

# Armenia Trekking

OXALISadventures



## HIGHLIGHTS

4000 metre Mount Aragats - evocative stone churches and fortresses - Geghama Mountains and the Khosrov nature reserve - camping near nomadic settlements - Pagan Garni temple and Geghard stone church – Yerevan

## GUIDE – MATT MALCOMSON & ANDREY CHESNOKOV

Matt became interested in Armenia in the 90s while travelling in the region, and soon became involved in a sustainable tourism project and also studying the Armenian language. He returned to the UK in 2005 and set up Oxalis Holidays.

Andrey is originally from Russia but came to Armenia during the Soviet period and has since settled here and is now an Armenian citizen. He has 21 years experience of trekking and mountain climbing in the Armenian mountains and speaks fluent English and Armenian apart from his native Russian. Andrey is one of our in-country guides for our Armenia trips and has a wealth of experience leading foreigners through the natural splendours of the Armenian landscape. He is a member of the Armenian Alpinism Federation.



## 13 days, 12 nights

Trekking to 4000 metre Mount Aragats, a nature reserve, nomad villages, and ancient Christian churches.

Accommodation in hotels, tents.

## Meet/Depart:

Yerevan Airport

## Places visited:

Yerevan • Mount Aragats • Hamberd Fortress • Sagmosavank • Mount Azdahag • Zovashen nomad village • Kakavaberd fortress • Khosrov nature preserve • Garni • St Stepanos monastery • Havuts-tar monastery • Echmiadzin

## Level :

Vigorous. The tour includes 9 days of hiking, from 5 to 21 km per day. Travel will be on foot between camping locations. We will hike to the top of several mountains up to a height of 4008 metres. Several nights we will camp at 3400 metres. Normally you will carry your own pack on the trail, while guides carry all camping equipment and food. For a small supplement your pack can also be carried by one of our guides. Pack animals will be used for days 6 to 11.

## Dates:

Sunday September 10 - Friday September 22 2006

## Group size:

Maximum: 8 Clients Minimum: 2 Clients

## Prices for 2006:

Group size 2 or 3 £1,085/€1,565/\$1,905

Group size 4 to 8 £915/€1,320 /\$1,605

## Includes:

All domestic transport, accommodation, meals

## Does not include:


International Flights, drinks with meals

## Booking

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## INTRODUCTION

This trip takes some of Armenia's most spectacular landscapes and provides a real off-the-beaten-track adventure. From Yerevan we travel to Armenia's highest mountain, Mount Aragats (4,000 metres), spending two nights camping on its slopes, also visiting the fortress and church of Hamberd nearby. The second part of the trip travels to the Khosrov Nature Preserve, with its towering cliffs and thundering rivers. We climb Mount Azhdahag and camp nearby to nomad villages. Lastly we return to Yerevan to visit the Sardarapat Museum of Ethnography and the spiritual centre of the Armenian Church, Etchmiadzin.

## DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

### DAYS 1-2: ARRIVAL IN YEREVAN

You will be met at Yerevan Airport, and then transferred to your hotel in central Yerevan. There will be time to relax followed by a city tour. We will visit Erebuny fortress (782 B.C.) and museum. Afterwards we will have lunch at a local restaurant. Lastly we will visit the State Museum of the History. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

### DAY 3: TRAVEL TO MOUNT ARAGATS (8 miles hiking: Approximately 4 hours)

From Yerevan we will drive to Karalich lake (3200 m) on the slopes of Mount Aragats. From there we will start hiking to the mountain pass between the southern and western summits (3600 metres), stopping for lunch on the way. We will then ascend the southern (3897 metres) and western (4008 metres) summits. Camping.



### DAY 4: ASCENDING MOUNT ARAGATS (12 miles hiking: Approximately 6 hours)

After breakfast we will ascend the northern (4095 metres) summit, descend to the mountain pass between northern and eastern summits, stopping for lunch on the way, and then ascend the eastern (3975 m) peak. Following this we will descend to the gorge of the Gegharot river, seeing a cascade of waterfalls. Dinner and camping at the same place.

### DAY 5: RETURN TO YEREVAN (9 miles hiking: Approximately 4 hours)

We will return down the mountain to Karalich Lake, having lunch on the way. Driving towards Yerevan, we will visit Hamberd fortress and churches, built in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries lying on the mountain slopes below Mount Aragats. Next we stop by Sagmosavank monastery perched high on the edge of the gorge of the Kasakh river. Back in Yerevan we will have dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at the hotel in Yerevan.



### DAY 6: FROM YEREVAN TO THE GEGHAMA MOUNTAINS (3 miles hiking: Approximately 1.5 hours)

Leaving Yerevan again, we drive to Tsakhkashen village, and hike from there into the Geghama Mountains towards Mount Azhdahag, stopping for lunch on the way. We will have dinner and camp near the nomad village of Batikyan.

### Day 7: ASCENDING MOUNT AZHDAHAG (12 miles hiking: Approximately 6 hours)

After breakfast, we continue hiking, making camp at the north-east face of Mount Azhdahag at 3400 metres. Leaving our backpacks we ascend to the summit of Azhdahag (3597 metres), and then descend back to the camp.



### DAY 8: MOUNT SPITAKASAR (14 miles hiking: Approximately 7 hours)

After breakfast we leave camp and hike towards the foot of Mount Spitakasar. After leaving our backpacks at the foot of the mountain, we ascend to the summit (3555 metres), descend back, and hike towards the nomad village of Zovashen, stopping for lunch on the way. Dinner and overnight in tents.

### DAY 9: KAKAVABERD FORTRESS AND KHOSROV NATURE PRESERVE (12 miles hiking: Approximately 6 hours)

From Zovashen we hike towards the 9<sup>th</sup> century Kakavaberd fortress. After seeing the fortress, we descend to the Khosrov Nature Preserve ranger's house, making our camp there. Dinner and overnight in tents near the nomad village of Mirzik.

### DAY 10: KHOSROV NATURAL PRESERVE (10 miles hiking: Approximately 5 hours)

Today we continue hiking through the Khosrov Nature Preserve, and visit the abandoned monastery of St. Stepanos (12-13 centuries). We have dinner and overnight near the abandoned village of Yelija in tents.

### Day 11: GARNI AND RETURN TO YEREVAN (8 miles hiking: Approximately 4



**hours)**

We hike out of the mountains today, visiting on the way Havuts-Tar monastery (11-14 centuries) and the pagan temple of Mithra (1 AD) in Garni village. We will then drive to Geghard monastery, the oldest part begun in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and partially hollowed out of solid stone. From Geghard we return to Yerevan. Dinner. Overnight in Yerevan.

**DAY 12: YEREVAN**

Our last day is spent in and around Yerevan. Firstly we will visit Etchmiadzin, the spiritual centre of the Armenian Church and the seat of the Armenian Patriarch. We will see the Cathedral (303 AD), St. Gayane (7<sup>th</sup> century) and St. Hripsime (7<sup>th</sup> century) churches, followed by lunch in a local restaurant. We will then visit the Sardarapat Museum of Ethnography, and, on the way back Zvartnots temple (7<sup>th</sup> century).

We will have a farewell dinner in Yerevan. Overnight at hotel.

**DAY 13: DEPARTURE**

Transfer to the airport. Departure.

**TRIP NOTES****Equipment & Clothing**

When we receive your booking we send you a dossier, which contains a suggested gear and clothing list. If you do have queries at this initial stage do ring us and we will be pleased to offer advice.

**Hotels**

5 nights in modern comfortable hotels in Yerevan. 7 nights camping in locations throughout Armenia. All tents, sleeping bags, kitchen equipment and food is carried by the guides.

Please note that single rooms are normally only available in hotels – where a single room supplement may apply.

**Meal Plan**

All meals are provided.

**Important Notes**

Every effort will be made to keep to the above itinerary, but we cannot make absolute guarantees! Changes to the itinerary will normally be to introduce an improvement. Weather conditions, road and transport conditions, and the health of walkers can all contribute to changes. The guide will ensure that the trip runs according to plan, but an easy-going nature is an asset!