores," emphasizes President Professor Diniz Borges of Fresno University in California.



Azores-Diaspora Media Alliance platform, with elements alluding to the Azores archipelago and the United States of America

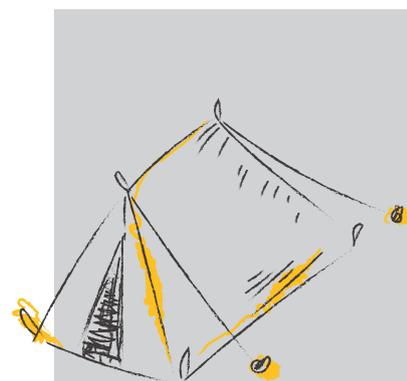
“

It is important that Azorean descendants have even more knowledge of other aspects of the Azores

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THE COMMUNICATION has always been a human need. From the most primitive means such as cave paintings (40,000 B.C.) to the most modern ones such as the Internet (1969), as well as the more individual ones such as letters and mail to the mass ones such as radio and television. These tools allow the exchange of information, ideas, values and events, and have a fundamental role in the evolution of humanity. They are essential in society because they represent and disseminate the reality, the culture, and the essence of mankind throughout the world. As Gerald Ford, 38th President of the United States of America, used to say, "Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively".

Portugal is a country that, due to its geopolitical situation, is traditionally faced with a great reality of emigration. Those who emigrate are the most energetic and the most stubbornly determined, the rest survive on rare stable wills and the a few virile arms. The Azores, as an ultra-peripheric region, has a high emigration rate, and therefore media is of supreme importance. It is through the media that contact is established with the outside world, fighting the loneliness that comes from its isolation from the rest of the world.



THE AZOREAN DAILY LIFE is faced with draining gray winters and salty, radiant summers. Among this plurality of adventures, however, emigration occupies a large part of the memories of Azorean families. There are 4.5 million Portuguese living abroad, and about 1.5 million are Azorean emigrants. About 250 thousand people live in the Azores, creating a sense of the importance of the Azorean Diaspora for the archipelago. The meaning of Diaspora refers to the dispersion of a people in different places. In this way, it highlights the large number of people who take with them the pain of the hydrangeas and the burning of the boilers to start a new life outside their homeland. For a region that lives so isolated, the means of communication are extremely important to maintain favorable relations between the islands and the world.

**"I MISS SO MUCH THE ISLAND
WHERE I NO LONGER LIVE,
THAT WHEN I'M OLD
I ONLY DRINK THE DROOL
OFF THE LITTLE TEARS I CRY"**

recited nostalgically Vitorino Nemésio, a poet from Terceira's Island. The homesickness for the breeze of the Islands are felt by everyone, from university students to emigrants from the other side of the globe with the same intensity of silence and monotony experienced by those who in contrast rarely leave the Atlantic.

THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA were the main emigration destinations chosen by Azoreans. There are many families that are divided between both countries, manifesting their culture in their daily lives. The Azorean Diaspora brings the world closer to the archipelago, spreading the language, culture and traditions to different places through the celebration of the regional culture. The Carnival dances, comedies, and skits accompanied by traditional music that fill the Casas do Povo in mid-February, are a generous example of a tradition that represents the population. "Carnaval da Saudade" was the show brought by the Californians to the archipelago in Carnival 2017.

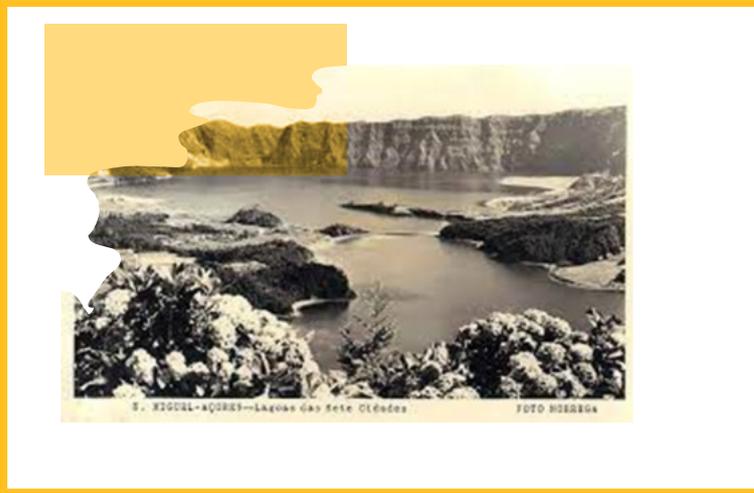
At this juncture, Professor Diniz Borges, president of the Portuguese Beyond Borders Institute (PBBI), a center for cultural interaction and dissemination at Fresno State University in California, gives us his testimony on the importance of communication in the Azorean Diaspora. "The media have played a very important role in spreading Azoreanness across the archipelago, echoing and providing space for reflection of the Azorean spirit in other lands," he says.

Born on Terceira Island, he emigrated to California at the age of 10 and began his career in communications at the age of 18 with the radio program "Voz do Emigrante Português" (Voice of the Portuguese Emigrant). With a degree in Political Science and Literary Studies and a Master's in Humanities, he now announces his new project Azores-Diaspora Media Alliance (ADMA).



Diniz Borges, Professor at the University of Fresno, California

This project aims to broaden exchanges through collective efforts, open horizons, and appease the nostalgia of the emigrant generation, while giving national and regional visibility. At the same time, it meets the new challenges of modern communication in relation to new technologies and access to information. It is intended that Mainland Portugal and the Azores increasingly unite with their Diaspora resulting in the absorption of mutual knowledge.



Postcard from
S.MIGUEL VAQUINHA

COMMUNICATIONS through media such as radio, newspaper, internet, and television facilitate and manifest the feeling of union by breaking distance boundaries. The value of their size and influence is enough to justify the need to enhance them both in the archipelago and in the Diaspora. Promoting, in this way, the development of journalism and different careers in communication for young people.

"It's very important to move towards having other opportunities for young people who want to enter journalism on both sides of the Atlantic. We have to find economic mechanisms that bring young people that opportunity. Moreover, it would be important to create conditions for Azorean journalists to participate more and more in issues of the American and Canadian worlds, from panels to debates, as well as for journalists from the diaspora to have this opportunity in the Azores," says Diniz Borges.



Carnival ball



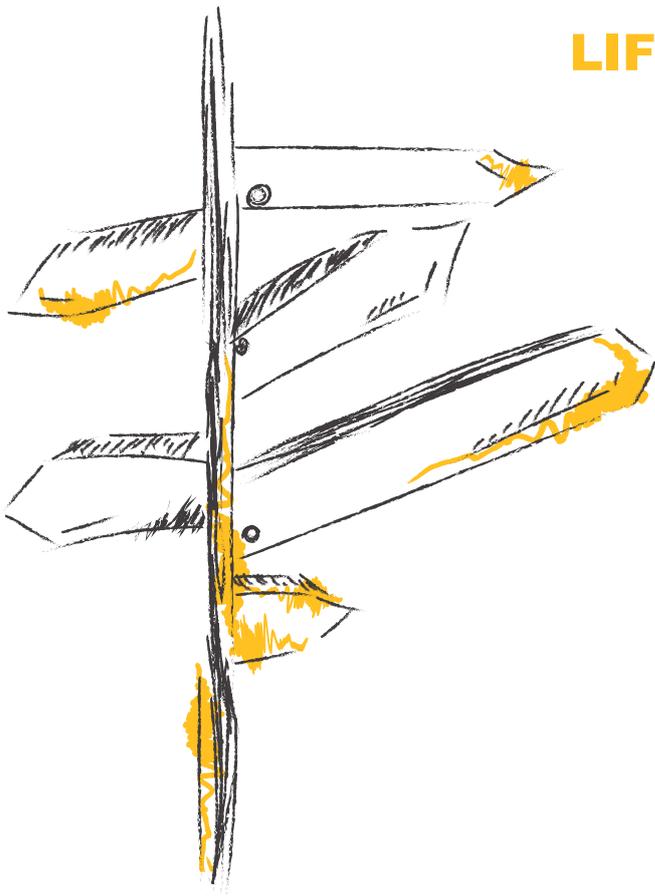
San Joaninas
Terceira Island

Azores-Diaspora Media Alliance is a major milestone in regional and national communication. It calls for the collaboration and growth of Azorean media preserving and strengthening journalism in future generations. Uniting all Azoreans and their descendants, with black basalt in their blood, back to the heart of the Atlantic.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT AZOREAN DESCENDANTS GET TO KNOW EVEN MORE ABOUT OTHER ASPECTS OF THE

ADMA comes as a result of joining efforts to bring together the Azorean media and the Azorean Diaspora promoted by the Azorean Government, through the Regional Directorate of the Community. This project, which is open to all Azorean media, aims to bring them together on a platform that shares different initiatives aimed at a better understanding of both sides of the Atlantic. The project includes meetings held first in the Azores, in Ponta Delgada, and later in the United States, in New England. "It's important that Azorean descendants get to know even more about other aspects of the Azores, from literature to gastronomy, from music to theater, from landscape to life," says the professor.

AZORES, FROM LITERATURE TO GASTRONOMY, FROM MUSIC TO THEATER, FROM LANDSCAPE TO LIFE



ADMA HAS THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

- 1
Create spaces that allow ADMA members to network and discuss professional issues on both sides of the Atlantic,
- 2
To promote broad coverage of the Azorean Diaspora, in all its multiplicities, and to bring to the Diaspora, particularly to the second, third and successive generations, a better knowledge of today's Azores,
- 3
To provide contacts and sources of information between journalists and media groups based in the Azores and in the Diaspora,
- 4
Encouraging youth on both sides of the Atlantic to pursue careers in journalism, including the possibility of creating spaces for interns from the Azores in the US and Canada and vice versa,
- 5
Advocate for reciprocal cooperation that builds on the experience and commonalities that unite the media in the Azores and the Diaspora,
- 6
Establishing contacts between the American and Canadian academic world and the Diaspora and Azorean media, enabling media professionals to participate in new forums for debate and training,
- 7
Generate, through the various communication platforms, new content aimed at Azorean-descendants who do not communicate in Portuguese.



Associação
MAIS
CIDADANIA