

Lebanon Traveler

A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut - Issue 8 September - December 2013

Lebanon 8,000 LBP



55+
HIKES
TO TEST

Outdoor adventures
*paragliding
in the skies*

**Ultimate
guide to**
Mar Mikhael

10
**MUST VISITS
IN ANJAR**

60
PAGES
of people
places &
products

The art of
OULD making

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Lufthansa



Lebanon Traveler

unveils the country's hidden treasures

As the summer hustle and bustle fades away, temperatures drop and the leaves change color; fall slowly invades our surroundings. Feeling relaxed, mellow and full of energy, we gladly welcome the season with good vibes to spare.

In this issue, Lebanon Traveler invites you to take a stroll in the vibrant area of Mar Mikhael and discover its unique offerings. Explore the diversity of religions that characterize our country through walking religious tours, or learn all about the art of silk making in its dedicated museum in Bsous. And, if you are in the mood for a change, take a drive to Anjar for eco-tourism and Armenian culture.

Get a new perspective of your local scenery as you paraglide in the sunny skies and get your adrenaline level back to normal in our hidden gems B&B review. Venture to Rashaya al Wadi to taste the classic Lebanese dish, hrisseh and discover the secrets of oud making. Finally, go back in time to learn all about how olives and olive oil preoccupied the villagers during this season.

If scenic exercise is more your thing, you can choose a hike from our extensive calendar or change scenery at one of our getaways... One thing's for sure, this fall, feeling bored is not an option.

THE LEBANON TRAVELER TEAM

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



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

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MACAM opens its doors in Jbeil

In June, a new Lebanese art space opened its doors to the public. Situated in the village of Alita, about seven kilometers above Jbeil, the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum (MACAM), is the brainchild of art historian Cesar Nammour and Gabriela Shaub – the co-founders of the RectoVerso art library, which houses over 1,000 books about art in Lebanon. Located in a pair of former factories, from the 1970s – devoted to cement and art supplies, respectively – MACAM launched itself with a pair of events.

“Taking Shape” an exhibition of 400 sculptures, installations and ceramics by 60 artists including Randa Nehmeh, Saloua Raouda Choucair, Naim Doumit, Bachir Khoury and Samir Muller, working in stone, metal and wood – a first of its kind. Alongside this, MACAM displayed “Converting a Factory into a Museum,” a design competition, where 45 students from six Lebanese universities – AUB, LAU, NDU, USEK, LU and ALBA – proposed 25 pieces on the same theme.

macamlebanon.org



MACAM was founded as a non-profit organization, in December 2012, for the sole purpose of establishing the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art. Since its establishment, the founding organization has received a donation of land with a 4,000 sq. m factory building in Alita. The museum will grow in two stages. In its initial stage, it will use the factory as its premises after introducing a few basic changes while a complete renovation and provision of a modern facility will come at a later date. The museum is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12 - 7 pm.

Another success for the annual Beirut Art Fair

The fourth edition of the Beirut Art Fair, to be held in BIEL from September 19 to 22, stands out as a significant platform for the promotion of contemporary art and design in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia regions.

Over the years, the Beirut Art Fair has whet collectors' appetites for all art forms: paintings, sculptures, designs, installation art, video and photography. On a larger scale, artists from the diversified region have found in the Fair an important platform to express themselves and enhance their visibility.

Beirut Art Week, in collaboration with Solidere, will take place from September

18 to 24, displaying monumental artworks in the streets and shops of Downtown Beirut. Momo at the Souks (MATS) has commissioned Penique Productions for two major urban art installations. Penique productions is an international collective of artists with various creative backgrounds that collaborate to create temporary structures, from Spain, Mexico, Italy, Brazil and lately Paris' Fashion Week with Maison Martin Margiela. The largest installation will be displayed at MATS, from September 17 to 24, as part of the Beirut Art Week. The second installation will be displayed in the BIEL VIP Lounge for the duration of the Beirut Art Fair.



collectifkahraba.org/spectacles

Nehna Wel Amar Wel Jiran celebrates the arts

The third annual Nehna wel Amar wel Jiran, brought to you by the performing arts company Collectif Kahraba, took over the neighborhood of Mar Mikhael around the Vendôme stairs for three consecutive nights. From September 6 - 8, this free outdoor festival offered theatre, dance, puppetry, storytelling and music. Taking the form of a guided tour, small happenings occurred throughout the evening. The quartier became a welcoming space animated by encounters, interactions and collaborations between neighbors, guests, amateurs, professionals, artists, children and adults alike.

menasart-fair.com



The Shouf Cedar Reserve comes alive

Under the patronage of the Minister of Culture, Gaby Layoun and in partnership with Al Shouf Cedar Natural Reserve, O de Rose presented "La Randonnée Musicale 2013," an open-air musical event in support of local NGOs, Chance (Children Against Cancer) and "Offre Joie (Farah el Ataa)". The all-day event took place at the Shouf Reserve on August 25.

Lebanese artists from different musical backgrounds were invited to perform at the Reserve, Lebanon's largest natural habitat of flora and fauna. Performers included Adel Harb, Al Kamandjati - Beit Atfal Assumoud, Allen Seif - "OAK", Beirut Vocal Point, the Barock Ensemble, Camille & Lory, Jebbara Unity Drums, Joy Fayad, LeBAM, Marc Nader, and Nachaz. Internationally acclaimed Lebanese Canadian jazz singer, Randa Ghossoub, also performed live, with her band at the Auberge Saint-Michel - Arcenciel in Maasser el Shouf.

Despite the difficulties they faced in shaping an event of this caliber amid security concerns, Lara Kanso, owner of O de Rose and Raja Abdallah, organizing partner expressed their assurance that "through events such as the Randonnée Musicale, where music and nature are celebrated," they would reach their ultimate goal which was not only to support causes that are very dear to their hearts, but also to make a statement about Lebanese perseverance.



MAD cooking in Copenhagen from Tawlet

Tawlet Restaurant and Souk el Tayeb's 20 chefs cooked lunch on August 25, at the Food Festival MAD 3 in Copenhagen, Denmark for 600 of the world's top chefs, food writers and food professionals like Rene Redzepi, Alain Ducasse, Alex Attla, David Chang, Fergus Henderson, Allan Jenkins, to name a few.

MAD (food in Danish) was established in 2011 by René Redzepi, chef of the renowned restaurant Noma, named best restaurant in the world for the past three years, by the British Magazine Restaurant.

Souk el Tayeb's lunch included tastes and flavors from all over Lebanon: Rima's manaiish zaatar, Jamileh's tabbouleh, Maysoun's fattoush, Fadia's moutabal,


soukeltayeb.com



Sona's lentil kefte and horra' osbao, Josephine's samkeh harra, Zeinab's frikeh, Zeina's hrisseh. This year's theme, dubbed "Guts" welcomed foods like Jony's bayd ghanam, Suzane's kebbeh nayeh, Nada's isenett, Georgina's fweregh... >



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hospitalitynewsmag.com

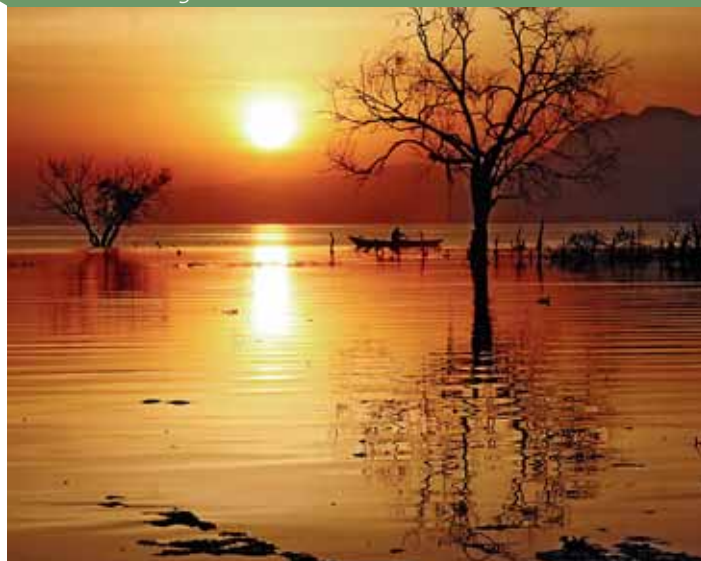
Upcoming events

Tourism spotlights water

World Tourism Day is celebrated annually on September 27. Its purpose is to foster awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value. The event seeks to address the global challenges outlined in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and highlight the tourism sector's contribution in reaching these goals.

In support of United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation, World Tourism Day (WTD) 2013 is being held under the theme Tourism and Water: Protecting our Common Future. This year's theme highlights tourism's role in water access and shines a spotlight on the actions currently being taken by the sector in order to contribute to a more sustainable water future, as well as the challenges that lay ahead.

wtd.unwto.org



wtmlondon.com

Gear up for World Responsible Tourism Day



The pioneering WTM World Responsible Tourism Day, in association with the UNWTO, hosts the world's most comprehensive, searching and thought-provoking agenda on responsible tourism on November 6.

This is the one defining day in the year that travel companies, destinations, organizations, employees and suppliers come together across the world in a remarkable expression of this new way of thinking.

Its aim is to inspire, push the boundaries, question long held beliefs and opinions

and highlight good practices. Key debates and workshops on crucial responsible tourism issues facing the industry today, are both challenging and provocative.

In Lebanon, the responsible tourism tour operator Responsible Mobilities will celebrate this Day with a conference about responsible tourism to be held at the ministry of tourism and a 2-day trip, November 7 to 8, will be operated in cooperation with the Shouf Cedar Biosphere Reserve.

Run for Lebanon

The 11th annual Beirut Marathon is scheduled to take place on Sunday, November 10. "Run for Lebanon", this year's Banque du Liban Beirut Marathon campaign slogan has taken on an even more pertinent meaning this year, amid regional security concerns. Founder May El-Khalil created the race in 2003 as a means to inspire unity through sports. "What and who could be more worthy to run for? Let's run for making Lebanon a

country of peace, beauty, civilization, and harmonious living", said El-Khalil.

More than 33,000 people registered for last year's race and organizers are hopeful that the new spirit of the current campaign will "create a sense of solidarity for the country, and a renewed sense of confidence in its potential."

beirutmarathon.org



GO RED AT NIGHT

INTRODUCING THE NEW DINNER MENU

Enjoy an early drink at **The Bar**, followed by a cozy dinner at **The Grill Room**. Discover our selection of gourmet salads and appetizers followed by a unique choice of Prime Meats, especially imported for **Four Seasons Beirut**. Choose your favourite cut from the meat tray and enjoy it perfectly grilled to your liking.



the Grill
Room



For more information and your reservations,
please call 01 761 600 or email us at
thegrillroom.bei@fourseasons.com



FOUR SEASONS HOTEL
Beirut

Baalbeck – the compelling ‘Sun City’ of the ancient world

Originally a Phoenician town thought to have been inhabited since 9000 BC, Baalbeck was a place of pilgrimage for the Sky God ‘Baal’ and his Queen of Heaven ‘Astarte’



Today, it is a part of the controversial but beautiful Bekaa Valley of modern day Lebanon, located between the Litani and Orontes (Al Aasi) rivers at an altitude of 1,170 meters, above sea level. For residents of the Levant, it is

the intersection between the main east-west and north-south trading circles of the region. For me, it is a marvelous example of historical architecture that I was delighted to discover for myself one hot and sunny afternoon last June.

I had heard many a mention of this metropolis, but was yet to stand before the impressive row of age-old pillars. Finally, well-hydrated, guidebook in hand and my energetic sister by my side, we set off on an 85 km mini expedition by road from Beirut to our destination. Excitement slowly started to build as we approached – we were about to see an important piece of the past, practically in our backyard! Unfolding ourselves from the car, we were welcomed by caretakers of the municipality, who pointed us in the right direction. We had arrived at Baalbeck – a UNESCO World Heritage site, as of 1984.

Immediately, our attention was drawn to the pale orange-sandy color of the immense and somewhat irregularly shaped rock structures. There was a steep flight of steps to the main grounds above, challenging us. Climbing to the top, our minds were immediately transported to the 1st millennium BC. In Alexander the Great's reign, in 334 BC, Baalbeck was known as Heliopolis (City of the Sun) and in 47 BC, it was Julius Caesar's Roman colony, in what is now Syria.

Once the site of rituals like ‘sacred prostitution’ and bloody other forms of worship, this was the foundation of the three famous temples – of Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus – an extended project begun in 60 BC, built by 100,000 slaves and finished 120 years later. The Temple of Jupiter originally featured 54 of the largest such columns in the world – 22.9m high and 2.2 m thick. Only six have survived the ravages of time and the elements. As for the historically beautiful Temple of Bacchus, there are 30 steps just to get to the entrance. The perimeter consists of 23 columns and there are still faintly visible primeval scenes – lions



Pieces of time gone by

and bulls, cornucopias and Roman gods such as Mars and Diana, which demonstrates the artistic expertise and mindset of the people of that time.

In the years that followed, there was a back and forth power struggle for control over the complex between various rulers and their respective religions.

Despite all the destruction between pagan parties of rule and Christians as well as natural causes, the ruins of Baalbeck are rather remarkable, and remain an example of the world's best-preserved Roman temple designs.

Coming back to the present and now that you may have been enticed to embark on your own explorations of the intriguing old town of Baalbeck, it is important to have on the right adventure gear to protect yourself from the heat and of course, minimize the chances of scrapes as you scramble mountain-goat style for that perfect photo opportunity between the mammoth stones and hard-to-reach nooks.

"Excitement slowly started to build as we approached— we were about to see an important piece of the past, practically in our backyard!"



The striking ruins lay spread out before us

GETTING THERE

By public transport

Mini buses from the Cola intersection: 4,000 LBP/Person

Chartered Buses 9,500 LBP - 44,500 LBP

All travel agencies offer tours to Baalbek.

WHERE TO EAT & STAY

Riviera Restaurant +961 6 370296

Palmyra Hotel +961 6 370011

Hotel Jupiter +961 6 376715

ON-SITE BASICS

Admission to the ruins is 12,000 LBP (children under 8 enter free) and the site is open to the public as early as 8:30 am to sunset; around 7:00 pm during the summer season. If you would like a personal tour, guides charge about 20,000 LBP an hour, or you can choose to wander wherever your curiosity takes you.

CONTACTS

Five Star Tours +961 1 347773

Kurban Travel +961 1 614914

Wild Discovery +961 1 565646

R. Rida International +961 4 718790

Lebanon Taxi +961 76 464617

Allo Taxi 1213 (from within Lebanon)

BAALBECK TAKES CENTER STAGE

In 1956, then Lebanese President Camille Chamoun officially named and declared the Baalbeck International Festival, a government institution. It is held in the most unique venue of the ruins of the Temples of Bacchus and Jupiter and has featured international and local plays, opera, pop and jazz concerts, dance performances by the likes of Caracalla, shows from the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and beyond.



A glimpse of the semi-underground museum

Unforgettable moments



We asked our sustainable tourism experts for their suggestions about such destinations for this autumn



WALKING IN NATURE

Pascal Abdallah, tourism development consultant, as well as managing director of **Responsible**

Mobilities, proposes a tour in the Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve. It was declared Lebanon's third biosphere reserve, in 2009, after Shouf and Jabal Rihane. Jabal Moussa extends between "Nahr Ibrahim" (the Adonis) and the "Nahr EdDahab" rivers, ranging in altitude from 500 to 1,575 m, above sea level.

You may start your ecotourism hiking day at "Baydar esh-Shawk," the upper entrance of the reserve, where Elias the local guide will be glad to accompany you on the trails of his childhood forest. The first part of the walk crosses oak and pine forests. On your way he will point

out common plants such as the peony and the marjoram. And if you are quiet enough you will succeed in meeting the hyrax, a small mammal, called the "tabsoon" in Arabic, lying peacefully on the grey limestone rocks.

The second part of the walk is the most interesting since you will be amazed by the autumn colors, in the heart of the pristine forest composed of hop-hornbeam trees and flowering ash trees. The trail then leads you to a giant cross, where there is a panoramic view overlooking Yahshoush and Nahr Ibrahim valley. Elias will enchant you with cultural information about the surrounding villages and the legend of Adonis, the Greek god of beauty.

On your way back you can have a rest at the mountain refuge known locally as the el-Byoot site. The last part is a downhill winding trail that leads to the hamlet of el-Msheteh, where you can have a traditional meal at the local guesthouse owned by Nazih Nader.

With Nazih, you may visit a 1,500 m long Roman stairway in el-Msheteh known locally as "el-daraj el-Roumani." If you continue by car to el-Ghineh village, you can visit one of the most beautiful Byzantine mosaic remains of Lebanon and the rock carving known as the rock of Adonis, representing a hunter being aggressed by a huge animal.

The Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve has a high ecological and socio-cultural value waiting for you to be discovered in a very responsible way, due to the high quality level management of the Association of Protection of Jabal Moussa that coordinates its development and conservation programs closely with the local communities of the region.

Responsible Mobilities +961 3 451113
Christelle Abou Chabke (APJM)
 +961 9 643464



THE SIMPLE LIFE

Gilbert Moukheiber, managing director of **33 North** is also an alternative tourism consultant, as well as a mountain guide and rescuer. This autumn, he invites you to join Lebanon's shepherds and be part of a unique nomadic experience, dedicated to promoting

their way of living. The 33 North shepherd's house, which will be your campsite, is located in Mount Lebanon's Mnaitra at 1,800 m, above sea level.

From here you may pick your choice of several adventure trips. This could be one to several days' hiking, or you could experience the migration of livestock with the shepherds and their way of living, daily tasks and 4-WD trips to the Cedars plateau and Kornet es Sawda, the highest point in Lebanon.

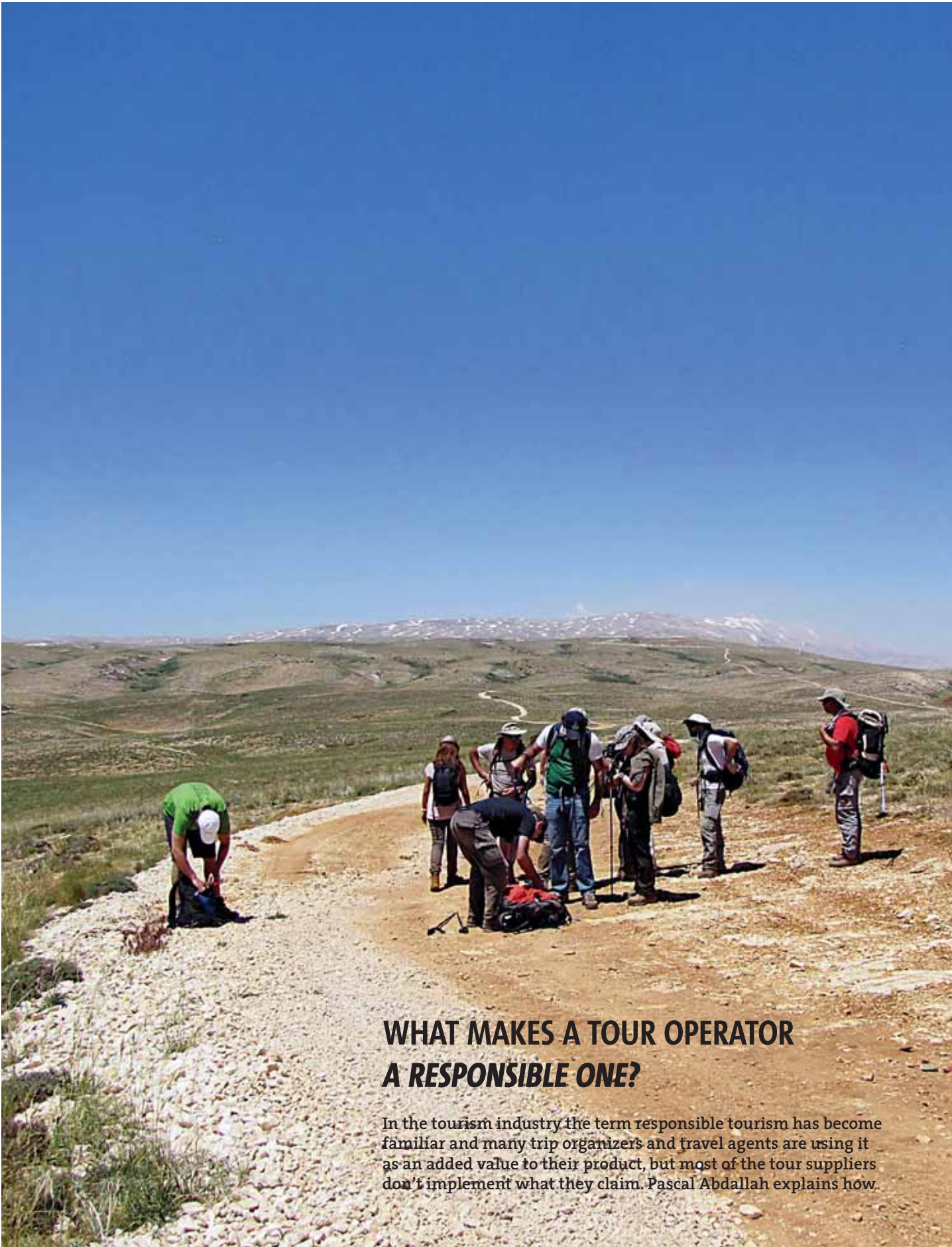
You will be accommodated in Bedouin tents and have the chance to savor authentic local cuisine, all in a picturesque framework. Most importantly is that you adopt the principles of leaving no trace behind.

33 North +961 71 331138 >



Photo courtesy of Pierre Sakr





WHAT MAKES A TOUR OPERATOR A RESPONSIBLE ONE?

In the tourism industry the term responsible tourism has become familiar and many trip organizers and travel agents are using it as an added value to their product, but most of the tour suppliers don't implement what they claim. Pascal Abdallah explains how.

Here are the three most important areas and actions that should be undertaken in practice by a tour operator, in order to be considered responsible

1. Economic equity

- Uses local accommodation facilities
- Uses local guesthouses
- Always pays the price of the service offered in a fair and timely fashion
- Always eats locally, asking for local traditional food
- Always purchases other needed products locally
- Encourages local craftsmanship
- Encourages local agriculture
- Supports youth locally
- Doesn't seek special treatment

2. Environment Protection

- At the business office
 - Tends towards energy efficiency
 - Tends towards a water management system and program
 - Tends towards waste water management and reducing the use of chemicals
- Installs a waste recycling system
- Projects to invest in electrical transportation means
- Forbids the use of motorized vehicles (Quads, Skidoos) in the wilderness
- Chooses partners who have the same vision
- Provides walking in nature for peaceful discovery
- Prioritizes protected areas for visits
- Hires knowledgeable tour guides for nature interpretation
- Organizes nature conservancy events

3. Social cohesion

- Always thinks at the micro local level
- Supports local initiatives
- Always hires a local guide
- Prepares the visit before visitors' arrival
- Gives details to visitors before they travel to destination
- Tends towards slowpaced tourism
- Respects local traditions
- Forbids photography unless well prepared and with permission
- Sends small group numbers to destinations
- Respects carrying capacity of the place visited
- Thinks about safety first
- Encourages local identity
- Listens to his visitors by filling and analyzing the visitor's feedback sheet



10 things to do in **Անյա՛ր**

Anjar, meaning unresolved or running river in Armenian, is also known as Haoush Mousa in the area. The town's history is comparable to an unrelenting roller coaster of events, ultimately culminating in the unexpected yet simply impressive Anjar of today

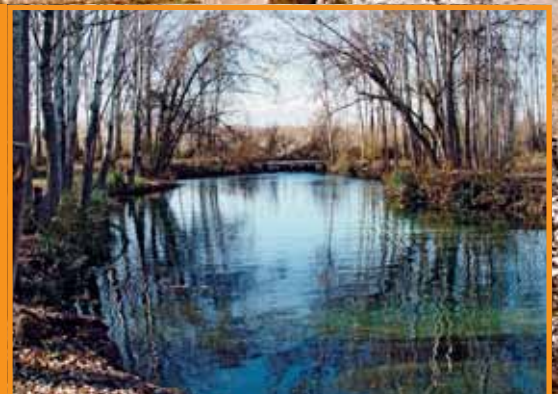
1. MEET THE LOCALS

When talking about Anjar, it's impossible not to mention the Mousadaghians (the area is almost entirely populated by Armenians from the Mousa Dagh area of Turkey). In Franz Werfel's epic novel "The Forty Days of Mousa Dagh," he highlights the historic battle between Armenian villagers who held their ground against thousands of Turkish soldiers. With the help of the French government the same population was, in 1939, obliged to leave their homeland and eventually settle in Anjar. Since then, they've tirelessly worked to transform what was basically barren land into a rich landscape. Originally combmakers, shoemakers, blacksmiths and carpenters but through agriculture and beautification they succeeded in making Anjar green. Anjar residents today also specialize as goldsmiths, artists, restaurateurs and suppliers of pantry essentials. By just walking through the village you can meet the locals and chat with them.



2. ECO-TOURISM

Nature has endowed Anjar with two water sources: **Nabaa Anjar** and **Nabaa Shamseen**. They are tributaries to the Litani River, joining it at about 25 km to the south, but on their way, they have created a marsh, which is today subject to protection by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL). The area is also a bird sanctuary for endangered species like the Syrian Serin, as well as a bottleneck for African Eurasian Water Birds. The protected flora and fauna is also home to the common otter, which you may be able to spot feeding on fish at Al Jazire restaurant's trout pond. ➤



3. FESTIVALS & MUSIC

The **Feast of the Holy Cross** is a special day in Anjar. The locals celebrate this Christian holiday every year in mid-September by preparing *hrisseh*, a stew made of wheat and meat. The twist is that it's prepared the traditional way, in 40 giant outdoor vats to symbolize the 40 days of resistance in Mousa Dagh. After an official ceremony and mass, the celebration continues till the evening, as the *hrisseh* is passed out to all the townspeople.

Music also plays a big role in people's lives. No wedding is complete without the traditional folk instruments to usher in the bride and groom. The "davul zurna" can be heard echoing through the trees – the "davul", a large double-headed cylindrical drum is almost always played by hand with two "zurnas", sharp quarter-tone oboes. Anjar also has an **International Arts Festival**, which takes place in September.



4. HISTORIC SITES

Before uncovering the ruins of Anjar, Lebanon boasted archeological evidence of almost every stage of Arab history except for the Umayyads, an Islamic caliphate hailing from Mecca. The Umayyads under Caliph Walid Ibn Aabd el-Malek founded the city of Anjar at the beginning of the 8th century. It is an example of an inland commercial center, at the crossroads of two important routes: one leading from Beirut to Damascus and the other linking Homs to Palestine crossing the Bekaa Valley. The city enjoyed only a brief existence. In 744, Caliph Ibrahim, son of Walid, was defeated and the partially destroyed city was abandoned. Visit the Great Palace, the remains of the mosque, the public baths and possibly the first mall in existence, with remnants of 600 shops in the shopping arcade.



5. RESTAURANTS

Food and ambiance are key to a successful eatery and Anjar has them in abundance. A visit to **Restaurant Al Shams** (+961 8 620567), serving Lebanese/Armenian cuisine, with its patented potato balloons, is a must. The restaurant has just earned its first ISO certification. **Nabaa Anjar's** (+961 8 620590) setting is just as delightful as the food. A pretty duck pond and watermill are the highlights of the landscape. And if you're in the mood for Armenian music along with your meal, try **Brother's Pub & Restaurant** (+961 8 622654). Or, for a true hidden gem, **Al Jazire** (+961 8 620733) is the place to be. Feed the trout and ducks or go on a leisurely canoe ride after lunch.

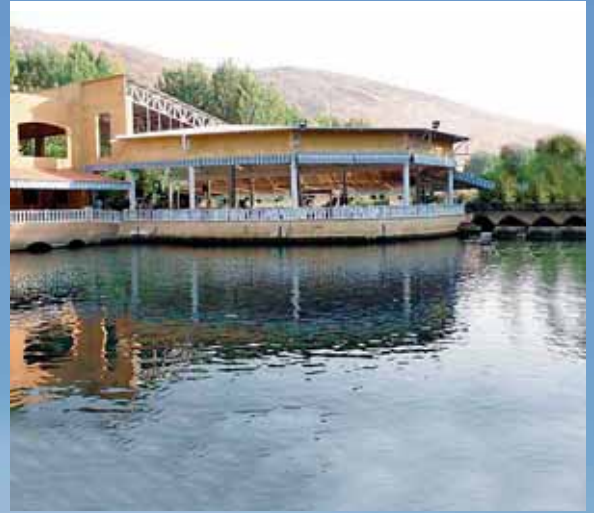
CONTACTS

Razmig Restaurant +961 8 620822

Casino Ain Anjar +961 8 620811

Alik Palace +961 8 621668

Challalat Anjar +961 8 620753



6. STAY OVERNIGHT

Anjar swells to almost double its population in summer, due to Armenians from the diaspora who vacation there. The lack of accommodations was noticeable up until recently, with new hotels popping up all over the village. **Hotel Layali Al Shams** (+961 8 622600) – established by Al Shams restaurant – offers charming luxury accommodations. For a more modest stay, **Wild Island** (+961 8 622577) rents out bungalows for guests set against the backdrop of the wetlands. It also boasts a large swimming pool.

Hotel Anjar +961 8 620753 ▶



7. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The SPNL has partnered with **Great Escape**, as a local tour operator, to conduct eco-tourism activities that teach about the Important Bird Area (IBA), different wildlife species, bird watching, hiking and biking. Contact **Andre Bechara** (+961 3 360027) or stop by the visitor's center for more information. Trails are available along the water-course from the Anjar spring to its wetlands. Bicycle or donkey tours of the agricultural fields, in addition to agro-tourism activities, a picnic area, camp-sites and a visit to observe one of the best panoramic views of the Bekaa Valley are offered.



8. CHURCHES

Despite having just a few thousand residents year-round, Anjar has three separate religious communities. The Mousadaghians were mostly devout Armenian Orthodox Christians, so their first order of business was to establish a temporary “Tent Church” erected during the first months of their arrival. The grand structure today is a far cry from its humble origins. Resting at the top of a hill, overlooking a lush green pathway and most of the village, the **Armenian Apostolic Saint Paul Church** is the second largest Armenian church in Lebanon. The painting on its altar, depicting Jesus Christ and the Holy Mary, is the work of the artist, Paul Giragossian. The **Our Lady of the Rosary Armenian Church** serves the Catholic community, which also runs the Aghajanian Orphan House and the small Evangelical community runs the **Armenian Evangelical Church** and school founded by Sister Hedwig Aienshanslin with the help of Swiss and German supporters.

9. BUY STAPLES (MOUNEH)

Hot pepper paste is a staple in every Armenian home and most would agree that the readily available stock of homemade “Beeberi Chour” found in Anjar is the best. Buy your traditional pantry staples like fire roasted red peppers and tomato paste in bulk from one of the many suppliers.

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Homemade Mounneh +961 3 269673



10. AGRICULTURE

Anjar is known for its apples. More than 500 apple orchards can be found in the vicinity, the fruit of which is mostly sold as a source of income for farmers. There is also a government-sponsored fish farm, where trout and other fresh water fish are raised. Wheat, corn, peaches, pears, cabbage, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, artichoke, ray grass, nectarines, alfalfa, sugar beets for animals, walnuts, a variety of plums and pistachios are grown in the area too and are sold throughout the country.

August to late October is the ideal time to visit Anjar, during cultivation season. Discover the difference between organic and non-organic farming, help in planting new trees or in the irrigation process and go apple picking with local farmers. Private tours could be arranged by contacting Dalia Jawhary from the SPNL at +961 1 344814 or by email djawhary@spnl.org

Digging into *Sidon's history*



For the past 15 years, archeologists with the British Museum have been digging in Sidon and uncovering never-before-seen treasures in Lebanon. We, at Lebanon Traveler, dug our own way into the site





The city-state of Sidon, 30 km south of Beirut, was one of the most important urban centers of the ancient Canaanite and Phoenician people. However, like other places in modern Lebanon, most of what we knew of its history until now came from contemporary Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Greek records.

Until recently, a major obstacle to any further in-depth research into the heart of the ancient city, the essence of any definitive knowledge, has been modern Sidon, which covers whatever lies below. Due to the propitious acquisition of three downtown sites by the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities in the early 1960s, access to the ancient layers of the city is now possible.

To date there have been 15 seasons of excavation that uncovered for the first time the history of one of Lebanon's major cities from the 4th millennium B.C. right to the Abbasside period and the role of this major harbor in ancient international trade around the Mediterranean. The site that was once part of an ancient wall that surrounded the city of Sidon in the Middle Ages illustrates the historical continuity of a city from the end of the 4th millennium B.C. through the medieval period.

The hard work of the team uncovered a coin dating back to the era of Abbasid Caliph al-Mansour and a head made of colored glass from the site. "We are rewriting the history of Sidon and shedding light on it," said the British Museum's Claude Doumit Serhal, who supervises excavation works: "The history of Sidon represents the history of all Lebanon, the history of the Mediterranean ... it is the history of people who stuck to their land and did not abandon it over thousands of years," insisting on the importance of the discoveries.

In an effort to share the discoveries with the local and international communities, an exhibition entitled "Sidon: Best of 15 years" is planned. "We want to give residents of Sidon an idea about the objects that were found during excavation works over the past 15 years in the site. Of course we won't display there the 1,400 objects that we are preparing to exhibit in the Sidon Museum (that will be established in the future) but our aim is to make the people of Sidon know what happened over the past 5,000 years," said Serhal.

In 1998, the Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon gave the British Museum the authorization to excavate on a land expropriated in the 1960's by Maurice Chehab then Director General of Antiquities, for the purpose of research and methodic excavation without the pressures of developers. What is known, as the "college site" project is one of the most important urban excavations to take place in Lebanon. It gives visitors an overview of the historical continuity of a city beginning at the end of the 4th millennium B.C. through to the medieval period, thus taking us back 5,000 years.

WHAT TO READ

SIDON BEST OF 15 YEARS
صيدا ١٥ سنة من الاكتشافات الفريدة

Organized by the Lebanese British Friends of the National Museum under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture – the Directorate General of Antiquities, "Sidon: Best of 15 years" will be located at the Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) in Sidon (Bouwebet el Fawqa) and will welcome visitors from September 3rd to November 3rd 2013.
DGA +961 7 722491

WHILE YOU ARE THERE

Crusader Castle +961 3 433 287
Debbane Palace and Museum
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Khan El Franj +961 7 727 344
The Port

WHERE TO EAT

Resthouse Saïda
+961 7 722469
Abou Rami (falafel)
+961 7 721907

WHERE TO STAY

Al Qualaa Hotel +961 7 734777
Hotel Yacoub +961 7 737733
Khan al-Franj Youth Hotel
+961 3 980603

Rachaya *Al Wadi*



Fall is a very special season for the Lebanese, as we celebrate our independence on November 22nd. One of the symbols of this independence is a hidden gem - the Rachaya Citadel, where French mandate authorities held the country's early national leaders, during the 1943 rebellion that triggered the county's independence

Their prison was an 18th century citadel that can be visited today. The Lebanese Army, which is now temporarily stationed at the castle, will assign a guide to show you around the old vaulted chambers and the rooms, where the Lebanese patriots were held.

The township of Rashaya has always occupied a strategic position overlooking the Taim valley, which is why the impressive and famous fortress was built. The citadel was in turn Canaanite, Greco-Roman, Arab, Crusader and Ottoman. The Shehab family, who made it the seat of their power, refurbished the massive Feather Tower, built by the Crusaders in 1172, on the still visible remains of ancient fortifications from the 17th century. This fortress has more than once played a role in the history of Lebanon, particularly when rival foreign powers have pitted against one another the various religious communities,

(Druze, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics and Syriacs) which otherwise lived together peaceably. There are four very old churches, two Greek Orthodox and one each for the Greek Catholics and the Syriacs.

In November and December 1925, the town was engulfed and nearly obliterated by one of the largest battles of the Great Druze Revolt, when over 400 Christian homes were either damaged or destroyed. Three thousand Druze under Zayd Beg besieged the citadel of French legionnaires under a Captain Granger between 20 and 24 November. The Druze eventually suffered their first major defeat to French reinforcements.

On November 22, 1925, the citadel was the scene of a memorable defeat for French authorities. In 1943, the members of the new Lebanese government, president Beshara el-Khoury himself,

the speaker of parliament Adel Osseiran and ministers Camille Shamoun, Abdel-Hamid Karamah and Selim Takla were imprisoned in the citadel on a hasty impulse of Commissioner Jean Helleu, delegate general of the Free French authorities. The Commissioner's action was quickly corrected and the prisoners left the citadel of Rashaya to sign the new Pact of the Lebanese Republic on November 22nd marking this day as its Independence Day.

You can hike to the Independence Castle in Rachaya with Baldati, a national development, environmental, and cultural association which works to develop simple and practical methods by which to revive Lebanese villages, reunite their communities, support their institutions, and encourage dialogue among them and their members.

+961 4 922999 ▶

*"The township of
Rashaya has always
occupied a strategic
position overlooking the
Taim valley"*

Photo courtesy of Ministry of Culture



GETTING THERE

Take the Damascus main road out of Beirut towards the Bekaa valley, once you reach the city of Chtaura, continue right towards the Masnaa, which is about 17 km ahead. Continue right towards Rachaya for about 25 km, at which point you will reach Dahr Al Ahmar, continue right towards Hasbayya for approximately 3 km and you will reach Rachaya El Wadi.

WHERE TO EAT & STAY

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Layali Restaurant +961 8 530 533

El Sahili Guest House +961 8 595302



Slices of *heaven*

We have gone far and wide to bring you a few places to escape to from the four corners of Lebanon, all of which are hidden gems

SOUTHERN GEM

Al Yasmine Guesthouse is a project that started two summers ago in the South of Lebanon. For the past 40 years, it used to be a country house, where the owners would spend weekends and holidays with family and friends. Originally, there were nine guestrooms reserved for them, but with time the owners started spending less and less time there and so decided to open it to the public. They started with the nine guestrooms and later, as demand grew, converted horse stables into additional guestrooms totaling 16 rooms.

Al Yasmine offers a variety of activities for all the family, including swimming, tennis, pony and horseback riding, trampoline and swings for the children, paddle boats in the pool, trekking in the surrounding orchards and deer, black

swans, ducks, turkeys and others animals to marvel at.

The south of Lebanon is a beautiful region. On the way to the guesthouse in the town of Sidon, there is a soap factory that is more than a century old. In downtown Tyre, there are famous ruins including the hippodrome. The old souk of Tyre is also well worth a visit for both its souvenirs and its architecture. Turquoise waters and a long stretch of white sandy beaches makes Tyre the ideal place to go swimming and if you go scuba diving in Tyre, you will be able to see some old ruins and columns in the shallow waters. Ten minutes east of the guesthouse is the town of Qana and ten minutes south of the guesthouse is the virgin landscape of the Naqoura region.

+961 3 372888
alyasmineguesthouse.com



"A variety of activities for all the family"

BATROUN HOSPITALITY

Nestled in a quiet valley overlooking the Mediterranean, you will find **Beit al Batroun**. This bed and breakfast is located in Thoum, Batroun, just a three-minute drive from the coast up the mountain. It has three double guestrooms and breakfast is freshly prepared every morning. A forest surrounds the grounds, which has a small outdoor dipping pool. Beit al Batroun offers a relaxed environment in which to escape the hustle and bustle of the city.

Beit al Batroun is based on traditional Lebanese architecture with its distinctive arches and the inclusion of a liwan, a traditional style living room, as a common space. The house was built with up-cycled materials recuperated from all over the country and furnished with objects collected from Lebanon, London, Oman, Syria, India and other countries. Many of them handcrafted personally by Colette Kahil, the owner, who has been practicing mosaic and painting on porcelain for many years.

It is very close to the towns of Batroun and Jbeil, which offer a lot by way of tourism. The mountain of Thoum also has its charms including the outdoor sculpture park of the Basbous family, as well as two local wineries, Ixir and Coteaux de Botrys. The area also offers cycling, hiking and water sports at beaches nearby such as Pierre & Friends, White Beach and Bonita Bay.

+961 3 270049

Facebook: [Beit al Batroun, B&B](#) ▶



"A forest surrounds the grounds, which has a small outdoor dipping pool"





AT HOME IN BEITEDDINE

The concept of **Bouyouti** is a home away from home. Located in Maaser Beiteddine, ten minutes by car from the ancient city of Deir el Qamar and five minutes from the palace of Beiteddine, it is an authentic bed and breakfast run by its owners, who have opened the doors of their family home for travelers from all over the world. Bouyouti is a cluster of upscale houses that combines the functionality of ample space with a warm and elegant atmosphere. Within this ambiance guests feel at ease and comfortably lodged in a pleasant and enjoyable environment. The Bazerji family, owners of Bouyouti, were born and raised in the vicinity, therefore can tend to the needs of guests with firsthand information about the premises and the surrounding area.

Bouyouti doesn't have a restaurant service but serves breakfast. However, the cooking facilities include a properly equipped kitchen, ideal for cooking together and a private terrace perfect for dining al fresco. But, if you don't feel

like cooking, there are numerous places to dine in the area. So in addition to its personal attention, Bouyouti provides its guests with a high level of comfort. The houses have private bathrooms, kitchens, living rooms and private terraces. Six are one-bedroom houses and two have two bedrooms.

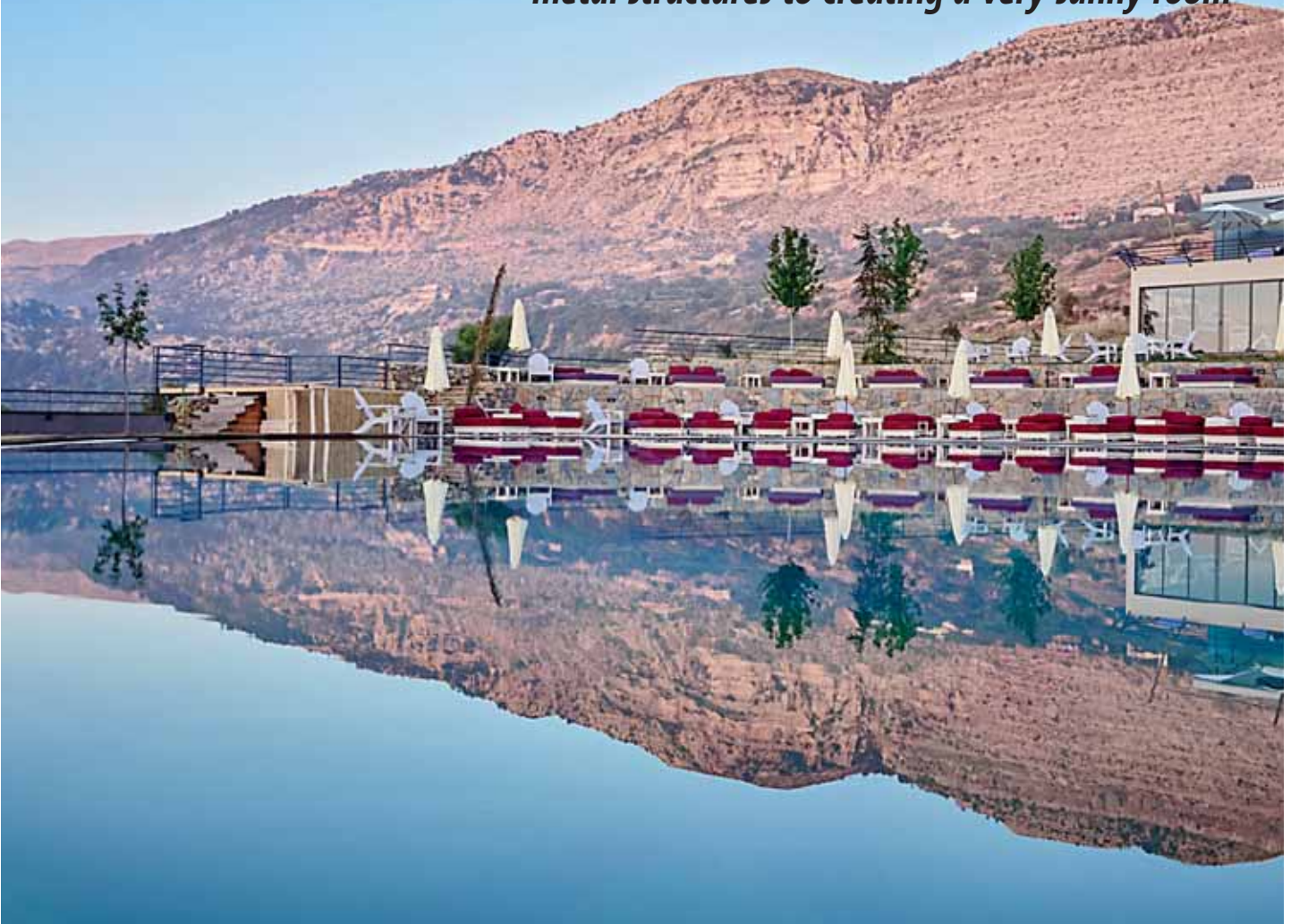
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Facebook: *Bouyouti*



"Bouyouti is a home away from home"

"Spacious and clean, bright wood blends with minimalist metal structures to creating a very sunny room"



LEBANON'S EDEN

Ehden, the picturesque, ancient town nestled very high up in the northern mountains of Lebanon has always had so much to offer. **Kroum Ehden** is a massive project, owned, operated and staffed by locals from Zgharta and Ehden.

A local team of chefs prepares the food with ingredients grown and processed in Ehden. The traditional Lebanese hot and cold Mezzeh is presented in nice clay plates and pots, and includes favorites of Zgharta and Ehden, such as the Darfieh cheese, which only two families still make in the traditional way: letting it ferment in goat's hide in a grotto! Another must-try dish is the Kibbeh Nayyeh (raw kibbeh) which is prepared the traditional way: with a large mortar and pestle (jiren hajar) to turn the meat

into the gorgeous paste-like mix with bulgur wheat.

Kroum Ehden has four pools: two large pools separated by a waterfall, as well as an infinity pool for the rooms and a t-shaped pool for the lodge. One of the nicest features is the natural rocks that surround the waterfall, which give it a river-like feel. The water is of course fresh water and not too cold.

There are suites you can choose from, as well as a bigger lodge. The rooms are spacious and clean, bright wood blends with minimalist metal structures to create a very sunny room, each with its own unobstructed view of the surrounding mountains and valleys.

+961 6 561 560
kroumehtden.com



Soaring in the skies *of Lebanon*

The view of Beirut from above when landing evokes a sense of nostalgia for most Lebanese. The moment lasts for mere minutes, but imagine what memories could be etched in your mind, if, instead of taking a plane, you took a glider

Paragliding enthusiasts have been soaring through the skies for decades now, virtually unnoticed. Due to favorable wind conditions, particularly during this time of year, and the proximity of mountain to the sea, Lebanon is an ideal location for this sport. Even if it's something you experience just once in your lifetime, Lebanon Traveler has you prepared for what may come.

By definition, paragliding is a sport in which a wide canopy, resembling a parachute, is attached to a person's body by a harness, in order to allow them to glide. Suspension lines to the harness, in which the pilot sits, secures the wing that is usually made of nylon. If launched by foot, the canopy, or wing, is stretched on a hill and the pilot inflates it while moving forward on a downward slope, taking advantage of good wind direction. When the wing is inflated, the pilot then runs down the incline, until the wing can carry him or her into the air. Unlike a parachute, which descends vertically, the wing has the ability to move forward, thus enabling the pilot to maneuver more, take thermals (columns of warm air rising up) and stay airborne.



Personal Experience

Paragliding expert, Alain Gabriel, recounts how his love affair with the sport began

"I was 17 when I first saw paragliders flying over the Cedars. I was amazed and excited about it and immediately started asking about where and how to learn. Luckily I knew a friend who knew the instructor, so after getting my parents' approval and signature (since I was a minor then) I began this exhilarating sport. I then continued my training in France where I also became an instructor. Now it is my full time job and I enjoy it as much as I did when I started, 21 years ago. The thrill remains the same. Each flight is different; especially when I take tandems. Every person is different and each ride is a new exciting adventure."

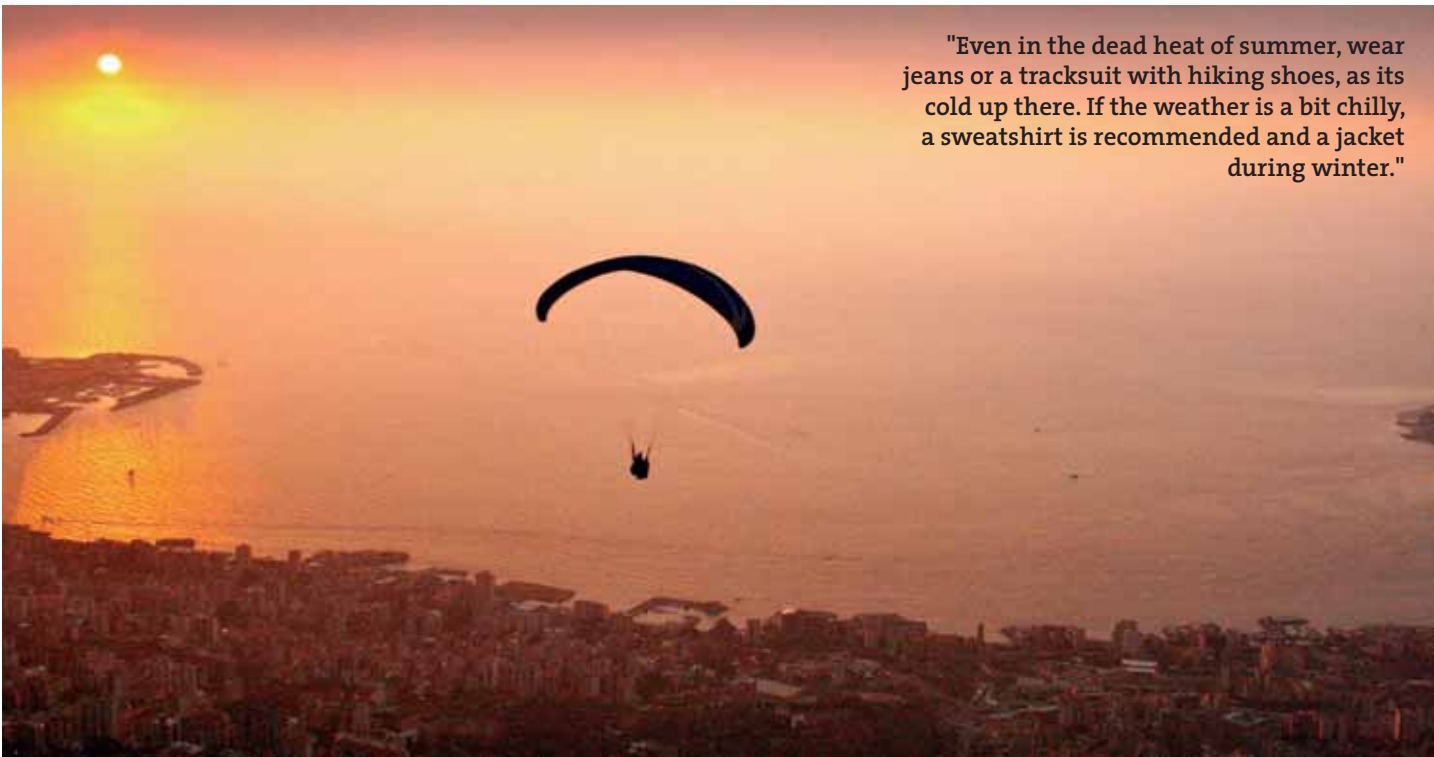


PARAGLIDING TANDEM

Alain Gabriel started paragliding in Lebanon in 1993 and has been practicing and teaching the sport for 20 years. He started his training in France, with the Club Thermique, which is linked to the first paragliding school in the world, the Centre Ecole Régional de Parapente des Pyrénées, where he pursued professional courses and also became a certified instructor. His company, Exit to Nature, provides scheduled tandem flights with a pilot. While most flights are from 2 pm till sunset, Monday to Saturday, you can plan for a fun outing on Sundays or the next official holiday, during which they fly throughout the day. ▶

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Briefing, gearing-up and flight time amount to approximately 1 hour
- Reservation is required 48 hours prior to the requested date of flight
- Paragliding is subject to wind conditions so clients must be advised that sometimes a flight may be postponed at the last minute
- Insurance is not included, clients must sign a liability waiver form releasing the company of any responsibility in case of an accident
- Minors are requested to have at least one of their parents or a legal guardian present, who must sign the waiver on behalf of the child
- Flight time is 10 to 20 minutes depending on weather conditions and costs 120 USD
- A DVD of the flight & a picture package is available for an additional 30 USD



"Even in the dead heat of summer, wear jeans or a tracksuit with hiking shoes, as its cold up there. If the weather is a bit chilly, a sweatshirt is recommended and a jacket during winter."

GLIDING LOCALLY

Paragliding in Lebanon started in the early nineties. The paragliding experience is enriched by the diversity of the country's landscape, with mountain and seascape areas that may be enjoyed from a bird's eye view like Ghosta, Jounieh, the Cedars, the Chouf Cedars, Lessa, Meziara, Dedde, Annaya and Hammana. Flight time depends on the weather, the pilot's experience and on the glider. A flight could last from 10 minutes to a couple of hours or more. Flying safely is also very important. One should fly in good weather, understand the site conditions (wind gusts, obstacles, thermals), know his or her skill level and not take unnecessary risks. When in doubt, cancelling the flight is a wise decision.

WHERE TO LEARN

Exit to Nature
 +961 3 270592 +961 3 684556

Club Thermique
 +961 3 288193 +961 9 237193

Paragliding Lebanon
 +961 3 260245

Cedars Paragliding School
 +961 3 544449

COURSES

Paragliding can be experienced either by choosing to go on a tandem flight, with an experienced instructor behind you, or by learning to fly solo at a paragliding school. When flying in tandem, the pilot talks the student through the operation of the glider. If the conditions are right, the pilot may even turn the controls over to a willing passenger, and let them experience what it's like to fly an unpowered craft. When in a tandem flight, the person in the front is in an ideal position to document the excursion with a still or video camera.

If you choose to fly on your own, a set of procedures is in place, with courses divided into three levels.

Level A The lesson begins with ground handling of the wing, as well as meteorological and theoretical lessons. You also learn how to maneuver the glider in midair, brake and land using levers on either side of your head. The course usually takes one week, during which you learn all the basics and then fly alone but under direct instructor supervision and instructor radio contact.

Level B With the basics in hand, the course veers over to thermalling (finding a warm patch of air, which increases the climb rate and rides it), flying in different sites, in different meteorological conditions, using the speed bar and

learning different takeoff and landing techniques.

Level C By the time you reach this level, you should have had around 50 flights completed after completing Level B successfully. This is an advanced level in which you master the techniques you already acquired and learn new, extreme exercises.



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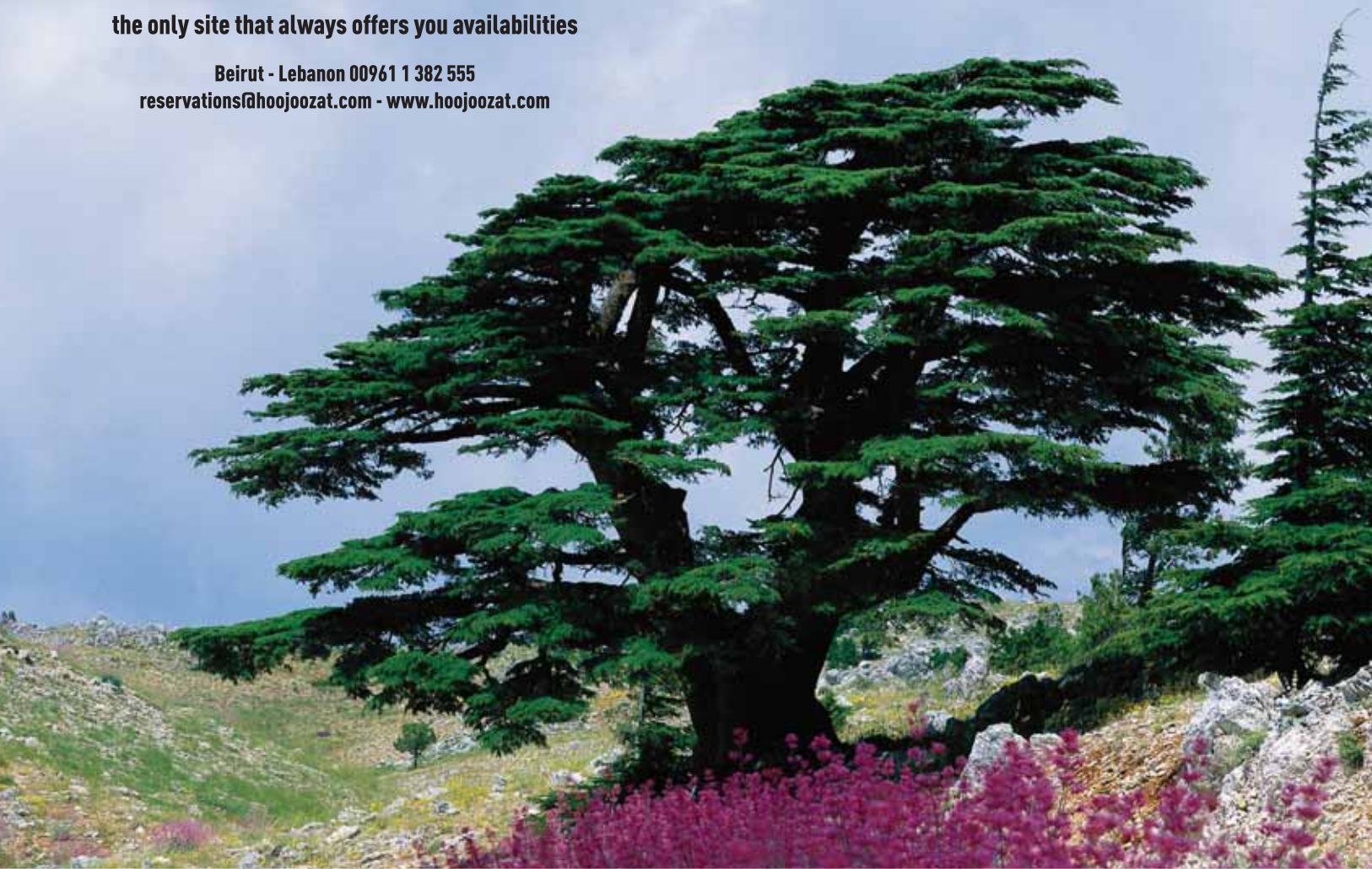
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Touring in *faith*

With 18 religious sects living on a 10,452 sq. k surface, Lebanon is rich in significant religious sites, of many eras, dotted across its map

Seyde Khawla



With its rich fabric of churches, saints, mosques, religious sites and ruins, Lebanon is the ideal place for those seeking the history of faith. Be it a visit to the Shrine of **Syeda Khawla**, the daughter of Islam's Imam Hussein, who accompanied him during the tragedy of Karbala or to Dahr El Ahmar, situated in the Rashaya district, where there is a shrine to **Sitt Sarah**, the niece of one of the authors of the Druze Epistles of Wisdom, Baha'u d-Din as-Samuqi. She is remembered for being a great peacemaker. Or even to the recently restored **Maghen Abraham Synagogue**, located in the former Jewish district of Wadi Abu Jamil in Beirut, which was abandoned after Israeli shelling destroyed it during the Lebanese Civil War.

Of the many religious tours, we have selected a walking trail and a day's visit that between them combine the sites of one of the country's major religions: Christianity.

A WALKING TOUR OF EHDEN'S CHURCHES

The municipality of Ehden, a picturesque village, in the north of Lebanon, along with Beyond Beirut, an NGO, whose mission is to encourage the development of experiential tourism outside Beirut, as a means of sustainable economic development, have organized a three-hour tour of area religious sites.

This itinerary begins at Al Midan, Ehden's historic souk, set in the iconic town center and characterized by traditional Lebanese architecture and includes cafés, pastry shops and restaurants. The next scheduled stop is at the **Mar Mema** (Saint Mamas) church, built 1,260 years ago. The asymmetrical architecture of the nave is quite remarkable. It is believed that the reason for this irregular construction was due to a shortage of stones from the Hellenistic temple of

Ehden, which supplied the building of the church.

Your next visit will be the **Mar Yaacoub** church (Saint Jacob), reachable by taking the “Dawalib” road, passing the Town Hall and through the bypass. Mar Yaacoub stands as a symbol of the large Maronite community in the area. It was built in 1885 on the ruins of an Ethiopian church built by refugees fleeing persecution in their homeland.

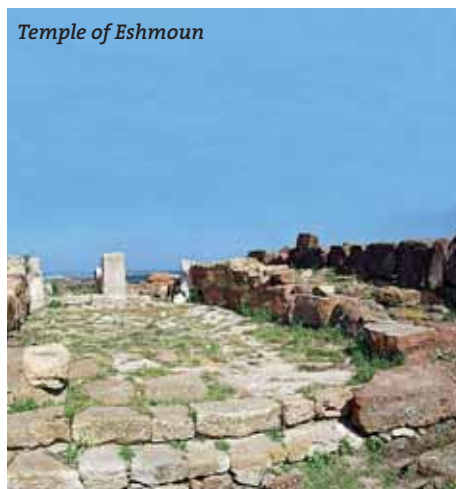
After which the convent of **Mar Kibrianos** (Saint Cyprianus) awaits you with its altar made out of recycled wall sections. Your next stop is the **Mar Moura** monastery (Saint Maur), built in 1339, which was deserted and damaged many times but restored, every time. It is linked to the founding of the Maronite Lebanese Monastic order, in 1695.

Before reaching the neighboring **Mar Geroges Cathedral** (Saint Georges) that was inaugurated in the year 1880, you will pass by **Saydet el Hara** (Our Lady of el Hara) built in 1512 and the 13th century **Mar Youhanna** church (Saint John). This lovely church has impressive vaults that are so characteristic of the construction features of the time.

A break at the Al Midan souk for a well-deserved meal concludes your tour.

A DAY TOUR OF THE SOUTHERN SITES BY BUS

Starting off in Beirut, the first stop will be the ruins of the **Temple of Eshmoun**, the Phoenician god of healing. Located near the Awali River, 2 km northeast of Sidon. The sanctuary consists of an esplanade and a grand court, surrounded by a huge limestone terrace wall that supports a monumental podium, which was once topped by Eshmoun's Greco-Persian >



Temple of Eshmoun



Mar Yaacoub

"Mar Yaacoub is on the ruins of an Ethiopian church built by refugees fleeing persecution in their homeland"



*Saydit el Tall **



*Mar Mema **



*Saydit el Hosn **

** Photos courtesy of Ministry of Culture*

style marble temple. The sanctuary is rich in Greek, Roman and Byzantine evidence that reveal the rich history of Lebanon.

The visit continues to **Sidon's Sea Castle** built on a little island around 1227 by the Crusaders for Frederic II, the Roman emperor.

The tour then continues on to **Tyre**, a famous Phoenician city cited in the Bible, where Jesus is said to have accomplished the miracle of curing the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Mc 7, 24-30).

The final stop will be at the village of **Qana**, thought to be the place of Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine and where you will discover the figures of the 12 apostles, as well as a collection of pottery jars dating from biblical times.



Tyre



Qana

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GET A GUIDE!

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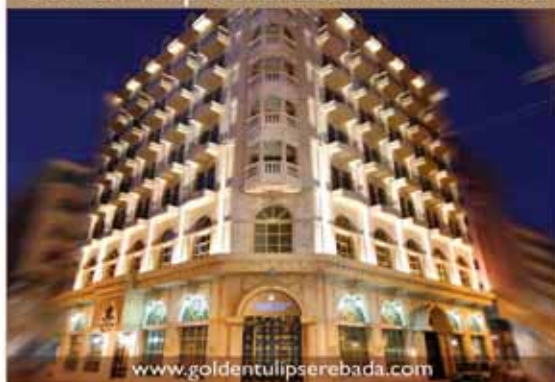
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Slow Food Trails

Author, photographer, food consultant and TV host, Barbara Abdeni Massaad, follows the trail of Lebanon's homemade wheat porridge, hrisseh



A picnic with the Haritz Family (small-scale food producers) in Arsoun



Hrisseh, a traditional Lebanese dish, brings back many a childhood memory, walking around as a toddler, or maybe a bit older, holding my parents' hands at village fairs during summertime. This rich porridge is prepared in commemoration to the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary that is celebrated by Christians all over Lebanon on the 15th of August. Similarly, Moslems also prepare hrisseh to celebrate the end of Ashoura, a feast celebrated by the Shia community all around the country and which this year falls in mid November.

Village dwellers, guests and passersby gather around a hot cauldron and take turns mixing the porridge as it slowly cooks for hours, over a coal fire. The fire is continuously fed with dry pieces of wood and logs. The flavors of the slowly cooked meat seep into the wheat while the fire gives a smoky taste to the mix.

Hrisseh is comfort food to most Lebanese and is very much appreciated. On the day of the feast, each member of the family, guest or even complete stranger is given a small plateful of rich hrisseh, cooked to perfection. Some will eat around the cauldron, sharing stories and anecdotes, while others settle for a quiet spot with the family to enjoy this laboriously prepared hot meal.

Because hrisseh needs a lot of time to cook, many will shy away from making this delicious porridge and only wait for yearly village fairs to enjoy its flavor. Thankfully, there are ways to make the process easier and less time consuming. There are variations to making hrisseh too, chicken, beef or lamb may be used or a combination is also acceptable. Usually large chunks of meat (beef or lamb) are used with thick bones of lamb to make the stock richer. The meat dissolves during the cooking process and turns into bits and shreds. Those who prefer a lighter variation use chicken. ▶





To save time, soak the hulled wheat for 24 hours before using and make the stock a day ahead

HULLED WHEAT PORRIDGE - HRISSEH

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6 - 8)

- 500g hulled wheat
- 1 kg cubed meat shanks
- 500g - 1 kg lamb bones (use less if you want lighter results)
- ½ tsp peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Sea salt

PREPARATION

To save time, soak the wheat overnight. Next day, place meat and bones in a pot filled with cold water and bring to a boil; skim away any scum. Add peppercorns, bay leaves, a cinnamon stick and salt—use coarse salt for best results. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for at least 1½ to 2 hours. You will obtain a rich stock, strain through a sieve. In a double boiler, empty the stock adding the chunks of meat and the soaked wheat. You may add the bones too if you like, some prefer a very rich flavor. Bring to a boil then leave to simmer until the wheat is cooked. The meat will dissolve into the wheat therefore making the porridge very chewy and robust. You may need to add additional water as it cooks if the liquid evaporates too quickly. Serve warm in medium-size bowls.

VARIATION

You can substitute the meat shanks with a large cooked chicken (use free-range or organic for best results). Use the stock of the chicken to cook the wheat. Follow the same procedure as mentioned above. Lamb bones can be added for extra flavor.

Find more traditional recipes and learn the history of Lebanon's culinary wealth in **Mouneh, Preserving Food for the Lebanese Pantry** by Barbara Abdeni Massaad.

Style, Service and Splendor by the Mediterranean



Overlooking the Mediterranean in its entire splendor, Le Royal Hotels & Resorts – Beirut is just minutes away from the city’s modern airport, bustling downtown area, famed Jeita Grotto, Casino Du Liban, old souks of Byblos, majestic ski resorts and upscale shopping districts. With spacious rooms and suites, Le Royal Hotels & Resorts – Beirut boasts sumptuous dining options, spectacular leisure facilities and sophisticated business amenities in an atmosphere of luxury.

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ADDITIONAL FEATURES

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Pressed the old *fashioned way*

Since Phoenician times, olive trees have been an integral part of Lebanese life. Olive trees grew in the wild until the Phoenicians began exporting them throughout the Mediterranean thus giving way to their cultivation





From north to south, the Lebanese have adopted the olive oil cycle. From September to December, villagers are busy with olive season but what of the rest of the year? We explore how the Lebanese used to cultivate olives, in the old days.

THE YEARLY ROUTINE

We've learned that throughout history, olive trees were not high maintenance. With sufficient rainwater, the only work needed would be to plow the land three times a year, once in winter, another in summer and a final time in the autumn. Although tilling the land was done with the help of bulls and mules, it still required effort from the farmers. This practice no longer takes place today.

HARVEST TIME

Harvest fell between September and December depending on the region and on whether green (early harvest) or black olives (late harvest) were to be produced. A common method cultivators used was to spread nets or canvases around the base of the tree so that when they hit the trunk and large branches, with a stick, the fruit would fall onto them. However, this method caused both ripe and unripe fruit to fall, leaving very few olives on the tree. This method bruises the olives, causing the oil within the fruit to deteriorate before even going to the press. It harms the twigs that will bear fruit next year thus jeopardizing the next harvest. >

WHERE TO GO

If you'd like to join in on the fun, the Akkar Olive Trail offers you the opportunity to pick olives, see how olive oil is made and buy a batch from the following local producers.

**Mar Touma & Haddara Walid
Haddara +961 3 885480
Zouk Habalsa Riad Hobios
+961 3 325102**



Today the technique has changed and there are other ways to harvest olives to encourage a yearly yield. One such method is handpicking, a labor-intensive process but one that yields a better product. Some also, comb the tree, with a hand-rake, which allows a bit more control than hitting. Others climb the tree and prune the largest and ripest branches, which fall to the ground and are then picked by hand. A more modern technique is to use a long-handled mechanical picker with vibrating tongs to remove ripened olives, without harming the tree.

After all the fruit was collected, they were placed in bags and taken home, where they were stored, while waiting for the entire picking process to conclude. "And this [is] where the habit of taking your olives home came from," said **Youssef Fares**, general manager, **Olive Trade**,



whose family used to own a traditional press in Baeino. "This was very bad as it only deteriorates the quality of [the] oil. For optimal quality, the olives

should be pressed within 24 hours of their picking. Back in the days, this fact was not known".

Harvest time was when the entire family worked together. The father and the children would go to the field, shortly followed by the mother who would bring a packed lunch and help out. Neighbors helped each other out, if they were done with their own harvests. Farmers would sing as they worked, as these were happy times, despite the hard work.



PRESSING TIME

After collection, olives are sorted according to their best use. The best olives are set aside for pickling and the bulk is taken to the press to be turned into olive oil. "Our family had a traditional press. The cultivators would book their turns as there was only one press for every two or three villages. They would either bring their harvest over or we would send a worker to bring it in for them," said Fares.

Traditional olive presses used grindstones to grind the olives, reducing them to a paste from which the oil can be extracted. Unlike the grindstones of a mill, which are horizontally mounted, with one turning atop the other, the grindstones of an olive press are vertically mounted and rotate in a tub, crushing the olives against the floor of the tub. In the old days, it was a mule or a horse that turned the grinder, which is why the process took some a long time as the animals would need to be rested periodically. In the 1940s, motors replaced animals, thus speeding up the process.

The paste is then spread onto round mats, which traditionally used to be made of horsehair. To extract the olive oil, the stacked paste is pressed atop each other and against the press. Olive oil begins to drip down the sides of the stack, collecting in a basin at the bottom of the press and then into a holding tank. Once drained, the olive mash is removed and the process repeated. The mash, made up of the skin and ground pits was and is still used to light fires in winter. The lesser quality oil is also used to make soap or fuel for oil lamps.

The oil that emerges from the press is impure, containing quite a bit of solid matter, as well as a fair amount of water. It is left to settle in the holding tanks to separate the water from the oil. The press operator then adds water to the mix, allowing the oil to flood to the adjacent tank, leaving the impurities behind. This process is repeated several times until the cleanest possible oil is obtained. The olive oil is then stored in large clay pots or in stainless steel vats, in a cool and dark room away from light and heat sources.

It must be noted here that this traditional way of pressing oil does not yield the best quality olive oil. Modern mills have been engineered to cause the least harm possible to the oil during the extraction process.

WHERE TO BUY

Olives and Olive Oil

BEIRUT

House of Zejd, Achrafieh

In addition to extra virgin and organic olive oil, Zejd select range also includes a unique line of aromatized oils, pickled and stuffed olives as well as traditional olive oil soaps....Make sure to try the olive stuffed chocolates! +961 1 338 003

Mohammad Zeitoun

+961 71 291212 +961 1 426222/333

THE NORTH

Tony Maroun, Jounieh +961 9 910090

Chadra, Akkar

Samir El Zir +961 3 458185

Joseph Khoury, Bchennine

+961 3 228849 +961 6 555552

Sarkis Moussa, Bchennine

+961 71777117

THE SOUTH

Youssef Abed Al Nour / Serge Fadel, Saïda +961 5 461575

Georges Abou Joudeh, Marjayoun

+961 3 345439

Soaps

Ambrah Soaps, Badaro

Ambrah takes a simple yet treasured recipe with 100% premium cold pressed olive oil, and turns it into a true return to the essence of nature. Entirely hand-crafted in Lebanon using the traditional cold press method, our soaps are mild, moisturizing and long-lasting. +961 1 380885

Khan Al Saboun, Tripoli

Khan Al Saboun, with decades of experience has gained a sophistication in the industry of aromatic and therapeutic soap, as well as the decorated soap. You will find unique items that make a perfect gift. +961 3 438 369

Les Senteurs d'Orient

Produced in Lebanon, Senteurs d'Orient soaps are made with traditional techniques using authentic ingredients and are available all over the country. senteursdorient.com/locations

Soap Museum Sidon

Explore the different steps of the traditional olive oil soap production at the Soap Museum in Sidon from raw materials, fuel and adopted practices for the preparation of the paste, liquefaction, drying, cutting into bars and final drying prior to packaging and marketing. The shop offers a wide variety of soaps from all over the country. foundationaudi.org +961 7 753 599

S'Oil

S'Oil is a family business specialized in making and selling all natural olive-oil based products that are made in Lebanon at an international level. Products include hand made and glycerin-based soap as well as a liquid line. soilsoap.com +961 1 341666



Pulling strings: hōw thē ōūd īs mādē



Albert Helou, once a mechanical engineer lives today tucked away “with the wood,” as he likes to put it; he makes ouds for top musicians. He will be our guide to the making of this traditional musical instrument of the East



The oud is a 5,000 year-old instrument that is still being played today, notably in the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, Greece, Turkey, and throughout the Mediterranean. It is the direct ancestor of the European lute. The word lute comes from the Arabic word "Al Oud". In Arabic, "oud" means wood. The oud made its way through North Africa up through Spain and became the lute, which eventually led to the creation of the guitar. Both the oud and the lute are very similar in form and sound, however they are played differently, unlike the oud, the lute uses frets.

Making an oud is no easy matter. It requires a lot of patience and knowhow. Helou used to go to an oud maker to get his oud fixed. "I went there quite a lot. After a while my oud got fixed, but I had gotten used to going there and that's how I learned the trade," he explained. Since Helou already had a job and didn't need to make a living from it, he was able to take his time. "My first oud took me about three years to make," laughed Helou.



"If one of my ouds need to be fixed, I will take it back & give the client another, but that has never happened yet"

Soon Helou's reputation grew and he became an authority himself. "I would make ouds and give them away. Marcel Khalife was my neighbor and he loved my work. He encouraged me to leave my job and concentrate on oud making, and that's how it all began," he pointed out.

To this day Helou stresses that his aim is to make an oud that will never fail, or need repairs. "Should one of my ouds need to be fixed, I will take it back and give the client another, but that has never happened yet," he said with a twinkle in his eyes.

It all begins with a piece of wood, walnut to be precise as it is the only type of wood that takes in the humidity. The piece of wood is placed in a slicer and cut into smaller and thinner bands, which are then soaked in water and bent over a special stool [1] to take a rounded shape. To help the wood bend and stay bent, a fire is lit under the stool for a little while, to let it dry. At this point the oud maker begins the process of building the body, also known as the back or bowl.

Starting in the middle then on the side, he makes sure the bands fit together on

the spreader jig, if not they are polished until they do [2]. Once the body is made, the bands are pasted together with glue and wood powder [3]. Then the inside of the body is polished [4]. Now, the pegbox is cut from a pattern and bent into the shape of a ribcage [5]. Later 12 holes are drilled into it for the keys [6]. Then the neck is cut and installed on to the body and the pegbox onto the neck [7].

At this point, Helou works on the soundboard [8 and 9]. It is also cut from wood and varies in price up to EUR 500 depending on the quality of wood and its provenance. "Some add some ornamental figures. I don't. I like to keep it simple," Helou said.

On the backside of the soundboard some ridges are glued and these "vary from one maker to the other. There are no rules for them, but they do influence the sound," he continued. The soundboard is glued to the body and a wooden belt is wrapped all around it to make sure body and face will not separate. A few finishing touches later, adding the strings and the oud is ready to make beautiful music.

"I want to make an instrument that will last, and that will bring joy to people, allow them to enjoy good sound and beautiful harmony, which is why I am in the business of making ouds," concluded Helou. >

WHERE TO LISTEN

Oud is an essential element in oriental music. You are likely to find it in most oriental bands. The Blue Note Café in Hamra schedules oriental nights several times a month.

Em Sherif, an upscale Lebanese restaurant, has a live band that plays traditional music during dinner. Café Em Nazih has a live band with oud every Friday.

Blue Note Café +961 1 743857

Em Sherif +961 1 206206

Em Nazih +961 76 711466

WHERE TO LEARN

Ecole des Arts Ghassan Yammine
+961 1 202820

Lebanese Music School
+961 1 902686

Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music

+961 1 489530/1/2/3

Mozart Chahine School of Music
+961 4 414649

LOUD MAKING STEP BY STEP



WHERE TO BUY

Albert Helou (Oud Maker)

+961 1 319448

Abdallah Chahine (Music Shop)

+961 361992

Mozart Chahine (Music Shop)

+961 1 215000



LOUD MUSICIANS TO CHECK OUT

Marcel Khalife

Charbel Rouhanna

Moustafa Said

Nasseer Shamma

Terrebrune Hotel

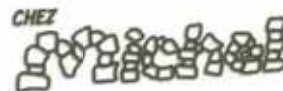


Step into the new in a place that redefines luxury and ultimate comfort. Craft your stay as your heart desires. With its variety of rooms and suites, a wide medley of food options, a piano bar, a relaxing spa, a heated outdoor pool and a series of private living room-like lounging sections, Terrebrune Hotel is the hub of it all.



At Les Caves de Chez Michel (steakhouse-lounge) enjoy great food and ambiance, especially after a long day of outdoor activities.

For late night entertainment and exquisite Lebanese cuisine, Chez Michel offers you the best combination of food and music.



The Cloud Spa features authentic decor and ambiance which radiate a magical charm. Its exclusive facilities include four treatment rooms, a private spa suite, sauna, relaxation area and a unique hammam experience.

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Industrial *handicrafts*



Designer Karen Chekerjian is making a name for herself around the world. Lebanon Traveler interviewed the young talent to learn more about her work and process

Chekerjian is a furniture and product designer of Armenian-Lebanese origin. She graduated from Milan's prestigious Domus Academy in 1997 with a masters in product design and design direction. However, her route to industrial design has not been direct. Film, advertising and graphic design have each helped shape her vision.

Prior to attending Domus, Karen worked at Leo Burnett advertising agency and in 1994, co-founded Mind the gap, a graphic design studio that contributed to the beginnings of the practice in Lebanon. At Domus, she studied under Massimo Morozzi, a founding member of the legendary 1960s design studio, Archizoom and currently Art Director at EDRA, Italy's globally renowned high-end furniture manufacturer.

After graduation, she worked in Milan for a number of years. During this period, one of her first designs

– a suspended hanger system entitled Mobil – was produced by EDRA.

In 2001, she returned to Beirut and opened Karen Chekerjian Studio. Beginning as more of a conceptual think-tank, dedicated to exploring new ideas in design. The Studio has gradually become more focused on production of furniture and everyday objects in small series, limited editions and made-to-order commissions.

The studio also takes on interior design projects, which have included restaurants, a hotel, retail stores and most recently, Maison Rabih Kayrouz, the flagship Beirut boutique of the Lebanese couturier.

According to Chekerjian her work falls into a category of its own, one that could be called “industrial handicrafts.” Her products blend a traditional manufacturing technique and industrial aesthetic, distinctively Lebanese and yet also international. She described her

work as, “perfect reflections of the spirit of the city in which they are created.”

How did it all start for you?

It all started when I decided to go to Italy to study industrial design. I was the founder of a graphic design company, Mind the Gap and I decided to sell my shares to my partners and go. Everything changed that year because I discovered doing the thing that I really liked.

Tell us about your work

My work has always been very straightforward, sincere and authentic. I had to adapt a lot to my environment in terms of production and little by little, I found my own way that was completely different from what I was doing in design, in Milan.

How does your heritage inspire you?

I don't know whether it is more my personal or my environment heritage that inspires me. I believe that we have very little culture left in Lebanon and we, designers and artists, are trying to keep



something of it for the next generations. I grew up during the war and the only heritage I got was violence and ugliness, but I try to take something from it still.

What is the best piece of advice you have been given?

That it is only perseverance that gets you where you want, not your talent only! So we always need to keep on digging.

What is your favorite piece(s) and why?

I don't have a favorite. I love each piece for something, but my Rolling Stones pieces that I did 13 years ago with my Icelandic partner, have a very emotional thing with my history. But usually, my best piece is always my last piece, and I

cannot show you my last piece because I will be presenting it at the Beirut Art Fair, in September.

What do you believe makes all the difference when creating?

It is important to keep focused and try hard to get to have a strong story or a vision, then suddenly it comes easily as an evidence.

What do you love most about Lebanon?

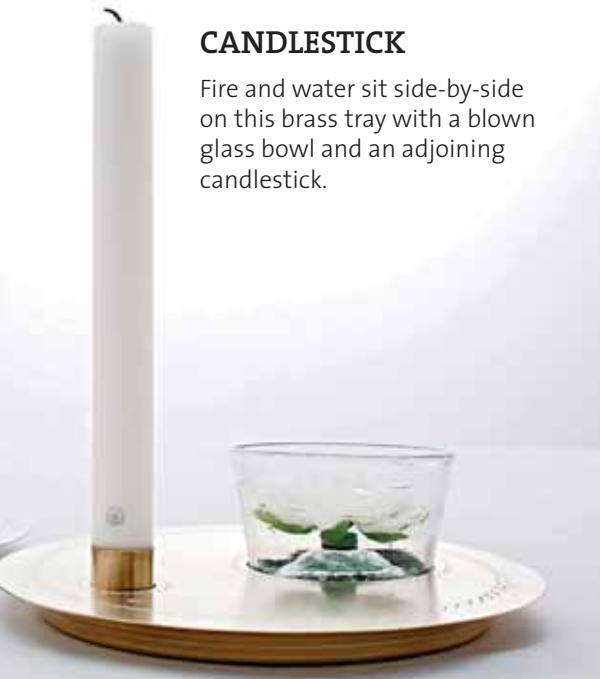
Where is your favorite spot in the country?

Lebanon looks very contradictory, sometimes super provincial, like a suburb place but sometimes very edgy like New York, I like this mix. >

OUR FAVORITES!

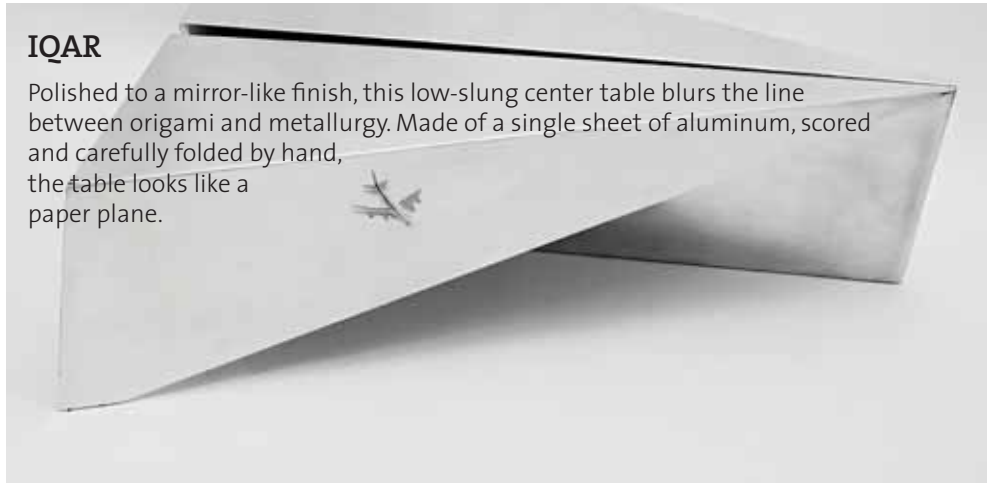
CANDLESTICK

Fire and water sit side-by-side on this brass tray with a blown glass bowl and an adjoining candlestick.



IQAR

Polished to a mirror-like finish, this low-slung center table blurs the line between origami and metallurgy. Made of a single sheet of aluminum, scored and carefully folded by hand, the table looks like a paper plane.



LIVING SPACE III

A combination of lounger, coffee table, stool and magazine rack, it is more than furniture and almost verges on architecture. Living Space III feels like a reminder of the 1920's or 30's perhaps, yet still modern. Sanded in places, notably at the head and feet, where the wood takes on a brownish-black color, the chair conveys a second-hand impression, even though it is brand new.



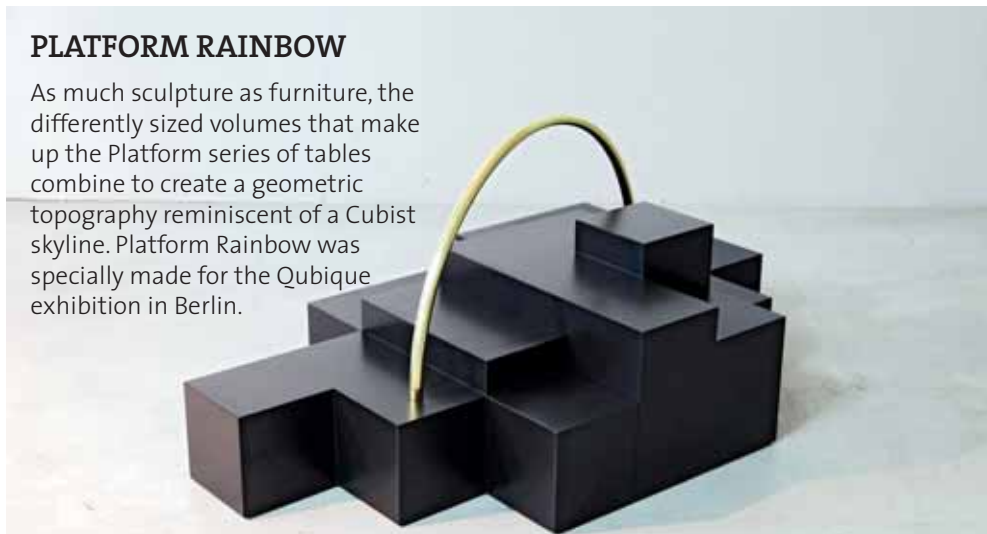
DERBAKEH

Named after a kind of Middle Eastern drum, this side table and stool with its hourglass profile can just as easily read as the recreation in metal of the makeshift nomadic table, which was often no more than a tray placed on top of a particularly large cushion.



PLATFORM RAINBOW

As much sculpture as furniture, the differently sized volumes that make up the Platform series of tables combine to create a geometric topography reminiscent of a Cubist skyline. Platform Rainbow was specially made for the Qubique exhibition in Berlin.



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A tale of many threads



Curator and museum specialist, Juliana Khalaf, visits the Silk Museum at Bsous and discovers an ancient craft that was once a mainstay of Lebanon's economy



As beautiful as summers can be in Beirut and on the coast, my husband and I decided to take a break from the city's scorching heat and spend the weekend in the mountains. Eager for greenery and fresh air we thought of visiting the Bsous Silk Museum and explore the nearby eco-hotspots in the Aley and Bhamdoun districts of Mount Lebanon.

Driving on the Damascus highway, heading towards Aley, 15 kilometers from Beirut, we cautiously looked out for the exit to Bsous. The only indication of how to exit towards the village and the museum were the grey and white "Silk Museum - Bsous" signs. So, we took a right off the highway and followed the signs down a valley. Midway to the bottom of the valley, we made a sharp left turn that brought us into the parking of the domain.

Upon arrival, we were directly assigned a tour guide, well-versed in Arabic, English and French, who helped make the tour fully comprehensible. Walking through the beautifully terraced botanical gardens leading up to the main building, we learned that the Bsous Silk Museum had originally operated as a silk factory between 1901 and 1954 and that Lebanon was once one of the most important silk producers in the world, before this trade fell victim to the advent of synthetic fabrics in the late 20th century.

As we entered the museum, built in the traditional 17th century Mount Lebanon architecture, we met a delightful gentleman who goes by the name, Jeddo Albert (grandpa Albert), weaving away a palette of colored silk threads on an antique wooden loom. Jeddo has been working at the museum for ten years. At

the age of 93, he is one of few people left who knows how to operate and repair silk weaving looms.

"The silk tradition has died out in Lebanon, especially after the civil war. Also everything today is industrialized for mass production," he explained. So, to preserve the memory of a tradition that spun more than 2,000 years, **George and Alexandra Asseily**, conceptualized, funded and inaugurated the museum, in 2001. When asked what role the museum had in reanimating an almost lost tradition, Alexandra Asseily replied, "The Silk Museum in Bsous is now the only active guardian of an important part of Lebanese history – social, economic and educational."

Silk production in Lebanon dates back to the beginning of the Byzantine era, when



George and Alexandra Asseily

a missionary monk smuggled silkworm eggs from China. Sericulture then became the region's most important source of revenue. "The silk industry radically changed the socio-economic status for many rural people, most especially ... the role of thousands of women, when, for the first time they left their homes to work in the silk factories, alongside men," she said.

In fact, by the 19th century more than 10,000 young women in Mount Lebanon worked in silk mills and helped contribute to their families' incomes. Thousands more women, usually older and married, raised and sold silkworms from home, some even owned weaving looms, producing artisanal pieces.

"The boutique is well worth it as you may find interesting local artisanal jewelry, silk wear, soaps..."

The tour guide went on to explain the silk production technique, from an intriguing live performance of silkworms eating their way through kilos of mulberry tree leaves, to their transformation into cocoons, which when immersed in hot water release up to 1,500 meters of thread.

The museum also houses temporary exhibitions, where antique weaved silk wear from various private collections and museum collections are given pride of place in the main galleries.

A visit to the boutique is well worth it as you may find interesting local artisanal jewelry, accessories, silk wear, soaps and organic food preserves. Keep in mind that the approximate time to tour the

museum is two hours including the grounds, which offer a comprehensive study on ethnic plants and trees of the region.

SURROUNDING ATTRACTIONS

After our highly instructive visit to the eco-museum, we resumed our route further up the highway, for some 15 minutes, to the town of Bhamdoun to visit the vineyard of Chateau Belle-Vue.

We followed venue signs after reaching the town. We had booked a wine tasting a day ahead, which is strongly advisable, and explored the grounds before a late lunch of homegrown organic French cuisine at the Chateau's restaurant, Le Télégraphe.

Well wined and dined, we made our last trip back on the highway, 15 minutes downwards to stop in the Ramlieh Forest, in Aley, where we spent the night at the nature eco-reserve's bed and breakfast. The next day we woke up to a tour in the beautiful green surrounding.

On our way back home, we finished our lovely trip with a generous serving of the Lebanese delicacy of 'assafir' (small birds), uniquely prepared in clay pots at the Al-Sultan restaurant, a hole in the wall in Aley, off the Damascus highway towards Beirut. The view and decor may not be attractive but the food is Lebanese gourmet at its finest.



HOW TO GET THERE

15 km from Beirut on the Damascus highway towards Aley –Bsous Exit (Map available on museum's website)

WHERE TO EAT & STAY

Al Sultan Restaurant, Aley

+961 5 552634

The Mediterranean Forest Development and Conservation Center of Lebanon (MFDCL), Aley

+ 961 5 280430

Le Télégraphe de Belle-Vue Restaurant, Bhamdoun

+961 70 628383

Four Points Sheraton, Bhamdoun

+961 5 260300

WHAT TO VISIT

MFDCL Forest, Ramlieh, Aley

+961 5 280430

Chateau Belle Vue vineyard, Bhamdoun

+961 3 221205

DON'T MISS

Permanent exhibition Wild Silk of Madagascar, temporary exhibition Memories of Silk, video explaining silkworm breeding and silk weaving technique and history, live silkworms, boutique and the botanical garden - the gardening workshop is a must for those who like to get in touch with nature - booking in advance is advised.

GOOD TO KNOW

Opening hours (closed Mondays)

10 am - 6 pm

May – October (inclusive)

Admission

Adults 8,000 LBP Students 5,000 LBP

Gardening workshop 10,000 LBP

+961 5 940767

thesilkmuseum.com



A neighborhood stroll

If you're in the mood for a little art, a little bite, or a hipster pub, Mar Mikhael is the up-and-coming place to be. From glitzy cafés to vintage books and knickknacks

LANDMARKS

5. ELECTRICITE DU LIBAN
Conceived by Pierre Neema in 1966, the building is influenced by Brazilian architecture and testifies of the modern spirit of the time. At the starting point of Mar Mikhael and ending point of Gemayzeh, the Electricite du Liban has long been an icon for the Lebanese. For the locals, electricity is a conversation starter, not to mention a matter that is always on their mind.

1. EAST VILLAGE
The concept of this residential complex takes key contextual elements – traditional building material and Lebanese gardens – and revives them with contemporary interpretations. So, conventional wood and dark stone find an unexpected contrast in vivid red metal, and space-efficient vertical gardens replace their horizontal

predecessors. While it looks like a simple geometric shape from afar, the structure consists of three parallel slices, each with a unique identity that's revealed on approach.

61. TRAIN STATION
Before reaching the end of Armenia Street you will find what looks like a bus graveyard. Step inside and walk past the buses and you will be able to see the original train station, which was the last stop for the trains that ran all along the Lebanese coast. Dated from the mid 1800s, the station's age is revealed by its French-style architecture, with the iconic Lebanese red-tiled roof. Make sure to check out the display of the renovated original trains. For train enthusiasts get permission to visit the abandoned Rayak Railway Station near Zahle from the Charles Helou Bus Station in Beirut.

54. THE VENDOME STAIRS
Lebanon's version of the Spanish Steps of Rome, the Vendome Stairs are so called after the Vendome cinema that used to be located next to them. Only these are not just stairs, they are telling of a neighborhood, with small shops and houses scattered left and right. Because of the stairs' status as a major icon for the Lebanese, a young group of mostly graphic designers, calling themselves "Dihzahyners," have taken it upon themselves to paint them, creating a colorful sight for all passers-by. The stairs make for an excellent photo and rest opportunity.

Other landmarks include the St. George Hospital and Dr. Mouawad stairs on par with the Vendome ones. Don't forget the green Mar Mikhael petrol station, Saliba Market, the Telephone Exchange, the Fire Station and Mar Mikhael Church.



DESIGN

33. DIANE FERJANE

A space for up and coming fashion designers to display their work. +961 3 948526

34. HQ

Headquarters Gallery, better known as HQ, is a gallery for art and design by Lee Federix. +961 1 566181

39. JUM

A haven of handcrafted jewelry, nightwear and home goods, this dreamy store is pouring over with soft linens and sparkle. +961 3 276719

22. KARIM BECKDACHE

At this gallery you will find original designs of the architect, as well as vintage furniture from unique places in Lebanon. +961 1 566323

41. LIWAN

Choose between a range of soaps, sandals, cushions, blankets, kaftans and more all personally designed by interior designer and storeowner, Lina Audi. +961 1 444141

40. MH DESIGN

Maria Helios (MH) specializes in industrial and interior design, as well as being a 'Espaces Insolites' - a space consultancy studio. +961 1 442344

17. MAGDALENA DIAB DESIGNER'S STUDIO

This is an interior design house that specializes in residential, commercial, corporate and boat furniture, as well as accessories. +961 1 588999

11. NAYEF FRANCIS

Using local artisans' knowhow in the execution of his modern designs, Francis offers a variety of products from home furniture to office and home accessories. +961 1 444711

52. PAVLAK

A designer clothes shop for women. +961 1 572216

38. PINK HENNA

A fabulous curio shop that sells mid-20th century collectibles and homemade items. +961 1 570361

42. ROSE MARIA CONCEPT STORE

Fashion, jewelry, arts and sculpture are what you will find in the gallery owned by jewelry designer Rosy Abouross. +961 1 571985

64. SCHIZZO DESIGN ART GALLERY

Designed and executed by Raffi Tokatlian and Leda Keuchguerian, products showcased include unique home accessories, sculptures, glassware, modern chairs and tables +961 1 566020

18. SLACK N CO

A furniture and interior design shop +961 1 587747

21. SPARE ARTS

A garage turned gallery where architect Nabil Rizk specializes in table designs. The gallery also hosts exhibitions by young artists. +961 1 569070

31. TAN

A Lebanese fashion label founded by artist Ghada Azouri Rizk and designer Rima Sabbah Bader. +961 3 787187

THE BAKERY

A research and creation lab, centered on manufacturing, where anyone can see their 3D digital files converted, in a matter of days, into a solid physical shape. +961 1 566241

BOOKSHOPS & MORE

6. GALERIE TANIT

Sister to the Munich gallery of the same name, this impressive gallery seeks to bring big-name contemporary artists from around the world to Lebanon and provide Lebanese artists with the opportunity to showcase their work. +961 70 910523 >

43. NASAWAIYA CAFÉ

Lebanon's first feminist collective has also found time to open its own volunteer run café with a project center and free reading library.
nasawaiya.org +961 1 565442

36 . PAPER CUP

A small piece of heaven, art lovers will find a wonderfully curated selection of books pertaining to the arts, design, fashion, architecture, photography and more. There's also a wide selection of international magazines that cannot be found anywhere else in the city, not to mention a great kids' section. And to top it all, it has a small café within. Not to be missed! +961 1 443083

56. PLAN BEY

Photography fans will find their fix in the wide selection of photographic prints, prints and art books, all sold at almost bargain prices! +961 1 444110

37. TINTA NEGRA

This gallery and bookshop specializes in everything Spanish (including South American). +961 1 570027

9. OSLO

Apart from the Oslo bakery and factory, there is a new Oslo outlet next to L'Oca Matta. +961 1 576464

63. JUNK SHOP

British owned antique and collectable shop. +961 70 407334

HOTELS

4. PORT VIEW HOTEL

+961 1 567500

65. VILLA CLARA

Hidden in a quiet back street, this little jewel has stylishly decorated 7 rooms with their own bathroom. The hotel has a restaurant, terrace and garden where you can play a game of bocce ball (or bowls). +961 70 995739

RESTAURANTS

12. BLACK ROCK

Various cuts of meat, chicken and seafood are cooked on volcanic rocks for an interactive meal experience. +961 1 567444

55. ENAB

With pastel walls, decorative details and an open glass façade that lets in the sunshine, the restaurant feels more like a home. The jabalieh salad, potato kibbeh and spicy kibbeh come highly recommended. +961 1 444441

68. FIORE

Set in an old Lebanese house, its dainty floral wall prints make you feel like you're in a cozy European restaurant just off any small street. Serving Mediterranean cuisine, it is open only for dinner during the week. +961 1 444332

35. FROSTY PALACE

This American diner will take you back to the Happy Days and Grease era where you would share a burger and milk shake with your sweetheart. Their ketchup is homemade and their breakfast a must try! +961 1 449595

49. LA COUR SAINT MICHEL (BAR TARTINE, LES FENETRES, SUD & STUDIO 43)

Right after Osteria, there is a marble entrance with marble steps. Follow the stairs and you will enter a new world within Mar Mikhael, La Cour Saint Michel. The "square" gathers four restaurants: Sud serving Mediterranean, Bar Tartine offering sandwiches and more, Les Fenetres serving French cuisine and Studio 43, a casual Lebanese restaurant with a 21 dish mezze. A boutique hotel is also expected to open soon.

Bar Tartine +961 71 466788

Les Fenetres +961 1 577578

Sud +961 1 560900

Studio 43 +961 1 566585

16. L'HUMEUR DU CHEF

Up for a little adventure? Go for the unpredictable menu of Chef Jad el Hage, who prepares a meal according to his mood, at his host table. +961 1 565495



57. LITTLE TOKYO

A maximum of 20 can fit into this Japanese-inspired corner. Although the sushi bar is the main focus, they also serve a range of other dishes. Small but perfectly formed! +961 1 566722

10. L'OCA MATTA

This Italian restaurant that mastered the art of creating a formal yet relaxed atmosphere is back with a renovated terrace and a new menu. +961 1 442444

MARINELLA

This Italian Trattoria by local foodie Sophie Schoucair has all the right ingredients, but unlike most Italian restaurants, it doesn't serve pizza! And is only open for lunch. +961 1 442342

20. MÓ

A tiny bistro with tables on the sidewalk. +961 1 569717

66. SEZA

This bougainvillea-covered exquisite Armenian family restaurant's wide-ranging menu incorporates all the classic dishes you'd expect, like itch, su beureg and manti. +961 1 570711

19. TAVOLINA

Serving daily specials, as well as gluten-free pasta, this eatery also boasts a central table used to prepare signature dishes and the local ice cream from Hanna Mitri. +961 3 292909

67. TAWLET

Tawlet is the farmers' market restaurant of Souk el Tayeb. Every day a different cook from a different area tells us the story and the traditions of a region of Lebanon through food. +961 1 448129

27. THE HAPPY PRINCE

The gastro-pub menu is what sets this eatery apart from its bar-snack neighbors. +961 01 569040

58. TOTÒ

Here the famous Pizzaiolo, Antonio Tolva, bakes his pizzas in a stone oven and has concocted a Lebanese pizza with Accaoui, green olives, green onions and purslane. +961 1 566991

COMING SOON

60. JUNKYARD

23. PRUNE

A new French style bistro that was about to open as we went to print.

SNACKS & CAFÉS

ALO ARGELIEH

Plastic chairs and table set in a garden under a canopy of trees. +961 78 808301

50. THE FOOD RUNNER

Try the kebabs +961 1 564471

24. CREW HUT

Try the sandwiches (open till 3am) +961 1 449873

30. STREET BURGER

New so you'll have to see for yourself +961 1 575030

32. SNACK ABOU TONY

Mar Mikhael's Le Chef +961 1 448660

PUBS & NIGHTLIFE

47. ABBEY ROAD

+961 01 570118

29. ANISE

+961 70 977926

14. BODO

+961 3 623234

28. CHAPLIN

Named after the legendary comic and if you wish you can dress up as Charlie Chaplin with mustache (available at the bar) and get a polaroid snapshot of it! +961 3 286977

25. CREW EXPRESS

+961 3 454484

71. DICTATEUR

+961 3 251512

7. EDL

+961 3 863680

13. EM CHILL

+961 1 565313

26. INTERNAZIONALE

+961 1 565463

62. LA BOUTEILLE

+961 1 570811

70. MANDALOUN

Set in an old cinema, it is one of the "It" nightclubs, with special live entertainment that will make you dance the night away. +961 1 565333

51. M-KAY

+961 3 415344

3. NAME THIS BAR

+961 3 911417

15. L'OSTERIA

A lovely wine bar owned by an Italian-Lebanese couple, it is one of those places you go for good food, good mood and good drinks, as well as being one of the rare places in Lebanon that is dog friendly. +961 1 566175

45. RADIO BEIRUT

A fairly priced place, Radio Beirut is the first radio café in the Middle East, streaming live through the web via www.radiobeirut.net. The café additionally serves as a live music venue, as well as a social hub for a variety of cultural activities such as workshops, exhibitions, exchanges and other events related to music, arts and culture. +961 76 936744

69. RUE 70

+961 76 050400

46. SCHWARZ

+961 1 444304

53. SECTEUR 75

Reopening in November +961 1 575675

59. THE CLOSET

+961 3 046708

2. THE GREEN DOOR

+961 1 565656

44. VYVYAN'S

+961 1 567040

MANOUCHE

MAR MIKHAEL BAKERY

Opposite Mar Mikhael Church, seating available, furn with extras +961 3 919954

48. AU BLEU D'OR

Furn and cafe, seating and extensive menu

8. BAKERY LEBANON

Traditional hole in the wall furn +961 1 562903

GETAWAYS

Here are three locations where you can go for a couple of days & return rejuvenated



Fun with family and friends in Ehdén

DISCOVER

local fauna and flora at the Horsh Ehdén Nature Reserve as the leaves change color

WALK

along the religious and archeological trails that will show you a different side of the village

BASK

in the local culture as you meet some of Ehdén's community in Al Midan for tea, dinner or even an early sahlab

LEARN

how printing began in the Middle East

at the Monastery of St. Anthony of Qozhaya

EAT

Lebanese cuisine at Al Fardous +961 560605 (special musical events)
Traditional food at Al Wadi +961 6 560332

STAY AT

Beit el Ward +961 6 561016
Ehdén Country Club +961 3 751292
Kroum Ehdén +961 6 561560
La Mairie Boutique Hotel +961 6 560108



Rural escape Bikfaya - Naas

RELISH

the chilly evenings. Wear your sweatshirt and watch the fog descend onto the village, through the trees to cover the roads

TAKE

a walk in the Bois de Boulogne pine forest and discover nearby villages

ENJOY

the gorgeous hydrangeas and geraniums that hang from Bikfaya's traditional stone villas, as you bite into one of the town's famous peaches

STOCK UP

on fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as homemade pantry items for the winter

EAT

Lebanese at Fadel +961 4 980979
Mediterranean at Lola +961 4 983440
Italian at Locanda Corsini +961 4 982689

STAY AT

Grand Hotel Naas +961 4 982629
Locanda Corsini Boutique Hotel +961 4 982689
Merry Land Hotel +961 4 980390



City break Jounieh

RIDE

the téléphérique (cable cars) to visit Our Lady of Harissa and a stunning view of the Jounieh coast

SPEND

a day at the beach and all it involves... tanning, water sports, boat trips and sand castles. Or shop in the souk, where traditional architecture is preserved

HAVE A DRINK

and dance the night away at one of the many lively pubs

GAMBLE

watch a show and marvel at the glorious view from the Casino du Liban

EAT

Fish at Chez Sami +961 9 910520
Michelin star at Table Fine +961 9 919666
Peruvian Argentinian at Punta Del Este +961 9 830788

STAY AT

Chateau Raphael +961 9 930621
Hotel St. Joseph +961 9 931189
Portemilio Hotel +961 9 933300

Take a break at Le Gray



With 87 wonderfully spacious rooms and suites, Le Gray, located in the historic heart of downtown Beirut, is just a 15 minutes drive from Rafic Hariri International Airport.

Apart from actually staying there Le Gray has a number of wow factors. So take a tour around the hotel and checkout the stunning floor to roof Atrium, the wrap-around views from Indigo on the Roof, the splendid purple rooftop infinity pool and the inward view from the ultra-chic late night Bar ThreeSixty. In addition to Le Gray's stunning contemporary design, the property houses a private contemporary art collection of more than 500 pieces.

Le Gray has its very own PureGray Health Club and Spa with six treatment rooms including one for couples and a wet treatment room. Using only Natura Bissé product, the state-of-the-art gym, also takes care of your hair and beauty.

And don't forget to try its restaurants and bars, which include Gordon's Café, Bar ThreeSixty and Indigo on the Roof, as well as the Cigar and Pool Lounges. However, at sunset Pool Lounge puts on its evening attire and is ready to join Beirut's nightlife as Cherry on the Rooftop.

For things to do in the vicinity of the hotel, Le Gray's concierge team – Chloe Chelala and Tarek Chamas suggest you

- Take a stroll around historical downtown, visit nearby churches, mosques and roman ruins
- Visit the Gibran Khalil Gibran garden, as well as the Robert Mouawad and National Museums
- Discover Lebanese designer shops in the nearby Saifi Village
- Get a taste of Beirut's nightlife by pub hopping in Gemmayze and Uruguay Street
- Shop at the Beirut Souks and the nearby international brand stores
- Enjoy a seaside jog along Zaitunay Bay and the corniche reaching Pigeon Rocks for a photo op
- Go to Hamra for its booming nightlife scene and take a walk through the grounds of AUB
- Let your children lose at Planet Discovery (Beirut Souks) and KidzMondo (BIEL)
- Savor traditional cuisine at Tawlet and Souk el Tayyeb but don't forget the myriad of restaurants dotted about the capital
- Visit the nearby art galleries
- Sip Lebanese wine at ViniFest 2013 taking place at the Beirut Hippodrome in early October
- Meet celebrity chefs at the Beirut Cooking Festival in early November
- Take part in Christmas preparations, events and celebrations throughout December
- Celebrate New Year's Eve in Downtown Beirut!

AGENDA

September

SUNDAY 15

Grape picking & Arak distillation in Niha Bekaa
Saad Tours

Blawza Annoubine
Vamos Tados

FRIDAY 20

Chobtine Night Hike
Vamos Tados

SUNDAY 22

Discover Nature in Shouf reserve
Saad Tours

Hike in Aqoura and visit the monasteries
Cyclamen

Hiking in AAYMAR

Level 3 Large oaks and the Douraya water spring
Level 5 Pines, oaks and water springs
Libantrek

SATURDAY 21-SUNDAY 22

Spend a weekend in the Cedars Reserve, Becharreh
Vamos Tados

FRIDAY 27

Tree house dinner in Ain Zhalta
Vamos Tados

SATURDAY 28

Hike through Deir al-Qamar,

Baadarane, the Joumblat mansion and Joun, Saint Savior monastery including lunch
Libantrek

SUNDAY 29

Grape picking & Arak distillation in Niha Bekaa
Saad Tours

Hike from Bakiche to Chakhroube
Cyclamen

Hike in Ain Majdalein Jezzine
Vamos Tados

SUNDAY 29

Explore Jbaa
Level 4 Old oaks and the LMT trail
Level 6 High ridges and the long prairie
Libantrek

October

SUNDAY 6

Discover Nature in Shouf reserve
Saad Tours

Hike in Wadi Janna at Nahre Ibrahim
Cyclamen

Discover Baakline
Vamos Tados

Discover Chatine
Level 2 Green valley of



The Lebanon Traveler team has selected the best hikes to discover the country's little-known treasures

Tannourine
Level 6 A great sinkhole in Douma
Libantrek

FRIDAY 13

Grape picking & Arak distillation in Niha Bekaa
Saad Tours

Hike and visit the monasteries in Qadisha Valley
Cyclamen

Discover Mtein
Level 3 Medieval sites and a Roman temple
Level 5 Pinewoods and the Ghamqa valley
Libantrek

TUESDAY 15 -

WEDNESDAY 16

Adha days in Tannourine
Libantrek

FRIDAY 18

Al Bireh night hike
Vamos Tados

SATURDAY 19

Explore the Jbeil district
Hike through Edde, St. George temple chapel, Behdaydat,

medieval frescoes
JRABTA, a Phoenician stele, Annaya, St. Charbel pilgrimage
Libantrek

SUNDAY 20

Discover the Chouf reserve
Saad Tours
Hike from Jezzine to Niha
Cyclamen

Discover Tannourine
Vamos Tados

Explore Jaj
Level 3 Old cedar grove
Level 6 Cedars and snow pits
Libantrek

SUNDAY 27

Grape picking & Arak distillation in Niha Bekaa
Saad Tours

Hike in Bkassine
Cyclamen

Qanat el Mir Hike
Vamos Tados

QADISHA

Level 2 The holy valley
Level 4 Garden of the patriarchs
Level 7 Cave monasteries
Libantrek





November

SUNDAY 3

Niha Beqaa Grape Picking & Arak distillation

Saad Tours

Bait Chabab

Cyclamen

Hamatoura

Vamos Tados

Bkassine

Level 3 Pinewoods
Level 5 Pinewoods and a watermill
Libantrek

MONDAY 4

Bkassine

Vamos Tados

SATURDAY 9-SUNDAY 10

Taanayel Special weekend

Vamos Tados

SUNDAY 10

Visit Tannourine and Lunch with locals

Cyclamen

Tartej

Level 4 Roman path to Douma
Level 7 Labyrinth in karstic rocks
Libantrek

WEDNESDAY 13

Abaydat Hike

Vamos Tados

FRIDAY 15

Saydet Qalaa Night Hike

Vamos Tados

SUNDAY 17

Mazraat El Chouf to Wadi Bessri

Cyclamen

Annaya to Lehfed

Vamos Tados

Ehden

Level 3 Autumn colors
Level 5 Panoramic ridges
Libantrek

FRIDAY 22

Litani

Vamos Tados

FRIDAY 22

Batroun District, Edde, a painted crusader chapel. **Douma**, Old souk. **Bchealeh**, oldest olive trees. **Qattara**, medieval patriarchal see. Restaurant lunch
Libantrek

SUNDAY 24

Niha Beqaa Grape Picking & Arak distillation

Saad Tours

Discover Nature in Shouf reserve

Saad Tours

Wine tasting & a visit to the temples of Baalbek

Cyclamen

Mayfoua Hike

Vamos Tados

SATURDAY 30

Wine Tour

Vamos Tados

December

SUNDAY 1

Hike and visit the monasteries

Cyclamen

Arsoune

Vamos Tados

Jwar el Hawz

Level 3 Water basins and pine forests

Level 5 A small Roman temple
Libantrek

SUNDAY 8

Biking in Baskinta

Cyclamen

Kour

Vamos Tados

Bella

Level 2 Old sanctuary and a shaded spring
Level 6 A curious fortified cave
Libantrek

SATURDAY 14

Wine Tour

Vamos Tados

SUNDAY 15

Maasser El Chouf Reserve

Cyclamen

Lamartine Hike

Vamos Tados

Kefraya

Level 4 Roman tombs
Level 6 Lake view
Libantrek

ACTIVITIES UPON REQUEST

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Trekking, rock climbing, caving, mountain biking, paragliding, abseiling & 4x4

CULTURAL

EXCURSIONS

Hiking to cultural sites and nature reserves

WHITE ADVENTURE

Snowboarding, igloo building and cross-country skiing

PARAGLIDING

TANDEMS

Briefing, gearing-up and flight time amount to approximately 1 hour. Reservation is required 48 hours prior to the requested date of flight.
exittonature.com
+961 3 559992

ADDRESS BOOK

Byblos & Beyond
byblosandbeyond.com
+961 9 540857

Cyclamen
tlb-destinations.com
+961 4 419848

Great Escape
greatescape.com.lb
+961 5 456121

Liban Trek
libantrek.com
+961 1 329975

Mawassem by Saad Tours
saadtours.com
+961 1 393100

Vamos Todos
vamos-todos.com
+961 3 561174

Wild Discovery*
wilddiscovery.com.lb
+961 1 565646

* Call for regular daily trips to all areas of Lebanon

BEIRUT BASICS



AIRPORT

Rafic Hariri

International Airport

The only international airport in the country, with live online updates every 10 minutes on 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. You should arrive at the airport 2 hours prior to departure.

+961 1 628000

beirutairport.gov.lb



BANKS

Bank cashiers are normally open between 8 am and 2 pm from Monday to Friday, and until noon on Saturday.



BUS ROUTES

Bus 1 Hamra to Khalde

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

Bus 2 Hamra to Antelias

Begins by the gas station next to Barbar on Emile Edde St. and passes by Radio Lebanon, Sassine Square, Mar Mikhael, Borj Hammoud and Dora before 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 Jdeideh, Bourj al Barajneh and the Airport before ending in Hay As-Saloum.

Bus 6 Cola to Byblos

Begins in Wata at the Cola intersection and continues northeast passing through Dora, Antelias, Zalka, Kaslik, Jounieh and 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 arriving in Bharssaf.

Bus 8 Hamra to Ain Saadeh

Begins at AUH and passes

through Mar Elias, Becharra el Khoury, Sassine Square, Karam el Zeitoun, Bourj Hammoud, and Jdeideh before ending in Ain Saadeh.

Bus 9 Barbir to Nahr el Mot

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

Bus 12 Burj Al Barajneh to Hamra

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

Bus 15 Cola to Aley

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

Services (taxis that go along certain routes and take up to 5 people, 2,000 LBP each), street taxis (10,000 – 12,000 LBP), vans (1,000 LBP) and private buses (1,000 LBP).

Prices are correct at time of going to press.



TRANSPORT

Buses from Charles Helou Station will take you to destinations north of Beirut. You can also catch a taxi or service to Damascus.

Cola Intersection

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.



CURRENCY

The national currency is the Lebanese Lira also known as LBP. One US Dollar is equivalent to approximately 1,500 LBP. The US dollar is accepted almost everywhere. International bankcards are accepted in most places. 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 range from 2,000 LBP to 5,000 LBP. Valet services are available at most bars and restaurants at a cost of 5,000 LBP or 7,000 LBP 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 1 USD per piece of luggage and 10% of the bill at restaurants.



BLOGS

Blogging Beirut
bloggingbeirut.com

Destination

lebanondestinationlebanon.gov.lb

David Lebovitz

davidlebovitz.com



USEFUL NUMBERS

Beyond Beirut

+961 3 828141

beyondbeirut.com

Ministry of Tourism

+961 1 340940

lebanon-tourism.gov.lb

International Code +961

Internal Security 112/999

Civil Defense 125

Red Cross 140

Fire Department 175

Directory 120

OGERO Phone Directory 1515

Weather 1718





ما يُعلا عليها!



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