

## Highlights of Iran and Armenia - 15 days

CT-04



This two week tour marries exotic Iran with the world's oldest Christian nation, Armenia. A packed programme celebrates the rich cultural heritage of the two neighbours, featuring ancient mosques and palaces as well as monasteries precariously perched alongside river gorges and on hill tops. The tour will delight history fans and architecture buffs, interesting anyone with a desire to travel a little off the beaten track and reap the rewards of a warm welcome.

**DEPARTURE DATES:** 02.06.2022; 09.06.2022; 16.06.2022; 23.06.2022; 30.06.2022; 07.07.2022; 14.07.2022; 21.07.2022; 28.07.2022; 04.08.2022; 11.08.2022; 18.08.2022; 25.08.2022; 01.09.2022; 08.09.2022; 15.09.2022; 22.09.2022; 29.09.2022; 06.10.2022; 13.10.2022; 20.10.2022; 27.10.2022; 03.11.2022.

## ITINERARY

**Day 1 - Shiraz**

Our driver will be waiting at the airport for your arrival. You'll transfer to your hotel and there'll be time for you to rest and settle in before our tour programme begins tomorrow. Overnight in Shiraz. (D)

**Day 2 - Shiraz**

The name of Shiraz will be a familiar one to wine lovers; the grape originated here though these days, Shiraz wine comes mainly from France and Australia rather than Iran. The vineyards may be no more, but there are plenty of sights to explore. Your included city tour today takes you first to Nasir Al Mulk mosque; known as the Pink Mosque, it was completed in 1888. From there, you'll visit Vakil Complex, comprising a mosque, traditional baths and a thriving bazaar. You'll round off the day's sightseeing with the imposing Karimkhan Citadel, the beautiful Eram Garden and Hafez Tomb. Overnight in Shiraz. (B,D)

**Day 3 - Shiraz - Persepolis - Naghsh-e Rostam - Pasargadae - Isfahan**

This morning you'll set off for the fabled city of Isfahan. We'll break our journey at Persepolis. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was founded in 518BC as the capital of the Achaemenid Empire. Constructed on an immense terrace, the breathtaking palace complex was one of the most impressive sights in Persia, and now even in its ruined state it is a wonderful place. From Persepolis, you'll move on to Naghsh-e Rostam, an ancient necropolis famous for its reliefs cut into the rock. Our final stop will be at Pasargadae, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Cyrus the Great built it as the capital of the Achaemenid Empire and it's also where you'll encounter his tomb. Overnight in Isfahan. (B,D)

**Day 4 - Isfahan**

Isfahan was abandoned as a capital in the 18th century when the seat of government shifted to Tehran. This meant that much of the historic buildings were left intact and today, the city is a delight for its Persian architecture. Your included sightseeing tour takes you to the Naghshe Jahan Square Complex, where you'll find the Imam Mosque, Ali Qapu and Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque. There'll be time to rummage in the Qeysarieh Bazaar, renowned for carpets and kilims. Round off the day with visits to Chehel Sotun Palace and the Si-o Se pol and Khajou bridges before returning to the hotel to relax. Overnight in Isfahan. (B,D)

**Day 5 - Isfahan - Abyaneh - Kashan**

Today we set off for Kashan, stopping off en route at Abyaneh. This place is nicknamed the "red village" on account of its rich red soil and homes of a similar colour. Its narrow alleyways straggle up the lower flanks of Karkas Mountain. From a distance, it's a picturesque sight and close up you'll enjoy learning about its clay architecture and living traditions. In Kashan, you'll pay a visit to the 19th century Boroujerdi House. It was built by an architect for his bride, the daughter of a wealthy merchant, and is now a museum. Finally, you'll stop at the 16th century Fin Garden, the oldest surviving garden in Iran. It's notorious as the site of the murder of Amir Kabir, the Qajarid chancellor, taken out by an assassin sent by King Nasereddin Shah in 1852. Overnight in Kashan. (B,D)

**Day 6 - Kashan - Tehran**

Our tour continues today to the Iranian capital Tehran. Occupying a spectacular location on the lower slopes of the Alborz Mountains, this backdrop of snow-capped peaks frames many a panoramic view in the city. You'll enjoy a visit to Niaravan Palace, a historical complex which is also home to the Sahebqraniiyeh Palace, and the Tajrish Bazaar and Square, in this, Iran's most liberal and secular city. Overnight in Tehran. (B,D).

### **Day 7 - Tehran - Tabriz**

You'll tackle more of Tehran's major sights today, beginning with Golestan Palace. This walled palace complex dates from the Qajar period and forms one of the oldest groups of buildings in the country. It was once, in the 18th century, the seat of government, but now it's more famous as the source of inspiration for countless Iranian artists and architects who come to marvel at its lavish interiors and stylish exteriors. Also on the itinerary today is the archaeological section of the National Museum and also a visit to the Crown Jewels Museum. You'll round off the day with a flight to Tabriz, in the north west of the country. Overnight in Tabriz. (B,D)

### **Day 8 - Tabriz - Jolfa**

This morning your sightseeing programme includes some of the highlights of Tabriz, located on the ancient Silk Road. You'll pay a visit to the Azerbaijan Museum to learn a little of the city's archaeology and history before making your way to the Blue Mosque. Dating from the 15th century but largely rebuilt, the turquoise mosaics on its entrance archway are original. El-Goli Park completes the itinerary in Tabriz, and then we transfer to Jolfa. We'll squeeze in a trip to the Armenian St Stephen's monastery, dramatically sited in a deep canyon, before checking into our hotel. Overnight in Jolfa. (B,D)

### **Day 9 - Jolfa - Armenia border - Goris**

This morning we set off by car for the Armenian border, crossing at Nordooz. Your driver will assist with any customs and immigration formalities and you'll cross over to Meghry on the Armenian side of the border to meet your new guide. Setting out for Goris, you'll make your way along a beautiful valley alongside a stream to the cave village of Khndzoresk. Explore the caves and rock formations before continuing on to Goris where you'll spend the night. (B,D)

### **Day 10 - Goris - Tatev - Noravank - Khor Virap - Yerevan**

Armenia is the world's oldest Christian nation and today you'll witness some of its most spectacular monasteries. Begin with Tatev, reached by one of the world's longest cable cars, the Wings of Tatev, affording breathtaking views stretching for miles across the valley. Afterwards, it's on to the 12th century Noravank Monastery. Accessed along a steep-sided canyon, it's worth climbing the vertiginous steps across the front of the chapel for the incredible views back along the valley as seen from its upper storey. A stop has been arranged at Areni winery; the wines and fruit-based spirits make excellent souvenirs. Our final stop is at Khor Virap monastery, from which you can see Mount Ararat across the border in Turkey. You'll spend the night in Yerevan, the Armenian capital. (B,D)

### **Day 11 - Yerevan - Echmiadzin - Zvartnots - Yerevan**

Today's included sightseeing comprises a city tour of the Armenian capital. Imposing Republic Square is one of the city's most distinctive landmarks. You'll also pay a visit to the manuscript museum known as the Matenadaran. Just outside the city centre you'll find the poignant and moving Genocide Museum, which graphically explains the events of more than a century ago. Another key part of the Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex is the obelisk and eternal flame, its simplicity creating a serene environment for contemplation. Later, you'll visit the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, the spiritual and administrative heart of the Armenian Church. The tour will continue to the ruins of the glorious 7th century Zvartnots Cathedral before returning to the city for another overnight stay. (B,D)

### **Day 12 - Yerevan - Garni - Geghard - Yerevan**

After a visit to Yerevan's History Museum, you'll make your way out of town to the Pagan Temple of Garni. Dating from the 1st century, it's a contrast to the many Christian monasteries scattered across the countryside. Nearby is the UNESCO-listed Geghard monastery, set right into the towering cliffs of the Azat River gorge. Overnight in Yerevan this evening. (B,D)

### **Day 13 - Yerevan - Sevan - Dilijan - Haghpat**

Today we'll leave Yerevan bound for Lake Sevan, the pearl of Armenia. On a hilltop overlooking the lake you'll encounter the delightful Sevanavank Monastery, occupying one of the most captivating locations of all Armenia's monasteries. The church is impressive, its graveyard littered with engraved standing stones known as khachkars. Moving on, you'll travel to Dilijan, a resort and spa town. Last of all, you'll visit Haghpat Monastery, one of the largest religious and cultural centres of mediaeval Armenia. The holes you'll see in its floors were used to store wine. Tonight your accommodation is in Haghpat. (B,D)

### Day 14 - Haghpat - Sanahin - Goshavank - Yerevan

Your itinerary makes a loop back towards Yerevan today. From Haghpat, you'll head to Sanahin Monastery. Twinned with Haghpat, Sanahin's name translates as "older than that one". The cavernous interior features plenty of tombstones on the floor. Step on them: it's commonly held that if you do, you're freeing the dead of their sins. Look to see the curtain across the main body of the church, which marks that it still functions as a place of worship. Your tour will conclude with a visit to Goshavank monastery before returning to spend the final night in Yerevan. (B,D)

### Day 15 - Yerevan

Today marks the end of your tour. We trust that Iran and Armenia's rich cultural heritage and long history have made for an interesting and memorable visit. (B)

## TOUR INCLUSIONS AND OPTIONAL EXTRAS

#### Included

[International flights](#)  
[Accommodation](#)  
[Guided tours & cultural programme](#)  
[English - speaking guides](#)  
[Half board meals](#)  
[Evening entertainment](#)  
[Ground transportation](#)  
[Airport transfers](#)  
[Iran visa](#)

#### Not included

[Personal travel insurance](#)  
[Optional excursions](#)

#### Practical information

[About Best of Caucasus company](#)  
[Book with confidence - covid FAQs](#)  
[Contact our travel consultants](#)

## AVAILABLE PACKAGES

### COMFORT - 3\* PACKAGE

Dates	Excl. flights	Incl. flights*	Single suppl.
02/06/2022 - 16/06/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
09/06/2022 - 23/06/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
16/06/2022 - 30/06/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
23/06/2022 - 07/07/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
30/06/2022 - 14/07/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
07/07/2022 - 21/07/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
14/07/2022 - 28/07/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
21/07/2022 - 04/08/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
28/07/2022 - 11/08/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
04/08/2022 - 18/08/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
11/08/2022 - 25/08/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
18/08/2022 - 01/09/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
25/08/2022 - 08/09/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
01/09/2022 - 15/09/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
08/09/2022 - 22/09/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
15/09/2022 - 29/09/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
22/09/2022 - 06/10/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
29/09/2022 - 13/10/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
06/10/2022 - 20/10/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
13/10/2022 - 27/10/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
20/10/2022 - 03/11/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
27/10/2022 - 10/11/2022	£2595	£3195	£275
03/11/2022 - 17/11/2022	£2595	£3195	£275

### PREMIUM - 4\* PACKAGE

Dates	Excl. flights	Incl. flights*	Single suppl.
02/06/2022 - 16/06/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
09/06/2022 - 23/06/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
16/06/2022 - 30/06/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
23/06/2022 - 07/07/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
30/06/2022 - 14/07/2022	£2995	£3595	£445

07/07/2022 - 21/07/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
14/07/2022 - 28/07/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
21/07/2022 - 04/08/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
28/07/2022 - 11/08/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
04/08/2022 - 18/08/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
11/08/2022 - 25/08/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
18/08/2022 - 01/09/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
25/08/2022 - 08/09/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
01/09/2022 - 15/09/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
08/09/2022 - 22/09/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
15/09/2022 - 29/09/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
22/09/2022 - 06/10/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
29/09/2022 - 13/10/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
06/10/2022 - 20/10/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
13/10/2022 - 27/10/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
20/10/2022 - 03/11/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
27/10/2022 - 10/11/2022	£2995	£3595	£445
03/11/2022 - 17/11/2022	£2995	£3595	£445

## ALTERNATIVE TOURS AND TAILOR-MADE ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to organized group tours, we also offer individual trips. This could be an entirely separate holiday arrangement or an extension to a regular "Best of Caucasus" trip. Whether you would like to travel independently, or just with the group of your friends or colleagues, we can help to realise your holiday plans. Depending on your preference for either comfort or budget, we can help you to design the ideal itinerary and provide the optimal value-for-money quote. Please [contact us for a quote](#).

Based on your chosen tour we believe you might be interested in alternative trips listed below:

- > [Discover Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan - 16 days \(CT-02\)](#), Price from £2,745, 16 days
- > [Best of Georgia and Azerbaijan - 12 days \(CT-03\)](#), Price from £2,045, 12 days
- > [Great Armenian Discovery - 10 days \(AM-03\)](#), Price from £1,695, 10 days

## HOW TO BOOK

### Step 1 - Choose Your Holiday & Departure Dates

It is important that you choose a trip that is well suited to your interests, capabilities and experience. All our staff has first hand experience of a range of Best of Caucasus holidays and will be happy to talk to you about your chosen trip, enabling you to assess its suitability. We also recommend that you read the descriptions of the relevant region, general information about our services, booking conditions, and trip dossiers carefully. Once you know what tour is right for you, as well as your departure dates, you can start your booking.

### Step 2 - Complete the Booking Form

**Online:** log on to [www.best-of-caucasus.co.uk](http://www.best-of-caucasus.co.uk) and open the tour you wish to book and click "Book now". To provide you with a more personalised and relevant experience in all your contact with Best of Caucasus, when you book online we ask you to register on our system. Once registered you can retrieve your bookings, update newsletter subscriptions, passenger and emergency contact details, submit special dietary requests, view invoices and receipts, download trip documents.

**Email:** alternatively, you can book your tour per email - [info@best-of-caucasus.co.uk](mailto:info@best-of-caucasus.co.uk), or

**Phone:** call us on **+44 (0)20 30 51 76 40**

When booking by email or over the phone please confirm your personal details (full name and address), chosen tour, departure date, package type (hotel category), and available upgrades.

### Step 3 - Confirmation of your booking

On receipt of your booking form, we will make any necessary reservations for you and send you confirmation invoice, including the flight details, and additional information about your destination: advice on visas, vaccinations and what to take. The invoice will also show you the exact due date of the payment.

## Step 4 - Payment

Please note, if your departure date is more than 56 days you will need to pay the deposit, which should cover the full cost of the flight (if applicable), plus 10% of the land-only arrangements (minimum £100) per person towards your tour. The outstanding payment must be made 56 days prior to departure. If you book less than 56 days before departure, full payment must be made at the time of your booking. You can make your payment by bank transfer, debit or credit card, cheque, bankers draft or postal order. You will find all relevant payment details in your invoice.

