

**When visiting a foreign country, it is important to respect the local customs, even if you find them amusing or downright absurd. This is the key to a pleasant stay. We have prepared this guide to help you avoid conflicts.**

1. Women should refrain from wearing short skirts, dresses, shorts or revealing necklines.
2. Swimwear is only appropriate on the beach.
3. Avoid discussing the conflict with Georgia or expressing support for the Georgians with locals.
4. Speak politely and respectfully to Abkhazians and avoid arguments. Although the locals are friendly, they can be very short-tempered. Any argument could escalate into a serious altercation.
5. It is best to walk around during the day and avoid going out after dark, or stick to well-lit tourist areas.
6. Men are advised not to wear earrings or other facial jewellery (such as eyebrow, lip or nose piercings) as this may provoke aggression from local men.
7. Hitchhiking is uncommon in Abkhazia; if you try to hitch a ride, you may at best be misunderstood.

**Abkhazian traditions and etiquette:**

1. To avoid being perceived as rude or impolite and to prevent conflicts, make an effort to learn basic etiquette norms.
2. When someone new enters a room, stand up and greet them. This shows respect, even if you do not know the person. Show respect and deference to elders, avoiding arguments or interruptions.
3. In Abkhazia, it is customary to use the informal "you" rather than the formal "you." However, people do inquire about each other's well-being when they meet. A man should greet a woman first, and an elder should greet a younger person first.
4. When invited to someone's home, remember that the host should be the first to cross the threshold. The host will insist that you go in first but will eventually yield.
5. At a festive meal, seating arrangements are based on age hierarchy, and the meal should only start after the eldest person gives the signal to begin.
6. Treat nature with respect. For the locals, the mountains are like a sacred place—do not curse, speak loudly, disrobe, litter, or swim in mountain rivers and lakes.
7. Abkhazians are very reserved in showing affection, and public displays of kissing or hugging are not customary.
8. If you face difficulties and are offered help, politely decline, even if you need it. However, do not worry; no Abkhazian will leave you in trouble—they will insist on their offer. After some hesitation, you may accept their help.

**We hope that your time in Abkhazia will be filled with only positive experiences.**