

Armenia Cultural Tour

09 Days / 08 Nights



★ Anglo Indiago Travels (P) Limited ★

Day 1: Arrival

Arrival at Zvartnots International airport. Meet and greet transfer to the hotel. Rest. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan. No meals included.

Day 2: Yerevan sightseeing/ Genocide Memorial/ Vernissage

Breakfast at hotel. At 11:00 start our exploration of the vibrant capital of Armenia, Yerevan, where the ancient culture is mixed with modern lifestyle and great traditions. Though the city has turned 2800 years' old, it keeps up to the latest trends alive with hustle and bustle of contemporary life. We start our tour from the Republic Square, the masterpiece of the architect Alexander Tamanian. Continue to **Cascade Complex**, an open-air museum of modern art. The complex links the downtown with the residential area with massive stairways leading up to the **Victory Park** providing a fantastic overlook to the entire downtown from above. The monument to Mother Armenia is standing tall in the park carefully guarding the city from above. Next, we are in the Opera House, a remarkable sample of urban architecture and a lively hub of the city. Freedom Square is just behind it, surrounded by parks and outdoor cafes which are a favorite spot to spend breezy summer evenings. Our next visit is **Parliament Park** facing the splendid building of The National Assembly of Armenia. The park is newly opened to the public after velvet Revolution in Armenia, May 2018 and locals have loved this site so much that the park has become one of the main walking areas in the evenings. Continue to **Memorial park** to the victims of Armenian Genocide in the 20th Century. Our last visit of the day is the local flea market **Vernissage** complete with handmade souvenirs, jewelry and antiques, ancient rugs and hand-woven carpets in traditional ornaments (open on weekends). Dinner in a local's house in Yerevan. Our host is the daughter of a renowned Armenian painter. She will treat us with homemade special dishes and entertain with her piano performances. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan. (B/-/D)

Day 3: Yerevan - Khor Virap / Tushpa/ Noravank/ Goris

Breakfast at hotel. Today we head for exploration of the south of Armenia. Departure to Ararat region. Sightseeing at **Khor-Virap** monastery 4- 17th cc. In early times it was used as a pit- dungeon for convicts. The religious importance of the monastery is related to the adoption of Christianity in Armenia in 301 AD. The monastery is in Ararat Valley, at the loop of the biblical Ararat Mountain, where Noah's arch cast anchor. In clear weather you will be lucky to take a great shot of the snow-picked mount at the nearest point. Ararat Valley is the cradle of Armenia wine-making traditions, so we proceed to visit "**Tushpa Wine Cellar**". Here we will take tour inside the factory and enjoy high quality Armenian wine in all its perfection and delicate taste. Continue tour to Vayots Dzor region, the agricultural center of Armenia. Along the road you will see tens of fruit stands colorful with fresh vegetables and fruits. Visit **Noravank monastery**, set higher up the Amaghu gorge nestled in rocky mounts and red cliffs. Drive to the town of Goris in Syunik region for dinner and overnight at the hotel. (B/-/D)

Day 4: Goris / Old Goris/Khndzoresk /Tatev / Goris

Breakfast at hotel. Start the exploration of Goris at Old Goris with medieval cave dwellings inhabited by the locals until not too long ago. Rocks and wild forests compete the image of this rustic view. Drive to **Khndzoresk**, a cave village with many trails of past settlement throughout the valley. Here you can notice that some of the caves have been carved out by man and served as house-shelters for locals. Continue to explore the **monastic complex of Tatev**, often referred as "monastery built at the edge of nothing". The monastery used to be the religious center of the region and one of the first education center of medieval Europe. We will reach Monastery via the World's longest aerial tramway called "Wings of Tatev". The tramway is registered in Guinness Records book with length of 5.7 km and biggest height of 320m. Drive to our hotel in Goris for overnight. (B/-/-)

Day 5: Goris/ Karahunj/ Selim / Noratus / Sevan

After breakfast Visit **Karahunj**, the so-called Armenian Stonehenge even older than Stonehenge itself. The scientists have proven the thesis that Karahunj was used by locals to observe the stars back in ancient times. In 2001 in the vicinity of Karahunj many rock – paintings were discovered some drawings that represent a great astronomic interest. Drive to Lake Sevan taking stops at the remarkable sights on the way. Lunch at local restaurant. We will cross Selim Pass to visit the medieval **Selim Caravanserai**, an important trading post on the Great Silk Road. This caravanserai has welcomed travelers along the highway through the mountains of Selim (Sulema). Selim is an excellent example of medieval Armenian architecture partly preserved till nowadays. Continue to **Noratus**, a small village at the lake. The village is famous for its "forest of Khachkars" - one of the largest collections of khachkars dating centuries 7-10. "Khachkar" is a religious and secular monument typical to only Armenian culture and represents commemorative symbolism. Drive to **Lake Sevan**, the Pearl of Armenia, and the largest alpine freshwater lake in the Caucasus region. Check-in and overnight at the hotel in Sevan. (B/L/-)

Day 6: Sevan Peninsula/ Old Dilijan/ Fioletovo/ Tsaghkadzor

Breakfast at hotel. Visit medieval Monastery **Sevanavank** on the peninsula, once a strategic shelter for Armenian Kings. High up at the monastery you will enjoy the scenery of the waters bowled in high mountain chains. Continue to explore the north of the country, priding for its lush green and fresh air. We arrive in **Dilijan** town, one of the popular resorts in Armenia. The resort is often referred as the "Little Switzerland" of Armenia. Have short city tour, visit the Sharambeyan Street in the center, which is known as an "old town. The street is complete with artisan workshops where you can explore the secrets of handicrafts. Visit **local wood carver**, who has turned his house into a real artifact alive. Continue to **Fioletovo village** mainly inhabited by Russian sect, Molokans (translated as "milk drinkers"). Our host will treat us with best of homemade dishes for lunch and share stories from their daily life. Drive to ski resort town of **Tsaghkadzor**, translated as "flower gorge". Optional: Here you can take cable car ride atop Teghenis Mountain to enjoy panoramic view upon forested mountains. Check-in and overnight at the hotel in Tsaghkadzor. (B/L/-)

Day 7: Tsaghkadzor/ Garni/ Geghard/ evening sightseeing in Yerevan

Breakfast at hotel. Check-out and drive to **Cave Monastery Geghard** a magnificent monument of medieval Armenian architecture inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage list. Geghard is a unique monument in the whole country being carved out of adjacent rocks. Our next visit is **Garni Temple**, a Hellenistic monument built in 1st c A.D. The temple is the only standing monument in its style and is dedicated to ancient god of the sun. After enjoying the scenery, we will have lunch at a local's house in Garni where you will have opportunity to watch how Armenian national bread "lavash" is baked in the underground stove called "tonir". Our host is a farmer and gardener who will take us around his orchard to introduce the vast variety of fruits. Here you will have a chance to taste any ripe fruit right from the tree. If we are lucky to be on right time, we can also take part in harvest of fruits, berries, and nuts (seasonal activity). Return to the capital to enjoy Yerevan at night when the city has special charm. At the end of the working day people come out for a cup of coffee or a glass of wine in the city center. All buildings at lit up in colorful lamps making it like a daytime. Choose to go to Republic square where each night is unique with singing fountains and light show under classical music gathering crowd around. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan. (B/L/-)

Day 8: Yerevan/ Matenadaran/ Zvartnots/ Echmiadzin/ Cooking class / Yerevan

Breakfast at the hotel. Today's first visit is to **Matenadaran**, an observatory and home to the world's largest collection of Armenian Illuminated manuscripts, books, and fragments of all times. Drive to the ruins of **Zvartnots Temple** (7th century) which is listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO. The Temple used to a splendid monument of Armenian architecture. Long while ago the earthquake ruined the temple and now even in ruins the temple impresses the visitors. Continue to Echmiadzin, the center of the Armenian Church and the spiritual center of Armenian people. Here we will step into **Echmiadzin Cathedral**, the oldest ever Christian monument in the world. The cathedral was built in 301-303 by Gregory the Enlightener, the first bishop of Armenians. Drive back to Yerevan. En route take a stop at a local house for lunch and cooking class. There the owner Mrs. Zara, a former TV host, will arrange a master class and share her secrets of cooking traditional Armenian dish, "tolma"- minced beef in grape leaves. Free time in Yerevan. Farewell dinner at traditional restaurant to enjoy last glance of Armenian experience. The guests will receive special presents from the company. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan. (B/L/D)

Day 9: Departure

Transfer to the airport and departure (B/-/-)

End of the services...

NOTE. This tour can be modified as per your requirements.