

Armenian Tourism: Huge Potential



The Republic of Armenia, with a population more than three million, is situated in the Southern Caucasus between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. This is a country which continuously puts more and more money into its tourism industry. Facilities are yet to be fully developed but are getting better and better every year. The country has a huge tourism potential, for there are many places of scenic beauty as well historic sites, both ancient and medieval. The nation has a very long history, being one of the oldest in the world and this adds to its attraction for foreign visitors. There are monasteries at Haghpat and Sanahin, for example, that have been given the status of World Heritage Sites, and other places of interest are Lake Sevan, the hot springs of Arzni and Jermuk, the forests of Dilijan, Aghveran, Tsaghkadzor, Bjurakan and Gugark, and the mountainous natural caves and cliffs of the south-east region. The capital, Yerevan, is nestled in the shadow of Mount Ararat. This is the spot where Noah's Ark first landed, after the Great Flood.

Nevertheless, the Armenian tourism industry faces many obstacles, but the government is taking steps to improve the situation. Deputy Minister of Trade and Economic Development of Armenia, Ara Petrosian, says that over 270 million AMD were earmarked for tourism in 2006. 139 million of the sum was spent on advertising Armenia via CNN, and this year the government plans to give 180 million to the Tsakhador Ski Resort. This is open all-year round, for skiing in the winter and for hiking during the rest of the year and it hopes to attract foreign tourists in large numbers in the future.

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