SPICE ROADS
CYCLING



TOURING

ARMENIA'S PASSES BY BICYCLE

Tour Code
ARM-APB

10 DAYS
9 NIGHTS

Destinations	Armenia
Tour Meets	Yerevan
Tour Ends	Yerevan
Fly in to	Zvartnots International Airport (EVN)
Fly out of	Zvartnots International Airport (EVN)
Group Size	4-16 riders
Minimum Age	18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE

8 Cycling days	**464** km Total cycling distance
58 km Avg distance / day	**877** m Avg climbing / day

PRICING

Price	US$ 3,750
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)	US$ 200
Bike Hire (E-Bike)	US$ 480
Single Supplement	US$ 435

**E-bikes are in limited supply, please enquire to reserve one.*

DEPARTURES

17 Jun - 26 Jun 2027
11 Jul - 20 Jul 2027
20 Aug - 29 Aug 2027
30 Sep - 09 Oct 2027

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Airport pick up
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

TRIP PROFILE

We ride a total of **464 km over 8 cycling days**. Days average 58 km and 877 metres of climbing, and on seven of them we ride higher than 2,000 metres above sea level. The week opens with a big day out of Gyumri, eases off in the gorges of Lori, builds again through Tavush and around Lake Sevan, and then we cross Selim Pass into Vayots Dzor. We stop at the Orbelian Caravanserai, a 14th-century inn on a Silk Road route, and visit a family winery on the last day, in a region where wine has been made for over 6,000 years. The hardest day, from Lake Sevan to Tsapatagh, covers **70 km with 1,274 metres of climbing** and reaches the tour's high point at 2,586 metres above sea level.

The trip is fully supported, and your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way.

Suitability

This tour is for fit riders who are comfortable with long climbs and several big days in a row. Four days have more than 1,000 metres of climbing, two of them back to back in the middle of the week, and the high points of most days are over 2,000 metres above sea level, where the thinner air makes climbs harder. Most climbs are steady, but several days have steeper pitches, and above Lake Sevan there's 1.5 km at 14 to 18%. You should be at ease on gravel roads, some of them a little rough. Plan to ride three times a week, with a longer, hilly ride of up to 70 km at the weekend. The tour is **not suitable for riders new to sustained climbing or to riding on gravel**.

Biking Conditions

About 60% of the route is paved and 40% is gravel. Most of the gravel is smooth and well packed, but a few stretches are rougher, like the barely used road along the Dzoraget gorge, and need care. The paved sections are mostly rural roads linking villages. While much of the route is on quiet countryside roads with minimal traffic, we will be regularly sharing the roads with other vehicles, including cars, motorbikes, and buses. The road over Selim Pass is a main road between Lake Sevan and the south of the country, so expect more cars and trucks there.

We generally ride rain or shine, but we can adjust the planned route based on the guide's discretion or your comfort. It's all part of the adventure! Throughout the ride, the support vehicle is always nearby to offer refuge to any weary cyclists.

Accommodations

We stay in **boutique hotels, country hotels and a family guesthouse, with city hotels in Gyumri and Yerevan**. In Gyumri our hotel sits beside the main square, and its spa is in the Alexandra, a protected building from the late 1880s. In Debet we sleep in a small hotel built into the hillside under a green roof, run as a social enterprise for the Children of Armenia Fund. At Nerkin Getashen we stay in a family guesthouse built from local materials beside the Tatoyans' 19th-century water mill, still working and listed as national heritage. Breakfast is served every morning.

Please be aware that some older or more characterful properties may show signs of wear and the service pace can be more relaxed than you might be used to.

For larger groups we may occasionally split the group between nearby properties or substitute a similar hotel if the listed one is not available.



Day 1: Meet in Yerevan

We meet in Yerevan, Armenia's capital, for a city tour with a local guide. Much of the centre was rebuilt in the 1920s and 1930s to a plan by the architect Alexander Tamanian, in pink volcanic stone from the surrounding hills, which is why Yerevan is known as the Pink City. We recommend arriving at least a day early to see more of the city.

After the tour we transfer north to **Gyumri** (approx. 2 hrs), Armenia's second city, where the riding starts tomorrow. Its old centre, the Kumayri district, is a protected reserve of 19th-century buildings in black and red volcanic stone. We sit down to a welcome dinner and go through the week ahead.

Please let us know if you need assistance with airport transfers or pre-tour hotel bookings.

Radisson Hotel & Spa Gyumria Dinner

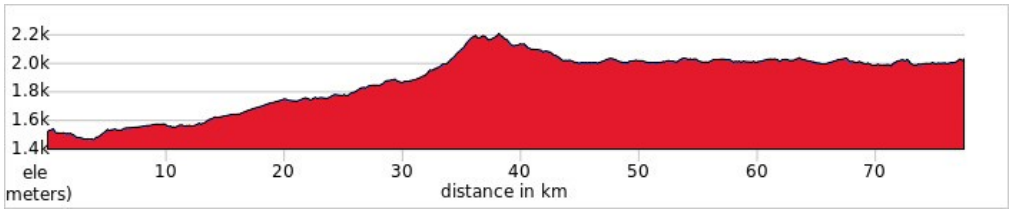
Day 2: Gyumri → Vardaghbyur

The day starts with a short transfer (approx. 5 min) to Sev Berd, the Black Fortress, a round 19th-century fort of black volcanic stone on the edge of Gyumri. After bike fitting, we ride out of the city.

For the first 35 km the road rises steadily onto the high plateau, a long false flat you feel in your legs more than you see, with a short, steeper pitch near the top at about 2,200 metres above sea level. From Haykavan the road turns to gravel for about 13 km, and we break for a picnic lunch along the way.

At Paghakn we reach the edge of **Lake Arpi**, a protected wetland lake at over 2,000 metres above sea level. We turn east on a second stretch of gravel, past the wet meadows of Ardenis and Aghvorik, which belong to the same protected area. The last kilometres follow the main road to Vardaghbyur, a village high on the plateau, where we sit down to dinner.

Herbs & Honey Boutique Hotel Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 78km +1203m -699m

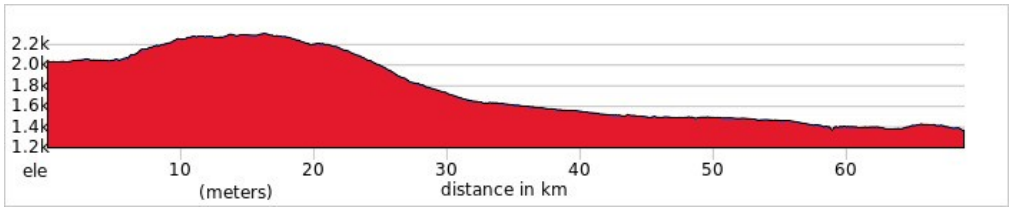
Day 3: Vardaghbyur → Gyulagarak

Today is mostly downhill, but it starts with a climb. From Vardaghbyur the road rises gently for 16 km to the day's high point at about 2,300 metres above sea level, our last stretch on the open plateau. Then a 26 km descent, partly on gravel, takes us off the high ground to the town of Tashir, with a picnic lunch on the way down.

From Tashir we head south to **Stepanavan**, a town on the Dzoraget river among the pine forests of the Lori region. Just off our road, above the Dzoraget gorge, lie the ruins of Lori Berd, the fortress-capital of an 11th-century Armenian kingdom.

The day ends in Gyulagarak with dinner. The village sits near the Stepanavan Dendropark, an arboretum founded in 1931 by the Polish forester Edmund Leonowicz.

ABA Resort (or similar) Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 69km +496m -1155m

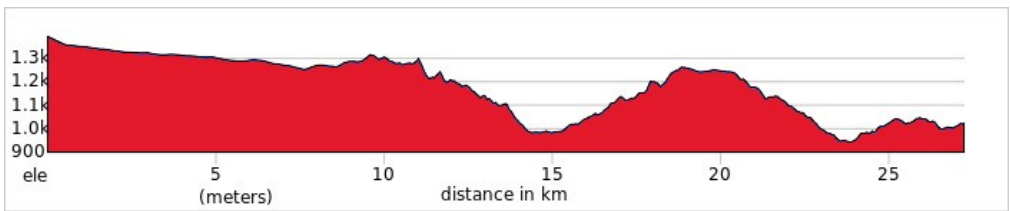
Day 4: Gyulagarak → Debet

This is the shortest day of the tour, and it crosses two gorges. We leave Gyulagarak on rolling roads through the village of Pushkino. Soon after, we're on gravel, quiet and a little rough in places.

The road drops us into the gorge of the Dzoraget river to **Hnevank**, a monastery founded in the 7th century on a hill where the Dzoraget and Gargar rivers meet. We stop to look around and have a picnic lunch, then climb out of the gorge, the day's only real effort, about 4.5 km at around 6%.

We drop again to cross the Pambak river and ride the last few kilometres up to Debet. The village is home to an education centre run by the Children of Armenia Fund for children from the surrounding villages, and we end the day there with dinner.

Debet Concept Hotel by COAF Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 27km +539m -906m

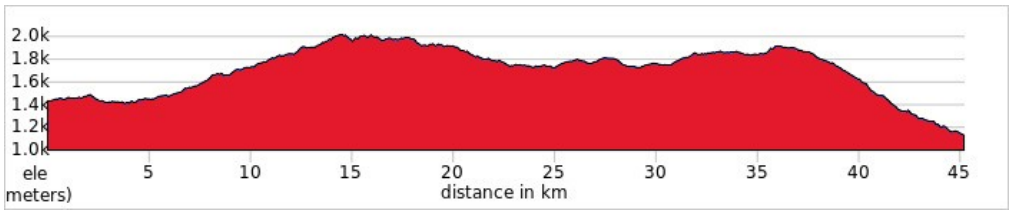
Day 5: Debet → Yenokavan

The riding starts in the village of Lorut, after a transfer from Debet (approx. 40 min). We cross the Marts river and soon start climbing, about 11 km at around 5%, with some steeper pitches, up onto a high, open ridge at about 2,000 metres above sea level. Partway up, the asphalt ends, and we stay on gravel for most of the day.

Around halfway we cross from Lori into Tavush, the province we sleep in tonight, and roll east along the high ground for the next 20 km, never dropping far below 1,750 metres. We break for a picnic lunch on the ridge.

The last part is a long descent, nearly 800 metres down to Yenokavan, a village in the forested hills above Ijevan, the capital of Tavush. The evening is free, and you can pick your own dinner at the resort or close by.

Yenokavan Apaga Resort Breakfast, Lunch



Ride 45km +1148m -1449m

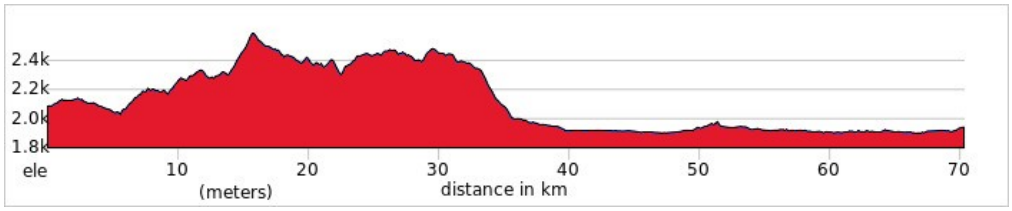
Day 6: Yenokavan → Tsapatagh

This is the hardest day of the tour. After a transfer from Yenokavan (approx. 1 hr 30 min), we start at Tsovagyugh on the north-western shore of **Lake Sevan**, one of the three great "seas" of historic Armenia, and turn straight away from the water into the mountains above it.

The road soon turns to gravel and climbs for about 11 km, with 1.5 km at 14 to 18% near the top, the steepest riding of the week. It takes us to the tour's high point at 2,586 metres above sea level, and we stay high for the next 15 km before a long gravel descent brings us back down to the lake.

The last 30 km follow the north-eastern shore on paved road, mostly flat, with a stop for lunch. We finish in Tsapatagh, a small village near the shore, where we have dinner.

Avan Marak Tsapatagh Tufenkian Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 70km +1274m -1420m

Day 7: Tsapatagh → Nerkin Getashen

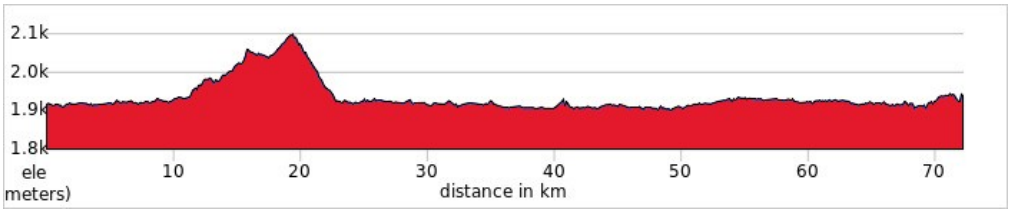
After two hard days in the mountains, we spend today on the shores of Lake Sevan. From Tsapatagh we ride south along the eastern shore, close to the water at about 1,900 metres above sea level.

After about 12 km we turn inland towards the village of Geghamasar, on a gentle rise of about 8 km that never gets steep. At the top we leave the asphalt for gravel, and it stays that way as we drop back to the south-eastern corner of the lake. We stop for a picnic lunch on the way.

From the corner we turn west along the southern shore, flat and mostly paved, to Nerkin Getashen. The village sits on the Argichi river below Kotavank, a 9th-century church. We sit down

to dinner in the village.

Au Moulin Tatoyan Nerkin Getashen Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 72km +507m -488m

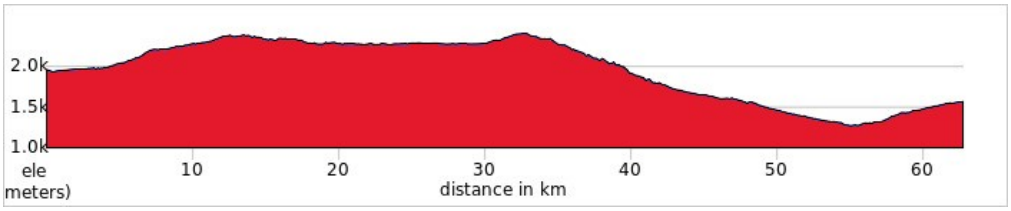
Day 8: Nerkin Getashen → Yeghegis

Today we cross Selim Pass, on an old trade route from Lake Sevan south into Vayots Dzor province. We leave Nerkin Getashen on a steady climb away from the lake, and we're soon on gravel. It stays that way for most of the morning, up to about 2,370 metres above sea level and then across a high, open plateau.

Back on the main road, a short climb takes us to the top of the pass at about 2,400 metres. Just over the top we stop at **Orbelian's Caravanserai**, an inn built in 1332 by Prince Chesar Orbelian for travellers and their animals crossing the mountains. It's the best-preserved caravanserai in Armenia, with carved animals above the door, the symbols of the Orbelian princes.

Then we ride downhill for about 23 km, losing more than 1,100 metres on the way to the valley floor. The first 10 km have two long sets of tight hairpins. We stop for lunch along the way. A last climb of about 7 km takes us up the Yeghegis valley to the village, below the medieval fortress of Smbataberd. The evening is free, with dinner on your own.

Arevi hotel Yeghegis (or similar) Breakfast, Lunch



Ride 63km +1049m -1437m

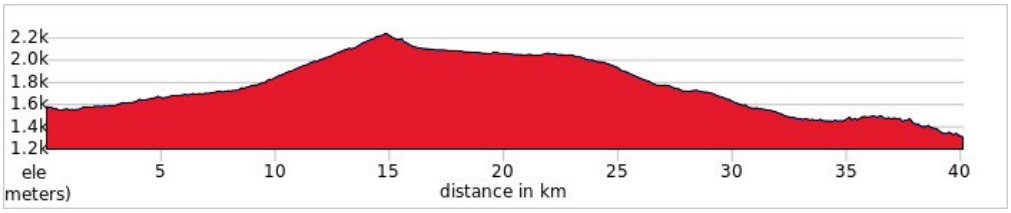
Day 9: Yeghegis → Yerevan

Our final day on the bikes starts east up the Yeghegis valley, on and off gravel. Then comes the last real climb of the tour: about 500 metres in 7 km, much of it on tight hairpins, up to about 2,240 metres above sea level.

From the top the gravel carries on across high, open ground before we start down. Along the way we stop for lunch and visit a **family winery** for a tour and tasting, in Armenia's best-known wine region.

The road drops to Herher, a village known for a wild pear that grows nowhere else in the world. We follow the Herher river past the reservoir and down to the main road near Vayk, where the riding ends. We load the bikes and transfer to Yerevan (approx. 2 hrs 30 min) for a farewell dinner.

Tufenkian Historic Hotel (or similar) Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 40km +796m -1062m

Day 10: Yerevan Departure

After breakfast our tour ends at the hotel in Yerevan. If you're staying on, the city has more to see. At the top of Mashtots Avenue, the city's main street, the Matenadaran holds the largest collection of Armenian manuscripts in the world. A short walk away is the Cascade, a giant stone stairway with an art collection inside and views over the city from the top.

For a day trip, Garni lies about 30 km east of Yerevan. Its 1st-century temple is the only Greco-Roman colonnaded building still standing in Armenia, on the edge of a gorge lined with basalt columns.

Please let us know if you need assistance with airport transfers or post-tour hotel bookings, as these are not included in the main price. We are happy to help you organise these final details for your journey home or an extended stay in the capital.

Breakfast

Disclaimer: The adventure cycling tours we operate often go beyond the beaten track, and the countries where we ride are not always predictable. Due to these reasons, it is occasionally necessary to reroute or update itineraries. Our guarantee is that we will not change a trip unless for safety or to improve it. Our listed hotels are always accurate at the time of writing, but should we have to change any hotel, it will always be for a similar or better one.

NUTS & BOLTS

Bikes

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we don't include bikes in the tour price. However, you can hire one locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section. The hire bikes are high-quality **hardtail mountain bikes** by Cube or similar. **E-bikes** by Bianchi or similar are also available. If you bring your own bike, we recommend a hardtail mountain bike. You're welcome to bring a gravel bike instead, as long as you're happy to ride at the group's pace on the same route, and please make sure your bike is in excellent mechanical order before you travel.

Bike Repairs

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Passports and Visas

GENERAL BOOKING INFO

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place:

FLEXIBLE BOOKING CONDITIONS

Booking a SpiceRoads cycling adventure is easy and we try to do everything possible to make sure you have full flexibility and peace of mind. We do not require a deposit to hold your place on a tour and once full payment has been made your money is protected in our client account and you have the flexibility to cancel or change your booking if needed.

CONFIRMING YOUR BOOKING

Just complete our online booking form or send your booking details offline (email or post), and we will confirm your participation. No deposit is needed to confirm your place on a SpiceRoads tour.

You are advised to read our Booking Conditions in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please email us or call our office.

TRIP STATUS

There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If the trip status is 'Limited' will mean we have only a small number of spaces available for booking. If you are unsure about the trip status, please email us or call our office.

BOOKING ONLINE

From the tour page, click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. For the next steps, you'll need to know the names of the people travelling. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height (for bike hire), or you can add that later by logging into Manage My Trip (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). Our system will contact you from time to time to fill in the missing information, as it will be required before departure. However, if the trip that you are booking offers a child discount, you will have to fill out the date of birth of each rider (so we can calculate the appropriate discount).

If you are having any problems please send us an email, or give us a call (+66 026 3295) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

BOOKING OFFLINE

Just call us or send an email indicating which trip you want to join and we will happily send you a list of questions and process your booking for you.

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS

We do not require a deposit or full payment to book a place for you on a tour.

The balance of the tour's cost (final invoice) will need to be paid 60 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights.

In the case where a booking is made when there are less than 60 days until the tour departure date, the tour's cost should be paid in full within 72 hours of receiving an invoice from SpiceRoads. Payment can be made by credit card using our online payment gateway or by bank transfer. When making payment online you will need to confirm that you have read these booking conditions during the "checkout" process, which equates to agreeing to the terms of services and stipulations as indicated in this document.

In all cases, tour fees need to be paid "in full" before participation in a tour. No person(s) will be allowed to join a tour without fully settling their invoice and receiving a confirmation number from SpiceRoads.

The exception can be made for last-minute miscellaneous fees that can be paid locally (visas, additional local hotel bookings, etc.) can be settled on the day of arrival.

FULL FLEXIBILITY FOR TOUR CANCELATIONS

If the tour is cancelled or postponed by SpiceRoads because we didn't make the trip numbers and the tour can't run, we will make a full cash refund (by bank transfer or on your credit card).

If the tour is cancelled for any other reason, including due to Covid related travel restrictions, we will give you a full credit (with no deductions for admin or any other small-print item) to use on any SpiceRoads tour with no time limit. (Exceptions being flights, special permits and other non-refundable items and these will be advised when booking the trip).

Before paying for your tour, you can cancel your booking with no charge and up until 40 days before departure, you can change your booking to another travel date or move your booking onto another SpiceRoads tour with no charges.

If you need to cancel after you have made full payment, please see our cancellation policy.

Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us, we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for a loyalty discount.

International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your travel insurance that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

CONTACT US

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