

# Lebanon Traveler

A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut - Issue 3 June - August 2012

**& Rafting  
& Kayaking**

**10 MUST VISIT  
IN EHDEN**

**Tour 14 wineries**

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# Construction has now set sail

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It is official, the construction has set sail. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, the ground breaking of Waterfront City marked the rise of a new community offering unparalleled living experience.

This initial phase will include state-of-the-art residential buildings with 350 apartments, 32 retail and F&B outlets, a health club, green parks, over 1000 parking spots and a marina front boardwalk. Residents will enjoy a pleasant living environment in a unique community by the sea.

To mark this much anticipated milestone, Waterfront City is introducing two new residential Promenade buildings situated 10 meters above the marina level offering breathtaking views of the Mediterranean.

Join us on this magnificent journey as we build a city where you can live like never before.

# Lebanon Traveler

## unveils Lebanon's hidden treasures



Lebanon Traveler is one year old! And what a glorious year it has been. During this time the magazine, a quarterly, has been finding its feet and getting to know its readers. We have traveled the width and breadth of the country, meeting people along the way and discovering Lebanon's hidden gems. It has been an exhilarating and exciting experience. And the more we see, the more we find there is to see.

With the encouragement of the country's Minister of Tourism, Fadi Abboud, the Lebanon Traveler team promises to continue working on effective tourism marketing strategies for areas outside of Beirut, keeping in mind its readership: Lebanese wanting to explore their country, the Lebanese diaspora excited about getting to know their homeland and tourists from abroad longing to discover this little country with such a wide diversity.



Each issue of Lebanon Traveler is dedicated to understanding the essence of tourism, promoting regions outside Beirut, elevating Lebanese cuisine, encouraging locals to work towards developing their areas, and creating a society that wants to belong there.

The magazine aims to grab the traveler's attention, generate interest, inspire desire and motivate them to take action. To succeed, Lebanon Traveler will be calling on all who can help and benefit from these actions to cooperate and assist us to attain these objectives.



Whether you are a resident or joining us from abroad, we hope that each issue has done its part in enriching your stay in the country. There are many more secrets left uncovered and we know with all certainty that Lebanon Traveler will help us discover them together. We thank all those who have made this year a tremendous success!



*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](mailto:info@lebanontraveler.com)*

*The Lebanon Traveler team*

# Lebanon Traveler

A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut

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## June 2012

READERS EXPERIENCE.....p.07  
 RESPONSIBLE TOURISM.....p.08  
 FOCUS ON.....p.12  
 A DAY WITH.....p.18  
 HIDDEN GEMS.....p.23  
 OUTDOORS.....p.28  
 TAKE ME THERE.....p.36  
 INDOORS.....p.38  
 TOURING LEBANON.....p.40  
 MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE.....p.44  
 GOING TO THE SOURCE.....p.48  
 GASTRONOMY.....p.50  
 CAMPING.....p.52  
 SUMMER CAMP.....p.54  
 CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS.....p.58  
 FESTIVALS.....p.60  
 FOR YOUR INFO.....p.62

### 38

Discover what wild flowers you can see while taking a walk through the countryside this summer..



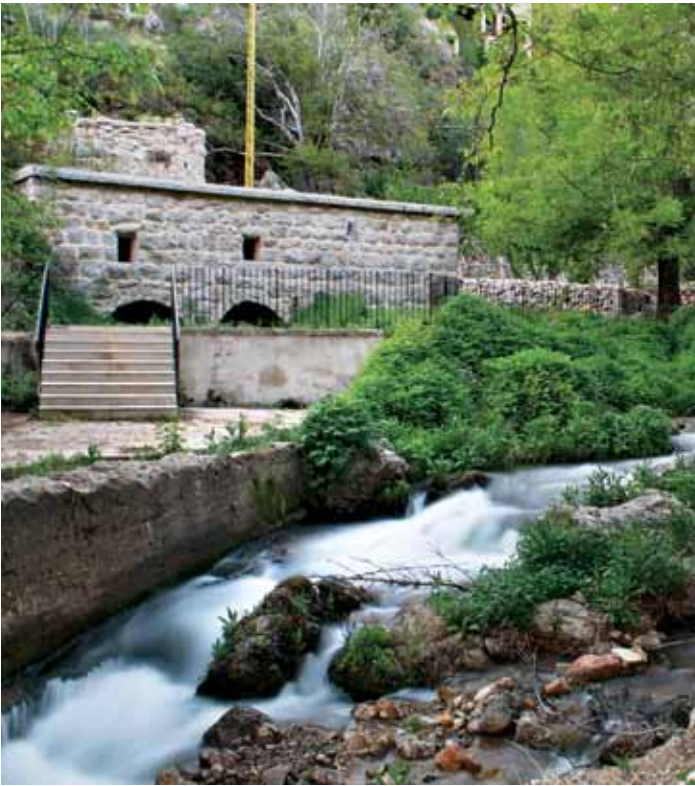
### 12

Ehden's full of great destinations for visitors and residents alike! Here are ten ways to spend a weekend at this quaint picturesque town...



# 23

Lebanon is full of hidden treasures. This one is not just a gem, it will also transport you back in time...



# 48

Did you know that pottery is still made totally by hand without even using a kiln...

# 60

Come to the festival and stay for the weekend. Your guide to Lebanon's summer festivals...



# 44

Pamper your clients with a relaxing day at the beach. Or pump up the volume at a beach party along the coast...



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Sustainability  a bright future.



# e Loryne Atoui

June 2012

## No frills or fuss Just a whole lot of personality



"Just ask for Maguy" was what I had to go by on my quest for a quaint eatery, rumored to serve the best seafood in Batroun. I was intrigued. And sure enough, that really was all I needed to find it. Everyone in the coastal village knows Chez Maguy's and some of the friendly locals will even accompany you there if you're not from town.

Follow the winding roads within Batroun's old port town and you'll find a brightly colored wooden shack, nestled between a public beach and an ancient Roman ruin. Rather than your typical Lebanese seafood restaurant with crowded tables, an impatient staff, and often blaring Arabic music, Maguy's is quite the opposite. It doesn't promise to offer you anything more than exactly what it is: a small home on the coast turned restaurant that serves the catch of the day, with no frills or fuss, just a whole lot of personality.

Visting Chez Maguy's is a unique experience in and of itself, accentuated by the creative use of recycled furniture. Rarely will two chairs actually match and you'll find quirky decor items (like plastic flowers or souvenir shot glasses) scattered throughout, but somehow it works. The whole mixing and matching approach is even evident in the shack's construction. Engineers will marvel at how, against all odds, it is still standing.

Maguy herself is quite a character as well - a boisterous, chatty one at that. That deep-hearted laugh you're hearing in the background is probably her, joking around with the staff, as she jumps between the kitchen and the grill, to serve guests. You'll often find her in a swimsuit ready for a quick dive when the weather gets too hot. Don't be shy to bring yours as well. For an insider's story, ask her about "the turtle".

The restaurant is very personal in all these little ways, and for guests, it almost feels as if someone has invited you over to have a bite to eat in their home. Well, that is if their home served fresh grilled fish, assorted seafood platters and Lebanese mezza daily. Top this off with a cup of refreshing tea as the sun sets on the horizon or an afternoon dip and you'll understand what makes Chez Maguy's so appealing to both locals and tourists alike.

It's certainly what keeps me going back time and again. Needless to say, the rumors about the food were completely true and it's become one of my favorite places to visit when I need an escape from the city, or have friends visiting from abroad. For reservations, call Maguy on +961 3 439147. Book early in July or August as it gets pretty packed.

Follow Loryne Atoui on [www.ifthebagfits.com](http://www.ifthebagfits.com)

**Share your nature experience with us and let others learn by writing to [readersexperiences@lebanontraveler.com](mailto:readersexperiences@lebanontraveler.com) ■**



Photos courtesy of Loryne Atoui

# Local guides via the web

Imagine a journey where Lebanon's most wonderful hidden treasures are revealed. Imagine stopping every now and then to appreciate true beauty, to learn about the land's history, heritage and culture through the compelling stories of an elderly villager, through the intriguing craft of an artisan or through the taste of a traditional homemade dish. This is real tourism with a twist! And, it's exactly what Tourtwist thrives on.



Christina El-Hayek takes a look at Tourtwist, a new social platform aimed at offering tourists, both foreign and Lebanese, the opportunity to identify and connect with locals. Visits to Lebanon are instantly customized and vacations turn into unique cultural experiences. The local Lebanese population will thus be granted the chance to create tours in their beloved hometowns, and provide insider access to some of the most hidden gems that they alone are best equipped to introduce.

How does Tourtwist work? Locals create their own profiles on the platform, in which they list their passions, skills, and knowledge, and by doing so they become one of the many other local guides, eager to unveil the beauty of their hometowns to tourists.

Additionally, a rating system will be incorporated and potential tourists will be able to select their own local guide, based on multiple filters such as languages spoken, tour types, prices, most recommended sites, regions, etc... Videos and testimonials will be available on the website, as well as unique content about untapped towns, in a bid to offer tourists the most genuine and personal tourism experience.

In fact, Tourtwist itself was created from a personal tourism experience. Aware of the fact that 84% of all tourism receipts are spent within Beirut, and having witnessed some of the neglected natural beauties beyond the capital, Tourtwist founders Pierre Daher, Pascale Baaklini, Jessica Abou Haydar and Ghady Felfleh came up with this project in an effort to decentralize part of the tourism industry. As passionate Lebanese entrepreneurs and travel adepts, they have set their hearts on boosting development in rural areas – in about 1,648 towns and villages – by providing job opportunities and increased economic turnover.

Tourtwist has won the Keep Walking Project in 2012 as the best Social Entrepreneurship Initiative and was the winner of the Maurice Fadel Prize in 2011. Tourtwist strives to inspire and support young people in creating a positive impact on the development of their hometowns and local economy, to protect and develop endangered local cultures and crafts.

In other words, responsible tourism is at the core of Tourtwist's business. The expected social impact is directly in line with the pillars agreed upon in the 2002 Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism. They include, generating greater economic benefits for local people, enhancing the wellbeing of host communities, providing enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with locals, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues.

The dispersion of local guides around the country will help in sustaining small businesses in villages and provide a much-needed injection of economic activity to rural areas.

Tourtwist capitalizes on its collaboration with prominent local partners such as Beyond Beirut. Also, the online platform is developed through a strategic partnership with Keeward, a company that specializes in the intersection of culture and technology. It is a perfect fit for the project, since Keeward brings years of international experience to the platform's benefit.



Photo courtesy of Pascale Baaklini

Tourtwist could not ask for a more fertile ground to flourish in, given its location in a country of tourism par excellence, with consumers who are taking increasing control over their travel arrangements and demanding more unusual holiday experiences.

Tourtwist launches in July of 2012, with plans on scaling internationally after testing the model domestically. Now that summer is on our doorstep, don't settle for a typical organized tour in conventional areas. You might as well seek or offer your own local tour twists and make the best of your experience.

**[tourtwist.com](http://tourtwist.com)**  
**[facebook.com/tourtwist](https://facebook.com/tourtwist)** ■

# Sustainable tourism in South Lebanon

Since 2002 Lebanon's Ministry of Tourism has shown an increasing interest in the development and promotion of responsible tourism throughout the country.

A workshop held recently in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre, reinforced the ministry's notion of tourism as a fundamental sector for the country's economic future, while raising awareness of responsible eco-tourism in the framework of green economy and sustainable development.

Organized by ESCWA in collaboration with UNIFIL and Union of Tyre Region Municipalities, the workshop tackled the challenges

facing the development of responsible eco-tourism in south Lebanon, as well as what the south itself can do in terms of tourism promotion, marketing and development to and within the region. The participants also discussed future steps that should be taken, including options for a regional action plan, a mapping exercise of potential facilities and gaps related to responsible eco-tourism, and the accessibility of funds to promote and develop such projects and concepts.

The ministry emphasized the role of eco-tourism in South Lebanon and the many opportunities it could bring to the local society and the region's economy. Tyre boasts a rich historical heritage, as well as archaeological treasures that a great number of travelers have visited over centuries. The region has great potential for the promotion of cultural tourism, as well as religious tourism especially when the significant number of Christian and Muslim sanctuaries and relics it possesses are taken into account. Over the years, ESCWA has been involved in a number of activities at the regional and national level, promoting Green Economy and Sustainable Development approaches to socio-economic development in member countries, while UNIFIL actively cooperates with local municipalities and NGOs, supporting a number of small-scale projects, including Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), which contribute to an improved environment. ■



Photos courtesy of Zeina Haddad



  
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# 10 things to do in Ehden

Ehden's full of great destinations for visitors and residents alike! Here are ten ways to spend a weekend at this quaint picturesque town.

Photos courtesy of Alexy Frangieh



## 1. Enjoy nature

Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve located in North Lebanon, is a diverse and beautiful remnant of cedar forests, making the reserve a very important part of the country's cultural and natural heritage. Located on the northwestern slopes of Mount Lebanon and surrounded by mist and relatively high precipitation, the reserve has a multitude of rare and endemic plants that flourish in it.

A mixed forest of juniper, fir and the country's last protected community of wild apple trees, border patches of cedar. A number of water sources can be found in Horsh Ehden, the most important of which are Ain Al-Naasa, Nabaa Jouit and Ain Al-Baiada. During a peaceful hike through the forest, lucky visitors might spot an endangered Eastern Imperial Eagle or Bonelli's Eagle, a gray wolf, or a wildcat. The reserve's beautiful valleys and gorges, with their wild orchids, brightly colored salamanders, mushrooms, and other flora and fauna, are sure to soothe even the most anxious visitor.

The remote wilderness of parts of Horsh Ehden and of the adjacent mountain areas provides the ideal setting for walks and other outdoor activities.

Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve  
+961 6 560590 +961 70 601601

## 2. Know its heroes

Yousef Bek Karam (May 5, 1823 – April 7, 1889), whose statue can be seen in front of the St. Georges church, was a Lebanese leader who led the nationalist effort against the Ottoman Empire. He was an early advocate of forming a united world assembly that would protect the rights of small nations. He was also a champion of human rights, justice and freedom. He fought against tyranny, human rights abuses and social discrimination. Due to his high ethical standards, he refused to live the life of opulence and luxury.

Another local hero is Patriarch Estephan II Boutros El Douaihy. He was the Patriarch of the Maronite Church from 1670 to 1704 and is considered one of the major Lebanese historians of the 17th century. Douaihy strongly believed in the social importance of education and science. He pursued a successful policy of sending as many Maronites to Rome as possible, in order for them to return to their villages and raise the level of education. Douaihy established a college in Aleppo, which became the basis for the development of renewed monastic orders.



## 3. Tour the churches

St. Sarkis Monastery overlooks Ehden, Kfarsghab, Bane and Hadath El Jebbeh. Given its exceptional location commanding the valley at 1500 meters altitude, the monastery is called the Watchful Eye of Qadisha. It is dedicated to Saints Sarkis and Bakhos (Saints Sergius and Bacchus). The monastery belongs to the Lebanese Antonin Maronite Order, a monastic order founded on August 15, 1700 by the Maronite Patriarch Gabriel Al Blouzani from Blaouza.

Among the many famous churches is Saint Mamas (Mar Mema), which is the oldest Maronite church in Lebanon, built in 749 CE on the remains of a pagan temple, while Sayidat Al Hosn, Church of Our Lady of the Fort, was built over the remains of a Crusader castle, hence the amazing view that it commands. Saint Moura was built in 1339 and witnessed the founding of the Lebanese Maronite Monastic Order in 1695. The cathedral of St. Georges, with its seven altars, houses the mausoleum of Yousef Bek Karam, while his statue and that of Gabriel Sionite stand in the courtyard.

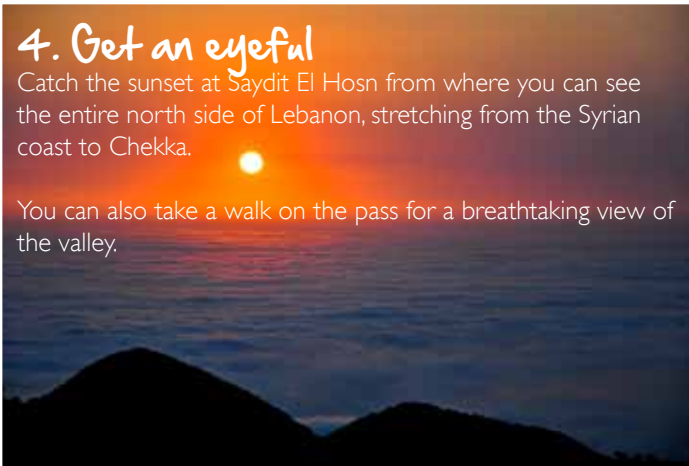
*Photo courtesy of Chafic Makary*



## 4. Get an eyeful

Catch the sunset at Saydit El Hosn from where you can see the entire north side of Lebanon, stretching from the Syrian coast to Chekka.

You can also take a walk on the pass for a breathtaking view of the valley.



## 5. Learn the history

The Monastery of St. Antonios Qozhaya is the birth place of the first printing press in the Middle East. Some historians believe it was built in 1584. Its first printed text is The Book of Psalms, which can actually be found at the library of the University of the Holy Spirit in Kaslik. It dates back to 1610. The Lebanese Maronite Order renovated the printing press at the start of the nineteenth century. Its activities were halted at the beginning of the 1860 war. It resumed printing in 1871, but stopped again at the beginning of World War II.



## 6. Take in the local culture

A trip to Ehden is not complete without a visit to Al Midan, a historic public square, surrounded by typical Lebanese architecture and filled with cafes, patisseries and restaurants. Al Midan is the place to be 24 hours a day. Take a stroll in the early morning and you can smell the Turkish coffee with cardamom. At noon have a leisurely lunch under the shade of the colored umbrellas. After a cup of tea, nibble on local sweets up at the pass. In the evening, the shisha smoke rises above the sound of merriment during dinner. Then, end the day with a sip of sahleb to warm you up.

## 7. Take a break

Sama Ehden has a whole series of activities for little ones, while Ehden Adventures and Ehden Mountain Activity are great for outdoor activities for adults such as; hiking, paragliding, rappelling, caving, etc... Kroum Ehden will open in July with a fun water park and beautiful gardens. Eleven luxury chalets with private lap pools and Jacuzzis set within a larger fun pool, offer overnight stays while day trips are also available in the garden. Look for musical and cultural events, as well as surprise pool parties.

**Sama Ehden +961 70 070095**

**Ehden Adventures +961 3 491493**

**Kroum Ehden +961 70 722502**

**Ehden Mountain Activity +961 3 754928**



## 8. Try the food

Vegetarians beware! This is the place for kibbeh. Try all the different kinds, from kibbeh nayye (raw meat) to kibbeh krass, the specialty of the region, which is basically grilled meat, shaped into a ball. Whether for lunch or dinner, one of the many outdoor restaurants specializing in Lebanese cuisine in Mar Sarkis, or on the pass with amazing views of the Qadisha Valley, will definitely offer a treat. One of the better known restaurants, Al Fardous has a great mountain view. However, there are many more traditional Lebanese restaurants to choose from. For something different try French cuisine at Pinch, with its marvelous view of apple and pear orchards.

**Al Fardous +961 6 560605**

**Al Wadi +961 6 560332**

**Adan +961 561332**

**Nabaa Jouit +961 3 751292**

**Pinch +961 3 823900**



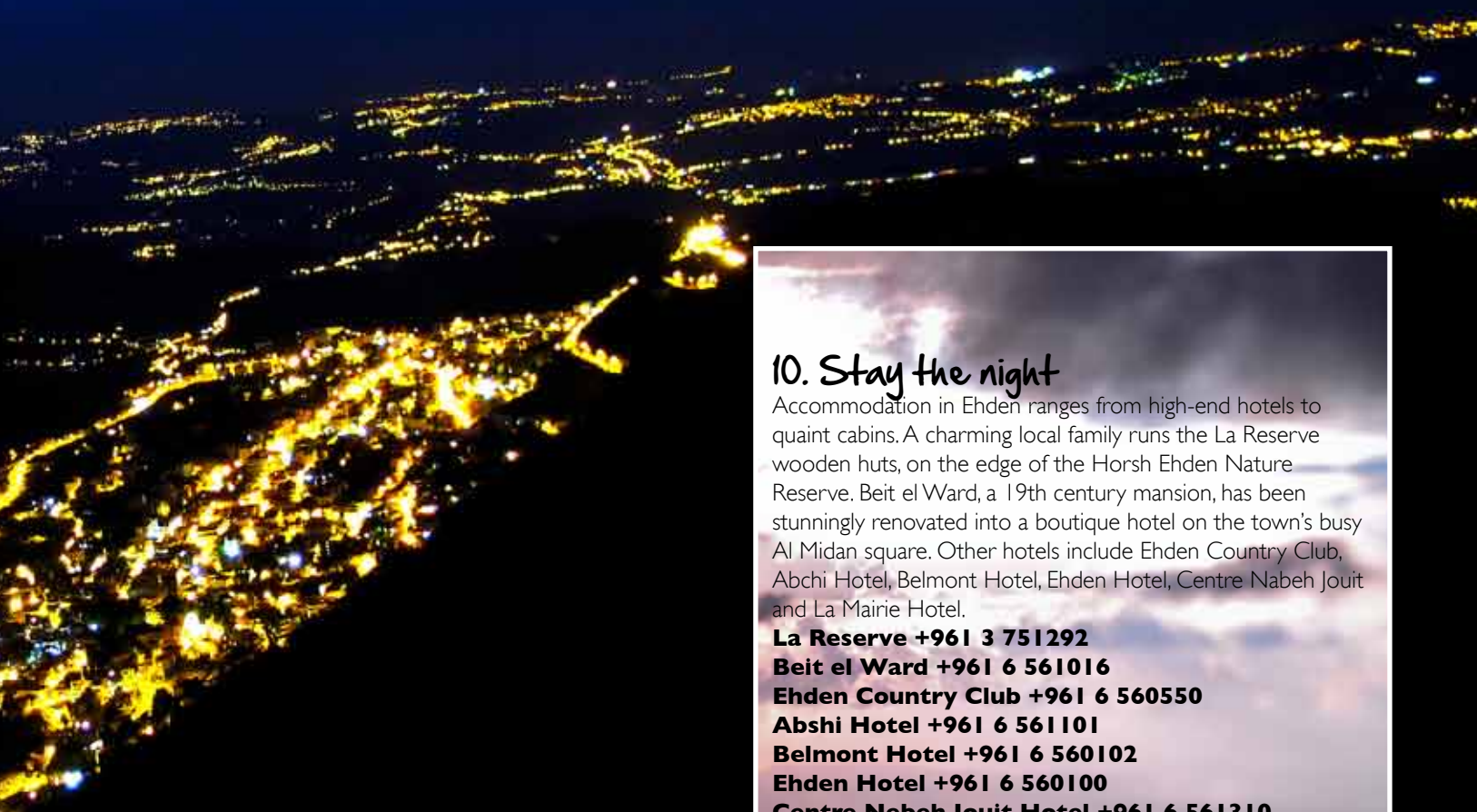
## 9. Join the festival

Summer in Lebanon is always fun-filled thanks to the number of local festivals in towns and villages throughout the country. With the Ehdeniyat International Festival 2012, hundreds of people are expected to flock to Ehden to enjoy its lively atmosphere and talented performers. The festival is representative of both the traditional and modern cultures found in Ehden.

**[ehdeniyat.com](http://ehdeniyat.com)**







## 10. Stay the night

Accommodation in Ehden ranges from high-end hotels to quaint cabins. A charming local family runs the La Reserve wooden huts, on the edge of the Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve. Beit el Ward, a 19th century mansion, has been stunningly renovated into a boutique hotel on the town's busy Al Midan square. Other hotels include Ehden Country Club, Abchi Hotel, Belmont Hotel, Ehden Hotel, Centre Nabej Jout and La Mairie Hotel.

**La Reserve +961 3 751292**

**Beit el Ward +961 6 561016**

**Ehden Country Club +961 6 560550**

**Abshi Hotel +961 6 561101**

**Belmont Hotel +961 6 560102**

**Ehden Hotel +961 6 560100**

**Centre Nabej Jout Hotel +961 6 561310**

**La Mairie Hotel +961 6 560108 ■**



# Time to harvest

The harvesting of wine grapes (vintage) is one of the most crucial steps in the process of winemaking.

The time of harvest is determined primarily by the ripeness of the grape as measured by sugar, acid and tannin levels. Winemakers base their decision to pick depending on the style of wine they wish to produce. The weather, which can damage the grapes and bring about various vine diseases, can also shape the timetable of harvesting. In addition to determining the time of the harvest, winemakers and vineyard owners must also determine whether to utilize hand pickers or mechanical harvesters.

Despite the costs, most wineries in Lebanon prefer the use of human workers to handpick grapes. The main advantage is the knowledge and discernment of the worker to pick only healthy bunches and the gentler handling of the grapes. The production of some dessert wines require that individual berries are picked from the botrytized bunches, which can only be done by hand.





Photo courtesy of Chateau Belle-Vie

The harvest season in Lebanon typically falls between August and October. Once the winemaker has defined the appropriate time for harvest, wineries invite friends and family to share the joy of picking the ripened grapes, and perhaps get a glimpse of the difficulty of winemaking.

### Pick your own grapes

Located in the fertile Bekaa Valley, Chateau St. Thomas vineyards are spread over 500,000sqm of land. When the time is right, wine lovers and harvesters get ready for many long days of bending in the sun, picking the ripened bunches. Since harvesting the grapes should be done in the early hours of the morning, the winery begins the harvest on a weekend. Wine lovers travel from all over and camp on location in order to be fresh and dynamic in the morning. After settling in, they mingle and gather for dinner under the stars, where wine and food flow in abundance.

Early in the morning, the grapes pickers wake up, if they'd slept at all, and gather for mass, which is meant to bless the harvest for a good vintage. This takes place in the chapel on the estate. When the owners were excavating, they fell upon a small underground cave, which they expanded to create a chapel dedicated to St. Thomas, whose name the family carries. Then, they're off to the vineyards. Experts give detailed instructions for harvesting and look over the process, which takes up to 2 to 3 hours.

If you are thinking of going grape picking, wear loose comfy clothes that will protect you from the sun and don't forget your hat. To stay overnight at Clos St. Thomas, camping gear is necessary.

**+961 8 500812/3**  
**closstthomas.com**

Clos de Cana in Ras el Harf, shares a similar harvesting process. During the months of September and October, weekends are reserved for amateur grape pickers who want to partake in the wine making process. Each harvester is given a pair of clippers to cut the grapes from the vine. The crops are then put in boxes. The process is not very complicated. Once the picking is over, workers take the yield to the wineries, where the amateur pickers can follow as well.

Grapes are first put in a stemmer that separates the stems from the fruits and then in a press that pours the juices into tanks for fermentation. Once the process is over, the workers of the day gather at the restaurant for a well-deserved barbecue and some good wine. For a single evening in the season, Clos de Cana goes back in time and juices the grapes the old-fashioned way, by having dancers stomp on the harvest. Enthusiasts can witness the process while enjoying a soiree of song, dance, food and wine.

**+961 3334353**  
**closdecana.com**

## Special treat with the winemaker

Chateau Ka offers wine tasting sessions with the winemaker, who will let you in on some of the secrets of their wine. Call ahead to book a session.

**+961 1 899888**  
**chateauka.com**

## Time in the vineyards

Enjoy a walk in the vineyards of Chateau Khoury and learn all about planting the vine. Educate yourself on their latest offerings during a wine tasting session.

**+961 3 075422**  
**chateaukhoury.com**

## Wine and sustainability

A visit to IXSIR is not simply about wine. Voted as one of the greenest buildings in the world by CNN, the winery is an example to follow when it comes to sustainable buildings and production. Later, you can delight in their wine...

**+961 9 210023**  
**ixsir.com.lb**

## Mixing gastronomy with wine

Le Télégraphe, the gastronomic restaurant at Château Belle Vue, features an outdoor grill and patio seating. After a hike in the winery, you can grab a bite and try out their wine range.

**+961 3 221205**  
**chateaubelle-vue.com**

## Lunch in the vineyards

Massaya's garden restaurant is located in the middle of the vineyard and serves, every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, a wonderful "buffet campagnard" of country style food, prepared by housewives from the neighboring villages. Daily guided tours of the winery and distillery followed by tasting are available from 8am till 4pm; reservation is a must for the restaurant.

**+961 8 510135 +961 3 744047**  
**massaya.com**

## Wine Tasting

Chateau Musar, one of the first wines to represent Lebanon on the international market, offers visits of the winery and tasting. The visit will take about 2 hours, which can be followed by lunch at the neighboring restaurants in Jounieh and Jbeil.

**+961 9 925056 + 961 9 925127 +961 9 926217**  
**chateaumusar.com.lb**

Chateau Qanafar describes their wine as "fruity, powerful yet complex, with oak restrained enough not to smother the subtlety of the fruit." You can evaluate for yourself during a wine tasting at the estate, offered upon reservation.

**+961 1 398782**  
**chateauqanafar.com**

Cave du Monastere Saint Jean in Khenchara has been producing sacramental wine since 1720, but it is only since 2006 that they

have begun producing wine of international standards. For a taste of ancient knowhow, call the winery and book an appointment.

**+961 3 203098**  
**cavesdumonasterestjean.com**

Domaine des Tourelles was the first commercial winery in Lebanon, since the others belonged to priests at the time and were not allowed to sell their products. The turrets of the estate inspired the name and it is not only known for its wine, but for a unique arak as well. As a special treat, ask for the orange liqueur and its famous chocolate shots.

**+ 961 8 540114 +961 3 805925**  
**domainedestourelles.com**

## Underground galleries

First founded in 1857 by Jesuit Priests, one of Ksara's distinctions is the subterranean gallery, dating back to the Roman period that was discovered by chance. Ksara stocks its oldest bottles there, as they benefit from constant temperature and humidity levels. Guided tours are available 7 days a week during the summer season. Treat yourself to cheese & wine at the winery's restaurant.

**+961 8 801662 +961 8 813495**  
**ksara.com.lb**

## Prehistory and wine

The entrance to a cave from the Paleolithic era was found by mistake in the vicinity of Karam Winery. After a visit to the cave that is accessible to the public, hop on to the winery for lunch and dinner upon request.

**Reservations +961 1 370519 +961 3 373703**  
**karamwinery.com**

## "Fare niente"

Kefraya's beautiful vineyard spreads over 36,000,000sqm. Every inch of it, invites you in to relax. Once you are done with the tour and tasting you can enjoy a delicious lunch at the vineyard's restaurant, and then take a nap in the garden. Just pass by. There is no need for a reservation.

**+961 8 645333 +961 8 645444**  
**chateaukefraya.com ■**

Photo courtesy of Domaine Des Tourelles



# Eddésands

*My Love*



Discover an atmosphere of sun-drenched beauty, luxurious leisure and fabulous festivities... Whether sunning yourself on the beach, lounging by the pool, dining by the sea or reveling day and night in our beach bar, be prepared for the ultimate in summer fun! From sparkling parties and world-class entertainment to elegant outdoor events, trendy accommodations and blissful treatments at the Tropical Spa, EddéSands truly is Lebanon's ultimate summer destination.

Welcome to Byblos!  
Welcome to EddéSands!



# Shebaa's Water Mills

Not only was the watermill the first automatic machine invented by man, it was also the most important factor towards the development of agriculture and artisanship of the Orient, in the Middle Ages.

Water mills, from a technical point of view, are constituted from two flat horizontal circular stones, positioned on top of each other. The upper one is pierced at its center to allow the grains to fall in between the two stones. The milling operation occurs as a result of friction between the upper and lower stones. This system is a hydraulic adaptation of a more primitive manual, one that dates back to the 7th century B.C.

Water mills are divided into two main types based on the position of the waterwheel: vertical, which requires a right-angle gear; or horizontal, the more primitive type, in which case the rotating millstone can be attached directly to the same vertical shaft. These primitive, horizontally wheeled mills are most common in





Photos courtesy of Nell Abou-Chazale

*"Other than their primary function as a hub for traditional economic activity, watermills served as a meeting point for men and women from different communities and villages"*



mountainous terrain, where small brooks can be exploited. This is the case in the village of Shebaa, where the water mills have been restored and made into a museum under the supervision of anthropologist, Moheb Nader Chanesaz.

There are grounds for believing that horizontal waterwheels were first developed in the Middle East, within the geographical boundaries of ancient Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. However, it is usually held that they made their first appearance in Greece. These wheels seem to have been constructed by analogy with the potter's wheel, which is rotated horizontally by foot. The system is very similar as it has a lower disk for rotation and an upper one for treatment, situated in between a rotation shaft.

This method of exploiting water is probably the result of the local tradition in agriculture, irrigation, artisan technology and building engineering. The fact that the horizontal wheel is commonly spread in Lebanon's Hasbaya region, where pottery production is closely associated with one of its villages, Rashaya el Fokhar, could further explain the relationship between the potter's wheel and the horizontal wheeled mill.

Among all the mills in Lebanon, which exceed 500, there are six types of the horizontal waterwheel mill. Shebaa alone has two of these, one that treats dry grains through what is called a "Mathaneh" and another, with a double function, that of treating dry grains and that of extracting oil from olive residue through what is called "Matruf".

Information resulting from a field survey indicates that Shebaa mills are about 500 years old, but the technical analysis and comparison

allows us to suppose that the mills are actually much older than this, especially that the type has proved to be the most primitive among all of Lebanon's mills.

Historically, the network of people seeking the services of Shebaa's watermills is very wide. They used to flock from the entire Hasbaya region, better known as the "Arqoub." Traditionally, it was the location of a specific economic activity whereby people used to pay 12.5% of the wheat or the raw material of any grain for the grinding service. Other than being a hub for traditional economic activity, watermills served as a meeting point for men and women from different communities and villages.

The watermill was a place where people danced, ate and found each other. In fact, the man who was operating the last functioning mill in Shebaa, before its rehabilitation process, had met and fallen in love with his current wife at the watermill.

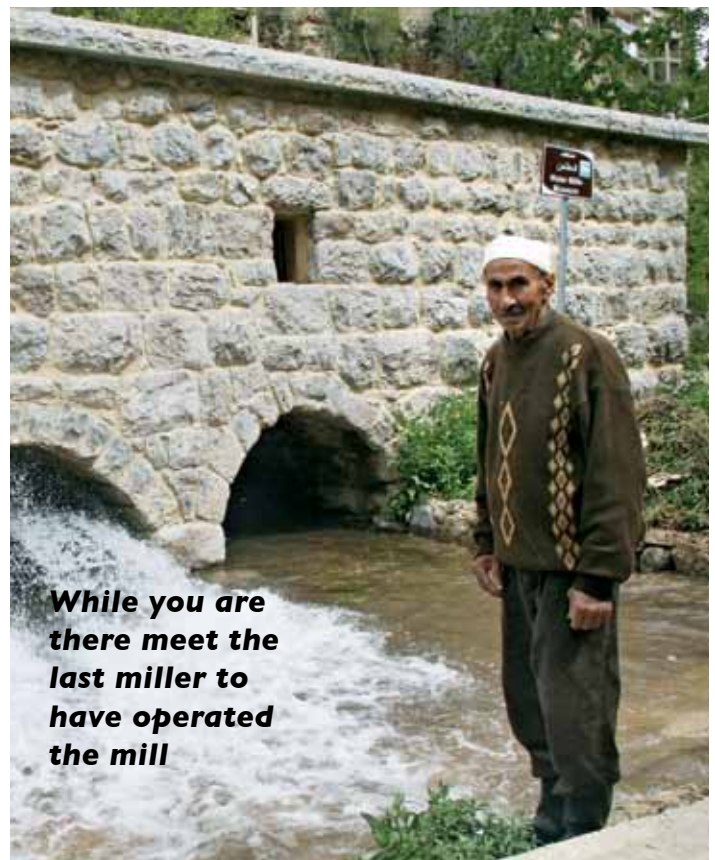
**Local guide Ramez Dallah +961 3 672262**

### Places to stay

Rachaiya El-Fokhar, Hasbaya  
Esber Guesthouse, host: Jihad Esber  
**+961 3 429745/643859**

Ebl Es-Saqi  
Saadeh guethouses, host: Samira Saadeh  
**+961 3 745712**

Dana Hotel, Ebl Es-Saqi  
**+931 7 831000 / +961 3 421233**  
**danahotel.com ■**



**While you are there meet the last miller to have operated the mill**

Photo courtesy of Ramez Dallah



# A real treasure



Photos courtesy of Ed Ou edouphotos.com

Wadi El Deir is a picturesque family owned and run restaurant in the quaint neighborhood of Tannourine Al Tahta. Located on the edge of the Nahr (River) Al Jouz, which runs into Batroun on the coast, this eatery serves homemade food just like grandma used to make.

Local delicacies include dried goat cheese in olive oil, pickled eggplants stuffed with walnuts and green olives with thyme. The restaurant opens from mid-May until October, leaving the winter months for preparing the pickles, preserves and the like.

Emile Nohra, along with his wife and relatives run and staff Wadi El Deir, which is named after a 1,500 year old monastery in the village, Deir Mar Mtannious. The monastery, which fell into disrepair, has been lovingly restored by the villagers, and is open one day a year on the holiday of its patron saint.

The restaurant is at nearly 900 meters, so it is always advisable to take a jacket or cardigan incase you get cold!

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# Lebanon by foot

Our intrepid reporter, Sabina Llewellyn Davies, discovered stunning sights, rural culture, ancient history and fabulous food when she joined the Lebanon Mountain Trail hikers for a few days

It's a warm spring morning in April. Under a canopy of bright blue, we tread along a worn track, past groves of ancient olive trees, retracing the tracks of bygone travelers, traders and shepherds. Then, a steep descent, down a rocky hillside, leads us towards a makeshift Bedouin camp. We stop in our tracks to chat with the local women and children who are harvesting wild herbs. A cow is resting in the grass with its newborn calf. It just gave birth that morning, says one of the children.

We had woken up early that day at around 6 a.m., all set to trek the Mayjaoun to Hasbaya section of the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT), around 16 km. "I really want to discover my own country," says Lebanese born Mustapha Kandil, CEO of Impress Advertising, who has lived in Dubai since the eighties. Mustapha is one of the five core walkers determined

to complete the LMT Thru Walk, around 440 km, joined by other hikers along the way.

We are a mixed bunch of hikers, all ages, backgrounds and nationalities. Christian Akrass, our resourceful trek leader and field coordinator of the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA), moves us along after a thorough briefing of the trail, plus the LMTA's objectives. "We aim to expand economic opportunities in rural areas through responsible tourism," Christian informed us. "We still have 15 more kilometers to Hasbaya," he said. "Yalla, let's go."

The theme of this year's Thru Walk is water conservation. "We pass around 65 springs along the trail and hope to raise awareness for this issue so that the locals will protect the

springs and their surroundings," says Christian. Protection of the trails and the environment is high on the agenda for Paul Khawaja, head of mission at the British Embassy, who is also vice-president of the LMTA. He points to a road, "This was not here two years ago. We [the LMTA] are doing our best to protect the trails and we hope that this year's Thru Walk will raise awareness."

Using the services of a local guide to trek the LMT is definitely recommended. We're able to gain a deeper insight into Lebanon's rural regions through the eyes of a local, as well as provide the rural folk with some welcome income. Today, we are joined by Wael Shmeis, a 26-year-old from the village of Hasbaya. Beaming, he leads us along the trail with a bounce in his step, pointing out the names of wildflowers and trees. Suddenly, he stops in his track and peeks down. "Look, a tortoise."

The 26 sections of the LMT range from easy to difficult and are 10 to 24 kilometers in length. While much of the trail is spent trekking flat terrain, there are also challenging rocky paths ascending to high points. The reward at the end of each day's hike is an overnight stay at a low-key rural lodging, often the home of a local villager. Staying with a family is also a direct channel for putting money into the villager's pockets. Around forty families will benefit from this year's Thru Walk. And, supper is always a delicious surprise. Expect regional specialties such as vine leaves and fattoush salad, or maybe even a rarity like the akkoub vegetable, a specialty of the south, served in a garlicky yogurt sauce.

That night, Wael's family welcomed us into their riverside home in Hasbaya. After a well-earned shower, we devoured our supper and then walked around the village in search of ice cream. Agreeing that there was not an inch left in our stomachs, we headed back to Wael's home, crawled into our sleeping bags and fell asleep to a chorus of frogs croaking from the nearby riverbank.

After an early rise the next day, a delicious breakfast of eggs, yogurt, cheese and an exceptional fig jam with walnuts made by Wael's mother, awaits us. "Only 24 kilometers to reach the village of Rashaya," says Christian, grinning wryly. That day the sun was strong and temperatures rose to the thirties. The ascents were steep and as we climbed the rugged footpaths with fellow hikers, our chatter was soon replaced by silence, as the trail climbed hundreds of meters. We stop and turn to take in the view of Jabal el Cheikh behind us and gasp, not out of exhaustion but rather in awe of the stunning sight of the majestic snowcapped peak.

Walking beside me is Alan Philps, a British journalist and editor, who came to Lebanon to join the Thru Walk for ten days with his author friend Desmond Astley-Cooper. "Tired?" I ask. "Exhausted," he replies but smiles when we finally reach the top of the hill, greeted by the sight of the red roofs of Rashaya, lustrous during the sunset. The climb was well worth it we decide, as we head to the home of the local guide Mehdi el Fayik. "The whole experience of hiking on the LMT is just incredible. Not just the stunning scenery, but also staying overnight with a local family. It's a real immersion into Lebanon's rural culture," says Desmond. "I wonder what's for supper tonight?"

To find out more about the trail go to [lebanontrail.org](http://lebanontrail.org)

The Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) is a 440 km hiking trail, funded by USAID, extending from the village of Qobaiyat in the northern Akkar region to Marjayoun in the deep South. It passes through seventy-five towns and villages, three nature reserves, ancient castles, abandoned mills and Roman ruins.



The Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA) organized its 4th Thru-Walk, from Marjayoun to Qobaiyat, in April 2012 to support rural economies in trailside communities, and to promote responsible eco-tourism in Lebanon. Around 100 hikers from over a dozen countries joined the walk. ■



Local guide Wael Shmeis

# Taming the wild flower



For nearly fifteen years, Ahmad Hour and his wife, Nisrine Machaka-Houri, have been carefully documenting and photographing hundreds of Lebanese wildflowers. Their work has been summarized in *Photographic Guide to Wild Flowers of Lebanon* and a searchable online database. Hour and his wife have taken time to describe what you can expect to see while hiking during the summer months



Few things in life have the varied benefits of hiking. Improved knowledge of the country and remote areas that are rather interesting, exercise, fresh air, meditation, meeting new friends, increased motivation and a positive attitude to name a few. However, you might miss an equally rewarding learning experience, which is the scientific knowledge of what you are seeing.

With its diverse topography, Lebanon presents an outstanding experience for hikers to enjoy plant biodiversity. One of the main features that we have in this country is that, due to the varied elevations we have, you might see the flowers in bud, in full bloom, withered or even seeding on the same day.

Few flowering plants in the summer might be exciting to check out in the lower altitudes, but sea daffodils, which flower in August, are definitely worth pursuing. Higher elevations present an amazing array of wild flowers, large and small, throughout the season.

The average non-botanist might not be too interested about flowers that are less than one centimeter in diameter, nor would one be too excited about non-flashy colors (white and green), but it is important to remember that some of these inconspicuous plants are very rare and might be endemic to Lebanon (i.e. they exist only in Lebanon). Red, yellow, orange, pink and purple are some of the more exciting colors that you might focus on.

In addition, naturalists are “naturally” attracted to large flowers like irises or beautifully designed flowers like orchids. Accordingly, you can see some of the more beautiful flowers on your next hike in the summer.

Still, the experience is not full unless you are accompanied by a knowledgeable person or at least a guide that can tell you the name (not necessarily the scientific ones despite their usefulness), the uses and associated stories with these plants: how they were discovered, who used them first, etc...

These bits of information strengthen the knowledge you might gain during the trip and in turn you will become a transmitter of this knowledge. Fortunately, such general field guides, organized by color, such as our Photographic Guide to Wild Flowers of Lebanon exist in the country, while other site-specific field guides can be very helpful when going to certain reserves (Ammiq wetland) or (Chouf Cedar Reserve). More thorough guides that are organized by scientific family are also available for botanists (Illustrated Flora of Lebanon by Georges Tohmé and Henriette Tohmé).

A thorough understanding of the surrounding environment on every level (scientific, social, psychological) can only enhance your outdoors experience. Please remember when you are out there and you find that amazing flower with an outstanding design, that others can derive just as much pleasure from seeing it as you do. So do yourself and nature a favor and take as many photos as you like, but make sure that you and your group are careful enough to maintain the wonders you see, for others to enjoy.



## Flowers you might encounter

Common name	Scientific name
1 Tansy-leaf milfoil, tall yarrow	<i>Achillea distans ssp. tanacetifolia</i>
2 Spiny Caper	<i>Capparis spinosa</i>
3 Wedge-lipped orchid	<i>Dactylophiza saccifera</i>
4 Mountain-spignel pink	<i>Dianthus libanotis</i>
5 Oriental leopard's-bane	<i>Doronicum orientale</i> (main photo)
6 West's tulip	<i>Tulipa aucheriana westii</i>
7 Broad leaved helleborine	<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>
8 Lotus sweetjuice	<i>Glaucium leiocarpum</i>
9 Short-lobed lizard orchid	<i>Himantoglossum affine</i>
10 Stinking Tutsan	<i>Hypericum hircinum</i>
11 Sawfar Iris	<i>Iris sofarana</i>
12 Bushy golden-drop	<i>Onosma frutescens</i>
13 Late spider orchid	<i>Ophrys fuciflora</i>
14 Common Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>
15 Indian sage	<i>Salvia indica</i>

wildflowersoflebanon.com ■

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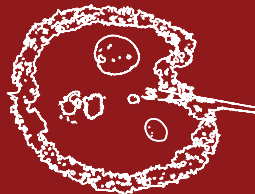






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# Lebanon's secret forest

Just 50 kilometers northeast of Beirut is one of the country's most diverse natural heritage sites. Today, dedicated conservationists are working to safeguard it through sustainable ecotourism and local development projects. Since Lebanon has its fair share of protected sites, safeguarding flora, fauna and animals, it was delightful to hear that in February, the area of Jabal Moussa, a biosphere located in the Keserwan Jbeil area of Mount Lebanon, was granted a protected status by the Ministry of Environment. Jabal Moussa was designated as the third biosphere reserve in Lebanon in 2009, as part of the UNESCO Network of Biosphere Reserves under the Man & Biosphere (MAB) program.



The Biosphere Reserve is divided into three core areas: a region for expert visits and research, a buffer zone where more ecotourism activities take place, and a transition zone that allows human activity and use of land. The transition zone covers around half of the reserve's area, and its predominant land uses include: forest management, charcoal production, traditional agricultural activities, fruit trees plantation, grazing and seasonal recreation.

Trail guides chaperone visitors to ensure they inflict only minimal damage on the environment and are able to navigate the tricky trails safely. Locals have been trained to serve as guides and guards, while women from the rural areas are now selling their traditional food, "mouneh", including kshik, tomato syrup, zaatar (thyme) and hosrom (juice from grape vines), as well as handcrafts. In addition, local families are trained to run guesthouses for visitors, who choose to stay the night.

Flanked by the Nahr Ed-Dahab and Nahr Ibrahim rivers and rising 350 to 1,600 meters above sea level, it forms a stunning natural oasis. The steep mountains make a thrilling but hard hike for trekkers. It also has nurseries dedicated to reforestation and preserving biodiversity. Although it sits on a relatively small area, 12,500,000sqm, Jabal Moussa is notable for its rich diversity. Home to 715 different plant species, 26 of which are endemic to Lebanon and 6 of which are unique to it, the reserve offers something new, even for the experienced hiker or conservationist.

The mountainous ecosystem gives rise to a number of eco-zones. Designated a Global Important Bird Area in 2009, Jabal Moussa hosts 83 bird species, of which 7 are regionally

or globally threatened. There are 23 mammal species in the reserve including the squirrel, wolf, hyrax, and hyena. Out of the 23 species, which are wholly or partially limited to the Middle East region, 8 are regionally threatened and 6 are significantly declining.

It houses rare sites like the Mar Geryes monastery, constructed in the 14th century, but still used by locals to commemorate mass on St. George's Day and a unique inscription, reserving four tree types for the personal use of Emperor Hadrian (76 – 138 A.D.) and allotting the rest for the people.

## Hiking

Hikes are organized on the reserve all week, after which you can enjoy a traditional homemade lunch at a local house. A popular hike begins by going up the Roman stairs from Mchati to the main entrance of the reserve in Qehmez, from where you walk up the El Bouyout Stroll trail. This trail passes by Bir el Masbek, an old well found on the mountain, three old houses known as El Bouyout and an old water cistern used by the people who lived there. Then, go down Hadrian's trail stopping to see his inscription.

To book your hike (and the optional lunch) contact the project manager, Christelle Abou Chabke

**+961 71 944 405**

or from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm on **+961 9 643464**

**[jabalmoussa.org](http://jabalmoussa.org)**

## Surrounding villages

Qehmez  
Nahr el-Dahab  
Yahchouch  
Ghbeleh  
el-Aabri

## Access roads

- Beirut - Zouk Mosbeh - Meyrouba - Qehmez entrance (about 50 minutes)
- Beirut - Jounieh - Ghazir - Ghineh - Nahr ed-Dahab entrance (about 1 hour)
- Beirut - Jounieh - Nahr Ibrahim - Yahchouch entrance (about 75 minutes)

**[jabalmoussa.org](http://jabalmoussa.org)**

## An inspiration

After visiting the Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve in 2011, Najib Qassar was inspired to write his first story in a series of books about the reserve. Wanting to increase awareness about the importance of preserving the environment, he chose the hyrax - a furry, chubby animal the size of a rabbit - as the main character for his comic stories. The story takes young readers on a tour through Jabal Moussa and introduces them to its flowers, animals and birds. Qassar, who recently finished writing the first story in the series, called "Hyrax! Hyrax!" in Arabic, hopes the book will be distributed to students in schools near the reserve, and later to all Lebanese schools. ■



Photos courtesy of Chassan R. Jaradi

TAKE ME THERE





**'Bekaa valley'**

*Photo courtesy of Raymond Yazbeck, +961 3 377098*



# Going back in time

Curator and museum specialist, Juliana Khalaf, takes a stroll in the beautiful grounds of the American University of Beirut (AUB) to find its hidden treasures.

Nestled in the heart of Beirut, the University's Archeological Museum acquired its first donated collection in 1868, which marks its opening date. After extensive renovations and a state-of-the-art display refurbishment, the museum reopened in 2006.

The Museum provides an exceptional overview of the Near East from the Early Stone Age (500.000 - 3000 B.C.) through to the Islamic Period (7th - 13th c. A.D.), with archeological objects collected from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and Iran.

The collection comprises of prehistoric tools, pottery artifacts, bronze and terracotta figurines, weapons, gold jewelry and fashion accessories, Phoenician glassware, Hellenistic classical marble sculptures as well as musical instruments.

To really absorb the richness and history of the museum's collection, one should consider dedicating at least an hour to tour and ideally use the audio guide to help understand the intricacy and historical implications of each artifact.

An additional 10 minutes can be spent browsing through the boutique's collection of Lebanese designer jewelry, replicating the museum's collection, books, and home accessories.

After visiting the University Museum, you might also be tempted to visit the rest of the university's historical campus and beautiful grounds.



Photos courtesy of AUB Museum



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[aub.edu.lb/museum\\_archeo](http://aub.edu.lb/museum_archeo) ■

# Lebanon by river

There are many ways to see Lebanon's countryside. One way, not often thought of, is down its rivers and waterways. Home to the best inland water sport activities in the region, Lebanon's many rivers allow you to appreciate nature while giving extreme sports a try. Canyoning, rafting, kayaking and canoeing will give you all the thrills you need for a memorable summer.

## Rafting, kayaking and canoeing

Imagine soaring along the river, gaining speed as the water splashes you and gets your heart racing. This is known as rafting, a challenging recreational outdoor activity, using an inflatable raft to navigate a river or other bodies of water. It is usually done on white water or different degrees of rough water in order to thrill and excite the raft passengers.

Both canoeing and kayaking are known as paddle sports. Kayaking is distinguished from canoeing by the sitting position of the paddler, and the number of blades on the paddle.

Ali Awada, who perfected his skills in Toulouse, first introduced rafting to Lebanon in 1993. Awada also founded the Lebanese Canoe-Kayak Federation that has since then explored the rivers of Lebanon and initiated the Lebanese to the joys and thrills of rafting.

In Lebanon, there are many rivers where you can practice the sport. The Federation has classified them into levels, 1 being the simplest. Naher el Kalb, from the middle to the end is considered an easy trip and classified as 1. A small section around Jeita however is a level 3-4. The Awali and Litani are classified as level 1-2. The same goes for the Assi that has a few rough rapids.







The season starts as early as May in all the rivers, but as summer advances, your best bet is to experience the Assi in Hermel or the Awali in the South.

The raft can fit from 4 to 10 persons and the sport is a lesson in solidarity and synchronization. Indeed, participants should make sure they are paddling with the same rhythm to avoid capsizing. Usually, the two persons at the front of the raft do the heavy lifting, but it is highly essential that every person on board does their part. The guide will direct you with instructions and safety precautions.

Ali Awada has also founded Sport Nature, which organizes rafting, kayaking or canoeing and camping trips that can last up to two days. For those who plan to take a trip on the river, the only gear needed is a helmet and a life vest, both of which are provided by the organizer. The only stipulation is that the participant be able to swim. Adventure seekers will be debriefed before they hit the water, as there is no playing with security. As children as young as 6 years can partake in the activity, this makes for an interesting family outing. Sport Nature provides all the necessary equipment.

### Fees

Day trip Rafting plus lunch 50 USD/person

2-day trip Rafting, camping, breakfast, lunch, diner and chalet 95 USD/person

For more information **+961 3 678398** ■





## Canyoning

Though introduced in 1997 by the founding members of 33 North, canyoning was re-launched in Lebanon two years ago after a halt of several years. The activity began in Akkar, but has spread over the entire country.

What is canyoning exactly? It is an adventure trip that mixes hikes, jumps, abseiling and sliding with water. Canyons are essentially narrow grooves and slots in the stone, which have been eroded by rapid water movement over the years. When you go canyoning, you take a trip through these narrow canyons in a journey down the river. Seeing that the topography of a river is not exactly homogenous, participants will walk in water and slide when the river flow gets more intense. As they continue their journey, they will have to jump into small lakes from a height of a meter or two. If the descent is more than a couple of meters, guides will set up the cords for an abseiling session down the cascade.

33 North was the pioneer in this activity and is still the only company that can take you on a canyoning adventure, as it is not something you can do on your own. Experts have discovered the path, paved the way to allow clear passages, installed the pitons and moorings for the rappelling ropes and made sure the small water formations are deep enough to jump in. Their excellent knowledge of the area will ensure fun and security. Today, there are three sites for canyoning in Lebanon, one in Akkar, another in Hammana and a third in Jezzine, which has recently been set up.

Though it sounds tough, it is not a difficult endeavor and anybody over 18 can do it. The only requirement is to be able to swim, not as a professional swimmer, but have certain floating capabilities.

33 North provides all the gear. Participants are fitted with shoulder belts and helmets. You simply need to bring towels, a change of clothes (as you will be soaked by the end of the trip), water and some energy bars or chocolate to keep you moving.



Canyoning is an adventure like no other! It combines the thrill of hiking with the freedom of free jump and the freshness of water. For those who have tried it, the feeling is magical, the thrill unrivalled and an experience to be repeated over and over again. It is a great way to have fun, discover the hidden beauty of nature, all the while getting an adrenaline rush.

### Fees

60 USD/person (groups of no more than 10 at one time)  
For more information +961 71 331 138 or 33 North founder  
Gilbert Moukheiber **+961 3 454996**  
**33-north.com** ■



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# Sea, sun, sand & business

In business, building good relationships with clients or partners is of utmost importance. Going that extra mile will truly make all the difference. That's why mixing business with pleasure can be a smart idea. For those of you who are entertaining business guests this summer, Lebanon Traveler has compiled a list of possible hot spots that will cater to every need and desire. So, take the day off at one of the country's seaside resorts and don't feel guilty – you're still working!

## The sound of silence

Relaxation is not possible without some quiet time. Lazy B in Jiyeh, just 20 minutes south of the capital, is certainly the ideal place to enjoy the sound of silence, since unlike other resorts in the country, there's no loud music on the premises. Another unique feature of the resort is its creek, with a fresh water spring that provides a very invigorating swim. Your guests can lounge in the adult pool, where kids are not allowed and take advantage of the free Wi-Fi, while sipping a refreshing cocktail. For lunch, they can savor Lebanese and international cuisine on one of the seven terraces of the restaurant or a light snack if they prefer to keep their spot in the sun. To end the day, why not offer them a reflexology or aromatherapy massage at the most silent spot of the venue? By sunset, you will have a happy relaxed guest.

**lazyb.me**

## Parties and live music

For party animals, there is but one address: Bonita Bay. In this charming Batroun location, about 50 minutes north of the capital, Sundays are not only meant to take in the sun, but also to take in the beat. In the afternoon, a live band entertains guests who are ready to let go of their inhibitions and dance the afternoon away. By evening, all feel rejuvenated and ready to tackle the coming workweek. For night owls, theme evenings are available: Thursday nights are reserved for salsa, while Wednesday nights are White Party time. As for those who enjoy good food, the chefs at Bonita Bay will dazzle you with local dishes made from the freshest ingredients, not that you'll have much time to eat.

**bonita-bay.com**



Photo courtesy of Edde Sands



Photo courtesy of Lazy B

## Wellness attitude

Aside from being one of the most beautiful resorts in Lebanon, Edde Sands has established itself as a wellness destination. Here under the shadow of the historical city of Byblos, 40 minutes north of the capital, your guests can begin their day sunbathing at the pool. Then they're off to the tropical spa for some Ayurvedic treatments to help balance their inner selves. The in-house Bach Flower specialist is always ready for a personal consultation to alleviate the strains of work. Bach flower therapy is a natural system of stress management. Finally, a yoga session on the beach will seal in the relaxation and turn the day into a memorable experience.

**eddesands.com**

## Join the It crowd

At the heart of the capital lies the Riviera Beach Lounge, where your guests can rub elbows with Beirut's "It" crowd. A party venue at all times, your guests can enjoy dancing and drinking at the pool. This is not a place for a swim but rather a dip. It is a place to see and be seen. For additional privacy, you can reserve the San Tonini Lounge where your guests can bask in the sun while a private butler serves chilled drinks at the table or in your reserved Jacuzzi. Riviera is the perfect way to show how the other Lebanese half live.

**rivierahotel.com.lb/beach**

## Relaxing weekend

Instead of just a day out, why not offer your guests a relaxing weekend on the beautiful sandy shores of Remaleh, a 30-minute drive south of the capital? La Guava is an ideal place to spend a weekend on the beach. Your guests can settle in at one of the newly renovated bungalows, with modern décor in bright refreshing colors. After a swim, sip a glass of chilled rosé while enjoying the sunset in the outdoor Jacuzzi. If your guests have a taste for adventure, they can engage in some parasailing activities, go water skiing or scuba diving. Those who are less daring can enjoy a game of beach volleyball or soccer in the specialized sports area.

**laguavaresort.com**

## Enjoy the ecosystem

Located northwest of Tripoli, Palm Island Nature Reserve is perhaps the best beach to witness the diversity of the Lebanese ecosystem. It takes about an hour and fifteen minutes to get to Tripoli from Beirut and another thirty minutes by boat from the city's Al Mina (port) district. Many fauna and flora species, as well as habitat ecosystems take refuge in the reserve, away from the urban stress. The island is a resting area for rare and endangered migratory birds and the only place in Lebanon that has nesting sea birds. After a stroll along the shore observing the wonders of nature, your guests can take in the sun, go for a swim or simply while the hours away. It's advisable to pack a picnic.

**tripoli-city.org**

## Underwater ruins

One of the best and cleanest beaches in Lebanon lies in Tyre, an hour's drive down the coast to the south of the country, where city dwellers can cherish sea and sand. What makes this place so unique is the fresh water springs that outflow to the sea, creating a fresh marine water interface. Kayak with your guests from the shore towards the submerged Roman ruins and dive in for an exceptional snorkeling session. Upon your return to land, share a picnic basket of homemade food or fish cooked in nearby huts. A good meal should always be followed by a siesta in the sun. Finally, watch the sun go down over the Mediterranean. With such serenity, your guests will never want to leave.

**tyremunicipality.net**

## Water sports

Pearl Beach is where guests can take pleasure in sunbathing, swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, scuba diving, windsurfing, wave riding, kite boarding, fishing, sunset watching and beachcombing on the beautiful shores of Batroun. The natural beach is a wonderful destination for water sports lovers who are looking for some wet thrills. With so many choices, your guest will be busy all day and go back to work, full of energy. Pearl Beach is also a wonderful food destination where the chef will serve you delicious local delicacies. The beach bar offers a daily happy hour and many evenings are reserved for parties. If you happen to be there on a weekend go to barbecue night with your guests.

**pearlbeachlebanon.com**



Photo courtesy of Pearl Beach



Photo courtesy of White Beach

## The simple life

Since 1988 this family owned beach has welcomed visitors from around the world. Located on the untouched shores of Batroun, the White Beach family will see to your guest's every need. They'll be pampered with the best of traditional Lebanese cuisine while basking in the sun. A chill out beach with a wide range of activities to enjoy if your guests feel up to it, otherwise you can just let them lay back and relax. With the Batroun wineries only a stone's throw away, why not send your guests there to visit as part of their day out?

**whitebeachlebanon.com**

## A sandy beach

Big straw umbrellas and people catering for themselves. Atlas Beach on the shores of Jiyeh is solely about a seaside experience. Attendants will help you settle in, provide you with a table, a sun bed and a cardboard visor for your car. Early birds might even enjoy the sight of a dozen crabs darting in and out of the sand. The restaurant serves basic food at reasonable prices. Usually a young crowd, but you can occasionally see children playing in the sand with their parents. Your guests will enjoy the simplicity of it all.

**+961 3 222309**

## Out to sea

Discover the wonders of the Mediterranean Sea by taking your guests on a unique boat ride. The Dolphin Team Yatching at the Mövenpick Hotel and Resort Beirut provide big or small boats that can take you deep out into the sea, all the while enjoying 5-star food and beverage service. A captain and crew will remain with you at all times, so your guests will feel at ease. Upon their return they can do laps in the Olympic sized pool, followed by a cool cocktail on the beautiful terraces of Hemmingway's Bar or Square Lounge. A unique nautical and gastronomic experience!

**moevenpick-hotels.com**

## Business on the beach

If you are looking to pamper but work at the same time, then The Golden Tulip Jiyeh Marina and Resort maybe the answer. Spread over 100,000sqm, with a 1200m beachfront and 20,000sqm of sandy beach, the resort is conveniently located 20 minutes from Beirut International Airport and Beirut Down Town City Center. The 4-star resort consists of 57 chalets and five Yacht Club studios. All rooms are fully furnished, spacious and have their own private balconies and a unique view. As expected of a 4-star resort, it has a variety of eateries, as well as beach, nautical, sports & water activities.

**jiyehmarina.com or goldentulipjiyeh.com ■**

## Golden Tulip Hotel De Ville

Sodeco



[www.goldentuliphoteldeville.com](http://www.goldentuliphoteldeville.com)

# Inspiring stays in Lebanon



## Golden Tulip Jiyeh Marina & Resort



## Golden Tulip Galleria Hotel

Jnah



[www.goldentulipgalleria.com](http://www.goldentulipgalleria.com)

## Golden Tulip Serenada Hamra Hotel

Hamra



[www.goldentulipserenada.com](http://www.goldentulipserenada.com)

The Golden Tulip Hotel De Ville in Sodeco, Golden Tulip Galleria in Jnah, Golden Tulip Serenada (hotel of the year 2011) in Hamra and Golden Tulip Jiyeh in Jiyeh are pleased to welcome you and offer you an exceptional and unforgettable experience.

Our location in different areas in Beirut; close to the Airport, a walking distance from shopping areas and by the most beautiful Lebanese beaches made our Four Star Hotels very convenient for Leisure, Business Meetings as well as Wedding Venues and Ceremonies.

At the Golden Tulip Hotels you can live the real spirit of Beirut and enjoy the distinguished Lebanese hospitality.

[GoldenTulip.com](http://GoldenTulip.com)



  
**GOLDEN TULIP**  
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MENA  
International standards  
local flavours

# Assia pottery... healthy pottery



**In the remote village of Assia in Batroun, two houses perpetuate a tradition that has existed for a very long time. Sana Jabbour follows her mother's footsteps and continues to make pottery, a time-honored craft that was once a main source of income, in the village of her ancestors.**

You can recognize Assia pottery by its traditional shape and reddish color. It is 100% handmade, meaning not a single machine is used, not even a turntable. It is the most ancient form of pottery. What makes it so unique is its health benefits, in that the pieces are made of natural components. It is not painted and no artificial material is ever used.

Assia pottery's composition is quite simple: pottery sand that is extracted from the land and a quartz-like stone that is grinded and mixed with it. The process of making the pottery is a bit more complicated and can take up to a month to finish a single piece.

First comes the making of the clay. Cleaning the sand begins by wetting it, then letting it pass through a fine sieve which will separate it from any small rocks and stones. Then the quartz is finely ground and mixed with the sand. The mixture is laid on concrete to dry to get a clay-like matter.

Before starting any piece, the clay is kneaded and made more malleable to be able to shape it in any form. Once fashioned, the piece will dry for a day. With a pebble, the potter then proceeds to smooth the surface.

It is left to dry again, after which the craftsman uses a knife to remove thickness from the piece. After a day or two left in the shade, away from sun and wind, another round of polishing with the pebbles is done. The piece should then dry for a week or two, after which it will get a final polish layer (also done with pebbles) to make sure all roughness is gone. At this point, the piece becomes shiny without the use of any varnish material, simply by polishing it with the pebble. The item is kept in a room





to fully dry and then cooked in a wood oven. During the final phase, many of the pieces are ruined due to mishandling or small defaults in the fabrication, making the whole process quite tiresome.

For Sana, who learned the craft from her mother, perpetuating this tradition is her passion. Although she continues to make the same shapes her ancestors did, she has also given in to more modern requests and added a coffee maker and a mug to her line of products.

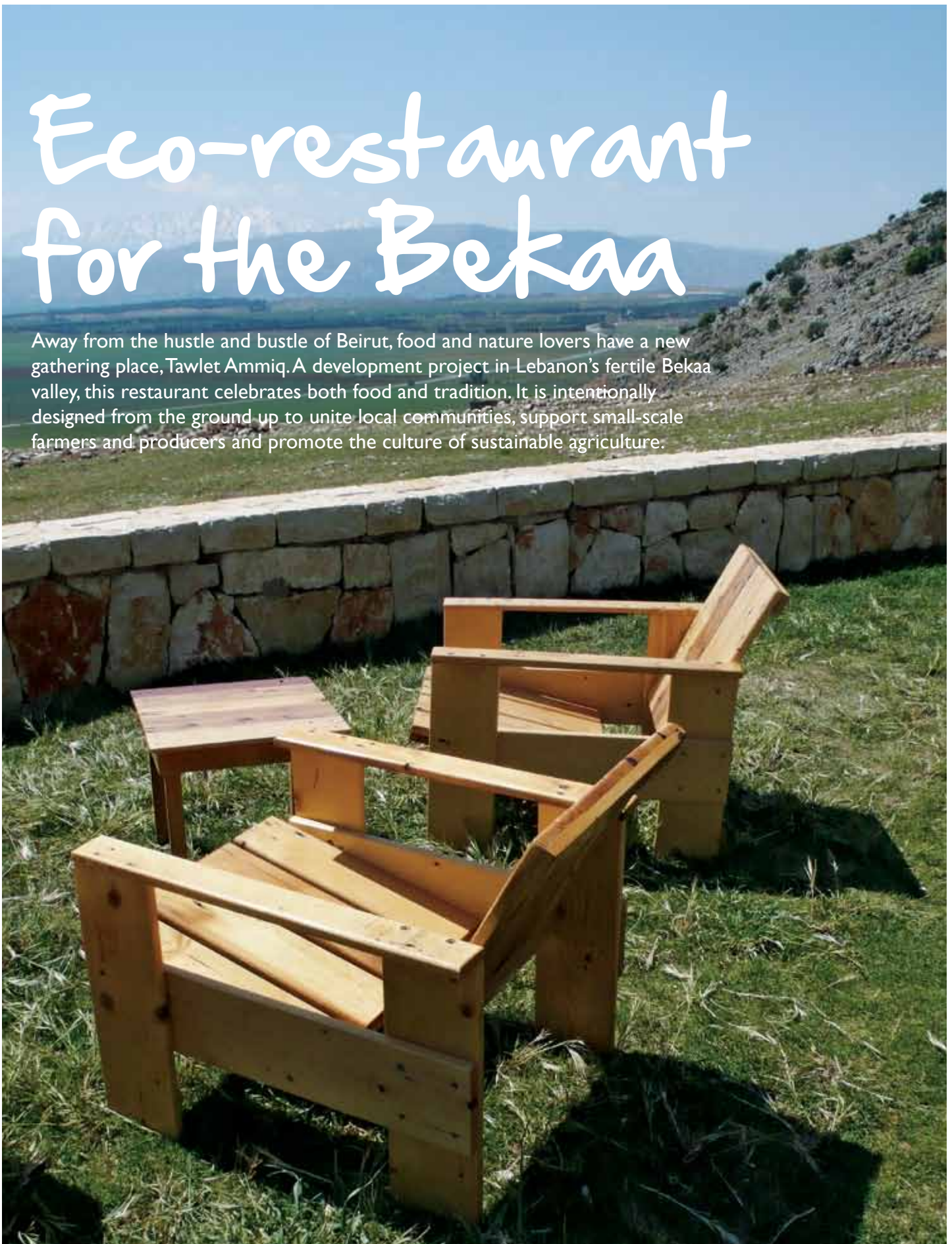
However, she refuses to make decorative items, as Assia pottery's main feature is its health advantages for cooking and general use.

You can sample Sana's work every Saturday at Souk al Tayeb or if you are up for the drive, you can meet her in Assia and see her at work.

Contact Sanaa Jabbour **+961 3 630626** ■

# Eco-restaurant for the Bekaa

Away from the hustle and bustle of Beirut, food and nature lovers have a new gathering place, Tawlet Ammiq. A development project in Lebanon's fertile Bekaa valley, this restaurant celebrates both food and tradition. It is intentionally designed from the ground up to unite local communities, support small-scale farmers and producers and promote the culture of sustainable agriculture.



The restaurant, with its low-key relaxed atmosphere is accessible only by a dirt road near the wetlands of Ammiq. It's located in a simple and spacious building with outdoor and rooftop seating, boasting tremendous views of the mountains of West Bekaa.

The last significant wetland in the country, Ammiq is a remnant of extensive marshes and lakes that once covered parts of the Bekaa Valley. This natural spot remains an important staging and wintering area for migratory water birds en route between Europe and Africa.

The Tawlet Ammiq building features Canadian wells, an insulation system, solar chimneys, a green roof and a solar energy system. It is an environmental performance building, with a high thermal performance building envelope, naturally assisted cooling, lighting at minimum cost, solar water heating and is both a smoke and music free environment.

It uses 80% less energy to operate than a conventional construction. All waste (mostly organic) is sorted and recycled, and sourcing unpacked products or using reusable containers also reduces waste.

Local artisans and craftsmen were hired to manufacture the chairs, designed on original Rietveld patterns, tables and columns from reused pallet wood. The birds, modeled on the wetland's birds, are the creation of handicraft artist Nadine Tawil Abou, while the Ammiq jars are that of Alexandra Warde, a young interior designer.

The restaurant boasts a festive farmers' buffet on weekends, cooked by local ladies from the region wanting to share the best of their land and traditions. On weekdays the service is à la carte. The food, an assortment of local dishes, is prepared on-site.

And, by carrying wines from all of Lebanon's wineries, Tawlet Ammiq hopes that it will contribute to the growing interest in Lebanese wine within the country. Wine tourism is on the move and it wants to set the standard.

The "Dekenat", situated at the entrance of the restaurant, offers a wide selection of regional "mouneh", handicrafts and specially designed collectibles, along with regional eco- and cookbooks.

### What you can do while you are there

Ammiq's wetlands, valleys and mountains make it an ideal place for outdoor activities like walking, hiking, bird watching, biking and exploring nature trails.

[shoufcedar.org](http://shoufcedar.org)

### Directions, opening times and contacts

Ammiq is on the eastern slopes of Mount Lebanon, halfway between Chtaura and Kefraya, overlooking the Bekaa Valley.

Saturday and Sunday, 1pm to 4pm

Tuesday to Friday, 9am to 4pm

+961 3 004481

[tawletammiq.com](http://tawletammiq.com) ■



# Joy of the great outdoors



Photos courtesy of La Reserve Afqa

**Nothing beats the open air when it's sunny. It is the perfect time to leave the city behind and savor the beauty of nature. Getting away from it all will help you rejuvenate and recharge. Enjoy the simple pleasures of life far from TV, radio and the stress of social media. Whether on the beach or in the mountains, Lebanon Traveler compiled a list of the best camping sites in the country.**

## **Camping Amchit Les Colombes**

Situated in Amchit about 38km north of Beirut, Camping Amchit Les Colombes accommodates tourists and locals 365 days a year and 24 hours a day, in a peaceful, natural and wild environment. Occupying 27,000sqm of land, it is set on a 40-meter cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Apart from camping, various types of rooms and chalets that suit all tastes and budgets are offered. No services or activities are provided at the camp, but it has access to two rocky beaches. Take a walk to the sea, snorkel and swim. Later, perfect your talent as a chef by firing up the barbecue or cooking your own fish using an old family recipe. Those of you who wish to camp should bring their own tents. Common bathrooms, showers and kitchens are available on site.  
**+961 9 622401/402**  
**campinglescolombes.com**

## **Sharewood Camp**

Located in the mountains above the capital, Sharewood Camp features an outstanding choice of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities and accommodations in fully equipped tents. Whether you are a group of adults or a family, 20 large tents (3m x 4m x 2.75m) zipped from all sides will ensure the best security. Activities include abseiling, rappelling, rock climbing, Tyrolean traverse, zip-line, archery, hiking, volleyball, giant chess, rifle shooting, darts, backgammon, four-in-a-line, lawn ball, donkey rides, ping pong, giant sandbox, balance beam, tug-of-war, table football, trampoline and badminton. At night, you can let your inner singer out during karaoke around the campfire. If you don't feel like cooking, you can always eat at the restaurant, which serves traditional Lebanese food and snacks.

**+961 4 870592**  
**sharewoodcamp.com**

## **Bzedbine Hidden Valley Resort**

Located in the Metn Mountains, a region known for its beautiful weather and pine tree forest, the Bzedbine Hidden Valley Resort is a great location for nature lovers to take in the outdoors. You can stay in a tent or in a wooden cabin. Electricity and hot water are available. Aside from the usual nature activities, you can engage in horseback riding sessions in the forest, self-guiding hiking trails, biking, caving and rappelling. The open-air restaurant serves

homemade food and fires up the barbecue every Sunday for lunch.

**+961 3 339370/466662/410605**

**bzebdinehiddenvalleyranch.com**

### Nature Land Camping & Adventure

Spread over 10,000sqm of luscious green wilderness, Nature Land Camping and Adventure offers a wide variety of social, cultural and environmental outdoor activities including hiking, caving, rappelling, tree climbing, flying fox and archery. Unique half-day programs will take kids on a tour of a farm, where they will participate in milking a cow and collecting eggs. Survival half-day will teach them to use a compass and read a map. Martial art day is an occasion to perfect your fighting and self-defense technique. The evenings are reserved for astronomy lessons, or for the more energetic, night hikes and caving. You can stay in a tent that can fit different sized groups equipped with mattresses and all lighting necessities. A cooking facility is also available.

**+961 3 784246, +961 71 016232, +961 1 902538**

**nature-land.com**

### La Reserve, Afqa

Situated high in Lebanon's mountains, Afqa camping welcomes you from May till October for a night in the wilderness. Every tent is equipped with (four) beds, mattresses, pillows, lighting and one electrical outlet for your mobile telephone, if being out of reach might trigger separation anxiety issues. WC's and showers are individual prefab units, and hot water is available. Campsite activities range from archery, hiking and orienteering to caving and rope courses. If you prefer not to carry food with you, a restaurant is available to satisfy your hunger.

**+961 1 498775/6**

**lareserve.com.lb**

### Bkassine Forest

In the mountains near the town of Jezzine lies Bkassine Forest, an ideal location for ecotourism. In addition to it being the largest stone pine woodland in Lebanon, the forest is a delight to any nature lover as it hides waterfalls, hydraulic mills and a river. After setting up your tent, you can hike anywhere in the forest and enjoy its panoramic views of Mount Niha or the backbone of Mount



Photos courtesy of Camping Amchit Les Colombes

Lebanon. The trail includes many traditional features such as kilns, olive presses, old bridges and water sources along the river; that flow at the edge of the forest at an altitude of 500m. During Fall, the forest offers a unique canvas of colorful foliage.

**Samer Harfouche +961 3 237812**

## Where to get your camping equipment

### • La Maison du Ski

Feytroun Main Road

+961 9 958203

laisonduiski.net

### • Sports Experts Co

ABC Mall Ashrafiyeh +961 1 202555

Kaslik +961 9 223555

Feytroun +961 9 951555

sportsexpertsco.com

### • Mike Sport

Zalka Highway

+961 1 888855

mikesport.com ■





# Fun packed summer

**School is out and kids are thrilled. Summer vacation has begun! But for parents traveling with kids or families on an extended holiday, it won't take long before boredom kicks in. To avoid the frequent utterance of "I'm bored", Lebanon Traveler looks around for entertaining options to fill up the long days and ensure a positive and productive summer.**

## All about sports

### Jeunes Amis du Sport

The Jeunes Amis du Sport has been organizing activities for children with an emphasis on sports, since 1994. Their two month long daily summer camp has a variety of activities as well as several outings for children. Three days a week, children enjoy their time at the local "Le Collège des Peres Antonins-Baabda", participating in: rollers, basketball, football, climbing, flying fox etc...

The remaining two days are reserved for outings at water parks such as Waves and Water Gate, carting and other leisure parks like Adventure World. The price includes all activities and trips, a t-shirt, a cap and insurance.

**Age group 3 - 15**

**Date 6 July - 30 August**

**Price 275 USD**

**Contact +961 3 225865**

**jeunesamisdu sport.com**

### My Gym

My Gym has developed an extraordinary program and facility, devised to help children develop physically, cognitively and emotionally. Age-appropriate classes that incorporate music, dance, relays, games, special rides, gymnastics, sports and more allow children to have loads of fun as they gain strength, balance, coordination, agility and flexibility, while developing social skills, confidence and self-esteem. The summer camp will include gymnastics, football, basketball, water games, martial arts, cooking, planting, singing, dancing and field trips.

**Age group 3 - 12**

**Date July, August, September**

**Price 360 USD**

**Contact +961 3 641219**

**my-gym.com**



Photos courtesy of Kinderkamp

## Ecology and more

### Lebanese Adventure

For this summer season Lebanese Adventure is organizing two 10-day summer camps, during which kids will gain resourcefulness and self-esteem. Children will spend eight days at the lodge and two days camping outdoors. They will go on hikes, learn archery, enjoy rappelling and Tyrolienne and learn about teamwork, while playing games. On the artistic front, kids will participate in macramé, origami, and recycled paper workshop and learn all about photography. As for survival skills, kids will be introduced to firefighting, orienteering, and astronomy as well as Indian survival during a visit to the Chouf reserve.

Location Chouf (Ramlieh)

**Age group 8 - 14**

**Date 16 - 25 July, 30 July - 8 August**

**Price 800 USD/kid/camp**

**Contact +961 3 214989/234178**

**lebanese-adventure.com**

### La Reserve Afqa

With a mission to instill an awareness of the fragility of our ecosystem, and to guide them towards a respectful approach to nature, La Reserve Afqa organizes, all throughout the months of July, September and August, several 12-day camps for kids to enjoy nature related activities. Divided into different age groups of 12 kids max, participants enjoy climbing, rappelling, caving, mountain biking, lawn bowls, basketball, volleyball, badminton, hiking, archery and more. On the artistic side, activities are related to nature as well, from painting on pottery and mud sculptures to cooking and pastry, and learning about flora and fauna.

**Age group 8 - 15**

**Date July, August, September**

**Price 1485 USD**

**Contact +961 1 498775/6, +961 3 727484**

**lareserve.com.lb**

## Arts and crafts

### Busy Box

Busy Box is the place that unleashes your kid's creativity. Over the summer months, it offers activities that are also Ramadan themed. From gathering wood puzzle shapes, creating their own creatures, making a doll by fixing, cutting and sewing cloths to origami, decorating t-shirts with spray paint, making a summer hat and personalizing your cushions, kids will try their hand at every artistic medium to find their calling. During Ramadan camp, children will make beaded boxes for a charity savings, color calligraphic wood signs or use special glass paint to personalize glass tea mugs among other things.

**Age group 5 - 14**

**Date July 3 - End September**

**Price 22 USD/daily session**

**Contact +961 1740171, +961 3 333659**

### La Petite Academie

This school of painting and sculpture for children offers daily classes where kids can discover crafts, mosaics, glass and ceramic paintings, sculpture, music and guitar lessons and graffiti. Other

additional surprises await them as well. Kids will don a red apron provided by the academy and let their artistic inspirations flow. Although art is grounded on randomness and unpredictability, the teachers will also focus on the science and logic behind any artistic activity for well-rounded learning.

**Age group 4 - 12**

**Date July - August**

**Price 25 USD/session (1 1/2 hours), packages available**

**Contact +961 | 201353**

**lapetiteacademie.net**



Photos courtesy of La Reserve Afqa

## Out every day

### The Dolphins Junior Club

The Dolphins Club isn't really an indoor club at all. Kids are picked up from their homes, meet with their trainers and off they go! The daily program is quite varied: visit to Jbeil, a day at Waves, outdoor sports at Sharewood Camp, discoveries at Dinosaur City, tourism in Jeita or Beiteddine, a learning session at Tanayel Farm and treasure hunts and picnics just to name a few. There's always something to discover with Dolphins Club. Two 3-week camps will be available this season. The price includes transportation to and from home, activities and lunch.

**Age group 3 - 13**

**Date July, August**

**Price 500 USD**

**Contact +961 3 701420**

**dolphinsclub.net**

## Leisure time

### Mini Club Vel

Organized by a professional team, the Mini Club Vel offers a variety of sports and cultural activities for kids. Daily programs are available based on the age group. Sports include football, basketball, volleyball, tennis, ping pong, swimming, dance, judo, trampoline, gymnastics etc... As for leisure activities, children can enjoy circus workshops, magic workshops, music and songs, theater and cine clubs, and outings.

Club Vel is operated in different area and clubs including Chekka Summer Club (Chekka), VEL Village Vacances (Faraya), La Collina Country Club (Mtayleb) and Cap sur Ville (Dekwaneh).

Three available options: 2-month session, 1-month travel session, discovery session/12 participations.

**Age group 3 - 14**

**Date Varies upon location**

**Price Varies upon location**

**Contact +961 | 880962**

**groupevel.com**



Photos courtesy of Mini Club Vel



## Dent De Lait

Dent de Lait offers two summer camps this season for different age groups. For ages 1-5, the camp will take place at the Dent De Lait premises in Koraytem, where kids will enjoy a large array of activities such as painting, splashing pool, puppet shows, sign language, water games, storytelling, gardening, cooking, singing, science experiments, outdoor activities and games. For ages 5-12, Dent De Lait has a unique 8-week program held at the Golf Club. The themes comprise of amazing animals, arts and crafts, all star sports, challenge games, scouting, discovery and exploration, community service and back to roots.

**Age group 1 - 12**

**Date July, August, September**

**Price 155 USD/week**

**Contact +961 1 789103**

**dentdelait.com.lb**

## Scientific curiosity

### The Little Engineer

The Little Engineer is a unique platform enabling young minds to unleash their potential in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, through proven hands-on educational activities. Courses in renewable energy, highlighting wind and solar energy, as well as leveled courses in robotics and electro-mechanics are offered in flexible time slots. Children learn about solar cars and houses, robotics or the secrets of wind energy. Full courses of five 3-hour sessions are available on a daily, bi-weekly or weekly basis or full and half day, pay-as-you-go workshops. The Little Engineer centers are found all over Lebanon: Sodeco Square, Msaitbeh and Galaxy Mall.

**Age group 4 - 16**

**Date July, August, September**

**Price 15 - 200 USD**

**Contact +961 3 723715**

**thelittleengineer.com**

## On a musical note

### KinderKamp by Rola

With a mission to provide a customized educational experience by offering a safe and fun-filled enriching environment, KinderKamp in collaboration with Kindermusik, the award winning music and movement program, allows children to gain self confidence, develop leadership and team building skills, discover new interests and develop a natural sense of musical appreciation. The 8-week program focuses on themes from health and fitness, cooking and circus to careers around the world, nature discovery, the community and more.

Kindermusik is a weekly activity exclusive to KinderKamp, delivering age appropriate programs founded on the principals of safety, learning and pure enjoyment.

**Age group 3 - 12**

**Date July 2- August 24**

**Price 800 USD/8 weeks, 400 USD/4 weeks**

**Contact +961 3 241020**

**kinderkampbyrola.com**



Photos courtesy of Little Engineer

## Sea breeze

### Summer workshops with Nadine

In a traditional house, overlooking the Mediterranean, Nadine Tawil Abou hosts four one-week sessions, where kids enjoy learning, socializing, exercising and enhancing their knowledge and skills. Supervised by experts and specialized trainers, children play ping pong, football, chess etc... Yoga, theater and outdoor painting are available as well. The circus workshop allows kids to let out their inner juggler or acrobat, while soap and perfume workshops stimulate curiosity and creativity. Outings include an archeological adventure and fishing in Byblos. The 11-13 year old groups produce a short film and learn about multimedia and movie making.

**Age group 7 - 13**

**Date 2-9 July, 13-20 July, 23-30 July, 3-10 August**

**Price Varies according to session**

**Contact +961 3 366000**

**nadinea1@hotmail.com**

## Edutainment

### Ceramics N' More

Faithful to its tradition, Ceramics N' More is organizing once again an out-of-the-ordinary summer camp. This year the theme is travel across time and the exploration of the world from a historical perspective. By the end of summer, kids will have acquired a historian's critical eye. Kids will also dive into the makings and tastes of international cuisine, acquire lifelong manual skills and work in groups to support their community. A diversified program awaits children with trilingual educators to accompany them through edu-taining steps.

**Age group 5 - 12**

**Date 25 June - 14 September**

**Price 38 USD/day including lunch and materials**

**Contact +961 1 424516, +961 70 202723**

**ceramics-n-more.com ■**

# Musaher

## the charm of Ramadan

Photo courtesy of Joseph Abi Saab

He is the one who wakes sleepers. He is the one with the resonating voice, the one everybody waits for; the one kids follow. He is the "musaher". Sandra Khalil goes in search of this elusive character to find out his secret.

Musaher or musaharati is the name given to the person who, during the Moslem holy month of Ramadan, roams the streets of his village beating his drum to remind people to have their "suhur", the final meal before the beginning of the day's fast. During Ramadan, the faithful are to abstain from food and drink in a dawn-to-dusk period, meant to test their faith and discipline.

The musahers first appeared in the Abbasid era. Uqba bin Ishaq, then the ruler of Egypt, was the first person to walk around Cairo waking people up so they could have a bite before the start of another fasting day. In the Fatimid era, the government issued a decree advising people to sleep early during Ramadan, while soldiers were given the task of knocking on people's doors, waking them for the suhur. From then on, the musaher has been an integral feature of Ramadan in all Arab countries. Though a dying tradition, the musaher is one of the many charms of the holy month of Ramadan and has become an element of its folklore, just like the lantern and the iftar (the meal at the end of the day's fasting) canon.

The musaher's job starts an hour ahead of daybreak. He dresses up in his traditional getup, takes his drum and stick and leaves home on his noble mission. His chant vibrates in the silence of the night, "Esha ya nayem... Wahed el Dayem... Ramadan Karim... Esha ya nayem... Wahed al razaq" meaning, "Awake faster and praise Allah... Welcome Ramadan, month of forgiveness", followed by three beats of the drum. As he passes by the houses, he calls each resident by their name to make sure his duty is fulfilled. Because his task is to wake everybody up, the musaher makes so much noise that he can be heard in all directions. After they take their pre-dawn meals, traditionally men and women head to the mosque for morning prayers.

Being a musaher is not a job; it's a calling and a religious duty. The musaher does not get paid for what he does. He does it out of faith. In the old days, they were highly respected for their devotion and were considered wise men due to their incredible memory as they remembered the name of each and every resident of their village. Today, they are just a manifestation of a beautiful tradition. Nonetheless, those fortunate enough to have a musaher in their neighborhood regard him with great esteem. Since the musaher does not get paid for what he does, each resident makes sure to tip him, either with money or food, to show their gratitude at the end of the holy month.

Nowadays, with alarm clocks and different forms of entertainment that can keep you up all night, the musaher is becoming obsolete. The younger generation is not interested in learning the craft especially that it serves nostalgic purposes.

Unless you are staying in a village with locals, as a tourist, you might not catch a musaher in action. However, you can still experience the charm of Ramadan by attending an iftar, or by spending time with locals in what's known as a Ramadan tent. Should you happen to be in the old Bab al Ramel district of Tripoli, or the old souks of Sidon, stop by in the evening for a thirst-quenching cup of tea, a refreshing glass of Jellab made from raisin and grape molasses, or a filling glass of Amaredine, made from dried apricot syrup. Play backgammon with one of the locals and share a shisha. And, if you start feeling a bit peckish, there's an endless choice of sweet or savory dishes to satisfy your hunger:

If you cannot make it to a souk then many hotels and restaurants throughout the country serve sumptuous iftars, tables are laden with appetizers for all to share as those fasting wait for the obligatory bowl of soup. But a traditional way to break one's fast is first with a date and a glass of Jellab or Amaredine. Then comes the main course and by the time dessert arrives most are full and there is little room for more food. At hotel or restaurant suhurs, buffets are the norm and dessert is definitely on the menu. If you are around during Ramadan you are sure into to bump into an event or two. Ramadan kareem, or let Ramadan be generous.

**saida.gov.lb**

**tripoli.gov.lb** ■

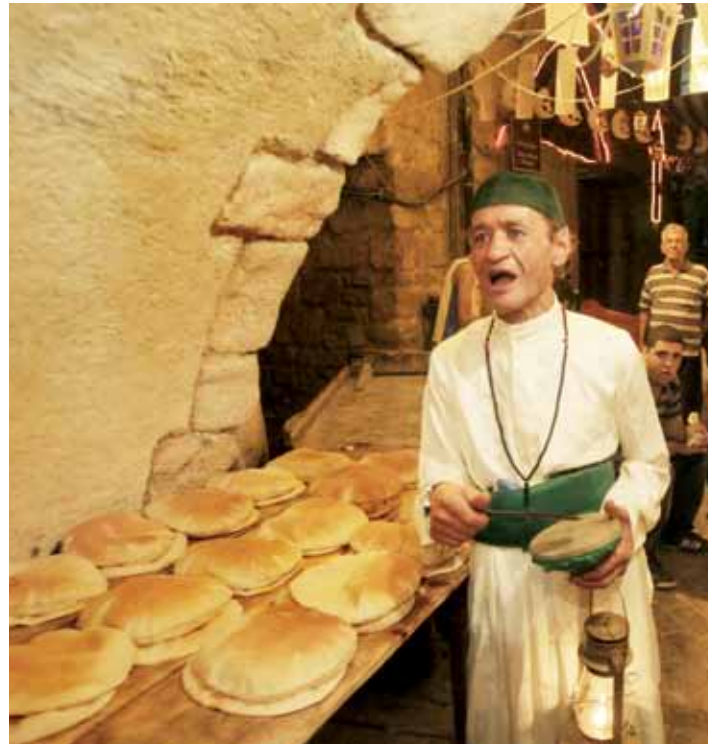


Photo courtesy of Mohammed Zaatari



Photo courtesy of Raafat Naim

# Come for the festival stay for the weekend



This year, Lebanon's summer festivals offer an impressive line-up of cultural events. However, there is a lot more to see in these areas other than a stellar performance. Opportunities abound to enjoy a brief holiday a few miles away from the festivals, with comfortable accommodations, good restaurants, and amazing natural sites and enriching cultural encounters. We took a look at some of the places you can stay overnight or longer, to explore the lesser known treasures, before and after the show.

The new **Byblos Sur Mer (+961 9 548000)** hotel offers five-star standards directly by the sea for those wanting to attend the festival there. The 30-room boutique hotel breathes romance and tranquility, with artisanal touches like plush oriental carpets, locally embroidered wall hangings and cabinet handles, crafted from seashells. **eHotel (+961 9 545999)** owned by Edde Sands is also a hip spot for snoozing after the show, with newly refurbished suites and modern bungalows that can comfortably accommodate up to four adults. In Batroun, the hillside **Batroun Village Club (+961 6 744336)** or casual beachside **San Stephano Hotel (+961 6 643201)** are budget friendly and just as much fun. For the slightly more adventurous, **Les Colombes (+961 9 622401)** – a picturesque camping site in Amchit and not far from Byblos is a hidden natural refuge where one can enjoy the beauty of the beach and the sound of the waves. Pitch a tent or stay in one of their small but tidy studio chalets. **Hotel Douma (+961 6 520106)** is 15 minutes away from Assia Pottery and has a lovely view of the mountains. The Laklouk **Shangri-La Hotel (+961 9 430006)** offers breathtaking vistas from its verandas the 1950's and 1960's vintage furniture and bamboo-themed bar lend the place a classic retro vibe.

To spend a night in luxury, the **Mir Amine Palace (+961 5 501315)** is a historical boutique hotel just a five-minute drive away from Beitiddine Palace, where the Beitiddine festival takes place. It was built from the ruins of the original palace and has 22 rooms decorated in an oriental style. Drawings by the famous French artist and writer Jean Cocteau still adorn its walls. The new wing is more luxurious for an overnight stay and the hotel cafe is a good spot to stop for a fancy tea. For a more rustic, yet equally charming overnight stay, the **Beit El**

**Hana guesthouse (+961 70 103222)** in the village of Maasser el Chouf, which lies at the edge of the cedar forest, offers opportunities to meet other nature lovers, savor organic meals, and be completely overtaken by the tranquility of the place. Beit El Hana guesthouse is quaint and perfect for couples, while the **St. Michel Auberge (+961 5 350451)** is ideal for families and youth groups. Other options include La Bastide, a modest guesthouse in Deir El Qamar, with a view on the Chouf Mountain, and the **Ashkar House (+961 3 354558)** in Khreibeh.

If you are heading to Baalbeck the **West Bekaa Country Club (+961 8 645601)** in Kherbet Anafar and the **Chtaura Park Hotel (+961 8 540011)** in Chtoura offer reasonable rates and attractive grounds for enjoying a relaxing weekend escape. For contemporary history, visit the **Palmyra Hotel (+961 8 370230)** and step into the past. The colonial-era relic remains unchanged since the 1960's and still maintains its star-studded guest book on display inscribed with names, such as the likes of General Charles de Gaulle. The hotel was used as a headquarters by the German army in WWI and a British army in WWII. The new annex of the hotel is much more comfortable than its historical counterpart, though both have a phenomenal view over the ruins. **Pension Shouman (+961 8 372685)** is clean with all of the basics and has 5 small rooms that also overlook the ruins. **Wada B&B (+961 8 320239)** in Deir El Ahmar and the **Al Rachid (+961 70 211503)** in Jdeydet El Fekha are warm and friendly guesthouses. And, the **Taanayel Ecolodge (+961 3 124279)** is a unique and fun experience from Arc en Ciel, which restored and transformed traditional houses in the Bekaa into rustic and colorful chalets that reflect the culture of the valley. The eco-lodge organizes cultural and sport activities for guests.

# Summer 2012 calendar

## June - September

### International Heritage Day

Various locations throughout Lebanon

+961 | 390138

## 13 - 15 June

### Annual Chebaa Festival

+961 3 672262

## June 17

### Cherry Day in Hammana

Laura Hatem +961 5 530109

## 21 June - 25 August

### Batroun International Festival

+ 961 3 105700

## 25 June \*

### Slash

Byblos International Festival

## 28, 29, 30 June \*

### Caracalla's Once Upon a Time

Beiteddine International Festival

+961 | 373430

## 29 June \*

### Chico and the Gypsies

Baalbeck International Festival

+961 | 373150

## 29 June

### Lighting Festival

Jounieh International Festival

jouniehinternationalfestival.com

## July

### Tyre and South Festival

+961 | 791252

tyrefestival.com

## July - August

### Kulturzentrum Festival

+ 961 9 835572

## 1 July - 5 August

### Star El Metn Festival

+ 961 3 331663

## 4 July \*

### Julien Clerc

Byblos International Festival

## 5 July \*

### BB King

Byblos International Festival

## Zucchero

Baalbeck International Festival

## 6 July \*

### Charles Aznavour

Jounieh International Festival

## 7 July \*

### Sylvie Guillem and Russel

### Maliphant

Beiteddine International Festival

## Saber Rebai

Baalbeck International Festival

## Zajal Festival Bdedoon

+961 3 326902

## 8 July

### Biggest Cup of Lemonade

+961 6 741430

## Chris de Burgh \*

Jounieh International Festival

## 10 July \*

### California All Star Blues Band

Zouk Mikael international

Festival

## 11 July \*

### Ute Lemper

Byblos International Festival

## 11 - 21 July

### Rachmaya Lives Joy

+961 3 331116

## 12 July \*

### A Night of Tarab, Muwashahat and Qudud

Beiteddine International Festival

## 12 - 16 July

### Anjar International Festival

+961 | 787074

## 13 July \*

### Jessye Norman

Baalbeck International Festival

## 14 July \*

### The Cranberries

Beiteddine International Festival

## Carole Samaha

Zouk Mikael international

Festival

## Kadim Al Sahir

Byblos International Festival

## 15 July \*

### Mashrou' Leila

Baalbeck International Festival

## 17 July \*

### The Dizzy Gillespie All Star Big

Band with Randa Ghossoub

Beiteddine International Festival

## Snow Patrol

Byblos International Festival

## 18 July \*

### Jose Carreras & Monica Yunus

Zouk Mikael international

Festival

## 25 July - 1 September

### Faqra Festival

+961 9 710160

## 25 July \*

### Tinariwen

Byblos International Festival

## 26 July \*

### La Boheme

Beiteddine International Festival

## 28 July

### Kfartay Festival

+961 3 648320

## 28 - 29 July

### Houmal Nights

+ 961 5 942794

## August

### Ehdeniyat

+961 6 208090

ehdeniyat.com

## Deir Al Qalaa Festival

Beit Mery Municipality

+961 4 870702

## 5 - 6 August

### Transfiguration Day

Rachaya Haramoun

+ 961 3 639776

## 11 - 14 August

### Jezzine Festival

+961 3 307173

## 15 August

### Eid El Saydeh

Various locations throughout

the country

## 16 August - 16

## September

### Summer of Freykeh

+961 3 425280

## Mid August - 8

## September

### Sunfields Festival

Meghdouche

+961 3 079103

## 25 August \*

### Majida El Roumi

Batroun International Festival

## September

### Batma Festival

+961 3 653745

## 21 - 23 September

### Bkassine Festival

Samer Harfouch

+ 961 3 237812

\* ticketingboxoffice.com

## Airport

**Rafic Hariri  
International Airport**  
+961 | 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](http://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 Str (better known as Lion), the Bristol Hotel, Verdun, Cola, the airport and Kafaat before reaching it's 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. One 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 should have a fire extinguisher in the car; wear your seatbelt at all times and 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; more in areas outside the capital. Almost all establishments have generators automatically set to operate when the power cuts.

## Tipping

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

## Transport

### **Outside Beirut Charles Helou**

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.

## Useful numbers

+961 | 449557 Beyond Beirut  
[beyondbeirut.com](http://beyondbeirut.com)

+961 | 340940 Ministry of  
Tourism

[lebanon-tourism.gov.lb](http://lebanon-tourism.gov.lb)

+961 International Code

112/999 Internal Security

125 Civil Defense

140 Red Cross

175 Fire Department

120 Directory

1515 OGERO Directory

1718 Weather



A woman's face is the central focus, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Her hair is replaced by a crown of chocolate, fruit, and flowers. The chocolate is dark and glossy, with some pieces splashing out. The fruit includes a slice of orange, a slice of yellow fruit, a slice of red fruit, and a bunch of green grapes. There are also red flowers and other smaller fruits scattered throughout the crown. The background is a dark, textured grey.

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