

Biblical Journey Through Armenia - The First Christian Country

A journey through the **Biblical country of Armenia** offers Christian travelers the opportunity to learn about an ancient culture by visiting world heritage sites, deepen their understanding and appreciation of their faith and experience deep spiritual connection on a different level.

Unknown to most, Armenia is considered to be the **First Christian Country** by historians. Armenia adopted Christianity as the country's religion in 301 A.D., many years before Constantine and the Roman Empire officially recognized the Christian faith. To this day, the country is still Christian.

During this tour you will experience **genuine interaction with people** and create amazing memories, encounter with **authentic, diverse and delicious cuisine**, explore antique wine making monuments and traditions, and today's wineries.

Pass through **millennia long history** up to nowadays modern Armenia and its "Pink City" capital Yerevan, a city that is historically 30 years older than Rome. Travel through history before and after the Christ on the **Holy Land**, where **Noah arrived** once upon a time.



Start: Yerevan, Armenia
Finish: Yerevan, Armenia
Tour Theme: Religious
Duration: 6 days / 5 nights

Physical rating: (1 out of 5)
Group size: Min: 2
Ages: Min 18 or Family
Tour Availability: All Year Round

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival to Yerevan, Zvartnots International Airport, Yerevan City Tour



Welcome to Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia. Our tour leader will greet you at the airport and help you with all the ground handling services. After a welcome briefing meeting with the tour leader, you will check in to your hotel.

Time to explore the Armenian capital **Yerevan** – a 2806-year-old and modern city, that is historically 36 years older than Rome. Yerevan located in the shadow of the biblical Mount Ararat. You will explore The Republic Square with its dancing and singing fountains, Cascade, Opera House, North Avenue, parks devoted to 2750th and 2800th anniversaries of the city. From the impressive Cascade you have a panoramic view of the whole capital and Mount Ararat.



Accommodation

- Overnight in Yerevan.

Included Activities

- Yerevan City Guided Walking Tour

Day 2: UNESCO World Heritage Site Zvartnots and Etchmiadzin Holy Mother Cathedrals, Treasure Museum of Etchmiadzin, Matenadaran

Breakfast at the hotel

The program starts with a visit to the spiritual and religious center of Armenia **Etchmiadzin**. The city is best known as the location of Etchmiadzin Holy Mother Cathedral, the center of

the Armenian Apostolic Church. It is unofficially known in Western sources as a “Holy City” and in Armenia as the country's "Spiritual Capital". Along with several important early medieval churches located nearby (St. Gayane, St. Hripsime), Etchmiadzin Cathedral was listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2000. In the museum of Etchmiadzin you will see very important and sacred Christian items - The Holy Lance that pierced Jesus’s side (also known as the Spear of Destiny and Lance of Longinus), Relics of Jesus’s disciples St. Thaddeus, St. Peter, St. Andrew, and St. Gregory the Illuminator, wooden pieces from Jesus’s cross and Noah’s Arc.



Lunch will be in [Agape Refectory](#) - This building is a restored **monks’ refectory** from 1655. It is now an elegant restaurant with classic and modern Armenian food where you will feel yourself back in 17th century.

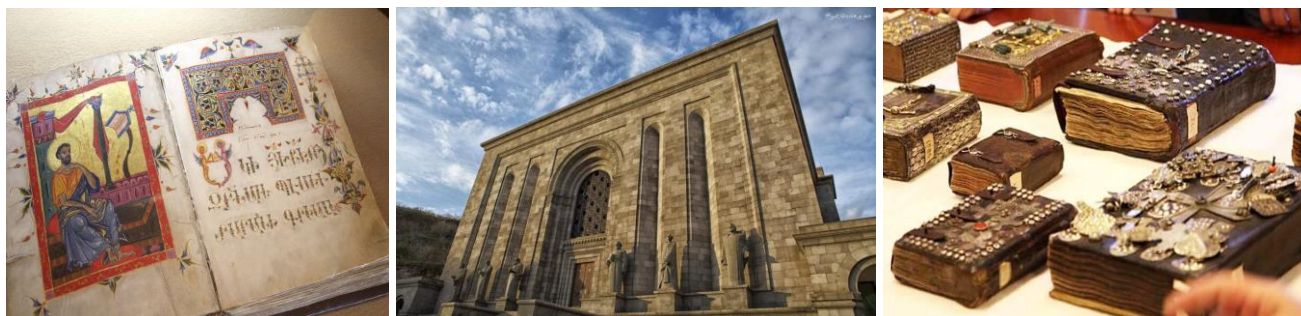


Then we will visit [Zvartnots Cathedral](#) (literally “celestial angels cathedral”) is a 7th-century centrally planned aisled tetra conch type Armenian cathedral. Now in ruins, it is located at the edge of the city of Ejmiatsin, on the background of mesmerizing view to **Biblical Mount Ararat**. Zvartnots was added to the **UNESCO World Heritage** list in 2000.



Our next highlight is **Matenadaran** - a place where you can feel the spirit of ancient civilizations, get acquainted with the rich ancient history and see unique world ancient manuscripts, including Armenian.

The beginning of the creation of the Matenadaran collection dates back to the 5th century. Here you can see such interesting exhibits as the largest, smallest, thickest and thinnest books (handwritten) in the world. For example, the **biggest manuscript** is “Sermons” written around 1200. The book weighs 27.5 kg and has a size of 75 by 55 cm. The **smallest manuscript** is a church calendar of 16th-century, it's smaller than a matchbox, contains 104 parchment sheets and together with a cover weighs only 19 grams. The **oldest manuscript** stored in Matenadaran is “The Gospel of Veghamor”, written presumably in 887. The manuscript is considered the oldest full-fledged Armenian manuscript.



Accommodation

- Overnight in Yerevan.

Included Activities

- Etchmiadzin Holy Mother Cathedral
- Treasure Museum of Etchmiadzin
- Zvartnots Cathedral
- Matenadaran

Meals Included

- Breakfast at the hotel

Day 3: Khor Virap, Noravank Monastic Complex, Hin Areni Winery, Tatev Monastery, “Wings of Tatev” - Longest Reversible Cableway

Breakfast in the hotel

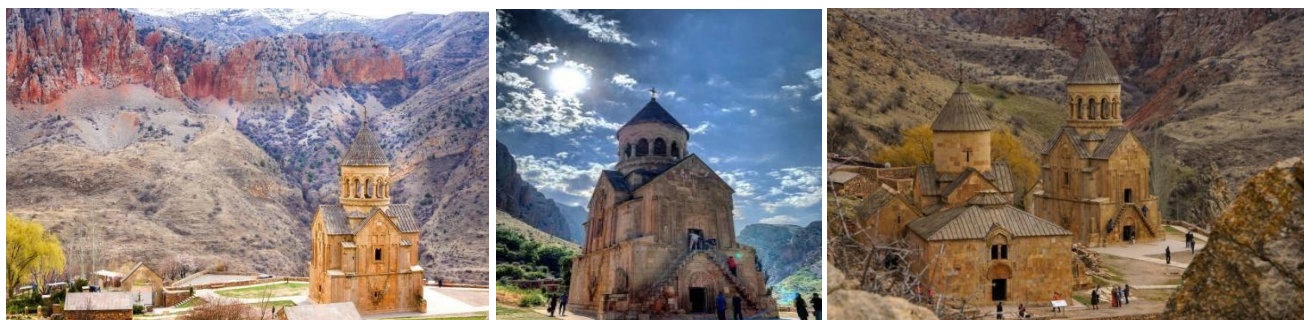
The morning starts by heading to the Southern part of Armenia. From Yerevan we move towards **Khor Virap Monastery** (in Armenian stands for “deep dungeon”). Khor Virap's notability as a monastery and pilgrimage site is attributed to the fact that Gregory the Illuminator was initially imprisoned here for about 14 years by King Tiridates III of Armenia. Saint Gregory subsequently became the king's religious mentor, and they led the proselytizing activity in the country. **In the year 301 Armenia was the first country in the world to be declared a Christian nation.**

The walled religious complex also stands before the snowcapped flanks of **Biblical Mount Ararat**, offering a spectacular view of the mountain and cutting a striking silhouette of itself. As mentioned in the Holy Bible, Noah's Arc landed on Mount Ararat, and the history of mankind after the flood started from here and the Ararat Valley.



Then we will continue our tour to Armenian architectural masterpiece **Noravank Monastic Complex**. Noravank means “New Monastery” in Armenian. However, today this name does not fit, as the monastery is already more than seven centuries old. The beautiful Noravank Monastery was built in the 13th century.

The monastery complex is located on a steep mountain ledge, near the cliff. The territory is “framed” by unusual cliffs of bright red color, which create a very picturesque background for the buildings. Noravank monastery is one of the most visited attractions in Armenia.



Lunch will be at [Tnjri Restaurant](#).

After lunch we will have a wine degustation at ["Hin Areni" Winery](#). Vayots Dzor and Areni village in particular has been the cradle of Armenian winemaking for millennia. "Hin Areni" wine factory opens up the doors of this region to the world to showcase the historic and indigenous Armenian grape varieties. At the winery the historic traditions of winemaking are well combined with state-of-the-art modern equipment. "Hin Areni" wine factory has the capacity to process over 250 tonnes of grapes.



To finalize this beautiful day, we will visit [Tatev Monastery](#) - a 9th century historical monument. It is one of the **oldest and most famous monastery complexes in Armenia**. According to legend the monastery was named after Evstateos - the disciple of Thaddeus Apostateus.

During medieval times Tatev Monastery was a vital scholastic, enlightenment and spiritual center and played a singular role in the country's history. You will reach to Tatev Monastery by the shortest, most picturesque and impressive route, by **"Wings of Tatev" - the longest reversible cableway in the world (5752 m), recorded in the Guinness Book of Records**: twelve minutes of unforgettable flight above the gorge of the fierce Vorotan River, through a celestial highway at the altitude of 320m.



We will reach Goris and have overnight there.

Dinner at the hotel.

Accommodation

- Overnight in Goris

Included Activities

- Khor Virap Monastery
- Noravank Monastic Complex
- Wine degustation at Hin Areni Winery
- Tatev Monastery
- “Wings of Tatev” longest reversible cableway

Meals Included

- Breakfast at the hotel

Day 4: Shaki Waterfall, Carahunge, Vardenyats (Selim) Caravanserai, Noratus Village, Lake Sevan

Breakfast in the hotel

The morning starts with a small hiking to the beautiful [Shaki Waterfall](#), one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Armenia. On the left side of the river Vorotan's gorge, basalt lava flows have solidified to form a 18 meters high ledge from which the waterfall cascades down. Get closer to the refreshing splashes and enjoy the calming sound of the water. One could stay hours in this magnificent location.



Then we will visit the mysterious prehistoric complex of [Carahunge \(Zorats Karer\)](#) (walking). This famous megalithic structure consists of hundreds of vertically arranged stones that are stretched from the south to the north. In the middle, there are about 40 stones that are formed into an ellipse. The size of the stone's ranges from 0.5 to 3 meters and can weigh up to 10 tons. It is also called "Armenian Stonehenge". According to researchers, **Carahunge could be among the world's oldest astronomical observatories, and is at least 3,500 years older than British Stonehenge.**



Lunch will be in Yeghegnadzor.

On our way to next destination, we will pass by **Vardenyats (Selim) Caravanserai** - an ancient caravanserai located along Vardenyats pass that was part of the **Great Silk Road**. The building served as a place where caravans, moved from Europe to the East, stopped for an overnight stay. Historical sources indicate that the construction located on the Vardenyats Pass was erected in 1332, by the order of Duke Chesar Orbelyan. It is known that **Marco Polo crossed this area** and described how the Armenians lived in impenetrable mountains.



Our next highlight is **Noratus village** - situated near the legendary **Lake Sevan**. The world's biggest khachkars collection is located here, as well as the oldest Armenian cemetery covering an area of 7 hectares. The amount of khachkars here reaches nearly 1,000 copies from the **13th-17th centuries**. Each of them has their own distinctive design made of ornamental or life scenes. "**Khachkar**" implies "**cross stone**" in Armenian translation. It is the monument with complicated sculpted patterns, clusters of grapes, solar disk and a cross. The oldest khachkar in Noratus was built in the **5th century**.



We reach **Sevan**, where we are going to spend the overnight.

Dinner will be at the hotel.

Accommodation

- Overnight in Sevan.

Included Activities

- Shaki Waterfall
- Carahunge (Zorats Qarer)
- Vardenyats (Selim) Caravanserai
- Noratus Village
- Lake Sevan

Meals Included

- Breakfast at the hotel

Important Notes

Today we will be having small hiking and walking in Shaki Waterfall and Carahunge. No special physical readiness is required, being moderately fit is enough. It is recommended to wear comfortable shoes and clothes and have sun protection (caps, sunglasses, sun cream).

Day 5: Lake Sevan, Sevnaavank Monastery, Dilijan, Haghartsin Monastery, Honey House

Breakfast in the hotel

Early in the morning we will start our tour with a visit to [Sevanavank Monastery](#). Enjoy a visit to the picturesque site of monastery, an ancient religious complex that overlooks Lake Sevan. Situated on a peninsula that was once an island before the water level dropped, the monastery stands atop a hill, with scenic views of the lake and the often-snow-capped slopes in the backdrop. You'll need to climb a number of stairs to reach the site, but you'll be rewarded with inspiring panoramic views. Explore the two historic churches, most likely dating from the 9th century and exhibiting a typical, simple Armenian style of architecture.



Not a single visit to Armenia is complete without visiting her majesty [Lake Sevan](#) - the highest freshwater mountain lake in Europe, and surrounded by the Lesser Caucasus Mountain range. Set 1900m above sea level, Sevan is the largest lake in the Caucasus, it's also one of the largest

freshwater high-altitude lakes in the world. Its colors and shades change with the weather and by its own mysterious processes, from a dazzling azure to dark blue and a thousand shades in between.



Our day continues to beautiful city of **Dilijan** that is sometimes referred to as the forest kingdom of Armenia. In this cozy town, you can find vivid examples of traditional wooden house architecture. The mountains and gorges are covered with rich forests changing to alpine meadows and dotted with small farms, hiking tracks, lakes and rivers. The mountainous landscape is highly diverse, with different terrains, climates, soils and water resources. Many natural and man-made features enrich the national park: monasteries, lakes, archeological sites, forests, rivers and farmland create an endlessly-changing environment.



The day wouldn't be complete without visiting **Haghartsin Monastery** that rises among the majestic mountains where eagles fly. The name of the monastery is associated with them: Haghartsin in Armenian means "game of eagles". The most ancient building of Haghartsin is the Church of St. Grigor built in the 11th century by monks who fled from Western Armenia fleeing persecution. Haghartsin used to be a major center of culture and spirituality in Armenia since the 13th century.



Visiting **Honey House** - located in a cozy corner right in the heart of nature, where you can taste different types of delicious homemade honey,jams, and the most unique and authentic wine — a kind you probably have never tasted before — Honey Wine. Couldn't resist the taste? Buy from these delicious treats and take with you.



Accommodation

- Overnight in Yerevan.

Included Activities

- Lake Sevan
- Sevanavank Monastery
- Dilijan City Tour
- Haghartsin Monastery
- Honey House

Meals Included

- Breakfast at the hotel

Day 6: Departure

Breakfast at the hotel and Departure.

See you soon in Armenia. We hope that while looking at Armenia pinned in your travel map, will bring back unforgettable memories and experience during your trip with us!

Travel Enjoy Respect...