



GRAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOUR TO ARMENIA

FROM STONE AGE SETTLEMENTS TO ANCIENT ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORIES
AND FROM URARTU KINGDOM OF VAN TO THE MEDIEVAL MONASTERIES

Program is dedicated to the 2800 anniversary of Yerevan to be celebrated in 2018.





Duration: 10 days. / 9 nights
Best period : Mid June – Mid October
Suitable for small and mid - size groups

BRIEF ITINERARY

- Day 1 . Departure from Home land**
Day 2 Arrival to Yerevan / TOUR TO URARTU KINGDOM OF VAN
Teishebaini / Erebouni / State History Museum
Day 3. ANTIENET CAPITALS
Yerevan / Dvin / Artashat / Khor Virap / Cave Areni 1 / Noravank if time permits Sisian
Day 4. ANTIENET ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORIES and PETROGLIFS
Sisian / Karahoungue / Ukhtasar / Yeghegnadzor
Day 5 . BRONZ AGE
Yeghgenadzor / Selim / Sev Sar / Lchasen / Noraduz if time permits / Sevan
Day 6: CLASSICAL ARMENIA - MIDDLE AGES
Sevan / Goshavank / Hagpat / Gyumri
Day 7. BRONZ AGE
Gyumri / Horom /Beniamin / Agarak / Yerevan
Day 8. BRONZE AGE
Yerevan / Metsamor / Echmiadzin / Zvartnots / Yerevan
Day 9. CLASSICAL ARMENIA
Yerevan / Garni / Ghegard / Matenadarn / Vernissage
Day 10. Departure.

Transfer to airport. Departure.

The trip offers

- Visit to historical, UNESCO and archaeological sites
- Visit to archaeological museums
- Visit to Institutue of Archaeology and Ethnography in Yerevan (upon request)
- Visit and participation to the excavations at different archaeological sites, washing , sorting and classification of archaeological findings under the supervision of Armenian archaeologist.



DESCRIPTIVE PROGRAM

Day 1 . Departure from Home land

Day 2 Arrival to Yerevan / TOUR TO URARTU KINGDOM OF VAN Teishebaini / Erebouni / State History Museum

Arrival to Zavrtnots international airport in Yerevan. Meet the guide and private transfer to the hotel. Short rest or overnight at the hotel. Breakfast and start the tour to the historical center of the capital Yerevan. It's Erebuni Fortress also known as Arin Berd is an Urartian fortified city, located in Yerevan, Armenia. It was one of several fortresses built along the northern Urartian border and was one of the most important political, economic and cultural centers of the vast kingdom. The name Yerevan itself is derived from Erebuni. Early excavations began during the 19th century while more systematic excavations were carried out at Erebuni in 1952, In 1968 the Erebuni Museum of History was established. Its opening was timed to coincide with the 2750th anniversary of Yerevan. In 2018 Yerevan will celebrate its 2800 anniversary. Continue the tour to another archaeological site from Urartu Kingdom Era the Teishebaini also Karmir Blur which was the capital of the Transcaucasian provinces of the ancient kingdom of Urartu. It is located near the modern city of Yerevan in Armenia. The ancient Armenian site of Karmir Blur was discovered in 1939 after being buried for more than two and a half millennia. The excavations here are considered as one of the most important archaeological discoveries and findings in the Middle East, the Near East and Asia Minor. Some of the findings include carved ivory, stone, ceramics, metal figurines, pottery and an astonishing wide variety of bronze domestic tools and utensils etc. Archaeological evidence shows that the city of Teishebaini was destroyed by fire sometime around the beginning of the 6th century BC. In the afternoon visit History Museum to have a brief idea about the history of Armenia and its rich archaeological potential starting from Stone Age up to our days. Dinner and overnight in Yerevan.

Day 3. ANTIEN CAPITALS

Yerevan / Dvin / Artashat / Khor Virap / Cave Areni 1 / Noravank if time permits Sisian

Breakfast at the hotel .Check out. Drive to Dvin archaeological site which is in UENSCO Tentative List. Dvin was a large commercial city and the capital of early medieval Armenia. It was situated north of the previous ancient capital of Armenia, the city of Artaxata, along the banks of the Metsamor River, 35 km to the south of modern Yerevan. The site has evidence of occupation from the second millennium B.C. and was the site of a fortress in the sixth century B.C. King Khosrof II built a palace on the site, when it served as the capital of Armenia and subsequently as the seat of the katholikos. It also served as a regional administrative center for the Sassanian empire and the caliphs of Baghdad. The excavated structures cover the entire history of the site until its destruction by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Continue to Artashat. Artashat - commercial city and the capital of ancient [Armenia](#) during the



reign of king Artaxias I who was the founder of the Artaxiad Dynasty of the ancient Kingdom of Armenia. According to the accounts given by Greek historians Plutarch and Strabo, Artashat is said to have been chosen and developed on the advice of the Carthaginian general Hannibal. Artashes also built a citadel (which was later named Khor Virap and gained prominence as the location where Gregory the Illuminator was to be imprisoned by Trdat the Great) and added other fortifications, including a moat. Continue to the most southern region of Armenia – Syunik province and visit Noravank medieval monastery en route if time permits. Dinner and overnight in Sisian.

Day 4. ANTIEN ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORIES and PETROGLIFS

Sisian / Karahoung / Ukhtasar / Yeghegnadzor

Breakfast at the hotel. Tour to Karahoung (Known also as Zorats Karer and Dik-Dik qarer) which is a prehistoric archaeological site the name of which is interpreted as deriving from two Armenian words: kar - meaning stone, and hung or hoonch - meaning sound. Thus the name Carahunge means Speaking Stones. The astronomical significance of megalithic structures at Zorats Karer was first explored by Armenian archaeologist Onik Khnkikyan in 1984. After it the investigation by radio physicist Paris Herouni and his research team during 1994-2001 led them to the now disputed conclusion that Karahunge is the world's oldest astronomical observatory. The site has been investigated British-born American astronomer and archaea-astronomer Gerald Hawkins, by archaeologists from the Institut für Vorderasiatische Archäologie in 2000, by professors of University of Munich, by Archaea-astronomer Clive Ruggles etc . Not far from Karahoung you can find dozens of prehistoric petroglyphs laid on the Mt. Ukhtasar. Take the soviet 4 x 4 to reach the carvings.

Over 2,000 decorated rock fragments extend to the foot of the mountain. The petroglyphs, some believed to date back to the Paleolithic Era (12,000 BCE), are carved onto dark brownish-black volcanic stones left behind by an extinct volcano. Although the site was discovered in the early 20th century, it was not really studied until the 1920s and again in the late 1960s; it is still not fully understood today. Continue to Yeghegnadzor. Dinner and overnight.

Day 5 . BRONZ AGE

Yeghegnadzor / Selim / Sev Sar / Lchasan / Noraduz if time permits / Sevan

Breakfast at the hotel. Check out. Take the Selim pass to arrive lake Sevan shores. Stop at Orbelians caravanserai dated to 1332 built on the Great Silk Road route. Tour to Mt. Sevasar with ex soviet 4x4 cars which is situated on the south western part of Lake Sevan. The mountain is full of petroglyphs which are 6000 – 8000 years old and there is one which is completely different form the other petroglyphs of the area and of Armenia ones in general. There hasn't been a lot of studies and researches in this area but it's known that this can be world's ancient calendar or astrological map quite rare in the world. The Sevasar astrological map is the only one in its type found in Armenia till now. As per scientist researches there are few countries in the world that have rock art testimonials in general. Therefore, the Sevasar



calendar or astrological map seems to be a unique in the world. Continue to the North - Western shores of Lake Sevan and visit Lchashen village in the Gegharkunik Province of [Armenia](#). The settlement dates back to the 3rd millennium BC. It has a 13th-century church, an Urartian Iron Age fortress and a Bronze Age cemetery. The ancient necropolis was discovered in 1950s when the water level of Lake Sevan dropped. On the southern end of the necropolis, on the hills there rises the cyclopic fortress of Lchashen as well as the remainders of the ancient city. Besides the two-wheel and four-wheel carts and chariots there were other valuable findings as well. Among them were the bronze statuettes of bulls, the gold-made frog and 25 other golden items, which were made in the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. In all likelihood, the gold was brought from Zod gold mine. Of interest are the colorful and decorated potteries of Lchashen that came to replace the simple and black potteries.

Visit Noraduz cemetery en route full of Armenian Cross stones if time permits and stop near lake Sevan for dinner and overnight.

Day 6: CLASSICAL ARMENIA - MIDDLE AGES
Sevan / Goshavank / Hagpat / Gyumri

Breakfast at the hotel. Admire world's second highest and largest alpine freshwater lake and visit the monasteries on the peninsula. Drive to Tavush forested province and visit Goshavank monastery of 13 cen. which hosts one of the jewelries Armenian cross stone making. Continue to Lori region that borders with Georgia and visit Hagpat monastery 10-13 cent. UNESCO. Drive to Gyumri city in Shirak province – the second largest city in Armenia. Dinner and overnight in Gyumri.

Day 7. BRONZ AGE
Gyumri / Horom / Beniamin / Agarak / Yerevan

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Horom village to visit the Horom Citadel which is an ancient Bronze Age Urartian fortification on the top of two large hills south of the main road and opposite of the dam and Kamut Reservoir. Horom is considered to be one of the most impressive archaeological sites in Armenia because of its unique architecture. There are potsherds and obsidian flakes strewn on the surface of the ground. Recent excavations have been underway at the site recently by Armenian and American archaeologists. Continue to Beniamin village where a Bronze Age and later on also Achemenids Empire period archeological site is laid. Possibility to take part at the excavations. Return back to the capital and visit Agarak village The site contains some of the oldest large man-made structures carved into stone, dating to the Early Bronze Age ('Agarak 1' dated 3400 BC). This is the earliest in the Caucasus. Rock wells, rock-cut stairways, corridors, and horseshoe-shaped structures are found. The Early Bronze Age culture area covers 200 hectares, of which 118 hectares were declared a protected zone. In the early Bronze Age, here already existed a town with a regular street plan. A possible ancient astronomical observatory is found here. Dinner and overnight in Yerevan.

Day 8. BRONZE AGE
Yerevan / Metsamor / Echmiadzin / Zvartnots / Yerevan



Breakfast at the hotel. Start tour to the town of Echmiadzin, the center of the Armenian Church and the spiritual center of Armenian people. Here is the location of Echmiadzin Cathedral, which is the most ancient Christian temple of Armenia. Continue to Metsamor which has been populated from the 5th millennium BC until the 18th century AD. The excavations of the tombs of Metsamor castle began in 1965. Arkuni town is noted for its observatory and temple complexes consisted of seven sanctuaries. Near the site is a Neolithic stone circles dated to ca. 5000 BC, interpreted by enthusiasts of archeoastronomy as an astronomical "observatory". Metsamor observatory studied the sky 2800-2600 b.c. This fact came to prove the 19 cen. European scientist conclusions according to which the naming of zodiac signs was done in Armenian highland in the XXVIII cen. b. C. Return to Yerevan on the way with a stop at the ruins of Zvartnots Temple (7th century) which is listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO. Dinner and overnight in Yerevan.

Day 9. CLASSICAL ARMENIA

Yerevan / Garni / Gegharkunik / Matenadaran / Vernissage

Breakfast at the hotel. Drive to Garni village to visit Garni Pagan temple (1st cent. A.D.) – the only one in all CIS countries, and Gegharkunik cave monastery (12-13 cen. UNESCO). Have an unforgettable lunch at Serghy's house yard tasting Armenian barbeque and participating at Armenian traditional bread baking process. Return back to Yerevan and visit Matenadaran manuscript museum. In the afternoon visit Vernissage open air handcraft market if its week end and take some souvenirs for back home. Farewell dinner at an Armenian restaurant with live music and dances if available. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan.

Day 10. Departure.

Transfer to airport. Departure.



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