

NORTH-WESTERN IRAN TOUR (year round)

Character:

The ancient lands of Iran are steeped with history and culture. A unique aspect of this culture is Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran in the north-west of the country. St Thaddeus, St Stepanos and the Chapel of Dzordzor are examples of outstanding universal value of Armenian architectural tradition and testimony to important interchanges with other regional cultures, in particular the Byzantine, Orthodox and Persian. Tabriz home to unrivaled masterpieces of architecture such as the Blue Mosque and Kondovan, Iran's Cappadocia are exciting landmarks not to be missed.

Duration:

4 days / 4 nights

Accommodation:

Tourist hotels

Meals:

4 breakfasts

Mode of travel:

Comfortable, air-conditioned vehicles

Tour support:

Services of local Iranian guide fluent in English

Included:

Accommodation for 4 nights

Meals as specified in the itinerary

Services of local Iranian guide fluent in English

All activities as per itinerary with all entry fees

All transfers in comfortable, air-conditioned vehicles

Visa processing

Excluded:

Optional activities

Itinerary

Day 1

Jolfa and St. Stepanos

From Goris we drive south to Armenia-Iran border via Kapan-Meghri highway, the highest in Armenia. We reach Meghri famous for amazing lush fruits and vegetables. The figs are great, while the pomegranates, if in season, are not to be missed. Reach the border, change the vehicle and meet your Iranian guide. Continue to Jolfa on the Arax River, at one time a major Armenian settlement until Shah Abbas I drove Armenian families to New Jolfa in Isfahan. Visit Church of St. Stepanos, a UNESCO World Heritage site dating back to the 14th century. This remarkable well preserved monastery is famous for its exterior reliefs and carved stones on the outer walls.

Overnight: Hotel in Jolfa

Meal plan: breakfast

Day 2

St. Thadeus and Dzordzor

After breakfast we continue to Tabriz via Maku, en route we visit the small Urartian citadel of Sangar and Maku Palace. Off to Saint Thaddeus church, a masterpiece of Armenian architecture, the oldest and original part of the church around the altar dates back from the 10th century and is believed to be built by Apostle Thaddaeus who is buried here. This is a major pilgrimage site for Armenians of Iran who camp once a year for three days to attend special services on the anniversary of the death of Saint Thaddaeus. We continue to the Chapel of Dzordzor. Arrival Tabriz, the fourth largest city and formerly the capital of Iran.

Overnight: Hotel in Tabriz

Meal plan: breakfast

Day 3

Tabriz

From Tabriz we make an excursion to Kandovan village famous for its unique architecture, where cave-houses are carved off from huge rocks. The legend goes that the first people to settle here were Mongol warriors who found the caves by chance and used them as their temporary camouflage and accommodation. However, among archaeologists, it is considered to be of Pre-Islamic Period. Back to Tabriz and proceed to city tour including the major highlights: Blue Mosque, one of the masterpieces of Iranian tile work built by Jahan Shah in 1465; Arg-e Tabriz, part of the medieval citadel dating back to the 14th century. A landmark not to be missed is Tabriz Bazaar, once the largest and most beautiful bazaar in the Middle East. The bazaar is known for rugs, silverware and silk; proceed to the spice Bazaar to see and sample some of the amazing diversity on offer.

Overnight: Hotel in Tabriz

Meal plan: breakfast

Day 4

Back to Armenia

Back to Armenia-Iran border. Arrive in Armenia around noon time, continue to Goris.

Overnight: Hotel in Goris

Meal plan: breakfast