



# Pimsleur®

## Armenian 1

### Reading Booklet

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Booklet Design: Maia Kennedy

Eastern Armenian

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Western Armenian

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Simon & Schuster Studios, Concord, MA

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## Introduction

Pimsleur's *Eastern Armenian* and *Western Armenian* Programs each contain ten lessons. These ten 30-minute sessions provide an introduction to the language, and make it possible to gain sufficient spoken-language proficiency to be able to have basic, but essential communication with local speakers.

These programs provide the beginning language strategies that will allow you to greet native speakers, to make your needs known, and to satisfy your basic requirements when traveling in Armenia, as well as in the many other countries where Armenian is spoken.

## The Armenian Language

Armenian, or *hayeren*, is the national language of the Armenian people and ranks as one of the oldest languages of the world.

Armenian represents an independent branch of the Indo-European family of languages and is comprised of two dialects—Eastern and Western Armenian. Of these, Eastern Armenian is the official language of the Republic of Armenia. It is also spoken by Armenians living in Iran, Russia, Georgia, and the former Soviet republics. Western Armenian is the daily language of Armenians who claim origin

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in the region known as Eastern Anatolia, located in current-day Turkey. It is spoken by the majority of Armenians living throughout the Middle East, North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Australia, collectively called the Armenian Diaspora.

Historically, both dialects arose from Classical Armenian or *Grabar*. *Grabar* survives as the liturgical language used in Armenian churches the world over.

Although words in both dialects are spelled more or less the same, phonologically Eastern Armenian observes the nuances of all the Classical Armenian consonants. This is not the case with Western Armenian, which combines certain pairs of consonants and pronounces them as if they were one.

Grammatically, the two dialects differ in the declension of nouns and the conjugation of verbs. Using the noun *grich*/*krich*\* (pen) and the verb *grel*/*krel* (to write), in the examples on the following pages illustrate the differences:

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## Modern Eastern Armenian

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
Nominative/Accusative	<i>grich</i>	<i>grich-ner</i>
Genitive/Dative	<i>grich-i</i>	<i>grich-ner-i</i>
Ablative	<i>grich-its</i>	<i>grich-ner-its</i>
Instrumental	<i>grich-ov</i>	<i>grich-ner-ov</i>
Locative	<i>grich-oom</i>	<i>grich-ner-oom</i>

## Modern Western Armenian

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
Nominative/ Accusative	<i>krich</i>	<i>krich-ner</i>
Genitive/Dative	<i>krich-i</i>	<i>krich-ner-oo</i>
Ablative	<i>krich-ē</i>	<i>krich-ner-ē</i>
Instrumental	<i>krich-ov</i>	<i>krich-ner-ov</i>
Locative	_____	_____

\* All examples throughout the booklet are given in Eastern and Western pronunciations and forms. Eastern pronunciations are listed first and Western second.

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## Modern Eastern Armenian

<i>groom em</i>	I write
<i>groom es</i>	you write
<i>groom e</i>	s/he writes
<i>groom enk</i>	we write
<i>groom ek</i>	you write
<i>groom en</i>	they write

## Modern Western Armenian

<i>gə krem</i>	I write
<i>gə kres</i>	you write
<i>gə kre</i>	s/he writes
<i>gə krenk</i>	we write
<i>gə krek</i>	you write
<i>gə kren</i>	they write

Armenian nouns indicate number (both singular and plural) as well as case. Verbs agree with their subjects in person and number. Adjectives, as a rule, precede nouns. The gap between literary and spoken Armenian is not significant, especially among the well educated who comprise the majority of the population.



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## Asking a Question

The flexibility of the Armenian language is most apparent when asking a question. To ask a question when speaking, you simply change the intonation and stress the particular word that is the subject of the question. To ask a question in writing, you place a question mark ( ? ) on the last vowel of the given word (the subject<sup>2</sup> in question). The word chosen will change the meaning of the sentence and elicit a different response.

For example, the sentence *Duk angleren haskanum ek / Tuk ankleren gə hasgnak* means, "You understand English." In the following variations of this sentence, applying a question mark to the last vowel of the words to be stressed, changes the question being asked:

*Du<sup>2</sup>k angleren haskanum ek.*

*Tu<sup>2</sup>k ankleren gə hasgnak.*

Is it **you** who understands English?

*Duk anglere<sup>n</sup> haskanum ek.*

*Tuk anklere<sup>n</sup> gə hasgnak.*

Is it **English** that you understand?

*Duk angleren haskanu<sup>m</sup> ek.*

*Tuk ankleren gə hasgna<sup>k</sup>.*

Do you **understand** English?

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## Armenian Punctuation

Mark	Armenian Name	English Equivalent
'	shesht	emphasis mark
Falls on the last vowel in a word, except if the vowel is "ə."		
՝	yerkar	!
Used like the emphasis mark. Works like the English "!"		
՝	storaket	,
Used as in English.		
•	mijaket	;
Requires a slightly longer pause than a comma. Works like the English semicolon. Also used when there are two different subjects within a sentence, after abbreviations, and before direct quotations.		
Դ	paruyk	?
See explanation on page 5.		
։	varjaket	.
Used as in English.		
–	yent'amna / gts'ik	-
Used either as a hyphen like in English, or as a connecting dash between words.		

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Mark	Armenian Name	English Equivalent
↘	but'	:
<p>This mark entails a short pause like the comma. Also used when there are deleted speech parts in a sentence, or to separate words that don't relate to each other, yet are next to each other, and when the following word or phrase explain or expand upon the preceding word or expression.</p>		
'	apat'ardz	
<p>Is used only in Western Armenian, when a vowel (mostly "ə") is abbreviated.</p>		
...	kakhman ket	...
<p>Works like the English ellipsis.</p>		
—	mets'gts'ik	—
<p>It is used for dialogues.</p>		
« »	ch'akert	" "
<p>Used as in English.</p>		
‹ ›	p'akagits	( )
<p>Used as in English.</p>		

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## Armenian Alphabet

Lower-case	Upper-case	Sound Value Eastern/Western	Num. Value
ա	Ա	a (halt)	1*
բ	Բ	b (mob) / p (ape)	2
գ	Գ	g (game) / c (car)	3
դ	Դ	d (mad) / t (top)	4
ե	Ե	e (hem) **	5
զ	Զ	z (zeal)	6
է	Է	ē (hem)	7
ը	Ը	ə (church)	8
թ	Թ	t' (ton)	9
ժ	Ժ	zh (measure)	10
ի	Ի	i/ee (film / deer)	20
լ	Լ	l (lamp)	30
խ	Խ	kh (khmeir)	40
ծ	Ծ	ts' (its) / dz (adz)	50

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Lower-case	Upper-case	Sound Value Eastern/Western	Num. Value
կ	Կ	k (cat) / g (get)	60
հ	Հ	h (hat)	70
ձ	Զ	dz (adz) / ts (its)	80
ղ	Ղ	gh (yataghan)	90
ժ	Ժ	ch' (chin) / j (jam)	100
մ	Մ	m (man)	200
յ	Ի	y (may) **	300
ն	Ն	n (new)	400
շ	Շ	sh (mash)	500
ո	Օ	o (more) **	600
չ	Չ	ch' (itch) / ch (chin)	700
պ	Պ	p' (park) / b (bar)	800
ջ	Ջ	j (just) / ch (chin)	900
ր	Ր	r' (rum)	1000

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Lower-case	Upper-case	Sound Value Eastern/Western	Num. Value
ս	Ս	s (song)	2000
վ	Վ	v (veto)	3000
ւո	Տ	t (tap) / d (mad)	4000
ր	Ր	r (hour)	5000
ց	Ծ	ts (its)	6000
լ	Լ	w (waye) ***	7000
փ	Փ	p' (pomp)	8000
ք	Ք	k' (keep)	9000
օ	Օ	o' (or)	
ֆ	Ֆ	f (fan)	

\* Just like roman numerals, Armenian characters also represent a numerical value.

\*\* These letters respectively change their values at the beginning of a word: e becomes ye as in *yet*, y becomes h as in *hat* (in Western Armenian only), and o becomes vo as in *vote*.

\*\*\* generates the oo sound, as in moon, when added to the letter ռ (vo).

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The Armenian alphabet consists of 38 letters, seven vowels and 31 consonants. The language contains stops, affricates, fricatives, nasals, and even semi-vowels that, when combined, can mimic the sounds of other languages.

Although Armenian has been spoken from time immemorial in Armenia, its alphabet (then, 36 characters) was created in A.D. 404 by Mesrop Mashtots, an Armenian monk who is also credited with creating the alphabets of the Georgian and Caucasian Albanian languages. The last two characters were added during the Middle Ages to express the sounds of foreign words.

Mashtots's alphabet was revolutionary at the time, designating one character for each phoneme, or sound. He also designed two sets of distinctly different characters for each phoneme, one for uppercase and the other for lowercase.

Two decades after the creation of the alphabet, Armenian monks translated the Holy Bible into Armenian. That 5<sup>th</sup> century translation of the Bible is referred to by scholars as the "Queen of Translations."

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## History

The tri-colored flag of Armenia beautifully symbolizes the nation's history and people. The flag's upper red stripe reflects the bloody past Armenians have endured in the defense of their homeland and the right to worship as Christians; the central blue stripe represents the eternal Armenian hope and longing for peace; and the bottom orange stripe signifies the golden harvest of wheat and other crops.

According to scripture, after the great flood, Noah's Ark came to rest atop Mount Ararat, the highest point in historic Armenia. Indeed, Armenians have long prided themselves on being descendants of Noah. Nestled between the Caucasus Mountains and the Anatolian Peninsula, some scholars consider Armenia "the cradle of civilization," for Armenia lay at the crossroads, where East met West.

Armenia enjoyed its greatest geographical size and influence in 95 B.C., when Tigran the Great's rule stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. Thereafter, Armenians experienced short-lived periods of autonomy, sandwiched between longer periods under Roman, Persian, Byzantine, Arab, Seljuk, Mongol, Ottoman, and Russian rulers. Nevertheless, unlike other ancient nations which perished under similar conditions, Armenians strengthened their resolve to survive and be self-governing while struggling under foreign rule.



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Key to the Armenian story was the unprecedented leap of faith taken by King Trdat in A.D. 301 that converted the Armenians to Christianity. The invention of the Armenian alphabet and the translation of the Bible quickly followed. Together, Christianity and language became cornerstones of the Armenian identity.

Within a generation, however, this national identity was tested at the Battle of Avarayr in A.D. 451. Led by General Vardan Mamikonian, 66,000 Armenians fought a 220,000-strong Persian army intent on imposing Zoroastrianism upon the Armenians. Many Armenians died that day on the battlefield, but the ferocity of the Armenian will so impressed the Persians that eventually, in A.D. 485, they signed the Treaty of Nvarsak. With this treaty, the Armenians won freedom of religion and the right to practice Christianity.

Later, the fall of the Armenian Kingdom of Bagratids in 1045 caused the migration of many Armenians toward Europe, where they gathered in large communities located in surrounding countries such as, Transylvania, Bulgaria, and Poland. These Armenian communities played two subsequent major roles in history. First, they fought to hamper the advance of the Ottomans into Europe, and

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second, they contributed to the concept of religious reform.

Another turning point in Armenian history occurred in 1555 when the Ottoman and Persian Empires divided historic Armenia between them, with the vast majority of Armenian land falling under Ottoman rule. Later, in 1828, by the Treaty of Turkmanchai, Persia ceded Eastern Armenia to Russia, which established the basis for Armenian sovereignty on the land now recognized as the Republic of Armenia.

Meanwhile, after centuries of living as minority subjects in the Ottoman Empire, the rise of nationalism in the late nineteenth century ignited the long-latent desire of Western Armenians for the liberation of historic Armenia from Ottoman rule. This awakening brought with it the formation of Armenian political parties and resulted in the massacre of approximately 300,000 Armenians under Sultan Abdulhamid II who was intent on suppressing Armenian nationalist demands. The Sultan's policy of annihilation was later continued by the Young Turks' government, which, on April 24, 1915, launched the premeditated mass killings and deportation of Armenians from their historic lands of Eastern Anatolia. An estimated million and a half Armenians perished in what is known as

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the Armenian Genocide, the first genocide of the twentieth century.

On May 18, 1918, Armenia declared its independence, but, once again, it was short-lived. Less than two years later, on November 29, 1920, the first Republic of Armenia fell to the Bolsheviks.

Self-determination for the Armenian nation was finally realized on September 21, 1991, when the newly-established, independent, and democratic Republic of Armenia was born upon the breakup of the Soviet Union.

## **Religion**

The Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church traces its foundation to Christ's disciples, Saints Thaddeus and Bartholomew, who preached and were martyred in Armenia. In A.D. 301, Christianity was proclaimed the official state religion, establishing Armenia as the world's first Christian nation.

Two years later, the Mother Church of Holy Echmiadzin was established. Echmiadzin is regarded not only as the center of the Armenian church, but also, together with Mount Ararat, as a symbol of Armenia's eternity. During the darkest

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periods of Armenia's history, when Armenians had lost their independence and the majority of their leaders, the church protected the Armenian identity and aspirations.

Today, the majority of Armenians belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, which is headed by a *Catholicos*, or supreme patriarch / head bishop, who resides in Echmiadzin. Known as Oriental Orthodox, the Armenian Church is allied with the Jacobite (Syrian), Coptic, Ethiopian, and Malankara (Indian) Christian Churches. Sometimes referred to as non-Chalcedonian, these churches separated from Western Christianity in the mid-fifth century and profess Christ as being of one nature in his divinity and humanity. A small percentage of Armenians converted to Catholicism and Protestantism.

## **The Land and Climate**

The Republic of Armenia covers 11,506 square miles (29,800 square kilometers or about the size of the state of Maryland) in the region known as the Transcaucasus located in southwestern Asia. Armenia shares borders with Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. One-third of Armenia is comprised of fertile valleys and pastureland. The remaining territory is mountainous and rocky.

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The difficult terrain of the Armenian homeland and the resiliency of its people are illustrated in a well-known folktale. It is said that God allowed representatives of various nations to specify the types of lands they would like to have for their homelands. When it was the Armenians' turn to present their request, there was nothing but rocks left, so that is what God gave them. Nevertheless, Armenians accepted the rocky land and cultivated it with their sweat, turning the rocks into wheat and grapes.

Armenia lies on a major fault line. The most recent, significant earthquake occurred on December 7, 1988 in and around Gyumri, Armenia's second largest city. According to some sources, it claimed up to 65,000 lives.

The mountainous areas of Armenia are dotted with streams, rivers, and small lakes. Lake Sevan, one of the world's largest mountain lakes, is located 6,500 feet above sea level and covers 540 square miles (1,400 square kilometers). It is home to some unique species of fish, including the endangered Ishkhan (prince) trout.

Summer lasts from June to mid-September with temperatures ranging between 71° F (22° C) and 97° F (36° C). However, low humidity levels mitigate the effect of high temperatures and cooling evening

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breezes blow down from the mountains. Spring is short, while fall is long and remarkable for its colorful foliage. Winter is quite cold with temperatures ranging between 14° F (-10° C) and 20° F (-5° C). Armenia gets a lot of snow, which makes Tsakhkadzor, a ski resort located outside of the capital city of Yerevan, very popular.

## **Population**

An estimated 8 to 9 million Armenians live throughout the world. Armenians living in the Republic of Armenia count for a little more than one-third of this number. Ethnic Armenians comprise 96 percent of Armenia's 3.5 million people. Minority groups include Kurds, Russians, Yezidis, Assyrians, and Greeks.

The largest Armenian communities outside Armenia are found in the United States, Russia, Iran, France, Lebanon, and Syria. These Diasporan communities are well organized and centered around Armenian churches, schools, newspapers, cultural and youth centers, organizations, and even political parties. Diasporan Armenians consider themselves loyal citizens of their host countries and take pride in the contributions they bring to the progress of these countries in every walk of life.

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A few of the many Armenian individuals recognized the world over:

**Arshile Gorky** (1904–1948) Armenian-born American Abstract Expressionist Painter.

**William Saroyan** (1908–1981) an American author who wrote many plays and short stories about growing up impoverished as the son of Armenian immigrants.

**Yousuf Karsh** (1908–2002) whose portrait of Winston Churchill in 1941 brought him international prominence.

**Charles Aznavour**, born Varenagh Aznavourian in Paris, the son of Armenian immigrants. Discovered by the great singer Edith Piaf, he toured with her through France and the U.S. Often described as the "Frank Sinatra of France," Aznavour is known world-wide for his love songs.

## Greeting and Forms of Address

Unlike English, Armenian employs two separate forms for the singular and plural *you*. When addressing officials, elders, or strangers, Armenian customs and politeness mandate the use of the plural *you*. It is also customary to use formal titles:

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*paron / baron* (Mr.) — for all men,  
*tikin / digin* (Mrs.) — for married women  
*oriord / oriort* (Miss) — for unmarried women.

To address an unmarried woman as married or vice-versa is considered offensive. The Armenian language does not possess an equivalent to the English Ms.

Peers and close friends address each other by first name and add the endearment *jan* after the name. For example, *Talin* becomes *Talin jan*. The most common greeting *barev / parev*, literally, "Let good be with you," expresses a casual, "Hello." The plural form *barev dzez / parev tsez*, "Hello to you," signifies respect or formality. Another popular form of greeting is *bari* or, "Good day."

When meeting, men shake hands; some kiss acquaintances on the cheek. Women hug and kiss each other on the cheek. After an initial greeting, it is common to ask: *vonts es / inchbes es?*, "How are you?" or *vonts ek / inchbes ek?* (formal). When taking leave, Armenians say: *tstesutyun / tsdesutyun*, "Until next meeting," or *hajoghutyun / hachoghutyun*, "Good luck."

Urban Armenians do not acknowledge strangers, but rural people will greet them.



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## **Socializing – The Armenian Character**

Armenians often rely on body language to express themselves. During casual conversation, eye contact is expected. Hand gestures are used among friends, such as expressing approval with thumbs up or a shrug of the shoulders to show indifference. In formal settings, however, such body movements are considered impolite and people exercise restraint. Chewing gum in public is impolite, as is putting one's feet up on furniture. Men, and sometimes women, stand when an older person enters a room. People remove hats when entering a building.

Armenians are sociable and gregarious. They treat guests graciously and generously and expect the same when visiting. Guests are served dessert or fresh fruits with coffee or tea. Guests arriving near mealtimes are invited to share the meal. Unannounced visits are common and accepted, especially between neighbors and relatives. In fact, neighbors often enjoy very close relationships, because of frequent daytime visits between the women and socializing in the neighborhood courtyard or nearby cafés among men.

When inviting friends to socialize, people prefer to go to cafés or restaurants. Invitations to the home occur primarily for special events, in which

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case guests are expected to bring flowers or sweets. When flowers are given, they are given only to the hostess and only an odd number of stems is appropriate — except for funerals, when an even number of stems is customary.

Armenians take great pride in their history. They value freedom, sometimes to the point of anarchism, along with justice and fairness. Their long, tragic history has developed, in many, a sarcastic sense of humor, mixed with skepticism and the urge to unveil conspiracies. Hard work, a strong will, and perseverance are among their most striking individual characteristics. These qualities are also regarded as key to the Armenian national identity. Armenians are proud of the fact that they have long been acknowledged for their entrepreneurial skills and their ability to adapt.

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## **Dress Code**

Armenians, particularly the young and those living in major cities, follow modern European or American trends in fashion. Older women are more conservative in their dress, as are men. Parents do their best to dress their children well, because maintaining a good appearance is important to them and their prestige in the community.

Rural women wear multi-layered long dresses when at home. Rural men essentially dress as urban men do, except when working in the fields. Traditional costumes are limited to special cultural events and ceremonies.

## **Society**

The family plays the most influential role in Armenian life, ensuring that religious and cultural values are passed from generation to generation. Armenian values are a unique mix of both conservative and progressive approaches drawn from Eastern and Western traditions and concepts.

The father is the family patriarch. He heads the family and works for its financial well-being. The mother is in charge of the household and the children's education. Urban men and women have equal access to higher education, and often both

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pursue professional careers outside of the home. Great value is placed on education, and parents are responsible for providing their children with the best schooling and higher education available.

Children are not expected to do chores except for homework until boys are old enough to help with neighborhood shopping and girls with housework. Rural families have more children than urban families, who usually limit their offspring to two or three.

Newlyweds commonly reside with the groom's parents, who later care for the grandchildren and are cared for and supported by their children. First-born sons are appreciated, because they represent future security and assurance of the family's continuity. If there are two sons, it is customary for the younger to stay with the parents while the older son moves his family into a new home or apartment.

## **Recreation**

Armenians love to read newspapers and discuss politics in groups. Soccer is the most popular sport. Wrestling and boxing are also favorites, and Armenians boast many world champions in these fields. It is common to see children playing outdoor games.

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Among all age groups, chess and backgammon are especially popular, particularly since Armenian chess players, Tigran Petrosyan, Garry Kasparov, and many others, have demonstrated their superior skill during world championships.

Encouraged by Andre Agassi's success on the court, tennis is gaining momentum among many of the young.

Armenians enjoy cultural performances and the arts. Frequent attendance at the opera and other musical and theatrical performances is considered essential to the quality of life. Folk music is very popular and special attention is paid to educating children in the skills of drawing, painting, dancing, acting, and playing instruments.

## **Cuisine**

The Armenian table is one of the world's great culinary melting pots. Rather than rely on condiments or sauces, Armenian dishes depend upon the food itself to give fine flavor. The cuisine relies heavily on bulgur (precooked cracked wheat) and lentils for bulk and substance. Many vegetables extend the dishes, which are eaten with large quantities of bread, especially flatbread. Although

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not vegetarians, the Armenian diet relies heavily on fresh fruits and vegetables, cheeses and yogurt, and whole grains and nuts. It is considered one of the healthiest diets in the world today.

The day's first meal, *nakhajash*, consists of coffee or tea and a pastry. Children are served bread, butter, cheese, boiled eggs, honey or jam, and warm milk. Lunch (*jash*) is eaten at midday. Dinner (*ntrik*) is served in the evening and is the main meal.

When guests are present, a *seghanabed* or *tamada* (toast-master) will propose toasts, ranging from praising the hostess to world peace. Traditionally, a woman prepares the meals and joins the group only after serving everyone else. She will later insist that her guests take second or third helpings. Alcoholic beverages, primarily Armenian cognac or vodka, are served in small cups and must be emptied in one sip, to be renewed immediately after. Declining such offers in rural areas can offend the hosts, so it's best to drink and eat slowly.

## Armenian Holidays

**New Year's** (*Amanor*), January 1–6  
(official holiday) — gifts are exchanged among family and friends.

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**Christmas** (*Surb Tsnund*), January 6 (official holiday)  
— Part of the ritual is the "Blessing of Water."

**Women's Day**, March 8 (official holiday) — Men give presents to women, and the streets are full of flowers. People usually celebrate with friends, in cafés, restaurants, or at home.

**Easter** (*Zatik*), April 8 (religious holiday) — Celebrations include coloring eggs and engaging in friendly, but competitive egg wars.

**Genocide Victims Commemoration Day**, April 24 (official holiday) — Hundreds of thousands of Armenians climb the Tsitsernakaberd Hill in Yerevan to pay respect to the victims of the 1915 genocide and to remind the world of the horrors of racial cleansing.

**Victory and Peace Day**, May 9 (official holiday) — celebrates the end of World War II and honors the almost 350,000 Armenian servicemen who lost their lives fighting against the Nazi forces.

**Day of the First Republic**, May 28 (official holiday) — Marks the 1918 to 1920 period of independence.

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**Constitution Day**, July 5 (official holiday) — The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia was adopted through a national referendum on July 5, 1995.

**Independence Day**, September 21 (official holiday) — Celebrates the restoration of the Republic of Armenia in 1991, after 70 years of sovietization.

**Holy Translators Day** (*Targmanchats ton*), October 13 (religious holiday) — Dedicated to the creator of the Armenian alphabet, Mesrop Mashtots, and Sahak Partev, translator and interpreter of the Bible.

**Day of Remembrance of Victims of the 1988 Earthquake**, December 7 (official holiday) — Commemorates the thousands of people who died as a result of the earthquake that also destroyed much of the Republic's infrastructure.



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