



# Armenia

## Includes »

Yerevan .....	124
Geghard Monastery .....	145
Echmiadzin .....	148
Mt Aragats .....	151
Khor Virap Monastery ...	151
Lake Sevan .....	152
Dilijan .....	157
Vanadzor .....	163
Debed Canyon .....	167
Gyumri .....	169
Noravank .....	174
Yeghegnadzor .....	174
Jermuk .....	178
Sisian .....	179
Goris .....	180
Tatev .....	184

## Best Places to Stay

- » Envoy Hostel (p135)
- » Mirhav Hotel (p181)
- » Gohar's Guest House (p176)
- » Ananov Guesthouse (p157)

## Best Places to Eat

- » Maghay B&B (p163)
- » Nina B&B (p158)
- » Dolmama's (p138)
- » Haykanoush (p158)

## Why Go?

Although Armenians carry a lot of psychological baggage from a traumatic 20th century, you'd hardly notice it from a quick tour around the country. The rapidly modernising capital, the boutique tourism industry and the warm welcome you'll receive everywhere seem to belie the country's reputation for tragedy. Rather than letting past woes weigh it down, Armenia (ՀԱՅՍՏԱՆ) has built its memorials, dusted itself off and moved on. For travellers, easily visited highlights include ancient monasteries, candlelit churches and high-walled forts – but lasting impressions lie more with the Armenians themselves. You'll easily find friends among these gracious, humble and easy-going people, even without a common language. The travel experience is wide-ranging – you can have a four-star holiday in Yerevan and Sevan or a much simpler experience in rural towns like Dilijan and Goris. Many travellers only spend a week or less as they shuttle around the region but those with more time get to experience the best spots in crowd-free bliss.

## When to Go

Most of Armenia has a dry, high-altitude climate except for verdant rainy pockets in Lori, Tavush and Syunik.

Spring (March to May) is a riot of flowers but does get a lot of rain.

Autumn (late September to early November) has long, warm days and more stable weather.

Summer (June to August) in Yerevan can be 40°C for days at a time, while conditions in the north are mild.

Winter weather lasts until late April through much of the country, with temperatures falling to -10°C in some areas. See p295 for details.

## RESOURCES

### Armenia Guide

(www.armeniaguide.com)

### Armenia Information

(www.armeniainfo.am)

### Armenia Now

(www.armenianow.com)

### Discover Armenia Tourist Magazine

(www.touristmagazine.am)

### Tour Armenia

(www.tacentral.com)

## Fast Facts

- » **Country code** ☎374
- » **Population** 3,262,200
- » **Currency** Dram (AMD)
- » **Languages** Armenian, Russian
- » **Emergency** ☎103

## Exchange Rates

<b>Australia</b>	A\$1	1.77 GEL
<b>Canada</b>	C\$1	1.69 GEL
<b>Euro zone</b>	€1	2.36 GEL
<b>Japan</b>	¥100	2.16 GEL
<b>NZ</b>	NZ\$1	1.41 GEL
<b>UK</b>	UK£1	2.70 GEL
<b>USA</b>	US\$1	1.66 GEL

## Set Your Budget

- » **Guesthouse (per person)** AMD6000
- » **Two-course evening meal** AMD3500
- » **Museum entrance** AMD500–1000
- » **Beer at a bar** AMD400
- » **100km bus ride** AMD1200

## Connections

The closed border with both Turkey to the west and Azerbaijan to the east means that connections to Armenia are somewhat limited. Land borders are open with both Georgia and Iran. As a result, many overlanders regard Armenia as something of a side trip from Georgia, heading south from Tbilisi for a week or two before returning to Georgia. *Marshrutka* (minibus) connections between Georgia and Armenia are fast and frequent, making it easy to pop between the two republics. Only a handful of travellers travel to/from Iran (given the visa restrictions of that country) but there are daily bus connections between Yerevan and Tehran. There are plenty of air connections between Yerevan and other regional cities, including Moscow, Dubai, Vienna, Prague, Paris, Riga and London.

## ITINERARIES

### Three Days

There's lots to do and see around Yerevan: take in live music at a concert or restaurant, and shop for brandy, *oghee* (fruit vodka) and handicrafts. Take short day trips to Garni and Geghard, or Khor Virap, or a longer one to Lake Sevan and Dilijan.

### One Week

Travel up to Lori to the awesome World Heritage-listed Haghpata and Sanahin churches, stay in Vanadzor or Dilijan, or concentrate on the best of the south – Tatev and Noravank in particular.

### Two Weeks

Take some time around Yeghegnadzor and taste more of Yerevan's cosmopolitanism; organise a village or town homestay, explore more of Dilijan; visit Gyumri; or head for Sisian and Goris in the south. Take some time for day hikes, spelunking in Vayots Dzor or hiking on Mt Aragats.

## Visas

Armenian visas are available at all entry points – 21-day tourist visas cost AMD3000 and a visa valid for 120 days costs AMD15,000. Most Western nationals require a visa to enter Armenia.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'