

ASIA · HISTORY · SACRED SITES · MOUNTAINS · HIKING · FOOD · WINE



Armenia

Armenia's early Christian monasteries perch in gorges and on ridgelines, from cliff-hung Tatev to rock-cut Geghard, all within a few hours of Yerevan's pink-stone cafés. Lake Sevan sits at around 1,900 metres, Mount Ararat looms over the southern plains from across the Turkish border, and costs stay pleasingly low for food, wine and guesthouses.

**The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all travel to parts of Armenia.**
Read the latest FCDO travel advice before planning a trip. Your travel insurance may be invalid if you travel against FCDO advice.
FCDO advice last updated 1 March 2026.

 CAPITAL Yerevan	 CURRENCY Armenian dram (AMD) £1 ≈ AMD 483	 LANGUAGE Armenian, Russian English	 BEST TIME May–Jun, Sep–Oct
 DAILY BUDGET £30–£150 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type C, F 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 5h 10m direct ~£180–£450 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+4 standard time

Armenia was the first state to adopt Christianity, traditionally in 301, and its landscape is stitched together by the results: basalt and tuff monasteries on gorge rims, carved stone crosses called khachkars, and a 1,600-year-old alphabet still on every shop sign. Almost every trip is based around Yerevan, with day trips to Garni, Geghard, Etchmiadzin and Khor Virap. From there a northern loop takes in Lake Sevan, the forested resort town of Dilijan and the Debed Canyon monasteries, while the long road south passes the wine village of Areni and Noravank on its way to Tatev. Many visitors pair Armenia with Georgia.

Distances are short but mountain roads are slow, so a week covers the essentials and ten days lets you add the south properly. Costs are low: guesthouse rooms, marshrutka fares and long, shared dinners of grilled meat and herbs rarely strain a budget, and Yerevan's wine bars pour local Areni reds for a few pounds. Crowds are light outside summer weekends at Garni and Sevan. Hospitality can be overwhelming — expect a glass of homemade oghi, a fruit vodka, at village homestays. Russian is still more widely understood than English beyond the capital, and visitors are often surprised by how late Yerevan stays up on warm evenings.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

SACRED SITE
Tatev Monastery
Tatev's 9th-century monastery clings to a cliff edge above the Vorotan gorge in Armenia's far south. Most visitors arrive on the Wings of Tatev, a record-breaking 5.7 km cable car that glides high over the canyon floor.
- 2

SACRED SITE
Geghard Monastery
Partly hewn out of the cliff in the Azat valley, Geghard's candlelit rock chambers date mainly from the 13th century and have remarkable acoustics. Combine it with Garni, a Greco-Roman temple 10 km downhill above a gorge of basalt columns.

3

SACRED SITE

Khor Virap

This hilltop monastery near the Turkish border offers Armenia's classic view of snow-capped Mount Ararat. Visitors can climb down into the pit where, tradition says, Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for 13 years before converting the king.

4

NATURE

Lake Sevan

One of the world's largest high-altitude freshwater lakes, Sevan lies at about 1,900 metres. The twin 9th-century churches of Sevanavank crown a former island, now a peninsula, and summer brings swimmers to its chilly beaches.

5

HISTORY

Haghpat and Sanahin monasteries

Two UNESCO-listed monasteries sit on plateaus a few kilometres apart above the Debed Canyon in Armenia's north. Founded in the 10th century, they were major centres of learning, with domed churches, book depositories and superb khachkars.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Yerevan

≈ 1.1 million people

Armenia's capital is a city of pink tuff boulevards, Soviet-era grandeur and pavement cafés, with the Cascade, the Matenadaran manuscript library and Vernissage market among its essentials.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Gyumri

≈ 112,000 people

Armenia's second city keeps a handsome core of 19th-century black-tuff merchant houses in the Kumayri district, plus a strong craft tradition and memorials to the devastating 1988 earthquake.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Vanadzor

≈ 75,000 people

A workaday former Soviet industrial town, Vanadzor is mainly useful as a base for the Lori region's forests and the monasteries of the nearby Debed Canyon.

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Armenia

Best time: **May–Jun, Sep–Oct.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

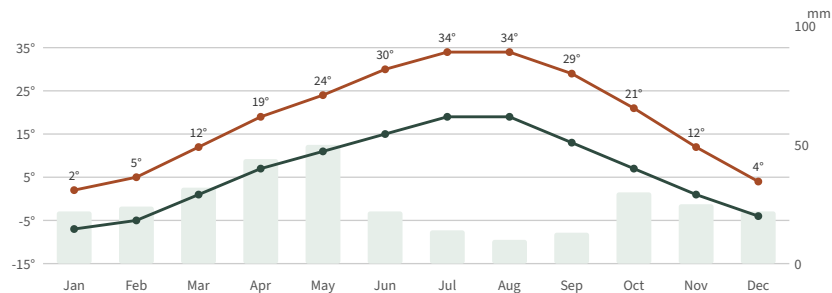
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Yerevan

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jan	Armenian Christmas The Armenian Apostolic Church celebrates Christmas together with Epiphany on 6 January, with candlelit Christmas Eve services, blessing of water and family feasts after New Year's festivities.
Jul	Vardavar On Vardavar, 14 weeks after Easter, much of Armenia turns into a water fight — expect to be drenched by buckets and water pistols in Yerevan's streets and parks.
Oct	Areni Wine Festival Held each October, usually early in the month, in the village of Areni, near the cave where the world's oldest known winery was found, with tastings from local producers, folk music and dancing.

How much does Armenia cost?

SHOESTRING £30 per person / day ≈ AMD 14,480 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £70 per person / day ≈ AMD 33,786 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £150 per person / day ≈ AMD 72,399 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Khorovats

Armenian barbecue of pork, lamb or chicken chunks grilled on skewers over glowing embers, served with lavash, herbs and a charred aubergine and tomato salad.

Tolma

Minced lamb or beef and rice wrapped in vine leaves in summer or cabbage in winter, usually served with garlicky yoghurt.

Lavash

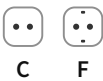
Paper-thin flatbread slapped onto the walls of a clay tonir oven; its making and meaning are UNESCO-recognised intangible heritage.

Getting around

Yerevan is the hub: marshrutkas (minibuses) leave from several stations for Sevan, Dilijan, Gyumri and the south, and trains run to Gyumri and, overnight, to Tbilisi. Within the capital, the single-line metro is cheap and taxi apps such as Yandex Go and GG keep fares honest. For monasteries off the main roads, most visitors join day tours or hire a driver; car hire works, but mountain roads are slow.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



230V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter

DIALLING CODE

+374

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Telephone: **911**

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

TIME ZONE

UTC+4 (standard time)

TAP WATER
Generally safe to drink

DRIVING
On the right

TIPPING
Many Yerevan restaurants add a 10% service charge; where they don't, leave around 10%. Round up taxi fares and tip guides and drivers.

ETIQUETTE
Cover shoulders and knees in churches, where many women also cover their hair. Expect toasts at shared meals, and treat the 1915 genocide and the Karabakh conflict as deeply personal subjects.

MAIN AIRPORTS
Zvartnots International Airport (EVN), Yerevan; Shirak International Airport (LWN), Gyumri

Visas & entry for Armenia

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit Armenia without a visa for up to 180 days in a year for tourism or business.

To extend your stay, contact the Administration Department for Passports and Visas (OVIR).

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A Tetanus Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Hepatitis B Measles Rabies

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Armenia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Thu 31 Dec 2026	New Year's Eve
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Sat 2 Jan 2027	New Year's Day

Wed 6 Jan 2027	Christmas and Epiphany
Wed 27 Jan 2027	Day of Remembrance for the Fallen Defenders of the Fatherland
Thu 28 Jan 2027	Army Day
Mon 8 Mar 2027	Women's Day
Sat 24 Apr 2027	Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Armenian Genocide
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Sun 9 May 2027	Victory and Peace Day
Fri 28 May 2027	Republic Day
Mon 5 Jul 2027	Constitution Day
Tue 21 Sep 2027	Independence Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Armenian

ENGLISH	ARMENIAN	SAY IT
Hello	Բարև	<i>bah-REV</i>
Thank you	Շնորհակալություն	<i>shnor-ha-ka-loo-TYOON</i>
Please	Խնդրում եմ	<i>khun-DROOM em</i>
Excuse me	Ներեցեք	<i>neh-reh-TSEK</i>
How much is this?	Սա ի՞նչ արժե	<i>sah eench ar-ZEH</i>

Know before you go

Most overland travellers arrive from Tbilisi by marshrutka, shared taxi or overnight train, which makes Armenia and Georgia a natural two-week combination.

Cards work widely in Yerevan, but carry dram in cash for marshrutkas, village guesthouses, markets and the candle sellers at monasteries.

Ararat often hides in haze by midday in summer. For the classic Khor Virap view, go early in the morning, ideally between October and April.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.