

EXPERIENCE  
**ARMENIA**  
WITH LOCALS





**Location**



**Religion**



**Museums**



**Language**



**Capital**



**Food**



**Ancient Armenian Discoveries**



**UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**



**Festivals**



**UNESCO World Heritage List**



**Nature**



**Cultural sites**

**ARMENIA**  
with **LOCALS**





About **ARMENIA**



*Although Armenia is a small country, it is one of the world's oldest centers of civilization.*

Its strategic location—at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, along the Great Silk Road—created enriching opportunities for cross-cultural connections. Armenia's majestic, mountainous landscape offers numerous tourism possibilities: natural landmarks, historic Christian monasteries, ancient cultural heritage, distinctive gastronomy, and one of the world's oldest winemaking traditions. Armenian viticulture and winemaking traditions are nearly 6,100 years old. Petroglyphs depict festive celebrations and ancient manuscripts contain hundreds of thousands of references to the culture of wine and

grapes. Today, new generations of enthusiastic winemakers are using native grapes found only in Armenia to keep traditional winemaking alive with booming levels of production. While many Armenian traditions have remained steadfast throughout recorded history, others have evolved through cross-cultural influences. For instance, touches of Mediterranean cuisine similar to that of Greece, Syria, and Lebanon appear in Armenia's culinary traditions. And central to everything is the rich heritage of Armenian hospitality, which you will witness for yourself.

## HIGHLIGHTS



**At crossroads between Europe and Asia, in a cradle of civilizations**



**First country to adopt Christianity as its official religion**



**Armenian alphabet is among the oldest alphabets in the world**



**Yerevan is more than 2,800 years old**



**One of the oldest wineries dating back 6,100 years; oldest leather shoe dating back 5,500 years**



**Duduk and its music (2008); Armenian cross-stone (*khachkar*) art (2010); Performance of the Armenian epic of "Daredevils of Sassoun" or "David of Sassoun" (2012); *Lavash*, the preparation, meaning and appearance of traditional bread as an expression of culture in Armenia (2014); *Kochari*, traditional group dance (2017); Armenian letter art and its cultural expressions (2019); Pilgrimage to the St. Thaddeus Apostle Monastery (Armenian, located in Iran) (2020)**



**Includes 5 Armenian monasteries**



## What you should discover in Armenia

*All experiences in this guidebook were carefully selected to represent Armenian cultural heritage and to give you an opportunity to explore them together with local cooks and winemakers, artists and artisans, hikers and bikers, and guides of all sorts.*

# HIGHLIGHTS

## Culinary



There is an Armenian saying that dishes should cover the table so completely that guests cannot fit an open palm on the tabletop. Meals in Armenia are feasts of fresh vegetables and fruits, mountain herbs and greens, local meats and fish, regional cheeses and dairy, wines and brandy, homemade fruit vodkas, and intense Armenian coffee with local sweets.

Armenian hospitality underscores the country's gastronomy. Armenians believe that God sends each guest and that to warmly receive them at home guarantees prosperity to the owner. The Armenian term for hospitality—*հյուրասիրություն* [*hyurasirutyun*]*—*means both hospitality and reception, and consists of two roots "guest" and "love."

Armenian cuisine is as ancient as the country itself and reflects traditions and influences from both old civilizations and present-day neighbors. You may experience different savors and aromas, fresh vegetables and fruits, fish and meat, and spices and sweets.

For culinary experiences, see pages 25, 27, 36, 37, 39, 45, 49, 53, 63, 68, 75, 80, 81, 83, 84, 87, 97, 107, 112, 114.

## Arts and Crafts



A passion for arts and crafts has long defined Armenian culture. Armenian architects and masons have left lasting legacies in all countries of the surrounding region. Miniature artists decorated pages of ancient manuscripts that you may see today in the Matenadaran museum. Almost every home once carried traditions of rug and carpet weaving, needlework, pottery, and wood and stone carving. Even today you may find many artists and artisans who have preserved their craft traditions and are reviving them now with zest and dedication. You may find artisans across Armenia, especially in small towns and villages, but certainly in Gyumri, known as the City of Masters or *Varpetac Qaghaq*. With local artisans, you may learn how to carve cross-stones, weave rugs, and embroider intricate patterns.

For arts and craft experiences, see pages 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 31, 33, 53, 56, 57, 59, 62, 65, 73, 78, 85, 86, 93, 96, 108, 110, 111, 113.

## Outdoors



Armenia is a mountainous country with wonderfully diverse scenery. Throughout its regions, you may marvel at the 4,000-meter-high peaks of Mount Aragats, enjoy the picturesque Ararat Valley decorated with blossoming apricot and peach trees, swim in Lake Sevan at an altitude of 1,900 meters, visit national parks and protected landscapes, and hike deep canyons.

Because historical and cultural sites extend across the country, almost no outing in nature goes without seeing at least one such monument.

For hikers, the Transcaucasian Trail and the Legends Trails may be of much interest. HIKEArmenia is a free app that

## Winemaking



The oldest trace of wine production found to date in Armenia is 6,100 years old, which enables the country to compete for the title, "cradle of wine." Ancient cave findings, wine-presses, clay jars, and *karases* where the wine fermented all bear witness to Armenia's millennia-old traditions. With expanded wine tourism, you have numerous opportunities to not only enjoy Armenian wines, but also to learn about indigenous grapes, wine production, and of course to taste. Almost all wineries in Armenia organize tours and tastings. In Vayots Dzor, you may follow the Wine Route, which presents experiences from large factory tours to cozy family-owned vineyard visits.

[www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com](http://www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com)

For wine experiences, see pages 60, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 118.

## History and Culture



For millennia, Armenians have interacted with ancient civilizations, traded with empires of Europe and Asia, fought back foreign invaders of the Middle Ages, and evolved relations with their present-day neighbors. You may experience Armenian history and culture on a museum visit, city tour, hike to a medieval fortress, or sharing meals with an Armenian family.

For history and culture experiences, see pages 20, 21, 30, 43, 44, 46, 51, 53, 57, 65, 77, 78, 79, 84, 89, 91, 93, 105, 109, 113, 115.

provides information and maps for more than 50 trails around the country.

For cyclists, opportunities abound for road trips and mountain biking. Information about possible routes, campsites, and more is at [www.cyclingarmenia.com](http://www.cyclingarmenia.com).

Other trending activities in Armenia include horseback riding, rafting, cave exploration, canyoning, paragliding, ziplining, and winter sports.

For outdoor experiences, see pages 30, 43, 51, 65, 77, 79, 80, 89, 93, 105, 112, 115.





## What you should discover in Armenia

*Armenia is rich in art and craft traditions that are passed from generation to generation. Today, many artists and artisans are happy to share their skills and knowledge with you through classes and demonstrations.*



# ARTS AND CRAFTS



## Stone Carving and Khachkars



In a mountainous country like Armenia, people have used stones since ancient times to build fortresses, temples, houses, and cities. They have also used freestanding stones as different types of cult objects and monuments, which they shaped and engraved.

*Khachkars* are unique to Armenia, where they are now a national symbol. Armenians use *khachkars* to commemorate important events, mark significant spots, or serve as memorial gravestones. Sprouting and blooming motifs—which make the *khachkar* a version of the Tree of Life—are prominent features.

Medieval *khachkar* carvers typically followed the style of a local school; modern carvers compile their cross-stones from different schools and styles. Today, stone carvers often use the language of *khachkars* to express artistic and philosophical ideas rather than the traditional cross-stone.

## Carpets and Rugs



Carpet making was women's craft—an ancestral occupation traditionally passed from women to young girls. Armenian women commonly practiced rug weaving—seen as pious work—especially in the villages, where every home contained a weaving loom. Although rugs and carpets involve different weaving techniques, they could be woven on the same loom. Handmade carpets and rugs were important elements—to decorate the floors and walls and to separate rooms—in the interior design of traditional homes.

Armenians use various motifs to decorate their rugs. Some of the earliest surviving rugs are the *vishapagorg* (dragon-rug). This design dates to the 15th century and later developed distinctive regional styles. It remains popular among modern weavers.

## Pottery



Pottery is one of the oldest Armenian traditions, dating to the 3rd millennium BCE, and passed through generations of families. The ruins of ancient dwellings contained large vessels to carry water, preserve foods, and store wine—often with etchings of deer, fish, trees, the sun, and mythological creatures like dragons and serpents. Both women and men made ceramics, often crafting household items on a pottery wheel.

## Needlework



The 19th-century Armenian home featured an abundance of laces and embroidered textiles, especially during weddings and feasts, when families displayed their finest. Needlework was one of the few forms of expression open to women in a society where they largely lacked rights or prestige. It gave them a “voice”; stitches, instead of words, became a language. It also provided subsistence in hard times; women could sell their needlework for income, calling it “bread of the black days.”

## Woodcarving



The art of woodcarvers greatly enlivened traditional homes in Armenia, which contained many wooden components—from cupola-shaped ceilings and pillars to functional furniture, bins, chests, cradles, ladles, and spoons. Woodcarvers also decorated utensils, especially those that helped sustain life, such as grain bins or cradles. The purposes of the decorations were not only aesthetic, but also to protect their contents from the evil eye. Woodcarvers created special amulets, known as *daghdghan*, for this purpose.

As woodworking became more industrialized in the 20th century, the craft of woodcarving faded, surviving mainly in functional and unpretentious ladles. However, in the 1970s, a new life for woodcarving emerged, thanks in part to its revival through museums, which encouraged and commissioned new works. Gradually, woodcarving returned from museums to homes. In the early 1990s, during the first unstable years of independence, a second revival occurred when many amateur woodcarvers made their hobby a profession for earning a living.

## Jewelry



The roots of the Armenian tradition of jewelry-making and decoration lie in ancient times. Armenian women have always enjoyed wearing much jewelry—necklaces, earrings, rings, and bracelets—mostly made of silver and gold. The silver belt signified perfection and was thus an inseparable part of a married woman's look. Pearls and other precious or semi-precious stones adorned the belts.

Motifs that are geometrical, animal, and nature-inspired are especially common. For example, the pomegranate—which symbolizes fertility and abundance—is the most central and recognizable symbol in Armenian jewelry. Numerous Armenian artisans maintain jewelry-making traditions, making it one of the most prominent elements of Armenian culture today.

## Blacksmithing



Because blacksmiths made essential household items and the tools for all other crafts, Armenians call blacksmithing a “mother craft.” In all regions of Armenia, it is a male occupation—passed from father to son, a tradition that continues to this day.

Since ancient times, blacksmithing has played an important role in Armenian rites and traditions. According to legend, when Prince Artavazd was imprisoned in a cave on the peak of the Masis (Ararat) Mountain, his chains became dangerously thin until a blacksmith delivered several heavy blows on the anvil to strengthen the chains. This—and other legendary actions related to his craft—positioned him close to the mythological thunder god and inspired the expression, “The blacksmith is the only man whom the devil is afraid of.”

## Textile Art



Armenia has been famous for its production of naturally dyed yarns and delicate fabrics—primarily woven at home—since ancient times. One of the most significant expressions of these fabrics and yarns was the Armenian *taraz* (traditional dress). Men traditionally made the patterns of the *taraz*—sewing with different fabrics, colors, designs, and embellishments depending on the geographical area and economic situation of the region. Each *taraz* gained different status according to those who wore it—whether royal, urban, peasant, or religious dress.

Although Armenians no longer wear the *taraz* in everyday life, its traditions of textiles and sewing pass through generations. Based on this knowledge, modern ateliers and fashion houses are using the traditions of the *taraz* in more contemporary expressions.









## What you should discover in Armenia

*Every year, more than 30 local festivals bring people together over crafts, cuisine, dance, music, and much more. Get a taste of Armenian tolma at the Tolma Festival, learn about local herbs and flowers at the Haybuis Festival, sing and dance at the Sevan International Music festival, and taste wines made from the world's most ancient grapes at the Areni Wine Festival. Experience these and much more at local festivals that provide diverse impressions, colors, and tastes.*

# FESTIVALS



## Food and Wine: Taste the Flavors of Armenia

If you are a wine lover or food enthusiast, the flavors of Armenian food and wine festivals may satisfy your tastes, thanks to a variety of local traditional dishes, rural products, street food, and outstanding wines. The festive moods of these events offer excellent opportunities to learn about local dishes, agricultural traditions, and local wine producers.

- *Areni Wine Festival*
- *Aveluk (Wild Sorrel) Festival*
- *Blueberry Festival*
- *Edible Plants in Armenian Cuisine*
- *Food and Beer Pairing Day*
- *Gata Festival*
- *Harvest Festival*
- *Honey and Berry Festival*
- *Khorovats Festival*
- *Mulberry Festival*
- *Spirits of Armenia*
- *Tavush Wine Days*
- *Tea and Coffee Festival*
- *Tolma Festival*
- *Yerevan Wine Day*



## Arts and Crafts: Make Your Own Memories of Armenia

Armenia's festival culture also includes a wide range of regionally specific arts and crafts, such as stone carving, textile art, woodworking, embroidery, carpet weaving, pottery, and blacksmithing. By visiting arts and crafts festivals across Armenia, you may enjoy a mix of traditional and contemporary Armenian culture, buy locally made products, and create your own masterpieces.

- *Armenia on the Crossroad of Peace Festival*
- *Arts and Crafts Festival*
- *DiliTon*
- *My Handmade Armenia*
- *1,000 Years of Village Life*



## Nature and Adventure: Dive into the Nature of Armenia

Eco travelers and adventure lovers may find new combinations of exhilaration and education at local festivals that present Armenia's natural resources through learning activities, sports competitions, and games. Festival activities may include hiking, horseback riding, marathoning, mountain climbing, paragliding, rafting, and zip lining.

- *Color Festival Yerevan*
- *Ecotourism Festival*
- *Haybuis Festival*
- *Rafting Fest*
- *Yell Extreme Festival*



## Music and Dance: Feel the Beat of Armenia

Music and dance have long served to connect Armenians as they celebrate festive occasions. Today's festivals offer splendid opportunities to witness the power of music and dance and also to participate in the fun of singing and dancing.

- *Armenia Tango Festival*
- *Gutan Festival*
- *Sevan International Music Festival*
- *Yerevan Jazz Fest*
- *Yerevan Music Night*



## What you should discover in Armenia

*Numerous public and private museums across Armenia—both in the capital Yerevan and in the regions—contain and display rich and diverse collections of artifacts and artworks from throughout historic Armenia. These institutions are valuable repositories of knowledge that offer comprehensive histories of art and culture through trusted sources of information. You may experience diverse activities and compelling stories—from interactive public programs to hands-on experiences—which enhance a sense of community and place by celebrating the collective heritage of Armenia.*

*Some museums use historic buildings and homes to tell their stories. Some undertake academic initiatives to expand the public's interest and expertise. And some promote handmade artisan products inspired by the museum collections in their shops.*



# MUSEUMS

## Art Galleries



The National Gallery of Armenia in Yerevan maintains the country's largest collection of applied and fine arts, including European, Russian, Armenian, and Eastern art. You may become acquainted with works by Aivazovsky, Sarian, Sureniants, Chagall, Donatello, Kandinsky, Rodin, and other prominent artists. The National Gallery of Armenia has several branch museums in local regions, some of which highlight specific artists and some that exhibit works by various artists.

One of the most notable regional museums is the Gallery of Mariam and Yeranihi Aslamazyan Sisters in Gyumri. With a fascinating collection of paintings, graphic works, and ceramics created during and beyond the Soviet period, it is the only museum devoted to female artists in Armenia.

Other art galleries, both public and private, exhibit works created by artists from Armenia and abroad during different centuries. You may try your own hand at painting landscapes in a plein-air setting in the Jermuk Art Gallery's garden, prepare ceramic pieces at the Aslamazyan Gallery to take home as a memento from your visit, or participate in a handmade printmaking workshop with traditional techniques at the Dilijan Local Lore Museum.

## House Museums



The homes of important Armenian writers and artists have become house museums, which preserve and share their legacies with a wide public. By preserving the homes' interiors and household objects, these museums allow you to experience the environments in which these artists lived. Two examples of homes with the original architecture preserved are the Hovhannes Toumanian House Museum in Dsegh and the Aksel Bakunts House Museum in Goris—vernacular architecture for Toumanian and urban architecture for Bakunts. You may also experience interactive programs in the museums' gardens, such as participating in a tea ceremony around the samovar at the Aksel Bakunts House Museum, which was a tradition very dear to the writer and his family.

## History Museums



The many history museums across Armenia hold rich treasures of humanity—including the world's oldest shoe and the oldest fully equipped winery, complete with wine press, fermentation vats, jars, and cups. In both Yerevan and the regions, many local lore and history museums exhibit archeological and ethnographical collections that scholars continually enrich with new excavations and fieldwork. For instance, the History Museum of Armenia in Yerevan contains many masterpieces, but you also should not miss the one-of-a-kind five-faced idol from the 2nd millennium BCE at the Goris Local Lore Museum or the intricate 13th-century *khachkar* by master Momik at the Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum. Visitors of all ages may enjoy diverse public programs led by museum specialists, such as creating one's own family tree at the Sisian History Museum or participating in an excavation program at the Erebuni Reserve-Museum.

## Private Museums and Museum-Institutes



Armenia also has many private museums, such as the Cafesjian Center for the Arts in Yerevan, derived from the Gerard L. Cafesjian collection of contemporary art, or the Ter-Ghazaryans' Micro Art Museum in Yerevan, the first museum of microminiatures in Armenia. Such museums offer you the opportunity to enter into a collector's mind and discover works that often are not found in public museums. Also in Yerevan are museum-institutes dedicated to exhibiting and researching special subjects and collections, such as the Genocide Museum, the Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, and the Komitas Museum-Institute.



**USEFUL INFO**



## Getting around



Although public transport in Armenia may be challenging to navigate, it still offers very affordable ways to travel to the regions, especially via bus or mini-bus (known as *marshrutka*). There is regular train service from Yerevan to Gyumri and seasonal service to Shorzha on the east side of Lake Sevan.

Taxis are another possibility to travel to the regions. Especially when traveling in groups, the prices may become affordable.

Another option is renting a car, but car-rental offices are located in Yerevan only.

- Railways: [www.railway.am](http://www.railway.am)
- Bus Stations: Kilikia Central Bus Station, Northern (Hyusisayin) Bus Station
- Taxis: gg (also with shuttle services in some directions) | Yandex Go | Utaxi

## Accommodations



You have many options of places to stay in Armenia and especially in Yerevan—from luxury hotels and private apartments to cozy guesthouses and budget hostels. When traveling to the regions and places off the beaten tourist path, your best options may be homestays, B&Bs, and guesthouses, which often provide greater intimacy and insight into the country's culture. Owners of accommodations are also the hosts for many of the experiences in this guidebook, which may help to combine your stay with authentic cultural experiences.

To arrange your stay, you may use some of the popular Internet options, such as [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com), [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com), and [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com). Or you may try local resources, such as the Armenian B&B association and tour agencies.

## Eating



As with accommodations, you have many places to eat in Armenia—from very expensive restaurants to cheap street food. However, in the regions your choices may be limited to mid-range restaurants and cafés. Accordingly, you may wish to arrange your meals with the place where you will be staying. The food there may be simple but natural, perhaps coming from the owner's garden and domestic animals. If you request meals made with local ingredients that are abundant in season, you may experience products and dishes that are genuine cultural experiences, not just items of food.

## Guides



When traveling in Armenia, you should visit not only popular attractions, but also places where few people go and where you may discover authentic folklore, distinctive lifestyles, forgotten monuments, and the trails that few people have previously taken. A brief visit becomes more memorable when you are with someone who was born and still lives in that area, who has an emotional connection with the soil, who personally knows the intimate history of the place, and who can reveal to you the concealed corners, hidden roads, lesser-known legends, and, of course, the people who live there. Fortunately, there are many local guides in Armenia who can do all of the above.

To find local guides, you may visit [www.myarmenia.si.edu/guides](http://www.myarmenia.si.edu/guides)

## Tipping



Tips are not obligatory but are customary in Armenian culture. In restaurants, you may consider adding a tip of 10 percent. You may also consider tipping your tour guides. Because you may not be able to pay with credit cards in some regions, you should always have cash on hand.

## Treasures to Bring Home from Armenia



Wine, brandy, dried fruits, carpets, and handmade items are among the most common mementos to bring home from Armenia. When shopping, you should consider buying locally produced things. If you like handmade items, you may visit [www.myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/buy-local](http://www.myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/buy-local) to find artisans working in the regions.

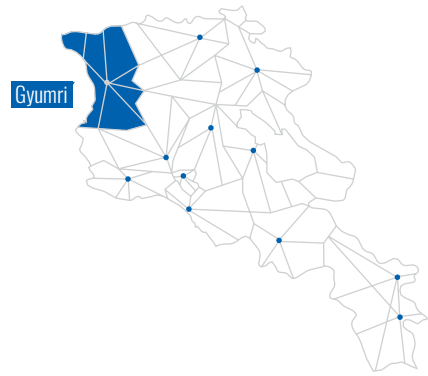
## Post



Armenia's national postal operator is HayPost. All cities and towns have a post office, where you may purchase stamps for postcards or to send souvenirs you have purchased. You may also purchase stamps in a philatelic shop at Nalbandyan Street 28.

[www.haypost.am](http://www.haypost.am)

To find specific businesses or services you may use Armenian Yellow pages at [www.spyur.am](http://www.spyur.am)



**SHIRAK** region

*The Shirak region is located in the northwestern part of Armenia bordering Georgia and Turkey, where the climate features cold winters and mild summers. The region's natural wealth is a mix of the vast open spaces of the Shirak steppe, four-peaked volcano massif of Mount Aragats, and gorges and lakes of the Akhuryan River. Shirak is home to Lake Arpi National Park and the Trchkan Waterfall, which became a special protected zone in 2011, as well as volcanic stones such as tuff and pemza.*

Shirak displays its rich cultural heritage—dating from prehistoric to modern times—through numerous monuments and artifacts, such as Horom citadel, Hoghmik Habitation, Beniamin Archeological Site, the monasteries of Marmashen, Harich, and the Basilica of Yereruyk among others.

Two special sights in the region are a section of the Great Silk Road where remnants of a caravanserai are still preserved, and the ruins of Ani, Armenia's medieval capital, which are visible across the Akhurian River Gorge into Turkey.

In the Shirak region, the beautiful town of Gyumri attracts visitors with its distinctive architecture, warm atmosphere, and preserved handicraft traditions. In Gyumri's workshops, you may meet generations of master blacksmiths, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, jewelers, and stonemasons who learned their crafts from their fathers and grandfathers. Here you also may find beautiful objects—from everyday household items to works of art.

Also known as a center for the arts, Gyumri is famous for the Gallery of Mariam and Yeranuhi Aslamazyan Sisters and house-museums of several famous writers, actors, and artists. The house-museum of painter Minas Avetisyan is located in the village of Jajur, not far from Gyumri. The Dzitoghtsyan House-Museum contains a rich collection of household items that portray the ethnography of Shirak.

You may wish to try special local dishes in Gyumri and parts of the region. Some favorite dishes include *chanakh*, *tatar boraki*, soup with beans and dough, Lenten *tolmas*, *harissa*, *ghazan* barbecue, *qyala*, *khash* and *tava*. Also popular in Shirak are *chechil* and string cheese, and sweets such as *pakhlava*, *shakarlokhum*, *yaghli*, *sini gata*, various puff pastries, and sliced *gata*.

The Shirak International Airport is just south of Gyumri. A railway passes through the region terminating in Gyumri.

## HIGHLIGHTS



*qyalla, chanakh, tatar boraki, harissa, satri qufta, kash, chechil cheese, Lenten tolma, yaghli, pakhlava, pokhindz, khashil, shakar choraki*



**Gallery of Mariam and Yeranuhi Aslamazyan Sisters, Museum of National Architecture and Urban Life (Dzitoghtsyan House), Hovhannes Shiraz House-Museum, Mher Mkrtchyan Museum, Avetik Isahakyan House-Museum**



**Lake Arpi, Trchkan Waterfall, Aragats Mountain, Akhuryan River**



**Pagan Shrine of Tsak Kar (1st-2nd mil. BCE), Yereruyk Basilica (4-5th c.), Kumayri Historic District in Gyumri, Harichavank (7-13th c.), Marmashen Monastery (10-13th c.), Horom Citadel (3rd-2nd mil. BCE – early Middle Ages), Seven Brothers Saints Chapel (4-5th c.), Sev Ghul (Black fortress) (19th c.)**





#### Contact Details

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www.cityresearch.org

#### Location

The City Research Center is in Gyumri,  
12 B, Gai Street.

# CITY RESEARCH CENTER

 Gyumri, Shirak



**Ashot Mirozyan is an architect by training and highly enthusiastic about Gyumri's architecture. For the past 15 years or so, he has been engaged in many projects aimed at collecting information about Gyumri's cultural history, including its architectural styles.**

**discover**  
the histories and legends  
of the main attractions and  
heritage of Gyumri

**get**  
acquainted with the history of  
this resilient city and learn about  
the rebirth of urban architectural  
traditions led by Gyumri residents

**see**  
how young people, like  
Ashot, are contributing and  
participating in community  
development

## Explore Gyumri's architectural history

Meet Ashot at the City Research Center before starting your tour around the city of Gyumri. Gyumri is one of Armenia's most distinctive cities and its second largest urban center. Known previously as Kumayri, Alexandrapol, and Leninakan, Gyumri's settlement dates to at least the 4th century BCE. Despite a catastrophic earthquake in 1988 and the social and economic hardships that followed, Gyumri has maintained a strong cultural identity and charm, including a well-preserved old town. Strolling through the narrow streets of Gyumri's historic district, visitors will find buildings and works of art that are both traditional and new, signaling the city's rebirth. A few of the highlights include:

- Discover the fallen domes in the church yard of the Seven Wounds or Yot Verk church
- Visit some of the 1,500 historic buildings in the city center
- Drink water from a gurgling goblet, one of the symbols of Gyumri
- Discover locations for several well-known Armenian films

#### What to Wear/Bring

Comfortable walking shoes, hat, and sunscreen.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from  
11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in  
advance.  
Duration: 2.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and  
Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing  
the site: None

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www.aslamazyanmuseum.com

#### Location

The gallery is inside a house built in 1880 that once belonged to a wealthy trading family in Gyumri (242 Abovyan Street).

# THE GALLERY OF MARIAM AND YERANUHI ASLAMAZYAN SISTERS

 Gyumri, Shirak



**Artists and sisters Yeranuhi and Mariam Aslamazyan established this gallery in central Gyumri in 1987. By the time of their deaths (in 1998 and 2006), they had donated about 620 of their original paintings, ceramics, and graphic works. This is the only gallery named after female artists—and devoted to female artists—in all of Armenia. Both sisters traveled extensively, and their work reflects this global exposure. See, for example, a lovely watercolor of Venice and colorful painting of a Japanese woman in a kimono by Yeranuhi and portraits of women in India by Mariam.**

## visit

the country's only gallery  
devoted exclusively to  
Armenian women artists

## tour

the gallery, focusing on the  
importance of the sisters and their  
contributions in the development  
of Armenian modern art

## discover

paintings from more than 60  
countries to which the sisters  
traveled

## learn

from a local artisan about the  
craft of ceramics

## paint

your own ceramic plate at the  
"1001 Shades" workshop

## Gallery tour. Create your own souvenir at One Thousand and One Shades ceramic workshop

Meet with the guide and take a tour of the gallery to learn about the art and lives of the Aslamazyan sisters. After the tour, a local artisan will tell you more about their artistic styles and techniques. The sisters used motifs from their home in Armenia, their extensive travels, and their own creativity to create expressive works of art on everyday ceramics. You may choose to paint a miniature ceramic plate or to learn a decoupage technique on ceramic ornaments. While painting or while trying decoupage, try some tea or coffee and sweets in the garden courtyard. The gallery's inner courtyard and wooden balcony are typical of 19th-century urban architecture in Gyumri. You may take your art piece home with you. Other souvenirs made by local Armenian artisans may be purchased in the gallery shop.

#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Friday,  
from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday  
from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours  
in advance.  
Duration: 2 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian;  
request English and French in advance

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5-10  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access  
the site: None





#### Contact Details

Contact person: Hasmik Khachatryan  
Tel: +374 93 55 56 56  
Email: zananaraz@gmail.com  
Facebook: @zanan  
Instagram: @zanantaraz

#### Location

Zanan is in Gyumri's Central Kumayri museum-reserve on Varpetats Street, in the basement of the Hovhannes Shiraz Memorial Museum. It has a separate entrance from the museum.

# ZANAN CULTURAL HOUSE

📍 Gyumri, Shirak



**Hasmik Khachatryan was inspired by her great-grandmother to restore the craft traditions of tailoring *taraz* (or Armenian national dress) in Gyumri. Taking into consideration her professional and family traditions, Hasmik decided to return to her favorite occupation with her husband Michael by creating the Tnak sewing workshop and clothing shop in 2014. The revival of traditional costumes for dance ensembles inspired Hasmik and her colleagues in 2019 to establish the Zanan Cultural House as a place for the study of costume sewing and traditional national dress. The name comes from Michael's sister, Hermine, who was called Zanan by her father as an expression of paternal love and tenderness.**



## try

your hand at making a piece of Armenian letter art to take home

## learn

about traditional costumes and how the *taraz* national dress is designed based on region, marital status, gender, etc

## participate

in a fun photoshoot in traditional Armenian costumes

## Zanan: Traditional costumes, painted fabrics, and photoshoot

Visit the workshop and studio in Gyumri and learn from Hasmik about her experiences creating her brand Tnak and reviving the traditional national costumes with her own signature style.

Because Armenia possesses such a rich writing culture, you'll learn about "bird letters," a calligraphic tradition that entwines images of birds with the elegant letters of Armenian script. On either chiffon or silk, Hasmik will show you how to paint a scarf with your own bird letters, creating a special souvenir to take home.

While the painting dries, get in the spirit and dress up in traditional Armenian costumes for your very own photoshoot. In the late 19th century, family photography became a common ritual in Armenia to mark special occasions and to demonstrate close kinship between generations and in-laws.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 72 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English and French in advance  
Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 12  
Age considerations: appropriate for ages six and older  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None





#### Contact Details

Contact person: Gagik Martirosyan  
Tel: +374 91 30 12 03  
Facebook: @Երանկյունի-Գյումրի

#### Location

Yerankyuni home-restaurant is in Gyumri, 80 Chernishevsky Street.

# YERANKYUNI RESTAURANT

 Gyumri, Shirak



**Blacksmithing has been one of Armenia's most important crafts for centuries. It has been especially important in Gyumri, where there were exactly 247 blacksmiths, according to a 19th-century inventory of guilds. One of those blacksmiths must have been an ancestor of Gagik Martirosyan, a sixth-generation blacksmith, who in 1986 was nominated as "the best blacksmith" of the Soviet Union and in 2015 was named Armenia's "National Blacksmith." Today Gagik owns the Yerankyuni (Triangle) restaurant, named for a famous Armenian film set in World War II, which tells the story of five blacksmiths from Gyumri (known then as Leninakan).**



**learn**

directly from Gagik about his fascinating and engaging knowledge of centuries-old metalworking techniques

**gain**

a hands-on metalworking experience from one of Armenia's masters

**try**

delicious local cuisine

**shop**

for locally made handicrafts

## Visit the studio of an award-winning blacksmith

Gagik will lead you to the restaurant to talk about his family's story and about blacksmithing traditions. In one of Yerankyuni's rooms, Gagik offers blacksmith classes. Over the course of one to two hours, you will learn metalworking techniques from one of Armenia's masters, while also enjoying lunch or dinner from that master's restaurant. You may even try to fashion your own piece of metalwork.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available upon request  
Reservations must be made 1 week in advance.

**Cancellation policy:** no charge if canceled 2 days in advance.

**Duration:** 2 hours

**Languages:** Armenian and Russian

**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Minimum group size:** 2

**Ideal group size:** 10

**Maximum group size:** 35

**Age considerations:** children younger than 15 cannot participate in the experience

**Restriction of vehicle size**

**accessing the site:** None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Susanna Mkhrtchyan  
Tel: +374 93 96 90 30  
Email: [aesthetic.cent@yandex.ru](mailto:aesthetic.cent@yandex.ru)  
Facebook: [@gyumriaestheticcenter](https://www.facebook.com/@gyumriaestheticcenter)

#### Location

The Gyumri Aesthetic Center is in Gyumri,  
216 Abovyan Street.

# GYUMRI AESTHETICS CENTER

 Gyumri, Shirak



Professor Susanna Mkhrtchyan founded the Gyumri Aesthetics Center in order to preserve traditional Armenian values. Located on one of the oldest streets around Gyumri's historical central square, the Center initially occupied the *kolkhoz* shop that sold the fruits and vegetables of collective farmers. Further expansions and renovations followed—particularly after the devastating earthquake of 1988. The Gyumri Aesthetics Center is a place that fosters creativity, artistic self-expression, and art therapy to thousands of children, ages three to eighteen. The arts and crafts taught there include painting, dancing, singing, embroidery, rug and carpet weaving, crocheting, lacemaking, national costumes, doll-making, and traditional Armenian cuisine.



## learn

about the significance of the Center and its building in Gyumri's social life, and the importance of art therapy to different people and histories

## see

the contribution of local people to community development and art therapy

## try

your hand at making dolls in the traditional style of Western Armenia while discovering their significance for festive and ritual occasions

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available Monday—Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



## Learn to make a traditional doll

Susanna will present the story of Armenian craft and the possibilities that have emerged for artisans in Gyumri. Highlighting the traditions of doll-making that reflect Armenian cultural heritage, Susanna will help make your own doll to take home. Choose from different fabrics, laces, and ribbons to dress your dolls in the *taraz* (Armenian national costumes) and to discuss their significance. While you work, Susanna will tell you where she gets her fabric and also about the diverse types of dolls that have been made for different purposes and reasons. Along with your own creation, you may also buy products from the Center as souvenirs.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 4  
Maximum group size: 6  
Age considerations: None

## Learn to cook traditional favorites from the city of Gyumri

Susanna will help you to prepare dishes and sweets typical for Gyumri. During the class, Susanna will tell the stories related to the dishes/sweets while you participate in the cooking process. Three types of traditional dishes and three types of sweets are offered in the Center. The main dishes are *panrkhash*, *avelouk* soup and *tatar boraki*; and the sweets are *pokhindz*, *halva*, and *bishi*. Around the table after the class, you will try whatever you have prepared.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 2 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 4  
Maximum group size: 6  
Age considerations: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Avetik Vardanyan  
Tel: +374 93 19 94 45  
Email: vardanyanstudio@gmail.com

#### Location

The house-studio is in Akhuryan village,  
6 Jrashinararneri District, House 25.

# VARDANYAN STUDIO

 Akhuryan, Shirak



**Albert Vardanyan and his two sons, Hrachya Vardanyan and Avetik Vardanyan, are three of Gyumri's most talented and best-known artists. Working with a variety of materials, including wax, gypsum, stone, clay, and bronze, Albert conveys in his sculptures not only the spirit of ancient times in Armenia, but also the national and folk concepts found in contemporary Armenian art. His sons follow their father's artistic vision. Albert and Hrachya both teach at the Gyumri Branch of the State Academy of Fine Arts of Armenia.**



explore

the art of Gyumri with a local  
artist

see

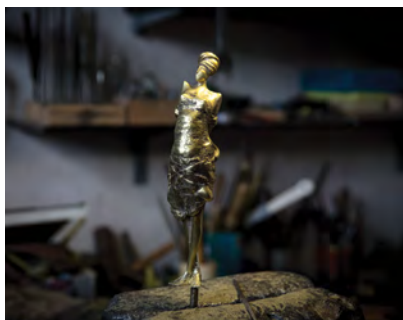
the various branches of art,  
processes, and technologies used  
in the city

visit

a well-known Gyumri sculptor's  
house to see his works and have  
refreshments with the artist

## Visit a workshop and explore Gyumri with a local artist

Meet Albert and Avetik at the Vardanyan studio, just outside the artistic city of Gyumri. They will lead you through their family's art-filled home and studio to demonstrate the entire process of artistic creation—from drafting to modeling to molding and final processing. You will see how each artist works in different materials but conveys the same underlying artistic philosophy. Albert's sculptures feature beautiful figures and more in bronze, gypsum, stone, and clay. Hrachya is a painter and mixed-media artist who often uses woven materials, which reflect the renowned traditions of Armenian carpet weaving, and makes innovative uses of color and depth. Albert's youngest son Avetik is an architect, who draws inspiration from a variety of sources, including Gyumri architecture, local stone, wood, natural landscapes, and Christianity. Throughout the tour, they will present their creative visions for sculpture and painting, as well as Gyumri's long traditions of artistic expression.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week,  
from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 1 week  
in advance.

**Cancellation policy:** no charge if  
canceled 2 days in advance.

**Duration:** 1.5–2 hours

**Languages:** Armenian, English,  
German, and Russian

**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Minimum group size:** 2

**Ideal group size:** 5

**Maximum group size:** 10

**Age considerations:** None

**Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site:** None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Karine or Ani Tumasyan  
Tel: +374 55 45 13 37  
Email: chaletgyumri@gmail.com  
www.shirakcentre.am  
Facebook: @ChaletGyumri

#### Location

The guesthouse is at 50/4 M. Khorenatsi Street, amid modern and ancient neighborhoods.

# CHALET GYUMRI

 Gyumri, Shirak



**A technician-seamstress by profession and a chef by hobby, Karine Tumasyan has experience cooking a variety of traditional local dishes. Chalet Gyumri is family-run and exhibits a collection of rare old photographs, engravings, furniture, carpets, tableware, etc. The Chalet also works with the Shirak Centre, which assists people living in temporary shelters and helps them find long-term apartments.**



## hear

Karine's personal story and her efforts to develop the community, including social support and opportunities for local youth through tourism

## learn

how residents of Gyumri rebuilt and recovered from the devastating 1988 earthquake

## experience

the making of *chanakh* and *pokhind*, dishes traditionally found in Gyumri family homes, and share a meal with an Armenian family

## Cook traditional chanakh and sweet pokhind balls

Join Karine in her kitchen and learn her family recipe for making *chanakh*—a nutritious comfort food, usually cooked with beef, but also sometimes with lamb. Following Karine step by step, you'll start with a customary clay pot and add the meat. While you wait for the main dish to cook, you'll have an additional option to make sweet *pokhind* dessert from whole-wheat kernels roasted and then ground into flour. Once you've got the basics down, you'll mix the *pokhind* flour with a base of honey or milk and then add the ingredients of your choice, such as nuts and dried fruits. Then, roll everything together into ping-pong-sized balls of sweet flavor. After your meal, take a short tour of the farm where you may see, feed, and take pictures of the sheep, cows, chickens, and indigenous Armenian Van cats and Gampr dogs.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5–2.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian  
Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 20  
Maximum group size: 30  
Age considerations: appropriate for children and adults  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Vazgen Gevorgyan  
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Facebook: [@GevorgyanCeramics](https://www.facebook.com/GevorgyanCeramics)

#### Location

Gevorgyan Ceramics is in Gyumri,  
Yerkatgtsi Street 31.

# GEVORGYAN CERAMICS

 Gyumri, Shirak



**Vazgen and Satenik Gevorgyan, a prolific husband-and-wife artistic duo, have combined their innovative artistic visions with their lasting love of clay to restore and revive many of the distinctive pottery traditions from the Armenian highlands. Vazgen applies the traditional approaches of clay processing and production of household utensils still observed in these villages and combines them with modern trends and methods, which are usually informed by his own experience.**



**discover** the history and traditions of Armenian pottery in this region

**experience** about Armenian ornaments, petroglyphs, and Urartian cuneiform

**learn** the contribution of local people to community development and art therapy

**shop** for souvenirs the contribution of local people to community development and art therapy

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



## Learn Armenian pottery traditions and techniques

Vazgen will share with you some of the main techniques for making Armenian pottery, and the current efforts to revive those traditions. By touching, feeling, and smelling the clay up close—and at different phases of production, from raw to baked to glazed—you will fully understand and appreciate the traditional techniques and processes. You will hear about Vazgen's careful research to discover the best raw materials to make the best clay and how he creates various colors with different glazes, including the use of milk. Vazgen will also demonstrate the different tools and equipment he uses (such as molds and kilns) to fashion a variety of plates, bowls, and ritual pots for everyday life.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 40 minutes–1 hour

Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2

Ideal group size: 10

Maximum group size: 15

Age considerations: None



## Create your own painted pottery with Vazgen

Vazgen will describe the history of their workshop and will lead you to the second floor, where you will have a chance to try your skills painting on a ceramic cup or plate. You may decorate your piece with designs from archeological clay objects, colorful ceramics, and Urartian inscriptions. While you are painting, Vazgen will share his extensive knowledge of these traditions. Following the class, you may take home your un-fired creation as a souvenir; or, if time allows, Vazgen will fire it in the kiln and send it to Yerevan for you. Alternatively, international shipping is available for an additional fee. Vazgen also restores and makes copies of ancient clay objects from different archeological and cultural periods, which he sells as souvenirs.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 2–2.5 hours

Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2

Ideal group size: 10

Maximum group size: 15

Age considerations: None





#### Contact Details

Contact person: Mamikon Varderesyan  
Tel: +374 94 83 39 94  
Email: mvarderesyan91@gmail.com  
Facebook: @hikingbikingwithmamikon

#### Location

Both routes begin and end in Gyumri's Independence Square.

# HIKING AND BIKING WITH MAMIKON

📍 Gyumri, Shirak



**Mamikon Varderesyan is a young artisan and experienced biker who has developed two biking routes that allow visitors the opportunity to learn more about the people and places of the distinctive Shirak region.**

bike

**across a spectacular mountain terrain**

enjoy

**panoramic views and hear the story of Nadya's Lake**

discover

**the 10th-century Marmashen Monastery**

marvel

**at the sacred pagan monument Tsak Kar**

## Explore Armenian villages by bike

The roads and paths in and around Gyumri take you through diverse landscapes, charming villages, and historical monuments, steeped in both culture and adventure. Gyumri is Armenia's second largest city and capital of the Shirak region in the north; it maintains a proud sense of identity, with a colorful history of collapse and revival. Mamikon's two bicycle routes begin and end in Gyumri's Independence Square, named for Lenin in Soviet times, with his statue at the center.

1. The Gyumri-Marmashen Trail, 50 kilometers long, takes you to: Marmashen Monastery, one of the most prominent medieval churches; ancient settlements with enticing artifacts; moribund Soviet structures; Nadya's Lake with a tragic story behind its name; the Tirashen archeological site, which dates to the 3rd millennium BCE; and an inscription of Urartian King Argishti I (730-714 BCE).
2. The Gyumri-Lernut Loop Trail, 66 kilometers long, takes you to: Lernut village where 150 people live on Shirak's mountain slopes; the historic Jajur railway station at the trail's highest point (2,000 meters); the Soviet bunker that connects several underground tunnels that served as bomb shelters; the natural egg-shaped monument, known as Tsak Kar, considered sacred since pagan times; and Hatsik village.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 2–2.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: April–November  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 7  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



### Contact Details

Contact: Hovhannes Margaryan  
Tel: +374 77 55 73 74  
Email: stoneartarmenia@gmail.com  
www.stoneart.am  
Facebook: @stoneartguesthouse

### Location

Stone Art Guest House is in  
Pemzashen village, 14th Street,  
House 17.

# STONE ART GUEST HOUSE

📍 Pemzashen, Shirak



**The families of stone master Volodya Saribekyan and Hovhannes Margaryan have been neighbors for almost two centuries. Their grandfathers moved from Mush to Pemzashen in 1827 and built the first houses around the village church. They recently turned their gardens into an art gallery where they showcase Pemzashen's rich stone heritage through art. Their initiative not only highlights the multifaceted traditions of stones, but also conveys the values of Armenian culture and local identity.**



## learn

**about tuff stone and its use all over Armenia**

## try

**your hand at making a souvenir sculpture from tuff to take home**

## tour

**the open-air stone art gallery in the yard of the guest house and stone carvers' studio**

## Make your own souvenir from Armenian tuff stone

As soon as you arrive at the Stone Art Guest House, you will meet Hovhannes and Volodya. First you will venture through the "Traveler's Pathway," a long, decorative wall made from the literal building blocks of Armenia—multicolored tuff that master stone carver Volodya has fashioned into a fascinating historical gallery of calligraphic inscriptions, coats of arms, and even fairytale characters and (in the nearby garden) animal sculptures. In the garden of the guest house, Volodya will talk about tuff stone, its types and colors, and uses in architecture. After this introduction to stone carving, you will experience it yourself by polishing a semi-finished sculpture of Volodya's or making a miniature sculpture featuring Mount Ararat with different colors of tuff stone—all under the master's guidance—leaving you with memories and a souvenir to take home.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian  
Seasonality: Year-round, but outdoor activities are best from April through October

Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: appropriate for ages 6 and over  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: Visitors arriving on large buses will have to walk 2 to 3 minutes to the gates of the guesthouse.





#### Contact Details

Contact person: Zhasmena Petrosyan  
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Email: petrosyangohar3@gmail.com  
Facebook: @PGog5  
Instagram: @gohar.petrosyan1

#### Location

Gohar Petrosyan Workshop is in Hatsik village, 5th Street, 3rd Lane, House 1.

# GOHAR PETROSYAN WORKSHOP

 Hatsik, Shirak



**Gohar Petrosyan is one of the most inspiring, emerging Armenian artists working with clay. Inspired by the rural tranquility and the picturesque landscape of Hatsik village, she moved there to revive the cultural significance of Armenian pottery according to her artistic vision. Gohar's distinctive techniques are the result of meticulous artistic experimentation. She harnesses the strength of clay and the beauty of painting with statuettes that feature the intricate patterns and regional accents of Armenian *taraz*.**



**get**

hands-on with your own painting and make a souvenir to take home

**enjoy**

refreshments like tea/coffee, some sweets, and dried fruits

**experience**

the special ceramic techniques Gohar uses and learn about Armenian *taraz*

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None

## Create your own painted pottery

Meet Gohar in her workshop. There, she will introduce her work and demonstrate her techniques of glazing ceramics. Gohar's small ceramic figures illustrate the significance and traditions of different *taraz*, or costumes, to Armenian culture. Then you will get the chance to do your own painting on clay. You may choose from either a clay tile or a doll. Gohar will give hands-on instruction on techniques and guide you as your creativity flows. You may take your work home as a souvenir. While the paint is drying, enjoy some tea/coffee, sweets, and dried fruits in the house's large garden.



## Paint on canvas with Gohar

This painting class en plein air will introduce you to Gohar's most important inspiration: the landscape and cultural sites near Hatsik village where she lives. You'll begin with a tour of Gohar's studio to see a sample of her ceramic pieces, canvas paintings, and archeological objects from the region. After telling you a bit about her artistic techniques and journeys, Gohar will take you to one of the places—surrounding villages, fields, houses, or ruins of old churches—that inspire her to paint, and that should inspire you as well. Towards the end of your class, Gohar's family will offer coffee, tea, and local desserts, like dried fruits and pastries. You may rest in the house's large garden or enjoy more time in the landscape as you learn about Hatsik's history and everyday life.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

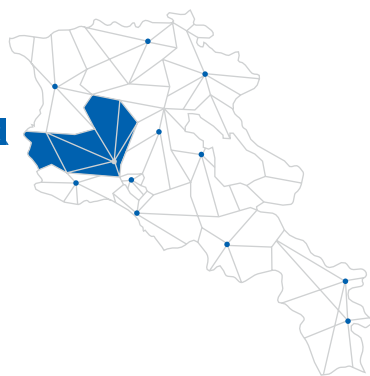
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 7  
 Maximum group size: 10  
 Age considerations: None

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 3 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round, however the outdoor painting may be weather dependent.  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 7  
 Maximum group size: 10  
 Age considerations: None



Ashtarak



**ARAGATSOTN** region



*The Aragatsotn region is located in the western part of Armenia, which includes Mount Aragats—the source of the region's name. The combination of Aragats, Ara mountains, and Kasagh River Gorge create stunning views.*

The region's historical heritage is very diverse, with several important monuments dating from the Bronze Age and medieval times. For instance, the medieval monastic complexes of Hovhanavank, Saghmosavank, and Mughni are situated along the deep and picturesque gorge of Kasagh. The powerful 10th-century Amberd Fortress, the petroglyphs on the slopes of Aragats, the *vishapakar* or dragon-stone monuments, and the Bronze Age settlement of Agarak are among the most popular destinations.

Its regional center, Ashtarak, reflects an urban style typical of the 18th and 19th centuries with many buildings that are excellent examples of folk architecture. Ashtarak is one of those rare Armenian settlements in the territory of Armenia, where evictions were few and brief, and where people have lived since ancient times to farm and to cultivate orchards, particularly vineyards.

In Ashtarak and surrounding villages, you may find restaurants in old wine cellars, which serve fresh *lavash*

baked in a *tonir*, as well as local dishes such as *tolma*, *tonir* barbecue, emmer wheat pilaf, *harissa*, *krjik*, *kloolik* with pickles, and *khash* during the cold winter months. You may also enjoy white and red homemade wines, fruit vodkas, teas made with mountain herbs, and sweets made from fruit juice and nuts, Ashtarak *sujukh*, *alani*, fruit *lavash*, and various dried fruits. Near Ashtarak is the equestrian club Ayrudzi, where you may also watch performances of the traditional Armenian Shadow Theater.

Aragatsotn has a rich traditional culture. The villages of Talin have preserved the folk songs and dances of the people of Sassoun. There are many skilled blacksmiths, potters, silversmiths, carpenters, wood carvers, and other artisans in Aragatsotn. The region is also home to Yezidi communities known for their distinctive traditional culture and history. Also, in the region is Byurakan Observatory, which is one of the world's most important scientific centers.

## HIGHLIGHTS



***khash*, *tolma*, *harissa*, *krjik*, *kloolik* with pickles, *tonir* barbecue, emmer wheat pilaf, sweet *sujukh***



**Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory**



**Aragats Mountain, Ara Mountain, Kasagh Gorge**



**Armenia on the Crossroads of Peace, 1,000 Years of Village Life**



**Agarak Site (3rd mil. BCE -18th c.), Tukh Manuk Shrine, Saghmosavank (13th c.), Tegher Monastery (13-14th c.), Amberd Fortress (7-14th c.), Saint Mesrop Mashtots grave in Oshakan (5th c.), Talin Cathedral (5-6th c.), Aruchavank Monastery (7th c.), Hovhanavank (5-14th c.), Aruch Caravanserai (13th c.), St. George's Monastery of Mughni (14th c.), churches of Ashtarak**



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Ani Hovhannisyan  
Tel: +374 98 93 15 99  
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Instagram: @nooshguesthouse

#### Location

Noosh guesthouse and restaurant is in Ashnak village, nestled between Yerevan and Gyumri (15th Street 1st alley, House 2).

# NOOSH GUESTHOUSE

📍 Ashnak, Aragatsotn



**Born and raised in Ashnak, Ani Hovhannisyan decided to return to her hometown after her studies abroad with the goal of promoting and preserving the rich intangible and tangible resources of Ashnak, its people, culture, and history. In this village, Ani and her friend Gayane Malishenko opened a guesthouse and restaurant named Noosh ("almond" in Armenian) after the 23 almond trees in their garden. They renovated and decorated the garden to create a beautiful outdoor restaurant.**



## relax

in the tranquil garden  
renovated to reflect modern  
Armenian culture

## learn

about the food and dance  
traditions of Sassoun people

## hear

personal stories of Ani and  
Gayane and their contemporary  
approaches to traditional cuisine

## Cook, feast, and . . . relax at Noosh

Ani or Gayane will teach you how to make *klulik* from wheat, pickled cabbage, and different spices on a bonfire in the garden. The most hands-on part of making *klulik* requires shaping the wheat balls—not an easy process—and then putting them into the boiling soup. While the *klulik* cooks for 30 to 40 minutes, you'll also learn how to make nooshellos—Ani and Gayane's innovative creation of orbs of fresh sour cream, curd, and almonds that make a great healthy snack. In Noosh's orchard, you may harvest fruits in the late summer and early autumn or, if you time it right, you may catch performances of *kochari*, *yarkhushta*, and other traditional dances while you enjoy a delicious meal.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week,  
from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in  
advance.  
Duration: 2–3 hours  
Languages: Armenian, Chinese, English,  
French, and Russian  
Seasonality: April–November for gastro  
components (as the restaurant is  
outdoors), May–October for garden part  
(when it's green and warm outside)

Minimum group size: 3  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: Visitors  
arriving on large buses will have  
to walk 2 to 3 minutes to the  
gates of the guesthouse.



# OLD ASHTARAK RESTAURANT

📍 Ashtarak, Aragatsotn



## Contact Details

Contact person: Talar Zakaryan  
Tel: +374 77 42 49 88  
Email: oldashtarak@gmail.com  
Facebook: @HinAshtarak

## Location

Old Ashtarak Restaurant is at 31 Ghapantsyan street in Ashtarak, an ancient settlement inhabited since the 4th century. The restaurant's facade is typical of the city's most beautiful houses, distinguished for their wooden balconies.

**The history of Old Ashtarak Restaurant reflects various layers of the history of Ashtarak and of the forced relocations of Armenians and their everlasting quest to live in their homeland. Talar and Hovig Zakaryan are a young couple born and raised in Syria who have made Armenia their home. They established a restaurant in Ashtarak where they serve Syrian cuisine mixed with traditional Armenian flavors. Uniting all the family members' skills and efforts, they continue to build an Armenian mosaic, based on memories of Old Ashtarak's historic buildings and its Syrian-Armenian community.**

**savor**  
cuisine of Armenian migrants from Syria, featuring both Western and Eastern Armenian traditions

**learn**  
the history of this restaurant's building

**try**  
your hand at making Syrian-Armenian cuisine

## Learn to cook Syrian-Armenian fusion cuisine

Hovig's mother, Sevan, will meet you at the restaurant and lead you to the garden, where she will teach you how to make the popular *ishli kofta* and fillo. Making *ishli kofta* is an art form and takes a true master, using recipes and techniques shared between mothers and daughters for centuries. At Old Ashtarak, you will have a rare hands-on opportunity to learn Sevan's secret techniques and to prepare these lemon-shaped spiced meatballs covered with a mixture of meat and bulgur wheat. Sevan will describe the wide range of spices used in Middle Eastern cuisine and how she combines these ingredients to make a delicate seasoning, which she adds into the beaten *kofta* meat filling. There are two ways to cook the *kofta*: by boiling or by frying. According to Sevan, Syrian Armenians prefer to fry them, but both options are available, depending on the guests' preferences. While the *ishli kofta* cooks, Sevan will teach you how to prepare a traditional Middle Eastern fillo pastry called *pakhlava*. Although it may seem easy, fillo pastry actually takes three to four days to prepare. Using dough prepared in advance, you'll fill your own pastries with a variety of local ingredients, including walnuts, honey, and other spices. To finish, Sevan will show how to neatly wrap it or cut it into flower-like shapes and then to bake to achieve a nice flaky texture. Enjoy your handmade *ishli kofta* and *pakhlava* in Old Ashtarak's cozy restaurant or garden.



## BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 40–60 minutes (*ishli kofta*), 20–30 minutes (fillo pastry)  
Languages: Arabic, Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None

EST. 1837



**TATOENTS QOTUK**

gourmet house

#### Contact Details

Contact person: Karen Hakobyan  
Tel: +374 96 11 21 49  
Email: k\_hakobian@hotmail.com  
Facebook: @TatoentsQotuk

#### Location

Tatoents Qotuk is at 1 Sajumyan Street in one of the old districts of the town of Ashtarak Puchur – Kucha (literally translated as “small street”), which is known at least since the 19th century, if not earlier.

# TATOENTS QOTUK

📍 Ashtarak, Aragatsotn



**Hripsime Hakobyan and her son Karen organize different experiences and serve food in one of the most historic and cozy corners of Ashtarak, in a two-story house, with a 200-year-old, seven-arched cellar. The house itself is on the list of historical monuments of Ashtarak. Hripsime and Karen will be happy to share with you stories from their 18th-century ancestor Tadevos, known as Tato. Come through their open door, hear traditional Armenian music, taste delicious local food, take part in different cooking classes and enjoy their captivating storytelling and warm hospitality.**



**eat**

**in an authentic 19th-century cellar, nearly 200 years old**

**learn**

**the traditions of Ashtarak hospitality**

**hear**

**the personal story of Hripsime's family**

**prepare**

**Armenian *tolma* and pickled vegetables**

**make**

**sweet *sujukh* as a sweet memento from Ashtarak**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None





## Cook *tolma* and make pickles with Hripsime

There are many types of *tolma* in Armenian cuisine. During this experience, visitors will have the opportunity to learn how to cook different types of *tolmas*, such as meat, vegetable, and vegetarian *tolmas*. Hripsime will explain and demonstrate how to prepare the chosen filling, as well as what ingredients and spices to add. You will have the opportunity to mix the ingredients and, once the stuffing is ready, to learn how to delicately wrap/stuff the leaves/vegetables. While the *tolma* cooks, you may participate in a vegetable pickle-making class. Hripsime will teach you the art of pickling, which has long been an integral part of Armenian culinary life. Afterwards she will help you to choose from a variety of seasonal vegetables and then to neatly stack them in a jar with a blend of spices, herbs, and salt to marinate. Although it may be a few weeks before they're ready to eat, you won't mind when you break the seal back home and share this Armenian culinary tradition with friends and family.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1–1.5 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 20  
 Maximum group size: 30  
 Age considerations: None



## Learn to make Armenian sweet *sujukh*

Sweet *sujukh* is one of Armenia's culinary mainstay and Ashtarak's best-known delicacy. Colloquially known as "Armenian snickers," the dish is made from threaded walnuts dipped in thickened grape juice. Ashtarak's walnuts are so famous that they're even venerated in folk songs and almost every village resident has a walnut tree that may be generations old. In her outdoor kitchen, Hripsime will guide you through the steps: to delicately thread walnuts onto a string; then dip your sweet *sujukh* into a grape syrup (made with a variety of spices like cloves and nutmeg); and finally hanging it up to dry. The heavy threads need a few days to dry, so you may return to pick yours up, have it delivered to Yerevan, or purchase some pre-made *sujukh* at Tatoents Qotuk to enjoy as a snack on your travels.

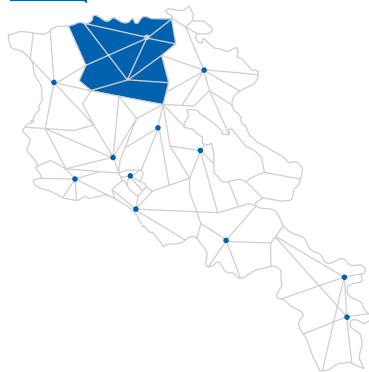
### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 40 minutes to 1 hour  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 20  
 Maximum group size: 30  
 Age considerations: None





Vanadzor



**LORI** region

*The Lori region, in northern Armenia bordering Georgia, is one of the country's most beautiful regions with its forested mountains, clear water springs, deep canyons, gorges, and caves. Lori's climate is humid with long, cold winters at mid and high altitudes, and warm summers.*

The region's natural features include the Sochut Dendropark, which consists of 35 hectares containing natural forests and ornamental trees. Adventurous visitors may enjoy rafting in the Debed River.

Pomegranates, apricots, peaches, pears, apples, plums, kinglet persimmons, and even kiwis grow in the Debed Valley. Gathering berries and wild plants are popular because they are ingredients in the local dishes, which include *ghapama*, *korkot*, pork barbecue, rosehip soup, cornel soup, dried fruit soup, pumpkin and bean dishes, and *konchol*. Also popular in the villages are breads baked in stone ovens, *gata*, *nazuk*, *bagharj*, *agdak*, and *bishi*. Traditional crafts still practiced include textile and carpet weaving, embroidery, woodwork, *khachkar* making, and stonework.

The region's population is ethnically diverse, thanks to Greek and Russian settlements. There are also Molokans who have distinctive religious beliefs, cultural practices, and lifestyles.

Those interested in historical and cultural heritage may wish to visit Lori Fortress to see the Bronze-Iron

Age settlement and the medieval town-fortress. Other historical and architectural attractions include the famous Odzun Monastery and its adjacent monument of the 6th century, the frescoed monasteries of Kobayr and Akhtala, and the medieval monasteries of Sanahin and Haghpat, which are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The village of Dsegh is especially famous, thanks to its beautiful natural surroundings and the house-museum of the great Armenian poet Hovhannes Toumanian.

Lori's regional center is Vanadzor, which became a modern industrial town in the late 1920s following the establishment of the Soviet regime. The town developed as both a recreational area and an industrial center. The surrounding forests featured resorts, while the town developed light, heavy, and chemical industrial enterprises. Today, Vanadzor contains many abandoned industrial buildings or scraps of waste metal, which form an integral part of the landscape and have become one of the most recognizable parts of the town.

## HIGHLIGHTS



**pork *khovovats*, *ghapama*, *korkot*, *konchol*, greens (*sindrik*, *bokhi*, *dandur*, etc.), *tanov* soup, berries, oyster mushrooms**



**Hovhannes Toumanian House Museum, Mikoyan Brothers House-Museum, Vanadzor Fine Arts Museum**



**Pambak and Gugark mountains, Debed River valley**



**Pan-Armenian Barbecue (*khovovats*), Flying Lanterns, Blueberry, Edible Plants in Armenian Cuisine, Armenia Rafting Fest, Armenia on the Crossroads of Peace**



**Haghpat Monastery (10-13th c.), Sanahin Monastery (10-13th c.), Odzun Monastery (5-7th c.), Akhtala Monastery (10-13th c.), Kobayr Monastery (12-13th c.), Horomayr Church (12-13th c.), Russian Church of St. Nicolas in Amrakits (19th c.), Lori Fortress (11th c.), Ardvi St. Hovhannes (Srbanes) Monastery (8-17th c.)**



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Emma Petrosyan  
Tel: +374 91 10 77 74  
Email: boomtbpark@gmail.com  
Facebook: @discovervanadzorontwowheels

#### Location

Boo Mountain Bike Park is at  
Miasnikyan Street 90/2-3.

# VANADZOR ON TWO WHEELS

 Vanadzor, Lori



**Emma Petrosyan and Vaghinak Karapetyan are young bike enthusiasts who decided to resettle in Vanadzor because Yerevan didn't seem to be the best place in Armenia for cycling. Vanadzor has both urban spaces and mountainous landscapes, which is why Emma and Vaghinak fell in love with the city. Encouraged by their experience in other countries, they founded the Boo Mountain Bike Park Project to develop mountain biking in the town.**



## bike

**around beautiful Vanadzor with  
local guides**

## learn

**about Soviet heritage in a post-  
Soviet town**

## experience

**a mountain trail biking tour to  
Artek Pioneer Camp**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days  
a week, from 10:30 a.m. to  
6 p.m. (spring and autumn),  
9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
(summer)

Reservations must be made  
48 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian,  
English, and Russian

Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: None



## Explore Vanadzor's Soviet heritage on two wheels

Touring Vanadzor by bicycle is an excellent way to explore the history and culture of this city that was once an industrial center of Soviet Armenia, and that now seeks a new identity amid its post-industrial decline. The tour will start from Boo Mountain Bike Park.

The highlighted sights include:

- Famous Armenian writer Stephan Zoryan's house-museum on Zoryan Street
- The chemical factory and surrounding park
- The cultural house of Vanadzor, built in traditional Soviet architectural style
- The central square of Vanadzor, named Hayq
- Bus station and Railway station
- The food market where you can do a little shopping for local fresh fruits, dried fruits, berries, herbs, and more
- The house of master stone carver Mehrab, who carved numerous stone drinking fountains throughout the Lori region, including Vanadzor
- Holy Mother of God Church, the central church of Vanadzor
- The Primacy of Gugark Patriarchal Diocese, which was built in 1895 and formerly belonged to Vasil Tairov, a famous Armenian winemaker

The biking tour will finish near the Armenia Health Resort, which has become a forested oasis along the Vanadzor River. Stop to have a rest in nature and eat what you bought at the food market (fruits, dried fruits, etc.). Afterwards, return to the Boo Mountain Bike Park.

### What to Wear/Bring

Clothing and shoes suitable for casual biking, and sunscreen.



#### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 3 hours

Accessibility considerations: Easy to moderate

Seasonality: April–November (dependent upon weather conditions)

Minimum group size: 2

Ideal group size: 6

Maximum group size: 8 (if 2 visitors bring their own bicycles)

Age considerations: No age restrictions, but the bicycles are best suited for people taller than 150 cm

## Bike to Soviet youth camps through mountains

Nestled amid Lori's lush green nature, Vanadzor was famous for its health resorts and youth camps where Armenians spent their vacations and summer holidays. Today, you may enjoy the beauty of Lori on two wheels and discover distinctive sites with knowledgeable local guides. Vanadzor was known as a "camp town," hosting at least five youth camps in the Soviet era. Vaghinak will first lead the group to the Artek Pioneer Camp through the botanic garden, which is one of three botanic gardens of Armenia. It was established in 1935 and now occupies 12 hectares, including 600 plant species. Along a 3 km route, traverse a mountain-slope trail and travel uphill through the charming, forested landscape that characterizes the Lori region. From your bike, admire the charming landscapes and forests and see old abandoned buildings, including two abandoned summer camps. You will see the Tsitsernak spiritual summer camp in the distance, which still hosts thousands of schoolchildren in summer. Once you arrive at Artek Pioneer Camp, sip some coffee or tea while you learn from your guide about this fascinating part of Vanadzor's history. On your return trip, don't miss the panoramic viewpoint of Vanadzor that offers a perfect chance to reflect upon your memorable journey.

### What to Wear/Bring

Clothing and shoes suitable for mountain biking, water, and sunscreen.



#### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1 hour

Accessibility considerations: Easy to moderate

Seasonality: April–November (dependent upon weather conditions)

Minimum group size: 2

Ideal group size: 6

Maximum group size: 8 (if 2 visitors bring their own bicycles)

Age considerations: No age restrictions, but the bicycles are best suited for people taller than 150 cm



VANADZOR  
FINE ARTS  
MUSEUM

#### Contact Details

Contact person: Tatevik Baghramyan  
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Email: [info@vanart.org](mailto:info@vanart.org)  
Facebook: [@vanadzorfineartsmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/vanadzorfineartsmuseum)  
[www.vanart.org](http://www.vanart.org)

#### Location

The Vanadzor Fine Arts Museum is in Vanadzor, Tigran Mets Avenue 52.

# VANADZOR FINE ARTS MUSEUM

 Vanadzor, Lori



**Established in 1974, the Vanadzor Fine Arts Museum was a branch of the National Gallery of Armenia until 1979, when it became an independent museum. The museum is an educational resource and research environment for students and artists. Lectures and workshops explore art history and art criticism. Museum staff members provide special tours and classes for students.**



explore

**a dedicated gallery that  
houses works of artists  
from Lori**

discover

**the rich fine arts collection of  
the museum**

admire

**the soviet architecture of the  
museum's building**

## Museum Tour

A prominent cultural center in Lori, the Vanadzor Fine Arts Museum houses a collection of nearly 2,000 works of art, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and decorative arts by Armenian, Russian, and European artists, with a special focus on artists from the Lori region. The light-filled galleries invite visitors to view works that explore different aspects of Armenian arts and culture, including landscape paintings, works by female artists, portraits of prominent Armenians, and subjects relating to Armenian history. The museum hosts more than ten special exhibitions each year, along with many public events.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian; request English and Russian in advance

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



### Contact Details

Contact person: Tatevik Bezhanyan  
Tel: +374 93 90 01 49  
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Facebook: @Sona-guest-house-Dsegh-Unluw-hjnpawnnn-7utn

### Location

The guesthouse is in Dsegh, one of the beautiful villages of Armenia (14th Street, 17th House).

# SONA GUESTHOUSE

📍 Dsegh, Lori



**Ashot and Anahit Bezhanyan invite you to a delightful hike and an opportunity to get to know the charming tradition of harvesting food from the forests of Lori region. Their guesthouse is named after Sona, one of their grandchildren, which shows the preservation of strong intergenerational ties in Armenia.**

## hike

**in Dsegh village to popular local sightseeing spots**

## collect

**plants, herbs, mushrooms, and berries in Lori's beautiful natural landscape**

## learn

**from locals how and why foraging is important to Armenian cuisine**

## make

**a dish from freshly harvested ingredients during a hands-on experience with Anahit and Ashot**

## Forage for dinner & cook with grandma's recipes

Ashot and Anahit will meet you at their guesthouse located at the end of the village where the famous Lori Canyon and mountains begin. The harvesting tour will take you through a beautiful forest. During the tour, Anahit and Ashot will present the variety of herbs, berries, and mushrooms found in the region and used in local cuisine. Though the experience is seasonal, from May until October, there is always something to gather. Here is an approximate "calendar" of the seasons:

- May – Herbs: *chaerophyllum*, *carpinus* (hornbeam), malva, zimbél
- May-Oct – Mushrooms: *Agaricus bisporus*, *Armillaria*, tree mushrooms
- July-Aug – Berries: raspberries, blackberries, cornel
- Sept-Oct – Berries: rosehips, blackthorn

After harvesting and gathering on the tour, you will return to the guesthouse and start preparing the food. If you gathered herbs or plants, Anahit will demonstrate how to fry or make soups with them or just mix them making a fresh summer salad. With berries, you will prepare fresh juices or preserves, which you may take home with you.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (spring and autumn), 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (summer).  
Reservations must be made 5 hours in advance.  
Duration: 2–4 hours  
Accessibility considerations: Minimum fitness level needed for hiking and walking on uneven terrain.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English 3 days in advance  
Seasonality: May through October  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Roza Ghazumyan  
Tel: +374 77 90 69 89  
Email: dseghmuseum@gmail.com  
Facebook: @gatmuseum  
www.gatmuseum.am/en/branches/tumanyan

#### Location

The Hovhannes Toumanian House Museum is in Dsegh village, the birthplace of the writer, at 1st Street, 10th House.

# HOVHANNES TOUMANIAN HOUSE MUSEUM

 Dsegh, Lori



**The Hovhannes Toumanian House Museum presents the life and works of this remarkable writer and public figure in his childhood home, where his love for storytelling began. The museum is one of five branches of the Charents Museum of Literature and Arts in Yerevan.**

escape

to Dsegh village, birthplace of the famous Armenian poet and writer Hovhannes Toumanian

visit

the ancestral home of the Toumanian family

see

the writer's childhood kitchen and bedroom

learn

about the writer's life and literary activities through his manuscripts and photographs

appreciate

furniture and textiles preserved from the 19th century

## Museum Tour

The five rooms and upstairs living quarters invite visitors to experience the early life of Toumanian and his family in the early 19th century—from making bread in the kitchen to the sleeping quarters where Toumanian's family gathered for songs and stories. The museum also features photographs, watercolors, and selected writings highlighting the personal life of Toumanian. Visitors should keep an eye out for an intricate sculpture of the writer on the second floor rendered in a piece of gold smaller than a grain of rice and also visit the memorial in the yard where Toumanian's heart is buried.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Seasonality: April–November  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None







#### Contact Details

Contact person: Irina Israyelyan  
Tel: +374 91 08 88 12  
Email: irinaisrayelyan@gmail.com  
Facebook: @IrisGuestHouseArmenia

#### Location

Iris guesthouse is in a beautiful, calm corner of Alaverdi, away from the noisy districts of the city (65 Baghramyan Street), and is the town's first guesthouse.

# IRIS GUESTHOUSE

📍 Alaverdi, Lori



**Irina Israyelyan has many years of experience working with tourists. Her enthusiastic approach uses food and the environment to vividly convey the local culture's warm and generous hospitality. Irina offers three different food experiences at her guesthouse.**



learn

the history behind *tanov* and then make it yourself with Irina's guidance

appreciate

the richness of Lori's rich nature

gain

insight into the importance of bread and its folk heritage in Armenian culture

participate

in a *ghapama*-making cooking class accompanied by a special song about the dish

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

**Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site:** Buses and minivans should park on the road, leaving guests to walk about 50 meters to the guesthouse. Small cars (up to 8 seats) can easily park next to the entrance.



## Learn to cook Armenia's national dish, *ghapama*

Irina will lead you to the yard of the guesthouse, where you will have an opportunity to make Armenia's national dish, *ghapama*—pumpkin stuffed with rice, dried fruits, and nuts. The process starts with cleaning out a sweet pumpkin to create a pot, which is then filled with rice and different types of dried fruits, and baked in the oven. As it is one of the popular and loved local dishes, Armenians even have a special song dedicated to *ghapama*. With so many steps, this dish is normally made with the help of the whole family for special occasions and holidays.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1.5 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5-15  
Maximum group size: 25  
Age considerations: None

## Bake traditional north Armenian bread at Iris

A must for any visitor to Alaverdi is to try traditional bread baking with Irina. Irina will lead you to the yard of the guesthouse, where you will learn about ancient Armenian bread-baking folk traditions and beliefs, an experience that will leave your hands doughy and your mind amazed. Following Irina's instructions, you will first prepare the dough by mixing flour, water, salt, and yeast. Then you will shape the dough according to your taste and creativity, before sweeping aside the embers and ashes and placing it into the oven with a large wooden shovel. In Lori, bread is traditionally baked in a brick stone oven called *pur*. After baking, you will enjoy your freshly made bread in the garden.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 30–40 minutes  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5-15  
Maximum group size: 25  
Age considerations: None

## Cook *tanov spas*, a favorite soup of Armenians

Irina will lead you to the yard of the guesthouse, where you will have an opportunity to cook the local buttermilk soup, known as *tanov spas* or just *tanov*. Traditionally, this buttermilk soup was a very common meal in the cuisine of Lori. Following Irina's instructions, you will mix the ingredients—wheat, buttermilk (*tan*), strained yogurt, eggs, and flour—to create this traditional staple of Lori cuisine.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 40 minutes  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5-15  
Maximum group size: 25  
Age considerations: None

#### Contact Details

Contact person: Arpine Hakobyan  
Tel: +374 91 64 33 17  
Email: tuccamp@gmail.com  
Facebook: @TUC.Dsegh

#### Location

The TUC camp in Dsegh village, 14th Street, 8th Site, offers the experiences near Dsegh Tsover.

# TOURISM UNIQUE CENTER (TUC)

 Dsegh, Lori



The Tourism Unique Center (TUC) is a community-based tourism initiative, specializing in the nature, adventure, and culture of the northern region of Lori. Its philosophy is to provide visitors with a chance to meet local people to the benefit of both the community and travelers. TUC offers comprehensive tour services to help visitors find art, culture, entertainment, adventures, local flavors, and more. Inside TUC's basecamp of 1,500 square meters are a kitchen, storage room, 2 bathrooms, and shower. The rest of the camp is open and available, with plenty of space for tents, relaxation, as well as hosting different activities and events.



**enjoy**  
zilling off-road experience

**bike**  
through scenic Lori  
landscapes

**play**  
traditional Armenian  
outdoor games

**contribute**  
to community development

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Reservations must be made 5 days in advance.

Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



## Discover “zilling” off-road experience at TUC

Taking an excursion in an open-roof truck from Soviet times, called a Zil, is both fun and engaging. The Zil follows a rural road, which ends at a lake where guests will have time to enjoy nature, have a picnic, and even paddle on the lake. A thick forest surrounds the lake on one side, and Lori canyon on the other side. An open area near the lake is flat and comfortable for picnics and camping. As an alternative to riding in the Zil, the lake is an easy 35-to-40 minute walk from the TUC basecamp.



For more of the local spirit, visitors may enjoy playing some traditional outdoor games on the fields surrounding the lake or back at the TUC basecamp, in both cases organized by TUC staff. For those who know Armenian, another option is to play some table games invented by Hovhannes Toumanian that are well-suited for both children and adults.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: *Zilling*, one-way drive, 20–25 minutes;  
Outdoor games, 40–60 minutes  
Seasonality: May–October  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 20  
Maximum group size: 50  
Age considerations: None

## Bike and play traditional games

Your TUC hosts offer a healthy and rewarding biking experience to blend a love for outdoors with an adventurous spirit in beautiful surroundings. Starting from the TUC basecamp, visitors will make a 7 km round-trip of the Dsegh Plateau, passing through groomed fields and views of a gorge and nearby natural sites. Along the way, you will marvel at a popular cross-stone with intricate patterns known as Sirun Khach (or “beautiful cross” in Armenian) and the picturesque villages on the opposite slope. Stopping in Dsegh village on your return to basecamp will provide opportunities to meet locals and to explore some of its most popular features.



For more of the local spirit, visitors may enjoy playing some traditional outdoor games on the fields surrounding the lake or back at the TUC basecamp, in both cases organized by TUC staff. For those who know Armenian, another option is to play some table games invented by Hovhannes Toumanian that are well-suited for both children and adults.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: Biking, 1 hour;  
Outdoor games, 40–60 minutes  
Seasonality: May–October  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
TUC has 15 bicycles for rent



#### Contact Details

Contact persons: Vazgen Khachikyan  
Tel: +374 43 53 53 46  
Email: nurik.center@gmail.com  
Facebook: @nurikcenter

#### Location

The Nurik Center is near Akhtala Monastery, 1st Raffi Street.

# NURIK CENTER

 Akhtala, Lori



**The Nurik Center is a community and tourism development center established by the Armenian Young Women's Association to promote the social and economic development of the Lori region and to provide places of work for women and people with disabilities.**



savor

**traditional Armenian dishes while learning about their cultural significance**

discover

**the traditional craft of Armenian carpet weaving**

learn

**about the culture, history, and architecture of Akhtala Monastery**

enjoy

**the beautiful scenery of Akhtala and neighboring villages**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



## Learn to cook *gata* and other Armenian favorites

Vazgen Khachikyan, a representative from the Center, will first describe the services Nurik offers the community. After a brief tour, you will take a *gata*-making class to learn about this traditional Armenian treat and the rituals associated with its preparation and presentation. Vazgen will show you how to stretch, fill, fold, and roll the *gata*—and as a final step to decorate it with traditional patterns. While your *gata* is baking, you may visit the nearby Akhtala monastery. Enjoy the beautiful scenery while tasting a national sweet treat. The Nurik Center offers other culinary classes showcasing such traditional dishes as *ghapama*, *harisa*, *tolma*, and *ghavurma*.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1–2 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10  
Age considerations: None

## Learn to weave Armenian rugs

Carpet-weaving holds a special place among the traditional crafts of the Armenian people. In the villages of Lori, for instance, women who have mastered this craft are eager to share their skills, stories, and traditions with visitors. They have preserved with great care not only the rugs they themselves made, but also those woven by their mothers and grandmothers. During this carpet-weaving class in the Nurik Center, you will hear the absorbing personal stories of these women, as they share with you both the difficulties they face and some of their proudest achievements in sustaining their cultural heritage.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1 hour  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10  
Age considerations: None

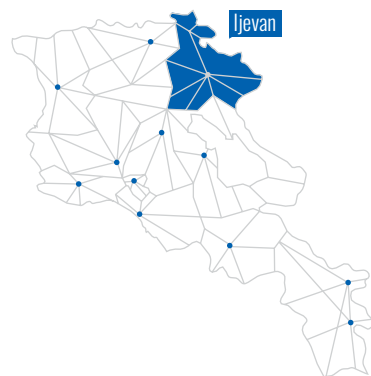
## Take a tour of Akhtala Monastery

Vazgen Khachikyan, a representative from the Nurik Center, will lead a 1-hour guided tour of Akhtala Monastery. With Vazgen's stories and local knowledge, you will explore the culture, history, and architecture of this 10th-century landmark. You will also learn about monastic life and modern-day Akhtala village, particularly how its copper mine has impacted community life.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1 hour  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10  
Age considerations: None





**TAVUSH** region



*The Tavush region, in the northeastern corner of Armenia, borders Georgia to the north and Azerbaijan to the east. Its climate is mild and humid due to its mostly forested mountains.*

The region is ideal for nature lovers, with its picturesque landscapes, mineral water springs, clear lakes, rich biodiversity, and dense forests of Dilijan National Park. Hiking enthusiasts may visit Gosh and Parz lakes by passing through forest trails that are part of the Transcaucasian Trail. Adventurous sports enthusiasts may wish to visit Yell Extreme Park in Yenokavan village near Ijevan, which is located on the banks of the Aghstev River that cuts through the region. The famous caves and waterfalls of Lastiver are a day-hike from the Yell Extreme Park. Birdwatchers will find a great variety of species in the forests of Tavush.

The capital of Tavush is Ijevan, which once had a spot on the Great Silk Road when the caravans passed through its gates. However, the region's cultural center today is Dilijan, also known as "Armenian Switzerland." It is a popular summer destination for local artists and writers, just as it was once frequented by Armenian kings for hunting and relaxation. Dilijan has also become a center for innovation, thanks to the opening of the United World College Dilijan, TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, Ayb workshop laboratory, and offices of the Central Bank of Armenia.

Artisans throughout the region practice carpentry, carpet weaving, embroidery, jewelry, and stonework. Restored workshops of traditional handicrafts highlight one of the most traditional streets of Dilijan. There you may also find holiday houses built in the local architectural style and restaurants that serve national dishes with a modern take. Some of the region's favorite dishes include pork barbecue, smoked pork, homemade salceson sausage, stews, nettle and malva soups, salads and pan-fries of Solomon's seal, sorrel and other local edible plants, and roasted or grilled forest and oyster mushrooms.

Along with the Ararat Valley and Vayots Dzor, Tavush is one of Armenia's most important wine regions, thanks to the local winery of Ijevan. Among the most popular fruit vodkas are those made from cornelian cherry, wild pear, and plum.

Tavush also contains the well-visited medieval monasteries of Haghartsin, Goshavank, and Makaravank, which are famous for their distinctive architectural style and their *khachkars*.

## HIGHLIGHTS



**pork *khovrats*, oyster mushrooms**



**Dilijan Local Lore Museum and Art Gallery, Dilijan Folk Art Museum**



**Lake Parz, Lake Gosh, Dilijan National Park, Aghstev River, Ijevan Dendropark, Shamshadin district mountains, Lastiver Cave**



**Honey and Berry, Yell Extreme Birthday, Haybuis Armenian Herb & Flower Festival, Art and Crafts Festival, DiliTon, Dilijan Carpet Weaving, Tavush Wine Days**



**Kirants Monastery (8th c.), Haghartsin Monastery (10-13th c.), Goshavank Monastery (12-13th c.), Makaravank Monastery (10-13th c.), Jukhtak Monastery (11th c.), Aghavnavank Monastery (12-13th c.), Matosavank (13th c.)**



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Artur Ghazaryan  
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Instagram: @armenecoop

#### Location

ARMENECOOP is in  
Dilijan, 8 Shahumyan Street.

# ARMENECOOP

 Dilijan, Tavush



The Youth Cooperation Center of Dilijan is a non-governmental organization dedicated to increasing the civic participation of young people for community development. One of its other projects is ARMENECOOP, which provides training in leadership, entrepreneurship, sewing, and pottery for unemployed women from the Dilijan area. ARMENECOOP also offers a sewing class in Dilijan where visitors may learn about the history of sewing and make a roll-up pencil case or a tote-bag decorated with Dilijan's distinctive motifs.



see

the sewing traditions of  
Armenia

sew

a souvenir to take home

learn

about ARMENECOOP and  
its mission

support

the participation of young  
people in community  
development

enjoy

tea/coffee refreshments

## Learn about the history and culture of sewing in Armenia

You will learn about the production of ARMENECOOP's signature pieces, such as the pencil rolls, tote bags, and additional products. You will get to sew your own souvenir, while also learning about the ARMENECOOP social enterprise and the sewing traditions of Armenia. Afterwards, you will be invited for tea and traditional *gata* as an opportunity to chat and socialize with local artisans.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian  
Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 3  
Maximum group size: 6  
Age considerations: Not recommended for children under 12  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Arman Badeyan  
Tel: +374 268 244 51, +374 94 27 04 82  
Email: dilijanmuseum@gmail.com  
Facebook: @dilijanmuseum

#### Location

Dilijan Local Lore Museum and Art Gallery is in Dilijan, 28 Myasnikyan Street.

# DILIJAN LOCAL LORE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

 Dilijan, Tavush



## tour

the two-floor gallery displaying a wide collection of fine arts from Armenia and abroad

## explore

the archeological and ethnographic collections

## experience

printmaking practices firsthand

### Museum Tour and “The Art of Printmaking” workshop

There are three floors, each with a different focus: the lower level has archeological and ethnographic objects; the ground level displays Armenian artists featuring works of the Socialist Realism style; and the second floor has international artists (predominantly European) from the 16th to 19th centuries. The majority of archeological objects come from Dilijan and its surroundings, which have been inhabited since at least the 2nd millennium BCE—though some museum objects date to the 3rd millennium BCE. The Socialist Realism style, which dominated the Soviet era and which highlighted the work and lives of everyday men and women, contrasts strongly with the grand landscapes, historical subjects, and fine portraits found on the second floor.

Following your guided tour of the museum, a hands-on workshop will help you discover and differentiate among the artistic processes and practices of printmaking. The workshop will also teach you the specialized technique of transferring images from a matrix (linoleum) onto another surface, such as paper or fabric. All necessary materials and equipment are provided to create your own print based on already-incised images on different matrices. At the end of the workshop, you will be able to take home your new artwork.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5:40 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1-1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None

#### Contact Details

Contact persons: Arman Badeyan or  
Margarita Malkhasyan  
Tel: +374 96 27 04 82  
Email: buduart@mail.ru  
Facebook: @buduart.dilijan  
Instagram: @buduar\_t

#### Location

Buduart Studio is in Dilijan, 34  
Myasnikyan Street.

# BUDUART STUDIO

 Dilijan, Tavush



Dilijan's beautiful natural setting and "drunk forests" of swaying pine trees have long inspired Arman Badeyan and Margarita Malkhasyan. As painters and jewelry makers, the couple founded Buduart studio, a gallery which combines a space for guests to explore their creative side while enjoying the company of friends and potentially a glass of wine. At the Buduart workshop and gallery, artists, art lovers, and craft enthusiasts may gather to make jewelry or paint batik in a relaxing friendly environment under Arman and Margarita's guidance.



try

your hand at making copper  
jewelry

learn

the fascinating technique of  
batik and its history in Armenia

paint

with a professional artist

enjoy

Armenian hospitality at this  
studio and gathering space

buy

local with a wide range of craft  
offerings from Arman and  
Margarita's collection

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available  
7 days a week, from 10  
a.m. to 10 p.m.

Reservations must be made  
24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and  
Russian; request English and  
French in advance

Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: None

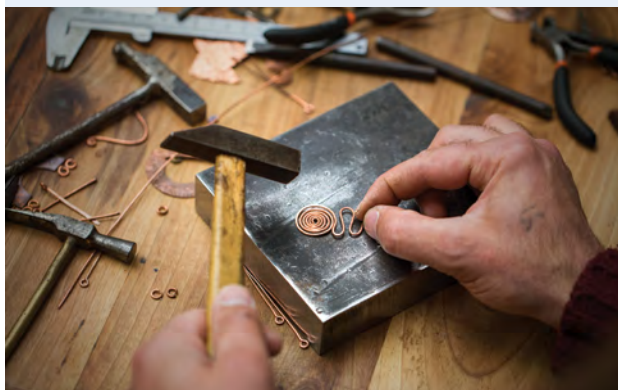


## Create your own copper jewelry with Arman

Meet Arman and Margarita in their studio, located in central Dilijan. First, they will present their story of opening a studio and then provide instruction on making jewelry. Arman will show you how to carefully twist soft copper wires into intricate jewelry designs to make earrings, hairpins, rings, and necklaces. After an hour or so, you'll have a brand new piece of handmade jewelry to wear! The atmosphere at Buduart fosters creativity and fun. If just one piece of jewelry is not enough, Arman's creations are also available for purchase.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1 hour  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10  
Age considerations: None



## Make your own batik scarf with Margarita

The studio of Arman and Margarita is where you may participate in the creation of batik scarves. First, trace the design onto the scarf with melted wax, which keeps the design in place. Then, you can apply paint to your design and watch as the colors fill the scarf. When you melt off the wax, you will reveal a beautiful, brightly painted accessory. While you paint, enjoy tea or coffee in this vibrant art space. After your scarf dries, you may take it home with you.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 2 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10  
Age considerations: None



## Take professional painting lessons

See examples of work by Arman and Margarita in their small gallery space before heading into the studio to make your own masterpiece. Arman will explain the main techniques for painting and his primary inspiration from Dilijan's nature and history. Then you can explore your own inspirations on canvas. Arman and Margarita's works are available for purchase for those who might like an additional souvenir to take home.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 3 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 7  
Age considerations: None





#### Contact Details

Tel: +374 11 99 91 91  
Email: [info@ijevangroup.com](mailto:info@ijevangroup.com)  
Facebook: [@IjevanWineArmenia](https://www.facebook.com/IjevanWineArmenia)

#### Location

The Ijevan Wine Factory is in Ijevan,  
9 Yerevanyan Street.

# IJEVAN WINE FACTORY

 Ijevan, Tavush



One of the oldest wineries in Armenia, the Ijevan Wine Factory is in the city of Ijevan, in the center of the Tavush region, in the valley of the Aghstev and Spitak Jur rivers. In 2005, the factory transformed itself with modern equipment and the latest technologies, as well as a new generation of wine specialists, to produce high-quality wines and brandies from regionally sourced grapes and fruits and a large selection of preserves and dried foods.



## learn

about winemaking traditions  
in the Tavush region

## taste

brandies and fruit wines in the  
historic tasting room

## shop

for Tavush wine at the "factory  
shop"

## Winery Tour and Tasting

Your guide will share with you the distinctive viticulture and winemaking traditions of the Tavush region. Walk between oak barrels and stainless-steel tanks and learn how to produce different types of wine and brandy. The tour ends at the tasting room where you will have a chance to taste and identify various wines and brandies along with refreshments. The Ijevan Wine Factory produces not only brandies, grape wines, and berry wines, but also fruit vodkas and canned and dried fruit products, all of which you may purchase from the "factory shop".



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Monday–Saturday,  
from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours  
in advance.  
Duration: 1 hour  
Languages: Armenian, English, and  
Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 4  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 40  
Age considerations: 18 and older  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing  
the site: None





#### Contact Details

Contact person: Hasmik Margaryan  
Tel: +374 98 56 01 18  
Email: [telikcrafts@gmail.com](mailto:telikcrafts@gmail.com)  
Facebook: [@telikcrafts](https://www.facebook.com/telikcrafts)

#### Location

Telik Handmade is in Ijevan,  
5 Ijevanyan Street.

# TELIK HANDMADE

 Ijevan, Tavush



**Hasmik Margaryan created Telik Handmade to restore the centuries-old traditions of Tavush traditional rug making, carpet weaving, embroidery and other handicrafts, making them applicable in modern life. One of Telik's goals is not only to rediscover the art of threads, but also to help improve the quality of life of women living in Ijevan and nearby villages by creating sustainable employment opportunities for them. Their brand, Telik, now attracts international attention and their workshop has become a tourist attraction in Ijevan.**



learn

**from local masters about  
their handicrafts and culture**

support

**local women in the community  
who are preserving Armenian  
cultural heritage**

handcraft

**your own souvenir to take  
home**

shop

**for handmade goods from  
local artisans**

## Try carpet weaving and other Armenian handicrafts

Hasmik will share with you the history, traditions, designs, and techniques of various crafts: carpet/rug weaving, needlework, doily making, batik, and Armenian bird script. You will have a chance to select and participate in one of these craft activities. The carpet-weaving class allows you to work with a small, partially woven carpet with a design from the Tavush region. You will finish the craft activity and take it home as a souvenir. You may also try your hand at needlework techniques, such as embroidery or crochet. Finally, you may design t-shirts with Armenian bird script, using its graceful lines and elegant forms, and adorning it with fantasy birds, a technique dating to the Middle Ages. After all classes, you will have your own art piece to take home. Hasmik will offer coffee/tea with some sweets while you work.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available Monday–  
Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in  
advance.  
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian;  
request English and Farsi in advance

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access  
the site: None





### Contact Details

Contact person: Alex Nersisyan  
Tel: +374 77 47 48 45  
Email: aghavnatun@gmail.com  
Facebook: @AghavnatunArmenia

### Location

The Aghavnatun Restaurant is in Aghavnavank village, nestled in the northeastern region of Tavush and home to about 150 families.

# AGHAVNATUN

 Aghavnavank, Tavush



After serving in the army, Alex Nersisyan returned to his hometown village of Aghavnavank with a big dream: to develop the local community and to preserve and illuminate its cultural heritage. Hoping to represent some of the village's rich culinary customs, which are found nowhere else in Armenia, Alex established a small restaurant. He also plays guitar, especially in the evenings, when guests gather around the bonfire and enjoy the music and singing. Alex will help you discover Aghavnavank, one of the idyllic rural communities in Tavush, a countryside with expansive, splendid views.



bake

*losh*, the local bread, with help from an expert

grill

Armenian barbecue with Tavush herbs and spices

taste

homemade wine and vodka

## Make *losh* and barbecue in a special *tonir*

After welcoming you to the outdoor area, next to the restaurant, Alex will teach you the perfect techniques for using his above-ground *tonir* to marinate pork and to bake the local bread known as *losh*. As Alex fires the *tonir* using grapevine branches, you will learn about this oven's history and how Armenians use it in both traditional and more modern, innovative ways. Tavush pork is famous throughout Armenia because it comes from the pigs that graze Tavush's lush forests, and because it is cooked with natural herbs, such as thyme picked from the nearby mountains. As the fire dies down, you'll start making *losh* by rolling out the dough and then baking it in the *tonir*. Freshly baked *losh* makes an ideal pairing with the smoked pork barbecue.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5–3 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: Large buses will have limited access to the site due to the dirt road.



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Vahe Mayilyan  
Tel: +374 93 02 29 21  
Email: mshatur@yandex.ru  
Facebook: @MayilyanTour  
Instagram: @mayilyan\_handmade.hiking

#### Location

The studio-shop is in Ljevan's central square.

# MAYILYAN WOODCARVING

 Ljevan, Tavush



**Vahe Mayilyan is a fourth-generation woodcarver and hiking guide from Tavush. Combining his intimate knowledge of woodcarving with his longstanding love of nature, he offers an exciting variety of workshops and hiking tours that demonstrate the natural beauty and traditional culture of the mountains, forests, and villages surrounding Ljevan.**



**learn**  
woodcarving techniques

**hear**  
stories of Vahe's family and his  
woodcarving traditions

**marvel**  
at natural beauty and  
medieval monasteries

**shop**  
among Vahe's creations

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Reservations must be made 72 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



## Learn woodcarving with Vahe

Meet Vahe in his studio-shop in Ijevan, where he will present the techniques that he uses to create different art pieces mixing wood with natural minerals and stones. Then, Vahe will show you how to work with different types of wood before guiding you in carving various patterns. If you are ready for a more adventurous workshop, Vahe also leads hiking tours around the Ijevan mountains, where he teaches wood-working techniques along the way.

## Take a hike in the Ijevan mountains

Join Vahe for a hiking tour in the Ijevan mountains to explore natural and medieval monasteries, and to discover what inspires Vahe's artistry. During the hike, Vahe will demonstrate his woodcarving skills on pieces of wood and roots picked up along the way. Stop at an abandoned monastery and learn more about Tavush's regional history. Vahe offers both half-day and full-day tours. The longer hiking tour may conclude at Vahe's house around a table bursting with Armenian dishes.

### What to Wear/Bring

Comfortable walking shoes, hat, and sunscreen.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

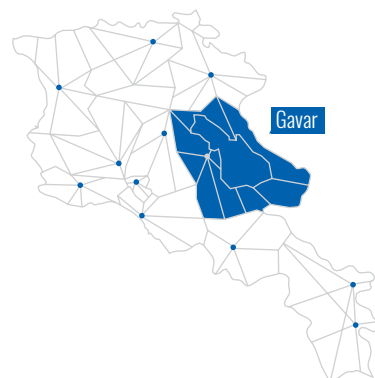
**Duration:** 1 hour  
**Seasonality:** March–November  
**Minimum group size:** 1  
**Ideal group size:** 10  
**Maximum group size:** 15  
**Age considerations:** Not recommended for children younger than 12



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

**Duration:** half-day tour–3 hours; full-day tour–6 hours  
**Seasonality:** March–November  
**Minimum group size:** 1  
**Ideal group size:** 10  
**Maximum group size:** 30  
**Age considerations:** Not recommended for children younger than 12





**GEGHARKUNIK** region





*The Gegharkunik region, located in eastern Armenia, contains 18 percent of the country's territory, making it Armenia's largest region.*

Gegharkunik includes Lake Sevan—the third largest freshwater alpine lake in the world and one of the most popular recreation areas for Armenians and tourists to visit. Also on Lake Sevan is the Bronze Age fortress-town Lchashen, where archeologists found a rare four-wheeled wooden cart dating back several millennia.

Other cultural treasures include petroglyphs and *vishapakar* (or dragon-stone monuments) left by ancient people in the Geghama Mountains. Enthusiasts of medieval architecture may wish to visit the 10th-century Sevanavank, 9th-century Hayravank, and the late-medieval cemetery of Noratus with its high-art *khachkars* and carved tombstones.

Gegharkunik is connected to the Vayots Dzor region by the Selim mountain pass—the site of Orbelian's 14th-century caravanserai, which served as an inn for Silk Road travelers through Armenia. The villages in Gegharkunik, and particularly in the Gavar district, still have traditional houses with *hazarashen* roofs. The

recreational areas of Lake Sevan and neighboring villages contain cozy guesthouses and restaurants where you may try typical local dishes, such as the whitefish and trout of Lake Sevan, Gavar *kufta*, *arishta*, *harissa*, salads and pan-fries of local edible plants collected from the mountains, different types of cheese, and grilled and fried potatoes. Two special dishes are the *tolma* made of hemp puree and wheat, and fish *kapama*, which is cooked with thyme and tomato sauce. Halva with *pokhindz* and honey, as well as Gavar *pakhlava*, which is famous throughout Armenia, are a few favorite sweets.

Birdwatchers will find many different species on the shores of Lake Sevan. Adventurers who want to explore the region from a bird's eye view may enjoy paragliding. With plenty of open spaces and high alpine meadows, the region offers excellent possibilities for horseback riding. One unusual experience in Gegharkunik is a short trip on the Cilicia sailing ship, built according to 13th-century construction techniques popular in Cilician Armenia.

## HIGHLIGHTS



**whitefish, trout, Gavar *kufta*, *harissa*, fish *kapama*, *pokhindz*, Gavar *pakhlava***



**Gegharkunik Geological Museum**



**Lake Sevan, Sevan Peninsula, Geghama mountain range, Vardenis mountain range, Artanish Peninsula, Areguni mountain range, Mount Armaghan, Mount Azhdahak**



**Sevan International Music, Sail of Hope International Bard Festival, Aveluk Festival**



**Lchashen Cyclopean Fortress-Settlement and Burial Place (4th mil. - 7th c. BCE) Sevanavank Monastery, Hayravank Monastery (9-12th c.), The cemetery of Noratuz (9-15th c.), Old Getik Monastery (9-12th c.)**



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Marieta Vardanyan  
Tel: +374 77 57 73 03  
Email: marietavanvardanyan@gmail.com

#### Location

Mtnadzor Restaurant is in Mtnadzor, a nearly abandoned tiny village in a quaint little valley that is a 15-minute drive from Martuni.

# MTNADZOR RESTAURANT

 Mtnadzor, Gegharkunik



**Avetik Grigoryan ran a successful restaurant in the main town of Martuni and used those proceeds to establish a restaurant in the ancient settlement of nearby Mtnadzor, the nearly abandoned village where he grew up. As a child, Avetik spent many summer days with his father and grandfather in Mtnadzor and the surrounding mountains.**

discover

**Armenian dragon stones, gravestones, and *khachkars***

admire

**Gegharkunik's beautiful highlands and alpine meadows**

hear

**local legends about the area**

experience

**local traditional cuisine**

## Explore medieval history and local fish cuisine

After welcoming guests near the entrance of his restaurant and a brief introduction, Avetik will tell the story of fish *kapama* and how to cook this traditional Martuni dish. Due to many invasions and resettlements throughout its history, Martuni's regional culture continually added new gastronomic traditions and flavors to the centuries-old local practices.

On the grounds of the restaurant is a small fish farm, where visitors may first catch fish and then learn how to marinate the fish with fresh thyme—a common and popular herb in the Gegharkunik mountains. Afterwards, you will learn to make a sauce with fried onions and tomatoes, to which you may add sliced potatoes. While the fish dish is cooking, Avetik will lead visitors through his hillside location, which boasts one of the finest and most venerable collections of famed Armenian *khachkars* or cross-stones—those delicately carved and subtly embellished symbols of Armenian identity. During the walking tour, Avetik will weave together mesmerizing stories, including tragic tales and local legends that may leave you yearning to learn much more about the area's history and folklore. Conclude your memorable journey with a steaming casserole of stewed *kapama* cooked in tomato sauce and flavored with mountain thyme as a reward for a fulfilling day. Treat yourself with this staple delicacy, passed from generation to generation for centuries, and revel in the picture-perfect landscape that surrounds Avetik's pavilion and beyond.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, April–October, from 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., and November–March, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 2–3 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance  
Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 25  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: Large buses will have limited access to the site when the unpaved roads are wet.







**SYUNIK** region



*Syunik is one of Armenia's most captivating regions due to its natural landmarks and its historical, architectural monuments.*

As the nation's southernmost region, Syunik connects Armenia to Iran and contains nearly every climate zone in Armenia, including the warm valley of Meghri, the forested mountains of Kapan, the alpine meadows of Goris, and the towns of Sisian, Goris, Kapan and Meghri.

In Syunik you may visit the Bronze Age settlement called Zorats Karer, hike to Ughtasar, and see the petroglyphs made by ancient people. You may visit the Tatev medieval monastery that was built between the 9th and 15th centuries, and do so via the TaTever ropeway, which is registered in Guinness World Records as the longest of its kind in the world. In the Old District of Meghri and in the central part of Goris, you may find yourself in the colorful environment typical of late 19th-century towns. Not far from Goris is the Old Khndzoresk

cave-city. From the swinging bridge that leads to the caves you may enjoy a panoramic view of the city and the gorge. Some places across the region have preserved textile and carpet weaving; in others you may find stonemasons, cross-stone or *khachkar* carvers, carpenters, and potters.

Syunik's villages are very hospitable. In their small rural restaurants, you may taste various local dishes such as the region's *tolma*, *ghapama*, *qyalagyosh*, *ghavurma*, *halim*, dishes made from the famous Goris beans, summer *khashlama* with vegetables, and cheese that is seasoned with local herbs and aged in the ground in clay pots. All these may be enjoyed with local fruit vodkas among which Karahunj's mulberry vodka is the most popular.

## HIGHLIGHTS



*qyalagyosh, ghavurma, tolma, khashlama*



**Aksel Bakunts House Museum, Goris Local Lore Museum, Sisian History Museum**



**Zangezur Mountain chain, Araks River, Mt Khoustup, Arevik National Park, Devils' Bridge, Shikahogh reserve, Mt Kaputjkh, Vorotan River**



**Sheep Shearing Festival, Mulberry Festival**



**Halidzor fortress (17th c.), Khndzoresk cave town, Tatev Monastery (10-13th c.), Vorotnavank Monastery (10-11th c.), Tanahat Monastery (5-6th c.), Ughtasar petroglyphs (5,000 BCE)**



#### Contact Details

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#### Location

The experience takes place in Sisian Ceramics, 42 Grigor Lusavorich Street.

# SISIAN CERAMICS

 Sisian, Syunik



**Join two artists, Vahagn Hambardzumyan and Zara Gasparyan, in their studio to learn about the roots of Armenian ceramics and decorative art forms. The main goal of Sisian Ceramics—founded by this husband-and-wife team in 2004—is to preserve and restore traditional pottery practices, as well as to create and to sell household clay items.**



**study**

**the roots of Armenian ceramics**

**try**

**your hand at pottery**

**participate**

**in a batik-painting workshop**

**take**

**home a handmade creation to remind you of your visit**

**enjoy**

**coffee/tea/sweets and Armenian hospitality**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian

**Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site:** Because the street is too narrow for large buses, passengers must walk for about 2 minutes.



## Learn to throw pottery with Vahagn

Following a short tour of the studio, Vahagn will describe the region's pottery-making traditions, including some of the tools and techniques for making clay vessels. Then, under Vahagn's expert guidance, you can try throwing clay mugs on the potter's wheel yourself. Your creation should dry within 48 hours. You may arrange its shipping to Yerevan for an additional cost.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 2 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 5  
 Maximum group size: 10  
 Age considerations: Kids may participate

## Make your own batik scarf with Zara

Zara's batik-painting workshop will teach you the necessary skills to craft a beautiful batik scarf that becomes an artistic accessory. She will also introduce you to the rich imagery of the petroglyphs found on Ughtasar Mountain, northwest of Sisian, from which you may choose your personal favorite to design your own scarf.

As an additional activity, Zara will teach you how to paint petroglyph designs or a different motif typical of Armenia onto small ceramic magnets or plates, which are already prepared for you. While your art piece dries—to become a memorable souvenir of your visit to Sisian—you may enjoy the family's hospitality.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 2–2.5 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 5  
 Maximum group size: 10  
 Age considerations: Kids may participate



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Zara Gasparyan  
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Facebook: [@SisianCeramics](https://www.facebook.com/@SisianCeramics)

#### Location

The experience will take place in Sisian Ceramics, 42 Grigor Lusavorich Street. The Hatsatun restaurant is on the second floor above the pottery and batik studio.

# HATSATUN BY SISIAN CERAMICS

 Sisian, Syunik



**Vahagn Hambardzumyan and Zara Gasparyan are spouses and artists who run Sisian Ceramics, which is first and foremost a pottery studio that uses local clay from the mountains of Sisian. Inspired by local nature and history, the studio seeks to preserve and restore traditional pottery-making practices. Recently, they came up with the idea for Hatsatun, a restaurant to cook and serve traditional dishes in their own ceramic creations. Zara uses organic fruits and vegetables from their garden, all naturally grown in the region.**



**try**

**your hand at making  
traditional dishes**

**learn**

**about *qyalagyosh* eating  
ceremonies**

**enjoy**

**lunch or dinner served on  
clay tableware**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian

**Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site:** Because the street is too narrow for large buses, passengers must walk for about 2 minutes. There are 15 steps leading to the second floor, where the restaurant is located.





## Secrets of *qyalagyosh* and eating ceremony

Eat like a local with Vahagn and Zara, who will teach you how to eat *qyalagyosh* and honor this hearty soup with a special ceremony in traditional Armenian fashion. In Sisian, every authentic experience of *qyalagyosh* begins with a base of *choratan*, made from pearls of dried buttermilk, along with several other essential ingredients. You'll face a table full of lentils, dried *lavash*, crushed garlic, stewed onion, and many other savory elements. When the dish is ready, Vahagn and Zara will show how to add each component to the plate according to your taste and flavor preferences. Eating *qyalagyosh* is a ceremony in itself. The dish is always eaten with relatives and friends, accompanied by endless comments of the best way to construct your plate. Vahagn will also demonstrate toasting traditions, part of every Armenian feast. Toast to your hard work with either a fruit vodka or a refreshing rose-syrup tonic made from flower petals plucked from their garden—all homemade by Vahagn and Zara.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 15  
 Maximum group size: 25  
 Age considerations: Children may participate in food preparation, but must not get too close to the hot oven.



## Cook a village-style feast

In this village-style feast, everyone gets to prepare their own small clay pot filled with boiled emmer wheat and lentils. Optionally, you can also add *ghavurma* (meat preserved with butter). You may also bake potatoes in the oven and enjoy them with pickled beet greens, considered one of the most popular local delicacies. While your dishes are baking in the Sisian Ceramics pottery oven, Vahagn will give you a short tour of the couple's pottery and batik studio downstairs. Vahagn and Zara also offer craft workshops on their property.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 15  
 Maximum group size: 25  
 Age considerations: Children may participate in food preparation, but must not get too close to the hot oven.



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Hasmik Azoyan  
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[www.basenhotel.am](http://www.basenhotel.am)

#### Location

Basen Hotel and Tours is in Sisian,  
2 Ara Manukyan Street.

# BASEN HOTEL AND TOURS

 Sisian, Syunik



**Hasmik Azoyan, the founder of Basen Hotel and Tours, named her business after an area in Eastern Anatolia, in the region of Erzurum, where her grandparents lived until 1915. Basen offers tours with local guides of historic areas in Sisian, as well as nature hikes in the surrounding mountains and through Sisian's more modern architectural and stone-art sites.**



**explore**

**Zangezur mountain range  
in a Soviet-era jeep and on  
foot with a local guide**

**hike**

**to a glacial lake and see the  
remnants of Syunik's once-active  
volcano**

**study**

**7,000-year-old petroglyphs  
with a knowledgeable guide**

**feel**

**the spirit of ancient times in the  
rugged landscape**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian; request Spanish in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None

## Ride in a Soviet-era jeep and find ancient petroglyphs

Meet Hasmik at the Basen Hotel where you will get into a Soviet-era jeep to journey across the Zangezur mountain range, famous for its stunning, carved petroglyphs that adorn the rocks dating as early as 5000 BCE. These carvings are visible only during the summer months because snow covers the site nearly nine months of the year. Learn about the land as Hasmik shares her knowledge of herbs, flowers, and animals. Hasmik will explain how the landscape and the prehistoric people who lived there interacted and ultimately left their mark.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: one-way 1.5 hours  
Seasonality: Mid-June–mid-October  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None

## Discover Sisian's Forgotten Soviet Heritage

Your tour starts at the Basen Hotel, where the city's airport stood until the early 1980s. From there, you will walk with a local guide to the city center to marvel at the central square and to learn the history of its construction in the 1970s. The imposing monument, Forty Fountains, opened in 1985 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in World War II. Learn about this distinctive architecture and hear intriguing stories about how Sisian developed during the Soviet period and beyond. As you stroll along the former Lenin Avenue towards the river, you may feel the spirit of the grandiose parades that once magnificently marched down this boulevard. By the riverside, you may visit several abandoned factories and settlements. You may also discover old Soviet fountains, bridges, and statues—many of which have fascinating stories and traditions behind them.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 2 hours  
Seasonality: April–October  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None

## Hike from Ltsen to Tatev village

Meet Hasmik at the Basen Hotel where you will depart in a Soviet-era jeep to Ltsen, a small village deep in the Syunik landscape. On the way, experience a dramatic change in ecosystems from grass-covered hills to forested mountains. You will see two important Syunik sites on your drive, the Vorohtnavank Monastery and Shamb Reservoir. The hike will start from the village of Ltsen (1,800 meters) and slowly ascend to 2,200 meters above sea level before descending to Tatev village and monastery. The hike's total length is 18 kilometers, with a picnic lunch along the way. Hasmik will help you pick herbs from along the path for a delicious lunchtime tea. The final destination is the Tatev Monastery Complex, an important medieval religious institution and defensive feature with a commanding position on the Silk Road. Spend some time exploring the area before riding the world's longest aerial tramway—5.7 kilometers from Tatev to Halidzor. At the end of the tramway, a car will return you to the hotel.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: Jeeping, one-way drive, 1.5 hours;  
Hiking, 6 hours  
Seasonality: Mid-June–mid-October  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None



#### Contact Details

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[www.sisianmuseum.am](http://www.sisianmuseum.am)  
Facebook: [@Sisianhistorymuseum](https://www.facebook.com/Sisianhistorymuseum)

#### Location

The museum is at 6/A Adonts Street, Sisian.

# SISIAN HISTORY MUSEUM

 Sisian, Syunik



discover  
Stone Sculpture Park

get  
familiar with the history and  
creation of family trees with a  
professional museum guide

put  
your knowledge to use by  
creating your own family  
tree

## Museum tour and family-tree workshop

This program introduces visitors to the museum's collection, focusing particularly on the family trees. Since the Middle Ages, family trees have been created and used around the world to record family lineage, helping us trace where we come from and learn more about family members who helped shape who we are. After a guided tour of the museum, you will explore examples of original family trees of well-known Armenians, including that of Nicholas Adonts, before creating your very own family tree with the support of a personalized workbook.

Beyond the workshop, we hope that this family tree and workbook will allow you to continue gathering information, collecting stories, and preserving them for future generations. Many different types of materials will be provided, making this a creative, insightful, and inspiring activity for visitors of all ages. At the end of the workshop, you will be able to take your family tree home and continue adding to its branches as you learn more about your ancestors and family traditions.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations for workshop must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5 hours (guided tour and family-tree workshop)  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



### Contact Details

Contact person: Katya Babayan  
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Email: mytenttours@gmail.com  
Facebook: @mytenttours

### Location

Meet Katya at an agreed-upon location in Sisian to start the trip.

# MYTENT TOURS

📍 Sisian, Syunik



**learn**  
about Sisian's cultural heritage

**visit**  
historical monuments

**hike**  
through Sisian and surrounding villages

**camp**  
overnight, counting the stars

**discover**  
breath taking landscapes

## Hiking and camping adventure from Sisian to Tatev

The two-day Sisian-Ltsen-Tatev tour contains cultural and natural wonders, unforgettable history, and gracious hospitality at the crossroads of Artsakh, Iran, and Nakhchivan. It winds through rugged landscapes, velvety green mountains, time-warped villages, ancient settlements, and medieval monasteries—all of which inspire further exploration.

### 1st-day highlights

- Explore the village lifestyles and practices, and embrace the local hospitality while savoring home-cooked national dishes and lessons on baking *lavash*.
- Marvel at the breathtaking view of Vorotnavank, built during the years 1000-1007; it once housed workshops, stores, a seminary, resort, cemetery, and almshouse.
- Relax in Vorotan Canyon with its mineral springs, amazing stalactites, crystal-clear stream, cliffs, and deep gorges.
- Set camp in mostly abandoned Ltsen village, largely off the tourist track.

### 2nd-day highlights

Hike 15 kilometers (ca. 6 hours) from Ltsen to Tatev through beautiful landscapes. End your hike with a 30-minute visit to the magnificent Tatev Monastery, dating to the ninth century.

During the tour, you may gather asparagus, Star of Bethlehem, and sickleweed (based on the season) and learn from Katya about their history, medicinal features, and recipes. Some of what you gather may end up in your lunch or herbal tea.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week.  
Reservations must be made 1 week in advance.  
Payment policy: A deposit of 40% of the total price must be paid 72 hours in advance.  
Duration: 2 days  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Seasonality: May–September  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Artyom Hambardzumyan  
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#### Location

Vanki Tak Wild Gastro is next to Vorotnavank Monastery, at the bottom of the Vorotan Gorge, by the riverside. The area is suitable for camping, if guests have tents with them.

# VANKI TAK WILD GASTRO

📍 Vorotan Gorge near Vorotnavank, Syunik



**Because Zhora Hambardzumyan has fond childhood memories of his birthplace and an attachment to nature, he decided to return and establish a garden in Vaghatin, where he cultivates a selection of new, high-value crops, including asparagus, broccoli, celery, and greens. His son Artyom assists in all facets of the experience.**

feed

**fish and make fresh grilled  
fish-on-a-stick on a bonfire**

try

**your hand at picking vegetables  
from the greenhouse**

cook

**asparagus inside an envelope of  
willow tree bark**

tour

**the garden and greenhouse**

## Cook your organic lunch/dinner in the wild

Zhora will lead a short excursion through the garden where he has planted fruit trees, ornamental trees, willows, and also maintains several fishponds. Next, he will guide you to the greenhouse and asparagus plants. One of the special characteristics of this experience is that everything is wild and all the dishes are cooked on a bonfire. The area is alongside the Vorotan River that flows through the Vorotan Gorge. A stone table is located under a huge willow tree where you may sit and enjoy your lunch. From May until late August, visitors may taste fresh wild asparagus—getting a hands-on experience of harvesting and baking it on a bonfire. Zhora and Artyom will show you a special way to cook asparagus on a bonfire by placing it inside an envelope of willow tree bark. Zhora and Artyom cut the bark from pruned willow branches, which they replenish by regularly planting new willow trees. Willow bark is the best fit for cooking on an open fire as it provides the right level of humidity and adds a pleasant, woodsy taste to the dish. Guests may also choose other vegetables from the greenhouse to make a fresh salad and also have an opportunity to fish and cook on a bonfire the fish they catch.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week,  
from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in  
advance.  
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian  
Seasonality: May–November  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10

Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing  
the site: The road is not accessible  
for sedan cars. If not able to drive,  
visitors can hike for about 10  
minutes to the bottom of the gorge  
or Artyom will provide transport.



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Ashkhen Mashuryan  
Tel: +374 77 95 02 50  
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Facebook: @LOBYGoris

#### Location

Loby Goris restaurant is in Verishen village, adjacent to Goris, 1st Street, 96 House.

# LOBY GORIS RESTAURANT

📍 Verishen, Syunik



**Anzhelika Dajunts and her daughter Ashkhen Mashuryan established this small homestyle business not only to serve traditional, rural dishes, but also to showcase their local hospitality. The restaurant called “Loby” (“beans” in Armenian) is next to Anzhelika's house and is sharing the garden. Ashken's great-great-grandfather, Samson, a famous master-builder, constructed the house nearly 100 years ago.**



**learn**  
how to cook the famous  
Goris *tolma*

**eat**  
in an authentic 100-year-old  
house

**tour**  
the owner's garden, including  
picking/eating local fruits,  
berries, and vegetables  
directly from the plants

## Make a special *tolma* with bean leaves at Loby

Taking part in the *tolma*-making process from A-to-Z is a memorable hands-on experience packed with Armenian history and culture. Under Anzhelika's guidance, you'll first mix tenderized meat with milk for a delicate taste. Then add chopped onion, rice, local greens, and spices that will fill the air with a diverse blend of irresistible fragrances, all while listening to Anzhelika's stories about some of the local food customs and their fascinating history.

The secret of making perfect *tolma* is learning how to wrap the filling in bean leaves—an older tradition common only in this region—if you visit in summer; or wrapped in cabbage or grape leaves at other times of year. After they are wrapped, you'll let the *tolma* stew for about an hour with flavorful herbs to create a dish that is both tender and nutritious.

While waiting for your *tolma* to simmer, you'll have the opportunity to pick fresh from the family garden some homegrown fruits and vegetables, which will not only complement your dinner but also illustrate how your hosts are maintaining traditions of self-sufficient, zero-waste agriculture. If you visit in the fall, you may peel kidney beans with your hosts (also available for purchase to take home).



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Languages: Armenian and Russian

Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 15-20  
Maximum group size: 25  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Gayane Martirosyan  
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Instagram: @mirhavhotel\_  
[www.hotelmirhav.am](http://www.hotelmirhav.am)

#### Location

The Mirhav Hotel is in central Goris, 100 Mashtots Street. The hotel's brick floors, antiques on the walls, wood furnishings, and stone facade all exemplify Goris's historic character.

# MIRHAV HOTEL

 Goris, Syunik



**Gayane Martirosyan is director of the Mirhav Hotel, one of the first hotels in post-Soviet Goris. The hotel offers not only safe and comfortable lodging, but also the opportunity to learn about classic Goris cuisine and its historical context. The hotel's gastronomical reputation has enticed tourists from both near and far for memorable eating and drinking experiences.**



**tour**

**one of the first hotels in  
post-Soviet Goris**

**participate**

**in hands-on cooking  
workshops**

**learn**

**cooking techniques from  
centuries ago**

**bake**

**Armenian *pakhlava* in the  
distinctive Goris style**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available  
7 days a week, from 9  
a.m. to 10 p.m.

Reservations must be made  
24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and  
Russian; request English  
and French in advance

Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: None



## Learn to make Armenian pastry

Gayane will lead you to the yard of the Mirhav Hotel where the chef will introduce the experience and share her story at the hotel. You will learn about the ingredients and different recipes for *pakhlava* (aka baklava) while you mix those ingredients and hear about some of the different ways to make *pakhlava*, both in and outside Armenia. While the *pakhlava* is baking, you will learn about some of the special occasions for the dish. When it's finished baking, enjoy your *pakhlava* with tea/coffee or juices.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1–1.5 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 5  
 Maximum group size: 10  
 Age considerations: None

## Making vodka with locals

From the Mirhav Hotel, walk with Gayane to the mulberry garden about 15 minutes away, while you learn about Goris's history and food traditions. If at the mulberry garden in July, you may join in shaking the trees to gather mulberries. You may also taste the collected mulberries and then learn how to make mulberry vodka from them. Your hosts will share their family traditions for making vodka, as well as how else they use mulberries, such as making a traditional snack with mulberry syrup and coating walnuts on a string. While you observe the distillation process, you may taste some homemade vodka with local pickles, dried fruits, and some snacks.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1.5 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round, but shaking mulberry trees in July only  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 5  
 Maximum group size: 10  
 Age considerations: 18 and older

## Learn to cook an Armenian feast

Gayane will lead you to the garden (if weather permits) or to one of the hotel rooms containing all the ingredients needed for the cooking workshop. The chef will introduce the workshop, offering three main dishes to choose from:

- Vegetarian *tolma*—cabbage leaves stuffed with chopped potato, onion, and carrot, mixed with lentils, beans, and herbs, and served with yogurt.
- Meat *tolma*—cabbage leaves stuffed with chopped beef and pork, mixed with onion, milk, and herbs, served with yogurt.
- *Zhengyalov hats*—bread stuffed with different greens (available when in season) that are chopped, then mixed with onion and butter, and baked in a pan.

The chef will explain the ingredients of each dish and how to cook them. As you prepare your Armenian feast, you will also learn about the significance of each dish from Gayane and your hosts. Once the dish is in the oven, you'll learn about the local beans and how to prepare *aveluk* (sorrel). When the cooking is completed, sit down to your feast and share traditions and stories with your hosts around the table.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 2–2.5 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 8  
 Maximum group size: 10  
 Age considerations: None





AKSEL BAKUNTS  
HOUSE MUSEUM  
GORIS

#### Contact Details

Contact person: Vardan Sargsyan  
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www.gatmuseum.am/en/branches/bakunc

#### Location

The museum is located in 41 Building,  
Mashtots Street, Goris.

# AKSEL BAKUNTS HOUSE MUSEUM

📍 Goris, Syunik



**Behind a picturesque stone wall and wooden door opening to a beautiful and large yard in Goris, this branch of the Charents Museum of Literature and Arts in Yerevan offers an intimate view of writer Aksele Bakunts's origins. The rooms feature life as it would have been lived in the 19th and 20th centuries: a simple kitchen, bedroom, and the room where he wrote.**

see

**Bakunts's well-preserved house,  
whose architecture is typical to  
Goris**

discover

**a traditional tea ceremony and  
tea's significance to Bakunts**

learn

**how to use a samovar to  
make tea**

sip

**rose-petal tea in the garden  
while encountering classic  
Armenian literature**

## Museum tour and tea ceremony

After visiting Bakunts's family house and seeing objects representative of early 19th-century life in Goris, you will learn about tea-making traditions and their significance to Bakunts by participating in a tea ceremony. In the process, you will learn all about the significance and origin of the samovar, a metal container used in Armenian tea ceremonies, and how to use one to make rose-petal tea, a favorite of Bakunts. While sampling the tea, as well as local sweet delicacies, you will have the chance to read Bakunts's short story "The Alpine Violet" and discover the realities of rural and urban life during the Soviet period—all while sitting in a garden where Bakunts himself likely relaxed with a cup of tea.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Saturday, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:40 p.m., and Sunday, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. Reservations for workshop must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5 hours (guided tour and tea ceremony)  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



#### Contact Details

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#### Location

The Wool to Carpet center is in Verishen village, near St. Hripsime church.

# WOOL TO CARPET CENTER

📍 Verishen, Syunik



**In Syunik, many residents herd sheep and practice agriculture. Those sheep provide the raw material for the Wool to Carpet center, which transforms wool into natural carpets, home products, and personal accessories. Fifteen women from Syunik work in the center at four primary tasks: wool processing, threading, carpet-making, and selling souvenirs. Their woolen thread is 100 percent natural raw material, which is ecologically clean, without chemical additives.**



**learn**

traditional techniques of dying sheep's wool

**try**

wool washing and bending

**experience**

carpet weaving

**discover**

handicrafts from the area

**shop**

for local handmade products

**participate**

in a sheep-shearing class with a local farmer

## Transform rough wool into a fine Armenian carpet

At the Wool to Carpet center, you will have a chance to discover the carpet-weaving process, from the shearing of sheep to the final creation of carpets and other artisan crafts. Learn about and participate in sheep shearing with a local farmer before touring the wool-processing area where local women hackle and twist the wool. You may take part in processing this raw material to finally become a carpet. With the guidance of master artisans, participate in weaving a traditional Armenian design. You will also have the opportunity to purchase souvenirs from the women. A meal may also be provided for groups of six or more.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance (for tour), 3 days in advance (for sheep shearing and lunch).  
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Seasonality: March–November  
Languages: Armenian and English

Minimum group size: 2  
Minimum group size for meal and sheep shearing: 7  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 25  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Anush Malintsyan  
Tel: +374 94 30 93 69  
Email: info@hotelyeghevnut.com  
Facebook: @yeghevnuthotel

#### Location

The experience takes place at Grisha's house and garden, one of Goris's cultural heritage assets, built in 1913 using stone and lime mortar. The house is at 56 Ankakhutyan Street.

# BEESWAX BY YEGHEVNUT

📍 Goris, Syunik



**With more than fifty years of experience as a beekeeper, Grisha Harutyunyan and his daughter-in-law Anush Malintsyan are the perfect hosts for this experience. Anush learned from her grandmother about the healing properties of beeswax, as well as the folk traditions of using it to treat wounds and skin cracks. With this wisdom, Anush has created a cream that helps heal the skin.**

hear

**Grisha's personal story as a beekeeper and his secret of longevity**

get

**a brief introduction to beekeeping and the honey-making process**

see

**the full process of making hand cream from beeswax and mix your own hand cream**

taste

**famous honey and mountain tea**

## Beekeeping & hand cream with a master beekeeper

Anush and Grisha will greet you in front of their house which was built in 1913, using local materials like stone and lime mortar. They will provide you with beekeeper's protective clothing (the upper head/face covering) before entering their garden where 5 to 10 beehives are located. Grisha will open the beehives to show the bee colonies at different stages of honey production. In a small demonstration room, Grisha will show and explain the beekeeping and honey-making processes.

After the introduction, Anush will take over the tour with her beeswax cream-making class. She will demonstrate how she melts and purifies the beeswax before mixing it with olive oil. Anush will then fill your small glass container with wax, which you can mix with your preferred essential oils to make the cream. It will take about 10 minutes to dry. While you wait, taste Grisha's famous honey and enjoy mountain teas.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round; however, the explanations about beekeeping and the honey-production process may take place indoors from October to April

Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 12  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None





#### Contact Details

Contact person: Anush Malintsyan  
Tel: +374 94 30 93 69  
Email: info@hotelyeghevnut.com  
Facebook: @yeghevnuthotel

#### Location

The Yeghevnut hotel is in Goris, 7 Yerevanyan Highway, on the slopes of a green mountain surrounded by evergreen fir trees.

# YEGHEVNUT HOTEL

📍 Goris, Syunik



**Anush Malintsyan founded the Yeghevnut hotel with her husband in 1993—starting with five rooms. Thanks to its popularity, they gradually enlarged the facility and now have a 34-room hotel with modern décor, situated on the slopes of a velvety hill, amid dense pristine forests of evergreen fir trees.**

enjoy

**magnificent views of  
Goris from the hotel**

learn

**about the region's  
distinctive foodways**

hear

**Anush share charming  
stories about her family  
and local traditions**

## Learn to cook Armenian pastries and other dishes

After welcoming you to the hotel, Anush will lead you to the kitchen for a cooking class. She will introduce the chef who will briefly explain each ingredient and their uses. You will learn about local cooking traditions and stories behind each of the dishes and their significance in everyday life. You may choose to cook one of three dishes:

*Tan*, a yogurt soup, also known as *pzkatan*. The chef will show you how the yogurt is made from fermented milk, and then demonstrate how to strain it with yogurt that was previously prepared. After adding eggs, salt, and some water, the *tan* is cooked until boiling.

*Khashil*, a popular local dish made of roasted ground wheat and served with butter and yogurt. Often eaten with *khashil* is *tan* seasoned with mint or cilantro.

*Gata*, a well-known Armenian pastry. Anush will describe how to make different varieties of *gata*, as well as the rituals associated with this dish.

At the end of the class, you will be able to enjoy whatever you prepared/baked, along with local pickles, bread, cheese, and some greens.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Duration: *Tan* soup, 1 hour;  
*Khashil*, 2–2.5 hours; *Gata*, 1 hour

Languages: Armenian

Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2

Ideal group size: 10

Maximum group size: 20

Age considerations: None

Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Anahit Aleksanyan  
Tel: +374 43 00 44 22, +374 94 44 22 89  
Email: hotelminagoris@gmail.com  
Facebook: @minahotelingoris

#### Location

Old Khndzoresk is 13 kilometers southeast of Goris, next to present-day Khndzoresk, which has deep basins on both right and left slopes of the rugged glen.

# KHNDZORESK REVIVAL FOUNDATION

 Khndzoresk, Syunik



**A local businessman, born in one of the Old Khndzoresk caves, manages the Khndzoresk Revival Foundation, which seeks to revive and preserve the old village as a historic site and tourist attraction. Located on the steep slope of a gorge, the historic village of Khndzoresk was fully inhabited around the 17th and 18th centuries, when more than 8,000 people resided in its natural and manmade caves. Until 1958, Old Khndzoresk boasted homes, schools, cheese factories, churches, and even a bar where villagers socialized at night.**



**cross**

**the swinging bridge with  
fabulous views**

**explore**

**the land of abundant cave  
homes**

**discover**

**the old churches, village structures,  
and social areas**

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: Large buses will have limited access to the site due to the dirt road.



## Explore Old Khndzoresk - Armenia's abandoned cave city

You will catch your first glimpse of the historic cave city when you meet your local guide on the swinging bridge that leads you into the heart of Old Khndzoresk. There you will be able to visit one of the village's two stone churches and several of the approximately 2,000 cave dwellings, some remarkably well-preserved with the original furnishings intact. This hiking tour involves a description of the history of the village and the way of life of its residents by the locals' interpretation. During the walking tour, you may discover old caves, churches, natural springs and other structures that make up the town. Stop for lunch and meet Vardan, the keeper of a small museum collection of Old Khndzoresk and who produces mulberry vodka.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1–1.5 hours  
Seasonality: March–November  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None

## Hiking from New Khndzoresk to Old Khndzoresk

Visitors with a little more time may start their tour at New Khndzoresk, from where they will hike to Old Khndzoresk via a scenic trail that leads past caves and other rock formations. Local guides relate stories about the history of the region, traditions and lifestyle, and its natural heritage, like plants that were used in traditional food and medicine. Travelers then arrive in the village of Old Khndzoresk where they are able to explore the caves and stone structures of this abandoned town. Travelers complete their tour at the suspension bridge where they may have lunch or a coffee in the cave cafe.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 3 hours  
Seasonality: March–November  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None









#### Contact Details

Contact person: Vardan Sargsyan  
Tel: +374 284 207 82, +374 77 11 12 45  
Email: getmuseum@mail.ru

#### Location

The Goris Local Lore Museum is in the town center, 5 Mashtots Street, close to the main square and municipal buildings.

# GORIS LOCAL LORE MUSEUM

📍 Goris, Syunik



The Goris Local Lore Museum was the first museum in Syunik when it opened in 1948, originally in an abandoned church. Visitors can identify the museum by the stone sculptures and *khachkars* outside. The museum offers a fascinating collection of materials from the Soviet times, as well as special objects dating from the Early Bronze Age to the present.

## learn

about Goris's history through objects from the Early Bronze Age to the Soviet Armenian period

## explore

this small museum's broad and fascinating collection with a guided tour

## enjoy

an aperitif, served by special request

## Museum Tour

The museum displays the rich history of Goris, a thriving center of the Syunik region from ancient times to modern day. The museum's 5,000-plus objects (400–500 on display) help illustrate Goris's longstanding traditions of stone carving and metal working. The collections include beautifully designed weapons, ornaments, belts, ceramics, bronze and beaded jewelry with semi-precious stones, and ethnographic objects that speak to a long history of cultural activity. Many objects were excavated nearby. Of particular significance is a five-faced idol, dating to the 2nd millennium BCE, found between Tatev and Goris (Harzhis village), which suggests the location of a pagan temple. Also significant is a bronze lion—a symbol of kings— from the Urartian period of the 7th century BCE.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Monday–Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian and English; request Russian in advance

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact persons: Mikael Shelemetev,  
Paloma Rubio, Bagrat Hakobyan  
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+374 77 89 91 10  
Email: pegasustandzaver@gmail.com  
Facebook: @tandzavervillage

#### Location

Tandzaver is 40 km from the main E117 road to  
Goris and 16 km past Tatev. Transportation may  
be arranged to pick up and drop off guests in  
nearby Tatev.

# TANDZAVER

📍 Tandzaver, Syunik



**Mikael Shelemetev and Paloma Rubio, a young couple, moved from Spain to the village of Tandzaver in 2019 to develop geotourism in Armenia. Once Mikael visited this hidden corner of Armenia, tucked away in the mountains near the iconic Tatev Monastery and tram, it felt like home to him. He was fascinated by everything: the people, mountains, gorges, tranquility, clean air, and the prospect of engaging in tourism activities. Mikael and Paloma's settling in the village is not only about two young people finding their new home in this wonderful corner of nature, but also about how local villagers redefined their opinions about their surrounding environment.**



**venture**

off the beaten track to the  
small village of Tandzaver

**take**

a guided walking tour of the  
Magic Forest

**make**

a piece of "land art" under the  
guidance of your hosts

**discover**

little-known Andok Fortress

**hike**

or bike to Davit Bek Reservoir

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days  
a week, from 7 a.m. to  
8:30 p.m.

Reservations must be made  
24 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian,  
English, Russian, and Spanish

Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: High-  
clearance or 4x4 suggested.  
Suitable for 20 pax Sprinter  
van or smaller, but not for  
large bus.

## Explore and make “land art” in the Magic Forest

Visit the village famous for the first Land Art Residence in Tandzaver, not far from the Tatev Monastery. After leisurely strolling along the 5.5 km trail through “The Magic Forest” and seeing enchanting works of art, you will have a chance to create your own masterpieces in a hands-on art class. Mikael and Paloma will help you find interesting “building blocks” from the forest and expand your creativity to create things you never thought possible.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

**Duration:** 2–3 hours, 5.5 km over mellow terrain  
**Seasonality:** May–November  
**Minimum group size:** 1  
**Ideal group size:** 5-15  
**Maximum group size:** 25  
**Age considerations:** appropriate for ages 5 and older

## Explore Andok (Vanand) Fortress

Join Mikael and Paloma on a 7 km hike from Tandzaver to Andok (Vanand) Fortress and Davit Bek Reservoir through forested terrain that abounds in both flora (particularly deciduous/broad-leaved species of plants) and fauna (including 200 species of vertebrates and over 30 species of birds). With the help of locals, Paloma and Mikael are renovating the trail to the fortress—locally known as Andok berd—which was one of the Kingdom of Syunik’s 43 fortresses in the 11th and 12th centuries. The walls of Andok (Vanand) Fortress are half-covered with tree branches and leaves, but you can enter inside the walls. On the way to the fortress, there is a perfect point for birdwatching and you may see many species of birds even without special equipment. After the fortress, you will continue your hike to a charming, hidden waterfall and then to Davit Bek Reservoir, also known as Chai-Zami Lake (which in Turkish means “the field of river”). The trail is also good for biking, so you have the option of traveling by foot or by bike. Afterwards, you may return to Tandzaver by off-road vehicle and you may stay in Tandzaver at the camping site or in two local guesthouses.



### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

**Duration:** 3.5 hours, +2 hours if returning by foot (hiking trail Andok (Vanand) Fortress—Chai-Zami Lake)  
**Seasonality:** May–November  
**Minimum group size:** 1  
**Ideal group size:** 10  
**Maximum group size:** 20  
**Age considerations:** appropriate for ages 5 and older



# **VAYOTS DZOR** region





*The Vayots Dzor region in southern Armenia features a dramatic, rocky, and dry terrain, ranging in elevation from about 990 meters in Areni village to 3,522 meters in the Vardenis Mountains. Although a small region, it has diverse climate zones typical to valleys and high-altitude mountains, which make gardening and viticulture prevalent in the valleys and foothills.*

Numerous rivers flow through the region, creating fertile plots of land that support many types of small trees and shrubs in addition to orchards and vineyards. The region's natural wealth is the Arpa River valley, which is home to the Arpa Protected Landscape that boasts hundreds of plant and animal species. This is where still grow the aboriginal species of wild grapes, which are considered to be the ancestor of domestic grapes. Typical local grapes in the foothills yield the most delicious wines of Armenia, which you may taste on the spot.

Located at the heart of the ancient Silk Road, Vayots Dzor has been a crossroads of cultures for millennia and contains numerous cultural heritage sites. One of the most famous is the Areni-1 cave where many ancient *karas* (or clay urns) provide forensic evidence of wine production dating back 6,000 years. You may also visit cave dwellings that are several thousand years old, ascend to the medieval Smbataberd Fortress perched on the cliffs, and visit Noravank Monastery, which dates to the 10th through 13th centuries and is located in a huge gorge surrounded by red rocks. The spa town of Jermuk, with its numerous hot springs and

mineral waters, is another of Vayots Dzor's crown jewels.

In the villages, you may find traditional artisans such as carpet weavers, wood carvers, carpenters, cross-stone or *khachkar* makers, stonemasons, basket weavers, tailors, and puppet makers. Village restaurants and guesthouses serve special local dishes such as delicious salads made from edible plants collected from the nearby mountains, sorrel soup, *karshm*, *tonir* barbecue, buried cheese seasoned with different spices, *ghavurma*, *qyalagyosh*, pickles of various wild plants, and river fish prepared in a clay pot. If you are curious about spirits, you may taste various homemade fruit vodkas and even try to distill them during the season.

The region contains a remarkable number of animals, many listed in Armenia's Red Book, which catalogs rare and endangered species in Armenia. Bezoar goats, Caucasian bears, wild boars, eagles, vultures, and even the elusive Caucasian leopard call the hills of Vayots Dzor home, making this region a must-see for wildlife enthusiasts.

## HIGHLIGHTS



***ghavurma*, *tolma*, *tonir* barbecues, buried cheese, *karshm* soup, *qyalagyosh*, river fish, *gata***



**Jermuk Art Gallery, Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum**



**Arpa River, Arpa River valley, Noravank Gorge, Areni-1 Birds' Cave, Mozrov Cave, Bear Cave, Magel Cave**



**Areni Wine Festival, Gata Festival, Ecotourism Festival**



**Noravank Monastery (13-14th c.), Smbataberd fortress (9-10th c.), Tsakhats Kar Monastery (10-11th c.), Jewish cemetery, Tanahat Monastery (7th c.), rock-hewn Holy Mother of God Church in Old Martiros (13th c.)**

**Contact Details**

Contact person: Arpine Matevosyan  
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Facebook: @arhestanots.studio

**Location**

The art studio is centrally located in Areni village.

# ARHESTANOTS STUDIO

📍 Areni, Vayots Dzor



**Arpine Matevosyan is a young and enthusiastic woman from Areni village. She was a crafts teacher at a private center for kids in Yerevan, but she moved home to Areni village in order to share her knowledge and skills with the residents from her birthplace.**

## hear

the history of clay and pottery traditions of the region

## choose

from three distinct pottery workshops

## participate

in family-friendly experiences

## Take family-friendly clay lessons with Arpine

After a short tour of the studio, Arpine will show you the different stages of clay, starting with earthy clay, then semi-mixed clay, and finally the fully mixed clay that is used in pottery. Each person in the group can choose between three workshops:

### **Jewelry making from clay pieces**

Under Arpine's guidance, you can make your own jewelry, which can be a necklace, bracelet, or any other accessory, with terracotta pieces and thread. Arpine will show the Armenian ornaments on the clay pieces and will explain their meaning.

### **Painting on a clay candle holder**

You can paint a house-shaped candle holder made of baked clay and finish your piece with a dry texture spray. Each person will receive a small candle to put inside their candle holder.

### **Pottery class**

Learn the techniques of pottery making hands-on with Arpine as she shows you how to mix and form the clay. Because the baking process may take about three to five hours, visitors should take their baked objects the next day on their way back to Yerevan, or await their delivery to Yerevan.

#### **BOOKING DETAILS**

Classes are available 7 days a week, April–October, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., and November–March, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–2.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; Basic English

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 10

Age considerations:  
Child-friendly  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



### Contact Details

Contact person: Svetlana Khachatryan  
Tel: +374 93 43 35 26  
Email: ar.arenirestaurant@gmail.com  
Facebook: @ArAreniRestaurant

### Location

Ar Areni restaurant is in Areni village, on the Yerevan-Meghri Highway, located on the upper floor of the cellar. There is outdoor dining next to the vineyards.

# AR ARENI

📍 Areni, Vayots Dzor



**Svetlana Khachatryan and Gevorg Grigoryan started winemaking during the 1990s. They share a similar story with the majority of families living in late-Soviet Areni and are helping to keep Areni's local winemaking heritage alive. As the wine factories refused to take their grapes, they decided to make their own wine to not lose their entire harvest. At the time, they couldn't imagine that they'd become one of the village's first homemade winemakers who would host tourists and introduce local wine and the story of Areni village as the homeland of wine production. This married couple is full of warm hospitality and stands apart with their ability to learn and innovate, combined with their inquisitive minds and an incessant desire to build better lives together.**



## learn

**about the work of cultivation from a winemaker and participate in seasonal grape cultivation**

## taste

**how every piece of the grapevine is used in local cuisine**

## cook

***tolma* and river fish with Svetlana and eat your meal with a personal wine pairing**

## visit

**a wine cellar and taste different varieties of wine produced at the vineyard**

## experience

**all of this in Areni village, the historic birthplace of Armenian wine**

## From vine to wine: follow a grape's journey

This experience shows the life cycle of the grapevine and its use in traditional cuisine. Gevorg will explain (and demonstrate, depending on the season) the stages of cultivation from March to October such as collecting grapevines, tying the branches of vine to the lines, picking the leaves for making *tolma*, harvesting, and pruning the branches. Svetlana will show all the ways they use the various parts of the vine in local cuisine. You will participate in making *tolma* with the grape leaves and a fish dish with the grapevines. Svetlana will demonstrate how to prepare both dishes and lead you through a hands-on demonstration. While the dish cooks, Gevorg will give a tour of their wine cellar, finishing with a tasting. Then you may choose your favorite wine to drink with your meal.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–2.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian  
Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 20  
Maximum group size: 30  
Age considerations: None, wine tasting: 18 and older  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



HIN ARENI  
VINEYARD

#### Contact Details

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[www.hinareniwine.am](http://www.hinareniwine.am)  
[www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com](http://www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com)

#### Location

Hin Areni winery is in Areni village on the Vayots Dzor Wine Route.

# HIN ARENI WINERY

📍 Areni, Vayots Dzor



**Hin Areni winery is perhaps the most organized and market-ready large-scale wine production facility in the region. It has good quality wine, a modern, well-laid-out wine production facility, and two tasting areas: one for walk-in visitors and the other for group visitors.**

learn

**about modern, state-of-the-art wine production with historic and indigenous Areni grape varieties**

see

**wine matured in oak barrels from the lush slopes of Artsakh**

visit

**the tasting room to enjoy various wines and snacks**

travel

**along the famous Vayots Dzor Wine Route**

## Winery Tour and Tasting

The guide will begin your tour of the Hin Areni winery by showing you its modern, large-scale production techniques. Afterwards, you may relax in the wine-tasting area with an optional meal to go with the drinks. There is also the opportunity to tour the nearby vineyards on a quadricycle all-terrain vehicle—a special way to see firsthand how Areni grapes go from bunch to punch. Depending on the production cycle, you may arrange grape-picking tours during the autumn months.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 40  
Age considerations: 18 and older  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None





#### Contact Details

Contact person: Tigran Simonyan  
Tel: +374 94 42 44 27  
Email: areniwines@gmail.com  
Facebook: @wineareni  
www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com

#### Location

The Areni Wine Factory is in Areni village, on the Vayots Dzor Wine Route.

# ARENI WINE FACTORY

 Areni, Vayots Dzor



**Founded in 1994, the Areni Wine Factory is among the oldest and best-established wine facilities in the area. The winery produces a selection of red, white, and pomegranate wines. Some 30,000 curious (and thirsty!) visitors have experienced its wines every year since 2012. Areni has been a family-run business since its founding and has garnered a number of awards and medals for its wines.**



visit

**the oldest and best-known wine facility in Vayots Dzor**

see

**and smell wine aged in massive oak barrels**

leave

**a message on the tasting area's walls**

taste

**traditional grape and special fruit wines**

tour

**the vineyards and harvest grapes with locals**

travel

**the Vayots Dzor Wine Route**

## Winery Tour and Tasting

A tour of the factory includes a walk through the cellar where the wine ages in massive oak barrels, followed by a tasting of the winery's selection of traditional and fruit wines. In an upstairs dining area, you may order coffee or tea and watch a short video about Armenian winemaking traditions and the company's history. With advance notice, you may also arrange an on-site lunch and a *lavash*-making workshop. A small craft shop offers souvenirs and handmade gifts, as well as a selection of wines for purchase.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 4  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 40  
Age considerations: 18 and older  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None

#### Contact Details

Contact person: Nver Ghazaryan  
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Facebook: @MomikWines  
Instagram: @momikwines  
www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com

#### Location

Momik Wines is in Ghrrer vineyards, Areni village, which is on the Vayots Dzor Wine Route.

# MOMIK WINES

📍 Areni, Vayots Dzor



**Nver Ghazaryan's family has been growing and producing wine from the endemic Areni grape near Areni village for more than 40 years. The results of their efforts are quality wines, one of which received the Areni Wine Festival's "Best Homemade Wine" award in 2011. Nver and his wife Narine will share with you not only their knowledge of Armenian winemaking traditions, but also some of their wines in the tasting area, which they call the "wine cube."**

learn

**about Armenian  
winemaking traditions**

taste

**red, white, and rosé wines in  
the Momik "wine cube"**

discover

**the history and production of the  
endemic Areni grape in a small  
vineyard near the village of Areni**

travel

**the Vayots Dzor Wine Route**

## Try Armenia's "Best Homemade Wine"

Nver and Narine grow grapes on their family's land in soil that is rich in limestone and calcium. This style of production not only makes the grapes sweeter, but also eliminates the need for artificial fertilizers. The wines are aged partly in *karases* (enormous clay vessels), partly in wooden barrels, and partly in glass barrels. The winery takes its name from Momik, the famous Armenian architect, sculptor, and artist who helped construct Noravank Monastery and churches in Areni village in the 14th century. Nestled in one of Vayots Dzor's many valleys, their vineyard very nicely illustrates the natural beauty, winemaking traditions, and hospitality of Armenia.

Narine is also an accomplished stone carver who will explain the characteristics of the regional limestone that is used in many local buildings, including the monastery itself and she will demonstrate *khachkar* carving.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available Tuesday–Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance  
Seasonality: March–November

Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: 18 and older  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: Large buses will have limited access to the site due to dirt road



### Contact Details

Contact person: Hovakim Saghatelyan  
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 Email: hovakim@trinitycv.com  
 Facebook: @trinitycanyonvineyards  
 Instagram: @trinitycv\_  
 www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com  
 www.trinitycv.com

### Location

Trinity Canyon Vineyards is in Aghavnadzor village, 1st Street, 115, on the Vayots Dzor Wine Route.

# TRINITY CANYON VINEYARDS

📍 Aghavnadzor, Vayots Dzor



**Hovakim Saghatelyan is one of the three wine enthusiasts who has led Trinity Canyon Vineyards since 2009 and who has written a book on the history of Armenian wine. Trinity values quality over quantity—seeking to produce wines as organic as possible, without the use of modern mass production practices. Trinity experiments with both endemic and foreign grape varieties.**

visit

**an up-and-coming winery,  
operating since 2009**

travel

**along the Vayots Dzor  
Wine Route**

learn

**about winemaking traditions at  
the first certified organic wine  
producer in Armenia**

enjoy

**Trinity's award-winning  
organic wine and its specially  
paired wines and foods**

## Winery Tour and Tasting

Hovakim will present Armenian winemaking traditions, focusing on Trinity's production of organic wines. During your tour of the winery, you will see how Trinity's winemakers respect the traditions of Armenian wine production by using terracotta vessels (*karas*) to produce natural white and red wines from their centuries-old vineyard. During harvest season, volunteers may sign up in advance to help pick grapes and to join in the post-harvest celebrations, where you may appreciate a classic red made with Areni noir grapes or taste one of their small batches made with indigenous and international varietals. Afterwards, you will get to taste three types of wines with locally made cheese and *lavash*. Trinity offers a variety of packages which include wine tasting and food. Trinity may also arrange traditional folk music and dance lessons, vineyard and winemaking tours, and customized events.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week,  
from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours  
in advance.  
Duration: 1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and  
Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 4  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 30  
Age considerations: 18 and older  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing  
the site: None



#### Contact Details

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Facebook: [@oldbridgewinery](https://www.facebook.com/oldbridgewinery)  
Instagram: [@oldbridgewinery](https://www.instagram.com/oldbridgewinery)  
[www.oldbridgewinery.com](http://www.oldbridgewinery.com)  
[www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com](http://www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com)

#### Location

Old Bridge winery is on the Vayots Dzor Wine Route, on the main road in Yeghegnadzor, at Yerevanyan Highway 1.

# OLD BRIDGE WINERY

 Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



**Armen Khalatyan founded Old Bridge, a small but high-quality winery with a separate but related B&B. The facility produces 8-9,000 bottles each year. The winemakers at Old Bridge attribute their special wine to the energy, love, and emotion, which they transmit by hand to the wine.**

travel

**along the Vayots Dzor Wine Route**

visit

**a winery and vineyards, family-owned since 1998**

learn

**about age-old winemaking traditions**

enjoy

**fine wines in the cozy tasting room**

see

**both the Old Bridge winery and B&B**

## Winery Tour and Tasting

Armen will first show you the vineyards and then lead you to the winery's cozy tasting room to sample some of Old Bridge's wines—such as red, white, and reserve labels—paired with local goat cheese and honey. Depending on the season, you may also participate in grape-picking, distillation, or bottling. The winery's name comes from the nearly 13th-century old bridge, once part of the Silk Road.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, French, Russian, and Swedish

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 4  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 40  
Age considerations: 18 and older  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None





#### Contact Details

Tel: +374 281 255 65  
 Email: info@getnatoun.am  
 Facebook: @getnatoun  
 www.getnatoun.am  
 www.vayotsdzorwineroute.com

#### Location

Getnatoun winery is in Yeghegnadzor, 11 Yerevanyan Highway, on the Vayots Dzor Wine Route.

# GETNATOUN WINERY

Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



**After serving as a tobacco factory, Getnatoun became a winery in 1999 and has expanded over the years. The fruits on eight hectares of vineyards in Vernashen village are both sweet and sour, which help to create a balanced wine. Other important factors are the vineyard's location in the foothills of Vayots Dzor at an altitude of 1,400 to 1,600 meters, the sandy and calcareous soil, sunny climate, and great temperature differential between day and night.**

**hear**

**about Getnatoun's ancient, indigenous grape varieties**

**taste**

**award-winning wines that continue an ancient history of winemaking**

**see**

**how they blend natural fermentation with modern sophisticated wine, brandy, and vodka production**

**walk**

**among the 200-plus oak barrels that hold their 7 types of wine**

**learn**

**about their famous pomegranate wines**

## Winery Tour and Tasting

If you are curious about larger, industrial-scale wine, brandy, and vodka production, then plan a visit to Getnatoun's factory, a family-run business since 1999. Getnatoun's products are not available in regular markets, so the wine-tasting room featured on the tour is something of an exclusive experience. After exploring the clean, modern facility, enjoy a snack at the company's vineyards not too far away. Getnatoun is particularly well-known for its pomegranate wine, which has a distinctive scent and balanced taste. It is sour and a little bit sweet, complemented with just a touch of astringency. The over-ripe, often cracked, and exceptionally red pomegranate is brought from either Meghri in southern Armenia or Artsakh. Yet, Getnatoun also uses its own fruits to make high-quality apple, apricot, and plum vodkas, which age for seven or more years. The wine factory also has reserve wines—aged wines, which are first kept in oak barrels and then in bottles for at least four years before being sold.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Monday–Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
 Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
 Duration: 1.5 hours  
 Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 4  
 Ideal group size: 15  
 Maximum group size: 40  
 Age considerations: 18 and older  
 Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Arusyak Mikayelyan  
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Facebook: @ArpaPL

#### Location

The Arpa Environmental Foundation is in Yeghegnadzor, 8/1 Yerevanyan Highway, 1.

# ARPA ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION

 Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



The mission of the Arpa Environmental Foundation (founded in 2014) is to manage and protect 6,000 hectares of protected land in the Vayots Dzor region. The Arpa Protected Landscape is the first community-managed protected area in Armenia, which is home to more than 900 species of flora and 525 species of fauna, including 90 species of endangered plants and 80 species of endangered animals. The Foundation has developed a number of trails for guided hiking, biking, and horse-riding tours, and offers safari-style jeep tours through the protected highlands. In addition, the Foundation may offer camping experiences in the protected area or arrange overnight accommodations in a network of B&Bs in the region. In 2017, the Foundation opened a tourism visitor center in Yeghegnadzor, where travelers may find information about the protected area, arrange guided tours or overnight accommodations, rent bicycles and camping equipment, and browse a small craft shop.



tour

adventurously in a  
Soviet-era jeep

enjoy

brehtaking views of the  
landscapes

get

brehtaking views of  
the landscapes

hike

through an environment with  
more than 900 species of flora  
and 525 species of fauna

#### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week. Highly recommended to book tours from 8 to 10 a.m. and from 5 to 8 p.m., which are the best times to see animals.

Reservations must be made 72 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



## Take an off-road jeep tour

Take a 1.5-hour jeep tour from Areni village to Noravank Monastery, accompanied by a professional guide and ranger who knows the area and its cultural heritage. On the jeep tour from Areni village to Hin Amaghu ruins, you may see Hrashkaber Fortress. Your tour will end with the opportunity to buy some souvenirs from the shop that is located inside the Noravank Monastery. It is also possible to take longer hiking/safari tours based on the Arpa Environmental Foundation's itineraries.

### What to Wear/Bring

Comfortable walking shoes, hat, and sunscreen.

## Hike the stunning Noravank Canyon

Take a hiking tour with the Arpa Environmental Foundation through the untouched natural beauty of Noravank Canyon within the Arpa Protected Landscape. Professional hiking guides will help you discover deep gorges, majestic mountains, historic ruins, and much more. Three easy-to-moderate hiking trails are available.

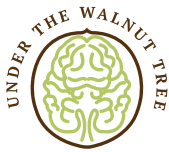
- The 2.8 km Noravank trail connects the old settlement of New Amaghu—now in ruins—with the Noravank Monastery complex. The trail runs through the canyon, famous for its red rocks, endangered flora such as juniper forests, and endangered fauna such as leopards, lynx, and bears.
- The 5.8 km Chukar trail starts from Khachik village, crosses the Bezoar Trail, and takes you to Old Amaghu amid biodiversity and medieval *khachkars*. During the hike, you will also have the rare opportunity to see the Noravank Monastery from high above.
- The 3.1 km Bezoar Trail takes you to one of the highest points of the Arpa Protected Landscape, from which you can admire the stunning scenery of the canyon and the Noravank Monastery. From a vista point on the way, you may be able to spot through binoculars some wild Bezoar Goats, known for their striking horns.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1.5 hours  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: Noravank trail 1–1.5 hours  
Chukar trail 2.5–3 hours  
Bezoar Trail 2–2.5 hours  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None



### Contact Details

Contact person: Lilit Khalatyan  
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Facebook: [@underthewalnut](https://www.facebook.com/underthewalnut)  
Instagram: [@\\_under\\_the\\_walnut\\_tree\\_](https://www.instagram.com/_under_the_walnut_tree_)

### Location

Under the Walnut Tree is in Yeghegnadzor, 14 Levonyan Street, which is 15 or 20 minutes by foot, or 5 minutes by car, from the city center.

# UNDER THE WALNUT TREE

 Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



Lilit Khalatyan and Abraham Khalatyan are the founders of Under the Walnut Tree, a guesthouse and restaurant. Their family has been hosting visitors for 20 years, beginning when their grandfather, who worked in the construction industry, began receiving business partners from abroad. They maintain their family traditions of hospitality, guiding visitors through the process of making traditional dishes and drinks.



**make**

and bake *gata* in a traditional *tonir*

**learn**

about the traditions of making *gata* and vodka

**taste**

delicious *gata* of your own creation and various types of homemade vodka

**sit**

overlooking the houses of Yeghegnadzor in a friendly home environment

### GENERAL BOOKING DETAILS

Experiences are available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Reservations must be made 72 hours in advance.

Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



## Learn to make *gata* with Lilit

Lilit will share with you the history and traditions of baking *gata*, which is a cake traditionally prepared for holidays, weddings, rituals, and other special occasions. To make the dish, you wrap a sweet filling in cake, then shape it, and decorate. Lilit will provide ready-made dough and your preferred filling; then, under her guidance, you will fill your cake and shape it into the distinctive *gata* design. Finally, you will bake your *gata* in the *tonir*. Once the dish is ready, taste it in Under the Walnut Tree's large backyard patio.



## Vodka distillation and tasting class

Abraham will explain the entire distilling process—from harvesting the fruit to the first drops of distilled vodka—still a widespread practice in many Armenian households. Nearly every home has a *zavod* (distilling equipment) or at least can borrow the equipment from their relatives or neighbors. Because the distillation process takes several days, you are not able to distill your own vodka from start to finish; however, you can get a taste of the steps and of some finished products with experienced vodka-makers. Under the Walnut Tree's vodka comes from grapes, plums, apples, apricots, pears, and/or berries.

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 10  
 Maximum group size: 15  
 Age considerations: None

### EXPERIENCE BOOKING DETAILS

Duration: 1–1.5 hours  
 Seasonality: Year-round  
 Minimum group size: 2  
 Ideal group size: 10  
 Maximum group size: 15  
 Age considerations: 18 and older



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Artyom Ghazaryan  
Tel: +374 94 69 47 90, +374 77 75 22 15  
Email: artyom.yerkat@gmail.com  
Facebook: @artyom.yerkat

#### Location

Artyom Yerkat workshop is in Yeghegnadzor,  
9 Myasnikyan Street.

# ARTYOM YERKAT WORKSHOP

📍 Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



Originally an architect from Yeghegnadzor, Artyom Ghazaryan found his passion while walking in Jermuk, a mountain spa town in Vayots Dzor, in southern Armenia. A casual glance at the rubbish scattered in the street inspired Artyom to make use of what others deemed trash. The results are one-of-a-kind collages and sophisticated iron structures that explore complex artistic themes—which gave him the nickname of “Yerkat,” meaning iron. At his workshop in Yeghegnadzor, on a property shared with his grandfather’s home, Artyom teaches his son the elements of his craft and shares his knowledge and stories with visitors.



## tour

the artist's workshop in a local house where he creates and teaches his craft

## learn

about the recycled materials used in Artyom's works

## get

a hands-on collage experience and make a souvenir to take home

## Create a collage from recycled materials

Artyom will lead you through his studio to see some of the many collage works he has created. Afterwards, you will take his collage-making class, either in the house or (during warmer months and weather permitting) outside in his garden. After Artyom introduces the steps and materials, you will start to make your own collage out of recycled materials. Under Artyom’s guidance, you will glue pieces of fabrics, plastic, feathers, dried flowers, nut shells, and other collected/recycled objects onto a piece of cardboard, according to your own imagination and taste. Once the glue has dried, you will start painting and varnishing your collage. During the process, you will learn where the materials come from and how Artyom decided to make collages from recycled materials, including the inspiration behind his first collage. Enjoy coffee/tea and some sweets while you work. At the end of your visit, you may take your creation with you as a souvenir and/or visit the shop, where Artyom’s works are for sale.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Classes are available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 7  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Vehicle size restrictions to access the site: None



Yeghegnadzor  
Regional  
Museum

#### Contact Details

Contact person: Karen Azatyan  
Tel: +374 98 05 25 52, +374 28 12 33 92  
Email: tangaran68@gmail.com  
Facebook: @museum68

#### Location

The museum is in Yeghegnadzor,  
Shahumyan Street 4.

# YEGHEGNADZOR REGIONAL MUSEUM

📍 Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



Established in 1968, the Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum preserves cultural values and scientific research in Vayots Dzor. It strives to educate the public through exhibitions, as well as educational and cultural events, which promote greater awareness and appreciation of Armenian cultural heritage.

discover

the rich history of Vayots Dzor  
through the ages

learn

about distinctive bear-shaped  
vessel and ritual traditions

explore

treasures from the museum's  
archeological and ethnographic  
collections

admire

an intricately carved *khachkar*  
(cross-stone) by the master artist  
and architect Momik

## Museum Tour

This museum boasts approximately 9,000 objects dating from prehistory through the 20th century that tell stories of life in this region through the millennia. The collections feature artifacts ranging from Bronze and Stone Age tools, jewelry, ceremonial vessels, and pottery to more modern rugs and agricultural tools. Among the highlights are a 14th-century exquisitely carved *khachkar* by the artist, sculptor, and architect Momik, which originally came from nearby Noravank Monastery.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Monday–Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Duration: 1–1.5 hours

Languages: Armenian, English, Italian, Russian, and Spanish

Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 1

Ideal group size: 10

Maximum group size: 20

Age considerations: None

Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Armine Aghajanyan  
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Facebook: @studiomosh  
Instagram: @\_mosh\_studio\_

#### Location

The Mosh Studio is in a two-story building in Yeghegnadzor, 16 Shahumyan Street. The first floor houses the showroom of clothes and accessories; the second floor houses the workshops.

# MOSH STUDIO

📍 Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



**Artist Armine Aghajanyan has stayed true to her childhood dream of founding a design studio by creating Mosh Studio in Yeghegnadzor. With the studio, she aims to share her knowledge of cloth designs, doll-making, and other activities—and also support the community by providing a group of women tailors with work. As both sewing atelier and shop, Armine's Mosh Studio blends fashion and tradition, as well as ancient ornamental art and her personal artistic vision.**



## make

**your own doll with a hands-on experience**

## learn

**about the traditions and uses of different dolls in Armenian culture**

## shop

**locally for more souvenirs to take home**

## Create your own handmade doll with Armine

Armine will first share the story of her studio's origins, as well as its underlying philosophy and artistic creations. She draws particular inspiration from Momik, a prominent medieval Armenian miniaturist and architect. Central in her designs are floral patterns that symbolize solar deities found on cross-stones. In this way, Armine not only revives Armenian artistic motifs with innovative touches, but also provides sartorially elegant bespoke clothing for women in her hometown. Next Armine will lead you to the second floor for a craft workshop. After learning about the steps and materials to use, you will start to create dolls from leftover fabrics and ping-pong balls (for the heads) according to your own imagination and artistic tastes. While you are busy designing your doll and its clothing, Armine will offer coffee/tea and some sweets. You may take home your own doll as a souvenir and/or shop downstairs, where Armine's works are displayed.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available Monday–Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1.5–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian, English, and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 5-6  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None





### Contact Details

Contact person: Arthur Petrosyan  
Tel: +374 94 38 73 13  
Email: apet-p@mail.ru  
Facebook: @Yegheg  
www.wicker.am

### Location

The workshop may take place at Arthur's house, the Muse restaurant in Yeghegnadzor, 1st Lane, House 9, or may take place elsewhere upon your request.

# YEGHEG

📍 Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor



**Arthur Petrosyan softens and bends branches from willow trees lining the Arpa River in Vayots Dzor to make his all-natural baskets. He creates woven covers for *karas* (clay amphora), wine bottle holders, bread baskets, and other objects to decorate the home.**



discover

**the history of basket weaving  
in Vayots Dzor**

learn

**to weave willow into a wine-bottle  
holder or basket**

try

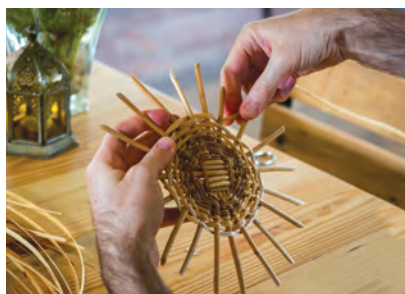
**to create your own masterpiece  
to take home**

shop

**for souvenirs**

## Learn traditional Armenian willow weaving with Arthur

Arthur will first share with you the history of willow-basket weaving in Armenia. Then, he will teach you the process from start to finish: how the materials are selected, cleaned, soaked in water, and dried for weaving; and how to bend the branches into beautiful designs. You may learn how to fashion willow into a wine-bottle holder, basket, dish, or even a new design, shaped only by your own personal creativity. With Arthur's expertise, you may start your piece, and then take it home to finish.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 72 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1–2 hours  
Languages: Armenian  
Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Karen Karamyan  
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Facebook: @SMBATABERT

#### Location

The Legend guesthouse is the first two-story stone house in Artabuynk village.

# LEGEND GUESTHOUSE

📍 Artabuynk, Vayots Dzor



**Karen and Vardan Karamyan are two brothers whose dream was to develop ecotourism in their hometown of Artabuynk. In 2017, they established a guesthouse on a hill above Artabuynk, at the base of the mountain leading to the historically significant Smbataberd Fortress. Vardan is a tour guide who developed a trail from the village of Yeghegis (on the opposite side of Smbataberd Mountain) up to the Smbataberd Fortress and back down to his village of Artabuynk. He knows every tree and stone on the trail, as well as many legends and stories about local folklore and history.**



**admire**  
the marvelous nature of  
Yeghegis and Artabuynk  
villages

**learn**  
about the history and folklore of  
Smbataberd Fortress and other  
cultural monuments

**experience**  
gata baking in a  
traditional *tonir*

## Hike to Smbataberd and gata baking in tonir

The 7 km hiking trail is Yeghegis village—Smbataberd Fortress—Artabuynk village. First you will drive to Zorats Church and from there, Vardan will lead you on a 1-1.5 hour hike to Smbataberd Fortress, a site that dates to the 5th century and is guarded on three sides by steep cliffs. Once arriving at the fortress, the guide will give more details about Smbataberd's history, the role it played in the valley/region, and some personal stories of the personalities connected with it. You will have some rest for 40 minutes to enjoy the magnificent views and take photos. After you will walk down to Artabuynk village, the route will take another forty minutes. Your trail will finish at Vardan's house, where you will participate in *gata* baking in the outdoor *tonir*. From the veranda in front of the *tonir* is a majestic view of the Smbataberd Fortress from below.

#### What to Wear/Bring

Comfortable walking shoes, hat, and sunscreen.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available 7 days a week, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 4-6 hours  
Difficulty level: Easy  
Languages: Armenian and Russian;  
request English in advance

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 4  
Ideal group size: 15  
Maximum group size: 20  
Age considerations: 10 and older  
Restriction of vehicle size  
accessing the site: None



### Contact Details

Contact person: Vardan Avetyan  
Tel: +374 28 72 21 32, +374 93 73 27 70  
Email: galleryjermuk@gmail.com

### Location

The gallery is in Jermuk,  
1 Charents Street.

# JERMUK ART GALLERY

📍 Jermuk, Vayots Dzor



**A branch of the National Gallery of Armenia, the Jermuk Art Gallery is known for its colorful, mysterious, and evocative paintings of landscapes, scenes in nature, and paintings that include natural elements, such as vibrant bouquets of flowers, verdant mountainous landscapes, and waterfalls.**



## discover

**the gallery's rich collection of landscape painting**

## learn

**about the landscape genre in Armenian art from a professional museum guide**

## use

**this knowledge to paint your own landscape inspired by the works in the Gallery**

## Gallery tour and painting workshop by the mountains

This introduction to the Gallery's collection focuses on the landscape genre. You will first learn about the artists—both Soviet Armenian and contemporary—whose works are on display. Then you will set up easels outside by the mountains (weather permitting) or throughout the gallery for a workshop on painting landscapes. Led by a professional painter, you will learn not only the processes and principles of landscape compositions, but also how to depict light, space, and tones. Tap into your artistic creativity to express your own painting style.



### BOOKING DETAILS

Tours are available Tuesday–Saturday, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:40 p.m., Sunday, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. Reservations for the workshop must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 2 hours (1-hour tour and 1-hour workshop)  
Languages: Armenian and Russian

Seasonality: Year-round  
Minimum group size: 1  
Ideal group size: 5  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: None



#### Contact Details

Contact person: Hamlet Yeghiazaryan  
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oldmartiros@gmail.com

#### Location

The guesthouse is in Old Martiros (3rd Street, 4th Land), partially abandoned but surrounded by many historical monuments.

# OLD MARTIROSGUESTHOUSE

📍 Old Martiros, Vayots Dzor



**Gohar and Hamlet Yeghiazaryan, a married couple from Old Martiros village, opened their guesthouse in the home built by Hamlet's father in 1960. Because the threat of landslides in the 1980s forced most residents of Old Martiros to relocate 2 km away, the establishment of the guesthouse offers opportunities to restore some of the old village's life and vivacity. Gohar's extensive knowledge of local herbs helps preserve some of the village's culinary traditions. Together Gohar and Hamlet share a passion for telling the history and culture of the Armenian people who settled here more than 700 years ago.**



**learn**

**about the area's wild herbs, including their medicinal and cooking uses**

**cook**

**a soup with *karshm*, a local wild green**

**try**

**your hand at traditional cheese-making with wild greens**

**hear**

**the story of Old Martiros village and its possible second life**

**see**

**a hands-on demonstration of organic natural dishes**

## Learn to cook with wild herbs in Old Martiros

Gohar and Hamlet love to share their knowledge of local culinary traditions with their guests. For instance, they will reveal the special ways that villagers use wild herbs from the nearby hills. Gohar is especially passionate about preserving this traditional knowledge and will let you smell and taste your way through her collection of dried herbs and plants, as she describes their properties and uses. One of the village's special soups uses *karshm* as its key ingredient. During the *karshm* harvest in May and June, you may even help braid the stems. Whatever the season, the herbs blend beautifully with the soup's other ingredients of lentils, bulgur wheat, ground walnuts, minced garlic, and dried *lavash*. While the soup is cooking, Gohar and Hamlet will show you how to prepare buried cheese with local herbs, an unusual treat that is special to Martiros. First, the cheese is crushed and seasoned with various herbs. With Gohar and Hamlet's help, you'll fill your clay pot to the top with the cheese mixture. Then you'll turn the pots upside down and bury them underground where they'll age for five months. But not to worry: Gohar and Hamlet have some samples already prepared for you to taste.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

Experience is available 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
Duration: 1-2 hours  
Languages: Armenian and Russian; request English in advance  
Seasonality: Year-round

Minimum group size: 2  
Ideal group size: 10  
Maximum group size: 15  
Age considerations: None  
Restriction of vehicle size accessing the site: Large buses will have limited access due to the narrow road





### Contact Details

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[www.hikearmenia.org](http://www.hikearmenia.org)

### Location

The office of HIKEArmenia is in Yerevan, 5 Vardanants Street.

# HIKEARMENIA

 All Armenia



**HIKEArmenia is a non-profit NGO developing ecotourism in Armenia and sharing the country's trail potential with the world. With its free hiking app, website, and information center in downtown Yerevan, the organization is making hiking in Armenia easy and fun for everyone. More at [hikearmenia.org](http://hikearmenia.org)**



**explore**  
 medieval monuments

**hike**  
 to see stunning landscapes  
 of Vayots Dzor

**discover**  
 a spectacular basalt rock arch

## Hike through Vayots Dzor's magnificent landscapes

Hiking in Armenia is a special adventure: magical views, warm hospitality, and thousands of years of history tucked in deep valleys and atop high mountains. In Vayots Dzor, you will witness the diversity of landscapes from semi-deserts to steppes and lush forests, as well as many natural and man-made wonders, such as a basalt arch near Kapuyt village or a cave church near Old Martiros. With HIKEArmenia's free smartphone app, you may navigate the trails yourself offline or choose a knowledgeable local guide to lead the hike and tell you about magnificent monuments and artifacts found along the trails.

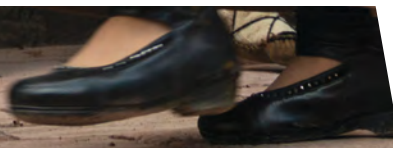
### What to Wear/Bring

Comfortable walking shoes, hat, and sunscreen.





# ARARAT region



*Named after the famous biblical mountain, the Ararat region is in Armenia's southwestern corner, bordering Turkey and the Nakhchivan exclave of Azerbaijan.*

The region is located in the heart of the Ararat Valley—the symbol of Armenian identity. A glorious view of Mount Ararat opens from the Khor Virap Monastery, which is a favorite place not only for Armenians, but also for guests from abroad.

The green valleys of the Araks, Azat, and Vedi rivers cross Ararat, making it the most important agricultural region of Armenia. Orchards symbolize the region, which you'll see while driving along the highway adorned on both sides by vast apricot and peach orchards. Along the way, you may stop by small seasonal stalls that burst with a variety of colorful, sun-bathed fruits and their dried variants, jams, and more.

The Ararat Valley is also one of the world's centers of grape domestication and viticulture origins, and contains one of the highest densities of aboriginal grapes anywhere. Some popular dishes are summer *tolma* with stuffed vegetables and cabbage, grilled and fried vegetables, pork and lamb barbecue, *khashlama*, pilaf with raisins and dried fruits, emmer wheat pilaf, and Lenten *tolma*.

The Khosrov Forest Reserve, founded in the 4th century, is located near Dvin. As Armenia's largest nature reserve, it contains a variety of plants, animals, and excellent opportunities for hiking and active recreation. It is also remarkable for its diversity of ecosystems such as mountain steppes, semi-deserts, woodlands, and alpine meadows.

In the villages, people practice various crafts; some settlements have carpet weavers, silversmiths, and jewelers. The potters and *tonir* makers of Yuva village are respected throughout Armenia. These centuries-old crafts are still practiced in Shahumyan, also known as Yuva, thanks to the tradition of passing skills from one generation to the next.

Ararat is home to two famous capitals of Armenian history: Artashat, founded in the 2nd century BCE; and Dvin, its successor. Also famous is Vordan Karmir (Ararat *cochineal*), an indigenous insect used to produce the royal red dye that illuminates the miniature paintings found in old manuscripts.

## HIGHLIGHTS



***tolma*, *khashlama*, seasonal edible *banjar* (plants), apricots, peaches, grapes**



**Paruyr Sevak House-Museum**



**Ararat Valley, Mount Ararat, Araks River Valley, Mount Yeranos, Urts Mountain Range, Khosrov Forest State Reserve, Azat Cave, Angel's Canyon**



**Khor Virap Monastery (7-17th c.), Kaqavaberd (10-14th c.), Aghjots Vank Monastery (13th c.)**





#### Contact Details

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Email: noyanvaz@gmail.com

#### Location

The Noyan Vaz Winery is in Pokr Vedi village, at 5 Raffi Street.

# NOYAN VAZ WINERY

📍 Pokr Vedi, Ararat



**Harutyun Hovhannisyan is a third-generation winemaker who has transformed his love into a profession and business. When Harutyun's grandfather Jivan Hovhannisyan moved to the Ararat Valley from Vayots Dzor in 1964, he brought with him a vine originally planted by his father to ensure the continuity of his family's winemaking traditions. Harutyun keeps his family's winemaking traditions alive while also developing new innovations.**

**tour**

the family's magnificent  
fruit orchard and vineyards

**gain**

insight into the the Hovhannisyan  
family's fascinating traditions of  
winemaking

**taste**

homemade wines and  
vodkas

**pick**

and taste the seasonal fruits

**shop**

homemade wine available  
for purchase

## Tour an orchard and taste homemade wine

With Harutyun, you will tour the family's magnificent fruit orchard, vineyards, and beautiful wine cellar in their newly built Noyan Vaz guesthouse, located in Pokr Vedi village, adjacent to biblical Mount Ararat. While visiting the fruit orchard, you will learn about the Ararat Valley's signature trees, such as apricots and peaches. You will appreciate agriculture's vital role in the Ararat Valley, especially when you taste the orchard's sweet seasonal fruits (including plums, apples, and peaches) or pick some of them for making freshly squeezed juice and to enjoy back on the Noyan Vaz terrace. After visiting the vineyard, you will better understand the nuances among the many local grape varieties and how Harutyun uses them to craft superior quality wines. He also distills an impressive assortment of homemade vodkas from his diverse harvest of grapes and other fruits. After visiting the wine cellar, you may enjoy the distinctive flavors and aromas of Harutyun's wines and vodkas while on the terrace with a magnificent view of Mount Ararat.



#### BOOKING DETAILS

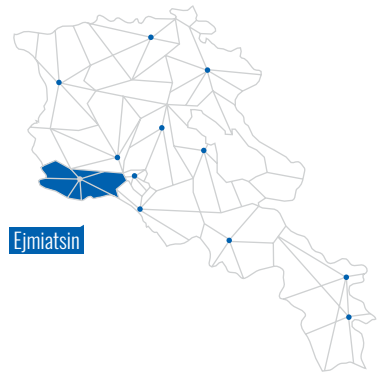
Tours are available 7 days a week, from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.  
**Duration:** 1.5–2 hours  
**Languages:** Armenian and Russian; request English in advance  
**Seasonality:** The wine cellar experience takes place year-round. The fruit-garden tour takes place from mid-May through October. From mid-April and mid-May, there are blossoms (but not fruits) in the garden, where visitors may enjoy tea and coffee.

**Minimum group size:** 2  
**Ideal group size:** 15-20  
**Maximum group size:** 30  
**Age considerations:** For tasting alcohol, 18 and older  
**Vehicle size restrictions to access the site:** None  
The cellar has no staircase, but visitors may use handrails to walk down a slope to reach it. The slope is purposefully not completely smooth so that wine barrels may roll down the slope.









**ARMAVIR** region

*The Armavir region is Armenia's smallest in size, but also its most densely populated. The region is home to Ejmiatsin, also known as Vagharshapat, which is the spiritual center of Armenia and all Armenians, with the Mother Cathedral from the 4th century, Gayane and Hripsime churches, and the nearby Zvartnots Cathedral—all of which are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.*

Its location in the Ararat Valley makes Armavir one of Armenia's hottest, driest regions. Because everywhere are orchards, especially apricot orchards, the region's traditional occupations are viticulture and winemaking, with brandy production now also developing. Grape seeds—discovered in the Aratashen archeological site and dating to 8,000 years ago—reveal the region's ancient traditions of viticulture.

Another well-preserved tradition is baking bread in *tonirs*—enormous clay vessels placed in the ground. You may try local dishes, such as Ejmiatsin *tolma*, Ejmiatsin *kufta*, *harissa*, *tonir* barbecue, and Easter pilaf with raisins

and dried fruits. Grape vodka, white, rose, and red homemade wines are very popular—as are dried fruits, sweet *sujukh*, peach *alani*, and other local sweets. You may also try one of Armavir's attractive fishing spots for another culinary delight.

In some settlements, you may still find potters, skilled carpenters, and blacksmiths. The Sardarapat Ethnography Museum displays remarkable examples of traditional folk culture. The Bronze Age fortress city of Metsamor, now an archeological site, was once a place of worship, containing an observatory and a metallurgical complex dating to 3000 BCE.

## HIGHLIGHTS



***tolma, kufta, harissa, dried fruits, sujukh***



**Sardarapat Museum, Musa Dagh Resistance Museum and Memorial, Metsamor Museum - Archeological Site, Treasury Museum of Ejmiatsin**



**Mount Ararat, Metsamor River**



**Ejmiatsin Mother Cathedral (4th c.), St Gayane church (7th c.), St. Hripsime church (7th c.), St. Shoghakat church (6-7th c.), Zvartnots Cathedral ruins (7th c.), Arghishtikhinili - City Fortress ruins (776 BCE), Metsamor archeological site (3rd mil. BCE)**



**Tolma Festival**





# **KOTAYK** region





*The Kotayk region is a place of great natural beauty, especially the Azat River Gorge and the Garni Gorge, which features the Symphony of Stones made of natural basalt columns.*

The region is rich in forested mountains and mineral springs, such as the Hankavan, Arzni, and Arzakan resorts. The mountain resort town Tsakhkadzor is particularly famous for its alpine ski slopes, ropeway, hotels, and guesthouses, where you may relax year-round. Hiking enthusiasts may wish to visit Mount Hatis, especially in early summer when it is covered with mountain flowers.

Local dishes include salads and pan fries made from edible plants collected from the mountains, *tanapur* with *khnotsi* butter and wheat, emmer wheat pilaf, homemade *arishta*, lentils, bean and pea soups, *pokhindz* and milk porridge, *tolma*, *kyufta*, barbecue, *khashlama* and *bozbash*. Thyme, mint, rosehip, and hawthorn teas are popular in the region. Common folk

sweets include *gata*, *halva* with honey and *pokhindz*, *sujukh*, and various dried fruits.

The Kotayk region features Nor Geghi, renowned in the history of human development as an early Stone Age settlement from 350,000 years ago. The well-known Temple of Garni, dating to the 1st century CE, is the region's only extant monument from the pagan period, which ended ca. 300 CE. The Geghard and Kecharis monasteries are among the most popular historical and architectural monuments from the medieval period. The Geghard monastery—carved and hewn from rock—is famous because relics of the Holy Lance that wounded Christ were kept there for centuries. They are now in the museum of the Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin.

## HIGHLIGHTS



*arishta*, *tanapour*, *khashlama*, *bozbash*, *kyufta*, barbecue, herbal teas, *gata*, *pokhindz*



Hrazdan Art Gallery, Garni Historical-Cultural Museum-Reservation



Azat River and Gorge, Tsakhkunyats and Geghama mountain ranges, Mt. Hatis, Mt. Ara, Khosrov Forest State Reserve



Harvest Festival



Garni Temple (1st c.), Geghard Monastery (4-13th c.), Havuts Tar Monastery (11-13th c.), Greek Catholic Church of St. Georgios (19th c.), Kecharis Monastery (11-13th c.), Bjni Fortress (9-10th c.)

# VOCABULARY

## USEFUL ARMENIAN PHRASES

You should be able to find someone in Yerevan who speaks English, but this is much less likely when traveling in the regions. Below are some words and phrases that may help you interact with local Armenians and to enjoy your stay even more.

Although Armenians must differentiate between informal and formal ways to address people older than them or people they meet for the first time, foreigners may always use the simpler informal forms—which you will find below.

We have based our pronunciation guide on American English. For instance, if you see “June,” you would pronounce it like the name of the month. If you see “Zhock,” it should rhyme with “sock,” not with “woke.” Armenian words almost always place the stress on the final syllable, which we indicate with ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. Hyphens divide syllables. APOSTROPHES separate sounds, but do not divide into syllables.

*There are some special sounds in Armenian, which may need some explanation:*

**ZH** is pronounced like the final **G** in *garage*,  
or like the **J** in the French name *Jacques*.

**KH** is pronounced like the **CH**  
in the name of the composer *Bach*.

**RH** is pronounced with a raspy  
sound like the French **R** at the end of *Bonjour*.

## GREETINGS AND SMALL TALK

### Hi

ba-REV or  
voke-JUNE

### Good morning

ba-ree-LOO-ees

### Good day / afternoon

ba-ree-OR

### Good evening

ba-ree-yeh-re-KO

### Good bye

tse-te-soo-TYUN

### Good night (wishing)

ba-ree-ghee-SHARE

### What's your name

ko-ah-noo-NEH?

### How are you?

nch-PESS-ess? or VOHNTS-ess?  
(Very) good - (shott) lahv  
Not bad – vo-CHINCH

### You are welcome

kh'n-TREMM

### "Thank you"

*may be the most important word used by travelers, and (lucky you) in Armenian it's not exactly easy to pronounce. It sounds like **shno-rah-kah-loo-TYUN**. If you can master this word, many Armenians will admire your language skills. But if you keep struggling, don't worry; you can always use the French merci. Even some Armenians use it to skip the full five-syllable word.*

### Mister

pa-RONE

### Madam

tee-KEEN

### No

cheh (informal)  
or vo'ch (formal)

### Yes

ha (informal) or  
a-YO (formal)

### Jan

*(pronounced like the English name John) may be the most frequent word you will hear in Armenia, where it is a term of endearment like "dear." Jan is a Persian word, which literally means "life."*



# WHEN EATING

## Bon appetite / enjoy your meal

ba-ree-akh-hor-ZHOCK

*Although bari akhorzhak is the formal saying, you may often hear Armenians say anoosh ara before the meal and anoosh after the meal*

## Coffee

soorj

*This may often mean thick Armenian coffee cooked in a coffee pot.*

## Milk

kott

## Tea

tay

## Beer

ga-reh-DJOOR

## Wine

ghe-NEE

## Vodka

oh-REE

*As you may be offered homemade vodka many times along your trips, you should know that besides the formal oh-REE, Armenian also use the words ah-RAHR and VOD-ka, which mean the same.*

## Water

djoor

## One

mek-HOT

## Bottle

sheesh

## A little bit

A little bit

## Big

mets

## Small

po'kr

## Lunch

Lunch

## Dinner

un-TREEK

## Salt

ah'rh

## Pepper

bee-BAR

## Spicy

k'ts-OO

## It is very tasty

shott-hah-MOE-vah

## The bill, please

ha-SHEE-veh, kh'n-TROOM-em





## WHEN SHOPPING

<b>Shop</b>	<b>Do you have?</b>	<b>This/that</b>
kha-NOOT	oo-NECK	ice/ide
<b>How much?</b>	<b>Expensive</b>	<b>Cheap</b>
INCH ar-ZHE?	tonk	eh-ZHAN



## WHEN ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS

<b>Can you please help?</b>	<b>Right</b>	<b>Left</b>
ka-ROGUE-eck oak-NELL	ah'j	dzokh
<b>Up</b>	<b>Down</b>	<b>Straight</b>
veh-REV	nair-KEV	oo-RHEE'rh
<b>Closed</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>House</b>
POCK-eh	BOTTS-eh	toon
<b>Hotel</b>	<b>Guesthouse</b>	<b>Street</b>
hyoo-rah-NOTES	hyoo-rah-TOON	po-RHOTES
<b>Bank</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Church</b>
bonk	tahn-gah-RUNN	yeh-keh-rheh-SEE
<b>Pharmacy</b>		
deh-rha-TOON		

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# ABOUT THE MY ARMENIA PROGRAM

**My Armenia supports the development of an inclusive tourism sector in Armenia by engaging and benefiting rural communities, which promotes the sustainability of Armenian cultural heritage. Through this guidebook, you may explore Armenia's rich cultural heritage, crafts, nature, festivals, food, wine and much more by participating in diverse tourism experiences.**

**The My Armenia Program, a joint partnership between USAID, the Smithsonian Institution, and the people of Armenia, harnesses the power of research, documentation, and storytelling to strengthen cultural sustainability through community-based tourism development. The program supports cultural sustainability by documenting Armenia's historic and living cultural traditions, sharing this knowledge with global audiences, and supporting the development of local resources and capacity to safeguard this cultural heritage for future generations.**

**In addition to cultural sustainability, the goal of the program is to increase visitation to the regions of Armenia, lengthening the time visitors spend in the regions, which will lead to greater regional economic growth.**

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Hrant Sahakyan, Ijevan Wine Factory, Inga Avanesova,  
Karen Nersisyan, My Armenia Program, MyTent Tours,  
Narek Harutyunyan, Narine Shalunts, TUC, Vanadzor on  
Two Wheels, Zanan Cultural House



This catalog was produced with the support of My Armenia, a program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the Smithsonian Institution. The contents are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, Smithsonian Institution, or United States Government.

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