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22 days
Duration

Armenia, Azerbaijan
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Small Group Tour to the Caucasus | Armenia Azerbaijan Georgia



May 17 2024 to Jun 07 2024

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia small group tour | Odyssey Traveller

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across the Caucasus and beyond. We explore Georgia's fairy-tale natural beauty, its ancient, and Imperial heritage in Armenia, its World Heritage Sites, and famous cities, all with some truly spectacular

scenery along the way. This and more is all waiting to be explored on one of Odyssey's small group tours of the Caucasus, designed for the senior traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people.

This 22-day small group tour to Armenia , Azerbaijan , and Georgia gives travellers an opportunity to explore Tbilisi , Baku , and Yerevan. To be seen on these escorted small group tours the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan) encompasses important monuments, historical and religious sites, diverse landscapes, and ancient architecture. We travel through the spectacular Caucasus Mountains and the lowlands of Armenia , Georgia, and Azerbaijan . On small group tours the Caucasus are fully escorted by an Odyssey Program Leader and led by a local guide in each city tour the group enjoys. Over the course of these Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan Tours we have the opportunity to meet locals and observe their lifestyles in both the cities and remote sections of the Caucasus visiting places of historical significance on the UNESCO World Heritage list . From Cosmopolitan Baku to the break at a caravanserai in the Kakheti region the experience and stories will remain with you you after a Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan group tours.







Visiting the Caucasus Region

Visiting Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in one trip makes logistical sense as the countries sit next to each other south of the Caucasus Mountains, but their deep, historical connections also make it imperative for travellers to visit all three to get a clearer picture of the region.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia are often referred to as 'the Caucasus region'. The Caucasus, or Caucasia, refers to both the mountain system and the region bounded by the Black Sea in the west and the Caspian Sea in the east. This mountain system includes the Greater Caucasus mountain range in the north – which serves as a natural barrier between Eastern Europe and Western Asia and includes Europe's highest mountain, Mount Elbrus (height 5,642 metres or

18,510 ft) – and the Lesser Caucasus in the south.

The name *Caucasus* comes from *Kaukasos*, which was what the Ancient Greeks used to refer to the mountains. For centuries throughout history, the Caucasus was associated with the myth of Prometheus. In Greek mythology, Prometheus was punished for stealing fire from the gods by being chained to the icy peaks of the Greater Caucasus chain. The land north of the Greater Caucasus (Ciscaucasia) is in Russian territory, while the south (South Caucasus or Transcaucasia) is occupied by the former Soviet territories and now independent republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. It is this region, south of the mountain barrier, that we will examine.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have a long history. In fact, in 2009, a team of researchers and experts from the United States, Israel, and the Republic of Georgia examined clay retrieved from the Dzudzuana Cave, 200 km from the capital of Tbilisi, and found flax fibres, invisible now to the naked eye due to disintegration, that were more than 34,000 years old (Upper Paleolithic Age). Flax is a plant with edible grain and is still used to make linen, though the variety used in modern times—*Linum usitatissimum*—is domesticated, unlike the wild variety used by our ancestors. The fibres found in this cave showed that humans had been industriously creating fibres from plants for clothing for much longer than experts had realised.

Some parts of this long history overlap as their borders were redrawn after every war or invasive siege, each country growing bigger, smaller, or encroaching on another's territory. The prime geographical location, mild climate, and fertile lands of the South Caucasus led to invasions from every major power in the world throughout the centuries. The Greeks, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Mongols, Ottomans, and the former Soviet Union have all left their mark in the region. The Ancient Kingdom of Colchis covered what is now western Georgia and dates from the Bronze Age. The Greeks established colonies in Colchis between the 8th and 6th centuries BC. The wealthy kingdom figures prominently in Greek mythology, said to be the home of Princess Medea, the site of war god Ares's sacred grove, the land of the Amazons, and the destination of Jason and the Argonauts. You can read more about their entwined histories in our article.







Armenia Azerbaijan Georgia Tour Itinerary



Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan champions secularism and a separation of state and religion. It is a country that perhaps travellers do not think to include on their list of places to visit, but Azerbaijan puts itself decidedly on the map. Baku is the capital, the centre of the city sitting on the shore of the Caspian Sea. Its skyline is dominated by the Flame Towers, a trio of skyscrapers that serve as the symbol of the city.'Azer' in Persian means fire and the country's nickname is 'the Land of Fire'. Zoroastrianism, the main religion during Persian rule, puts great importance on fire, which is believed to be a source of knowledge. We now know that the country's vast oil and natural gas reserves are responsible for the seemingly ever-burning flames that define Azerbaijan's landscape, but during ancient times, the flames made Azerbaijan a place of great mystery and a place of pilgrimage.

Our tour of the Caucasus begins in Baku and concludes in Yerevan. In Baku, the group has a guided tour, exploring the ancient walled old town , a maze of medieval narrow streets mixed with turn-of-the-century monuments. Our city walking tour also takes in Shirvan Shah's palace, a unique 15th century building. Before we drive to Georgia, we make time to visit Sheki, an important trading hub (caravanserai) on the Silk Road, recently listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. Azerbaijan is considered to have some unusual sites and features in a list of ten unimaginable places to visit.

Georgia

Our tour spends two nights in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, a charming mix of east and west. Odyssey Traveller has published a short article on questions about Georgia as well as a definitive guide on the country to assist you with your planning. Georgia is opening up to the world and to the future, but travellers are still attracted to its rich Georgian past. The city's heritage sites are clustered in Old Tbilisi which are revealed by your tour guide leading your around the ancient capital, which is also famous for its sulphur bathhouses, a perfect stop during the colder months of October to March. The city itself (Tbilisi means 'warm place')

was built around these natural thermal springs, which were believed to have healing properties. Travellers are enticed to have a soak and cure skin problems, joint pains, and other ailments.

Our time in Tbilisi includes sightseeing in the city's fascinating 'old town', a labyrinth of cobblestone streets, ancient churches and mosques, and medieval baths. After Tbilisi, we travel into the countryside to explore Georgia's many ancient churches, including the Gelati monastery, and Vardzia, cave monastery and underground complex. We also visit Georgia's Black Sea coast. In Georgia, our group tours also take the time to visit local restaurants so that you can enjoy the unique Georgian wine and food culture.





Armenia

Similar to its neighbouring countries in the South Caucasus, Armenia has a history marked by incredible losses and bloody wars, which continued even after its independence from the former Soviet Union. But the tide seems to have turned in 2018. Armenians, led by opposition politician Nikol Pashinyan, joined a series of peaceful anti-government protests from April to May 2018. The protests were in response to Pashinyan losing his bid for the Prime Minister seat, and Serzh Sargsyan being elected for his third consecutive term as head of state. Dubbed the Armenian 'Velvet Revolution', it led to Sargsyan's resignation, Pashinyan being named Prime Minister, and Armenians expressing hope for a better future.

Armenia's tourism industry has also been flourishing. A big draw is the capital, Yerevan**,** 23 kilometres (14 miles) from the Turkish border. The city skyline offers a beautiful view of Mt. Ararat (in Turkish territory) in the south. The 2,800-year-old city experienced tremendous growth due to industrialisation, growing from a town of 30,000 people in 1914 to a booming urban centre of more than a million in the latest census. Most buildings are designed with a pink volcanic stone called *tuff*, making the city's scenery glow pink at dusk.

Our tour of Armenia includes a full-day sightseeing tour of the capital city, Yerevan. In Yerevan, we visit a moving memorial to victims of the Armenia n genocide, and learn more about the history of Armenia with

your tour guide at the Museum of the Medieval Armenian Culture (Matenadaran). We also make a trip to a brandy factory for a tour and tastings.

Outside Yerevan, we further explore the cultural heritage of the Armenian people. We include a full-day trip to Khor Virap. This romantically located Armenian monastery has panoramic views across a vast plain to Turkey and the twin peaks of Mount Ararat.

Armenia was the world's first Christian country and the country plays an important role in the Bible. Here, in the atmosphere of historical legend, we see Noah's Ark in the snows of Ararat. According to the book of Genesis, it was here that humankind was reborn. Theatrical ceremonies and festivals take place in a Noah's-Ark-shaped stage against the majestic Mount Ararat. We may also enter the hole where Gregory the Illuminator was jailed for 13 years for dissemination of Christianity in Armenia. Later on, we visit the 13th-century monastery complex of Noravank set in a marvellous canyon. Throughout Armenia as a group we discover and see the evolution of religious architecture and the influence on people.



The Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan tours are designed for the curious senior, mature couple or solo traveller. During our tour of Armenia Azerbaijan and Georgia you have a knowledgable tour leader and the best local tour guide we can secure for this Caucasus tour . On these Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan group tours, your tour guide will provide excellent insights into the local culture and history of each of these destinations in the Caucasus region .

For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Articles about Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia published by Odyssey Traveller

- Among the Mountains: A Guide to the Nations of the Caucasus
- Visiting Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia: The South Caucasus
- Buildings and Christianity in Armenia
- Armenia: An Ancient Civilisation
- Clothes Began in Georgia: Ancient Fibres and the History of Clothing
- Discovering Georgia
- Questions About Georgia
- History and Legend in the Landscapes of Georgia

For all the articles Odyssey Traveller has published for mature aged and senior travellers, click through on this link.

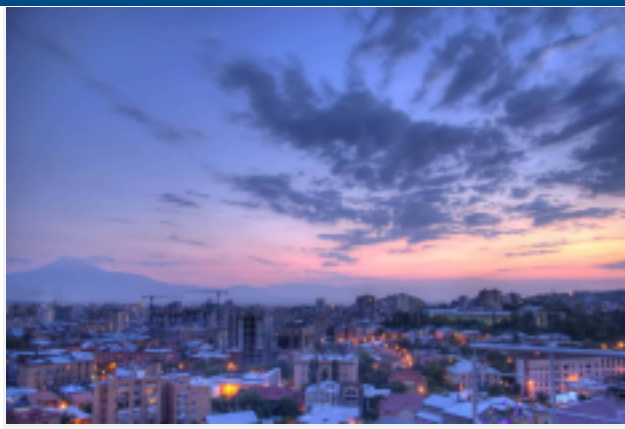




External articles to assist you on your visit to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia

- Caucasus
- UNESCO World Heritage List
- Walled City of Baku (UNESCO)
- Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan (Lonely Planet)
- Georgia's UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Wandering through Georgia: the Eden of the Caucasus
- Music and Ancient History in the Caucasus
- The Telegraph on why Armenia might be Europe's 'best kept secret'.

- Lonely Planet: 48 Hours in Yerevan, Armenia.
- Travel + Leisure: Where to go next – Armenia.
- The Lake Sevan Resort: A Modernist Masterpiece



Tour Notes

- Itineraries may change if flight schedules, site availability, and other inclusions have to be amended prior to departure.
- Group size limited to 15.

Highlights

1. Explore the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Armenia.
2. Sample the national cuisines and music at a special farewell dinner held in each country.
3. Trace the "Wine Route" of Kakheti, a rich wine-growing region with magnificent vineyards and quaint villages.
4. Discover the ancient Colchis Kingdom in Kutasi, destination for the legendary Jason and the Argonauts.
5. Experience diverse cultures and the landscapes between the Black Sea coast of Georgia and the Caspian coast of Azerbaijan.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: BAKU

Overview:

On arrival into the city built on oil that is contemporary Baku, a contrast of so much we will see on this tour, we make our own way to our hotel in Baku, where we enjoy a program orientation and welcome dinner in a

local restaurant. (D)

Accommodation:

3 nights at Central Park Hotel or similar.

Day 2

Locations: Baku

Overview:

We begin the first full day our Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan tours with a walking tour of Icheri Shey Har, the old town, with its maze of narrow, cobblestone streets lined with small mosques nestled between terrace cafes and grand turn-of-the-century architecture. A highlight of our afternoon's explorations will surely be Shirvan Shah's Palace, a royal palace built in the 15th century and the finest surviving example of Shirvan architecture. In the evening we enjoy a walking touralong Baku sea-side boulevard. Baku Bay is a natural harbour for the capital of Azerbaijan and the main port of Baku. It is located in the wide curve on the southern side of the Absheron Peninsula, sheltered by the Baku archipelago. Our tour guide will explain the history about the Caspian Sea. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Central Park Hotel or similar.

Day 3

Locations: Baku

Overview:

After breakfast we explore the Absheron Peninsula. It was once the centre of a booming oil industry. However, this former agricultural jewel – north of the capital – is now a desolate landscape of semi-arid vegetation, grim industry and forgotten oil fields. We will visit both Ateshga, the sacred Zoroastrian fire temple built on the site of a natural gas vent and Yanar Dag or Flaming Mountain, one of few remaining natural gas flares in the area. Here we have a traditional tea in a Gala village. We then carry on further down the Caspian coast to Gobustan where over 6,000 Stone and Iron Age petroglyphs have been

discovered in the hill caves above town depicting scenes of hunting and dancing rituals, a varied repertoire of animal figures along with thousands of artefacts and tools. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Central Park Hotel or similar.

Day 4

Locations: Baku - Shemakha - Sheki

Overview:

After breakfast we drive to Shemakha through small villages nestled among steep mountains and lush valleys dotted with vineyards. We will stop in Shemakha, a city that served for many centuries as the capital and commercial centre of western Azerbaijan before being replaced by Baku in 19th century. Here we visit the famed Yeddi Gumbaz (Seven Tombs), of which only three remain completely intact, the royal tombs of the last Shirvan Khans to rule before the region became part of the Russian Empire. In town, we will stop at Juma Meschid or Grand Mosque whose 10th century foundations are part of the first mosque built in the Caucasus. Passing through stark, arid landscapes dotted with mud volcanoes, we will arrive in Maraza where just off the main road lies Pir Diri Baba Mausoleum built precariously into the side of a cliff. We arrive in Sheki late afternoon. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Sheki Sarai Hotel or similar.

Day 5

Locations: Sheki - Lagodekhi Border - Telavi

Overview:

Early morning we depart Sheki and drive towards the border with Georgia. En route we stop to visit the exquisite Khan’s Palace set in the midst of dilapidated fortress walls and adorned with detailed mosaics and Shebaka windows made from fragments of coloured glass and hand-shaped wooden cross-pieces. We will have the opportunity to visit a Shebaka workshop as well as the local bazaar where we will wander

among street peddlers and artists selling everything from local handicrafts and souvenirs to halva, a sweet confection flavoured with cinnamon, fennel or saffron. We continue our journey and cross into Georgia, and make our way to Telavi where we'll learn about the local bread baking and traditional sweet churchkhela making before having dinner at our guesthouse. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Lalie's Guesthouse or similar.

Day 6

Locations: Telavi - Signagi - Tiblisi

Overview:

A short drive from Telavi takes us back to Gremi and its impressive citadel complex consisting of a 16th century domed church, tower and king's chamber. We continue towards Signagi where we explore the Royal Town, surrounded by the defensive walls with 23 towers. Each of these towers was named after nearby a nearby village and respective families and served as a refuge in case of danger. The town was mainly inhabited by merchants and artisans. It had many gates through which numerous Silk Road travellers from Asia and Europe passed. We also visit the Signagi Historical and Ethnographical Museum. For lunch we visit a local Georgian wine cellar and then continue our travel to Tiblisi. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

2 nights at the Hotel New Kopala or similar.

Day 7

Locations: Tbilisi

Overview:

Today we explore the narrow streets of the old town of Tiblisi including visits to Metekhi church (12-13th century) – cross cupola church, part of the Royal residential complex; Sulphur bathhouses – 19th century buildings; Sioni Cathedral – the main church of Tbilisi dated to 7th-19th century, located in the Old Town where we also visit Anchiskhati

Basilica. After lunch we'll visit the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia, formerly known as the State Museum of History of Georgia, one of the main history museums in Tbilisi which displays the country's principal archaeological findings and the Soviet Occupation Exhibition hall. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Hotel New Kopala or similar.

Day 8

Locations: Tiblisi - Mtskheta - Gori - Akhaltsikhe

Overview:

Today, this small group tour with your tour leader and tour guide drive across the Kartli province, the heart of Georgia. Here we visit the sacred Mtskheta, the ancient capital of eastern Georgia. Georgia's conversion to Christianity occurred in Mtskheta in 337 AD and it is considered to be one of Georgia's most important religious centres. We can visit several of its most important historic monuments including the beautiful Jvari church (6th-7th century), perched on a cliff overlooking the city; Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (11th century). In Gori, which is the birth place of Josef Stalin, the tourvisits Uplistsikhe cave town that dates back to 1st millennium BC, this is a 1-1.5hrs walking tour. In late afternoon we arrive in Akhaltsikhe, where we spend 2 nights. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

2 nights at Gino Rabath or similar.

Day 9

Locations: Akhaltsikhe - Varzia - Akhaltsikhe

Overview:

After breakfast we explore Samtskhe-Javakheti province and its important architectural monuments. We start by visiting Varzia cave monastery a town,that was transformed into a well-fortified monastery, which had a significant role in the political, cultural, educational and spiritual life of the country. En route there will be a short stop at Khertvisi Fortress (10th century). We then return to Akhaltsikhe to explore the historical centre of the old town and Museum of Akhaltsikhe in Rabati.

(B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Gino Rabati or similar.

Day 10

Locations: Akhaltsikhe - Kutaisi

Overview:

Today our tour guide takes the tour out to the picturesque Borjomi Valley and Rikoti Pass to Kutaisi – the capital of ancient Colchis. We'll have a walk in Borjomi Park and taste the local mineral water. Around noon we will arrive in Kutaisi, one of the biggest cities in Georgia. Nearby we visit the Sataplia grottoes located in one of Georgia's finest nature reserves. On our return, there will be time to enjoy a walking tour in the old town of Kutaisi. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Argo Palace or similar.

Day 11

Locations: Kutaisi - Mestia

Overview:

After breakfast we visit Gelati Monastery (a UNESCO world heritage site) before driving to Zugdidi. We then continue our drive to the Enguri Canyon where the Svan ethnic group evolved, cut off from the outside world by the high and inaccessible mountains, their culture preserved almost intact with the ritual of worshipping spirits, the fertility cults, the wolf and the bull, and the poetic muse, Dali, the golden-haired goddess of hunting.

Access to the Svaneti area is hard and conditions are basic, the road to Mestia is rough and long (220km / 4.5hrs drive from Kutaisi to Mestia). The climate in Svaneti is quite stern with cold winters, cool and long springs and cool summers. Mestia and Ushguli are surrounded by snow peaks, glaciers and alpine pastures which make the local climate very

special. We are scheduled to arrive in Mestia late afternoon. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

3 nights at Hotel Banguriani or similar.

Day 12

Locations: Mestia - Ushguli - Mestia

Overview:

Today's tour takes a 2 hour drive west to the picturesque village of Ushguli, boasting more than 20 ancient Svan Towers it has been listed as a UNESCO world heritage site since 1996. We enjoy a walk in Ushguli and its surroundings. En route we will visit several remote villages and churches. In Ushguli we will be guests of a local family and learn and taste Sulguni, the local cheese. In afternoon we drive back to Mestia. There will be free time this afternoon to continue exploring Mestia at our own pace. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Banguriani or similar.

Day 13

Locations: Mestia

Overview:

After breakfast we explore Mestia on a walking tour and visit the Ethnographical and Historical Museum, which was established in 1936 and initially housed a small collection but in 1948 it benefited from an expedition to Svaneti, headed by the famous Georgian art historian Giorgi Chubinashvili that collected illuminated manuscripts, icons and other antiquities from the Svanetian population and from Svaneti churches. The material collected by the expedition forms the core of the museum's collection. There will be free time this afternoon to further explore Mestia town on your own. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Banguriani or similar.

Day 14

Locations: Mestia - Batumi

Overview:

Today we enjoy a guided tour of the town of Batumi, situated on the shore of the Black Sea. En-route our tour guideexplains the history of the regiuon before we visit Dadiani Palace – palace of the lord of Samegrelo region, along with its beautiful park and museum. In the evening we enjoy a short walking tour of Batumi, the 2nd largest city of Georgia with its seaside Boulevard park and the nearby Old Town recently renovated to bring back tourism in the post-Soviet era. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

2 nights at Hotel Vanilla or similar.

Day 15

Locations: Batumi

Overview:

After breakfast today this small group tour drives south to visit Gonio Fortress, a well preserved Roman fortification just 4km from the border with Turkey. The site is believed to hold the tomb of the Apostle Mathew – one of Christ's disciples – but has yet to be fully excavated. Later we drive back to Batumi to visit the Botanical Garden, where we take a walk. The gardens overlook the Black Sea and cover an area of 111 hectares, divided into sections displaying flora from different parts of the world. For our lunch we enjoy a traditional cheese-filled bread called "Khachapuri". There will be free time in the afternoon to continue walking along the boulevard or relax back at the hotel. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Hotel Vanilla or similar.

Day 16

Locations: Batumi -Tbilisi

Overview:

Your small group tour has an early morning start departing Batumi for the drive to Tbilisi (approx. 7hrs). On the way we stop at the monastic complex of Ubisa, comprising a 9th century St. George's Monastery founded by St. Gregory of Khandzta, a 4-floor tower (AD 1141), fragments of a 12th century defensive wall and several other buildings and structures. A short drive away in the village Shrosha, we will be hosted by a pottery maker's family before we continue our travels to the capital Tblisi. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Hotel New Kopala or similar.

Day 17

Locations: Tiblisi - Sadkhalo - Dilijan

Overview:

After breakfast, we will be guests in a batik studio where we will meet textile artists and see how they work and later visit the museum of Local Arts and Crafts. After lunch at a local restaurant we will drive to Sadkhalo border and continue our sightseeing in Armenia where we visit the 10-13th centuries Haghpat and Sanahin historical and architectural monuments standing amidst forest-clad hills close to the town of Alaverdi. The monuments including the Haghpat monastery are now a UNESCO world heritage site and excellent examples of medieval Armenian architecture .

We then continue to the town of Dilijan where we spend the night. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

1 night at Dilijan Resort Hotel or similar

Day 18

Locations: Dilijan - Yerevan

Overview:

Today we visit the nearby Hagharstin Monastery of 13-14th century before departing for Yerevan, which is also another fine example of medieval Armenian architecture. Our first stop is at Lake Sevan – the emerald of Armenia, with a visit to the 9th century Sevan Monastery. If the weather is nice, we can enjoy some time to relax on the sunny and sandy beach of lake Sevan. After lunch we drive south and visit Noratus field of “Khach Kars” – Kross Stoness before heading west to the capital city. On arrival we’ll enjoy a short orientation city tour of Yerevan. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

4 nights at Ani Plaza or similar.

Day 19

Locations: Yerevan

Overview:

Today we enjoy a full-day sightseeing tour of Yerevan. Your tour guide leads the city tour which includes visits to the Memorial Complex to the Genocide Victims, Museum of the Medieval Armenian Culture – Matenadaran, and a brandy factory to taste some brandy. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Ani Plaza Hotel or similar.

Day 20

Locations: Yerevan - Khor-Virap - Noravanq - Areny Winery - Yerevan

Overview:

Today this Caucasus tour heads south to Khor Virap monastery, one of the romantically-sited monasteries in Armeniawith views across vast plain to Turkey and the twin peaks of Mount Ararat. Here, you will find a Noah’s Ark in the snow of Mount Ararat. Humankind was reborn here, with Noah, the world’s first tourist. The theatrical ceremonies and

festivals performing in a Noah's-Ark-shaped stage in the immediate vicinity of the Khor Virap monastery and against the majestic Mount Ararat will take us back to Noah's ages. We may also enter the hole where Gregory the Illuminator was jailed for 13 years for dissemination of Christianity in Armenia (optional). We also visit the 13th century monastery complex of Noravank set in a marvellous canyon. Lunch will be at a local restaurant. The evening is free to continue exploring the city of Yerevan at your own pace. (B,L)

Accommodation:

Ani Plaza Hotel or similar.

Day 21

Locations: Yerevan - Echimiadzin - Garni - Geghard - Yerevan

Overview:

With the tour leader this small group tour heads south again for a tour of Echmiadzin – the holy seat of the Supreme Patriarch-Catholicos of all Armenia. The Cathedral was built in 303 on the site of a pagan temple after the adoption of Christianity as a state religion in 301. We then visit St. Hripsime Church of Echmiadzin (7th century) before driving through the picturesque Avan Canyon, skirting formidable cliffs and passing exotic-looking gorges until the green plateau of the Azat River comes into view. In this natural setting, you will see the pagan Garni architectural complex of the 1st century and feel the spirit of ancient ages. Lunch will be at a photographer's house. We will also visit the UNESCO world site Heritage listed monastery of Geghard (13th century) which contains a number of churches and tombs, most of them cut into the rock, representing the very peak of medieval Armenian architecture. In the evening we enjoy our farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Ani Plaza Hotel or similar.

Day 22

Locations: Yerevan

Overview:

After breakfast, we say our farewells and another one of Odyssey Travellers Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan tours draws to a close. (B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 19 nights of hotel accommodation and 1 night in guesthouse accommodation with shared facilities.
- 21 breakfasts, 20 lunches, and 17 dinners.
- All excursions, entrance fees, and tipping.
- Transport in air-conditioned coaches.
- Local guides throughout.
- Services of Tour Leader for the duration of tour.

What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.
- Visa services and fees (if applicable).

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.