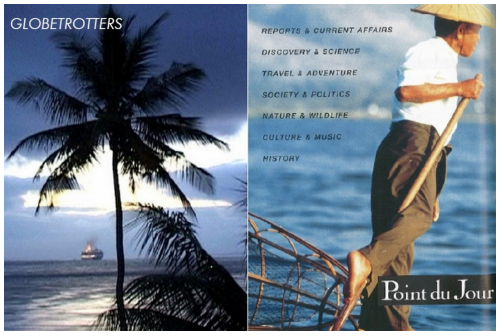



# GEORGIA: TEA

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The hills in the autonomous Republic of Adzharia (Georgia) are covered by tea plants. Over a century ago, Chinese adventurers brought the seeds. The subtropical climate proved to be excellent and tea growing flourished. In the times of the former USSR, the plantations supplied the enormous need of 15 republics. But at independence, in 1992, all state subsidies were cancelled, the plantations abandoned. Today, a bunch of die-hards fight to keep up the tradition of their black gold, the Colchide tea, one of the best in the world. Vaktang Kutubidze, an eminent science professor at Georgia University, continues to believe in this brand of tea - the result of almost one century's research... in the face of the steady progress made by anonymous tea bags.

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