

Lebanon Traveler

A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut - Issue 1 October 2011



More than 50

things to do around Tyre and its vicinity



Bird watching
nature trekking

**10 MUST VISIT
IN ZAHLE**

PLUS

40 pages of people places and products



Molasses
Photo by Fadi Yenil Turk

Promoting experiential tourism and cultural encounters



Beyond Beirut website

www.beyondbeirut.com will take you on a journey to discover Lebanon differently... Let unforgettable encounters reconnect you with traditions, cultures and values you thought had vanished and leave behind you the precious souvenir of a moment of sharing...

Lebanon Traveler

unveils Lebanon's hidden treasures



Worldwide, the last decades saw the evolution of a more experience-based domestic traveler, seeking to share experiences with the locals, taking home and leaving behind shared memories that will live long after the last turn on the road. If this magazine has found its way to your home, you are one of these.

Lebanon Traveler offers you the opportunity not only to "experience" Lebanon differently but also to "make a difference".



Through magical moments that make a tour become an authentic adventure, you will add to the enlightenment and stimulation not only of yourself but also of the communities you will exchange views, opinions and ideas with. A dash of engagement, creativity, great food, sun and without you realizing it, these exchanges might consolidate the bond between communities and their surroundings and contribute to fuel their respect for their own traditions, way of life and environment.

Do share your travel memories, your impressions and your ideas, even the craziest ones with us. This interaction between you, rural communities, areas of Lebanon and our magazine will contribute in shaping the identity and the future of rural tourism in the country.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our unfaltering contributors who have taken the time to experience and write about the country's wonderful hidden treasures. And especially to Joseph Abi Saab, Eddy Choueiry, Houda Kassatly, Barbara Massaad, Jiro Ose, Rima Sabbah and Clement Tannouri who allowed us to see Lebanon through their eyes.



Your feedback as a reader and as a user of this information is very important for us to develop quality sustainable tourism in Lebanon. Enjoy and share your experience on info@lebanontraveler.com

The Lebanon Traveler team



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Take our road trip and spend two activity-filled days in Tyre and its surroundings. You could even slow down the pace and stay longer...



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Lebanese foodie, Barbara Massaad, takes you on a journey down memory lane making family mouneh. Make sure you check out the local produce in every village you visit...

e Noor Obeid

October 2011

A must visit place in the Bekaa



This is the story of **Domaine Al-Rachid Guesthouse**, a living legend made of stone, paint, colors and life. How did I end up there? My friend Peter, the grandson of Rachid Nasr, invited me to visit and I accepted with pleasure.

I made my way to Chtaura, took the Hermel road and kept on going straight along the highway, bordered by Bedouin farmers working in never ending fields, until I reached to the village of Jdeydet el-Fekha, then I took my second right after the white church and 2 minutes up the alley, I arrived at Domaine Al-Rachid.

I was welcomed with the warmth only a Lebanese highlander could give and while walking to the house through the garden I couldn't help but notice the amazing mix of local wild life, landscaping and irrigation, decorated with vintage and modern industrial objects and lights. On the garden terrace I was piled with cold drinks, freshly picked blue berries, locally grown apricots and deep red cherries. We then retired to the rooftop gazebo for a rest.

The gazebo's bamboo roof lent a fresh summer feel, while the floor seating with its embroidered pillows and small intricately painted tables gave the area an arabesque style. In the middle of the gazebo was a table filled with delicacies: A pot of steaming hot Turkish coffee, fresh juices, famous Baalbaki Saj bread, a platter of shiny vegetables and a local dish called Ambaris, similar to Labne but made in a clay pot.

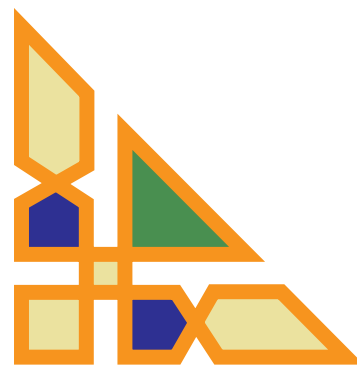
After the rest I was taken on a tour of the house, although I had already briefly seen the impressive paintings and calligraphy on the house doors and bedroom walls, I was astounded when I heard the story of how it all began.

Having been an officer in the French army, Rachid was appointed to a succession of administrative posts in the Lebanese army. He was a French, Arabic and Bedouin dialect translator for the forces. His gift for self-learning, his razor sharp memory and his love for his community lead him to memorize and recite poetry at social gatherings. This encouraged him to form a local club: Al Sanabel at his home, where village folks would gather once a week and share readings, poems and stories. The club even distributed a regular publication in the village.

In 1976, some time after his retirement from the army, Rachid, at the age of 83, began his first endeavor at painting. Arab authors and poets, as well as the Bible and the Quran, inspire his arabesque style, known as naive art. This hobby continued for the next twenty years and took 5000 hours to complete. Rachid stopped painting in 1996, 4 years before his death. Rachid Nasr made the 107 years he's lived a blessing and inspiration to his family, friends, society and even us guests who visit Domaine Al-Rachid, nowadays a guesthouse.

After a tour of this incredible house with its water canals and gardens it was time for lunch. A typical menu includes homemade Maqloubet batinjien (aubergine and rice), Safsouf, Salatet Bakleh (parslane salad) and sweet Ma'mouniyyeh. Nawal, the cook, had freshly picked the vine leaves from the garden for use. I got to eat with the staff and was able to meet the whole crew that formed this happy family. Unfortunately I had to leave shortly after lunch, but I can't wait to go & try out one of the tours with those lovely folks from beyond the norm.

Share your nature experience with us and let others learn by writing to readersexperiences@lebanontraveler.com ■



Albums



Rooftop



Outside



Authentic



Crafts



Nature



Further information about Domaine Al-Rachid Guesthouse

A homage to Rachid Nasr, his beliefs, accomplishments and his life and as a continuation of his values to support the local society, Domaine Al-Rachid is a private venture started by his daughter and grandsons. Domaine Al-Rachid is a project tending towards responsible tourism and sustainability contributing to the local economy and culture.

Economically Domaine Al-Rachid hires people from the villages of el-Fekha and Jdeydet el-Fekha, paid responsible tours contribute to the livelihood of the local communities in places with or without entrance fees, local know-how was solicited in the refurbishment of the house, all food and materials purchases are local and follow locally-made food products, supporting rural families are sold at the Domaine.

Culturally Domaine Al-Rachid preserves and sustains the heritage of the family represented by both grandparents: Rachid and Madeleine Nasr, from one side and develops the continuity of this heritage through the sons in modern times.

Then the contribution broadens to support the preservation of the heritage of the North Bekaa through the visits guests make to historical and traditional places while meeting local folk and promoting the entire region in a 'responsible tourism' kind of way. The Domaine is open for the public and can accommodate up to 12 people in 2 painted rooms

Apart from the wonderful experience within Domaine Al-Rachid, guests can enjoy a variety of cultural, religious and adventure activities:

- Cultural tours of Jdeydet el-Fekha, Ras Baalbeck and Hermel: Meeting local craftsmen such as carpet weavers and oud makers. Visiting the local molasses museum and historical sites such as Qamouaa el-Hermel (a tower tomb from 200 BC) and St Maroon Troglodyte Monastery (caves) where it is believed that the followers of St Maroon took refuge in the 9th century before entering Mount Lebanon.
- Hiking tours of Ras Baalbeck's arid mountains discovering the Mar Koulia (St Nicholas) cave overlooking the village and a panoramic view over the Western Mount Lebanon mountain range.
- Religious tours discovering St Maroon Troglodyte monastery at the Orontes (Al-Aassy) river water source, the Churches of Jdeydet el-Fekha, El-Fekha and Ras Baalbeck as well as the historical monastery of Saydet Ras Baalbeck.
- Adventure tours including rafting on the Orontes River. ■

Pascal Abdallah Tel 03 218048 pascal@responsiblemobilities.com

✉ [domainealrachid.wordpress.com](https://www.domainealrachid.wordpress.com)

Protecting the Cedars of Lebanon

The largest of Lebanon's nature reserves, Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve stretches from Dahr Al-Baidar in the north to Niha Mountain in the south. Blanketed with oak forests on its northeastern slopes & juniper and oak forests on its southeastern slopes, the reserve's most famous attractions are its three magnificent cedar forests of Maasser Al-Shouf, Barouk and Ain Zhalta-Bmohray. These cedar forests count for a quarter of the remaining cedar forest in Lebanon, & some trees are estimated to be 2,000 years old.

What to do within the reserve

The Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve is a popular destination for hiking and trekking with trails matching all levels of fitness. Bird watching, mountain biking and snowshoeing are also popular. From the summit of the rugged mountains, visitors will have a panoramic view of the countryside, eastward to the Bekaa Valley and Qaraoun Lake and westward toward the Mediterranean.

What to see around the reserve

You might consider spending a couple of days exploring the historical sites and traditional character of the reserve's neighboring villages, such as Ain Zhalta, Deir El-Qamar, Barouk, Maasser Al-Chouf and Niha. Important historical sites in the vicinity include the Beiteddine Palace, Mosque of Fakhreddine I, several old churches,

and the village of Moukhtara (location of the Jumblatt palace). In addition, you may enjoy Moussa Castle, the Marie Baz Wax Museum, the Kfarhim Grotto and Ain Wzain Grotto. Traveling to the east from the Maasser El-Chouf area takes you into the Bekaa Valley, where you can visit Kefraya Winery, the Aammiq Wetlands (good for bird watching) and Qaraoun Lake.

Don't miss The Niha entrance

Shqif Tyron also known as the Fortress of Niha, is located in the southwest part of the reserve near the village of Niha. The fortress overlooks Jezzine and was used by the Crusaders as an observation point onto the road that used to link Sidon to the Bekaa Valley. The Fortress is famous for being the place of refuge for Emir Fakhreddine II who was trying to escape capture by the Ottomans in 1633 A.D.



Photo courtesy of Eddy Choueiry

History

Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve was established by Law No.532 on July 29, 1996. The Reserve is managed by an Appointed Protected Area Committee in cooperation with the Al-Shouf Cedar Society and under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment. The UNESCO declared the Reserve and surrounding villages "Shouf Biosphere Reserve" in 2005.

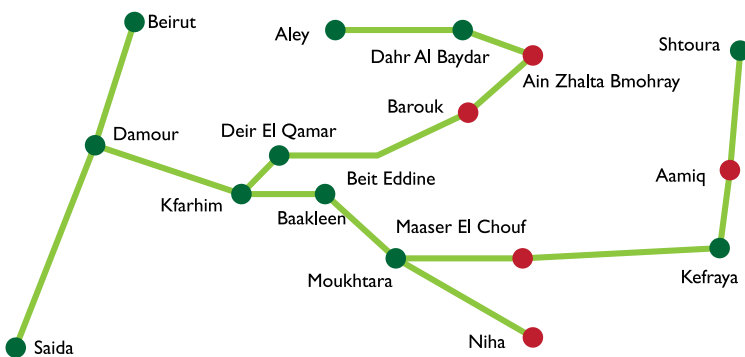
What is a biosphere reserve?

Biosphere reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. Biosphere reserves serve in some ways as 'living laboratories' for testing out and demonstrating integrated management of land, water and biodiversity. Collectively, biosphere reserves form a world network: the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Within this network, exchanges of information, experience and personnel are facilitated. There are over 500 biosphere reserves in over 100 countries.

Difference between a biosphere reserve and a natural World Heritage site

A biosphere reserve is a representative ecological area with 3 mutually reinforcing functions: conservation, sustainable development and logistic support for scientific research and education. Natural World Heritage sites must be of outstanding universal value in accordance with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972). In some instances, a core area of a biosphere reserve can meet World Heritage criteria: the usually larger biosphere reserve can therefore serve as a complementary means to protect the integrity of the World Heritage site.

How to get there



Best season to visit

The period from May to September is the best season to visit depending on the activities you enjoy. For floral enthusiasts, spring and summer are especially good times to visit the reserve. Flowers and plants can be identified with the help of reserve guides and the wooden signs peppered along the trails specified for walking. Animal lovers will enjoy using the hidden post in Ain Zhalta-Bmohray forest and Ain Elligeh for birds and mammals observation. It is also possible to do nighttime monitoring via jeep using geographic positioning system (GPS), and night vision binoculars. Spring and summer are the best seasons for these activities.



Photo courtesy of Eddy Choueiry



What to bring

In general visitors should come equipped with good hiking or walking shoes, comfortable clothing, backpack and water and take the following seasonal requirements into consideration:

Sumer/ Spring Water and sunglasses

Autumn jacket, hat and warm clothes

Winter Snow clothes, hat, snow glasses, gloves, snowshoes (limited quantities can be rented at gates)

Optional Visitors may also want to bring a field guide, camera, binoculars and a walking stick.

How to get into the reserve

There are four main entrances to the reserve

- Ain Zhalta
- Barouk
- Maaser el Chouf
- Nihla

Restaurants near Barouk Entrance

- **Tourist Restaurant** 03 231768 touristrestaurant.com
- **Pinacea Café** 71 232771
- **Baytna Restaurant** 03 841456 baytna.info

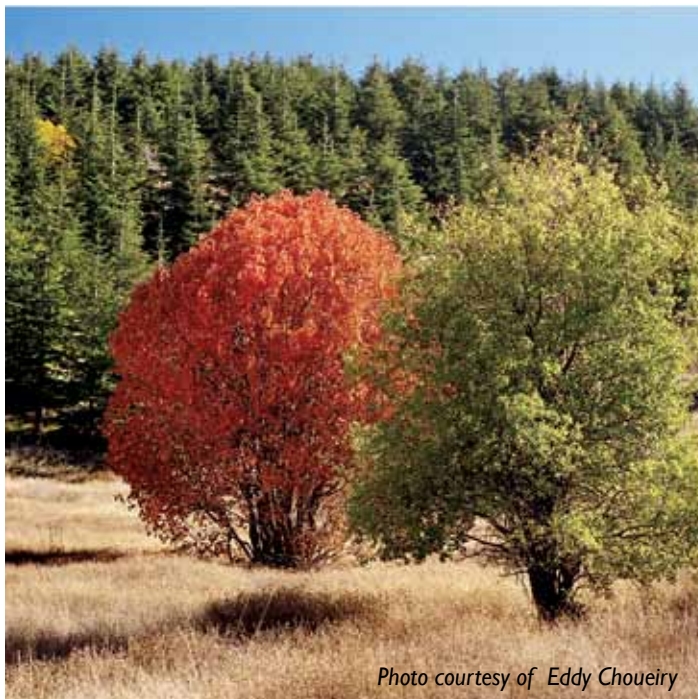


Photo courtesy of Eddy Choueiry

Where to stay

- In Ain Zhalta **El Eid Guesthouse**
- In Baadarane **Baz Guesthouse** 05 311191 - 03 702944
- In Beiteldine **Mir Amin Hotel** 05 501351
- In El Khraybe **El Ashkar Guesthouse** 03 354558
- In Maasser El Chouf **Auberge Saint Michel and Beit El Hana** 05 350451, **Boustany and Mahmoud Guesthouses**
- In Niha **Merchad Guesthouse** 05 330755

How you can help

Buy a "Cedars and Faces" tour package (available from 1 to 5 days) or adopt a cedar tree. But it is best to visit the Park House to get more information about the reserve and biosphere and how contribute to their income.

Contacts

Kamal Abou Assi 03 964495

Park House Maasser El Shouf village square (facing public garden Al Shouf), Tel 05 350250. E-mail arzshouf@cyberia.net.lb - info@shoufcedar.org
 Facebook [facebook.com/shoufcedar.org](https://www.facebook.com/shoufcedar.org)
 Website shoufcedar.org.



Local guide

Marwan Khodr 70 252762 has been working as an environmental guide for over a decade. Based in Baaqline, Marwan knows every nook and cranny of his hometown and the green spaces surrounding it. Marwan has learned to recognize endemic species such as local birds and plants. He spent much of his time with old village people recording their habits and customs. ■

A Local Initiative For Sustainable Tourism

Preparations for the Beyond Beirut Annual Forum for National Sustainable Tourism Development scheduled for the 5th of October 2011 are well underway. The Forum aims to promote dialogue and linkages among tourism stakeholders in rural areas as well as between these stakeholders and national tour operators, with the goal of supporting the expansion of rural and sustainable tourism across the value chain in Lebanon.

The Forum will take place at the UNESCO Palace in Beirut. The conference sessions of the forum will see the intervention of representatives of key world organizations such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and the World Wildlife Fund, as well as Siyaha, Jordan.

The local picture will be represented by a number of managers, consultants & entrepreneurs of major tourism projects in the country, some of them representing leading sustainable tourism initiatives.

The exhibition part of the forum will feature a number of **Lebanese Municipalities** that will showcase tourism services offered by **local tourism providers**, as well as **syndicates** and **private initiatives**.

This Forum will be made possible with the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and by the support of sponsors such as ATTAL and SAAD Transport. The forum counts amongst its media partners MTV, The Daily Star newspaper, Tourism Around The World e-publication and Almightareb magazine.

The forum is open to tourism industry professionals. Simply call **03 016607** or visit beyondbeirut.com for more information.

**NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FORUM**

10 things to do in Qada'a Zahle





Photo courtesy of Roger Al-Feghaly

1. SOMETHING SPECIAL

Abandoned railway - Rayak

Visit anytime

Contact **Charles Helou Bus station**

01 573322/574422 to get permission

At one time the town of Rayak was a hub for transporters, traders and travelers. It housed the Middle East's first rail network that ran across Greater Syria from the port of Beirut until its closure in 1976. The site is not only a station but also a factory comprising approximately 70 buildings including a 'locomotive garage', ticket office and a hotel. Now, in ruins, the iron is rusted, the roofs are torn apart and it is overgrown with bushes and wild flowers making it difficult to distinguish the pieces.

rayakrailway.org

2. WINERIES

Visit anytime

Contact **Al Karram 08 818855**, **Chateau Khoury 08 801160**,

Chateau Ksara 08 813495, **Domaine Wardy 08 930141** and

Massaya 08 510135

Zahle is mostly famous for its wineries that produce some of the best wines and Arak in the country and which are recognized internationally. Whether it is Chateau Ksara with its impressive 2km long cellars, Massaya with its Sunday brunches and yoga classes, Domaine Wardy vineyards across the Bekaa, Chateau Khoury with its exceptional view over the valley or Al Karram Arak with its 100 years of family tradition, they each represent a piece of the history and wealth of Zahle. You can enjoy a guided visit, all year long, where the representatives of each winery will take you through their vineyards and cellars to discover their roots and philosophies, ending your journey with a tasting.

arakkarram.com - chateaukhoury.com - chateauksara.com

domainewardy.com - massaya.com



Photo courtesy of Taanayel ecolodge

3. ACCOMODATION

Akl Hotel Zahle, Brazil Road

Contact **08 820701** and **03 820701** contact@akl-hotel.com

Like many of the buildings in this part of town, the hotel dates back more than 100 years and has all its old characteristics preserved. The small, family owned establishment has 10 bedrooms of which 6 have private bathrooms, 1 dining room and 2 lounges. Hosts, Nada Akl and her mother, make visitors feel at home right away. akl-hotel.com

Taanayel Ecolodge Taanayel - main road to Anjar

Contact **Fairuz Nassar 08-544881** auberge@arcenciel.org

Located at the heart of the valley in the small town of Taanayel near Zahle & the road to Anjar ruins, the eco-lodge is a traditional village with adobe houses where you can spend a day or two & travel back in time to live the village lifestyle of the Bekaa, decades ago. The lodge has 7 large rooms with mattresses on the floor & basic bathrooms. Facilities available include an old fashioned shop (dekkneh) where you can buy local produce, a restaurant serving fresh & healthy food, a meeting room, internet, TV, library, video & playground. arcenciel.org

Other places to stay include the **Traboulsi 08 812661** (small guest house), **Deir Yasso'u el Fadi 08 545200** (monastery which hosts groups only) and **Monte Alberto Hotel 08 810912** (for the view it offers).

4. ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

Niha

Visit anytime 10 km north of Zahle

Contact **Niha municipality 08 951154** (8 am to 2 pm)

In the midst of the village of Niha lays a colossal, restored Roman temple of the Syro-Phoenician God Hadaranes; the God of thunder, lightning and rain, adjacent to a much smaller, non-restored temple, dedicated to Atargatis, Goddess of fertility.

Furzol

Visit anytime 5 km north of Zahle

Contact **Zahle municipality 08 800252** (8 am to 2 pm)

One of the oldest villages in Bekaa, it enchants hikers and adventurers with its caves. But before checking these out, take a look at the foundation walls, big stone blocks with carvings and inscriptions, which remain of a Roman temple. The caves, partially natural and partially man-made, are located just outside the town in the Wadi el-Habis or Valley of the Hermit as the villagers call it. With rock-cut sanctuaries from Roman and Byzantine times, they are numerous and full of history and each can be explored or rappelled. At the base of the caves are cafes and terraces for visitors to rest.

Anjar

Visit anytime Southeast of Zahle

Contact **Anjar municipality 08 620791** (8 am to 2 pm)

Anjar represents one epoch and civilization, the Umayyad. It lies in the midst of the richest agricultural land in Lebanon and is strategically located at intersecting trade routes. It is essentially the only example of an inland commercial center. Some monuments at the site have been restored and today it comprises of a Mosque, three palaces, a residential area and a public bath.

lebanon-tourism.gov.lb



Photo courtesy of Clement Tannouri

5. NATURE

Kfar Zabad

Visit anytime 6km southeast of Riyak

Contact **Kfar Zabad municipality 08 925331** or **Sami Abou Rjeili 03 846631**

Kfar Zabad is a small village not only famous for its ruins but also and mostly for its wetland. Every year the wetland welcomes thousands of migratory birds that come to rest by the water before continuing their voyage. In order to preserve the site, a law against hunting has been instated and artificial water holes have been created. Visitors are welcome to be guided around the wetland and rest in the accommodation facilities provided. (See page 24 for more on bird watching) spnl.org



Photo courtesy of Clement Tannouri



Photo courtesy of Clement Tannouri

6. FOOD

Boozah Khalaf and Abou Sleiman Berdawni, Zahle

Visit anytime

Contact **Walid Khalaf 03 408880** or **08 823733**

Traditionally, it used to take hours and hours to make ice cream; the milk had to be boiled and then cooled down, in this case in the Berdawni River; so as to mix and beat with crushed ice and spices to add flavor. It was 3 generations ago that the Khalaf and Abou Sleiman families started producing such traditional Arabic ice cream with Miskeh, Sahlab and milk curd otherwise known as Ashta, the most famous ice cream flavor in the country. Today, they still serve this authentic, hand-made ice cream in their shop in Zahle.

Facebook page: **Khalaf & Abou Sleiman**

Don't miss the super slim taouk sandwiches at **Adel Massaad 08 807677** in the Mar Elias neighborhood (7ay). And for the best mezze in the country visit the Bardouni River restaurants including **Mhanna 08 801575** and **Arrabi 08 800144**.

7. ARCHITECTURE

Zahle

Visit anytime

Contact **Zahle municipality 08 800252**

It is by wandering around in Zahle you will discover its charms. The Geha House is a restored, typical 17th century house. Although a private home today, you can still appreciate its courtyard, garden and galleries. The house has a 1400 m long underground tunnel that leads to St Elias church and monastery (Al Tuwak). The monastery was built in 1755 while the church, also known as Al Moukhallasiah, was built in 1720 and was the second church built in Zahle, the oldest being Sayedit Zalzal, built in 1700 and standing at the heart of the city.

In the oldest part of the city, you can walk down the Souk al Blatt (or tiled market) where ancient travelers to and from Syria, Baghdad and Palestine used to trade their goods. Going east, you will find Housh El Zarani, a market place that used to bring together craftsmen, shops and caravansaries. It was an important commercial center where trades were made and products were sold. Close to it is the monastery of Our Lady of Najat, built in 1720, it possesses the largest bell tower, so far, in Lebanon. It is renowned for its magnificent icon of the Virgin Mary, a present from the King of Prussia and the viewing platform overlooking the city and crowned with a ten-meter high bronze statue of the Virgin. zahle.gov.lb - zahlee.com



Photo courtesy of Clement Tannouri

8. ACTIVITIES

Hiking

Every Sunday all year long
Contact **Alain Gabriel 03 275353**
Zahle offers many activities for the entire family. You can hike through the mountains and villages to enjoy the landscape and numerous archeological vestiges. exittonature.com

Rappelling

Upon reservation
Contact **Rony Al Najjar at Wady 71 737668**
There are many caves that can be rappelled or visited. However, most caves are vertical and cannot be entered without the assistance of professionals. speleoliban.com



Photo courtesy of Taanayel ecolodge

9. CRAFTS

Arak making

Contact **Fadi Fakhry 03 096 536**

Arak distilled from grapes & anise is considered to be greatly superior to similar hard liquors in other countries. In Nliha, Fakhry and his family make their own arak in the family distillery. Lebanon considers arak its traditional alcoholic beverage & the name Arak Zahlawi is a "controlled term of origin" given by the Lebanese to arak produced in Zahleh.

Mud brick making

Contact **Abir Barakat 08 544881** or **Jad Abou Arraj 03 567880**

To support their social activity with the disabled persons, the NGO Arc-en-Ciel has developed a whole concept with mud bricks & created a Dayaa (village) accommodation site (see Accommodation Taanayel Ecolodge). One can, however, participate in the making of the mud bricks & children can learn how to build mini mud houses.

10. MUSEUM

Terbol museum

Middle of the village, near Ste. Takla church,

Visit from May to November

Contact **National Heritage Association 01 367753** or on site **Jean Jabbour 03 283850**

Terbol museum is a refurbished rural farmhouse standing in the midst of the village that reflects the traditional way of life. It displays archaic agricultural tools and household utensils alongside temporary photography exhibitions of local and international artists that showcase the variety and wealth of the region's culture. Its primary purpose was the conservation of the traditional construction style but today it attracts visitors who wish to re-experience, for a while, the ancient way of life. (See page 38 for a closer look at the museum) fnp.org.lb - cvltvre.com ■



Photo courtesy of Terbol Museum

Optimism on Horizon for International Tourism

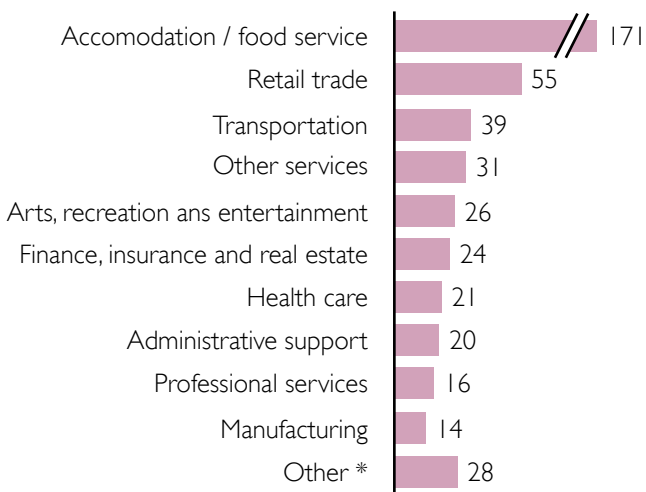
*By Scott Wayne, President, SW Associates, a
Washington DC-based consulting practice dedicated
to sustainable development through tourism.*

In the first issue, as we stepped into summer, Wayne asked where tourism is headed in 2011. Now, as autumn kicks in, he revisits some of the numbers and trends highlighted in his first column.

With EU and US economies generally still unsteady, the Syrian revolution boiling over, Qaddafi out and Egyptian elections approaching, the stage seems set for a volatile and uncertain future for international tourism, or at least around the Mediterranean. However, here in the US, there was a glimmer of hope this summer for tourism: Editorials this summer in Fortune magazine, The Atlantic and Washington Post cited international tourism as an under-recognized path to prosperity and jobs in the US. The same could be said for the rest of the world, especially the Middle East and North Africa.

In The Atlantic, senior editor Derek Thompson wrote that the past decade for the US has been a “lost decade” in tourism because while international tourism grew by 46 million, the US actually lost 2.4 million visitors, which cost the country 440,000 jobs and half a trillion dollars in travel spending. How did this happen? The reasons are well known by now, 9/11 led to security policies, which scared away families, it became harder and more expensive to get US visas and, while Europe and others increased travel promotion budgets, the US did not. This is not surprising given that the US is the only OECD country without a national tourism policy and travel promotion strategy.

Estimated jobs lost from shrinking international travel market share Thousand



* Other include agriculture, construction, information, management & education.

Bill Marriott writing in Fortune Magazine expressed similar sentiments. He said that if the US could boost international visitation by 10 per cent, over 100,000 new jobs would be created. He continued, “for every dollar spent for travel and hotels, there is a multiplier effect of visitors shopping on Fifth Avenue or eating out at great New York City restaurants that also juices the economy.” Fareed Zakaria agreed, writing in the Washington Post recently that tourism is one of the largest growth industries in America and yet the US has lost global market share especially due to the visa issue.

Lessons Learned

While visas may not be as much of a barrier to entry for most other countries, the lost market share experienced by the US provides two sorely learned lessons:

- 1 - Security can't be ignored, but make it as easy as possible for people to visit. Otherwise your economic “security” is at risk.
- 2 - Don't cut travel promotion budgets. These investments pay off well in excess of the original amounts through job growth, increased tax revenues and the like.

The World Travel & Tourism Council forecasts, in 2011, for the EU, where countries have spent nearly USD1 billion on travel promotion, 18.3 million jobs (8.4% of total employment) and USD1.2 trillion in GDP.

This growth is helped by a 7 per cent increase in international tourism in 2010 to 940 million, according to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The UNWTO recently added that within the first four months of 2011, international tourism grew by 4.5% with regions such as Latin America growing by more than 17%, South Asia by more than 14% and South-East Asia 10%. In the first column, we highlighted a number of trends that helped drive this growth: Mega-events, Emerging Markets especially the BRIC countries, Emerging Market Domestic Tourism, beach holidays continuing to dominate, niche markets for special interest activities and authentic experiences and new or renewed destinations.

The Daily Deal Trend

Another trend, which seems to be expanding globally at light speed and moving quickly into the “travel space” is the daily deal phenomenon led by Groupon and LivingSocial. Both are destination specific and offer huge discounts for everything from hotel stays to house cleaning services. Every business appears to now offer a daily deal. Travel suppliers are no exception with Groupon recently launching its Getaways program in partnership with Expedia and LivingSocial its Escapes program. LivingSocial was founded in 2007 and already has more than 32 million members in the US and more than 42 million worldwide in 25 countries. Groupon was founded in November 2008 and has members in over 550 cities in 43 countries. These companies along with many much smaller ones are fast becoming ways for tourism suppliers to fill seats and beds. They are becoming a significant player in travel and tourism – one certainly to watch. ■



Scott Wayne has advised Beyond Beirut, the Lebanon Business Linkages Initiative & the Lebanon Mountain Trail Project. Previously, he was the North America director for WTTC, UNWTO's first chief of communications and author for Lonely Planet.

✉ sw-associates.net

Walking for a cause



Matias Nordahl Carlsen, 29, a Norwegian photographer and filmmaker, has traveled to over 70 countries. After arriving in Lebanon in January 2010, he is still here. **Jørgen Ekvoll**, 30, a Norwegian artist represented by a gallery from Istanbul has been working in the Middle East. He came to Lebanon for inspiration in September 2009, and is still here.

Together, they took a 19-day walking trip through Lebanon, where they met hundreds of people and had coffee with most of them. Sleeping outside most days and sharing meals with families, they only spent around 200 dollars each. Here is their side of the story on Lebanese hospitality.

The idea of walking across Lebanon came to us after we had spent some months in Beirut. It would be a good excuse to try and see the country without spending too much money. Apart from that we didn't really prepare for the trip at all, we just figured out that the country was small enough to be "walkable" and set off to see where this would take us. And as every epic walk is done with a purpose, we decided to dedicate each day to a new cause. It turned out to be one of the greatest trips of our lives and towards the end, it changed the way we think about travelling.

A lot of people ask us about the most memorable experience from the trip but it's very hard for us to single out one great moment. Each day was just as beautiful and intense as the previous one and every day we met so many new amazing people! That's the thing about Lebanon, it doesn't matter where you are, in the north, south, east or west, because the hospitality of the people is always the same: It's unprecedented.





The Trip

“Haolo” is Lebanese for inviting someone to your house or to join them. As we walked we joked about how many “haolos” per hour we received, as if it was some way of measuring the speed we moved. After being lost for hours in Akkar we ran into some workers in the middle of the mountain and they offered us coffee. We’ve never turned down so many invitations before, which felt kind of wrong, but at the same time very typical.

I think what’s unique about Lebanon is its diversity. It sounds like a cliché but only because it’s the truth. In one day we could walk through many different landscapes and meet people belonging to a number of varied communities and faiths.

The natural scene could change drastically too, one mountain could be green and almost tropical while the hill on the other side of the valley could be yellow & dry. The forests in the North reminded us of Scandinavian forests while some areas further south would make us believe we were in Africa. Since the landscape and climate always changes, it never got boring. It felt like we were traveling through many different countries at once.

We received a lot of good advice, as well as warnings before we left. We were also told that communication could be a problem, as we don’t speak any Arabic. But you would be surprised at how easy it was to communicate through body language. We hardly encountered any problems on the road...

As far as staying overnight was concerned, I think it was to our advantage that neither of us is all that picky. We didn’t take a tent, but with a good sleeping bag each, all we had to do was to dodge the rain. We spent many nights in people’s homes, as well as at petrol stations, under the sky and in monasteries. But most of all we slept in unfinished houses, which the Lebanese countryside is full of, especially for example in the Chouf. Finding a place to sleep was never an issue.

A Typical Day

Just to give our friends a little taste of what we were experiencing, as we were walking one day, we decided to film as many portraits of people as we could in one day. We started in the northern region of Akkar, where we spent many nights in people’s homes close to the village of Koubaye, in Hrar, we slept under the sky beside the road at a petrol station, and finished in Syr El Dannieh, east of Tripoli, where we checked into a massive hotel as the only guests.

The next day, as we continued on our way we got lost in the mountains until we met a shepherd who took us to his house where we spent the night with him and his family in the village of Karm El Mohr. In many ways I think that these two days pretty much sum up our experience of the northern part of the country. I would love to do this region again with some more friends.



Our Hope

The goal of the trip was to get to know the country but we had never imagined the experience that was waiting for us. We now have friends all over the country. It would be great to see them again and be able to show them our web series. ■

✉ woc-lebanon.com

A home in the mountains



It's a little heaven on earth, the kind of place that you never want to leave. More than a usual relaxing spot, **Beit El Hana** is a unique enclave of serenity, located in the authentic village of **Maasser El Shouf**, on the footstep of the Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve. "It's all about peace, tranquility and nature", proudly says Raed Kayal, the welcoming manager.

Built in 1910, this typical stone house was renovated in 2008. It has 3 bedrooms with double beds and an extra sofa in 2 of them and 3 bedrooms with twin beds and an extra sofa in one of them. Each room has its own bathroom and is tastefully decorated with white walls and colorful fabrics.

It's the **perfect place** to either spend a **romantic weekend** or organize a **retreat** with a group of **friends**.

The common kitchen allows you to do your own cooking, with fresh products and vegetables that can be bought locally. For those who just feel like enjoying a real break, breakfast is included in the cost of the one night stay. The breakfast is prepared by Raghida Temraz, a local villager, and it includes tea, coffee, fresh labneh, cheese, bread, olives and homemade jam. A traditional lunch and dinner can also be provided at a cost upon request. All are made with the natural products from the surrounding area.

Elevated at an altitude of 1,200 meters, Maasser El Shouf is the perfect spot to enjoy fresh weather whether in the spring and summer or the much cooler autumn and winter. The nature lovers will be delighted to visit the gorgeous Cedar forest, only 15 minutes away by car. Located on the Lebanon Mountain Trail, the Shouf region is also a perfect place to hike. Biking can be an option for the more energetic. Moreover, the historical towns of Dar el Qamar and Beiteddin are close enough to go and visit from Maasser El Shouf and the village itself is a "must see".

Far from the real estate boom, it has maintained its character. By wandering along the streets, you will be surprised to discover some of the most beautiful and well-preserved traditional Lebanese houses. Don't forget to visit the old olive press as well as Saint Michel winery, where you can also purchase delicious orange blossom water and balsamic vinegar. Located on the other side of the street, the Saint Michel hostel regularly hosts some great yoga retreats for which you can register in advance.



Among other upcoming projects, a series of 9 wooden houses are currently under construction 4 minutes away from Beit El Hana. In the middle of a green area, each house will include a bedroom and a bathroom. And to top it all each dollar you pay is for a good cause. The "Arc en Ciel" association, an NGO helping the physically challenged and persons with special needs, runs Beit El Hana. Another good reason to come and enjoy a peaceful retreat far from the agitation of Beirut!



Useful information

- Price per person: 30 dollars (including breakfast)
- Beit Hana can accommodate up to 15 people
- Reservations can be made through the Saint Michel hostel 05 350451 or by email to auberge@arcenciel.org
- Check-in time: 14h00
- Check-out time: 12h00

For more information about places to see

- Have a look at lebanontrail.org
- Check shoufcedar.org ■

The diversity of migratory activities



Lebanon's geographic position places it at a strategic stopping point for birds along the African-Eurasian migration paths, which creates huge bird watching opportunities, especially during the spring and fall seasons. Prime time bird watching seasons are mid-September through mid-October and early March to mid-April.

Over 300 species of birds can be seen in the Lebanese skies and that is mainly due to the Land of the Cedars' diversified landscape, which even attracts birds that are threatened with extinction such as the Imperial Eagle and the Sociable Lapwing. Here it is worth noting that there are many opportunities to see certain species that are rather more common such as raptors, harriers, water birds and others like the Syrian Serin and the Palestinian Sunbird.

Bird watchers have three main areas to visit such as the coastal reserves, which include the Palm Islands Nature Reserve and the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve that both house various sea and water birds. The mountains also comprise sites such as the Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve and the Al-Shouf Cedar Reserve. The latter are known for house eagles, vultures and quails. Going further inland to the marshes and plains of the Bekaa Valley we have the Aammiq wetlands, which also offer a variety of bird watching opportunities.

Discovering New Sites

After allocating generous funding the MAVA Trust, A Rocha Lebanon and The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL – Birdlife's national partner) carried out a three-year science and community conservation project aimed at identifying and conserving new Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout the country.

In 1994, prior to the project the SPNL and Birdlife International had designated the following four sites as internationally recognized IBAs: the Ehden Forest Reserve, Palm Island, the Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve and the Aammiq Wetlands. However, due to Lebanon's importance for the migrating birds and species and a restricted regional or global range coupled with intense, largely indiscriminate hunting in the country, it was essential to identify the areas that are important for roosting (for soaring birds that fly low and are vulnerable), over wintering (for raptors and water birds) and breeding (for both wintering birds and species with limited regional or global distribution e.g. Syrian Serin).

During the period extending from March 2005 until February 2008, 31 sites were surveyed all over the country, lasting a complete yearly cycle, with recurring visits during the main migration period. Teams of researchers conducted a total of 320 site visits, totaling more than 3,000 hours of observations, generating thousands of individual records that represent tens of thousands of birds. All the data collected was matched to BirdLife IBA criteria.

9

new sites have been designated as Global IBAs after having received approval from Birdlife International

The **Hima Aanjar - Kfar Zabad** regularly welcomes significant numbers of internationally threatened species or other species that are of global conservation concern.

The **Reem - Sannin Mountains** is known to have a noteworthy assembly of species whose breeding distributions are largely or wholly confined to one biome and a meeting point site where at least 20,000 storks (Ciconiidae), raptors (Accipitriformes and Falconiformes) or cranes (Gruidae) often pass by during spring or autumn migration.

The **Tannourine Cedars Nature Reserve** habitually holds significant numbers of a globally endangered species, or other species of global conservation concern. It is known to be a bottleneck site, where at least 20,000 storks, raptors or cranes regularly pass during spring or autumn migration.



The **Hima Ebel es-Saqi** often holds significant numbers of internationally threatened species, or other species of global conservation concern, and it is also identified as a bottleneck site, where at least 20,000 storks, raptors or cranes regularly pass during migration periods.

The **Semi Deserts of Ras Baalbeck** are notorious for their significant assemblage of species whose breeding distributions are mostly confined to biome.

The **Qaraoun Lake, Beirut River Valley and Jabal Moussa Mountain** welcome at least 20,000 storks, raptors or cranes, which regularly pass by during migratory periods.

The **Upper Mountains of Akkar - Donnieh** holds significant numbers of a globally threatened species of renowned concern



Photo courtesy of SPNL

for conservationists. It holds a significant component of the restricted range of species whose breeding distributions define and Endemic Bird Area or Secondary Area to hold a significant assemblage of the species whose breeding distributions are largely or wholly confined to one biome.

2

new sites have been designated as Regional IBAs

The **Bentael Forest Nature Reserve** and the **Ramlieh Valley** where more than 5,000 storks and 3,000 raptors or cranes pass by during migration periods.

Only two of the eleven latter declared sites are government declared nature reserves while only two are conserved by the SPNL with the cooperation of local communities through the Hima approach. Meanwhile three of them have active NGO conversation and four presently have no protection at all.



Photo courtesy of Jiro Ose



Photo courtesy of Jiro Ose

Hima

The Hima is a traditionally protected area system involving the sustainable use of natural resources by and for the local communities surrounding it. Thus, it is indirectly benefitting the conservation of biodiversity as well as the natural and cultural heritage of the area. During the last thirty to fifty years, most countries in the Middle East neglected the Hima system and the region witnessed the advocacy and adoption of other categories of Protected Areas managed by governmental agencies.



Photo courtesy of SPNL



Photo courtesy of SPNL



Established Bird Areas of Lebanon

Photo courtesy of Jiro Ose

Aammiq Wetland

This 100-hectare, privately owned wetland in the Bekaa Valley was declared a national nature reserve in 1999. It lies on one of the most important bird migratory routes in the Near East and is the largest natural wetland in Lebanon.

Palm Islands Nature Reserve

Located about a 30-minute boat ride off the coast of Tripoli, the Palm Islands Reserve is composed of three small islands. Established as a national nature reserve in 1992, the site is recognized as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International. It is also an important egg-laying site for endangered sea turtles.

Al Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve

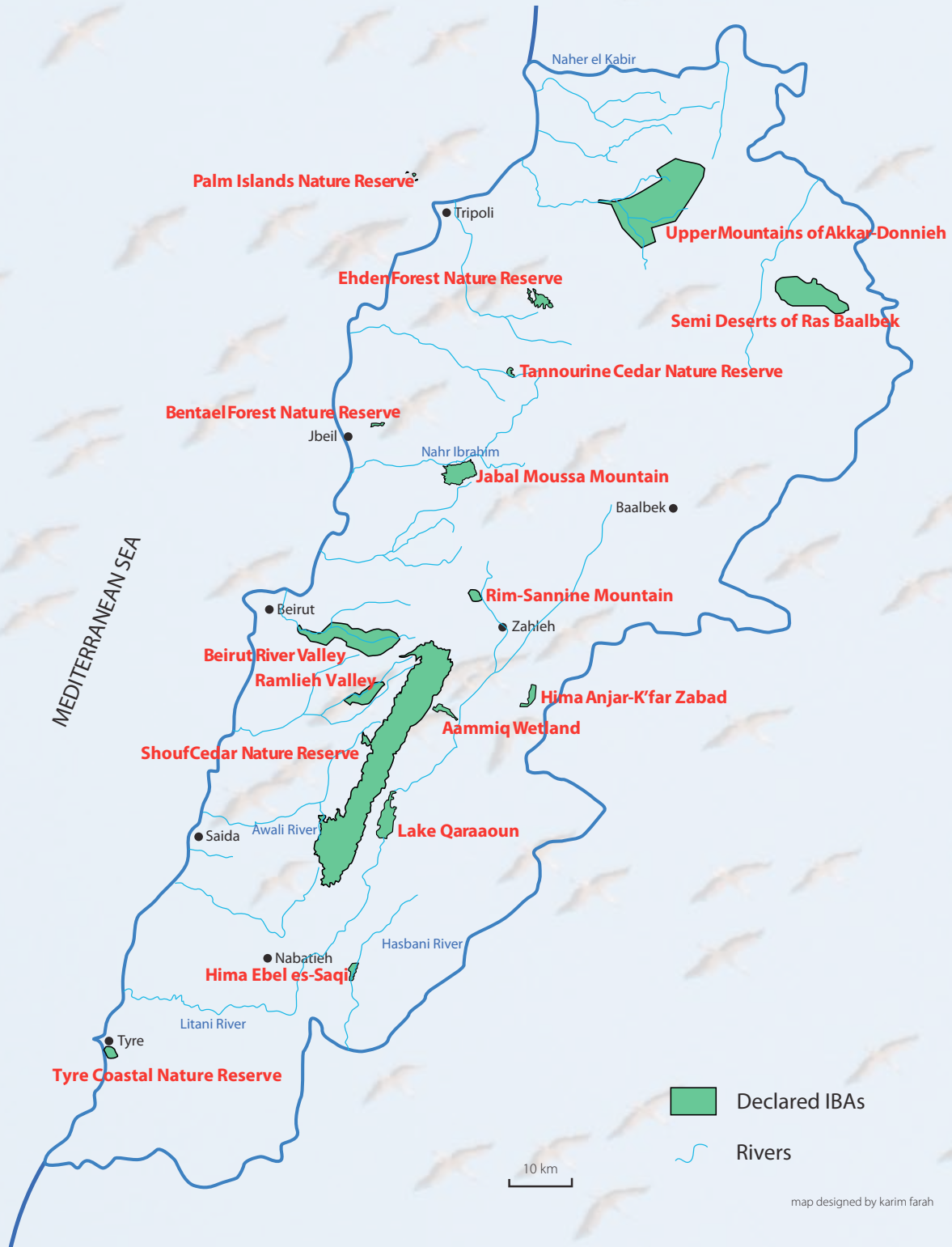
The Al Shouf Cedar Reserve is the largest nature reserve in Lebanon. It comprises 6 cedar forests stretching over 50,000 hectares in the Mount Lebanon range. In addition to the reserve's

important flora, Bird Life International recognizes the reserve as an Important Bird Area. Wolf, lynx and fox are among the other animals native to this area. The reserve has an information center, and accommodation facilities are available. Outdoor activities in the reserve include hiking and trekking (1,300 to 2,000m), bird watching from the watch-tower beside the lake, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Horsh Ehdn Nature Reserve

The rich biodiversity of this protected forest makes the reserve a unique place to visit. Extending over 4 valleys, the forest harbors many endangered mammals and birds, and most of the tree species found in Lebanon. A mixed forest, the reserve includes conifers, such as cedars, as well as wild pear and wild apple. New, well-planned footpaths of different levels are great for hiking and it is an ideal place for bird watching, hiking and snowshoeing.

Map of Lebanon with selected sites location



Tyre Coastal Nature Reserve

Established in 1998, the 380-hectare Tyre Coastal Nature Reserve encompasses a variety of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and one of the most beautiful and scenic sandy beaches in Lebanon. The pools of Ras el-Ain, used since Phoenician time, create small areas of marshland that serve as a freshwater habitat. A great variety of birds can be found in the reserve and its sandy beaches are an important nesting site for endangered sea turtles. Hiking along the seashore is possible.



Photo courtesy of SPNL



Photo courtesy of SPNL

For further reading

- S'Vere Benson's Birds of Lebanon
- The Field Guide to the Birds of the Middle East
- The periodical Sandgrouse, a publication of The Ornithological Society for the Middle East (OSME)

Who to contact

Trained guides are available in the nature reserves, and eco-tour operators run bird watching hikes and treks through many of these beautiful areas.

- The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL - Birdlife's national partner) spnl.org
- Birdtalk - Shadi Indary 03 196439
shadi_indary@yahoo.com ■



Photo courtesy of SPNL



Photo courtesy of SPNL



‘ Qobayat ’

Seeped in purple

A weekend in Tyre and its suburbs

Tyre is an ancient Phoenician city in southern Lebanon, just out into the Mediterranean Sea. About 83 km south of Beirut, it is the fourth largest city of Lebanon and it's also known by the modern name, Sour.

The legendary birthplace of Europa and Elissa (Dido) it amassed great wealth and power from the export of purple dye. In the first century AD, Tyre was the home of a Christian community visited by St. Paul. In the 12th century it became a major stronghold of the Crusaders. It was added to UNESCO's World Heritage list in 1984.

Tyre appears on monuments as early as 1500 BC, and claiming, according to Herodotus, to have been founded about 2700 BC. The inhabitants of Tyre were leading merchants in the ancient world. The city of Tyre was particularly known for the production of a rare sort of purple dye, known as Tyrian purple, which was in many ancient cultures reserved for royal use.

Day 1 Arrive in the city of Tyre and stay overnight at the **Rest House or Al Fanar**. Wake up in the morning & go straight to:

- **Al Mina archaeological site**. Upon entering, a double line of columns to the right is thought to be part of the market place. Further down is a long colonnaded road leading directly to what was the southern harbor. The marble sections of the pavement date back to the Roman era, while the black-and-white mosaic street is Byzantine. To the right of the road, below a modern cemetery, are the remains of an unusual, rectangular arena, with five rows of terraced seating cut in to limestone. In the center was a pool that may have been used for some kind of spectator water sport. Beside the arena, and covering the area heading south towards the harbor, was the settlement's residential quarter. Across the colonnaded main road is the ruin of an extensive Roman bathhouse.
- **The southernmost tip** is the site of Egyptian port and a look at over the side catches a glimpse of the underwater archaeological site.
- Now leave the ruins and walk towards the **Crusader cathedral** (Holy Cross). Having spent a couple of hours walking it is time to stop for an energy giving plate of fowl from **Baroud** (03 570168) with freshly baked bread from **Istanbuli & Sharafeddine** bakeries in the souk.
- Then check out the **Ottoman style souk** with its brightly colored merchandise.
- A quick walk around the **narrow alleys of the Christian** quarter; including a look at the **lighthouse** will bring you out at a bustling little harbor.
- At this **fishing port** meet boat makers, as well as fishermen mending nets. You'll be more than welcome to share a glass of tea and watch them play backgammon as they wait to sail.
- For lunch you could take a boat trip to the **ZIREH** (small island) with delicious sandwiches from **Mahfouz** (03 740131) (parallel to the harbor) or have lunch at **Le Phenicien** in the harbor.
- During a leisurely stroll around the **Bass ruins** you can see the remains of a **Roman cemetery** (necropolis) with several freestanding stone tombs, a **Roman triumphal arch, bathhouse**, aqueduct and street and a **Byzantine mosaic floor** from an ancient church. **Tyre's hippodrome**, of which a significant amount survives, is unique in being built of stone instead of the more usual brick. It could seat 20,000 spectators.
- Watch the sunset at the **city's nature reserve** and **golden beach**.
- Dinner must be by the sea at **Cloud 59**, one of **Al Chawakir Khiam**, or **Al Jamal** cafes and restaurants before heading just south of Tyre for an overnight at the **Orange House, Al Yasmine** Guest House or **Two Rooms**.

Day 2 visit **Bourak Ras El Ain** (6 km south of Tyre). The wells have been a source of water since Phoenician times.

- Then to the reported tomb of **King Ahiram** (Hiram) 970-936 BC, contemporary of King David, who sent cedar and craftsmen to help build King Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. It is located on the road to Qana El-Jaleel, 6 km southeast of Tyre.
- Which brings on the way to **Qana** and the **Gallery of Lebanese modern artist Moussa Tiba**, who spends his time between Lebanon and France, is in a private mansion so call 07430149 before going. Christ is said to have performed his first miracle in Qana that of turning water into wine. Although there is controversy as to which Qana this was, stone basins can be seen here. To the north of the town is the **Cave of Qana**, where early stone sculptures are thought to depict a group of 13 people (Christ and his disciples).
- Have lunch in the picturesque town of Tibnine at **Al Kashef Resthouse** (Estiraha) 03 697107
- End the day by visiting **Tibnine Castle**. Prince Hugh of Saint Omer, the governor of Tiberias built the Crusader Castle in the year 1105 to prepare for the siege of Tyre but it was later conquered by Saladin in 1187 and then taken back by the Franks in 1229. Mamluke Sultan Al-Zahir Baibars of Egypt finally conquered it in 1266 and it's been in Arab hands ever since.

Contacts at a glance

Al Fanar 07 740111

Hotel, pub and restaurant on the sea by the lighthouse
alfanarresort.com

Orange House 07 320063

A B&B and conservation project in Mansourieh Village, 15km south of Tyre, non-Lebanese need to get passes from the Lebanese army to be able to get to the B&B. orangehouseproject.com

Tyre Rest House 07 742000

A sprawling hotel, right on Tyre's golden sands, that has its own beach and swimming pool. resthouse-tyr.com.lb

Al Yasmine Guest House 03 372388

A new luxury B&B with swimming pool just opened in Maaliye beyond Tyre. yasmineguesthouse.com

Two Rooms 03 218624

Just what it says, a two room B&B on the beach just south of Tyre.

Cloud 59 03 517996

Hut 59 on Tyre beach open only in summer is good for lunch or dinner.

Al Jammal

A group of cafes and restaurants on the sea opposite the Mina ruins where you can take your own fish.

Le Phenicien 07 740564 / 07 741562

Restaurant in the old harbor famed for its fish mezze.

A leisurely stroll around the modern



Old Port



Lighthouse



Al Mina Archaeological Site



Fresh baked bread



Rest House Hotel



city of Tyre and its ancient sites



Beach



Triumphal Arch



Romain & Byzantine remains



Hippodrome



Turtles



Nature & Nurture

Businesses are beginning to understand the importance of taking part in activity days to develop stronger relationships within their teams. Where better to do this than in nature!



It has been found that paying your employees to participate in a team building activity or day away from the office environment can dramatically increase the whole team's productivity and ability to work well together. The most popular form of team building activity is the outdoor team building days.

Team building should not to be confused with team recreation. Team building brings a certain group of people together, through activities and games, for the purpose of solidifying their bonds, be they professional, educational or spiritual. There is a growing need for such retreats as team members not getting along with each other and working amidst tensions is a recurring problem that affects numerous companies worldwide.

Whilst the team members are busy enjoying themselves doing a whole host of activities such as treasure hunts, abseiling, canoeing, raft building and high rope challenges, they will also be bonding and learning to work as a team to achieve something. Although it may look like just fun and games, there are some important lessons being learnt which can then be transferred back to the office. It provides the team members with a topic of conversation and therefore something they have in common, which is a great basis for further developing their relationships.

Within a team of colleagues, the most challenging starting point is to 'break the ice' between them or introduce a new member to an established team. In an office environment it can be even more complicated to do thus providing the perfect opportunity to partake in an outdoor building day.

So, team-building activities are designed, and often personalized, to enhance a team's performance to get the best out of them. They encourage team members to trust each other and to be inter-reliant. Some activities, even used as ice breakers, increase productivity, motivation and commitment, as well as individual and group enhanced performance, by pushing the team members to depend on each other in order to win or succeed.

The activities are designed to allow the team members to communicate more effectively, set a certain goal and do all they can to reach it together, using problem solving techniques while having fun. It is important to first identify the main managerial goal or what the corporation is trying to obtain from its staff, and create a theme for the activities accordingly. The event is thus tailor-made and can prove to be more effective.





It also helps that the activities undertaken are really exciting and usually something most people have never done before which brings out peoples personality and helps conquer fear:

Once the **task** has been **achieved**, there is a great sense of **teamwork** and it **helps** to **build** upon the participant's **confidence**.

By the end of a team-building day the relationship between the employees and employer will have improved as the team will feel rewarded for their efforts, and are therefore more likely to work harder for the company. By building this connection, the work place develops into a more enjoyable environment where personnel become more than just colleagues, they become partners and can count on each other.

The event can last for a day or more depending on the company's wishes. They can be organized anytime of the year since professionals who take into consideration the season, the region and the team prepare them. Using a specialist company is the recommended route for organizing such outdoor activity days due to the fact they will be able to provide all the necessary materials, equipment and safety procedures to follow.

There are many companies that run events like this so it is important to look around for one that is reputable. Some of the companies can also recommend the most suitable experience and activities for the outcome you wish to achieve. This is a great idea as they will be able to guide you into a bespoke team-building day suitable for your individual company. ■



Lebanon Adventure

Andre (03 360027)

Serge (03 214984)

Activities include hiking, rappelling, caving, etc.
lebanese-adventure.com

Esprit Nomade

Nidal (03 050583)

Activities include treasure hunts, orientation races, rally papers, etc.
esprit-nomade.com

Promax Sport

Camille (03 955642)

Activities include rafting, mountain biking, paintball, etc.
promaxsports.com

Exit to Nature

Alain (03 270592)

Activities include snowshoeing, igloo building, sheep leading, etc.
exittonature.com



Eco-museum of the Bekaa

Experience rural living, dating more than 2000 years back

With the progress of modernization and the destruction in mass of modest habitation built of stones and mud bricks, it has become necessary to find ways to preserve some of these traditional homes to save an important part of the culture, the economic, social and family organization of rural societies of the past. To promote this traditional heritage a Museum of Rural Life was created by the Lebanese National Heritage Foundation.

Curator and museum specialist, Juliana Khalaf, takes a look at this very different and interesting museum.

The Terbol Museum opened its doors to the public in 2004 primarily for the sake of preserving an icon of rural vernacular architecture, but also to keep the remnants of a traditional way of life from disappearing altogether. A simple mud-brick farmhouse in the village center, it withstood the test of time and eventually attracted the attention of the foundation, which decided to refurbish it and create a museum on the site.

The project's objectives to preserve this type of architecture and make visitors aware of the importance of this heritage sheds light on Lebanon's rural societies' cultural, economic, social and family organization. The museum is located near the municipality of Terbol, in the Zahlé region, in the heart of the Bekaa valley, at a distance of 45 km east of Beirut.

"It is about creating links between what we are and what we used to be, who we are and who we used to be," explains Jean-Marc Bonfils, the award-winning architect who worked on the rehabilitation of the original building. He was one of 10 volunteers who brought the project to fruition. "Nostalgia is a very powerful tool, and if used with an optimistic approach, it becomes something productive," he adds. The architectural roots of these houses can be traced back to antiquity. The technical know-how of building these adobe houses has become extinct. However, thanks to the surviving remnants privately owned by a family living in the region, this technique has been revived.

Located in a 2000 square meter field, the 150 square meter whitewashed mud structure, made out of sun-dried bricks coated with clay & marl, took over a year & cost around \$50,000 to restore. The roofing is constructed from wooden beams that are covered with reeds and tamped clay while all the columns are made of tree trunks.

L shaped, the house is divided in the traditional liwan, youk & tabout. Dating back more than 2,000 years, the liwan is essentially a covered terrace, supported by retaining walls, with a courtyard in front & is frequently seen in Bekaa households. The liwan is further divided into the living room or dar & the storage room, where grains were stocked for the winter season. The youk is equivalent of a closet for the mattresses & the tabout, the burial area.

The museum also displays a collection of regional ethnographical and historical agricultural tools. Keep in mind that the approximate time to tour the museum is one and a half to two hours.

One of the rooms is used as an audio-visual space where documentaries and videos are displayed to elaborate on the museum's history and architectural technique of the mud house. A visit to the boutique is well worth it as you may find traditional local produce and handicrafts, as well as books, post cards and CD-Roms on Lebanese architecture, agriculture, culture and regional traditions.

The visit would not be complete if you do not roam around the garden of this traditional rural home. Located where the original cowshed, stable and barn were, the garden tour offers a comprehensive study on the ancestral agricultural tradition.

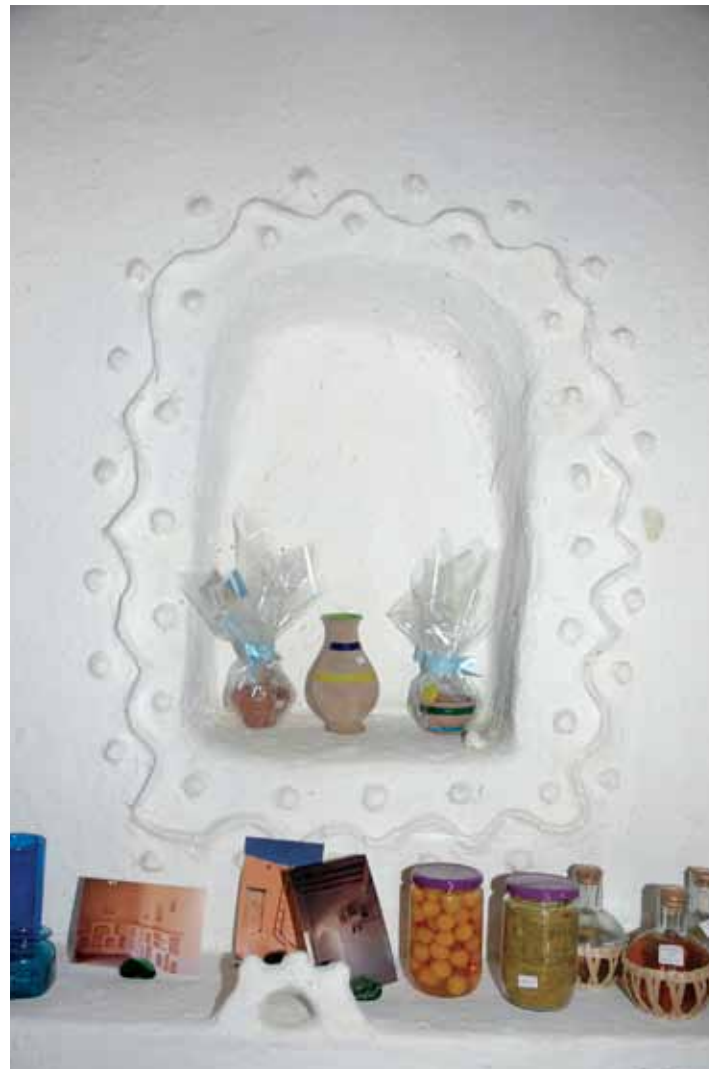


Photo courtesy of Houda Kassatly



Photo courtesy of Houda Kassatly

The garden is partitioned in a manner to guide visitors through the traditional crops and plants of the valley. Among the trees are poplars and junipers used to build the framework of the house. Other plants found in the garden are fruit trees and vines, vegetables, grains and herbs.

The museum is open from May to November, 10 am to 6 pm daily (closed on Mondays).

Entrance fee

Adults LL 3,000

Children LL 1,000

Schools are requested to contact the Secretariat of the National Heritage Foundation for special rates and guided tours.

What not to miss

Garden tour

Temporary exhibitions (contemporary and traditional art)
Traditional tannour baked bread sandwiches on sale at the cafeteria.

Museum shop

The Tannayel Eco-lodge (Arc en Ciel)

Outdoor activities in the area

The Kfar Zabad and Amiq wetlands, the numerous agricultural fields found in the valley, the various Bekaa vineyards, the Qaraoun Lake and, of course, archaeological sites such as Baalbeck, Anjar and Niha.

What to wear

Comfortable walking shoes

Hat and sunscreen



What to read

A recommended read is Lands of the Bekaa by Houda Kassatly, an anthropologist, ethnologist and photographer. Published by the National Heritage Foundation and Nayla Kettaneh Kunigk of the Espace Kettaneh Kunigk Art Gallery (Tanit), it offers a comprehensive study on traditional houses and dwellings throughout the Bekaa.

Experience traditional rural living!

Built in the same manner as the Terbol Museum, The Tannayel eco-lodge offers visitors the experience of living in these traditional adobe houses.

Address

Dalhamiye, Terbol, Lebanon

Contact

Jean Jabbour, a farmer who looks after the grounds of the museum, and his niece, Rita, who takes tourists around the museum.

Phone 05 455104 - fondnati@inco.com.lb ■



Abaya weaving stands the test of modernity



For centuries Bedouins and mountain shepherds wore the abaya. Now, thanks to the talent of enterprising designers this garment has made its way into the high fashion scene. Traditionally a man's square, generously cut outfit, the abaya served as cloak, blanket and coat. Today, hand woven abayas are as much a status symbol as they are worn to keep warm.

Among the many **traditional activities** still running throughout the country, **abaya making** is one of the most fascinating and time-honored, incorporating a **piece of history** in every one of its threads.

It is not common to find a traditional abaya weaver who still works the silk or wool the way our ancestors did. Nazih Baz grew up watching his grandfather make fabric and embroider it with silver and gold thread in the most captivating designs and

techniques. His village, Baadaran, is famed for its weaving and combination of design and style.

In 1979, Baz inherited the family business. He manufactures abayas and other textiles using the century-old loom that requires a special technique he learnt from his grandfather. Baz can use up to 24 pedals to operate the weaving machine. Concentration, patience and taste are the three main ingredients needed to create an ideal product. The exertion of this activity became more than just work to Baz, who defines it as "music where each twine has a note of its own".

Although he is a firm believer in maintaining tradition, Baz has started a creation of modern hand-made accessories such as wallets, cell phone cases, make up bags, jewelry boxes and more, designed for tourists as well as youngsters with reduced budgets. Baz also owns a family guesthouse in Baadaran that offers accommodation to mountain hikers who wish to discover the rich flora and fauna of the Shouf. ■

Nazih Baz 03 702944

Taking Art Beyond Beirut

With the summer festivals over, art-lovers found a new reason, other than the breezy and pleasant climate, to drive up to the mountainous city of Beiteddine. It was the Art Lounge's "Woman in Contemporary Arts" exhibition.

Although the exhibition just finished, the idea of taking art outside the capital, Beirut, that is especially interesting. There must be hundreds of interesting venues all over the country that would make great exhibition spaces.

The Art Lounge Beiteddine venue, once a silk factory that belonged to the family of Hala Khattar, was abandoned in the 1950s and re-stumbled upon two years ago when Belgian traveler and photographer Tom Schutyser was documenting the Caravanserai in the Levant. The space had not been used for over half a century.

It underwent innovative rehabilitation: The walls were re-painted, the corners were modishly refurbished, a cheeky bar was installed and various bookstands were erected, reconstructing the Art Lounge spirit.

Naturally, the first exhibition to be mounted on the new venue's walls was none other than Schutyser's "Caravanserai in the Levant," a photographic account of the roadside inns, which traditionally accommodated travelers and facilitated trade and relations between various regions and peoples throughout the Middle East and Central Asia.

Art Lounge used the space again this summer. More than 30 local and international artists exhibited their work. "Woman in Contemporary Arts" honored women without overly glorifying them. So let's hope this initiative will encourage other galleries to find alternative and interesting venues during the warm months, especially as summertime is usually a low period for exhibitions. ■

03 997676 - artlounge.net



All photos courtesy of Art Lounge

Mouneh

Defining the Craft of Preserving Food

Food writer Barbara Abdeni Massaad takes a closer look at this traditional method. Be sure to look out for local mouneh as you travel throughout the country.

The word Mouneh comes from the Arabic word mana, to store. In the past, especially in remote villages throughout Lebanon, mouneh was prepared during the harvest, the season of abundance. Fruit, vegetables, herbs, plants and all types of animal products were transformed into foods that could be safely kept for a certain period of time, usually a calendar year.

Today, the world has changed considerably. This, of course, does not mean that it is a positive change when it comes to food products. Through varying growing techniques, which in some cases causes major harm to our planet, products are now available all year long. In Lebanon, some continue to preserve, even without the urgent necessity of yesteryears. Farmers can avoid waste by selling off some of their bountiful harvest products. Some people stock up on mouneh to ensure food abundance in times of instability, while others maintain it as an important traditional aspect of our culinary heritage and feel the need to safeguard this family ritual.

The mouneh falls into different categories. Delicious jams, marmalades, molasses, syrups, and jellies are made to preserve fruits of the season. There are different techniques involved ranging from preserving whole fruit in syrup to developing highly concentrated liquids to make very thick molasses.

Vegetables are preserved in different ways. One way, involves the soaking of vegetables in a basic pickling solution made of water, salt, and vinegar. Highly reducing vegetables' water content to produce a thick paste is another alternative. Some vegetables are stuffed, and then preserved in extra virgin olive oil. Drying vegetables on a string in the sun was also a very common practice in the past.

Because of high consumption of olives and olive oil in the Lebanese diet, it is of utmost importance for a Lebanese family to have secured its share of olive oil for the family's yearly consumption. Olive oil is preserved in glass jars or in square-shaped steel containers away from light in a cool dry place.

Wild flowers, aromatic herbs, and wild edible plants are abundant. Families often plan field trips to spend a whole day at a specific area to pick nature's offerings. Aromatic herbs are dried and some are then ground.

Up until about the 1960's, in villages all around the country, a fat-tail sheep was force-fed for months before the cold winter. About mid September, the sheep was slaughtered and its byproduct would ultimately feed a family for a whole year. The traditional recipe for meat preservation called awarma calls for 1/3 meat and 2/3 fat. The fat is melted then the meat is added and cooked slowly over a low heat until it becomes tender. Today, awarma is still prepared, not so much for meat preservation, but for the exquisite and nostalgic taste that the recipe holds. It is very much appreciated in soups, pies, and is typically fried with eggs in a traditional fakr, a curricular pottery recipient.





Dairy products are also an important feature in making one's mouneh. In the past, lack of refrigeration made cow, goat, and sheep milk impossible to store. Thus, many recipes, which remain to be very popular and appreciated, were produced to preserve the abundance of milk. Different techniques including drying, preserving in oil, preserving in clay jars and in goatskin, and reduction have been created.

Grinding one's wheat to make bread is a common practice. Making paper-thin bread traditionally on a saj is an important aspect of mountain life. The authentic Lebanese bread maker will always keep wheat as an important part of his yearly preserves. Grinded wheat of different sizes is also preserved to be used in the most famous Lebanese recipes made with finely ground burghul.

Grains, seeds, and nuts are also important part of the staple Lebanese diet. Grains are made into savory stews and are very much part of weekly meal menus. Seeds and nuts are common in Lebanese recipes and one favorite is the pine nut, which is harvested in the winter to be put on rooftops during hot summer days.

Distilling and owning an alembic is typical of the mouneh producer. The most traditional recipes include distilling orange blossoms in April, rose petals in May, wild plants throughout the year, and fermented grapes at the end of the summer to make our national drink arak.

The mouneh is essential to preserve nature's abundance according to each season, naturally. This is why it is worth exploring. It is a base that one can build on to further local food production and it need not die and perish with technology and imported products which pollute our planet.



Mouneh
Preserving Foods
for the Lebanese
Pantry
Edition 2011

03 688258
barbaramassaad.com

What *mouneh* to look out for in each season

SPRING

March

pickling, cabbage, cauliflower, eryngo, green almonds, green thyme, green unripe plums, gundelia tumbleweed, akub, romaine lettuce

April

honey, blossoms, orange blossom flower harvest, loquats, peas, rosemary, sea fennel, jam, fruit syrups and marmalades, strawberries

May

artichokes, crabapples,

Damascus rose, garlic, green unripe walnuts, roasted green wheat.

SUMMER

June

drying fruit and vegetables, apricots, capers, cherries, chickpeas, fava beans, grape leaves, mint, onions, pine nuts, pine cones, watermelon, wild flowers, wild thyme

July

bell peppers, cucumbers, corn, green cherry tomatoes, green beans, green tomatoes, green

unripe grapes, Jew's mallow, marjoram, melon, mulberries, plums, sage, salt, wheat, wild cucumbers, zucchini.

August

basil, green hot peppers, lentils, okra, peaches, sesame seeds, sumac, sun-dried tomatoes.

AUTUMN

September

apples, beans, carob, eggplant, figs, green olives, raisins, red peppers, walnuts, preserving meat the traditional Lebanese way

October

bay leaves, black olives, dates, grapes, myrtle, pears, pomegranates, tomatoes

November

beetroot, grapes, quince, pumpkin

WINTER

December

carrots, grapefruits, turnips

January

mandarin February bitter orange, lemon. ■



Sweet & good for you





Fadi Abi Sleiman is a chemist and an apiculturist, and on top of it all he is a man who believes in his country's natural resources, especially honey.

Throughout history, honey has been linked to health, beauty and healing. Egyptians sacrificed honey by the tons to their river gods, while Roman legions slathered honey on the wounds as a natural cure to promote healing; and medieval lords reserved honey for their private use. It is also told that the body of Alexander the Great was preserved and embalmed with honey; and it is known that Cleopatra used honey and milk on her skin and hair.

Only the wealthy could afford to use honey since back then it was considered a product of luxury. Honey has been known for its properties and abilities to not only sweeten our tea and taste buds but also heal our wounds and purify our skin. It is believed that the discovery of honey dates as far back as 10 to 20 million years ago and the practice of beekeeping to at least 700 BC.

Although nowadays we possess medicine & skin care products by the billion, there's a tendency to opt for the natural & what better product for the body than honey?



Honey is primarily known for its moisturizing effect, as it has the ability to attract and retain humidity in the skin, rebuilding its necessary moisture level without leaving it oily. It is rich in antioxidants and anti-microbial properties that help protect the skin from the sun and its dreaded UV rays. It also rejuvenates and refreshes tired skin, leaving it soft, moist and radiant. Moreover, one of the most common natural skin care benefits of honey is the treatment of minor acne, where honey absorbs impurities from the skin's pores, which makes it an ideal cleansing agent.

The benefit of honey is promoted through products such as shampoo, soap or lotion, as more and more contain honey. Regardless of their price, their country of production or their properties, most of these products however contain a minimal amount of honey and a lot of chemicals, which somewhat reduces the level of trust in the capacities of honey.

Abi Sleiman's 15 years of research have resulted in a new technique that combines floral essence, herbs and mostly honey, without any chemicals, to create cosmetic products that are 100% natural.

Honey Herbs, his brand, consists of a wide range of products varying from soaps to lotions and are designed for everyone. Abi Sleiman's products contain over 30% of pure honey, royal jelly, pollen or wax, produced and collected from his own beehives.

Abi Sleiman distills, mixes and creates in machines that were designed by him. His passion for the bees and what they can produce has brought him to the idea of creating a line of products including facial, hair and body care. He even created a shaving care line for men.

All cultivated, picked, distilled and manufactured in Lebanon, Honey Herbs produce 100% natural and local products with the main goal of orienting the population towards healthier hygiene and a way of life by making the best out of what nature gives us, according to Abi Sleiman. ■

Fadi Abi Sleiman 03 737265





Singing, dancing & food galore

Rural Lebanese weddings can offer visitors from abroad an amazing insight into the country's deep-rooted traditions.

What better way to get to know a country than discovering its wedding traditions? You may think that a Lebanese wedding is like any other wedding, but anyone who has ever attended one in the rural villages, far removed from the glitz of Beirut hotel ballrooms, will assure you that the enthusiasm and festive atmosphere is simply amazing.

The Lebanese are well known for their love of good food, lively music and exotic dancing and every wedding celebration in the country certainly offers this to guests.

While Lebanese couples tie the knot along the lines of a Western-inspired white wedding – the bride wears a white wedding gown and the groom a black suit or a tuxedo, regardless of confession - there are still some age-old wedding customs that are upheld.

Lebanon's northern **Akkar** region has some unique and fascinating wedding traditions. The celebrations often begin as early as 8 am on the day of the wedding when the groom arrives at the brides' home with his parents and relatives in tow.

The **whole village** is invited to share an elaborate breakfast, and even **total strangers** passing by are invited to join in. At noon a huge lunch of **regional specialties** is served up, each dish homemade by the **female family members**.

After lunch the groom takes his bride and goes back to his parent's home where they continue celebrations until dusk. The groom's party is marked by the presence of a senior family member or religious leader who talks about the importance of marriage, its meaning and the value of a long relationship.

The whole village community then gathers at a public space, where the party gets into full swing with music and dancing.

Folkloric moves and belly dancing

In the mountain village of **Tannorine** the families of both the bride and groom gather at the home of the bride a few hours before the wedding and the groom's parents shower her with gifts of jewelry.

Men in traditional dress playing drums and horns walk her to the church. Or if the church is too far away, then the bride is driven to the wedding in a car decorated with flowers and ribbons, accompanied by a noisy parade of honking cars.

The groom meets her outside the church and his male friends encircle the couple while female relatives let out a string of high-pitched trills. Some of the local men may even perform traditional dances waving fierce looking swords. After the wedding ceremony a reception takes place often in the church courtyard or hall.

The married couple is received by the *zaffe*, a group of belly dancers and drummers, who surround the bride and groom and invite them to the *dabke*, a traditional Arabic folk dance, similar to line dancing.

Family and friends recite poems related to the couple's happiness & fortune; the mother of the groom may say something like ' we took you from the house of the minister to the king's palace', meaning that she will now lead a better life.

If there is a seated wedding reception with a formal dinner the bride and groom are seated alone, facing their guests, where they toast with champagne or juice. They have the first dance after which the other wedding guests join in and the friends of the groom lift the couple onto their shoulders, sometimes even tossing them boisterously into the air.



After the wedding the groom and bride are led home. Family and friends will have pasted the khamire, a mixture of flour and water, all over the front door and the guests are invited to stick on wads of money.

Money, money, money

Lebanon's deep **South** also has some amusing traditions of its own. On the day before the wedding the bride receives a special treatment from her friends and family; she is washed & gets a body wax, with a sugar and lemon paste, to be ready for her wedding night.

In the evening, the family of the groom pays her a visit and pretend to kidnap her, a sort of elopement game and they try to 'steal' some of her belongings, maybe a pair of shoes or a dress.

On the day of the wedding, the **groom's friends** take him to be **shaved** and **dressed**, sometimes outdoors in the public eye **under an olive tree**, all the time **singing** traditional songs.

The groom's family then goes to collect the bride. To prove the family's valor, strength and ability to take care of his wife, a member of the groom's family has to lift a heavy cylinder stone, the mahdaleee.

Before the **bride** is taken to the wedding ceremony a **village elder** presents her family and guests with a **cloth**. He starts with the bride's father and **invites** everyone to **hand over money** for the couple, loudly **shouting** out the given amount, encouraging a **competitive edge**. This **tradition** is known as the **shawbashee**.

In the **Bekaa** region the female Bedouin population often begin celebrations days ahead of the wedding preparing piles of food including tannour bread and kibbe, a spicy ground meat eaten raw.

The atmosphere is festive with lots of singing and in the past guests brought sacks of flour or sugar with them as gifts; these days money is a lot more welcome.

So, if you visit Lebanon keep an eye out for weddings. They take place nearly every weekend in the rural villages and if you are passing through don't turn down an invitation to join in the celebrations. Eat, dance, celebrate and cheer the happy couple ... and hopefully they will live happily ever after. ■



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Airport

Rafic Hariri International Airport

Tel 01 628000

The only international airport in the country, its website is extremely well organized and is updated every 10 minutes with the latest arrival and departure times, delays and cancellations. Certified airport taxis (with the airport logo on the side) are available for a fixed rate. However, you can bargain with other taxi drivers for a lower rate. You should be at the airport 2 hours prior to your flight.

beirutairport.gov.lb

Banks

Banks cashiers are normally open between 8am and 2pm from Monday to Friday, and until noon on Saturday. Most banks open longer hours for transactions that are not cash.

Bus Routes

Inside Beirut

Bus 1

Hamra to Khalde

Begins on Sadat Str and passes by Emile Edde (better known as Lion) Str, the Bristol Hotel, Verdun, Cola, the Airport and Kafaat before reaching its final destination in Khalde.

Bus 2

Hamra to Antelias

Begins by the gas station next to Barbar on Emile Edde Str and passes by Radio Lebanon, Sassine Square, Mar Mikhael, Borj Hammoud and Dora before finally arriving in Antelias.

Bus 5

Ain El Mreisseh to Hay As-Saloum

Begins in Manara on General De Gaulle Ave, and continues south, passing through

Verdun, Tariq Al Jdideh, Bourj al Barajneh and the Airport before finally ending in Hay As-Saloum.

Bus 6

Cola to Byblos

Begins in Wata at Cola and continues northeast passing through Dora, Antelias, Zalka, Kaslik, Jounieh and finally ending in Jbeil (Byblos).

Bus 7

Badaro to Bharssaf

Beginning near the National Museum (Matahaf) in Badaro, this bus travels east through Beit Mery, Broumana, and Baabdat before finally arriving in Bharssaf.

Bus 8

Hamra to Ain Saadeh

Begins at AUH and then passes through Mar Elias, Becharra el Khoury, Sassine Square, Karam el Zeitoun, Bourj Hammoud, and Jdeideh before finally ending in Ain Saadeh.

Bus 9

Barbir to Nahr el Mot

Begins in Barbir and continues through Fum el Chebbak, Sin el Fil, Habtoor, Salloume, Dekwaneh, Sabtieh and Mar Taklah before finally ending at Nahr el Mot.

Bus 12

Burj Al Barajneh to Hamra

Begins in Burj Al Barajneh and continues through Haret Harek, Ghobeiri, Chiah, Sabra & Chatila, Cola, Salim Salam Str and by the Bristol Hotel before finally ending in Hamra at AUH.

Bus 15

Cola to Aley

Begins at Cola and continues through Bir Hassan, Mar Mikhael Church and Hazmieh, before finally ending in Aley.

Currency

The national currency is the Lebanese Lira. 1.00 US dollar is equivalent to approximately LL 1,500. The US dollar is accepted almost everywhere. International bankcards are accepted in most places look out for signs. Foreign currency is easily exchanged. Banks, ATMs and exchange bureaus can be found in main cities and towns.

Driving

It is easy to rent a car if you have a valid Lebanese or international driving license

Parking

Public parking lots are available around the city and either charge a set fee or by the hour, at rates that typically range from LL2,000 to LL5,000. Another option, is to take advantage of valet services available at almost every bar and restaurant in the city, which usually cost around LL5,000 or LL7,000 if you're parking at a hotel.

Regulations

You must have a fire extinguisher in the car; you must wear your seatbelt at all times and you must always carry your mandatory government insurance, car insurance, car registration and driver's license with you at all times when driving.

Electricity

The two-pin rectangular plug system is used and adapters are easy to find. Most areas have at least a three hour power cut per day, with areas outside the capital having more. Almost all establishments have generators automatically set to operate so the power cut will only last a minute or two.

Tipping

Gratuities are usually in the region of 10 - 15%. As a rule, taxi drivers do not expect a tip, porters \$1.00 per piece of luggage and restaurants 10% of the bill.

Transport

Outside Beirut

Buses leaving from here will take you to destinations north of Beirut. You can also catch a taxi or service to Damascus from here. Be prepared to wait for the bus or service to fill up before they depart.

Cola

Packed with buses, taxis and services that will take you to destinations south of Beirut.

Dora

An intersection for services to the north, buses stop here too. You can get to Dora by service or van from the beginning of the highway by the port.

Services (taxis that go along certain routes and take up to 5 people, LL2,000 each), street taxis (LL10,000 - 12,000), vans (LL1,000) and private buses (LL1,000).

Prices are correct at time of going to press and for inside Beirut.

Useful Numbers

01 449557 Beyond Beirut
beyondbeirut.com
 01 340940 Ministry of Tourism
lebanon-tourism.gov.lb
 00961 International Code
 112/999 Internal Security
 125 Civil Defense
 140 Red Cross
 175 Fire Department
 120 Directory
 1155 OGERO Directory
 1718 Weather



Recipes



Kitchen



Drinks



Accessories



Restaurants

Look out for the new issue of Taste & flavors



at a bookstore near you in November

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