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Christian Routes of Armenia

Day 1

First day trip begins with a visit to Saint Sargis Church. The church is nicely located on the left bank of Hrazdan River Canyon and facing to 16th century Yerevan fortress. Trip will continue to Matenadaran-depository of manuscripts which holds one of the three largest collections in the world. Not to be missed a visit to Saint Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral, which is the symbol of the 1700th anniversary of the proclamation of Christianity as a State Religion in Armenia. The huge Cathedral is a complex, consisting of three churches with total area of 3,822 square meters. After lunch the tour will continue with a visit to the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, the religious center of all Armenians around the world. Catholicos, Supreme Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church is based and resides in this complex, along the main Cathedral of Etchmiadzin, the first official Christian church in the world. Our next stop is Saint Hripsime Church, founded in 618. In the evening you will be back in Yerevan to experience calm evening of this bustling city. (70 km /7 hours)

Overnight: *Hotel in Yerevan Meals: L*

Day 2

After a relaxed breakfast at the hotel, the second day's tour involves a drive to the scenic canyon of the Azat River. The 7th century Geghard Cave Monastery is located deep at the bottom of the canyon and is listed by UNESCO as a World Heirate Site. Following on from the tour of the monastery, the tour is continued by bus to Garni village, where the Hellenistic-inspired "Garni" temple lies. Built in 66 AD, Garni was a temple dedicated to the Armenian God of the Sun "Mitra". Garni's complex also consists of a royal bath which exhibits a fascinating hypocaust along with a well preserved original mosaic tiling. A visit to the Armenian Genocide Museum – Institute is the next stopping point. The Museum is founded to commemorate the innocent victims of the biggest crime against humanity of 20th century and to raise international awareness among the international community. In the evening you will have light walk in the city center, the skyline of which is crowned with the view of Biblical Mount Ararat. (90 km /7 hours)

Overnight: *Hotel in Yerevan Meals: B, L*

Day 3

After breakfast, the tour begins with a journey to the south of Armenia. Roughly 40 km south of Yerevan lies "KhorVirap", a historic site located amidst the Ararat Valley. It was at this very location that Grigor Lusavorich was sentenced to death by Kind Trdat for preaching Christianity in Armenia during the 3rd century. Nowhere else in Armenia does the biblical mountain of Ararat seem within arm' reach than at the site of KhorVirap on a clear day. "Noravank" Monastery is the next stop. A drive through a narrow canyon is in order to reach the valley of red rocks. This region of Armenia has been made famous for its unique grape sort "Areni" hence where "Areni" wines are derived from. One cannot pass through without a stop at a local winery for a tasting of some locally produced, exquisite wines. Continuing on south-east, a visit to "Qarahunge", a 6,000yearold observatory, also known as the "Armenian Stonehenge is in order. In conclusion to the day's tour, a visit is made to the town of Goris, encompassed by rocky caves and mountains. (270 km / 9 hours)

Overnight: *Hotel in Goris Meals: B, L*

Day 4

This day is dedicated to the pearl of Armenian Medieval architecture, University of Tatev. Thanks to its strategic location, Tatev was unreachable for centuries by enemies of the Armenian Kingdom, so it is well preserved. Here, one has a chance to ride on the longest cable car in the world which flies over the 320 meter-deep Vorotan River Canyon (*optional*). On the way back a drive down to the bottom of Vorotan Canyon awaits and a passing over the “Devil’s Bridge”. The next stop is 14th century Selim Caravanserai, which is one of the best preserved hostels along the ancient Great Silk Road. From here, one can enjoy the magnificent view over the wide valley and the surrounding mountains. Only after a few kilometers the landscape changes dramatically and one can immerse themselves in the surrounds of Lake Sevan, the blue pearl of Armenia, sitting at 1,900 meters above sea level. (290 km / 9 hours)

Overnight: Hotel at Lake Sevan **Meals:** B, L

Day 5

After morning fresh coffee we head to Sevan Peninsula, the stunning hilltop view of the azure lake framed by the surrounding mountains makes you feel inspired yet powerless by the same token. Sevanavank Monastery located on the hilltop was founded in 874 by Armenian Princess. You will continue your trip to Dilijan, a lush town known as a spa resort. A stroll in the historical district lets you experience the atmosphere of the old town as it was in the 19th century. The imaginatively carved balconies so typical of 19th century Dilijan display the region’s historical love for fine woodwork. You will continue to Hagartsin Monastery dramatically located among picturesque mountains covered with dense forest. You will continue your trip to Haghpat village where Haghpat Monastery – UNESCO World Heritage Site is located. (160 km / 7 hours)

Overnight: Hotel in Haghpat Village **Meals:** B, L

Day 6

After fresh coffee and a scrumptious breakfast, the day starts with a journey in the “Lori” region of Armenia. The tour consists of a visit to the “Sanahin” Medieval University, which is listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Site. Marvel at the intricate reliefs showing biblical scenes and characters whilst relishing the captivating old auditorium of Sanahin University. In addition to the many architectural attractions, the Lori region delivers beautiful landscapes of lush forests, the rocky deep canyon of Debed river and quaint little villages scattered along the canyon. Lunch is served in a local restaurant where Armenian traditional dishes are introduced to the palate. Upon the journey returning to Yerevan, allow yourself to appreciate the view from the Lori highlands, where the nearby Pambak pass brings astounding views over the quadruple-peaked Mount Aragats. You will visit a well preserved, triple-nave basilica type church of 4th century in the town of Aparan, The tour progresses on to stop at the “Saghmosavank” Monastery, located atop the yawning gorge carved by the Kasakh River. Not to be missed a visit to Saint Gevorg Church in the Village of Mughni. With nightfall nearing, we approach your hotel in Yerevan for rest, dinner and the evening at your leisure. (190 km / 9 hours)

Overnight: Hotel in Yerevan **Meals:** B, L

Day 7

Free day in Yerevan

Overnight: Hotel in Yerevan **Meals:** B

Day 8

Transfer to airport, departure.