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|  | **Art of Travelling – Travels in Armenia & Georgia**  **booking@art-travel.am** |

**TOUR FOR HISTORY BUFFS**

Guaranteed Group tour with arrival every Thursday, 100% confirmation!

01.03.2024-15.11.2024

Duration: 4 nights / 5 days

**THURSDAY**

Arrival at Zvartnots International Airport. Transfer to the hotel.

Overnight in Yerevan.

**FRIDAY**

Breakfast at the hotel

***Within this group tour you can enjoy the Armenia's most amazing sights! You visit the Khor Virap Monastery, a perfect place to admire the most picturesque views of the sacred Mount Ararat, then you see Noravank Monastery, have a wine tasting at the "Hin Areni" winery in the village of Areni, one of the oldest settlements in Armenia, famous for its wines. Finally, you visit the ancient "Cave of Birds", also called Areni-1.***

*Departure: 10:00. Duration: 9-10 hours*

*The tour is conducted alternately in English and Russian languages.*

Our first stop is **Khor Virap Monastery**, one of the holy places of the Armenian Apostolic Church. According to legend, this is the place where Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for preaching Christianity. Nowadays Khor Virap is the closest place to Mount Ararat in Armenia. It offers a magnificent view of the legendary mountain.

Then we move to the **"The Cave of Birds"** consisting of 3 halls and having an area of 500 m², most of which is still unexplored. The world's oldest (over 5500 years old) leather shoes, a woman's skirt attributed to 3900 BC and the world's oldest winery were found in the cave.

The village of Areni has been the cradle of Armenian winemaking for thousands of years. **The “Hin Areni winery”** masterfully showcases historical and local varieties of Armenian grapes.

**Optional lunch** at a local traditional restaurant at your own expense.

**Noravank Monastery** was one of the significant cultural and religious centers of medieval Armenia, surrounded by rugged cliffs and consisting of unique churches from the 13th - 14th centuries.

Overnight in Yerevan

**SATURDAY**

Breakfast at the hotel

***Within this group tour, you will explore Armenia's most unique sights! First you will visit Garni, the only pagan temple in Armenia. The next stop is the Geghard Monastery, partially carved out of the rocks. At the end of the tour you will have the opportunity to watch the process of baking lavash (Armenian thin bread), which is one of the most beautiful and widespread Armenian national traditions.***

*Departure: 10:00. Duration: 5-6 hours*

*The tour is conducted alternately in English and Russian languages.*

You will see the **Charents Arch**, created by architect Rafael Israelyan. One day on his way to Garni he stopped at this place and noticed a beautiful view of Ararat from there. It moved him to the decision to build an arch as a kind of a "temple" to Ararat.

The pagan **temple of Garni** is the only monument of the Hellenistic era that has survived in Armenia. This marvelous temple, dedicated to the Sun God Mitra, was built in the 1st century AD.

The famous **Geghard Monastery** with rock-cut churches was built in the 12th-13th centuries. At first it was called Ayrivank ("cave monastery"), and then it was renamed Geghardavank, meaning "the Monastery of the Spear", originating from the spear which had wounded Jesus at the Crucifixion, allegedly brought to Armenia by one of apostles and being kept at the monastery for a long time. The monastery is included in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List.

Lavash is one of the most popular culinary highlights of Armenia and is an integral part of Armenian cuisine. During a **master class** you will learn the old tradition of lavash baking and, of course, taste it with fresh herbs and delicious local cheese.

After return to Yerevan, you will have free time for a lunch and then a **walking sightseeing tour** in the center of the city. You will learn the thousand-year history of the Armenian capital along with a tour of architectural monuments such as the Opera House, Cascade Complex, National Assembly Building and Republic Square as well as the central streets of the city. From the height of the observation deck you will see the whole city. Walking around Yerevan is the best way to truly immerse yourself in the culture, history and local cuisine.

Overnight in Yerevan

**SUNDAY**

Breakfast at the hotel

***Within this group tour you will visit the churches included in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List: St. Ripsime and St. Gayane churches, Echmiadzin Cathedral. After that you will visit the museum "Treasures of Echmiadzin" with a final stop at Zvartnots, built in the 7th century, one of the tallest buildings of its time.***

*Departure: 10:00. Duration: 4-5 hours*

*The tour is conducted alternately in English and Russian languages.*

You will see the majestic **Church of the Holy Hripsime**, who was martyred for spreading Christianity in Armenia. Among the numerous monuments of Echmiadzin, the most famous is the **Church of St. Gayane**. Martyr Gayane was a friend and mentor of Hripsime and was also killed for spreading Christianity. **Echmiadzin Cathedral** was built in the 4th century after Christianity was proclaimed as the state religion (for the first time in history) and thus is the first Christian cathedral. Echmiadzin Cathedral is the spiritual center of the Armenian Apostolic Church, as well as the residence of the Catholicos of All Armenians. Since the end of 2018, the cathedral has been being restored, therefore the Cathedral can only be seen from the outside.

**The Museum "Treasures of Echmiadzin"** presents unique holy relics: Geghard that pierced the side of Christ, relics of Noah's Ark, as well as many other valuable works of art.

The marvelous **Zvartnots Temple** is a monument of Armenian architecture of the 7th century, which name means "the temple of vigilant angels". The temple was a huge and complex domed structure, which was destroyed by an earthquake. In 2000, the ruins of the temple and the archaeological area around it were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Overnight in Yerevan

**MONDAY**

Breakfast at the hotel

Transfer to Zvartnots International Airport.

***Program is subject to change due to organizational reasons without reducing the scope of services provided!***

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| **The price includes** | **The price doesn’t include** |
| - Transfers airport – hotel / hotel - airport;  - BB Accommodation for 4 nights in Yerevan in standard DBL rooms;  - Professional tour guide: ENG + RUS alternately;  - Air-conditioned vehicles;  - **Bottled water and buns**;  - Entrance tickets according to the program;  - **WiFi in vehicles on tour**;  - Vehicle and passenger insurance;  - Wine tasting;  - Master class in lavash baking and tasting. | o Airline tickets;  o Health Insurance;  o Drinks and gratuities;  o Lunches (optional lunches on tour approx. 3 500 AMD – 4 500 AMD. Only cash payment)  o Dinners;  o Any services not mentioned in the section “The price includes” |