

TREKKING ARMENIA

Character:

Exciting trekking tour of Armenia. We traverse the fantastically wild landscapes of Geghama Mountains with volcanic lakes, dragon stones and camps of nomadic people, embark on an adventurous trek through the stunningly beautiful Khosrov Nature Park then trek at Mount Aragats, the highest peak of Lesser Caucasus and an extinct volcano with one of the biggest craters in the world.

Duration:

10 days / 10 nights

Accommodation:

Tourist hotels, camping (5 nights)

Meals:

10 breakfasts, full board camping

Mode of travel:

4WD vehicles/on foot

Tour support:

AdvenTour tour leader /driver, local mountain guides

Included:

Accommodation for 10 nights in hotels and camps (all camping equipment provided)

Meals as specified in the itinerary

AdvenTour tour leader/driver, local mountain guides

All activities as per itinerary with all entry fees

All transfers in 4WD vehicles

Travel permits in protected areas

Trekking in Armenia information kit

Excluded:

Optional activities

Itinerary

Day 1

Lake Sevan, Pearl of Armenia

Free morning in Yerevan, meet your tour escort and travel companions. Transfer to Lake Sevan, one of the highest freshwater lakes in the world. Check-in at your chalet-style hotel at the beach, relax and swim in the emerald waters of the lake. Evening walk up to Sevanavank monastery at the peninsula for the best views of the Lake or take an optional boat trip to Stone Garden at Noraduz.

Overnight: *Hotel at Lake Sevan*

Meal plan: *Breakfast*

Day 2

Azhdahak Trek (start)

After leisurely breakfast we leave the lake and branch off the main road for transfer to Sevaberd village, start the trek to Lake Akna at the foot of Mount Azhdahak (1,100 m, short transfer by truck). This is an area more akin to high altitude desert and contrasts markedly with the fertile scenery we left behind. The remainder of the day is spent resting in preparation for the ascent of the following day at our trekking camp near the lake. The entire area is a showcase for the powers and beauty of the forces of nature.

Overnight: *Camp at Azhdahak*

Meal plan: *All meals*

Day 3

Azhdahak Trek

Early breakfast and we start our trek of Mount Azhdahak between hills with scenic volcanic lakes. Rewarded by superb all-round views and a tangible sense of wilderness we trek up to the summit (3,597 m, trekking distance 12 km). The gradual ascent enables us to build the slow, steady rhythm required for long walking at high altitude. We reach the summit and have a chance to enjoy the unforgettable views of the serene lake in the crater and alpine meadows of rare beauty. Back to camp to warm up by crackling fire and enjoy the dinner after the adventures of the day.

Overnight: *Camp at Azhdahak*

Meal plan: *All meals*

Day 4

Kakavaberd Fortress

Early breakfast and we start hiking toward Tokhmakh Lake. All along our route we will encounter prehistoric Dragon Stones, 10-20 feet-long fish-shaped stelae usually near river sources, sometimes with a stream of water flowing from the mouth of the fish. We expect to meet Yezidi nomads roaming the pastures with their flocks. If we meet them, they will certainly invite us into their camps as guests. Reach the lake and after rest continue to Kakavaberd Fortress, a highly scenic spot and a subject of local legends. We are already in Khosrov Nature Park and can notice the gradual change of scene from volcanic moonscape of Azhdahak to dramatic mountains covered with undisturbed forests. Time to rest and soak up the scenic views before dinner and overnight at camp.

Overnight: *Camp at Kakavaberd*

Meal plan: *All meals*

Day 5

Trekking to St. Stepanos

Early breakfast and we start descent to the lush valley of Khosrov river stopping to swim in mountain springs en route. Continue to the abandoned villages of Gilan and Yelija. Time to rest and follow the ancient pathway to the evocative monastery of Aghjots St. Stepanos on a plateau surrounded by steep mountainous slopes. This is one of the most isolated parts of the nature park whose natural barriers have provided shelter for monks throughout the ages. Back to our camp at Yelija, time for leisurely walks in this unique area where history and geology are so dramatically fused. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Overnight: *Camp at Yelija*

Meal plan: *All meals*

Day 6**Geghard Monastery and Garni Temple**

We begin the return journey by a final hike from Yelija to the ruins of Havuts Tar, an enigmatic monastery located on a mountainous peak dominating the area on the left side of Goght river. Continuing to Geghard village, the trail contours through pleasant picnic areas, then a narrow dirt road descends into the wonderful rocky gorge. The view is awesome with superb panoramas of surrounding mountains. Here we take time to visit unique rock carved Geghard Monastery. From here we take our support vehicle to reach Garni and discover Garni Temple standing in perfect harmony with the surrounding nature. Transfer to Yerevan for rest and overnight.

Overnight: Hotel in Yerevan

Meal plan: Breakfast

Day 7**Free day in Yerevan**

Free day in Yerevan to rest and unwind. Returning to civilisation will be something of a culture shock after our adventures in the mountains.

Overnight: Hotel in Yerevan

Meal plan: Breakfast

Day 8**Mount Aragats**

After breakfast we transfer to the base of Mount Aragats. A virtually uninhabited road leads us to the intersection of two mountain streams where we have an opportunity to admire the wild landscape as walk to Amberd Fortress (2,300 m). Transfer to Kari Lake where we set our trekking camp at a cirque beneath the towering spires of Mount Aragats. The rest of the day is yours to relax, visit the lush village of Byurakan, the summer residence of the Catholicos of all Armenians, an area famous for its beautiful orchards.

Overnight: Camp at Aragats

Meal plan: All meals

Day 9**Highest Peak of Lesser Caucasus**

This morning we rise early to start the trek of the highest mount of Lesser Caucasus, Mount Aragats (4,090m). The barren alpine scenery with only small clusters of scrubs is in stark contrast with the snowy peaks and deep blue skies. We start the trek to the pass between the Southern (3,897m) and Western (4,008m) peaks of the Mount, lunch break en route. Ascend the peaks and back to our camp at the lake. The walking is series of ups and downs but the impressive views are worth the effort (trekking distance 16 km, time app. 6 h). Back to Yerevan.

Overnight: Hotel in Yerevan

Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch

Day 10**Exploring Yerevan**

Yerevan is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world and deserves a tour. We will do this with a local guide who will show us the main highlights leaving late afternoon free to enjoy the city at your own pace! Explore the oldest part of the city or just relax in shady parks or busy outdoor cafes, enjoying the young and lively atmosphere of this ancient city, the contemporary of Babylon and Rome.

Overnight: Hotel in Yerevan

Meal plan: Breakfast

Tour Notes

1. Special notes

The information in these Special Notes covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. In remote destinations unexpected conditions can prevail at any time, and all adventurous holidays can therefore be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

2. Travel health and insurance

No vaccination is required for traveling in the Caucasus. The region's climate is very pleasant, with no health risks. Water is very clean and safe. However, travelers usually prefer bottled spring and mineral water, which can be found in shops and supermarkets.

There are registered pharmacies in all cities and towns with all basic medications. Travelers with special needs are advised to take a supply of those medications that they are likely to require. Medical facilities are numerous with many qualified doctors practicing in all specialties. Doctors and hospitals often expect cash payment for their services. Travelers are advised to consult their medical insurance company prior to traveling to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and covers emergency expenses such as medical evacuation. When selecting a travel insurance policy we require that it cover medical expenses including emergency repatriation and personal liability. We also strongly recommend that the policy cover loss of luggage and personal effects.

3. Trekking grade

This is not an all-inclusive organized trip, this is a guided trekking. The program may change depending on weather and road conditions or other safety reasons.

Grade B - strenuous

Physically challenging, suitable for hill walkers with good physical fitness, used to extended days. These treks can involve difficult and sometimes glaciated terrain, as well as lengthy periods at high altitude. The elevation varies from 3,000 to 4,000 meters.

4. Money

You will need to allow enough money for meals as well as optional activities. An average meal in a restaurant should cost between EUR 8-10. Tipping is customized and not compulsory. You

should be aware that Caucasus is still a cash-only economy and credit cards are not accepted in the majority of shops and restaurants. There are several ATM machines in major cities where you can obtain cash.

5. Communication during the tour

If you need to be contacted while traveling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road. Email cafes are common and are the preferred way for our leaders and travelers to stay in touch.

If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on an AdvenTour trip we recommend that they contact our operator by phone + 374 10 48 22 71 or E-mail: adventour@netsys.am.

6. Accommodation

We choose hotels/guesthouses that combine comfort and great service with unique ambiance and appreciation of the natural beauty of a region. The emphasis is on location and practicality.

Our tours are based on 3 star properties. In capital cities and other places where higher-class accommodation is available you can upgrade if you wish. Your tour leader will help arrange this and the extra cost will be paid by you. In areas where hotels are not available, particularly in small towns in the regions, the group will stay at a local guesthouse (often with shared facilities). Some campsites we stay in are equipped with showers, toilets, electricity and a common eating area. Where no campsites are available we go wild camping (no facilities). These are limited to once or twice a tour and are in areas where you can enjoy the scenery. All other nights will be in campsites/hotels as described above.

Single Supplement

Should you want more privacy during your trip, you can upgrade by the requesting your own room, often at a little extra cost.

Pre / Post-Tour Accommodation

If you require additional accommodation either before or after the trip, we can book this for you. Please contact AdvenTour for current prices.

7. Transport and private transfers

The mode of transport we use is chosen to suit the environmental aspects and local infrastructure. During tours we use comfortable, air-conditioned cars, minibuses and buses as well as some local transport that is well-maintained and supplied with a first-aid kit. In

fact, we often use more than one type of transport per trip. And just in case you are wondering – we also travel by foot.

Airport transfers are not included in the cost of the trip. Please, let us know at the time of booking if you would like us to arrange a private transfer for you.

8. Staff and support

While on AdvenTour trips, you will be accompanied by a tour leader/driver. On this tour, you will be accompanied by a trekking guide (staff/tourist ratio: 4 to 1 or 8 to 2). The tour leader is in charge of general organization of your trip making sure that you have a most enjoyable time. He/she has broad general knowledge of the places visited, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. The tour leader is able to provide suggestions on what to do and see and can recommend great local eating venues. Local guides are an important part of AdvenTour team, they are trained by us and support our groups in sites and locations where their special knowledge of the trails, particular activities or communities will add to the enjoyment of the tour.

9. Meals

The tour cost includes bed and breakfast in the hotels and guesthouses. Meals, when included, will feature local cuisine. For other meals, you are left to choose what and where to eat, though your tour leader will be on hand to suggest venues and arrange where necessary. This can be one of the great joys of this trip as the food in Armenia is superb. Vegetarians should have no problems on this tour.

10. Laundry

Facilities are offered by most hotels for a charge.

11. Visas

Citizens of EU, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other countries can obtain Armenian visa upon arrival at the airport or land border. All other nationals are advised to consult Armenian Embassy in their country of residence. Georgian visa is not required for EU, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand citizens. All other national are advised to consult the Georgian Embassy in their country of residence. Turkish visa is obtained upon arrival at the airport or land border. Iranian visa support is provided by AdvenTour through local partners in Iran. Visa regulations can and do change without

notice. Please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

12. Travel luggage

Because of limited luggage space on transfer vehicles, we limit each passenger to ONE main suitcase or frameless backpack (the size not more than 75cm x 45cm x 25cm, the weight no more than 20 kg) and one day bag. The daypack is practical for keeping general items (e.g. camera, books, wallets etc.) at hand when your main pack is out of reach. Please note many hotels in the regions do not have porters and you will need to carry your own luggage.

Travel tip 1: On some tours, if you wish, it is possible to leave surplus clothes and other personal equipment in hotels where you will return after your circular trip. Please bring a small bag to pack excess items in and leave the bag at the hotel. Mark your luggage with your name and arrival date. Please ask your tour leader to advise where this may be possible / advisable.

Travel tip 2: You might be tempted to buy a few souvenirs here and there, so leave a little room for those extra purchases!

We provide all communal mountaineering equipment during the tours. You will need to provide your own personal clothing and equipment. From early May to late October the weather is generally warm and pleasant with some hot days in July - August. Sometimes it can get cool in the mountains so we recommend taking a couple of warm sweaters. In addition to your “normal” daily clothes, you will need the following: 2/3 seasons jacket, light waterproof jacket, sunhat, water bottle, lightweight boots and a day sack.

Recommended: Tracksuit, gaiters, thermal underwear, trekking poles.

13. Safety

We always recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while traveling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. All the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which can be used to store your valuables.

14. Responsible tourism

Tourism can be a real help to local communities providing income, positive cultural exchanges and the financial incentive to protect the natural environment. Our trips are designed to use family-based guesthouses in the regions, buy local food, hire local guides, drivers and rent

trucks to ensure that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies.

15. Feedback

After your travel, we would like to hear from you. Within two weeks after your departure we will send you a feedback form to complete.

Information in this document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change and does not form part of the contract between the client and AdvenTour.