

IRAN TO GEORGIA VIA ARMENIA

17 Day – 16 Night

Type: Discover / Historical / Cultural / Religious

Shira 2N/Isfahan 3N/Tehran 1N/Tabriz 2N/Kapan 1N/Jermuk 1N/Yerevan 3N/Tbilisi 3N



HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover an Iran beyond the fake media portrayals of a repressive and dour regime – this is a country full of warm, lively and friendly people.
- Visiting several UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Iran, Armenia and Georgia.
- Discover Isfahan, the old capital and the 'Jewel of Islamic countries'.
- Visit Kashan, including Abyane and the historical houses of Brojerdis and Tabatabais.
- Discover Iranian, Armenian and Georgian cuisine. Do not forget to eat Chelo kabab, Shampours, Khingali and..., you will never forget the taste of this foods.
- Walk in the Tabriz indoor bazaar and drown in colors and smells and beauties.
- Explore one of the greatest cities of antiquity, Persepolis. The relief carvings and towering columns will leave you in no doubt that this was once the centre of the known world.
- Soak up the sights and atmosphere of the jewel in the crown of Persia, the beautiful town of Esfahan.
- Visit Lake Sevan, Geghard Cave Monastery and the holy city of Echmiadzin.
- Explore Fascinating cities of Tehran, Tbilisi & Yerevan.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Welcome to Iran-Shiraz

Salam! You will fly to Shiraz with flight TK884 Turkish Airlines via Istanbul. Your flight will land at 02:05 o'clock at Shiraz International Airport. After your welcome, the tour guide will transfer you to the hotel. Since you arrived in Shiraz in the morning, all your check-in have already been done. Have a good rest and collect your energy for the next morning.

Day 2: Explore Shiraz

Visit the Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque (Pink Mosque) after breakfast. This mosque was built as per the order of one of the lords during the reign of the Qajar Dynasty, Mirza Hasan 'Ali Nasir-ol-Molk, and it took 12 years to complete. Its interiors are a magnificent masterpiece of design with stunning colors. This is a space where light and worship intertwine. The mosque comes to life with sunrise and colors dance on its floor throughout the day like whirling dervishes. Also visit the orange-scented Narenjestan Garden, laid out in the 19th century, before

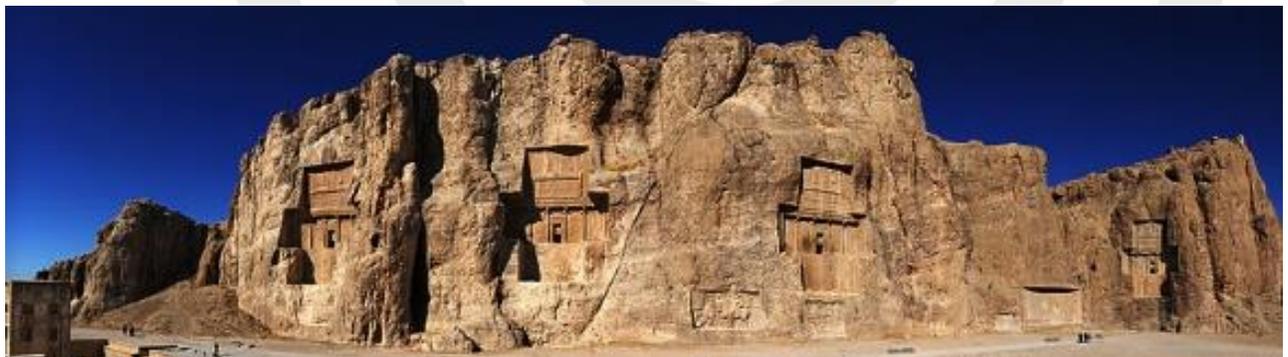


heading for the bustling Vakil Bazaar, home to hundreds of stores, beautiful courtyards and even an ancient caravanserai. Your next destination is the Karim Khan Citadel, built during the Zand Dynasty.

End your day in Shiraz on a tranquil note in the lovely garden tombs of Sa'adi and Hafez, two of the most outstanding poets of Persia.

Day 3: Drive to Isfahan. Visiting Persepolis, Naghsh-e-Rostam and Pasargad en route.

We spend today exploring the heritage of the Achaemenid dynasty in Persepolis and the royal tombs of Naghsh-e-Rostam. Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid kings with remains of the palaces of Darius the Great, Xerxes and Artaxerxes, is famous for its bas-reliefs depicting kings, courtiers and gift-bearing representatives of tributary nations of the Persian Empire ranging from India to Ethiopia.



We then visit nearby Naghsh-e-Rostam to see Ka'be-Zardosht (a fire temple) and the royal tombs dug into the rock itself. This site also has seven magnificent Sassanian rock-reliefs including Shapur the First's famous victory over Roman Emperor Valerian. We will continue to visit Pasargad, the site of the simple, but impressive tomb and remains of the palaces of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire. After a long day, we arrived in Isfahan at night and go to the hotel.

Day 4: Explore Isfahan

Start the day by exploring Imam Square, the 17th-century site which is also one of the largest public spaces in the world. Visit the Shah Mosque, revered as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture and easily recognized due to its magnificent tile work and a soaring cupola and minarets.

Marvel at the beautiful music rooms and balconies of Ali Qapu Palace and get the chance to explore the Qeisarieh Bazaar, which surrounds Imam Square. With hundreds of local vendors that specialize in traditional arts and crafts, it's a wonderful place to shop for pottery, enamel, jewelry and delicately inlaid board games.



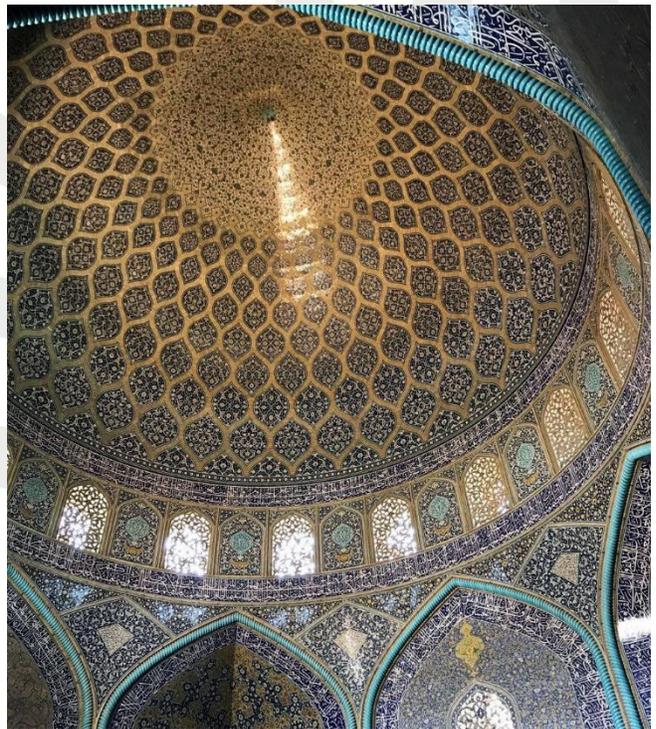
Next up is Chehel Sotun. Set in a landscaped and forested park in front of a tranquil reflecting pool, this graceful pavilion was built by Shah Abbas II for entertainment and court receptions. Enter into the building through a portico supported by twenty slender wooden columns and discover soaring halls embellished with frescoes, paintings and mosaics. The Hall of Mirrors is especially breathtaking!

In the city's Armenian quarter, you'll get the chance to delve more deeply into the region's complex history. Visit several churches in the area, including the 17th-century Vank Cathedral with its lavishly decorated interior and a unique blend of Islamic and European architectural elements.

Day 5: Esfahan

You have a free day to explore this lovely city, so take time to wander along the City's many tree-lined boulevards and spacious gardens. Visit the Jameh Mosque (Friday Mosque), the biggest in all Iran and full of lovely designed stuccos, or Afif Abad museum and garden, or you could also discover the bizarre Manar Jomban (shaking minarets).

Perhaps head to the Armenian Quarter and the Church of St. Joseph of Arimathea, which has a striking interior of gilded ceilings, walls and paintings. The stunning, delicate artwork of the dome depicts the biblical story of Genesis, from Creation to Man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Make sure to take a stroll by the Zayandeh River and stop for a well-deserved chai at one of the stunning bridges.



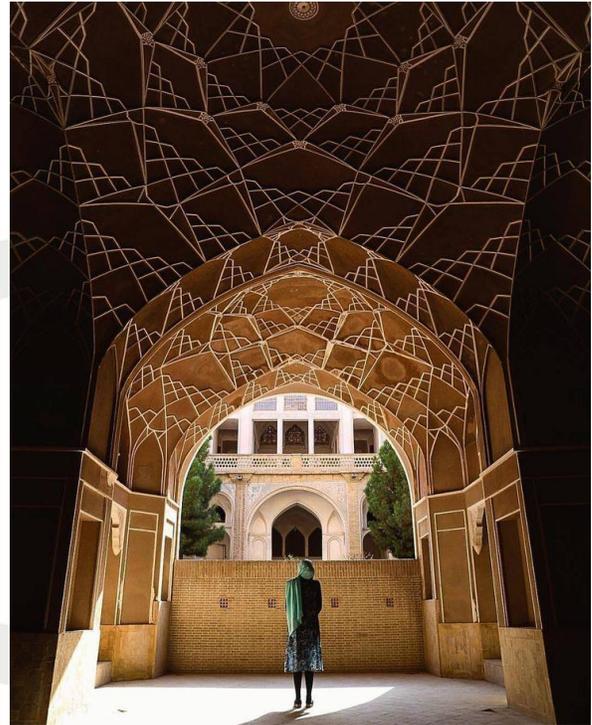
Day 6: Isfahan–Kashan–Tehran

Drive to Kashan after breakfast. Visit the Abyaneh village en route. The village is also known as the Red Village because of its red-mud houses (the area has red soil). The houses of Abyaneh bear an ancient architectural style and feature the use of clay as the main construction material along with latticed windows and wooden doors.

On reaching Kashan, head for its two famous traditional houses, Boroujerdi or Tabatabaei. Travel to the Fin Garden, a UNESCO World Heritage site, This Persian garden reflects ancient landscaping principles that trace their roots to the time of Cyrus the Great in the 6th century BCE.

Leaving Kashan behind in the evening and head for Tehran.

Salam! Welcome to Tehran.



This marvelous city sits at the bottom of the Alborz Mountains – their snowy peaks serving as a photogenic backdrop for the colorful buildings below. Tehran is commonly known as one of the country’s most liberal metropolitan areas and this may become obvious through an adventure into the depths of their hospitality scene. Lamb, chickpeas, tahdig (crispy rice pies) and potatoes are all big staples in Iranian cuisine – just don’t forget they’re best washed down with a cup of dugh (minty yoghurt drink). Upon arriving in Tehran, we go



straight to the restaurant, once you arrive, get to know the other travelers over a juicy Iranian kebab served with a side of local bread or rice – the kebab’s rich aroma should have you smelling it well before it reaches the table. Once you’ve filled up, wash it all down with a cup of tea. After a delicious dinner we go to the hotel and crawl into bed before tomorrow’s adventures. It’d be easy to call Iran a land of kebabs, but the country’s gastronomy is a little more complicated than that.

Day 7: Tehran-Tabriz

In the morning we will go to see National Museum of Iran, aging more than 70 years, containing 300,000 museum objects. Then we will have the visit of Iran Glassware and ceramic Museum, in order to see objects of 4th millennium B.C. up to the present time.

After that we will go to see a UNESCO World Heritage: Golestan Palace that has many places to offer: The Marble Throne, Karim Khani Nook, Museum of Gifts, Containers Hall, Mirror Hall, Salam Hall, Edifice of the Sun (Shams ol Emareh) and many other places. After that visit the fabulous State's Jewels Museum, housed in the vaults of the Central Bank of Iran displaying the most dazzling and priceless collection of jewels and gems in the world.



We see more of Tehran today with full day visits including the Golestan Palace Museum Complex, built by Fath-Ali Shah of the Qajar Dynasty and dating from the 18th to the early 20th century. We continue to the Shams-ol-Emareh (Sun) Palace and the Ethnographic Museum, with a walk around the garden to enjoy the beautiful tile-covered walls and buildings. In the afternoon, we visit the fabulous State's Jewels Museum, housed in the vaults of the Central Bank of Iran displaying the most dazzling and priceless collection of jewels and gems in the world. Transfer to airport, fly to Tabriz and transfer to hotel.

Day 8: Tabriz

Tabriz is one of the Iran's old capitals. Explore the highlights of Tabriz, like Azarbaijan museum, Blue Masque, Municipality palace, and the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, the largest covered bazaar in the world on Silk Road & UNESCO World Heritage Site. Then in the evening we taste a local delicious cuisine. Depending on timing, we may spend the night walking in El-Goli Park and breathing deeply in the scents of fragrant flowers.



Day 9: Tabriz to Kapan in Armenia

After breakfast we make our way towards the Iranian-Armenian border at Meghri-Norduz. We drive via Jolfa – a town which is split into 2 parts – one part is located in Iran and the other – in Azerbaijan. Visit St. Stephen's church of 14c – which has been listed as a UNESCO site since 2008. On arrival to the border we will complete formalities and be met by our Armenian guide and driver. After border formalities continue to Armenia and to Kapan city.

Note that the border of Iran and Armenia has a 1km stretch of no mans land, where you are required to walk with your luggage. We strongly recommend wheelie bags otherwise you will need to carry your luggage.

Day 10: Kapan to Jermuk

Serpentine road will bring us to Tatev village, en-route we drive through Vorotan canyon - the deepest canyon in Armenia reaching to almost 1 km depth. At the bottom of the canyon we will see the Devil's Bridge – an amazing geological monument located on the Vorotan River. We then visit Tatev Monastery located on the edge of Vorotan Canyon. This was one of the most prominent religious, cultural and educational centers of medieval Armenia. We will also visit Karahunge – local Stone Henge, believed to be an ancient



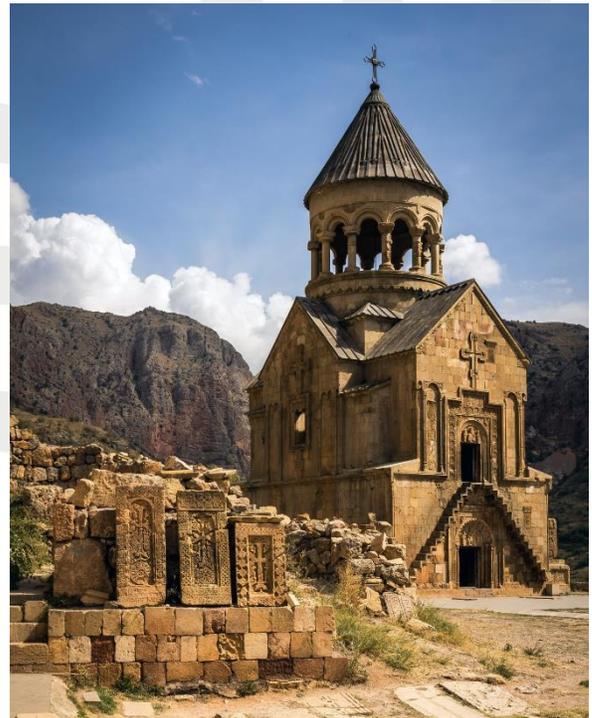
observatory (around 7500 yrs old) and a worship site for ancient people.

Day 11: Jermuk to Yerevan

Today we will explore the famous spa and resort town of Jermuk, located at an altitude of approximately 2200m above sea level. Surrounded by mountains and rich forests, Jermuk attracts numerous tourists and holiday makers from abroad as well as from different parts of Armenia. It is considered a place to relax and improve health, drinking and taking baths with the special mineral waters found here. We also visit the Mineral Water Gallery and waterfall in Jermuk canyon.

A winding road will bring us to Noravank monastery with its intricate carvings. The gorge of Noravank is a place of natural beauty, rich with beautiful multi-colored rocks.

En route we will stop in Areni village, the wine capital of Armenia, and visit a family-owned winery to sample the local wine. We continue to the plains of Ararat to visit Khor Virap monastery located at the foot of biblical Mt. Ararat.



Day 12: Yerevan City Tour

Today we will have a familiarization tour of the Armenian capital visiting all the major sights. We will explore Erebuni fortress – the birthplace of Yerevan and the museum of Urartu period located nearby. We then continue to the Manuscript Museum, which hosts one of the biggest depositories of ancient manuscripts in the world. We will view the panorama of the city from the Victory Park, where Mother Armenia statue is located. Finally a visit to the Food Market where you can find a variety of organic fruits and vegetables.

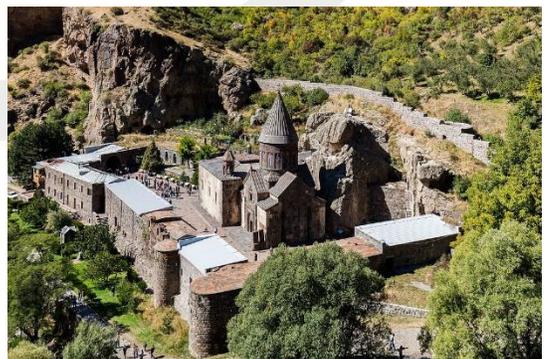


In the afternoon we will take a trip to the religious capital of Armenia, the town of Echmiadzin. We will first visit the archeological site of Zvartnots Cathedral, which is a masterpiece of Armenian architecture of the 7th century. The area is a UNESCO's World Heritage Site. We will then come to the main Cathedral of Echmiadzin – the residence of the Catholicos of Armenia.



Day 13: Day trip to Garni and Geghard Yerevan

Today we drive east of Yerevan and visit Garni pagan temple, the only pagan temple remaining from the pre-Christian period. At one time this was the summer residence of the Armenian kings located in a picturesque place overlooking a deep canyon. We will then explore the medieval Armenian architecture – Geghard Cave Monastery is a UNESCO site and some chambers of the monastery were carved out of solid rock and possess exceptional acoustics. The monastic complex received its name after the Holy Lance which was kept here in the middle ages. Overnight in Yerevan.



Day 14: Drive to Tbilisi in Georgia, visit Sevan Lake en route

In the morning we will head towards Lake Sevan - the “Pearl of Armenia”, which is one of the largest high-altitude lakes in the world located at 1900m. This fresh-water lake is surrounded with snow-covered mountains. Here we visit a 9th century Sevan monastery, perched on a cliff above the lake. From this point is a wonderful view of the lake and if we are lucky we will witness the changing colors of the water. We continue our journey to the beautiful rolling valley framed by the mountains of the Lesser Caucasus.

We will explore the resort town of Dilijan located in the midst of the forests of Dilijan National Park. We take a walk in the old town, which still preserves 19-century housing, stopping at a ceramicist’s studio. We then head further to the north. Driving via the deep gorge of the Debed River, we reach the monastery of Haghpat - a UNESCO site. The fantastic scenery and the breathtaking position of this monastery make this visit a truly unforgettable experience. Afternoon transfer to Armenian-Georgian border at Sadakhlo where we meet our new guide and bus, and continue to Tbilisi.



Day 15: In Tbilisi

Tbilisi is the capital of Georgia with a population of approx. 1.5 million. We visit the old city with its narrow streets and religious and secular architecture. Here we find a mix of buildings – churches, synagogues, mosques, as well as famous 19th century houses with wooden multi-colored balconies and the sulfur bath which made an unforgettable impression on Pushkin. Afterwards we visit the stunning treasury of the Georgian National Historical Museum.



Day 17: In Tbilisi, trip concludes

After breakfast, trip concludes with a group transfer to the airport and fly back to home via Istanbul.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Arrival and departure airport transfers
- 16 nights' accommodation in standard-grade hotels
- 16 breakfasts and 16 dinner
- Land travel in Iran by air-conditioned coach
- Services of an experienced Iranian tour guide throughout the tour
- Entrance tickets according to the travel plan
- Professional licensed English speaking guide during the tours
- Drinks with meals: Only water and cola - alcoholic beverages are not included
- Domestic flight tickets as per the itinerary

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- International air fares, taxes and surcharges
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry or phone calls
- Visa code application fees
- Tips & Personal Items
- Visa costs

IMPORTANT NOTE

- Please have in mind that in local house single rooms are not provided unless the client asks us for a single room. Also normally in local house, there are no beds.
- On sea trips in case of bad conditions of the sea the routes and timing may change
- In nature trips in case of climate changes and bad weather, changes in accommodation and programs may occur
- The booking process of the hotel starts upon receiving the flight details.
- Changes in the hotels may occur

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

As the executive of nature tours in Iran & Globe, we have assumed our responsibility & role so seriously, know the tourism effect on our surrounded environment & local society, and try to plan & operate our tours in accordance with this foreground thought; For, we believe that the tour executive has a great effect on the means of transferring his/her experiments, to guarantee both the passengers health & environment conservation.

Important:

In cities where there is no 5* hotel, we will have to stay in hotels with highest stars in that city.

HOTEL CATEGORY AND ACCOMMODATION

Cat.	Hotel Name	Location	Nights
5*	GRAND HOTEL 5*	SHIRAZ	2
5*	ABBASI 5*	ISFAHAN	3
5*	ESTEGHLAL 5*	TEHRAN	1
5*	SHAHRIYAR 5*	TABRIZ	2
4*	FENIX COMLIX 4*	KAPAN	1
4*	HYATT PLACE 4*	JERMUK	1
5*	MARRIOTT 5*	YEREVAN	3
5*	AMBASSADORI 5*	TBILISI	3