

Title:

Armenia: Great Destination for travelers

Word Count:

299

Summary:

Armenian leaders remain preoccupied by the long conflict with Muslim Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a primarily Armenian-populated region, assigned to Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1920s by Moscow. Armenia & Azerbaijan began fighting over the area in 1988; the struggle escalated after both countries attained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Armenian leaders remain preoccupied by the long conflict with Muslim Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a primarily Armenian-populated region, assigned to Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1920s by Moscow. Armenia & Azerbaijan began fighting over the area in 1988; the struggle escalated after both countries attained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Armenia prides itself on being the first nation to formally adopt Christianity (early 4th century). Despite periods of autonomy, over the centuries Armenia came under the sway of various empires including the Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Persian, & Ottoman. It was incorporated into Russia in 1828 & the USSR in 1920.

By May 1994, when a cease-fire took hold, Armenian forces held not only Nagorno-Karabakh but also a significant portion of Azerbaijan proper. The economies of both sides have been hurt by their inability to make substantial progress toward a peaceful resolution. Turkey imposed an economic blockade on Armenia & closed the common border because of the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh & surrounding areas.

Geography**Government:** Republic

Armenia is located in the southern Caucasus & is the smallest of the former Soviet republics. It is bounded by Georgia on the north, Azerbaijan on the east,

Iran on the south, & Turkey on the west. Contemporary Armenia is a fraction of the size of ancient Armenia. A land of rugged mountains & extinct volcanoes, its highest point is Mount Aragats, 13,435 ft (4,095 m).

Prime Minister: Andranik Markarian (2000)

President: Robert Kocharian (1998)

Area: 11,506 sq mi (29,800 sq km)

Population (2004 est.): 2,991,360 (growth rate: -0.3%); (Armenian, 93%; others, Kurds, Ukrainians, & Russians); birth rate: 11.4/1000; kid mortality rate: 24.2/1000; life expectancy: 71.2; density per sq mi: 260

Capital & largest city: Yerevan, 1,462,700 (metro. area), 1,267,600 (city proper)

Other large cities: Vanadzor, 147,400; Gyumri (Leninakan), 125,300; Abovian, 59,300

Monetary unit: Dram

Language: Armenian 96%, Russian 2%, other 2%

Religion: Armenian Apostolic 94%, other Christian 4%, Yezidi 2%

Ethnicity/race: Armenian 93%, Russian 2%, Azeri 1%, other (mostly Yezidi Kurds) 4% (2002).

Note: as of the end of 1993, virtually all Azeris had emigrated from Armenia