

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) 2015 on Fuller Center for Housing Armenia's "Global Builders" Volunteer Trips

Q: What can I do?

A. It takes about \$10,500 US dollars to assist a family in completing their half-built home. For many Armenian families this means moving out of a cardboard shack or a metal domik into a 1200 sq.ft. 3-bedroom home with running water, sanitation and electricity. In addition to the no-interest, non-profit loan from the Fuller Center for Housing, these families need your assistance in building their home. You can join a Global Builders work team building homes and hope in partnership with the Armenian families.

For making donations please visit our website www.fcharmenia.org

Q: What languages will be needed or used?

A: At the site an English speaking staff will be available to translate. In Yerevan most restaurants where we take the teams, English menus are available. In regions we will have an English speaking staff/volunteer to accompany the team in restaurants as well.

Q: Where is Armenia?

A. Armenia is located in the Caucasus and shares borders with Georgia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Iran. It was the first nation to adopt Christianity as the national religion. It has centuries-old majestic churches and monasteries, strong cultural traditions, and a love for the arts. It also prides itself for the world's highest mountainous fresh water lake -Lake Sevan. Yerevan is the capital and has a population of about 1.5 million people.

Q: Do I need a passport?

A. Yes, passports are required. Please send a copy of your passport by email or regular mail to your team leader and keep 2 copies with you.

Q: What charges can we expect at the airport entering (need a visa) and leaving Armenia?

A: Visitors need to obtain a visa to enter Armenia. For visa info please visit <http://www.mfa.am> web site. It is possible to apply for visa at the Zvartnots International Airport in Armenia and the cost is \$8. Make sure to check the eligibility of different country citizen's on the above mentioned web site. You can apply for an electronic visa (e-visa) online at www.mfa.am. The cost is \$60, and it usually takes about 2-3 days to process after you apply online. E-visas are available only to travelers arriving at Zvartnots International Airport in Yerevan. If getting an e-visa remember to print out and put the visa in your passport prior to departure. You need to keep this till your departure from Armenia. There is no departure tax.

Also effective January 1, 2015, U.S. citizens will be able to travel to Armenia visa-free and stay in Armenia for up to 180 days per calendar year. (<http://usa.mfa.am/en/visa/>)

Any updates possible can be checked at: www.mfa.am

Q: Do I need any construction skills?

A. No construction skills are necessary. We will be building primarily with concrete and 'tufa', which is a volcanic stone indigenous to Armenia.

Q. Types of construction for volunteers

A. Global Builders construction works mainly include; concrete work: mixing sand and cement, pouring water, preparing the mixture and carrying with buckets (as light as possible). carrying tufa blocks, plastering and painting the walls, sanding windows, doors and walls, preparing an insulation layer for the roof.

Q: Are there skilled leaders available to run the building work?

A: FCHA will provide house leaders who will always be available to give help and guidance to the participants. An English speaking staff or a volunteer will be available at the site.

Q: What about the accommodations?

A: Accommodations are double to triple occupancy rooms with private baths in a hotel. Breakfast will be served in the hotel. Lunches will be taken at the building site, and dinners - at various local restaurants. The hotels are simple, but have the basic amenities. Please be flexible about accommodations, and other differences in culture. In general the accommodations have hot and cold running water.

Q: What about sightseeing?

A: During days off trips are organized to some of the major cultural and historical sites in Armenia. Depending on the host city these may include the following: Geghart, a 12th century monastery and church complex carved in a mountainside; Khor Virab, the sight of St. Gregory's internment, with a spectacular view of Mt. Ararat, historically part of Armenia; Echmiadzin, the seat of the Armenian Apostolic Church; and, Tsitsernakaberd, a monument to the 1.5 million victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. All teams are offered to move back to Yerevan for the last 1-2 days to do just sightseeing and as an addition, a concert or dance performance is offered to visit if available at that time. There will also be shopping opportunities for souvenirs and some free time to see other sites of your choice.

Q: Who are the Team Leaders and how do we sign up?

A: All our team leaders have been trained and have experience in leading teams to Armenia for building homes for low income families. Once you decide on dates and location (available on our web site) please contact the team leader (contacts are next to dates & location) who will assist you to sign up.

Q: How much does it cost?

A: The trip will cost up to \$1,450 - \$1,700 plus round-trip airfare. This price includes lodging, food, ground transportation, cultural tours, orientation materials, traveler's medical insurance, transfers to and from the Yerevan airport (EVN), and a donation to FCHA. The donation is used to build homes for low income families. Participants will need to arrange and pay for transportation from their point of departure to Armenia, passports, visas, and vaccinations (if applicable).

Q: Is it safe to travel to Armenia?

A: Armenia is a safe country in general. Your safety is the most important for us. Please make sure to receive and read all in country information about Armenia and site safety rules, which you can request from your team leader.

Q: What if I have health or medical needs?

A: Please check Disease Control Web site (www.cdc.gov/travel) for tips and recommendations about how to stay healthy in country. Bring all your medications and label everything clearly. Please let your team leader know of any allergies or other medical needs that you may have.

Q: What about travel insurance?

A: The budget includes insurance and that will be taken care of from Fuller Center for Housing, Inc.

Q: What food can we expect?

A: Armenian food is organic and diverse. The dishes are usually not spicy. Lunch will be provided on site. There will be choices for vegetarians and non-vegetarians. Cheese, greens and lavash (traditional bread) are the indispensable components of the Armenian table. The traditional meals include lamb or pork barbeque (BBQ), kyuftah, which is prepared from minced veal, dolma, prepared from ground meat which is wrapped up either in grape leaves, cabbage or vegetables (summer dolma). Armenia is famous for its fruits -pomegranates, apricots, grapes, peaches, pears and figs. It is worthy to try Armenian soup- spas prepared from plain yogurt. Dinners will be in the city with the team. As Yerevan is a more westernized city there are many international cuisines and restaurants while in Yeghegnadzor and Vanadzor you will find local cuisines with traditional meals.