



# THE REPUBLIC OF ABKHAZIA

**The Republic of Abkhazia** (Apsny) is a country with a territory of 8.6 thousand square kilometers, which is situated on the east coast of the Black Sea. The climate in the coastal area is humid and subtropical. Most of the territory is occupied by mountains. The population consists of more than 240 thousand people who belong to the Abkhazian, Armenian, Georgian, Russian and other ethnic groups. Among religious people, Orthodox Christians predominate.

The Abkhazians are an ancient indigenous people of the eastern Black Sea coast. Their language belongs to the West Caucasian group of languages. In the first century BC, Abkhazia became part of the Roman Empire.

# ABKHAZIA COINS

Christianity on the territory of Abkhazia was preached by the Holy Apostles Simon the Zealot and Andrew the First-Called. In the 4th-6th century, it became the official religion of Abkhazia. The first states on the territory of Abkhazia came to exist in the 1st and 2nd century. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the Abkhazian Kingdom emerged after the consolidation of early feudal principalities. It united within its borders not only the Abkhazian but also Georgian, Adyghe and some other peoples of the Caucasus.

Since then, the Abkhazian statehood has existed in various forms to this day. The modern Republic of Abkhazia was established on the territory of the former Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many years of national struggle for liberation preceded

the establishment of the modern Republic of Abkhazia. Its independence was recognized by Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela and a number of other states. The process of further international recognition is ongoing.

Abkhazia is a presidential republic. The legislative branch is represented by a unicameral Parliament. Several political parties exist in the state. The city of Sukhum is the capital of Abkhazia.

Monetary circulation on the territory of Abkhazia is more than 2.5 thousand years old. In different periods, coins of the Colchis were in use here, as well as coins from different Greek city-states, the Bosporan Kingdom, the Roman Empire, Byzantium, Parthia, Sassanid Iran, the Arab Caliphate, the Abkhazian Kingdom, the Georgian states, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

The National Bank of Abkhazia has been issuing commemorative and investment coins since 2008. The coins have their own denomination which is called “Apsar”.

By the end of 2017, more than 60 kinds of commemorative gold, silver and steel coins with brass plating have been minted. The mintage is carried out at the request of the National Bank of Abkhazia at the Russian mints of Goznak.

Most coins are dedicated to the historical monuments and the distinguished personalities of Abkhazia.

In the modern history of Abkhazia, one of the most tragic events was the Georgian-Abkhazian War of 1992-1993, which lasted for more than a year. Thousands of people died, and the Republic suffered an irreparable loss. Dedicated to this war, which Abkhazia calls the patriotic war, is the commemorative coin series called the “Patriotic War of the People of Abkhazia of 1992-1993”.

The coin Aiaaira, which in Abkhazian means “Victory”, is one of the most popular coins of this series. On a matte background, there is a three-dimensional image of a warrior with a banner. Along the circumference, above the warrior’s image, there are inscriptions in the Abkhazian language – “Aiaaira” and the dates “1992” and “1993”. All inscriptions and the image of the warrior with a banner have a mirror image.



AIAAIRA

Series	Patriotic War 1992-1993
Date of issue	02-09-2013
Denomination:	50 apsar
Composition:	Gold 999
Weight:	15.55 grams
Diameter:	30 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Uncirculated
Mintage	1 000
Artist	Djapua B.R., Erokhin B.M.
Price	1200 \$

The main coin of this series is the coin dedicated to the First President of Abkhazia, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Abkhazia Vladislav Ardzinba. Vladislav Ardzinba was an important academic, historian-orientalist and Doctor of Historical Sciences. He became the leader of the nation and the founder of the modern Abkhazian state.

The coin was issued in 2013. 999 coins were issued in silver, 499 in silver with selective gilding, and only 99 in gold.



VLADISLAV ARDZINBA

Series	Patriotic War 1992-1993
Date of issue	02-09-2013
Denomination:	50 apsar
Composition:	Gold 999
Weight:	15.55 grams
Diameter:	30 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	99
Artist	Djapua B.R.
Price	1 500 \$

The series “Patriotic War of the People of Abkhazia of 1992-1993” is continued by coins dedicated to the hero-cities of Abkhazia: Gagra, Gudauta, Tkuarchal. The cities that have done a lot to win the war and the independence of Abkhazia.



20 YEARS OF LIBERATION  
OF THE TOWN OF GAGRA



HERO  
CITY GUDAUTA



THE HERO  
CITY TKUARCHAL

Series	Patriotic War 1992-1993
Date of issue	01-10-2012
Denomination:	10 apsar
Composition:	Silver 925
Weight:	33.94 grams
Diameter:	39 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	499
Artist	Djapua B.R.
Price	150 \$

Series	Patriotic War 1992-1993
Date of issue	24-06-2013
Denomination:	10 apsar
Composition:	Silver 925
Weight:	33.94 grams
Diameter:	39 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Saint Petersburg Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	499
Artist	Djapua B.R.
Price	150 \$

Series	Patriotic War 1992-1993
Date of issue	24-06-2013
Denomination:	10 apsar
Composition:	Silver 925
Weight:	33.94 grams
Diameter:	39 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Saint Petersburg Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	499
Artist	Djapua B.R.
Price	150 \$

In 2016, the Bank of Abkhazia issued a coin dedicated to the capital of Abkhazia, which started a new series “The cities of Abkhazia”.

The issue of the coin was timed to the anniversary of the city of Sukhum – 2500 years since it was established. Sukhum is one of the oldest cities of the world. The exact date it was established cannot be determined. In the 6th century BC, Greek merchants from Miletus founded a colony of Dioscuriad (Dioscuria), naming it after the brothers Dioscuri, participants of the Argonauts’ expedition to Colchis. In year 65 BC, the Romans founded the fortress of Sebastopolis on the site of the Greek colony. During its history, the city changed its names a few times: Dioscuriada, Sebastopolis, Tskhum, Sukhum-kale, Sukhum. The Abkhazian name of the capital is Akua.

The commemorative coin Akua is made of silver in the amount of one thousand pieces and also of silver with selective gilding in the amount of five hundred pieces. It depicts a relief building of the city administration, the clock tower, which is a symbol of the city. In the upper right part, there are images of the hats of the Dioscuri – symbols of an Abkhazian reigning house.



AKUA

Series	Cities of Abkhazia
Date of issue	30-06-2016
Denomination:	10 apsar
Composition:	Silver 925, Gold 999
Weight:	33.94 grams
Diameter:	39 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	500
Artist	Gablia R.T.
Price	250 \$

Fazil Iskander was a world-famous writer, philosopher and sage. For many people, Abkhazia is associated with the works of Fazil Iskander. His Homeland became a developed metaphor in his writings. Fazil Iskander is greatly loved both in Abkhazia, his home, Russia and all over the world. The coin, which is dedicated to his 80th birthday, was issued in 2009 with a mintage of one thousand pieces. It was sold out in a few months after the issue date.



FAZIL ISKANDER

Series	The outstanding people of Abkhazia
Date of issue	06-05-2009
Denomination:	10 apsar
Composition:	Silver 925
Weight:	33.94 grams
Diameter:	39 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	999
Artist	Djapua B.R.
Price	300 \$

Alexander Chachba (1867-1968) was a prince, a descendant of the ruling family of the Abkhazian Kingdom, locum tenens of the princely throne of Abkhazia (1918-1968). Alexander Chachba was an interesting and extraordinary person, who left his mark not only in the history and culture of Abkhazia, but also in the cultural life of Russia and Europe of that time. He was a professional artist, art historian and art critic. At the start of the twentieth century, he was one of the most famous stage designers in the Petersburg imperial theaters - the Mariinsky and the Alexandrinsky theatres.



ALEXANDER CHACHBA

Series	The outstanding people of Abkhazia
Date of issue	16-11-2009
Denomination:	10 apsar
Composition:	Silver 925
Weight:	33.94 grams
Diameter:	39 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	999
Artist	Djapua B.R., Erokhin B.M.
Price	150 \$

The only investment coin of the Bank of Abkhazia is the coin "Nart". The coin is made of gold with a mintage of one thousand pieces. It is the smallest coin of the Bank of Abkhazia both in diameter - 22.6 mm, and in weight - 0.25 ounces. On the reverse of the coin, there is a depiction of a rider on horseback, under it – an inscription in Abkhazian language «Нарт» (Nart).

The Narts epos is an ancient Abkhazian heroic stories about one hundred unconquerable heroes-narts, born by one mother.



NART

Series	Investment coins
Date of issue	16-11-2009
Denomination:	25 apsar
Composition:	Gold 999
Weight:	7.8 grams
Diameter:	22.6 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	uncirculated
Mintage	999
Artist	Gablia R.T., Erokhin V.M
Price	750\$

Series “Historical sites of Abkhazia” represents 7 ancient Christian churches. The coins are presented in silver, silver with selective gilding and also in gold. Their popularity is not surprising. This is because Abkhazia is a country with an ancient Christian history. The first Christian churches in Abkhazia were built at the beginning of the 4-5 century. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity becomes the main religion of the Abkhazian people. There is a legend that in the first century, the apostles Andrew the First-Called and Simon the Zealot preached in Abkhazia.



THE DORMITION  
CATHEDRAL OF DRANDA

Series	Historical sites of Abkhazia
Date of issue	22-03-2013
Denomination:	50 apsar
Composition:	Gold 999
Weight:	15.55 grams
Diameter:	30 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Moscow Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	99
Artist	Djapua B.R.
Price	1 500 \$



THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. ANDREW, THE  
«FIRST-CALLED» APOSTLE, IN PITSUNDA



THE DORMITION CATHEDRAL OF LYKHNY



THE NEW ATHOS CATHEDRAL OF THE  
APOSTLE ST. SIMON THE ZEALOT



THE BEDIA CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD



THE DORMITION CATHEDRAL OF MYKU



THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. GEORGE IN ELYR



Another coin from this series which deserves special attention is the coin dedicated to the New Athos Monastery. It is the biggest coin of the Bank of Abkhazia. Its diameter is 60 millimeters, its weight is 168 grams. It is made of silver with selective gilding. The coin's elements are: an icon, domes and haloes which are made in colour by pad printing and with selective gilding. The New Athos Monastery, which is depicted on the coin, was founded in 1875 by Russian monks of the Russian monastery of Saint Panteleimon. The place for the construction of the Monastery was chosen in 1875 by an instruction from the Mount Athos elders. During the Russian-Turkish War (1877-1878), the Monastery was robbed and plundered.

In 1880, the restoration of the Monastery began, which took 20 years. Emperor Alexander the Third participated in the restoration. In particular, musical chimes of the monastery's highest tower, which is the bell tower in the center of the western building, are his gift.

The Monastery was constructed by the side of an ancient church of the Apostle Simon the Zealot. Not far from the church, there is a cave, in which according to the legend, Simon the Zealot prayed.



THE NEW ATHOS MONASTERY

Series	Historical sites of Abkhazia
Date of issue	24-06-2013
Denomination:	100 apsar
Composition:	Silver 925, Gold 999
Weight:	168.15 grams
Diameter:	60 mm
Edge:	Corrugated
Mint:	Saint Petersburg Mint of Goznak
Finish:	Proof-like
Mintage	999
Artist	Djapua B.R.
Price	500 \$