

Monasteries of Armenia

9 days – 8 nights

Yerevan, Edjmiatsin, Geghard, Kasakh Gorge, Gegharkunik, Dilijan, Carahunge, Jermuk, Goris, Tatev, Khndzoresk, Areni, Khor Virap
Discovery, Culture, History

This program may be operated for individual or for groups
This is a suggested itinerary – Please call us to customize

See one, two, three, ten monasteries, and always be surprised by the grandiosity of the encounter between human buildings and imposing nature. Be carried along by the melodies of the accordions of the streets of Yerevan. Linger in front of the fog which seizes the landscape. Contemplate the weight of the years before us!

Day 1: Yerevan

Arrival at Yerevan Zvartnots airport, transfer and installation in hotel in the city center. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [D]

Day 2: Yerevan

Walk in the city of Yerevan. Discovery of the market, the blue mosque, the grand staircase-monument "waterfall", the preserved Abovian street of the ancient city, the modern North Avenue, etc. Lunch at a restaurant. In the afternoon, meet an artist in his studio and discuss his work. Then, visit of the museum of the great Armenian filmmaker Sergey Paradjanov and the "Matenadaran" ancient manuscripts museum-institute. Dinner at a restaurant and overnight in Yerevan. [B/L/D]

Day 3: Yerevan (Edjmiatsin, Geghard)

Departure for the city of Edjmiatzin (Vagharshapat)- seat of the Catholicos of all Armenians to visit St. Hripsime Church. Visit of the Cathedral and the remains of the temple of Zvartnots. Lunch at the "Cross of the Armenian Union" association. Return to Yerevan Departure for the Kotayk region. Visit of the rupestrian monastery of Geghard where the holy lance having pierced Jesus Christ was housed. According to tradition, the monastery was founded in the time of the first Christians and was then called Aïrivank or "rock monastery". Many monks would have led an ascetic life in cliff-side caves accessible only by ladders or ropes at the time; Saint Gregory the Illuminator would have lived there, as well as the Catholicos Sahak Parthev during the creation of the Armenian alphabet. It will become a great center of Christianity in Armenia. Visit of the Hellenistic Garni Temple, the only pagan temple standing in Armenia and throughout the Caucasus. It dates back to the 1st century AD and contains a 3rd century Roman bath, the ruins of a 7th century Armenian apostolic church, the ruins of a pre-Christian summer palace, the founding stone with an inscription in Greek and Urartian cuneiform dedicated to an Urartian King who lived in the 8th century BC. Dinner at the restaurant. Overnight in Yerevan. [B/L/D]

Day 4: Yerevan (Kasakh Gorge)

Departure for the region of Aragatsotn, at the foot of Mount Aragats (ancient volcano) which is the highest point in Armenia (4095m) with four peaks. Visit to the citadel of Amberd. Lunch at the restaurant. Departure for the monastery of Saghmosavank, dedicated to the psalms, standing on the edge of the Kasagh River ravine and dating from the 13th century. This monastery is made up of several buildings including the Sourp Sion church ("Saint Sion"), the Matenadaran ("the library"), the gavit and the small Sourp Astvatsatsin church ("Holy Mother of God"). Return to Yerevan with free time, Evening concert at the Malkhass Jazz café. Dinner at the restaurant and overnight in Yerevan. [B/L/D]

Day 5: Yerevan (Gegharkunik, Lake. Sevan, Dilijan)

Departure for in the Lake Sévan peninsula in the region of Gegharkunik to discover the Monastery of the Saints, or of the Twelve Apostles (Ergodasan Arak'élots), so called because of a tradition which

attributes to it the possession of relics of several apostles of Christ. This same tradition recognizes Saint Gregory the Illuminator, as founder, who would have given Eliazar or Lazarus (Ghazar) for first superior, reason for its second denomination. Lunch with the locals in Dilijan. Visit of the Haghartsine monastery. Visit the ethnographic district in the city of Dilijan. Dinner at the restaurant and overnight in Yerevan. [B/L/D]

Day 6: Yerevan, Carahunge, Jermuk, Goris

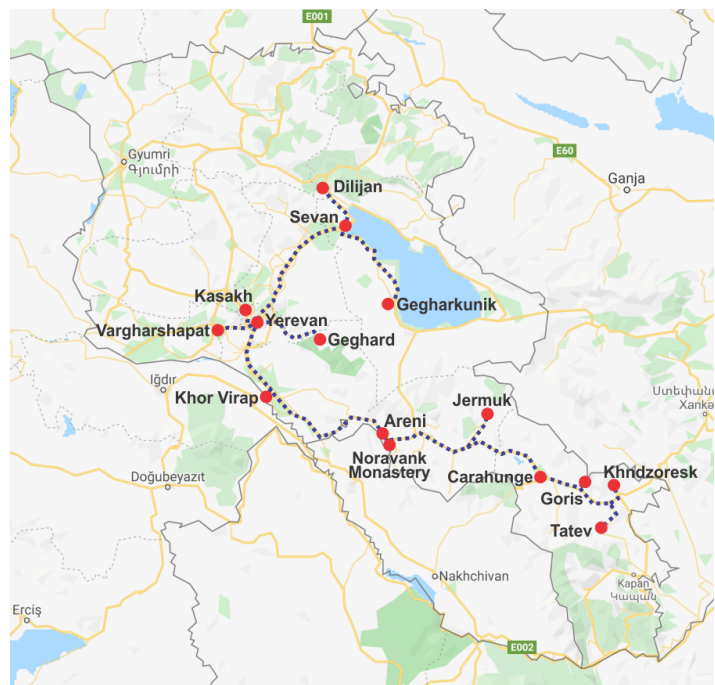
Departure for the region of Vayots dzor to visit the city of Jermuk known for its mineral water and its famous waterfall. Lunch at the inhabitant in Jermuk and continuation to the Siunik region for a tour of the megalithic site of Carahunge, one of the oldest sites in the world built between 5,000 and 7,500 years ago, much older than Stonehenge in England. Continue to the town of Goris for a walk in the town center and a visit to the archaeological museum. Dinner and overnight in Goris. [B/L/D]

Day 7: Goris (Tatev, Khndzoresk)

Departure to the Tatev monastic complex an important spiritual and cultural center of Armenia. Ready for the climb? Depart from the village of Halidzor in the Syunik region and climb by cable car above a breathtaking landscape to finally reach an altitude of 4,920 feet and admire the splendid Tatev monastery, above the Vorotan canyon. Surrounded by green and sometimes snow-capped mountains, the monastery is literally nestled in a dream setting! The current structure dates back to the 12th century and was once one of the most advanced universities in Armenia offering courses in the humanities. The building and setting will impress you with their grandeur, like the interior of the main church, Saints Peter and Paul, which rises to a dizzying height. Return to Goris for lunch at a local residence. In the afternoon discover the troglodytes in the village of Khndzoresk. Dinner and overnight in Goris. [B/L/D]

Day 8: Goris, Areni, Khor Virap, Yerevan

Departure for the Province of Vayots Dzor to visit of a wine cellar and tasting the local wine in the village of Areni. Discovery of Noravank Monastery, an Armenian monastery located in a gorge of the small Amaghov river east of the Armenian high plateau in the Lesser Caucasus. The complex was founded in the 12th century but dates mainly from the 13th and 14th centuries when it became the mausoleum of the Orbélians. The complex includes the Sourp Karapet church and its gavit (entrance to the church), the Sourp Grigor church and the Sourp Astvatsatsin church. It is completed by the ruins of various buildings and small chapels highlighted by the surrounding red and gray limestone cliffs. It is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Then, visit Goris troglodyte caves stopping at the troglodyte restaurant for lunch. Departure for the monastery of Khor Virap dominated by Mount Ararat on the Turkish border. Gregory the Illuminator, was thrown into a pit where he miraculously survived for thirteen years (Khor Virap means "deep well"). A thin bulb lights up the well, 13 feet wide. When the king, after having martyred Gayane, Hripsime and their companions, fell ill, Gregory appeared as the only one capable of treating him. He healed the king and converted him to Christianity. Armenia then becomes the first Christian country. The Catholicos Nersès III Chinanar (Chief Bishop and spiritual leader of the Armenian church) had a church built above the pit in the 7th century. After the visit, continue to Yerevan to enjoy a farewell dinner at city's restaurant. Overnight in Yerevan. [B/L/D]



Note: The humidity in the Khor Virap well is quite stifling. Not recommended for claustrophobes!

Day 9: Yerevan, USA

Breakfast at the hotel. Depending on the time of your flight, you may take advantage of possible free time to wander one last time in the capital. At the appointed time you'll be picked-up and driven to the airport to board your flight back home. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [D] = Dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast Lunch and Dinner

Your Tour Includes:

- Arrival and departure transfers
- 8 nights' accommodation:
 - Yerevan 6 nights
 - Goris 2 nights
- Meals:
 - Daily breakfast
 - 7 lunches
 - 8 dinners
 - 1 wine tasting
- Sightseeing of Yerevan
- Excursion to Etchmiadzin
- Rupestrian monastery of Geghard
- Hellenistic Garni Temple
- Saghmosavank Monastery
- Monastery of the Saints
- Haghartsine monastery
- Megalithic site of Carahunge
- Tatev Monastic Complex

- Noravank Monastery
- Noravank Monastery
- Goris troglodyte caves
- Monastery of Khor Virap
- English-speaking driver-guide
- Local English-speaking guides for tours
- Entrance fees where required
- All local taxes

Tour does not include:

- International airfares
- Any taxes related to airfares or airports
- Meals not mentioned under inclusions
- Travel Insurance
- Visas
- Tips to guides or drivers
- Expenses of a personal nature
- Any item not mentioned as "Included"

Hotels in your Tour

| City | Hotel Name | Tripadvisor |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| First Class | | |
| Yerevan | Armenia Marriott Hotel | 4.5 |
| Goris | Hotel Mirhav | 4 |

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

Tour Prices:

These programs can be customized for individuals and groups. Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- **Airfare**
We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares
- **Program**
You may add or remove;
 - Trip days
 - Cities and sites
 - Meals
- **Other options**
 - The program was designed with private services; however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available

o If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Tour Code: AM02EVN21XX

Options:

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

Group Quotations

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.

We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.