

IN COOPERATION WITH



## ARMENIA TRAVEL INFORMATION



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# ABOUT ARMENIA

Armenia officially the Republic of Armenia is a mountainous country located in the Armenian Highlands of Western Asia. Armenia is a unitary, multi-party, democratic nation-state with an ancient cultural heritage. It lies south of the great mountain range of the Caucasus and fronting the northwestern extremity of Asia. To the north and east Armenia is bounded by Georgia and Azerbaijan, while its neighbors to the southeast and west are, respectively, Iran and Turkey. The capital is Yerevan.

Modern Armenia comprises only a small portion of ancient Armenia, one of the world's oldest centers of civilization. Ancient Armenia was subjected to constant foreign incursions, finally losing its autonomy in the 14th century CE. The centuries-long rule of Ottoman and Persian conquerors imperiled the very existence of the Armenian people. Eastern Armenia was annexed by Russia during the 19th century, while western Armenia remained under Ottoman rule, and in 1894–1896 and 1915 the Ottoman government perpetrated systematic massacres and forced deportations of Armenians.

Armenia is a mountainous country characterized by a great variety of scenery and geologic instability. The northwestern part of the Armenian Highland—containing Mount Aragats, the highest peak in the country—is a combination of lofty mountain ranges, deep river valleys, and lava plateaus dotted with extinct volcanoes.



# ABOUT YEREVAN

Yerevan, the beautiful and welcoming capital of Armenia, rewards visitors with mesmerizing views of Mount Ararat, wide and imperial boulevards, lively city squares and graceful, majestic (and pink) architecture. Located in the heart of the Caucasus, this metropolis of more than a million people feels like a home away from home, a proud, tranquil and welcoming city of gracious and warm-hearted people. Guests are received with open arms by the residents of Yerevan, many of whom are eager to help you discover every hidden gem that its ancient streets have to offer.

Yerevan is one of the oldest cities in the world. In 782 BC the fortress of Erebuni was built on the southern outskirts of the modern metropolis, from which the name 'Yerevan' was later derived. The city's history has been strongly influenced by its location, for strategically important trade routes crossing Yerevan played a vital role in the development of the city.

Tufa stone, a durable, light material of a delicate pink color, was used to construct countless buildings in Yerevan, leading it to be dubbed the "Pink City". Yerevan stands proudly today as a symbol in Armenia of unity, stability and tranquility.





**Armenia** is famous for its fascinating monasteries ensconced in astounding landscapes.

# MAJOR SIGHTS IN YEREVAN

## The Cascade Complex

Cascade is the beating heart of the city. It is where the youth gathers for drinks, it is where most of the open-air concerts are held, it is where you can capture the best panorama of Yerevan. Cascade's benefits are probably countless.

It is important to note that Cascade does not merely refer to this colossal stairway. The whole district, or rather the "patio", that lies behind Yerevan's chief architect Alexander Tamanian's statue, is the very Cascade we know. It is from that wide hallway-patio that you get the feeling of what Cascade is all about - modern art.

Due to the Armenian-American businessman and art collector Gerard Cafesjians's investments and connections, Cascade has become a valuable open-air and free-access modern art museum. Artists like Fernando Botero, Lynn Chadwick, Barry Flanagan, Stanislav Libensky and Jaroslava Brychtova, Paul Cox, Jaume Plensa (Spanish Catalan artist and sculptor) are featured at Cascade, and all passers-by have a chance to enjoy their masterpieces for free, just during your morning or evening walk.

Cascade has been everyone's all-time favorite not only because of these high-end valuable artworks, but because of the fantastic view on Yerevan that one can enjoy from the top of Cascade, with Mount Ararat standing behind Yerevan's iconic pink buildings.

Cascade has also become an auspicious venue for youth pastime because of the recent emergence of cozy terraced cafes that allow for friendly gatherings, lively conversations, and why not, productive business meetings.

The foot of Cascade staircases has also become the perfect place for jazz concerts, traditional Armenian dancing masterclasses, and more.



## History Museum of Armenia

The main museum of Armenia is the National History Museum, located on the Republic Square. The elegant and refined museum building is one of the most famous postcards of Yerevan. This miracle of architecture, together with “singing fountains” in front of it, harmoniously blends into the overall architectural ensemble of the Republic Square. The History Museum of Armenia contains more than 400,000 exhibits, and covers various periods of development of Armenia, from pre-Christian times up to the present. The museum collection is presented both in temporary and permanent exhibitions. Temporary and permanent exhibitions are thematically divided and devoted to archeology, ethnography, historical architecture, numismatics, where you can see many ancient artifacts. There is also a section dedicated to modern Armenian history. Here you can also see the bronze armor of King Argishti I, the founder of Yerevan (787-760 BC). Many of these findings are still being studied and deciphered, as the people of Urartu were full of secrets and mysteries.

The National Museum of the History of Armenia is replete with pieces of arts and crafts. One of the exhibitions is devoted to the art of carpet weaving. This branch of applied art, along with the weaving of national costumes, is an integral part of the Armenian culture. The collection of carpets totals about 2500 pieces, dating from the early Christian Ages to the 19th century. This section also presents a collection of national costumes of different epochs and regions of Armenia.



## Matenadaran

The Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts also known as Matenadaran is a depository of ancient manuscripts and has one of the biggest collections in Armenia. It was founded in 1959 and located in Yerevan. The Museum's complex is located in the institute's old, original building which had only a single exhibition hall, but now it has fifteen halls with lots of exhibits. During the exhibitions, the visitors have the chance to see the manuscript, individual miniatures, documents, old printed books and etc.

The exhibition of the Central Hall is dedicated to the development of Armenian medieval sciences, literature, and arts throughout the centuries. It presents the Armenian culture started from the creation of the alphabet by Mesrop Mashtots in 405 AD to the 18th century.

The repository contains more than 17000 manuscripts, 450 thousand documents, and 3000 ancient books. The oldest manuscript is the "Vehamor Avetaran" which was kept from the 8th century. Here you will see the biggest Armenian book "Msho Charyntir" weighing 28 kg and the smallest book with a weight of 190 grams.

## Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall

Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall is the professional and artistic cradle of the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra. It is one of the architectural pearls of Yerevan designed by Alexander Tamanian. It hosts an audience of 1300 seats. Alexander Tamanian, the prominent Armenian architect, first planned to build the winter and summer halls with two amphitheatres separated by stages. During the various festivities, these two stages would then combine into a hall with a total capacity of 3000 seats.

The plan of the building and its miniature were presented at the World Exhibition in Paris, 1936, and awarded the Grand Prix. Unfortunately, technical problems and conditions, and Tamanian's untimely death in 1936, prevented the project from being fully realized.

In 1978-1980, the building underwent complete restoration and renovation. Later, the subordinate buildings and dressing rooms were renovated with Armenian marble and elegant wood. The concert hall was furnished with new chairs, the old chandeliers were changed, and modern stage facilities added. In front of the concert hall stands the monument to Aram Khachaturian, erected in 1999 on the occasion of his birthday (June 6). This accolade to the great composer completes the monumental panorama of the adjoining France Square.



## Opera House

Another wonder of Armenian architecture is the building of Armenian National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet named after Alexander Spendiaryan. Located in the heart of Yerevan, this building is another masterpiece of Alexander Tamanyan, that was awarded the Grand Prize at the World Exhibition in Paris. The building is considered to be the symbol of music culture expressed through the architectural grace and classic splendor. The Theatre of Opera and Ballet was officially opened on 20 January 1933. The building is round in shape. It consists of two concert halls: Aram Khachaturian concert hall with 1,400 seats and Aleksandr Spendaryan Opera and Ballet National Theatre with 1,200 seats.

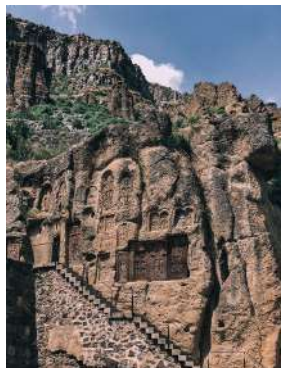
There is a round square in front of the Theatre of Opera and Ballet named "Azatutyun"- Freedom. The statues of Armenian great poet Hovhannes Tumanyan and composer Aleksandr Spendaryan are located here. The Freedom square is one of the favorite spots of the locals and the guests of the city, as it is not only a cultural center and an impressive architectural monument, but also a lovely place to stroll and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the city.

For the complete list of the major touristic sights in Yerevan, please visit <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/armenia/articles/must-visit-attractions-in-yerevan/>



The Armenian capital, Yerevan, is one of the world's oldest inhabited cities, constructed as it was 29 years before Rome.

# RECOMMENDED SIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY



## Geghard Monastery

Geghard is one of the most popular sights of Armenia and is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The name “geghard” is translated as “spear”, because, as the legend says, a spear was kept right here, by which Jesus Christ was pierced during the crucifixion.

Geghard is a medieval monastery complex in the Kotayk province of Armenia. The monastery was founded in the 4th century by Gregory the Illuminator. When St. Gregory was proselytizing in Armenia, he came across a miraculous spring in a cave and founded Ayrivanq, the monastery of the Cave. The spring still flows in the chapel and people come here to drink its water. Because of its sacred springs, this place was worshipped as a sanctuary in pre-Christian times as well.

## Garni Temple

Garni is remarkable with a number of historical and architectural monuments of the Hellenistic and early Christian era. The most prominent among them are Garni temple and the fortress of the same name. Moreover, there you will find the ruins of the royal palace and baths built according to the Roman methodology. The museum-reserve is situated on the territory of 5 hectares, 28 kilometers away from Yerevan. In 2011 the complex received the prestigious award of the UNESCO-Greece Melina Mercouri International Prize.

The true and unique masterpiece of Hellenistic architecture in Armenia is the pagan temple of the Sun, Garni. It is one of the most ancient landmarks in Kotayk and whole Armenia which has survived since pagan period. Historians attribute its erection to the ancient-Armenian king Trdat who adopted Christianity as official religion in 301. Although many scientists believe that it was constructed in the 1st century AD.

## Khor Virap Monastery

The walled monastery complex, which sits on a rocky outcrop above the river plain, offers magnificent views of Mount Ararat as well as a fine example of early Armenian ecclesiastic architecture, the ruins of nearby Ancient Artashat and the Khor Virap State Nature Reserve.



The monastery site, which has been extensively restored, is well presented. The hill of Khor Virap and the territory adjoining it were the site of the important early Armenian capital city of ancient Artashat, built by King Artashes I, founder of the Artashesid dynasty around 180 BC, can be found. Khor Virap plays an integral role in the history of Armenia due to the legend of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the first Armenian Catholicos, who was imprisoned there for 13 years.

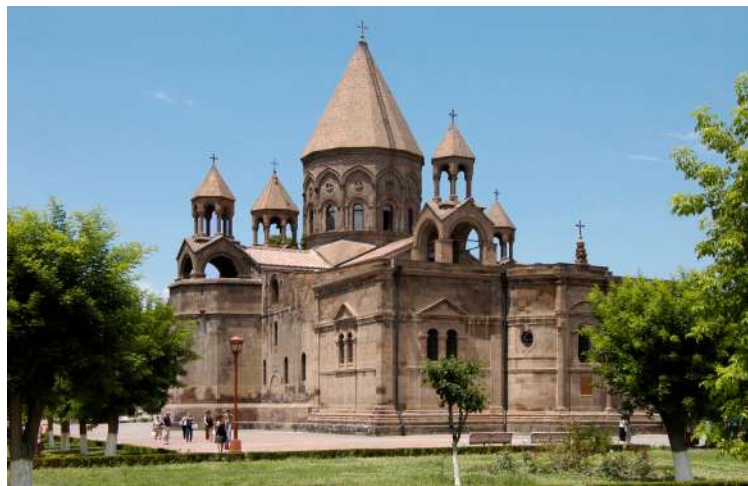
During the reign of King Tiridates III the Great, Gregory the Illuminator was trying to spread Christianity in Armenia, which was not approved by the pagan ruler. Gregory refused to worship pagan Gods, thus, the king ordered his guards to tie the Christian's hands and throw him into a deep well. King Tiridates left Gregory to die in the dark dungeon where he was imprisoned. He spent 13 years in that dark, damp and small place, but survived due to the kindness of a woman's tender heart. Meanwhile, Tiridates enthusiastically followed the lead of his friend, the Emperor Diocletian, in savagely persecuting Christians.



## Echmiadzin, the Holy See of the Armenian Apostolic Church

Echmiadzin, which means the “The Descent of the Only Begotten Son”, is an ancient capital of Armenia. According to legend, Jesus Christ descended from heaven and indicated the spot for a church to be built to St. Gregory the Illuminator. Holy Echmiadzin Cathedral was erected at that site in the 4th century (301-303), at the dawn of the Christian conversion of the country by King Trdat III. The Cathedral was built on top of the pagan temple of Vagharshapat, after it was destroyed by King Trdat - though the fire worshipping pit is still intact underground beneath the altar.

Echmiadzin is the residence of the Supreme Catholicos of all Armenians and the center of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Every seven years, the rite of blessing of holy chrism is held here; thousands of believers come to Echmiadzin as pilgrims from different parts of the world for this ceremony. The existing Cathedral was rebuilt around 480 AD on the site of the early 4th century cruciform basilica of which barely four bases had survived; these were used to support four pylons of the new structure. The Cathedral's present dome dates from the 17th century, as does a belfry on the western side (1653-1658). Its 17th-18th century frescoes are the masterpieces of the Hovnatanyan family of artists. The Cathedral's museums exhibit an unusually large collection of applied and decorative art objects associated with the church; reliquaries, gonfalons, and the like, dating from the 10th-18th centuries. The peaceful gardens exhibit an excellent collection of khachkars of different periods from all over Armenia.



## Lake Sevan and Sevanavank Monastery

Set 1900m above sea level and covering 1240 sq km, the vast expanse of Sevana Lich (Lake Sevan) is the largest lake in the Caucasus and one of the largest freshwater high-altitude lakes in the world. Its colours and shades change with the weather, forming dazzling azure to dark blue hues, and a thousand shades in between. Fish populations include the endangered ishkhhan (prince trout) as well as introduced crayfish and sig (whitefish).

Sevanavank is located on the peninsula of Lake Sevan, founded by Gregory the Illuminator in 305. Excavations revealed that this place was inhabited in the Stone and Bronze Ages. According to the inscription on the southern wall of the Church of the Holy Apostles, the expansion and construction of the monastery in the 9th century was organized by the daughter of Ashot I Bagratuni, the founder of the royal house of Bagratuni. The surviving buildings are currently restored and available to anyone who wants to personally see the old monument. Sevanavank is one of the most recognizable historical and cultural sites of Armenia. The monastery was founded in 305, and two churches in 874. Sevanavank Monastery is located on the peninsula of Sevan (formerly an island). Gregory the Illuminator founded the monastery in 305. The island has been fortified with fences since the Bronze Age. It is believed that there was a pagan temple here. The princes of Syunik province founded a stronghold here in IX century.



# NATIONAL CUISINE

Armenian cuisine reveals the geography and history of the country, as well as the animals and crops grown on its territory. The cuisine is rich in vegetables, meat, and fish; however, eggplant, lamb, and lavash make up its primary components. In addition, cracked wheat, or bulgur, is often used instead of rice and maize in Armenian cuisine. We have compiled some of the best dishes you need to try once in Armenia.

The most popular dishes of Armenian cuisine are dolma, khorovats, ghapama, khash, gata, baklava, harissa, Armenian kebab. All this famous dish you can try in restaurants named Dolma, Lavash, Sherep, Tavern.



## TIME ZONE

Armenia Time (AMT) is 4 hours ahead of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). Armenia observes Armenia Time all year. There are no Daylight-Saving Time clock changes.

## Hotels

Visit <https://hotel.am/> to check out available hotels, acquaint yourself with the offered services and compare prices.

## Visa

The citizens of EU member countries do not require visa to visit Armenia. More information regarding visa requirements for Armenia can be found at <https://www.mfa.am/en/visa/>

## Climate and Weather

The climate of Armenia is very different. The country is located in the subtropical zone, among ridges of the central part of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains. But despite this the subtropical climate is observed only in the southern part of Armenia.

Climate of Armenia in other regions is markedly continental. Summer is dry and sunny, lasting from June to mid-September. Winter is short and quite cold with plenty of snow. In the mountains the average summer temperature ranges between +10 and +22°C, and in the winter temperatures range between +2 and -14 °C. In plain lands the average January temperature is -5 °C, and July temperature is +25 °C.

In autumn and spring frosts are frequently strong, and the soil temperature can fall to -28 °C at that. Heat distribution in Armenia depends on the height of the place. Even within a city the temperature between two neighboring districts can differ by 2-3 °C.

First rainy season in Armenia lasts from spring to early summer while the months of October and November experience the second spell of rain. In the winter mountain areas receive a lot of snowfall, which lies on the slopes until March-April and all year round on the tops of the mountains.

Autumn and mid-spring are the best seasons to visit Armenia. Springs are short, while falls are long. Armenian fall is noted for mild and sunny weather, bright colors of landscapes and abundance of autumn fruits.

For more details, visit <https://www.advantour.com/armenia/climate.htm>



# TRAVEL TO ARMENIA

## Zvartnots

“Zvartnots” International Airport of Yerevan, is the main air gate of the Republic of Armenia, which has been operating since 1961. It is located near Zvartnots, 15 km west of Yerevan. It acts as the main international airport of Armenia and is Yerevan’s main international transport hub. There are plenty of air connections between Yerevan and other regional cities, including Athens, Barcelona, Beirut, Berlin, Bucharest, Brussels, Damascus, Doha, Dubai, Istanbul, Kyiv, Kuwait City, London, Milan, Minsk, Moscow, Paris, Prague, Riga, Rome, Tehran, Tel-Aviv, Tbilisi, Vienna, Venice and Warsaw, as well as daily connections to most major cities within the CIS region. The airport caters a large number of major international airlines and air companies including Air France, Qatar Airways, LOT Polish International Airlines, Austrian Airlines, Aeroflot Russian Airlines, Brussels Airlines.



For more information, visit <http://www.zvartnots.aero/EN/Index>

## Safety

On the Safety and Security domain, Armenia's incarceration rate improved significantly, falling over 35 per cent over the past three years to 76 prisoners per 100,000 people. This fall means that Armenia now has the lowest incarceration rate in the Russia and Eurasia region. There was also an improvement in its homicide rate, political instability, and a fall in terrorism impact. Despite these improvements, Armenia did record deteriorations in some indicators. Although political instability improved, it came at the expense of increasing government interference, resulting in a deterioration in Armenia's political terror scale score. There was also a deterioration in the Militarization domain. Weapons imports rose significantly, as did military expenditure as a percentage of GDP.



## COVID-19 UPDATE (as of March 3, 2021)

Armenia is ranked number 137 with most cases of COVID 19

Coronavirus Cases - 172,816

Deaths - 3,202

Recovered - 163,906

Fatality Rate - 1.9%

Recovery Rate - 94.8%

Critical Cases treated in ICU - 0

Daily Cases Receiving Treatment - 5708

Daily Confirmed Cases - 58247 per million population

For more information about the cases of COVID 19 in Armenia, visit:

<https://www.coronatracker.com/country/armenia/>

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/armenia/>



## CURRENCY

Armenian national currency is Armenian dram. There are paper bills worth 1000, 2000, 5000, 10000, 20000, 50000, 1000000 drams. The coins in circulation are worth 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 drams. All cash transactions are made in the local currency. There are banks, ATM machines and currency exchange points available in many places in the country. Current exchange rates can be found at <http://rate.am/>, <https://www.cba.am/en/sitepages/exchangearchive.aspx>



# HOST FESTIVAL

## Yerevan Perspectives International Music Festival

Yerevan Perspectives is one of the leading international music festivals in Armenia and is regarded as one of the best in Europe. The Festival program has featured top-class orchestras and musicians of our generation including Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Berlin Staatskapelle, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Israel Philharmonic, Mariinsky Symphony and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conductors Lorin Maazel, Michael Tilson Thomas, Daniel Barenboim, Zubin Mehta, Valery Gergiev, Christoph Eschenbach, soloists Pinchas Zukerman, Evgeny Kissin, Ivo Pogorelich, Sir András Schiff, Maxim Vengerov, Yefim Bronfman, Joshua Bell, Mikhail Pletnyev, Plácido Domingo, Andrea Bocelli, Renée Fleming, Dmitry Hvorostovsky, among other finest conductors, soloists, choirs and quartets of the world. The Festival presents high class performers of sacred, classical, contemporary, jazz and pop music during three seasons of the year: Spring, Summer and Autumn. Jazz legends George Benson, All Jarreau, Joe Cocker, singers Lara Fabian, Patricia Kaas, Goran Bregovic were also presented by the Festival. Yerevan Perspectives authored special project “Days of Great Living Great Composers” and hosted concert series of the world-famous composers Sofia Gubaidulina, Krzysztof Penderecki, Rodion Shchedrin, Gia Kancheli in Yerevan.

The Festival was established in 2000 by the prominent Armenian Composer, Honored Art Worker of the Republic of Armenia, Professor Stepan Rostomyan. The Perspectives is a member of the European Festivals Association since 2007.

In April 2015, Yerevan Perspectives launched Academy of the Festival in picturesque community of Byurakan, only 33 km north-west from Yerevan. The Academy welcomes all its guests into a special atmosphere of hospitality, as well as unique architecture and interior design, high class concerts, master classes, conferences and much more.

<http://www.yerevanfestival.am/>

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