

ARMENIA

“Land of Rugged Beauty” (Two weeks Nature Based Tour)

Tour duration – 14 days/13 nights, active rest – 10 days.

Tour length – 1200 km, walking tour – 34 km.

Tour type – Ecological/Educational/Adventure

Season – July – August – September

Accompaniment – Instructor and interpreter for foreigners

Accommodation in hotels, private houses, B&Bs and camps.

Day 1	Arrival and accommodation Airport pick up, transfer to hotel and accommodation. Greeting lunch or dinner, meeting the other people of the group.
Day 2	A tour in the capital A visit to history museum, lunch. For the second part of the day a visit to Matenadaran – the depository of ancient manuscripts. Free time.
Day 3	Yerevan – Aragats Mountain – Lake Kari – Amberd Fortress – Byurakan Observatory Not far from the capital you can find the highest mountain of Southern Caucasus – Aragats (4090m), Aragats is a huge massive with four summits and a volcanic cone, between the four summits the diameter is about 200 km. On this day you can see the natural wonders of Aragats. Ascend to Lake Kari (3200 m above the sea level) on a bus. Rest near the lake. A visit to Amberd fortress, built by the Armenian Prince and Commander Vahram Pahlavuni. The fortress is settled on cliffs. There is also a small church close to the fortress. Dinner. After dinner a visit to Byurakan Observatory. Accommodation in Byurakan Rest House.
Day 4	Aparan – Ria Taza – Spitak – Vanadzor – Kobayr Church – Sanahin Monastery – Haghpat Monastery Early in the morning after breakfast a tour to Lori, the northern part of Armenia which is famous for its unspoiled nature, large forests, high mountains and cliffs, fortresses and masterpieces of Armenian religious architecture. The highway goes through the Alpine meadows of Aragats Mountain, Aparan, Yezidi village Ria Taza and 15 minutes later after the mountainous climate one finds himself in the dry climate of Lori and another 20 minutes later one finds himself in subtropical unspoiled forests of Lori in the canyon of Debed river. A visit to Kobayr Church which is famous for its fantastic frescoes of the twelve Apostles. Lunch near Kobayr. After Lunch we continue to Sanahin Monastery which dates back to 10-13 th centuries. Spectacular panoramas open from this monastery. For centuries Armenian builders have selected sites for churches in the most spectacular regions of Armenia on a dominating height, that’s why while studying the nature and history of Armenia, tourists constantly find ancient buildings some of which have been included in the UNESCO list of world culture heritage sites. One of such buildings is Haghpat Monastery which was built in 10 th century. Dinner and overnight close to the Monastery.
Day 5	Noyemberyan – Makaravank Monastery – Ijevan – Haghartsin Monastery – Dilijan Breakfast at camp. Continue the tour to Noyemberyan. Rest and a short walking

	<p>tour to Makaravank Monastery (8th century). After sightseeing continue the tour towards the small picturesque town of Ijevan. Sightseeing in Ijevan, a visit to Botanical Gardens, a tour in the town park where there are about 100 sculptures from many countries of the world. Lunch. Continue the tour through Dilijan National Park, a visit to Haghartsin Monastery which is hidden in a grove of ancient trees high up in the mountains. Tour to Dilijan. Accommodation in B&Bs. Dinner and overnight.</p>
Day 6	<p>Lake Parz – Goshavank Monastery – Lake Sevan Breakfast. Ascend on bus to Lake Parz (Clear Lake) situated high in the mountains surrounded by a thick forests. A walk around the lake. A hike (13km) to Goshavank Monastery (10-13th centuries). Lunch in the village. Tour towards Lake Sevan which is called the gem of Armenian highland. Sevan is the second highest freshwater lake in the world (2000 meters above sea level). Accommodation at a rest house. Active beach rest. Dinner and overnight.</p>
Day 7	<p>Sevan Peninsula – Hayrivank – Noraduz – Selim – Yeghegis Breakfast. A tour to Sevan Peninsula, where there are two 7th century churches. Continue the tour following the ancient Silk Route along the shore of lake Sevan towards Noraduz which is famous for its khachkars (Khachkar – Cross stones covered with delicate thematic patterns, the earliest khachkars date back to 5th century). After Sevan begins the descend through Selim Pass to the southern region of Armenia – Vayots Dzor. A visit to Selim Caravanserai (13th century) which served the merchants and travelers of Silk Route. Lunch. The rocky landscape of Vayots Dzor is inhospitable yet beautiful. There are a lot of rocky canyons, misty rivers making their way through volcanic rock. Small villages and towns are nested in valleys and plateaus. Arrival to Yeghegis, set up the tents close to the village, sightseeing. Dinner. Overnight.</p>
Day 8	<p>Smbataberd Fortress – Tsakhats Kar Monastery – Shatinavank – Vayk Breakfast. Sightseeing. A tour to Smbataberd Fortress (5-10th centuries) built by Armenian King Smbat. An 8 km hike to Tsakhats Kar Monastery (10-11th centuries) and Shatinavank (10th century). Later head towards Vayk on bus. Lunch. Set up a camp close to the town. Dinner. Overnight.</p>
Day 9	<p>Sisian- Karahunj Observatory – Tatev Monastery – “Satani” Bridge Breakfast in the camp. Continue the tour towards Syunik, which is one of the most beautiful places in Armenia. The high mountains and forests of Syunik helped the population to withstand the attacks of invaders and to preserve their independence. After passing through Sisian, a visit to ancient Karahunj Observatory (8000 B.C.) which looks like English Stonehenge but is older for more than 4,5 thousand years. Continue the tour to the gorgeous Tatev Monastery (9-11th centuries) made from basalt. Sightseeing. Lunch in the open air. A tour to natural bridge “Satani Kamurj” (“Devil’s Bridge”) across Vorotan river. The bridge is 50 meters high above the river. There are mineral springs close to this natural wonder, and the locals have built stone baths for swimming in this curing water where bathing is possible if desired. Set up tents close to the bridge. Dinner. Overnight.</p>
Day 10	<p>Goris – Khndzoresk – Bkherots Monastery Breakfast. A tour to picturesque town Goris planned and built by a German engineer in 19th century. A tour to the center of the town. A visit to the spectacular cliffs surrounding Goris which look like towers rising high above the town. Continue the tour to cave village Old Khndzoresk which was inhabited until 20th century. A 5 km walking tour to see the caves and the picturesque surroundings. Return to Goris and lunch. After lunch continue towards the South of Armenia to Bkherots Monastery (10-12 km), surrounded by virgin nature. The highway from Goris crosses the valley of Vorotan river and ascends the thickly forested slopes of</p>

	Zangezur Mountain range. Set up a camp close to Bkherots Monastery (10 th – 11 th centuries). Hiking. Dinner. Overnight.
Day 11	Bkherots – Vahanavank Monastery – Kapan Breakfast. Continue to Kapan which is one of the unique cities in Southern Armenia located in the valley of Voghji river and surrounded by thick forests. The center of the city occupies the entire area of the valley, some the houses located on the slopes reach a height of 300 meters. Not far from the city you can find the “Giant and Guardian” Mount Khustup. A tour to ancient Vahanavank Monastery (10 th century). Lunch. Rest. A tour in the city. Dinner. Accommodation in Kapan.
Day 12	Noravank – Areni – Khor Virap – Yerevan Breakfast. A tour to Noravank one of the most beautiful monasteries of Armenia (10-14 th centuries). Lunch at a restaurant on the banks of river Arpa. Later a tour to Ararat Valley, a visit to one of the most sacred Church in Armenia – Monastery Khor Virap, where Gregory the Illuminator, the patron saint of Armenia was imprisoned for years. Return to Yerevan. Dinner. Free time. Accommodation in Yerevan.
Day 13	Echmiatsin – Sardarapat After breakfast a tour to Echmiatsin, the religious center of Armenia. A tour to the gems of Armenian religious architecture – Church of Saint Hripsime (618 A.D.) and Main Cathedral (301 A.D.). A tour to the unique museum and treasury of Armenian church. Lunch. A tour to Sardarapat Monument where Armenians won a narrow victory against Turkish invaders in 1918. A visit to National Ethnographic Museum. Return to Yerevan. Good bye party with songs and dances and night over in Yerevan.
Day 14	Departure from Yerevan Transfer to airport and departure.

The tours start at 10:00.

Breakfast at 9:00.

Lunch is organized on the route at 14:00 in a designated place.

Dinner 19:00.

Prices include

Meals (full board, breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Guide services

All transfers and transportation

Accommodation in double rooms in designated hotels and B&B in Yerevan and in the regions

All entrance fees for museums and historical monuments

All local taxes (VAT, etc)

Map of Yerevan and Armenia

Prepaid SIM card

Prices do not include

Air tickets

Single supplementary rooms

Alcoholic drinks

Visa for Armenia

Insurance

Other services in hotel (telephone, mini-bar, internet etc)

Departure tax (to be paid in airport in Armenian Drams) - 10.000AMD (~ €25)

Starting from € 825 per person