

Armenia's Trekking Highlights

Trip Code: ATH

Version: ATH Armenia's Trekking Highlights



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike to the Southern summit (3888m) of Aragats (4090m), the highest peak in Armenia
- Look out for petroglyphs on a 4 day trek through the unspoilt Geghama Mountains
- Visit the Khor Virap monastery, for views across the Ararat plain to Mt Ararat
- Stay on the shores of Lake Sevan, one of the largest alpine lakes in Eurasia
- Discover Armenia's monasteries including Geghard, which is partly hewn from solid rock

AT A GLANCE

- 8 days trekking
- Max altitude 3890m
- Join at Yerevan

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 10 Breakfasts
- 8 Lunches
- 7 Dinners
- 6 nights Hotel
- 4 nights Camping

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Armenia is one of Europe's most mountainous countries and this walking holiday in Armenia promises a veritable kaleidoscope of culture, history and great trekking. We start our excellent itinerary with a visit to several medieval monasteries, hiking on rugged trails between these fine examples of Armenian architecture and stopping off at mountain villages and on the shore of the vast Lake Sevan. After this splendid cultural introduction, we cross the Geghama Mountains on a 4-day trek that sees us hiking through flower-spangled meadows to the volcanic crater lakes on the summit of Mount Azhdahak (3597m). Then, transferring to a high camp on Mount Aragats, the high point of the country, where the views extend to Mount Ararat in the nearby Turkey. We climb to the southern summit on a long days walk, before return to Yerevan for our last night. This holiday includes a good selection of walks and seeing some of the many Christian churches that the country is famous for.

LOOKING to Extend your HOLIDAY?

Fancy the ultimate Caucasus walking and cultural experience? For a complete experience, why not combine KE's Armenia's Trekking Highlights Trekking Holiday with Trekking in [Georgia and the High Caucasus](#).

Is this holiday for you?

Armenia is a relatively new trekking destination that also has a great deal of cultural interest. We spend several days travelling through the country and stopping off to make short hikes. This provides us with a bit of fitness training ahead of our 4-day Geghama Mountains hike which involves three 6-hour walking days and one shorter day up to a maximum elevation of 2500 metres and with 2 camps at around 3000 metres. This preparation means that we are in good condition and well acclimatised before setting off on the single toughest day of the trip, the ascent of the dormant volcano, Mount Aragats. This walking holiday is suitable for regular weekend hillwalkers.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Yerevan. A single transfer from Yerevan Airport is provided.

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Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Yerevan city tour.

Our programme begins with a 2-hour walking tour of Yerevan City including the impressive Opera House and the incredible 'Cascade' monument, a stunning arrangement of gardens and waterfalls that climbs 100 metres to one of the city's highpoints and provides spectacular views of Mount Ararat (in neighbouring Turkey). We can take it easy over coffee in an open-air cafe. After lunch we visit the Yerevan Brandy Factory and the Closed Market or 'Pak Shuka' where we can get a real flavour of Armenia amongst the colourful stalls selling all manner of local produce - fruit, vegetables, spices and sweets. In the evening, we will enjoy a traditional Armenian dinner.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Hotel





DAY 3

Drive to Sevan Lake via Khor Virap and Norovank Monastery. Afternoon walk.

We begin our exploration of Armenia with a drive southwards from the capital to the popular monastery of Khor Virap (which means 'deep pit') built over the pit of imprisonment of the 3rd century Saint Gregory. The monastery sits on a hill, with great views over the border to Ararata and Little Ararat. Next stop on our loop around to Sevan Lake is at Norovank Monastery, a 13th century complex impressively situated in the rocky Gnishik gorge. Continuing our drive, we traverse pleasant mountainous terrain to reach the village of Yeghegis. Here, we take the opportunity to stretch our legs with the 3-hour round

trip walk up to the crest of a ridge, where we find the ancient (10th century) fortress of Smbataberd. The completion of our drive to Sevan Lake takes us across the Selim Pass (2400m) where there is an amazingly well preserved 14th century caravanserai used by travellers on the Silk Road. Dropping down to the shores of Lake Sevan, we check in at our accommodation. Total drive time today will be around 5hrs.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 385M	 Descent 385M	 Time 3 hrs walking
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DAY 4

Drive to Sanahin Monastery and walk to Haghpat Monastery. Transfer to Dilijan.

This morning, we drive north beside Sevan Lake and on to the pleasant resort town of Dilijan and further up on wooded slopes of Mount Tchantinler, in the extreme north-east of the country, where we find Sanahin Monastery. This is a beautiful part of the country, the 'Armenian Switzerland' with lush forest and the town is home to lots of Armenian artists and other celebrities. We have another chance to enjoy some of the picturesque Armenian countryside, as we make our 4-5 hour walk across to the neighbouring Haghpat Monastery, which can be clearly seen in the distance. The sites are linked by a pathway between the villages which boasts splendid mountainous views. We will stop off to eat our picnic lunch in the bed of the Debed river gorge, one of the most spectacular in Armenia. The complex of churches at Haghpat Monastery is impressively located and there are great views across hills and valleys. We then transfer to our accommodation in Dzoraget or Dilijan. Drive time today will be around 2.5hrs.

Meals: **B L D**



 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 200M	 Descent 200M	 Time 4 - 5 hrs walking	 Distance 10KM
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DAY 5

Visit the Odzun monastery and walk to the village of Kobayr. Transfer back to Yerevan.

From our hotel we transfer to the 6th century Odzun monastery. From here we walk to the village of Kobayr. We start above the Debet canyon and as our path descends we have dramatic views as the slopes drop to the canyon floor and river. As the path levels out we enjoy a delightful walk as the canyon opens out. After our picnic lunch we continue to descend and arrive at the village of Kobayr where we can have a stop for refreshments. Meeting our transport, we make the 5hr drive back to Yerevan and our hotel.

Meals: **B L**





 Accommodation Hotel	 Descent 270M	 Time 4 - 5 hrs walking	 Distance 13KM
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DAY 6

Start our trek from Sevaberd (2100m) and walk to Lake Akna to camp.

The Geghami Mountains extend north to south for around 70 kilometres and separate the Ararat Plain (to the west) from Lake Sevan (to the east). They are of volcanic origin and include a number of extinct volcanoes. The average height of the terrain is around 2500 metres, rising to 3597 metres at the summit of Mount Azhdahak. We start our walk at the village for Sevaberd (2100m), around a 1 hr drive from Yerevan. Our walk today ascends gently to the plateau and to Lake Akna where we camp for the night. It is very beautiful here. Very few tourists and people are seen, and there is a stillness which gives off a great peace.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Camping	 Ascent 1000M	 Time 5 hrs walking	 Distance 13KM
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DAY 7

Ascend over pastures and uplands to summit at Mt Azhdahak (3597m), descend and camp.

We set off from Lake Akna past a nearby shepherds camp and ascending through rolling uplands and alpine meadows to the base of Mount Azhdahak (3597m). After lunch we have a short steep ascent along the zig-zag trail, across scree and possibly some snow patches. We are rewarded by views of its summit crater (complete with snow-melt lake) and by another fantastic panorama, encompassing Sevan Lake and Mount Ararat. We take time to enjoy this amazing place, before descending down the other side of the mountain and camp not far from its base near some shepherds camps.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Camping	 Ascent 500M	 Descent 400M	 Time 6 - 7 hrs walking	 Distance 18KM
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DAY 8

Continue the walk over the plateau and past Lake Vank with its standing stones. Camp.

A wonderful day of trekking, as we traverse the open mountainous landscape of Geghama. This part of Armenia is well known for the quantity and quality of its petroglyphs (ancient rock art, depicting lots of subjects, from ibex to astrological symbols) and we descend to one of the best of these sites on the volcanic landscapes at 3050 metres. This is also a great viewpoint, with Mount Aragats in one direction and Mt Ararat in the other. We continue through and pass Lake Vank with its standing stones before descending to our campsite.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Camping



Descent
1000M



Time
6 hrs walking



Distance
15KM

DAY 9

Trek out of the Geghama Mountains, transfer to Mount Aragats to camp at the end of the road.

The final day of our Geghama Mountains traverse. We leave camp and the pretty meadows and grazing land of the high plateau as we meander down from the mountains. Earlier in the season there are many wild flowers as we descend. We end our trek at Garni, where there is a rebuilt Pagan temple, like a mini 'Parthenon'. We meet the vehicle and have a quick visit of the nearby Geghard Monastery, which is partly hewn out of the rock. We then drive (2hrs) to Lake Kari at the bottom of Mt Aragats. If we have time we can take a short detour to the 11th century fortress of Ambred built on the slopes of the mountain at 2300 metres. Continuing our drive to Lake Kari Lich (3200m), where we camp and make sure we have an early night ahead of our ascent of Armenia's highest peak. There is an Astronomical observatory at the lake.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Camping



Distance
6KM

DAY 10

Summit day on Mount Aragats, a long challenging days walk. Transfer back to Yerevan.

We make an early start to give us as much time as possible for the ascent and also to maximise our chances of getting good views. Aragats is an old volcano and its several summits are arrayed around a central crater lake (Kari Lich). Cloud tends to build up late morning around this lake. There are four summits on the Mt Aragats massif. The highest point is the North Summit (4090m) which is a long and

technical walk. Depending on the group and the weather, our goal today is the Southern Summit at 3890m. After taking in the awe-inspiring summit views, we return to our camp for some refreshment, before jumping in the vehicle and returning to our Yerevan hotel, where we have a final celebratory meal.

Meals: **B L**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 700M	 Descent 700M	 Time 6 - 7 hrs walking	 Distance 12KM
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DAY 11

Departure day. A single transfer to Yerevan Airport is provided.

A single transfer to Yerevan Airport is provided, where your holiday ends.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed transfers on arrival and departure
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Full service camping on trek including all camping equipment
- Baggage transfer by 4WD as required during the trekking
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What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Armenia Visa
- Yerevan Airport transfers (other than single timed transfer)
- Tips
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Yerevan.

A single timed airport transfers is provided.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 8 lunches and 7 dinners are included in the holiday price.

Food & Water

Many places on this holiday have drinkable water from the tap to fill your personal water bottles. Please check with the leader at the various locations. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) for days when drinking water out of the tap is not available. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

When staying in hotels and guesthouses, breakfasts are taken at the overnight accommodation and typically consist of tea and coffee, cereals, bread, jam, cheese, cold meat and eggs (omelette). Dinner will be taken either at our accommodation or in a nearby restaurant. Local fare predominates, but you can also expect such staples as pizza and pasta dishes. Varied and filling breakfasts are provided by the cook when camping. Picnic lunches are provided on most days and these will usually be bread, cheese, tomatoes, cucumber, olives, ham or other dried meats, fruit and biscuits. Dinners at camp are traditional Armenian fare consisting of 2 or 3 courses.

Accommodation

We will spend 4 nights at a comfortable hotel in Yerevan. There will also be a night at a guesthouse or hotel in Dzoraget and 1 night in a hotel at Sevan Lake.

There will be 4 nights camping, sleeping in 2 man tents. There will also be a communal mess tent, camp kitchen, toilet tent, chairs, camping tables etc. Whilst camping, you may be expected to assist with putting up and taking down your own tent as the crew set up the mess tent and prepare the rest of "base-camp".

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single hotel rooms and/or single tents are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday additional nights are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. There will also be one or more drivers, and when camping there will be a cook. A second guide will accompany groups of 10 persons and more.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude.

Spending Money

We estimate that £150 will cover your personal spending, including the 3 meals that you will pay for directly (allow a total of £20). This will also cover the paying of a reasonable tip to the local guide, trekking crew and other staff. Do not try to obtain any local currency (Armenian Dram) before you arrive in the country. You can withdraw cash from ATM's at Yerevan Airport and in Yerevan itself, using a credit card or a debit card.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We advise you to tip as a group. We recommend about £30-40 per person.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft duffle bag and a daypack. During the Geghama Mountains trek your main baggage will be transported in a 4WD support vehicle, there is a finite amount of space. Please keep the weight of your main luggage to no more than 15kgs / 33 lbs. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Visa Armenia

UK passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. Other nationals should see Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Currency

The unit of currency in Armenia is the Armenian Dram.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Running, cycling and swimming are good for developing better stamina. Before departure, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

Climate

The height of the summer is perfect for a trekking holiday in Armenia. We run our trips in July and August when we can expect the daytime temperatures in Yerevan to be around 25-30°C, dropping at night to 15°C / 59°F. At our highest camps, we can expect daytime temperatures to be no higher than 15°C / 59°F (although it may well feel hotter than this) and nighttime temperatures will fall to 5°C / 41°F. At this time of year, we will be unlucky to experience significant amounts of rain.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Maps

Armenia - Roskartografia. 1:500,000

Attractive map of the country, showing physical relief and communication information - roads, railways, canals. Intermediate driving distances on roads are marked. General relief is shown through hill shading and elevation tinting. Other detail: national parks, administrative boundaries, irrigation channels, marshes, seasonal rivers, mountain peaks, names of mountain ranges. All text is in cyrillic only.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

You SHOULD bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Underwear
- Base layer shirts (2 short sleeve, 2 long sleeve)
- T-shirts or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket

- Sunhat
- Fleece hat
- Sunglasses
- Thermal or fleece gloves
- Daypack 30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -5°C)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Travel towel
- Antibacterial handwash
- Selection of dry bags (to keep kit bag contents dry)

Basic First Aid Kit, consisting of the following: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment

- (Imodium) painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent (DEET), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

The following items are optional:

- Trainers or sandals for camp
- Spare laces

- Shorts
- Thermal baselayer - leggings
- Sleeping bag liner
- Insect repellent (DEET)
- Trekking poles
- Camera
- Swimwear
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Travel clothes
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '*Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer*'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary, joining at the hotel in Yerevan. A single transfer is included from/to Yerevan Airport.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights are based on UK flights from London (Heathrow) to Yerevan. The flight will depart the UK in the morning and arrive in the evening of day 1. The return flight will depart in the morning on the last day and arrive later that afternoon in the UK.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Only a select number of UK companies offer a good walking itinerary in Armenia. It is often overlooked as a walking destination - but it is packed full of tourist-free countryside and stunning mountains which are just asking to be walked through!

Please Note This document was downloaded on 27/07/2024 and the trip is subject to change