

National Academy of Sciences - St. Hripsime Church - The Mother Cathedral of Holy Ejmiatsin - St. Gayane Church - Zvartnots - Yerevan. Distance: 45 kilometers. Dinner at “Tteni” (Mulberry) restaurant is included in the trip.

## **Vagharshapat Town**



*The Mother Cathedral of Holy Ejmiatsin*

Vagharshapat, a.k.a Ejmiatsin, is located approximately 18 kilometers west from Yerevan. There are five churches in Vagharshapat among which is the Ejmiatsin Cathedral, the mother church of Armenian Apostolic Church. It is the first cathedral built in Armenia. That is why Vagharshapat considered as the spiritual capital of Armenia.

The Mother Cathedral of Holy Ejmiatsin was built at the beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> century (probably between 301 and 303) by the first patriarch St. Gregory the Illuminator. It was built on the place of the pagan temple. The main part of the current building was built in 483-484 by Vahan Mamikonyan. From its foundation until the second half of the fifth century and then since 1441 Ejmiatsin was and is the seat of Catholicos.of All Armenians.

In 2000 the Cathedral was listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The other churches of Vagharshapat are: St. Gayane Church (built in 630), St. Hripsime Church (founded in 618, listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site), St. Shoghakat Church (current building was built in 1694, originally came from 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site), St. Mariam Astvatsatsin (Church of the Holy Mother of God).



*St. Hripsime Church*



*St. Gayane Church*

## **Zvartnots Cathedral**



*Zvartnots Cathedral*

This cathedral is famous for its unique design. The church was built between 643 A.D. and 652 by Catholicos Nerses III. Zvartnots was a majestic cathedral dedicated to St. Gregory at the place where a meeting between king Trdat III and Gregory the Illuminator was supposed to have taken place. In 930 A.D. the church was ruined by an earthquake, and remained buried until its rediscovery in the early 20th century.