

## St. Stepanos Monastery beautiful Armenian church

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Jolfa is a city in East Azerbaijan Province, Iran. It is located to the north of Tabriz, separated by the Aras River from its northern neighbor and namesake, the town of Julfa in the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is famous for its historic churches. One of these churches is St. Stepanos Monastery which is the second most important Armenian Church in Iran after St. Thaddeus Monastery.



St. Stepanos Monastery is on the Iranian side of the border between Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Iran. It was built in the ninth century AD, but it was seriously damaged by earthquake. So, it was refurbished in Safavid period. Also, some measures were taken in Qajar era by Abbas Mirza to maintain and repair it.

The church is surrounded by greenery trees and valleys in the heart of mountains between the border of Jolfa and the Republic of Azerbaijan and situated in a deep canyon along the Aras River.

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St. Stepanos was the first to preach the Gospel in Armenia. He was a close friend of the apostle St. Paul. St. Stepanos was a man of great faith and courage. He was martyred for his faith in 302 AD. His death is celebrated as the beginning of the Christian era in Armenia.

The church is a beautiful example of Armenian architecture. It features a central dome and a series of smaller domes. The walls are made of dark stone and are decorated with intricate carvings. The interior is a masterpiece of art, with a high ceiling and a series of arches. The church is a place of great beauty and significance.

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This is the main image of the article. It shows the interior of the St. Stepanos Monastery, featuring a large stone archway with intricate carvings and a central relief depicting figures. The wall is made of large, rectangular stone blocks in shades of tan and reddish-brown. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures and colors of the stone.