

SECRETS OF ARMENIA AND LEBANON



Grand Tour with Dr. Robert M. Schoch

August 6–19, 2020

It is also possible to take part in one section of the tour:

Armenia only – August 6–15, 2020;

Lebanon only – August 15–19, 2020

(See details below)



Join world-renowned geologist, scholar, and author, Dr. Robert Schoch, for an incredible 14-day tour exploring the archaeology, rich history, culture, and natural beauty of Armenia and Lebanon.

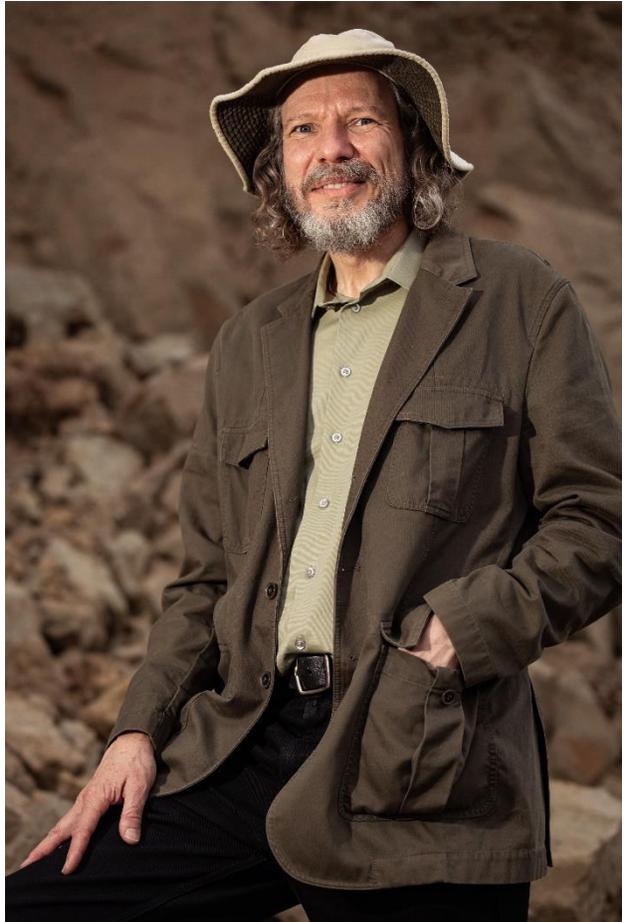
During the tour, Dr. Schoch will give a formal lecture presentation regarding his research, discuss the sites as we travel, and guests will also have the opportunity to take part in public and private conversations with Dr. Schoch, as everyone travels together, enjoying all of the sites and activities on the itinerary. Dr. Schoch will share with you his expert observations about the archaeological sites in both Armenia and Lebanon and help you understand the history and mysteries behind the greatest monuments of these two magnificent countries.



1. Introducing Dr. Robert Schoch – Our Host for the Tour

There is no better person to guide you through historical sites and geological wonders than Dr. Robert M. Schoch. Classically trained, with a Ph.D. in geology and geophysics from Yale University, Dr. Schoch has been a fulltime faculty member at Boston University since 1984. For over two decades Dr. Schoch has been studying ancient civilizations around the world, in such diverse countries as Egypt, Turkey, Bosnia, Romania, Wales, Scotland, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Easter Island, Indonesia, and Japan.

In the early 1990s, Dr. Schoch's geological analyses of the Great Sphinx demonstrated that the statue is thousands of years older than the conventional dating of 2500 B.C., bringing him worldwide fame. This work has been both controversial and pivotal in reshaping our understanding of the origins and history of civilization. Recent discoveries in Turkey, particularly at Göbekli Tepe, confirm the very ancient origins of civilization going back to the end of the last ice age, some 12,000 years ago. More evidence from Armenia and Lebanon reinforces Dr. Schoch's conclusions regarding the great antiquity and incredible sophistication of the earliest civilizations. For more information about Dr. Robert Schoch, visit his personal website: www.robertschoch.com



I am very much looking forward to exploring Armenia (interestingly, the first nation in the world to officially adopt Christianity) and Lebanon with you. Some of the oldest and most astounding remains of our early antiquity are found in these two countries. I do hope you will consider joining me on this adventure. – Dr. Robert M. Schoch.

2. Itinerary

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN ARMENIA

After your arrival at Yerevan International Airport Zvartnots, a representative of *The Time of a New Era* will welcome you at the airport and transport you to the luxurious 5-star hotel in Yerevan. After the check-in process at the hotel, our guests will have time to rest. Dinner and overnight stay at the hotel. (D)



DAY 2: YEREVAN

We will start our tour with a panoramic city trip of Yerevan. Along the way you will see the most important attractions of Yerevan, including Kievyan Bridge, the Presidential Palace, National Parliament, Cascade, Republic Square, and the Opera House. We will also visit the History Museum which houses collections of Armenian artifacts from the fields of archaeology, ethnography, and the fine arts. We will continue the sightseeing with a visit to a Brandy factory with tasting of two types of famous Armenian cognac. Armenia is known as one of the best producers of cognac in the world. After lunch, we will return to the hotel and have dinner at a traditional Armenian restaurant. Overnight stay in Yerevan. (B, L, D)



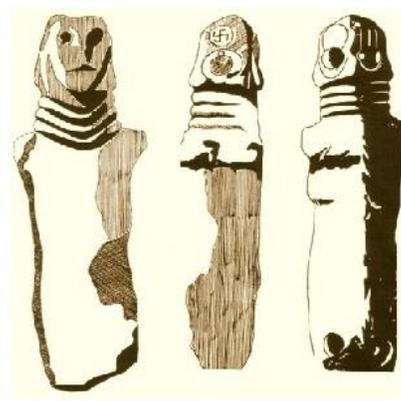
DAY 3: YEREVAN – ZVARTNOTS – METSAMOR – YEREVAN

In the morning, we will visit the magnificent Zvartnots Cathedral, a 7th century architectural masterpiece, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built as Armenia's main cathedral in 641 A.D., this majestic temple was constructed during the Byzantine era.



Later, we will continue the tour with a visit to the excavation sites of Metsamor – an ancient observatory and center of ancient metallurgy. Next, you will see the History Museum of Metsamor and the fortress of Argishti Khinili – an amazing stone chronicle. During the day, we will also take an excursion to the Megerian Carpet Museum, where you will learn more about the history and craft of making outstanding Armenian carpets. The day will end with dinner and traditional Armenian cuisine cooking masterclass.

Overnight stay in Yerevan. (B, L, D)



DAY 4: YEREVAN – GORIS

After breakfast, we will check-out from our hotel in Yerevan and head for Goris. On the way, we will visit the stunning terrain and spectacular rock formations of Noravank Gorge. In a cave there was found the oldest leather shoe known in the world, the 5,500-year-old “Areni 1” shoe, discovered by an international team of archeologists in 2008. The cave is also known for some of the oldest wine production facilities, unearthed during the 2007–2008 excavations.

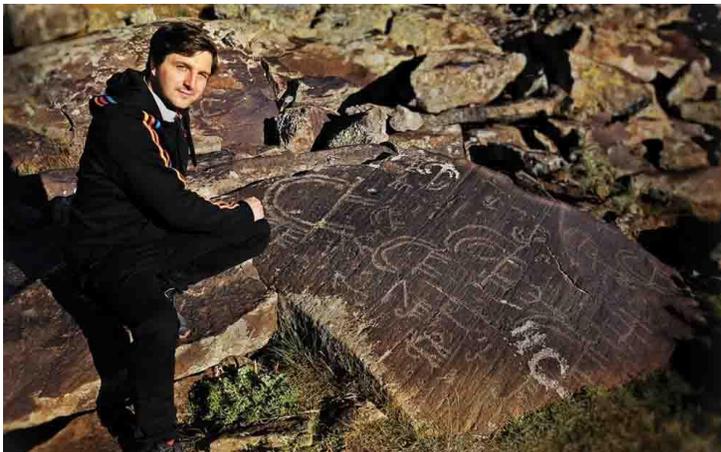


We will continue our journey with sightseeing of the Noravank Monastery, a magnificent monument of medieval Armenian architecture surrounded by gorgeous red rocks; it has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Dinner and overnight stay in Goris. (B, L, D)

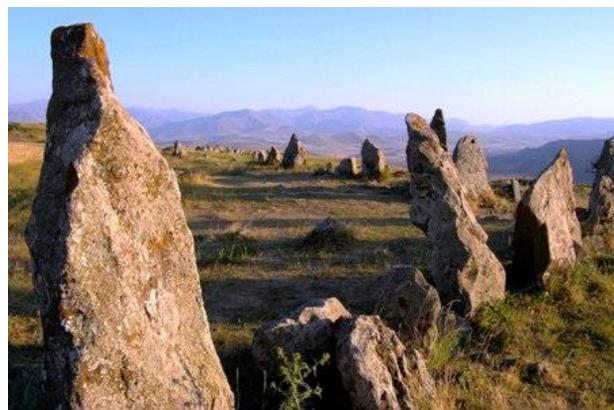


DAY 5: GORIS – UGHTASAR – KARAHUNJ – GORIS

We will start the day with an adventure in 4x4 rough terrain vehicles to explore the Ughtasar petroglyphs. One of Armenia's least known and most interesting attractions is to be found at the top of **Ughtasar Mountain**, situated more than 10,000 feet above the sea level. Aside from the natural beauty of the mountaintop valley, the views and the small lake, one can find there an abundance of millennia-old carved images. An ancient community in the Armenian Highlands left traces of habitation on over 2,000 dark volcanic stones. The oldest date back to at least 8,000 years B.C. The mysterious petroglyphs depict hunting scenes, astronomical sights, ancient rituals, religious dances, and wild animals. They offer a unique insight into the lives of our ancestors thousands of years ago. Although the site was discovered in the early 20th century, it is still not fully understood today. On the top of the mountain we will have lunch and enjoy a meal in the surroundings of nature and magnificent views.



Later, we will proceed with a visit to Karahunj, also called Zorats Karer, an ancient archaeological site with megalithic structures called the “singing rocks”. It was founded between 7,600 B.C. and 4,500 B.C., which means the site is much older than the traditional dates of Stonehenge in England or the Egyptian Pyramids. This complex served both as an ancient temple and an astronomical observatory. It is an impressive site with over 200 basalt stone megaliths. The holes in the singing rocks could have been carved to observe the phases of the Moon and the sunrise during summer and winter solstices, and to observe different constellations. In 2010, the University of Oxford and the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain explored Karahunj and concluded that the megalithic complex is probably the oldest observatory in the world. Zorats Karer is popularly known as “Armenian Stonehenge”. Dinner at the hotel in Goris. (B, L, D)



DAY 6: GORIS – TATEV MONASTERY – CITY OF KNOWLEDGE – GORIS

Before sunrise, we will experience something truly extraordinary in Karahunj. Every year hundreds of people gather at Karahunj to observe the rise of the constellation of Hayk-Orion, bringing the celestial New Year, Navasard, celebrated by our ancestors thousands of years ago. Could you ever imagine yourself standing at one of the oldest observatories in the world at night and experiencing this truly interstellar phenomenon? We hope this magical event will be something you will remember for the rest of your life!

After late breakfast, we will depart to Tatev Monastery nearby Goris. We will reach the 9th-century Tatev Monastery by the longest cable car in the world. It is located 5,300 feet above sea level in the mountains. The monastery was built in incredible harmony with the picturesque landscape creating an impression as if it was an inseparable part of its natural surroundings. It was founded in the 4th century at the site of a pagan temple. In the 14th and 15th centuries Tatev Monastery hosted one of the most important Armenian medieval universities, the University of Tatev, which contributed to the advancement of science, religion and philosophy, reproduction of books, and miniature painting. The monastery is richly carved and beautifully located over a mountain slope, with views of the surrounding pristine natural forests.



After lunch at the restaurant located in the middle of the forest, we will explore the 6,000-year-old city discovered in a mountain forest, called the City of Knowledge. We will see the ruins of houses and architectural details as well as visit an observation point. In the evening, we will return to the hotel. Dinner and overnight in Goris. (B, L, D)



DAY 7: GORIS – CARAVANSERAI – NORATUS – DILIJAN

After breakfast, we will drive to Caravanserai to see the Selim Mountain Pass where the caravans on the ancient Silk Route rested on their way, while transporting precious goods, including exotic spices, from China to Europe. We will take a scenic drive along the Sevan Lake.

It is a truly impressive sight – the lake supplies water to 28 rivers and is the source of the Hrazdan River. It is the biggest Armenian lake and one of the highest located lakes in the world. Next, we will visit the medieval cemetery in Noratus, the largest collection of Armenian “khachkars” (memorial steles carved in stone with intricate crosses, floral and religious motives, and beautiful rosettes). The oldest date back to the 7th century. Dinner and overnight stay in Dilijan – the land of natural, pristine forests and rivers with scenic views. (B, L, D)



DAY 8: DILIJAN – HAGHARTSIN – YEREVAN

The day will begin with breakfast at the hotel in Dilijan. After check-out from the hotel, we will stroll through the Dilijan's Historic Center, the cobbled Sharambeyan Street with its collection of stone and wooden traditional buildings, shops, restaurants, souvenir stalls, and workshops. After lunch, we will go to Haghartsin Monastery.



Hidden in a verdant valley 13 km northeast of Dilijan, Haghartsin monastery complex was built between the 10th and 13th centuries. The complex represents an indescribable example of the blending of nature with architecture. Dinner and overnight stay in Yerevan. (B, L, D)



DAY 9: YEREVAN – AGARAK – GARNI – GEGHARD – YEREVAN – FAREWELL TO ARMENIA
DINNER

The sightseeing will start with a trip to the magnificent complex Agarak – ancient settlement with numerous mysteries and secrets. It is a Prehistoric Plateau located in the foothills of Mount Aragats. Agarak’s entire site and surrounding area is fully covered by rock-cut and stone carved gigantic structure-complexes.



Later, we will visit the stunning 2000-year-old Garni Temple, the only surviving pagan temple in Armenia, a blend of Greco-Roman and Armenian architectural styles. Next, we will take part in a traditional lavash (Armenian bread) making ceremony.



In the evening, we will enjoy our time at the medieval Geghard Monastery carved into a mountain. The monuments included in the property of this UNESCO World Heritage Site are dated from the 4th to the 13th century. We will also enjoy a specially arranged spiritual concert in one of the grand halls of the monastery with its astonishing acoustics.

We will then have a farewell dinner in Armenia at Getapin Restaurant. The restaurant is a fabulous place in nature with its outdoor pavilions at Hrazdan riverside and is far away from the hustle and bustle of the city. There, you can enjoy the most delicious dishes of both Armenian national and regional cuisines. Among the attractions of the restaurant are the amazing music and dance performances and the live music programs. Overnight stay in Yerevan. (B, L, D)

DAY 10: YEREVAN – BEIRUT

After breakfast at the hotel in Yerevan, we will drive to the airport and continue our amazing journey with a flight to Lebanon. After arrival in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, we will check into our 5-star hotel.

Beirut was built on a rocky promontory, a site also occupied by prehistoric man. During Roman times, Beirut became a Roman colony and an important port and cultural center. During the Roman and Byzantine eras it was distinguished for its law school, where professors helped draft the famous Justinian code. Beirut, with nearly a million inhabitants, remains the cultural and commercial center of the country.

During the day, we will sightsee Beirut and its Roman Bath, churches and mosques, as well as the National Museum. In the evening we will have dinner at Abed El Wahab – one of the best Lebanese restaurants. Dinner and overnight stay in Beirut. (B, L, D)



DAY 11: BEIRUT – BYBLOS – JEITA – HARISSA – BEIRUT

The day will start with a visit to the beautiful Phoenician city of Byblos, one of the oldest towns in the world that goes back at least 7,000 years. The rise and fall of nearly two dozen successive levels of human culture on this site makes it one of the richest archeological areas in the country. Under the domination of the Egyptian pharaohs in the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C., Byblos was a commercial and religious capital of the Phoenician coast.



Next, we will continue our sightseeing in the famous Jeita Grottos which were nominated for the seven world wonders. Jeita is one of the world's most beautiful caverns located 20 km away from Beirut. The lower caverns are visited by boat over a subterranean lake that is 623 meters long. A dry upper gallery can be seen on foot. After many years of exploration, Lebanese speleologists have penetrated 6,910 meters from the entry point of the grotto to the far end of the Underground River and 2,130 meters of the upper galleries.

The day will end with a visit to Harissa. We will take a cable car up to admire a wonderful panoramic view covering the Bay of Jounieh and see the statue of the Virgin Mary from the beginning of the 20th century. Dinner and overnight stay in Beirut. (B, L, D)



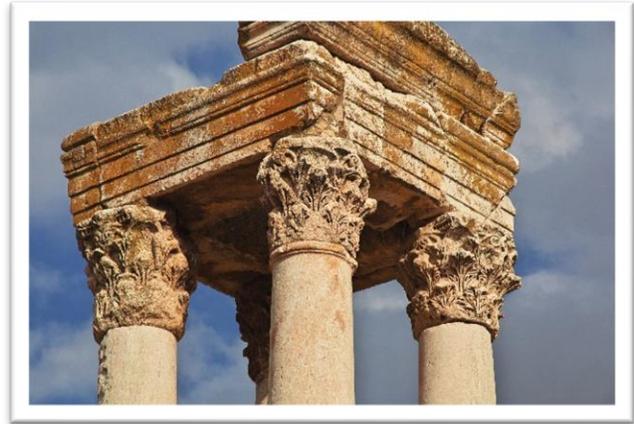
DAY 12: BEIRUT – BAALBECK – ANJAR – KSARA – BEIRUT

The day will start with a visit to Baalbeck with its big, stone Temples of Jupiter, Bacchus, and Venus. What is more, we will see "the Stone of the Pregnant Woman" which is estimated to weigh more than 1,000 tons – one of the largest stone blocks in the world.

Located at an altitude of approximately 1,170 meters in the Beqaa valley, Baalbek is known to have been settled from at least 7,000 B.C. However, some researchers argue that its roots go back as many as 12,000 years B.C. Some of the most awe-inspiring features of Baalbek are the incredible megalithic foundations of the Temple of Jupiter. It was built on a platform of stones that are among the largest building blocks seen in the whole world.



The sightseeing will be followed by a visit to Anjar city. It was built by the Omayyad caliph, al-Walid Ibn Abdel Malek, in the early 8th century A.D. Inside the city's strong fortifications there are remains of streets, three palaces, souks, two hammams, and a mosque.



Later, we will go to Ksara to explore its magnificent caves discovered in 1898 by the Jesuits who were looking for a wolf that was eating their chickens every night and was using the caves as a refuge. It is now the refuge of the well-known Ksara wine where thousands of old wine bottles are preserved. The visit will include wine tasting.

Dinner and overnight stay in Beirut. (B, L, D)

DAY 13: BEIRUT – CEDARS – BECHARRES – KOZHAYA – BEIRUT

We will begin the day with a visit to the forest of Cedars – the most venerable representatives of the Cedars of Lebanon, which once covered the country's mountains. Hundreds of trees stand on 2,000 meter high slopes in the shadow of the 3,088 meter peak of Qornet es-Sawda. From Lebanon's cedar forests, Solomon got the timber to build his temple and palace, while the Egyptians Pharaohs used its wood to carve their sarcophagi and “sunships”.

In the north, in Becharres, the picturesque gateway to the Cedars of Lebanon, is the birthplace of the famous Lebanese poet Gibran Khalil Gibran. Here, we will visit the Gibran Museum and learn more about Lebanese culture. The place itself is also known for many ancient churches and monasteries.



The sightseeing on this day will end with a visit to the convent of St Anthony of Kozhaya. Kozhaya is a part of the Holy Valley where Maronites used to live during the Ottoman period. The Monastery of St Antoine of Kozhaya is one of the numerous monasteries built in this valley. It is surrounded by an amazing panorama of forest and beautiful valley. Dinner and overnight stay in Beirut. (B, L, D)

DAY 14: DEPARTURE FROM BEIRUT

It is the last day of our tour and time to say goodbye. After breakfast, we will transfer you to the airport in Beirut for your return flight. (B)



Terms & Conditions

Option 1 – Armenia & Lebanon 14-day Grand Tour (August 6–19, 2020)

Price: 6985 USD per person in a double room (deposit is only 800 USD during booking!).

If you are a solo traveler, you can share a room with another tour participant. However, if you would like to stay in a single room, then the single room supplement is **1270 USD**.

Payment Schedule:

- 800 USD deposit – during booking
- Remaining balance – 60 days before the tour

Price Includes: Dr. Robert Schoch as your tour host throughout the trip, assisted by his wife and research partner Catherine Ulissey; accommodations (13-nights); 3 meals a day – breakfast, lunch, and dinner (except for the first day, which includes dinner only; and the last day, which includes breakfast only); all sightseeing tours and entrances included in the itinerary; English-speaking guide; English-speaking tour leader; transfers in air-conditioned buses; reception at the international airport in Armenia; airport arrival and departure transfers; international flight from Armenia (Yeravan) to Lebanon (Beirut); bottled water during the sightseeing; government taxes. **Not Included:** International flights from your country of residence to Armenia (Yerevan) and the return flight from Lebanon (Beirut) to your country of residence; Lebanese Visa; soft and alcoholic drinks; souvenirs and personal expenses.

Option 2 – Armenia only – 10-day Tour (August 6–15, 2020)

Price: 3985 USD per person in a double room (deposit is only 400 USD during booking!).

If you are a solo traveler, you can share a room with another tour participant. However, if you would like to stay in a single room, then the single room supplement is **780 USD**.

Payment Schedule:

- 400 USD deposit – during booking
- Remaining balance – 60 days before the tour

Price Includes: Dr. Robert Schoch as your tour host throughout the trip, assisted by his wife and research partner Catherine Ulissey; accommodations (9-nights); 3 meals a day – breakfast, lunch, and dinner (except for the first day, which includes dinner only; and the last day, which includes breakfast only); all sightseeing tours and entrances included in the itinerary; English-speaking guide; English-speaking tour leader; transfers in air-conditioned buses; reception at the international airport in Yerevan; airport arrival and departure transfers; bottled water during the sightseeing; government taxes; health insurance. **Not Included:** International flights to and from Yerevan in Armenia; soft and alcoholic drinks; souvenirs and personal expenses.

Option 3 – Lebanon only – 5-day Tour (August 15–19, 2020)

Price: 3985 USD per person in a double room (deposit is only 400 USD during booking!).

If you are a solo traveler, you can share a room with another tour participant. However, if you would like to stay in a single room, then the single room supplement is **490 USD**.

Payment Schedule:

- 400 USD deposit – during booking
- Remaining balance – 60 days before the tour

Price Includes: Dr. Robert Schoch as your tour-host throughout the trip, assisted by his wife and research partner Catherine Ulissey; accommodations (4-nights); 3 meals a day – breakfast, lunch, and dinner (except for the first day, which includes dinner only; and the last day, which includes breakfast only); all sightseeing tours and entrances included in the itinerary; English-speaking guide; English-speaking tour leader; transfers in air-conditioned buses; reception at the international airport in Beirut; airport arrival and departure transfers; bottled water during the sightseeing; government taxes; health insurance. **Not Included:** International flights to and from Beirut in Lebanon; Lebanese Visa; soft and alcoholic drinks; souvenirs and personal expenses.

JOIN US TODAY!

We encourage you to book this tour as soon as possible, because the number of places is limited. Please contact us for more information and for details. Office hours: 9am–5pm EST Monday–Friday. Our consultants will be happy to give you all the information you need.

E-mail: contact@timeofanewera.com

US phone: +1 646 7400-400

Dr. Robert Schoch and his wife Catherine Ulissey look forward to seeing you on the tour!

