



## Tour: **CHRISTIAN ARMENIA**

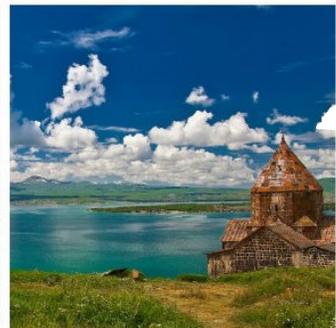
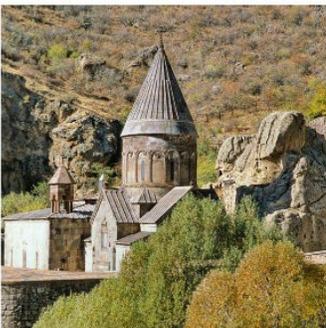
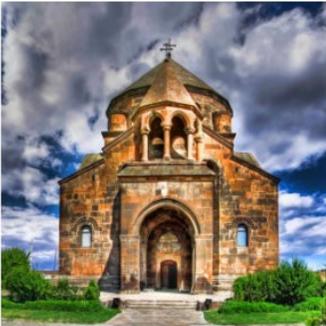
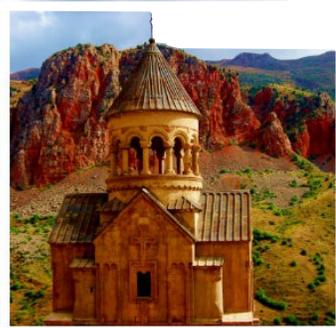
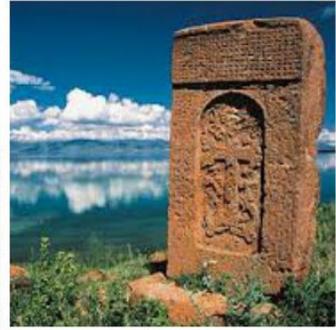
Characteristics: religion – Christian faith, culture

Armenian church: Part of Oriental Orthodoxy – Armenian Apostolic Church

Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church – Catholicos of All Armenians

Highlights – UNESCO sites and Holy Christian relics

Suitable for groups





In 2009 the World Religious Travel Association has published an article about Top 10 Emerging Destinations in Faith based – Tourism. ARMENIA was among them.

Only Armenia can offer faith-based travelers a religious history that begins with the first book of the Bible (Genesis), serves as the first country to adopt Christian faith, and can claim being evangelized by two of Jesus' apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. No other biblical or faith – based destination can boast such facts and highlights. *(Kewin J. Wright, President of WTRA, 2009)*

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## Brief itinerary:

Day 1: Departure from home country

Day 2: Yerevan / City tour / Tsitsernakaberd Memorial and Genocide Museum / St. Gregory Illuminator church

Day 3: Yerevan / Echmiadzin – Armenian Orthodox Apostolic Church center / Treasury Museum / churches of St. Gayane and St. Hripsime / ruins of the Zvartnots Cathedral UNESCO / Gyumri

Day 4: Gyumri / Hagpat monastery UNESCO / Dilijan

Day 5: Dilijan / Goshavank monastery / Sevan monasteries / Noraduz cemetery cross stones Yerevan

Day 6: Yerevan / Khor Virap monastery and Mt. Ararat / Noravank monastery / Yerevan

Day 7: Yerevan / Garni pagan temple / Geghurd cave monastery UNESCO / Yerevan

Day 8: Departure

## The tour offers :

- Mass in Qanaqer Catholic Church. Possibility to meet with His Eminence Archbishop Raphael, the leader of Armenian Catholic Church in Armenia, Georgia, and Eastern Europe countries.
- Meeting with fathers of Mkhitarist Congregation from St. Lazarus island of Venice
- Visit Mother Teresa solidarity houses in Yerevan or in Spitak.
- Participation in worship and liturgies
- Spiritual concert in one of the monasteries
- Singing and praying en route
- Lectures, discussions about Bible upon request
- Opportunity to enjoy Armenian folk dances by Tatul Altunyan's song-dance Ensemble.
- Farewell dinner at a traditional Armenian restaurant with live music and wine



## Descriptive itinerary:

### 1: Departure from home country

### Day 2: Yerevan / City tour / Tsitsernakaberd Memorial and Genocide Museum / St. Gregory the Illuminator church

Arrival at Zvartnots international airport in Yerevan. City tour in Yerevan on bus: stop near Mother Armenia Statue or over the Cascade monument for panoramic view to the city. Visit Tsitsernakaberd memorial and Genocide museum dedicated to the victims of Armenians massacres of 1915. The memorial was visited by John Paul II in 2001 and by Pope Francis in 2016. Lunch in a local restaurant. Visit St. Gregory the Illuminator church in Yerevan – the biggest pan-Armenian church opened in 2001. Here you can find Armenian first Catholicos relics brought to Armenia by John Paul II. Dinner and overnight in Yerevan.

### Day 3: Yerevan / Echmiadzin – Armenian Orthodox Apostolic Church center / Treasury Museum / churches of St. Gayane and St. Hripsime / ruins of the Zvartnots Cathedral UNESCO / Gyumri

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Echmiadzin – the center of Armenian Orthodox Apostolic church. Visit Echmiadzin cathedral of 301-303 A.D. which is one of the first Christian churches of the World. Visit the Treasury museums in Echmiadzin to see the relics of Armenian church:

- The Holy Lance that pierced our Lord's side by the Roman soldier during His crucifixion. According to the tradition it was brought to Armenia by Apostle Thaddeus when he came to evangelize.
- The Right Hand of St. Grigor Lusavorich (St. Gregory the Illuminator).
- The piece of Noah's Ark. According to the tradition it was given to St. Hakob (Jakob), Patriarch of Mtsbin, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century from Mt. Ararat.

Visit St. Gayane and St. Hripsime churches of 7<sup>th</sup> cen. which are built on the relics of the mother Superior of Hripsime nuns (who were followers of Christs in the III century) and of the virgin Hripsime on the place of their martyrdom UNESCO. Return back to Yerevan and visit the ruins of the magnificent Zvartnots cathedral of 7<sup>th</sup> century. UNESCO. Continue the road to Gyumri city. Dinner at a fish farm restaurant. Overnight in Gyumri.

### Day 4: Gyumri / Hagpat monastery UNESCO / Dilijan

Breakfast at the hotel. Explore the city of Gyumri, one of the areas where there is a high concentration of Catholic Armenians. Visit Catholic church in Gyumri and meeting with local community representatives. On 7 December 1988, the city is 60% destroyed by an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale. Short city tour in Gyumri and continuation to Hagpat monastery of 10-13 cen. which is one of the highlights of UNESCO. Continue to Tavush region for overnight in Dilijan resort city. Dinner and overnight in Dilijan.



**Day 5 Dilijan / Goshavank monastery / Sevan monasteries / Noraduz cemetery cross stones**

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Goshavank monastery of 13 cen. which was rebuilt over the former church by Mkhitar Gosh, a statesman, scientist and author of numerous fables and parables as well as the first criminal code. Here one can find Armenian most beautiful cross stone type carved by Master Poghos in 13<sup>th</sup> cen. considered to be a real masterpiece. Continue to lake Sevan which is second highest and largest alpine freshwater lake of the world. Visit the medieval monasteries on the peninsula one of which host a very rare Armenian cross stone called Amenaprckich – Holy Saviour of 13<sup>th</sup> cent. Drive to Noraduz cemetery which has the largest cluster of khachkars – cross stones in the Republic of Armenia.

**Day 6: Yerevan / Khor Virap monastery and Mt. Ararat / Noravank monastery / Yerevan**

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Khor Virap monastery built over the pit in which Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for 13 years. The monastery offers the best and the closest view to the Biblical Mt. Ararat. It's the place named in the Book of Genesis where Noah's Ark came to rest after the great flood (Genesis 8:4). Continue to Noravank monastery of 10 – 14 cen. which was an important religious, cultural and educational center in Syunik state in middle ages. It was built by one of the most famous Armenian architects of all times, by Momik. Return back to Yerevan. Dinner and overnight in Yerevan.

**Day 7: Yerevan / Garni pagan temple / Geghard cave monastery UNESCO / Matenadaran manuscript museum / Yerevan**

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Garni pagan temple of 1<sup>st</sup> A.D – the only one survived in Caucasus region . Continue to Geghard monastery of 12-13<sup>th</sup> cen. The monastery was originally named **Ayrivank** meaning "the Monastery of the Cave". The name commonly used for the monastery today, Geghard, or more fully Geghardavank meaning "the Monastery of the Spear", originates from the spear which had wounded Jesus at the Crucifixion, allegedly brought to Armenia by Apostle Thaddeus, and stored amongst many other relics. Now it is displayed in the Echmiadzin treasury. Return back to Yerevan and visit Matenadaran a depository of ancient manuscripts, research institute and museum which holds one of the world's richest depositories of medieval manuscripts and books which span a broad range of subjects, including history, philosophy, medicine, literature, art history and cosmography in Armenian and many other languages.

Farewell dinner and overnight in Yerevan.

**Day 8: Departure**

Transfer to the airport. Departure.

- The order of the itinerary is subject to be changed upon exact dates and the availability of hotels.
- All ecclesial meetings are subject to be confirmed 1 week before the tour.

**Notes:**

The order of the itinerary is subject to be revised.



Museums are closed on Mondays.

Scarves are required for women to enter in Armenian Orthodox churches.

Short trousers aren't acceptable in the church both for women and men.

Wind and rain coats, hat, sun cream and comfortable shoes should be in every luggage.

**EXPLORE ALSO CHRISTIAN CAUCASUS (ARMENIA + GEORGIA) CONTACTING US.**