

EASTERN TURKEY TOUR (year round)

Character:

Round up your Caucasus experience with Eastern Turkey extension. The legendary final resting place of Noah's Ark, Mount Ararat dominates our journey towards the town of Kars, where we visit the ancient Armenian capital of Ani. Continue via the sumptuous splendour of Isak Pasha Palace to Lake Van where to visit Aktamar Island and 10th century church of the Holy Cross.

Duration:

4 days / 4 nights

Accommodation:

Tourist hotels

Meals:

4 breakfasts

Mode of travel:

Comfortable, air-conditioned vehicles

Tour support:

Services of local Turkish guide fluent in English

Included:

Accommodation for 4 nights

Meals as specified in the itinerary

Services of local Turkish guide fluent in English

All activities as per itinerary with all entry fees

All transfers in comfortable, air-conditioned vehicles

Excluded:

Optional activities

Itinerary

Day 1

Kars

Breakfast at hotel and start your trip to the Turkish border. Meet your local guide at the border and change cars. Drive across a landscape dominated by the towering presence of Mount Ararat and reach Kars.

Overnight: Hotel in Kars

Meal plan: Breakfast

Day 2

Kars and ruins of Ani

City tour of Kars including some of its major historical sites - the citadel, Church of St. Gregory and Ethnography Museum containing samples of jewellery, kilims, ancient pottery and some fascinating reminders of Russian and Armenian influences. Proceed to the ruins of Ani, the capital of Armenian kingdom and an important trading point at the great Silk Road. Parts of the citadel and the Cathedral still remain and many ruined churches still retain some of their remarkable decorations and wall paintings (Church of St Gregory, Tigran Honentz) despite having been exposed to the elements for centuries. Back to Kars, rest and overnight.

Overnight: Hotel in Kars

Meal plan: Breakfast

Day 3

Van via Dogubeyazet

After breakfast drive to Dogu Beyazet and visit the spectacular Ishak Pasha Palace. It has an eclectic mix of Armenian, Georgian, Ottoman, Persian and Selçuk architectural styles and was said to contain 366 rooms, one for each day of the year. Proceed to explore the nearby bas-reliefs of what is believed to have been an Urartian Citadel, dating from the 9th century BC. After lunch we continue via the cascading Bendimaahi Falls near Muradiye and arrive at the town of Van, lying on the eastern shores of Lake Van. Overnight at hotel in Van.

Overnight: Hotel in Van

Meal plan: Breakfast

Day 4

Van and Akhtamar Island

After breakfast drive to the dramatic Kurdish fortress at Hosap, an impressive site - a medieval stronghold that dominates the village and was built in the 17th century by the order of Suleyman Bey. Boat trip on Lake Van to Aktamar Island. Seven times the size of Lake Geneva, Lake Van is the largest lake in Turkey and the largest saline lake in the world. We will visit Akdamar Island and its Church of the Holy Cross, a superb example of medieval Armenian architecture. Set against the spectacular backdrop of the lake it still retains its majesty, enhanced by the startling diversity of its exterior reliefs and *kachkars*, Armenian cross-stones. After lunch with Van Tarekh, the only type of fish which survives in salty waters of the lake we return to Van. Visit the Rock of Van towering above the old city of Van and supporting the imposing mass of the castle built by Urartian King Sardur I and the tomb of King Argishti.

Overnight: Hotel in Van

Meal plan: Breakfast