**Ararat, Armenia**

Even though Mount Ararat is central to Armenian identity, and plays a huge role in history and culture, the peak itself is actually located in Turkey. Since it is in the western part of Armenia, it was left within Ottoman state – only the eastern part of Armenia was annexed to the Russian Empire in the early 20th century. However, Armenians consider Ararat the symbol of their state no matter what, and it is also considered to be the holy land where Noah landed his Ark. Ararat is visible from many places in Yerevan, and indeed the city was designed so that Ararat could be the center of views all around the city. Many brands and products feature Ararat, and even the coat of arms of Armenia has the distinctive silhouette of this mountain.

Mount Ararat stands on the right bank of the Aras River near the border with Turkey. It consists of two cones with a common base – the Western or Big Ararat (5,165 m) and the Eastern or Little Ararat (3,925 m). The geological age of Big Ararat is about 3.5 million years, and Little Ararat is about 150 thousand years old. Both mountains are dormant volcanoes. Armenians lovingly call these tops “two brothers” - Sis and Masis. The tops of these mountains are visible from practically everywhere. Big Ararat is covered by a permanent snow cap under which, as described in the Bible, the remains of the Noah's Ark might rest. There are about 30 small glaciers of which the largest, St. Jacob, stretches for over two kilometers.