

***PILGRIM TO ARMENIA
JULY 27-AUGUST 8, 2020***

DAY 1 – July 27, Monday

Arrival to Yerevan. Meeting at the airport. Transfer to the hotel in Yerevan.

Check in. Time for resting.

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 2 – July 28

Breakfast served

YEREVAN CITY TOUR!

Your acquaintance with Yerevan will start with a look at the history of its foundation – a visit to Erebouni museum and Fortress founded in 782 BC.

Tsitsernakaberd memorial and museum to the 1915 Genocide, Commemorating the 102 years since the Genocide.

Today the *lunch* will provide in special restaurant part of Megerian Carepet Factory which is one of the opportunity taste of Armenian traditional meals with old recipes by "Araratyan Khohanots" – "Armenian Cuisine". "MEGERIAN RUGS" Factory & Show room: Which brings together time-honored traditions and a rang of exquisite aesthetics to create objects of art for modern living and you will become acquainted with the ancient technology of Armenian carpet making.

Cascade and Gerard Cafesjian Art Museum, which is Armenia's largest repository of modern art. "Victory" Park with fascinating view of Yerevan and the whole city will be seen spread at the foot of gorgeous Mt. Ararat. "Mayr Hayastan" - Mother Armenia symbolizes peace through strength.

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 3 – July 29

Breakfast served

Visit Aragatsotn Region - this part of Armenia, especially Mt. Aragats, has always attracted the attention of travelers, tourists and geologists due to a tremendous number of historical monuments and beautiful landscapes.

Artashavan – New Complex of Armenian Letters: *"It is difficult to express the deep feeling Armenians have for their language, which many regard as the lifeblood of their culture"*. Saghmosavank Monastery perch on the edge of the precipitous gorge of the Kasakh River. Visiting the village of Oshakan, you will see the church which is built over the grave of *Mesrop Mashtots*, who is the founder of the Armenian alphabet, and one of Armenia's greatest benefactors. *Lunch* and hospitality with an Armenian Family.

Gyumri Visit to Debi Arach Children Center and Dogs of Gyumri

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 4 – July 30

Breakfast served

Today is the day which will best contrast the difference between the pre-Christianity /paganism era and the conversion of Armenia to Christianity. This morning you will travel to Garni, the location of the only pre-Christian pagan temple maintained in Armenia. Later on, we will reach Geghard (Cave monastery) (UNESCO) architectural complex (12-13th centuries), carved out of one monolithic rock. Due to the extraordinary acoustics, when the local singer begins to sing in this chamber it is hard to believe a large choir isn't singing... be aware it is only one man...

A visit to Geghard is truly a spiritual experience.

Lunch with a traditional table/lavash making: "Eat thy bread with joy" in Geghard

Return Yerevan

Visit to Hay Vortats Tun - which is AGBU Educational Children's Center provides art, computer, crafts, dance, gymnastics, history, language and music programs to local children after school hours and during the summer, even there is the church services and Bible studies on Sundays. Today Performing Arts Groups will present their talents at various cultural events especially for us.

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 5 – July 31

Breakfast served and CHECK OUT

Driving through the fertile plains of the Ararat valley, you will reach Khor Virap Monastery – the beginning of the History of Christianity in Armenia, magnificently set against the towering slopes of the Biblical Mountain, Ararat. You have some quite spectacular photo opportunities before a landscape of unparalleled beauty and majesty. The monastery is the site where St. Gregory the Illuminator was incarcerated and it is a pilgrimage destination for every believer. Later on we will taste and enjoy a guided tour of the famous "Areni Winery." In Armenian, there is a famous saying that "*Wine is bottled poetry*". Next, we will take the path through the narrow gorge, revealing Noravank Monastery, nestled inside the deep red landscape of the tuf stone mountains.

Lunch will be served near Noravank Monastery.

After we'll drive to Jermuk, first visit is Tsovk waterfall and the town which is a great place to spend as much time as you can spare to relax and get away from it all.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT IN Jermuk

DAY 6 – August 1

Breakfast served and Check out

After Breakfast we leave Jermuk for Tatev Monastery in the early morning; on the way you will admire a splendid view of the area. The Aerial Tramway of Tatev - spanning 5.7 kilometers across the spectacular Vorotan River Gorge, offer a spectacular journey with breathtaking views of the river gorge below, but most significantly, it will link you to one of the jewels of Armenia's medieval legacy - Tatev Monastery as well the Tatev Aerial Tramway - the longest passenger aerial tramway in the world - is poised to be one of southern Armenia's most popular attractions. Arriving you the picturesque monastery nestled at the top of an impregnable plateau, crowned by the ramparts walls from the upper part of the territory. After you will have time to discover the interior of the monastery which was founded in the 4th cent., becoming an important religious and educational center of medieval Armenia in 9-10th cc..

Lunch in the foothills. On your return, you have a very attractive stop in Khndzoresk, a cave village and exotic rock formations. This village looks like a vertical multi-storied rocky amphitheater. Troglodytic dwelling at

Khndzoresk – Prehistoric era. Winding road leads your pleasant ascent.

Return Yerevan

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 7 – August 2, Sunday

Breakfast served

We embark on our journey to the land of ancient treasures of Christian history - Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin (UNESCO) the "religious capital" and the seat of the Supreme Patriarch-Catholics of all Armenians. The story holds that the place where Noah made the ark after the flood is the site upon which the

main Cathedral, one of the earliest Christian churches, was built. Nowadays, it is located in the lower chamber, underneath the main Altar of the Cathedral. Participation in DIVINE LITURGY
Then, admire the Churches of Sts. Hripsime and Gayane (7th c.) named after the faithful virgins, these churches are dedicated to these virgins, 3rd century followers of Christ who were martyred.

Lunch is in one of the educational and cultural centers of Etchmiadzin

Free time in Yerevan

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 8 – August 3

Breakfast served

Dilijan: “A piece of Switzerland in Armenia” - Earth and sky, woods and fields, rivers, the mountains become excellent schoolmasters, and teach some of us more than we can ever learn otherwise... The old approach in the new century ...

“Old Town Dilijan” complete with craftsmen workshops, small shops with traditional Armenian products and crafts, museum, showing typical 19th century living with all its local customs and handmade wood furnishings..... 10-13th centuries Haghartsin Monastery. Lunch in Dilijan

Later on visit to Lake Sevan – the emerald of Armenia, a beauty under the sky. Lake Sevan is considered to be one of the largest sweet water lakes in the world, situated at an altitude of 1,897 meters above sea level. The most picturesque view of Lake Sevan is seen from the peninsula atop which Sevan Monastery is nicely nestled dating to the 9th century.

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 9 – August 4

Breakfast served

FREE DAY in Yerevan

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 10 – August 5

Breakfast served

SERVICE VISIT: Our first service visit will be at the FAR Children’s Center, which is the only institution in Armenia that performs crisis intervention and rehabilitation, is also a national, fullservice facility where children and their families can access shelter, counseling, outreach services, healthcare and legal assistance. Free Afternoon with Time for Shopping at Vernissage, Yerevan’s famous outdoor open market, known for its souvenirs, crafts, and artwork

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 11 – August 6

Breakfast served **Lori Region (Vanadzor): Odzun, Haghpat, and Sanahin**

Today we will visit the *Lori Region*. The largest town is Vanadzor (formerly Girovagan). On our itinerary are the Monasteries of *Haghpat*, *Sanahin* and *Odzun*. The Monasteries of *Haghpat* and *Sanahin* are on UNESCO’s list of World Heritage Protected Sites. The two villages and their monasteries are similar in many ways, and lie in plain view of each other on a dissected plateau formation, separated by a deep “crack” formed by a small river flowing into the Debed River. *Odzun* is an Armenian basilica that dates back to the 5th-7th centuries. Visit to Hovhannes Toumanyan’s home and Ashot Yerkats’s fortress.

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 12-August 7

Breakfast served

Visit to the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator (20th c), the symbol of the 1700th anniversary of the proclamation of Christianity as a state religion in Armenia. The holy relics of St. Gregory were brought from Italy in time for the opening, and Pope John Paul II came to pay an official visit shortly after the consecration. This is one of those unrepeatable structures, the **FUTURE** built on the **PAST**.

You will enjoy a tour of the most enigmatic of cities, visiting the remarkable Matenadaran Library and Research Institute of Armenia which houses about 17000 rare manuscripts. This is one of the richest depositories of manuscripts and books in the world. The history of the Matenadaran dates back to the creation of the Armenian alphabet in 405.

"NOY ARARAT" Brandy Factory: *"...one does not drink brandy, one derives pleasure from it." Just let's do it in one of the oldies factories in "NOY ARARAT" Yerevan Brandy factory.*

EVENING: FAREWELL DINNER in a typical Armenian Restaurant with live Armenian music completing your journey with unforgettable memories.

OVERNIGHT IN YEREVAN

DAY 13-August 8

TRANSFER to ZVARTNOTS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

HAVE A NICE FLIGHT!!!

****Itinerary is subject to change at any time**