Armenia

Why Go?

Few nations have histories as ancient, complex and laced with tragedy as Armenia (Հայաստան). And even fewer have a culture that is as rich and resilient. This is a destination where you will be intrigued by history, awed by monuments, amazed by the landscape and charmed by down-to-earth locals. It’s not an easy place to explore – roads are rough, transport is often hard to navigate and those who don’t speak Armenian or Russian may find communication difficult – but travelling here is as rewarding as it is revelatory.

The simply extraordinary collection of medieval monasteries scattered across the country is the number-one attraction, closely followed by a dramatically beautiful landscape that is perfectly suited to hiking and other outdoor activities. And then there’s the unexpected delight of Yerevan – one of Europe’s most exuberant and endearing cities. Put together, they offer an enticing and hugely enjoyable travel experience.

When to Go

- Most of Armenia has a dry, high-altitude climate, though there are some verdant rainy pockets in the Lori, Tavush and Syunik regions. These receive the most rain in early spring.
- Spring temperatures are mild and the countryside is covered in wildflowers, making it a perfect time to go hiking.
- Autumn has long, warm days and stable weather conditions.
- Summer in Yerevan can be 40°C with little or no breeze for days at a time; weather in the north is cooler.
- Conditions in winter can be bleak, with temperatures falling to -10°C or even lower in many areas. Roads are often closed due to snow and ice.
Armenia Highlights

1. Enjoying time in the welcoming cafes, wine bars and restaurants of Yerevan (p128).
2. Marvelling at the ancient rock-hewn churches at Geghard Monastery (p149).
3. Hiking between spectacularly sited monasteries in the Kasagh Gorge (p154).
4. Visiting medieval fresco-covered churches of the dramatic Debed Canyon (p162).
5. Exploring somnolent villages, ruins and an old Jewish cemetery in Yeghegis Valley (p178).
6. Watching the sun slowly set over the dramatic cliffs surrounding Noravank (p176).
8. Soaring up to fortified monastery at Tatev (p184) on the world’s longest cable car.