

FROM JUTA TO ROSHKA via Chaukhi pass

Duration: 1-2 days

The hike can take one or two days, depending on how you plan it. I will focus on the 1-day version of the trek which takes 8-9 hours and starts in Juta. Starting in Roshka, it's almost impossible to finish this hike in a day.

Difficulty: Moderate

It's a long hike, but you will be gaining elevation quite slowly (from Juta side) and the path is well-trodden. From Roshka direction, I would rate it as Hard.

Accommodation:

If you go for 1-day version, you can sleep in the guesthouse in Roshka. Otherwise, you will need a tent.

Which way to hike:

I recommend Juta - Roshka direction; the trek is less strenuous this way as Juta lies higher by almost 400 meters. You also ascend more slowly, walking up the long valley. There is only one steeper section before you reach the pass.

If you want to climb to the pass from Roshka side, prepare yourself for the arduous ascent from Abudelaury lakes.

When to go:

Chaukhi pass is one of the highest and steepest "tourist" passes in Georgia and therefore remains inaccessible longer than the others. It becomes passable in the second half of June (the exact date differs year from a year) and even then you will have to tackle the substantial amount of the leftover snow.

Overall, the best period for this hike is from the beginning of July till the end of September. If you are lucky with the weather, you can have a nice hike even in first weeks of October. Later usually come first severe snowfalls which block the pass till the next season.

How to get to Juta:

There is no public transport, so probably the best option for solo hikers and couples is the daily bus arranged by Mountain Freaks agency. It depart at 8:30 from their office (colorful building little south of the main square in Kazbegi) and return at 17:00. Price of the return ticket is 25 GEL and the bus departs when there are three passengers.

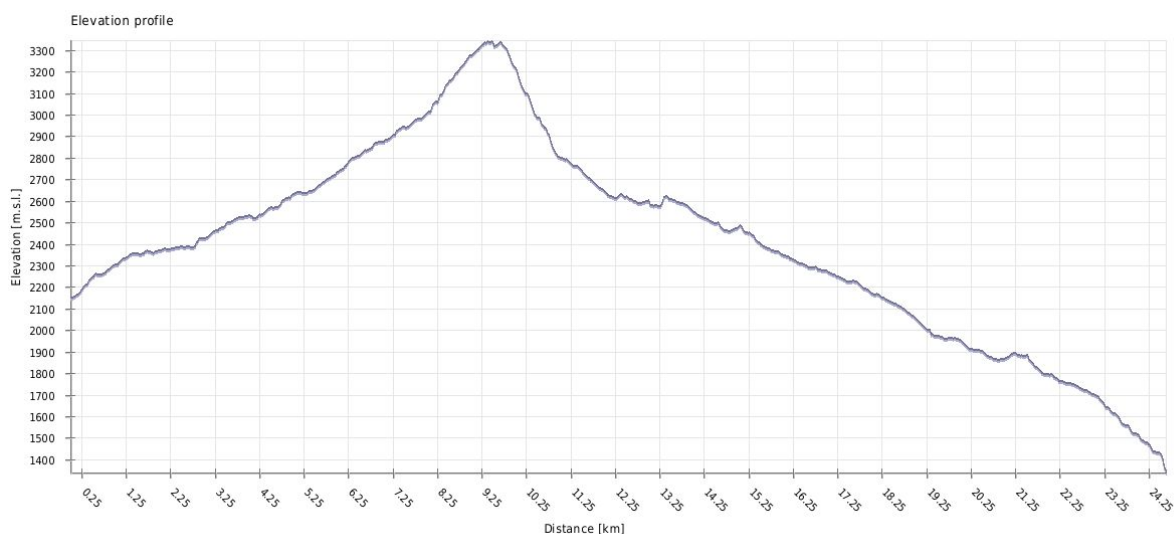
Larger groups may prefer a private taxi - ask the owner of your guesthouse or people at the main square. Price for the one-way trip is 40-50 GEL and the ride takes 45 minutes. Finally, if you want to walk by foot, from Kazbegi its almost 4 hours of walking (17 km)

How to leave Roshka:

Leaving Roshka may be tricky as there is no public transport - you will have to walk around a village and ask for a driver. It took us half of an hour until some villager called a guy who drove us to Barisakho. It did cost us 60 GEL, but it was the only option as we wanted to catch a bus to Tbilisi on the next day. But if you have more time, I recommend walking all the way to Barisakho. Also this route is recorded in a gpx log.

In Barisakho, there is daily marshrutka departing to Tbilisi at 9 am. If you want to continue north to Shatili, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, there is a marshrutka from Tbilisi passing the village before noon. Only other options are paying for a ride or hitchhiking.

If you need to return to Juta and don't want to use the same route, you can get there [through the Arkhoti valley](#).



Description of the route

The driver will drop you at the beginning of Jura by a huge hiking map of the area, the courtesy of Polish trekkers - the route is marked by blue marks. Cross the bridge and turn right onto a small track, which climbs uphill. After some 15 minutes, you will come to Zeta camp. The trail from here continues to the newly built "5 seasons" camp / restaurant. From here, it mostly traverses the eastern side of the valley, crosses the river (no bridge, you will have to ford it) and heads directly towards striking green/yellow tent. After a closer look, you see it's another pub and lies on the bank of small, artificially created lake - things really changed up there in the last few years.

Keep walking, pass several more or less dirty campground. Valley here bends to the east, you will have to cross several smaller streams on your way. At the end of the valley, the path turns to the south and there is a steep climb - then there are another 20 minutes of walk to the actual Chaukhi pass.

Chaukhi pass is a great viewing point and also a place to have a lunch. Walk from Jura takes over 4 hours so it should be around noon when you get there. After the break, you need to descend into the valley. It's quite pleasant as the terrain is loose, so you are descending and sliding at the same time. But I would hate having to climb this way.

2016 edit: Climb from Roshka side is every inch as tricky as I expected. Not only it is very steep, but the trail is often made of very soft rubble, which slides down at every step. So you have to climb at the edges of the trail, where the terrain is a bit more solid.

Once you are done with the steepest descent, the terrain becomes harder to navigate. The path first follows small depression, then sharply turns to the right and leads you towards Abudelauri lakes. There are three of them, but we found only 2 - white one is little more south from the marked path. All three lakes are visible from the Chaukhi pass.

Continue down the valley. To the left, you will see so-called "Roshka stones" - wandering boulders, that have been brought here by glaciers from Chaukhi massif during the last Ice Age. Also, you see an ugly road (I know, I know, it's important) being built in the direction of Arkhoti valley.

The route here is clearly visible, but it's quite a walk - you will need another 2 or 3 hours to get to the Roshka village.

The 2-day alternative of the trek

Beginning as a one-day variant, but you don't have to make it to Roshka. Break a camp near Abudelaury lakes, there is one beautiful spot above green one, between the rocks.

On the next day walk to Roshka, cross the bridge and follow the tourist pointer - trail follows the dirt road to the right, past the small barricade. Descent a bit into the hogweed jungle below the ancient toilet, trail here turns into the footpath again. You traverse the valley on a nice rocky trail and end up in another field of hogweeds. Ahead, you see a small hill with trees on top. Circumvent it from the right side - trail here may be overgrown but should appear again at its other side.

From there, it's straightforward. Follow the trail. First, it's descending slowly, then a steep serpentine finally takes you down to the river. There is a bridge - some wooden planks look a bit suspicious, so be careful here. You will emerge on the main road to Shatili close to the bridge over Aragvi river. Walk from Roshka to the main road is 5 km long and should take no more than 1,5 hours.

From Juta to Roshka

