

Armenia National Day

Country offers diverse culture, landscapes

On behalf of my country I express gratitude and respect to Japan for the quarter-century-long friendly ties with the Republic of Armenia, and on this celebratory occasion I wish peace and prosperity to the people of Japan and all readers of The Japan Times around the world.

Ambassador of Armenia Grant R. Pogosyan

The following is an excerpt from Armenia's official tourism website (<http://armenia.travel/>).

The Republic of Armenia was inaugurated on Sept. 21, 1991. Although it faces many challenges, the nation's heritage, art, culture, science and faith are highly regarded and held in high esteem. However, it has become very clear that Armenia's strength today lies in the intellect of its people; more specifically, in innovation, in all forms, especially within the IT sector.

Armenia today is an open air museum. It is a land of enchantment, with awe-inspiring untouched nature, seven climate zones offering different topographies, each more beautiful than the last. Each city is a museum in and of itself, with ancient relics, old and new architecture and churches dating back thousands of years. It is a land where art, heritage and culture fuse the past with the present, creating a living history.

Yerevan is the capital of Armenia. Its architect, Alexander Tamanyan, used the most progressive method of city building in 1923 — "planning of solar rays" into the foundation of the city plan. It is a walking city built on a circular foundation, consisting of parks, statues, museums, restaurants, cafes and fountains.

Armenia is a country rich in heritage and culture. This is evident in the cities, villages, sites and people. It is rich with traditions, events and festivals.

Presently there are three UNESCO World Heritage sites in Armenia, and each of the three hold significant religious and historical significance. They are the Monastery of Geghard and the Upper Azat Valley, the Cathedral and Churches of Echmiadzin and the Archeological Site of Zvartnots and Monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin. Two of these sites are included based on cultural criteria, while one meets both cultural and natural criteria.

The Armenian landscape is defined by its cliffs, mountains, valleys and gorges. The massive ridges divide the country along its axes, rendering large areas unreachable by regular transport, while giving way to large expanses of lush forests in the north, tunnels through mountain chains that become passages to other worlds, rolling green hills that leave behind the fog and rain and enter a new day of sun and summer enjoyment.

The different climates and altitudes have fostered the growth of one of the richest floral habitats on the planet, and along with it, a changing ecosystem of endemic and migratory wildlife. National parks have sprung up as a necessary response to human intervention, protecting the species within and promoting the reintroduction of once abundant fauna and flora.

As the seasons change, the visual elements and approach to nature change as well. As green turns to orange and deep shades of red, the forests of Dilijan National Park open up to mushroom pickers and hikers who were avoiding the spring and summer humidity. When the first snow comes in November, skiers start pining for the opening of the Tsakhkadzor and Jermuk ski resorts, while the most extreme outdoor enthusiasts prepare their winter gear for cold ascents of Mount Ara and Mount Aragats.

Possibilities of hiking across the varied landscapes of Armenia are endless. Hiking groups are expanding the outdoor possibilities of Armenia by trailblazing toward remote monasteries, setting higher standards for hiking up the many mountains and involving an ever-growing local and international community. There are a number of hiking trails that have already been mapped for the safety and convenience of visitors.

Meanwhile, Armenian cuisine is a perfect example of how history influences the culinary traditions of any land. Enriched with more than 2,000 years of history, the local cuisine in Armenia deserves special mention. Visitors will have unforgettable culinary impressions of Armenia.

The glory of Armenian cuisine extends far beyond the country's borders. Armenian food derives most of its magic from the great abundance, quality and freshness of its locally sourced ingredients. Armenian cuisine is based on a concept of food quality that is defined by the three interconnected principles of good, clean and fair.

The ecologically clean food in Armenia includes a rich and varied selection of fish and meat; with alpine plains and river valleys filled with orchards, groves and fields of vegetables, pulses, cereals and nuts; mountains and hillsides covered in vines and forests; and large flocks and herds pastured throughout the country.

Armenia is also famous for its wine and brandy. Winemaking is an important part of the Armenian culture. Armenian wines provide something for every occasion and in every form, from delicate whites through robust reds to wonderful dry or sweet sparkling wines, as well as from simple table wines to some of the most expensive and sought-after vintages.



Built in the ninth century, Tatev Monastery is a popular tourist destination.

EMBASSY OF ARMENIA



The capital of Yerevan is the largest city in Armenia and the administrative, cultural and industrial center of the country. EMBASSY OF ARMENIA

*Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Armenia
on the 26th Anniversary of Their Independence*

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