ARMENIA: A LAND THAT RISES, TIME AND AGAIN

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Category: Opinions

By Melinda Andonyan, Istanbul, 20 October 2025

As an Armenian born and raised in Istanbul, traveling to Armenia is more than a journey—it's a homecoming. From the moment you land at the airport, the sight of Armenian letters, the sound of the language, and the familiar cultural cues stir a joy that's hard to describe, especially for someone who has lived as a minority in a Muslim country. If you carry a deep love for your heritage, the experience is transformative. It may sound cliché, but it's something you must feel to understand.

Walking freely through the streets, wearing a cross around your neck without hesitation, and tracing the layers of a 2,807-year-old city in every corner of Yerevan evokes a flood of emotions. Sadness comes first—how could a capital with such ancient roots have endured so much cruelty and despair? But then pride rises. You see a people who have rebuilt, again and again, contributing to the world with resilience and brilliance. Your heart swells with admiration.



The Geghard Monastery

Traveling to Armenia feels like moving through time. Even as your plane descends, the pink stone buildings and the mist-shrouded majesty of Mount Ararat greet you. On one side, ancient stone churches; on the other, modern cafés, vibrant youth, and streets alive with art. The country may be small, but its soul is vast. Everyone seems to move to a rhythm—one that blends past and present. Yerevan's wide boulevards invite reflection. The city offers modern life steeped in memory. Mount Ararat looms in the distance, visible from everywhere, yet unreachable.

Armenia is the world's oldest Christian nation, and its churches are more than places of worship—they are stone chronicles of history. The Geghard Monastery, carved into a mountain, and the Hellenistic Garni Temple, a portal to Armenia's pagan past, are breathtaking. In Yerevan, Soviet-era architecture stands alongside museums, parks, and ruins, each corner overflowing with culture. It's no surprise the city ranks among Europe's cultural capitals. Art, history, and life pulse through its streets. And it's one of the safest cities in the world—peaceful even at midnight.



Garni Temple

This is a land of stones and silent mountains. In that silence, visitors often discover themselves.

Armenia is also a land of melancholy. Its music, its paintings, and the eyes of its people carry the weight of history. Sorrow is not worn outwardly—it's lived inwardly. The haunting sound of the *duduk*, a traditional wind instrument, tells the story of a nation that has endured for centuries.

The people are warm-hearted and generous. They love conversation. Their homemade wine, lavash bread, cognac, dolma, and *khorovats* (barbecue) are legendary. Around the dinner table, stories flow as richly as the food. Sharing—not consuming—is a way of life. Armenians embrace you with a sincerity that feels like kinship. In their care, you may rediscover the value of spiritual connection over material wealth.

Armenia is a land of spiritual depth. And every time it rises from its ashes, it reminds the world what endurance truly means.

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Melinda Andonyan was born in Istanbul-Türkiye in 1982. She is a Turkish-Armenian whose ancestors have lived in these lands for centuries. She graduated with honors from the Department of Teaching. She studied linguistics in Germany, on a scholarship from the German government. She has been actively involved in educational activities in various countries and worked as a teacher at private schools and universities in Türkiye. In addition to her teaching career, she has been an active translator and interpreter in four languages (English, German, Armenian, and Greek) since 2014. She first translated a Turkish book into English, called "Chaldee Letters and The Chaldeans," (written by Mgr. Francois Yakan) in 2014. This translation has been acclaimed worldwide and has found its place in libraries in many countries. Currently, she is translating books for many publishing companies and also writing articles and texts for various magazines and online platforms.

Comments

Erdem Hanay – 2025-10-27 17:11:32
Such a good way to describe a country, a culture, a diaspora.. I felt as if I was there traveling through the country. Understanding would be the catalyst to build new bridges. It is quite easy to understand thanks to the way you describe. So who's to say it would be hard to build those bridges :)



Nurnisa Erismis – 2025-10-22 04:38:20
Dear Melinda, Thank you for this magnificent piece. I was deeply moved - not only by what you wrote, but by how you wrote it. While reading, I felt as if I were there, in Armenia itself, walking through its streets, breathing its air, and touching its quiet soul through your words. Your piece felt like walking barefoot on the soil of a mother who never stopped waiting. Your words are not only about Armenia , they are Armenia: tender, wounded, proud, and endlessly reborn. For those of us who have lived with distance — between lands, between silences — your description of “hearing Armenian words and seeing the letters” touches a place beyond nostalgia. It is the moment when memory becomes breath again. You write of stones and mountains, yet what you truly reveal is a maternal presence that holds us all — a silent strength that neither demands nor forgets. In your lines, Armenia is not a geography but a heartbeat; not an old homeland, but the first embrace of a mother we never met yet always longed for. Every diaspora soul carries an invisible ache , the ache of separation from a land that feels like blood. Your essay turns that ache into grace. You remind us that to return, even once, is not merely to travel; it is to heal. Thank you for giving voice to this tenderness, and for reminding us that Armenia rises again each time one of her children dares to remember her. With admiration, warmth, and deep emotion, Nurnisa