

## WELCOME TO THE LAND OF NOAH

**9 days, 8 nights**

**Day 1: Arrival to Armenia.**

**Day 2: Yerevan city tour. Visiting Echmiadzin, where you can feel the spirit of Armenians.**

**Early arrival to Armenia. Meet local staff. Transfer to hotel. Rest. Late morning start the tour – Yerevan city tour – Armenia's capital: Old and New**

In the morning we will take a trip to the religious capital of Armenia, the town of Echmiadzin. The area



is a UNESCO's World Heritage Site. We will first visit the archeological site of Zvartnots Cathedral, which is a masterpiece of Armenian architecture of 7<sup>th</sup> century. We will then come to the main Cathedral of Echmiadzin. Today it is the Holy See of Echmiadzin, where the Catholicos of Armenia resides.

The tour is possible to do by walking – approx 2 hrs walk total with a coffee stop on the way – included a cup of Armenian coffee or tea – En route visit Cascade Modern Arts center: Glass Museum and open-air sculpture garden – Visit State History Museum with

exhibition from pre-historic times till present day. Dinner at traditional restaurant.

B/-/D

**Day 3: In the shadow of Mt. Ararat – The Rugged South of Armenia**

In the morning we will leave Yerevan. We will drive via plains of Ararat. We will arrive to Khor Virap monastery – an important pilgrimage site. The location very close to Biblical Mt. Ararat allows wonderful views of this mountain – the resting place of Noah's Ark. Today we will also stop by in Areni village, the wine capital of Armenia. We will visit a family-owned winery and get the taste of local wine. We will then drive to Noravank monastery – a site of amazing beauty with colorful rocks. The monastery itself is notable for its intricate carvings. We have lunch at local restaurant. Our last stop will be the cave city of Goris. Overnight in Goris.

B/L/-



## Day 4: Stone Henge of Armenia – The deepest canyon in Armenia and Tatev Monastery



The morning will start with the visit to Karahunj – local Stone Henge, believed to be an ancient observatory (around 7.500 yrs old) and a worship site for ancient people. Drive to the monastery of Tatev ('give wings' in Armenian) dates from the 9th century. The monastery is well known for being the center of one of the most prestigious medieval universities in Armenia, the University of Tatev. The greatest height of the monastery occurred in the Middle Ages becoming one of the spiritual centers of the time. The Tatev cable car, famously called "The wings of Tatev", is the longest

double-track funicular recognized by the Guinness World Record (2011). Its length is 5.7 km, the one-way trip takes 10 minutes, it has 2 cabins, each scheduled for 25 people, the highest point reached by the cabin is 320 meters above the gorge. This funicular is an alternative option for visiting the Tatev monastery, instead of taking a car. If you do not have acrophobia, do not hesitate to take the Tatev Wings and enjoy a stunning panoramic view. We will have lunch at a private house in Shinuayr village. Overnight in Goris.

B/L/-

## Day 5: Armenia on the Silk Route

Our trip is full of interesting sites picturesque scenery. Our road follows the ancient trade route Silk Road. One of its branches passed through Selim pass. We will stop near a 13<sup>th</sup> century caravanserai, which served as a shelter for merchants. Today this is the best preserved caravanserai in Armenia, overlooking Vayots Dzor mountains from the altitude of 2400 m. Our final stop of the day will be the "Pearl of Armenia". Lake Sevan is one of the biggest high-altitude lakes in the world. We will stop at Sevan peninsula and ascend to the top of the rock to take a beautiful picture of the lake. If we are lucky we will also witness the changing colors of Sevan. Dinner at Fish restaurant where you can try the fresh fish and crayfish from Sevan lake. Overnight at a hotel at Lake Sevan.

B/-/D



## Day 6: Little Switzerland of Armenia



We continue our journey to the beautiful rolling valley framed by the mountains of the Lesser Caucasus. We will explore the resort town of Dilijan located in the midst of the forests of Dilijan National Park. Here we will walk through a museum-street of the town, which still preserves 19-century houses, stopping at a woodcarver's and ceramicist's studio. There are numerous sites of interest around Dilijan. One of them is Goshavank monastery where you will see one of the finest examples of Armenian cross-stones. This monastery is also connected with the

medieval Armenian fable-writer and the author of the first Armenian code of laws. We can have a lunch in a private house with local family, where the hostess will learn you how to prepare traditional Armenian dishes. We then continue our journey to Lori Province, a country of forest-covered mountains, of dizzy gorges and bubbling rivers. Two hours ride will take us to the two major attractions in these parts - Haghpat and Sanahin monasteries. Both of them are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The breathtaking location on either side of the canyon and fantastic scenery makes the visit to these sites a truly unforgettable experience! Overnight in Dzoraget.

B/L/-

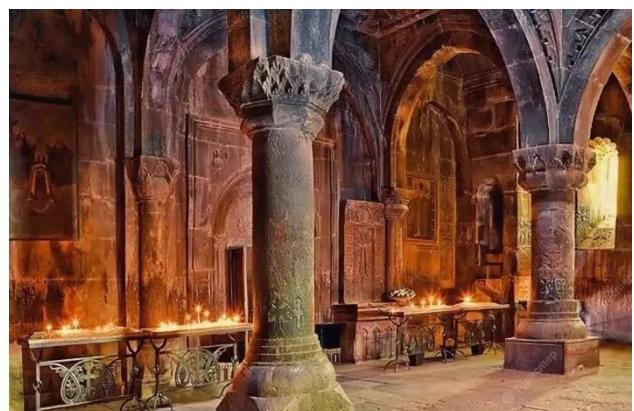
### **Day 7: Mt. Aragats and its environs**

This day will be dedicated to the exploration of the area of Mt. Aragats (4090), the highest mountain in Armenia. This mountain is an extinct volcano and is sometimes referred to as "sea of stones". It is also the biggest mining place of tuff stone, a volcanic stone of various colors, serving as a major building material in the country. We will stop near Lake Kari. Near this lake we will see a unique worship monument of pre-historic times, called "Vishapaqar" (dragon stone). We will have a short walk around the lake. Then we will continue towards the medieval Amberd fortress located in a beautiful isolated area in the mountains at the altitude of 2300 m. We will have lunch at a private house in Ashtarak. Overnight in Yerevan.

B/L/-



### **Day 8: Symphony of Stones and Geghard cave monastery (UNESCO)**



Today we will visit Garni temple – a unique monument of Hellenistic period in Armenia and the only pagan temple in Armenia surviving to our days. From here we will descend to the canyon of Garni which is famous for its unique rock formations – gigantic basalt pillars often called “the symphony of stones” (1 hour easy hike). We will then visit a fantastic sample of medieval Armenian architecture, the Geghard Cave Monastery. This rock-hewn monastery of 13<sup>th</sup> century is a UNESCO site. Some enclosures of the monastery have amazing acoustic and are a

perfect place for singling spiritual songs.

Dinner at Armenian restaurant with folk music.

Overnight in Yerevan.

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### **Day 9: Transfer to airport. Departure.**