

# Armenia

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**A country that offers a fascinating insight into the cultural and historical interactions of West and East.**



Cascade

Almost everyone whose name ends with “ian” or “yan” is of Armenian descent.

But it is surprising how few people know the exact location of Armenia. Smaller than Belgium, Armenia

covers the area of land between the Black and the Caspian Seas. The territory of the country is 29,000-sq. km and has about 3.5 million inhabitants. It is landlocked by Iran to the south-east, Turkey along

the south-western corner, Georgia up to the north and Azerbaijan on the east.

Armenia is often described as an outdoor museum. There are over 4000 historical monuments that have preserved here: cyclopean monuments, pagan temples, ancient Christian churches and medieval monasteries are scattered all around this beautiful land of mountain peaks and fertile valleys, crystal-clear lakes and turbulent rivers. All these natural

characteristics have dictated the location of towns and caravan routes as well as fortresses, bridges and aqueducts on the Great Silk Road.

Armenians are of Indo-European origin and their statehood goes back to the powerful Urartu Kingdom of the 9th century BC.

Their present day alphabet that consists of 39 letters dates back to the year of 404405- AD. The people of Armenia are very friendly and hospitable as well as hard

Sevan



## Dancing in Cascade, Yerevan



working and intelligent.

The natural features of Armenia are rather diverse and so is its climate. Armenia is a mountainous country and about 60% of its territory is more than 1200 m. above the sea level.

Only 10% of the country lie below the point of 1000m above the sea-level. The highest point of the country is Mt. Aragats, which is 4090 meters high. There are over 200 small rivers and springs here the largest of which are rivers Araks and Hrazdan. The Araks River forms most of Armenia's

border with Iran and part of the border with Turkey. The pearl of the mountains - Lake Sevan lies about 2000 meters above the sea. It is one of the largest fresh water lakes in the world and the largest one in Armenia. Forests and woodlands are very rare and cover a little over a tenth of Armenia. Though geographically Armenia is on the same latitude as is Greece and Italy and lies in the subtropical zone, the humidity is very low here. Rains are very seldom here, but in winter it gets rather cold and the height of the snow cover is



more than 11.5- meter. During winter and in early spring the mountains are usually covered with snow. Armenian wildlife includes countless rare species of Fauna and Flora such as tur (wild goat), mouflon (wild sheep), the chamois (antelope), bear, deer, boar, wolf, fox and a fabulous array of wildflowers and herbs during spring and summer, and many more. The country is rather rich in minerals such as copper, molybdenum, gold, silver and other rare and precious metals as well as various building materials, semiprecious stones and natural water springs.

## **YEREVAN AND ITS ENVIRONS**

Armenia's capital city is Yerevan is as old as Babylon and older than Rome and Athens. It was developed on the site of the ancient fortress of Erebuni, built in 782 BC. The centuries long history has phonetically changed the name first into Erevouni, then Erivan and finally–Yerevan. A Biblical tradition links the name of the capital with Noah and the Big Flood.

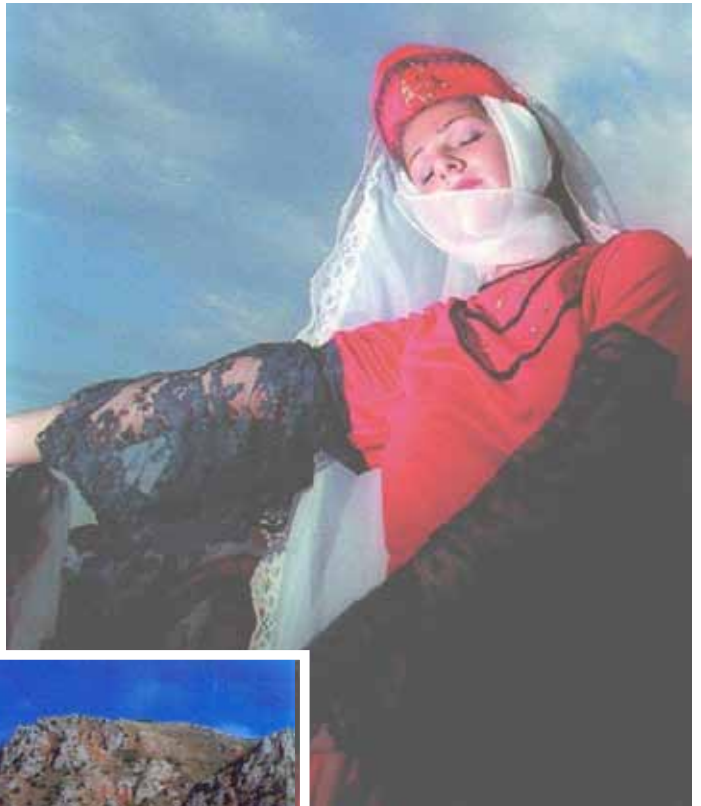
Visitors often call Yerevan “rosy city of fountains” since the majority of the buildings here is built of

pinkish tufa stone. Because it is regularly very hot in summer the city is encompassed by beautiful fountains and swimming pools, which help to keep the air fresh and pleasant.

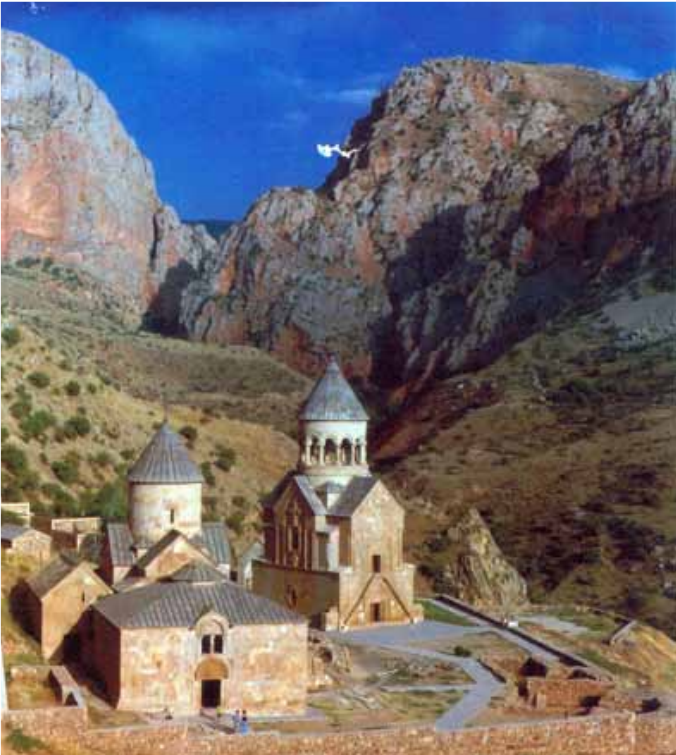
Once a small provincial town with 30,000 people and almost no industry, Yerevan had grown into a city with a population of 1.5 million. The present–day capital is Armenia's political, administrative, commercial and financial, as well as cultural and educational centre. Numerous theatres and concert-halls, an opera and ballet theatre and more than thirty museums and art galleries of the capital city



Armenian girl



Noravank



provide entertainment and endless opportunity for learning.

### **LAKE SEVAN**

Lake Sevan, the pearl of Armenia, is the largest lake in the region and the highest fresh water lake in the world, situated 2,000 meters above sea level. The lake's beaches and pure and fresh water receive

an abundance of sunshine providing excellent conditions for swimming and sunbathing. Lake Sevan is not only a perfect spot for a day of relaxation. As a result of its spectacular beauty, its unique Flora and Fauna and its historical monuments it has become a famous place to visit for botanists, ornithologists, historians, naturalists and every one who appreciates scenery and natural beauty.

**KHOR VIRAP , SARDARAPAT , ZVARTNOTS , ECHMIATSIN , DILIJAN , TSAKHKADZOR , GUEGHARD , GARNI are places to be visited.**

### **NATURAL TREASURES**

Armenia attracts visitors and guests not only by its time-long history and the numerous ancient relics of the past, but also by its famous resorts and mineral springs. There are about 400 mineral springs in the country, which contain the most variegated chemical ingredients. The most famous springs are Arzni, Bjni, Dilijan, Jermuk and Sevan. The healing properties of these mineral springs are well known far beyond

Armenia.

### **JERMUK**

The Jermuk resort lies 2.070 meters above sea level in mountain forests that border on alpine meadows. The salubrious qualities of its mineral waters were known thousands of years ago. There are many remains of ancient baths in Jermuk, which have survived till nowadays. The hypothermal waters of Jermuk are to a certain extent like those of Strudel spring in Karlovi Vary (Czech Republic) and are particularly effective in the treatment of gastritis, liver, pancreas and other health problems. There are many historical and cultural monuments in Jermuk and in the vicinity, the most famous of which is the Monastery of Noravank built in the 13th–15th centuries and Gladzor – a major medieval religious, cultural and educational centre, which was first referred to as a university in the manuscripts dating from 1291.

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