



# Lebanon Traveler

Lebanon 8.000 LBP

A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut - Issue 9 January - March 2014

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*the running*  
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**BOURJ HAMMOUD**

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# Lebanon Traveler

## unveils the country's hidden treasures

*It is the season to be jolly!*

And jolly you will be with what Lebanon Traveler has in store for you. The snow season is upon us and we have found 10 things for you to do in Faraya and Faqra, the most popular snow destinations in the country! We have other suggestions for your weekend getaways as well.

And, for the day you decide to stay close to home or your hotel, this is how we see it: wake up, have a cup of coffee and see what's ahead according to tasseography and then hit the road for a jog for which we have mapped out several interesting itineraries. Return and either make yourself a home-cooked meal using our star food for the season, pomegranate molasses, or go off to one of the restaurants that offers this yummy ingredient in their mezze. The afternoon is reserved for culture and you can either visit MiM for an interesting take on mineralogy or discover the metal work of Abdallah Hatoum. In the evening, you can dance the night away to the beats of Arabic music or just relax sipping a good local wine with friends from all over the world!

We also thought of those days, when the weather is good, as often in Lebanon, and you want to do something outdoorsy. You can discover the city with Beirut Street Photographers or plan a ride around the country with the bikers of Lebanon.

Lebanon Traveler has everything you need to stay pumped-up this season! Enjoy the winter!

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

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# Lebanon Traveler

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

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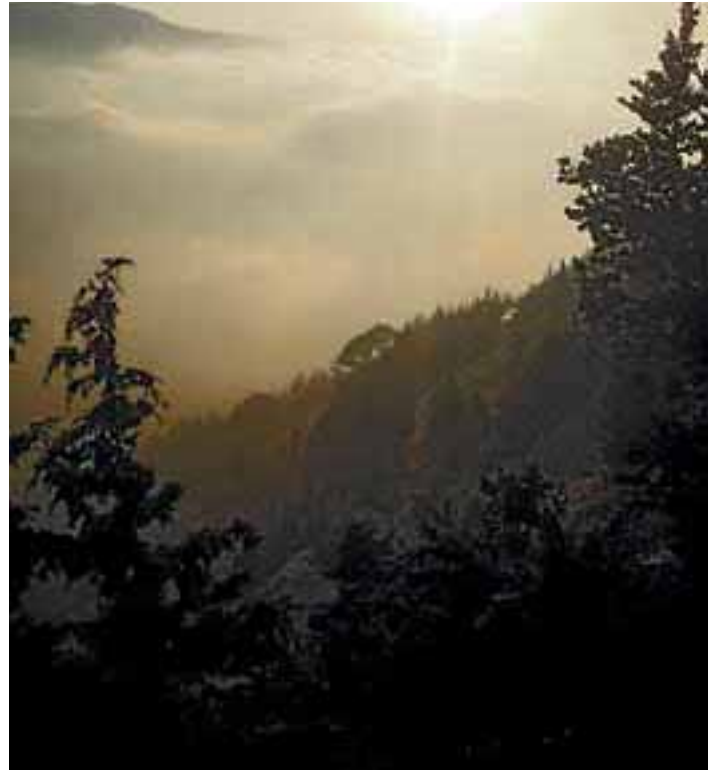
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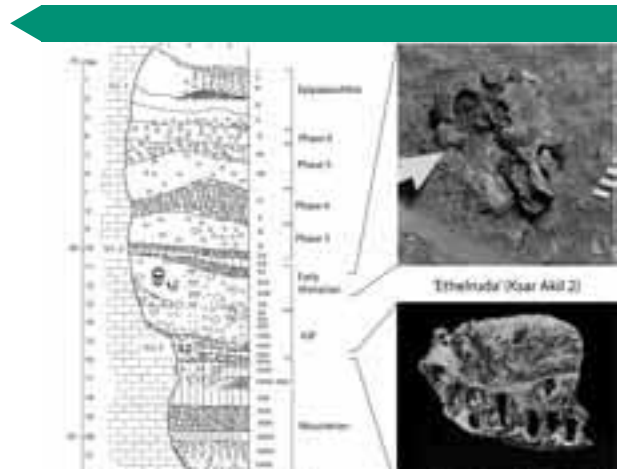


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## Fossils cast light on early humans

Prehistoric marine shells were discovered in Ksar Akil near Antelias, 10 km outside of Beirut. The shells date back to more than 40 millennia ago, indicating that humans existed in Lebanon at that time, since the shells were used to make necklaces and ornaments, a sign of advanced thinking patterns. Earlier human groups, such as the Neanderthals, a species closely linked to modern humans now extinct, did not use jewelry. This discovery shed light on the so-called “out of Africa” theory, which suggests that modern humans first evolved in Africa and then migrated in waves to the Middle East because of the attractive warm climate. But it is difficult to prove the theory since fossils from the Middle East of early modern humans are extremely rare. The only two fully modern known specimens are Egbert and Ethelruda, the fossil remains of two humans that were also found in Ksar Akil back in the 1930s and 40s.



“These people lived certainly in caves, but also in open air camps. They had sophisticated clothing, tools and social organization,” said Katerina Douka, a researcher at Oxford University, who led the study. “They looked very similar, if not identical, to us today and we would certainly recognize them as fellow modern humans.”

## Beirut gets a green guide

Beirut Green Project (BCP), in collaboration with WonderEight branding agency, launched the Beirut Green Guide (BGG), an interactive map, which highlights all public parks in Beirut and gives an overview of each. Both corporations believe in the need to be more pro-active and work on improving precious green spaces available, which would later open the door to demanding more such areas.

The idea for the green guide was initiated in a workshop organized by BGP called “Beirut Meets Hamburg”. The workshop brought together German

and Lebanese students with the goal of coming up with creative solutions to the lack of green spaces in Beirut. An unusually creative solution was to promote and spread knowledge regarding the available green spaces, which many Lebanese were unaware of.

This idea was picked up and developed by BGP while WonderEight produced the online version of the guide as part of their CSR (corporate social responsibility) program. BGP is currently working on taking this project to another level by producing the printed version of the guide.

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



[bdl.gov.lb](http://bdl.gov.lb)

## Lebanon’s first money museum

The country’s first state-of-the-art money museum opened at the Lebanese Central Bank – Banque du Liban– in November. The museum displays the oldest currencies ever to have existed in the history of Lebanon, as well as the Middle East and informs visitors on the development of the bank system in Lebanon throughout the times.

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## A new crossroad for contemporary art

Tony Salamé, founder and CEO of Aïshti, launched his latest venture: the Metropolitan Art Society. A comprehensive art gallery dedicated to displaying the contemporary works of internationally acclaimed artists embodies Salamé’s passion for contemporary art and his mission to place international art squarely within Lebanese culture, while at the same time offering a novel sensory experience. As for the location of the gallery, Salamé chose to set it in the former Abdallah Bustros palace in Ashrafieh (currently known as the Metropolitan Club), a beautifully designed building that pays tribute to Lebanon’s architectural history.

A successful cementation of Beirut’s status as the regional hub for contemporary art, Metropolitan Art Society was launched with the “East of Eden” inaugural group exhibit, curated by Massimo de Carlo. It exhibited exceptional works by notables like John Armleder, Christian Holstad, Thomas Houseago, Yan Pei-Ming, Rob Pruitt, Piotr Uklanski and Kaari Upson.



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## Lebanon’s oldest heritage on display

Tucked between Monnot Theater and St. Joseph Church is the Museum of Lebanese Prehistory (MLP), which gives us a glimpse of Lebanon in the prehistoric era. Founded 13 years ago, MLP displays a wide assortment of prehistoric hand-made artifacts, ranging from the Paleolithic era (2.6 M years ago - 10,000 BP) all the way to the Copper age. The main objective behind this museum is to make these eras more understandable and accessible the public, as scientific director Maya Boustani explained.

MLP contains artifacts that have been unearthed from more than 400 prehistoric sites all around Lebanon, including Ras Beirut, Antelias and

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Jeita. Every section is accompanied by French and Arabic texts explaining the corresponding tool or phenomenon. Occasionally the museum uses experimental means to explain certain phenomena. A model of the habitat shows a cave, a tent (probably animal skin) and a shelter under some rocks. The MLP welcomes archeologists interested in research or curious school students visiting on an educational school trip.



theagendabeirut.com

## A new way to learn

The Agenda Beirut, located in Sin al-Fil, has recently launched its first-ever run of courses, all of which aim at implementing the importance of learning outside of the traditional system. The program offers various courses that may or may not be found at a university setting, from fashion to cooking to PR classes. However, it is the learning approach and not the content of the lessons that make this program innovative, as Tony Abou Ghazaly, the creator of the idea, pointed out. Classes are meant to offer students honest insider knowledge and, more importantly, hands-on experience.

Cooking students will test their own Christmas menus while PR students will watch event management in action. Lana El Sahely, who is leading a course on image management, will take her students to watch a live styling at a

luxury boutique. Classes run between four and eight weeks and accommodate 12-15 students of all ages. “In one class we have a boutique owner, a fashion editor, a blogger and a young fashionista,” says Abou Ghazaly.

However, the program doesn’t only focus on having a diversity of students, but an equal variety of qualified teachers as well. Chef Cynthia Bitar, for example, heads Nazira Catering, the exclusive company used by the Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure Center. Maria Boustany, the instructor for The Agenda’s luxury events and public relations course, is the PR manager at Chateau Rweiss. “The value of The Agenda is all in its teachers”, says Abou Ghazaly. “The center aims to draw as many lifelong learners as possible, with the space for people who just want to develop a passion.”

## Lebanon at WTM - London



Lebanon's Ministry of Tourism took part in the World Travel Market (WTM) in November, where almost 5,000 exhibitors representing 184 countries and regions exchanged business opportunities generating millions of dollars. Tourism Minister Fadi Abboud underlined the need for reconsidering visa policies and the adoption of more

friendly ones, as a means to bolster touristic exchange amongst countries. He cited the Turkish-Lebanese example in this regard, saying that the abrogation of visas between Lebanon and Turkey has highly contributed to enhancing tourism exchange between the two countries.

The "Lebanon Taste" booth stood out with its mouth-

watering platters and drew in a crowd. Among the participants were Middle East Airlines, Saad Tours DMC, Barakat Agency for Travel & Tourism, Le Bristol Hotel, Nakhal, Rida Int'l, Le Commodore Hotel, Karam Winery, Chateau Khoury Winery and Batroun Mountains Winery.



## Beirut in New7Wonders Cities competition

From Casablanca to Athens, Doha and Prague, 28 finalists have been chosen as part of a new New7Wonders campaign and Beirut is among them. Created by Swiss-born filmmaker and explorer Bernard Weber, the aim of this competition is "to contribute to the protection of the world's human-built and natural heritage and to foster respect for our planet's diversity."

More than 100 million votes flooded in back in 2007 when the theme was the New7Wonders of Nature and Lebanon entered the competition with the Jeita Grotto. The Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China were among the winners. This

time, the focus is on "the seven cities that best represent the achievements and aspirations of our global urban civilization," Weber points out.

"This outstanding shortlist of 28 cities mirrors the diversity of urban society, especially when, for the first time in history, more than half of our planet's population lives in cities. Going forward, the New7Wonders Cities campaign will encourage debate about how cities should respond to the challenges of the present and the future." There are three more elimination phases and the competition will end on December 7 2014.

## Singer ambassador

Singer Haifa Wehbeh has been selected as a telecommunications ambassador for humanitarian causes. Nicolas Sehnaoui, minister of telecommunications, made the announcement during an information and road safety workshop that focused on the need to find solutions to dangerous driving. He also announced her appointment as ambassador of the "Don't Text and Drive" campaign. The campaign, which covers 2013 and 2014, will include awareness messages on radio, television and billboards, as well as a number of charity events.

Fadi Sawaya, the Crowne Plaza Beirut's general manager, who hosted the event, pointed out that Wehbeh's popularity and her use of social media awarded her the ability to influence by delivering a message of awareness. Wehbeh hoped that her role in the "Don't Text and Drive" awareness campaign would make a difference. She stressed that she would exert all her efforts to highlight the dangers of reckless driving. Shehnaoui revealed that 900 people were killed and 18,000 wounded in traffic accidents during 2012, adding that texting and driving was a major factor in these accidents.





# الصحة بتلبيق لسفرتنا



صحة  
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جديد بالزجاج

# Sustainable tourism



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

## Lufthansa securing tomorrow's mobility

Lufthansa has taken a pioneering role in the research for suitable alternative fuels for aviation

To advance the technology for the industry as a whole, Lufthansa was the first airline in 2011 to use biofuel on regularly scheduled commercial flights in order to study the long-term effect of biofuel on engine maintenance and engine life, as well as the environmental impact.

In the course of their research project "burnFAIR," a Lufthansa Airbus A321 flew for six months, four times a day, between Hamburg and Frankfurt, using 50 percent biofuel in one engine. In all, throughout the study, 1,187 biofuel flights were conducted. According to initial calculations, the total consumption of the bio kerosene mix amounted to 1,557 tons and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were reduced by 1,471 tons.

The study concluded in January 2012, with the world's first biofuel-powered transatlantic commercial flight to the United States. A Boeing 747-400

carrying 40 tons of biofuel mix flew from Frankfurt to Washington. This flight alone reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 38 tons, which is equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of six scheduled flights between Frankfurt and Berlin.

Lufthansa is now involved in various innovative projects that are focused on alternative fuels and has bundled them under the name "Pure Sky®". Together with partners in research and industry, Lufthansa is doing its part to speed up the process of placing sustainably produced alternative fuels on the market for the aviation industry. The biofuel strategy that was approved by the airline's board in 2012 provides the guidelines for this.

Lufthansa's daily flights to and from Lebanon have become part of the "Pure Sky®" project and the Star Alliance founding member is using one of its latest acquisitions, the Airbus 321neo, en route from Frankfurt to Beirut.

"There is so much optimism in our operations in Beirut. Our flights to and

from Frankfurt are well received by passengers. They know that Lufthansa offers more connections to Europe, North America and beyond than any other carrier. We are extremely proud to record positive growth in Beirut in times of tough economic situation surrounding the aviation sector," said Carsten Schaeffer, vice president sales and services Southeast Europe, Middle East and Africa during his first official visit in Beirut earlier this year.

"Lufthansa has been in the Lebanese market since 1956. This long time experience allows us to clearly understand the needs of the Lebanese community in Lebanon and around the world," says Till Heene, general manager of Lufthansa Lebanon. "We are constantly working on optimizing our flight schedule to provide a seamless travel. We combine our strengths such as punctuality, safety and quality with a broad understanding of what Lebanese travellers expect to have on board when travelling back and forth to their country."

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## Hima El-Fekha environmental festival

The weekend of 16 and 17 November, witnessed a busy gathering at El-Fekha village related to the Hima –protected area. More than 150 people participated in the different festival activities and over six million Lebanese Liras were directly injected into the local economy of the village.

Another successful SPNL intervention, the Hima el-Fekha festival was implemented with the support of the El-Fekha and Jdeydeh municipality and funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) in parallel to the United Nations Women Fund for Gender Equality (UNW FGE).

The festival kicked off with speeches from Me. Antoine Khoury, mayor, El-Fekha, and the UNW FGE representative Rana Massoud El-Houjeiry, followed by a series of presentations about the different projects and a visit to a local female carpet weaver and a festival dinner at Al-Rashid Guesthouse prepared by 12 local women.

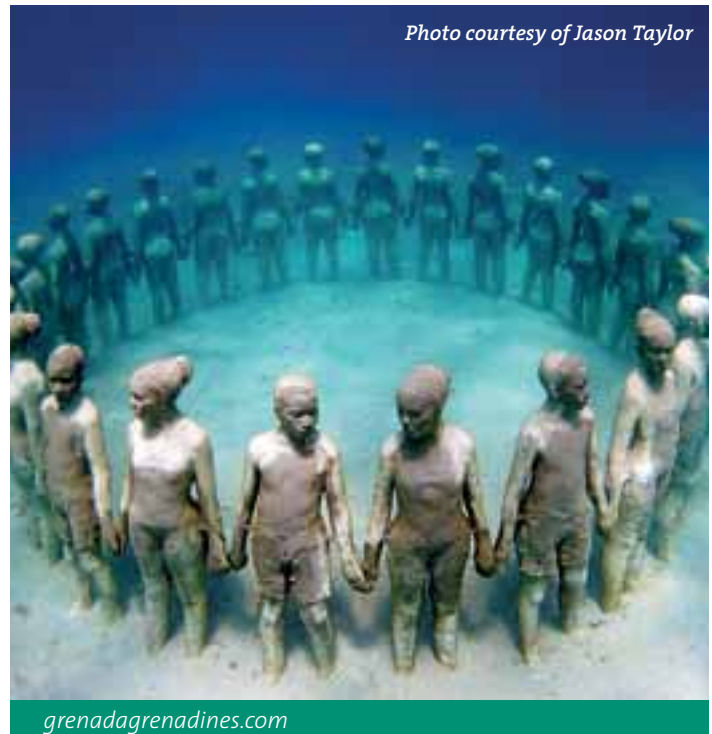
The next day the local women prepared a variety of delicious *manakish* on the saj for two different groups of hikers, one walked with the shepherds in the Sharqi eastern mountains and the other with professional hunters in the Sahl plain and Nahr area.

The municipality of El-Fekha has declared the El-Fekha lands as the Hima el-Fekha Protected Area and is now closely collaborating with SPNL on the zonation plan for a sustainable grazing and hunting approach. During the year 2014, a management plan for the Hima will be developed based on different studies by experts in flora, fauna, grazing, ecotourism and social-economics.

On the agenda of Hima el-Fekha activities, there will be several upcoming meetings with the local shepherds on grazing managements and with the hunters on sustainable grazing. December 16 will be a community service day where the local community of El-Fekha and Jdeydeh villages along with members of the municipality and the scouts and SPNL members will clean the historical water canal called el-Qana. This water canal is featured in the ecotourism strategy as a main tourism experience component.



News on this page courtesy of Pascal Abdallah, Responsible Mobilities



## Arts – Sports and Sustainable Tourism in Grenada Island

Under the shallow waters of Grenada Island an underwater sculpture park lies in silence. It is considered a model of sustainable tourism practice. Designed to act as an artificial reef, it is the first of its kind in the world. **The 105 sculptures are proving highly successful, so far, in attracting a stunning array of varied marine life. In doing so and attracting visitors, they have fulfilled a role in easing the environmental pressure on other reefs in the locality.**

Created by British sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor, the park has become one of the main tourist attractions for Grenada and the Caribbean Islands. The sculptures are accessible to both divers and snorkelers. "Creating artificial reefs is not uncommon, but using Taylor's pieces of artwork is a unique way of helping out nature. It has opened up a new world of possibility for the diving and snorkeling industry," says Howard Clarke, chairman of the park's management.

Molinere Bay has been hit by a hurricane which damaged its coral reefs, **so the sculptures have been designed to assist in the regeneration of the marine animals to live by providing new surfaces for them to thrive and grow.** A key aspect to the sculptures' appeal has been the dynamic changes brought about by being exposed to the power of the ocean. Unique natural forces including sea surge, wave action and currents have imposed their own influence and changes on the sculptures

Recognized as the "Spice of the Caribbean," Grenada boasts some of the Caribbean's most beautiful beaches, delectable cuisine and spices, a tropical rainforest, protected areas, and a wide range of fun-filled activities such as diving, snorkeling, hiking, fishing, and sailing. Now locally operated boats offering snorkeling and/or diving tours run regular trips to the park.

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# Nell Abou-Ghazale

December 2013

## The Qalaat Abou el Hassan fortress, also known as Belhasem, is one of Lebanon's ancient hidden secrets



Prehistoric castles, ancient ruins, nameless temples and pillars mark almost every area of Lebanon. Countless excavations and archeological digs have taken place all over the country, and yet we are nowhere near finishing our mission: to uncover the ancient secrets of the different civilizations that have thrived and fallen, one after the other, throughout the history of Lebanon.

On a sunny bright weekend, I decided to pay a visit to some friends in Jezzine, a charming southern town nicknamed the "City of Falls" because of its numerous waterfalls. Jezzine is also known for its historic landmarks, such as the cave used as a hiding place by Prince Fakhreddine II during the Ottoman reign.

Lebanon's rich history revealed itself one more time in the discovery of the ruins of an ancient gem in this region. During a boat ride along the Aloali River in Sfaray, a well-known area in the Jezzine region, my friends and I saw a high cliff surrounded by woods and bushes. When we drew closer a group of people gathered below the cliff informed us that an ancient fortress lies on the top. Naturally curious, we asked to see the fortress ourselves, but were told that since it is located on private land access is not allowed without special permission.



The crusaders built the fortress in the early 12th century, when it was known as Qaalat Abou el Hassan or Belhasem. In 1128, it was occupied by a wealthy crusader and was first mentioned in the chronicles as the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Strategically, it served to defend the ancient city of Sidon, a prosperous city and a center of trade and commerce, which consequently was subject of many attacks and invasions. Since the attacks mostly came from mountains surrounding the city, a series of fortresses were built around the city to protect it. Some walls of Belhasem are still standing but the fortresses has really surrendered over time to invasion by vegetation. Another one is thought to exist in the village of Abra. Together with the caves of Tyron that were built in the Shouf district, these fortresses secured the surrounding area of Sidon.

The fortress is divided into two areas, each protected by curtain-walls and rectangular towers. Located on an isolated cliff over the Aouali River, it is reachable by foot from the village of Sfaray via an asphalted road and venturing through the wilderness of the valley.

Several scientists and archeological excavations have taken notice of this fortress. In the 1900s, Camille Enlart, a prominent French archeologist and art historian, spoke about the fortress. It is also mentioned the Guide Bleu, the famous French travel guide. In 2005, a Polish group came to study Belhasem, as part of a university excavation mission. They found a silex (very hard stone, like flint), suggesting that the area, if not necessary the fortress, was a prehistoric one. An engraving was also discovered, depicting a scene with the fortress as seen from the Shouf area. In the old times, engravings, which were carved on flat stones, were the closest resemblance of a photograph.

Every area, town or village is filled with historical wonders waiting to be discovered and Belhasem is certainly no exception.

### HOW TO GET THERE

Drive southbound from Beirut to Sidon. From there, head straight east towards Jezzine. You will pass through towns such as Kfarjarra, Aabra, Kfarfalous and Roum before you reach the town of Jezzine.



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# A sense of place



**As destinations are threatened, the relationship between environmental assets and local culture is becoming a relevant issue in the tourism sector. Pascal Abdallah, tourism development consultant, and managing director of Responsible Mobilities, takes a closer look at how to make tourism more responsible**



Sustainable tourism development experts use the term “sense of place” to demonstrate the attachment of local communities to their environment and its forged cultural heritage. They sometimes refer to it by “place-attachment”, “place-making” or even better by “place-identity”.

Under this conceptual approach the cedar forests in Lebanon, which cover many square kilometers of varying landscapes from deep valleys to rocky cliffs and plains, have to be seen in their more general value of historical trees rather than just a botanical marvel. And whilst visitors associate rural areas in Mount Lebanon with Cedar forests, in reality there is a lot more to discover than the cedar tree. The rural areas of Mount Lebanon have an incredibly rich and diverse heritage, which is the result of centuries of civilizations that forged interplay between the natural environment and human activity.

Tourism is an important tool of economic growth and development. However, tourism can have a negative impact upon local populations and

their environmental areas and natural resources. But if we recognize that the sense of place is essential to the sustainability of those host communities a vital set of assets for consideration in sustainable tourism development policy and planning can be revealed.

The sense of place concept is important because all around the world, destinations and places are threatened with their authenticity and their local communities. Only a balance between tourism development interests and local community’s needs can guarantee the perpetuity of local cultures and places. In what way is the Horsh Ehden Cedar Forest Nature Reserve unique and different to the Shouf Biosphere Reserve? The answer is in the local history of the local populations, which a tour operator can reflect into tourism packages.

As an implementation of this concept the Shouf Cedar Biosphere Reserve team has developed packages entitled “Cedars and Faces” in which the tourist has the opportunity to discover the local cultures in the surrounding villages in parallel to the enchantment in the cedar forests.



*All photos courtesy of Pascal Abdallah*





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# A wintry walk on the wild side

This season, even when it's raining, head outdoors, Pascal Abdallah, suggests a trip to Yammouneh Nature Reserve to learn about Lebanon's biodiversity and geophysics

An outing needn't be canceled just because it's raining. The Yammouneh Nature Reserve in the Bekaa region is a wonderful destination for all seasons.

Start the day early and stop enroute in Chtoura for a labneh sandwich at one of the numerous dairy product shops along the road.

Then continue the journey to Yammouneh via Baalbeck and the Deir el-Ahmar road. Checkout the changing landscape of the countryside as the drive goes through the length of the Bekaa valley.

Once at the nature reserve, **Nasser Shreif**, a field botanist and its local manager, will be there to welcome you. The reserve has three bioclimatic zones reflected in its geographical regions.

Starting on the eastern side with the high mountain range of Jabal el-Makmel

and followed by the wetland area in the high plain, where the Nabaa el-Arabaain water source gushes out of the soil to fill the peaceful lakes laying at the feet of the Yammouneh village, and finishing on the western side of the local hills with a Mediterranean forest. The lakes are home to a very special type of fish and a water dam is currently being installed.

Shreif will tell you about the region's cultural, as well as natural, heritage and the story of the water source. He will point out the endemic fish of the lake and then lead you along a hiking loop on an ancient Roman road that gives way to footpaths and agricultural tracks.

You may be lucky and come across a lizard-orchid (named after its long tailed flowers) and, of course, Shreif will be sure to amuse you with his interpretation of the juniper tree and its benefits to both nature and humankind. No other

person is better qualified to show you Yammouneh than Nasser Shreif. He was born here and has dedicated all his time to studying and archiving the region's biodiversity heritage. He has also written books about the local flora.

Take a break for lunch at a local house in the villages of Yammouneh or Deir el-Ahmar. And don't forget to ask for the local syrup made out of rhubarb that is found in the high mountain plateaus. And, if you want to extend your stay you can contact WADA association in Deir el-Ahmar to have a dinner and overnight at one of the local guesthouses.

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Nasser Shreif

All photos courtesy of Pascal Abdallah

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# 10 things to do in Faraya, Faqra & Kfardebian

Beirut's winter getaway is home to a sleepy village, a members only chalet grounds and a ski resort, respectively. The main ski area is located in Mzaar Kfardebian, a 20-minute drive from the village of Faraya. The season here stretches from December to March, and the slopes are similar to the Alps with peaks as high as 2,465m

## 1. HIT THE SLOPES

Mzaar Mountain Resort and Spa (+961 9 340100) has 80 kilometers of ski tracks and a new international partner - Courchevel of the French Alps. Situated just above the village of Ouyoune El Simane in Kfardebian, the area boasts numerous ski runs with a capacity of 20,000 skiers per hour, 18 ski lifts and 10 snow grooming machines. Split in three connected domains: Refuge (accessible only from Mzaar InterContinental Hotel), Junction (principal domain, with a new ski park for freestylers) and Wardeh (the latest extension), the slopes are categorized into three difficulty levels, "Black" being the most advanced. It's an excellent spot for downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding or any other snow-related activity under the sun. For live status updates on the slopes go to [skileb.com/ski-resort/Mzaar/slopes](http://skileb.com/ski-resort/Mzaar/slopes)

## 2. BE A SNOW BUNNY

Enjoy après-ski activities, which start in the afternoon and end late in the evening. The Mzaar Mountain Resort and Spa (+961 9 340100) is home to the veteran snow bunnies, who tend to spend their time sipping hot chocolate by a crackling fire or getting their winter tan on the Refuge Terrace. Rejuvenate the senses with a massage and a wide range of beauty treatments at Les Thermes du Mzaar – a popular activity in winter so booking ahead of time is advised. But, to truly experience the local culture, your best bet is to make a friend. Socialites spend most of their mornings making house calls (chalet calls to be exact), so a cool new friend will be your ticket into the *subhiyah* (morning coffee) crowd. >

### 3. TASTE THE FOOD

Mouthwatering saj stations, fancy restaurants to keep you warm and well fed in the snowy weather, or just casual cafés, this ski region has it all. Try La Cabane (accessible by skidoo or skiing) a restaurant serving local dishes and you can dance to oriental music until the wee hours. There is the new Urban - part of the White and Iris family (+961 76 070605) in Faqra, as well as a couple of trusted favorites like Olio/Soto (+961 78944496). Chez Michel (+961 9 300614) with its familiar stone sign, is a longtime favorite serving exquisite Lebanese food. Try Les Airelles (+961 9 340100) at the InterContinental Mzaar or Italian at La Tavola. Chez Mansour (+961 9 341000) is a casual cozy eatery and Le Montagnou's (+9619341441) fondue and raclette is the perfect winter feast. For Lebanese cuisine there's the new Khebze W Zeytoune at the San Antonio Hotel or a whole slew of local favorites in Faraya village:

#### CONTACTS

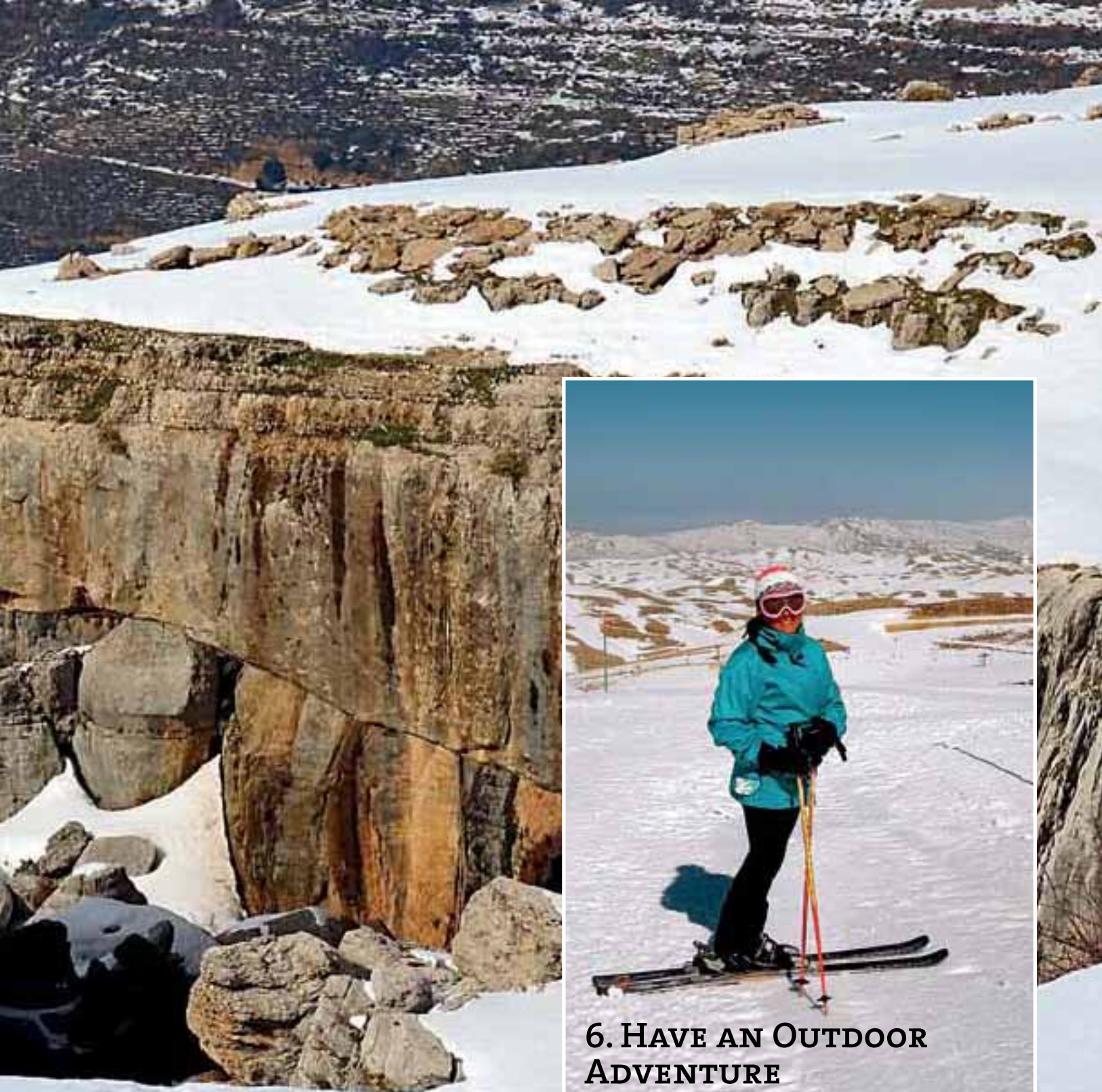
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**Coin Vert – Faraya Al Saha** +961 9 321556  
**Nabeh El Delbeh – Faraya** +961 9 321500  
**Sama Faraya – Tamer Land Hotel**  
+961 9 321268



### 4. TAKE IN THE HISTORY

You might want to see a couple of unique landmarks that are worth exploring, after getting your fill of the snow. Check out the two springs, one named for milk and the other for honey (Nebaa el-Laban and Nebaa el-Assal) that cascade down two steep valleys. Discover the Canaanite temple dedicated to the fertility goddess Astarte that stands just above the waterfall from the Nabaa el-Laban spring. The area is home to well-preserved temples, columns, altars, tombs and a Roman temple that is partly cut out of rock. Dedicated to the god Adonis, the

temple has six Corinthian columns overlooking a sacrificial altar. At the summit of Mzaar mountain, at 2,467m, you will find the highest chapel in the Middle East, built from the ruins of a fortress. And, the breath-taking natural bridge of Jisr el Hajar near Faqra, arching over the Nebaa El Laban River is one of the greatest wonders of the world. This unique erosion-made arch rises 38 meters over the river and offers memorable views during sunsets. Try to spot the fossilized seashells embedded in the surrounding strata, dating back 200 million years.



## 5. BUY MOUNEH

If you're looking for natural, healthy, homemade Lebanese *mouneh*, then you've come to the perfect place. Faraya, meaning the "land of fruits and vegetables", has very fertile soil, but is excellent for juicy apples and pears found in warmer seasons. Best known for its local *arishe*, Faraya village is filled with small stores that sell all kinds of delicious traditional foods and drinks, such as *labneh*, pickles, *makdous*, cheese, and *mazaher*. Al Baladi, (+961 9 333058) a brand known for their *arishe* and *mouneh*, is also available inside the San Antonio Hotel.



## 6. HAVE AN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Skiing is delightful, but you don't want to tie yourself down to one activity. If you use your imagination, you'll find there are countless adventures you can have. A picnic on the slopes, or an outdoor barbecue might seem like a good way to start. Be creative and indulge your sense of adventure. The region is known for extreme sports, which take place all year round. In winter, enjoy alpine skiing, skate skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. The rest of the year, guests can go mountain biking, hiking, climbing, paragliding, clay-pigeon shooting, horse riding, rappelling, or go off-roading with an ATV or 4x4. >

## 7. ENJOY THE FESTIVALS

The Mzaar Winter Festival is probably the hippest all-day event in the area. Scheduled for the end of February, Big Air competitions, the Lebanese Army performance, bands and free night skiing are a standard every year. The Ski & Fashion Festival is also a highly anticipated event scheduled for the beginning of March; call it the Lebanese Victoria's Secret fashion show meets the snow. Top models parade around in their lingerie and guests enjoy the drinks from the Refuge Terrace. A plan for an international festival, like last year's Italy on Ice Festival, is scheduled for the season but the details are still hush-hush.

## 8. PARTY TILL DAWN

Nothing beats partying in fancy chalets and chimney-lit cabins as you warm up with fine local wines and spirits. And, if you feel like exploring the town's party hubs, begin your evening at Les Caves de Chez Michel Steakhouse and Lounge (+961 9 300060) for premium wine and a full weekend entertainment program. Last year's outdoor ice bar was an epic spectacle. Powder (+961 3 700072) next to Eleven Hotel is the newest pub on the block with L'igloo (+961 9 341400) and Le Montagnou as longtime favorites. Rikky'z (+961 9 341422), known as the biggest wooden house in the Middle East, is another party-goer's favorite, open year round and infamous for their over the top events. If you manage to make it to the top of the hill on New Year's Eve, you'll find the party spilling over onto the snowy streets.

## 9. WHO NEEDS HOLLYWOOD?

On the top of Faraya mountain, giant Hollywood-style white letters read "FARAYA" for those who haven't yet realized where they are. Sponsored by citizens of the village and erected by four locals in 2010, it only goes to show that glitz and glamour doesn't just exist here, it prevails. Hike up the mountain to reach it and don't forget to take your picnic basket. Pose for the perfect Facebook shot right in front of the sign, and unlike Hollywood, fame in Faraya is very much attainable.





## 10. STAY OVERNIGHT

The 5 star InterContinental Mountain Resort and Spa (+961 9 340100) has superb ski in and out facilities. The brand new Aux Cimes du Mzaar (+961 70 341002) boutique hotel, the 4 star Hotel Eleven (+961 9 341741), the 3 star Merab Hotel (+961 9 341000) and the San Antonio Hotel, (+961 70 335656) as well as the 2 star Auberge Suisse (+961 70 103222) are a nearby alternative. For those who want to fend for themselves as far as their meals go, try the Mzaarville Chalets (+961 71 773911), facing the ski slopes.

When staying in Faqra (one of the world's first private ski resorts) you can't hit the slopes if you're not staying at a posh hotel or a private chalet. Located near the Roman ruins, the 4 star Terre Brune Hotel (+961 9 300060) is an alpine sanctuary offering the most breathtaking views of the area. The 4 star Auberge de Faqra (+961 9 300600) and the new Urban (+96176 070 605) are also nearby.

In Faraya village try Faraya Village Club (+961 9 320666), Chateau D'Eau Hotel (+961 9 341424) or Auberge Le Valais (+961 9 341227). Online booking for accommodations and other services are available on [www.skileb.com](http://www.skileb.com) (+961 70 103222).

# Route 961

Take a ride on long winding roads to reach Lebanon's highest peak



All photos courtesy of Sabina Llewellyn-Davies



*"A personal favorite of mine is to ride late afternoon up to Falougha in the Shouf region"*

"Riding offers freedom, it's a real get away, for me it's like breathing," says Eddy Nehme, a private banker. Eddy has been riding for around 34 years, his first bike was a Cross Yamaha 250. Now he rides a Honda Goldwing. He is president of the WingRiders Club and organizes group rides most Sundays as well as trainings to promote safe riding in Lebanon.

And, his dedication shines through as he checks the buckle on my helmet to make sure it's fastened well as we get ready for our ride. Zaki, who owns a Harley Davidson, and Nada, a beautiful blonde who rides a Honda speed-bike, are joining us today along with 15 other bikers. "There are so many beautiful routes in Lebanon ... but I have forgotten the names of the regions," says Nada, her words greeted by an outburst of laughter from her fellow bikers.

Under a clear blue sky, we head off along the highway towards the North, taking a right after passing the Chekka seaside. Longitude and latitude doesn't seem to matter much for bikers here, it's all about reaching the roads up to the mountains, through stunning green valleys. Soon, the Kornet el Sawda, Lebanon's highest peak, rises ahead of us in the distance. It makes an incredible backdrop to the winding road, lined with vast olive groves. Our destination is the Cedar forest located at 1,900m.

The brave of heart were invited by Eddy to continue along a gravel road to the peak of Kornet el Sawda but no one took up his half-hearted offer. It was about time to give the bikes a well-deserved break, and we discovered a simple mountain eatery where we feasted on delicious *bayd bi awarma*, fried eggs cooked with minced meat, as well as *manouche*, pies with an array of toppings baked on an outdoor oven by the owner Leila.

An hour later, we headed back a different route, via the village of Qanat, along a narrow virtually car free road through a pine forest, perfect for riding. Along the way we took a short break, but Eddy warned us not to step off the road into the wilderness.

"Look out for the red flags indicating the possibility of landmines remaining from the Civil War." Charming! It was time to get on the saddle again and we continued down this gem of a road towards the highway back to Beirut, passing Chekka seaside while the sun set over the Mediterranean.

Experiencing Lebanon's countryside from the saddle of a motorcycle is an incredible feeling. The natural and historic sites along the way combine to feed you with a wealth of experiences. A personal favorite of mine is to ride late afternoon up to Falougha in the Shouf region, to the spot where the Lebanese flag flutters proudly, stopping along the way to take in a glowing sunset. Or riding the wide roads through beautiful green valleys from Nabatieh to Marjayoun in the South.

"Taking my bike on a long road trip, up to the mountains, reloads my mental batteries," said Eddy. And, as there is no rest for the eager, on the ride back home Eddy was already planning next weekend's energizer.

## BIKING CLUBS

### WINGRIDERS

[edynehme@gmail.com](mailto:edynehme@gmail.com)

### ANB Moto Club

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

### H.O.G.® Lebanon

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

## WHAT TO WEAR

For the classic motorcycle rider who wants to be safe and cool, there are some specially designed pieces of riding gear to consider.

1. Vented helmets are a must to circulate air inside the helmet and ultimately dissipate the heat to the outside.
2. Cool suits are designed to be used as an undergarment for leather suits. The washable liner helps air to circulate and allows moisture to be drawn (a system called wicking) away from the body to help regulate body temperature.
3. Vented leather jackets allow a limited amount of air to pass through them.
4. Body armor cool pants are ideal for riders wanting to retain the blue jean look, with comfort and protection.
5. Cool gloves offer the protection of leather at all of the vulnerable points, but are also vented to allow air to flow.

# An urban *haven*





## In the middle of Mar Mikhael St, shielded away from the noisy hustle of crowded streets, lies BEYt, a guesthouse that has become a meeting place and cultural platform for a diverse group of people, who want to experience Lebanese culture and hospitality

An elegant fusion between a warm guesthouse and a cultural artistic platform, BEYt gives visitors a unique taste of the irresistible Beirut culture.

When you enter BEYt, the first thing you feel is a sense of enveloping coziness that only an authentic Lebanese house can offer. You are greeted, along with smiling faces and the famous Lebanese Ahla-w-Sahla, by a welcome drink and delicious appetizers. All food is strictly local, natural and homemade, the traditional way. The spacious living room is dotted with colorful and carefully restored vintage furniture. Sitting there you take in the house's unique architecture. High ceilings, typical arcades, colorful tiles, old-fashioned windows and a sunny garden, all exude gradually fading traditional charm that is no longer prevalent in Beirut.

Large old-fashioned radios, a wooden record player and an antique clock are but a few items that add to the spirit of the house. The bedrooms and the bathrooms are spacious, light colored but not without a touch of modernity.

Paintings by Joe Keserwani, Rafic Majzoub and Mazen Kerbaj, amongst others hang on the walls. Old metal basins, used for washing, lie on the floor of the beautifully decorated bathrooms. And perhaps the most charming is the garden outside, planted with jasmines and an assortment of vegetables used for cooking. That is exactly what the concept of BEYt is, to offer guests a unique experience of old-fashioned Lebanese hospitality, tailored to the last detail.

"Lebanese people have always been known for going out of their way to make their guests feel at home

and make sure they enjoy their time. And this is the case with BEYt," says Abdallah Almachnouk, co-partner of the project.

Guests have the freedom to cook their own food while being offered natural, healthy Lebanese food. A selection of books and CDs lie neatly stacked in one corner, available for anyone who wishes to use them. A small chalkboard, used to post the latest events and activities in town, is hung in the kitchen and updated every few days.

"We're all like one big family," says Abdallah. "I remember we had a graffiti artist once who wanted some inspiration. He set his canvas in the living room and would listen to music and paint."

"My friend, Tony Sfeir, and I were aware this beautiful 150-year old apartment in the same building as his boutique. We heard the people renting it were leaving and there was no way we were going to let it be transformed to another Mar Mikhael restaurant. Even though the timing was wasn't right we decided to take the risk," explains Abdallah.

While remaining true to the house's original spirit, the two partners renovated the house's infrastructure and sure enough, BEYt was born "a small heaven in the middle of Beirut, made with love," stressed Abdallah.

But BEYt is not just a warm household welcoming strangers. It is also a house full of artistic dedications. Plan Bey, Tony's gallery/bookshop collaborates closely with artists to create, publish and manufacture products, in limited quantities, to sell them.

+961 1 444110





# Back to nature

In the middle of Baaklin's serene forest, in the wonderfully preserved Chouf district, lies Bkerzay

This artistic workshop and meeting hub, located amidst olive groves and pine trees, is for all those who are interested in preserving Lebanese heritage, handcraft and natural products. This project aims to promote products of the area, such as soaps, oils, herbs, honey and other organic products. It also encourages traditional crafts, including pottery and weaving, to give the villagers the opportunity to work within their environment and to keep their expertise alive. Bkerzay is a venue for those seeking a space for creativity and healing.

Currently, four artists are working there regularly and a huge showroom is open daily for purchases. Bkerzay's spacious pottery workshop showcases authentic designs of cups, pots, ornamental objects and much more. Launched in September 2013, it will be expanding its workshop to give pottery lessons to people interested in this handcraft as of February 2014. Now it is now operational just for professionals and artists who can work without tutoring.

Bkerzay is in the center of a natural reserve and is a place where people can come to release their creativity. "The purpose is to preserve nature in anyway

possible," says Pascale Sloukji, project manager. "Bkerzay is a project intended to preserve and reinforce the rural environment of the Lebanese mountain and its inhabitants by promoting the crafts, the terroir products and the ecotourism in the Chouf area. We are now getting ready to start the construction of the guesthouses that should be ready to rent by next summer. We are also preparing hiking tracks in the Baaklin forest," added Ramzi Salman, the developer of the project.

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All photos courtesy of Bkerzay



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*Photo courtesy of Jamal Saïdi*



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# The running *revolution*

During the winter months, more and more joggers can be seen taking advantage of cooler temperatures and lower humidity. Our ace action reporter put on her running shoes to discover where the best routes are

*Photo courtesy of Paul Nicolas*

Unpredictable traffic, frequently obstructed pavements, poor air quality: It is a truth universally acknowledged that Lebanon is far from ideal for joggers. Nonetheless, this country is currently experiencing a “running revolution”, as this low-cost sport proves increasingly popular among locals and visitors alike.

“Running has picked up dramatically for the past 10 years in Lebanon,” says Roger Bejani, founder of the Inter-Lebanon running club. Bejani credits the Beirut Marathon Association and a variety of running clubs that actively promote this “accessible to all” sport with popularizing running as an activity.

Indeed, 10 years after its inaugural marathon more than 36,000 people signed up to run in events organized by the Marathon Association for its 2013 edition on November 10. “Running is becoming more and more popular regardless of the season, although one can notice a significant increase in the number of runners on the Corniche around the time of the marathon preparations,” points out Marathon Association spokesperson, Elissar Mezher, referring to the city’s most well-known coastal running route.

Mezher is clear however that running is not a seasonal sport. “Running is very popular as a means of keeping fit in all months and weather conditions,” she stresses. But while there are runners aplenty in Lebanon all year round, there is simultaneously widespread agreement that conditions for jogging are far from ideal.

“Abysmal,” is the word Anthony Ussher, an active member of the Beirut Hash House Harriers Running Club and organizer of the Batroun Triathlon, chooses to describe Lebanon’s roads and traffic as they relate to joggers.

“It is somehow true that Lebanon lacks the proper infrastructure for running and other outdoor sports like biking,” concedes Mezher, referring to the absence of designated running lanes, the lack of street lighting after dark and drivers’ casual disregard for traffic lights. Ussher advises that in order to stay safe in the city, runners must be constantly aware and wear bright, highly visible clothing.

Bejani particularly highlights the challenge runners face in finding suitable places to train. With just a handful of



Photo courtesy of Paul Nicolas

comfortable running routes, Bejani says that “compared to other cities, especially European or American, running in Beirut is tough and may be boring.”

But, for visitors to the city with their trainers in their suitcase, it definitely won’t be boring to go down to the Corniche and join Beirut’s fittest as they pound the pavement from Ain al-Mreisseh to the iconic Pigeon Rocks. The Corniche is busy, and not Bejani’s favorite route, but it does offer a run with a view of Lebanese society: Weave between families, cyclists and dog walkers, while to your right daredevils leap from cliffs above the blue Mediterranean.

For residents, for whom the Corniche’s curiosities are a frustration, Mezher reassures that action is being taken to expand the number of designated running areas in the city.

**“There are some great initiatives to provide such places for runners like the new Beirut water front track by Solidere,” she says, noting also that “there are awareness campaigns being carried out by the Beirut Marathon Association and active local NGOs are advocating for running and cycling lanes and opening of public parks.” >**



In the meantime, runners keen to mix it up might find variety in varying their running companions as much as in diversifying their routes. Lebanon boasts several active running clubs, many of them, including Bejani's and Ussher's, all too keen to welcome newcomers including tourists or short-term residents of the city.

Bejani says that visitors regularly join the ManiaX, the road-runners' group of which he is a part, while Ussher of the Hash House Harriers likewise says visitors are welcome to join the group's excursions outside the city.

With the latter however be warned: Their tagline is "the drinking club with a running problem." Although serious athletes do participate in both their city and mountain outings, the focus is as much on socializing over some beers as it is on getting in a good workout.

## WHAT TO WEAR



Joggers wear attire typical of the sport throughout most of the world – running shoes, shorts and sleeveless tops are all

perfectly permissible. Lily Bejjani, who took up running in 2012 and has since placed in her category in almost every major race in the country, hits her running route wearing "shorts, a no-sleeve top, socks and shoes, an iPod and a GPS watch." She carries almost nothing – "no water, no food" – just tucking some cash into her running shoes in case she needs to stop for water or circumstances arise that make it necessary to take a taxi home. For runners, particularly of the longer distance ilk, arriving in Lebanon without the appropriate gear, Bejjani says a recently opened running store in the Galaxy Mall is owned by long distance runner Ali Kacemi and is top notch. Given many drivers disregard for joggers, it is also worth reiterated Anthony Ussher's advice: wear bright clothing to ensure you're visible.

## GYMS

Traffic and track issues notwithstanding, in sunny Lebanon getting in an outdoor jog is not often impaired by bad weather, but on the odd occasion when it is, it really is. Rain in Lebanon comes in torrential downpours, flooding streets in minutes and chasing the sane indoors.

For runners, Bejani says, rain need not be a problem – provided the deluge commences when you're already pounding the pavement.

"Rain is not a problem if it starts when you're running; it may even be stimulating. It is a problem though when you wake up at 5 a.m. and it is raining cats and dogs. You need to be a freak runner (and there are some) to venture outside," he jokes.

The alternative is to take to the thread mill. If you're not lucky enough to be bunking at one of the city's 5-star hotels with a luxury gym on hand, don't worry, most gyms in town offer day rates.

## ROUTES

### Tried and tested

The Corniche from Ain al-Mreisseh to the sandy shoreline at Ramlet al-Baida is a favorite. The Beirut Marathon Association describes the route as a "challenging 10 km run." For those keen for an even more rigorous run, the association suggests extending this route back along the coast to the Beirut Port and back to Ain al-Mreisseh.

### Short and sweet

For a much shorter, but also much calmer jog, go for a 2 km run along the Beirut Waterfront. Here the honking of horns recedes as the lap of the sea provides the soundtrack to your run.

### Lapping it up

If you happen to have a permit or the ability to gain a permit (for foreigners this usually just involves producing your passport at the gate) for Horsh Beirut, running laps beneath the trees in Beirut's largest public park is a pleasant change of pace from coastal routes.

### Down in Dbayeh

Just north of Beirut at the Dbayeh marina, Ussher says the air is fresher and a reasonably quiet, mostly traffic-free 5 km loop can be accomplished. As at the Corniche and Waterfront, this route offers a pleasant seaside stretch.

### Beating the Beirut bounds

For joggers seeking a really challenging

## RUNNING CLUBS

**Beirut Tarboush Hash House Harriers**  
beiruthash.com

**Beirut Marathon Association**  
beirutmarathon.org

**Inter-Lebanon Road Running and Athletics Club**  
rralebanon.org

**Elite Running Club**  
eliterunningclub.com

## GYMS

**Body Garage, Ashrafieh**  
+961 1 200090

**Genesis Health Club, Verdun**  
+961 1 864646

**Fitness Zone, Hamra**  
+961 1 751666

**INSHAPE at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ain al-Mreisseh**  
+961 1 368111

**In Shape, Geitawi**  
+961 3 751898



route, three-time Beirut marathon finisher Tom Mather suggests a loop that takes you right along the edge of the city limits. You begin on the Corniche running along it until you reach Ouzai, then turn east along Corniche al-Mazraa following the road until you reach the Beirut River where you head north to Forum de Beirut before turning back west to join up with the point you set out from on the Corniche. Mather readily acknowledges that this route can be chaotic, particularly with traffic along Corniche al-Mazraa. But, he says, "there's something nice about big, long loops [and] completing exactly what was planned."

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E-mail: [Ridatvl@dm.net.lb](mailto:Ridatvl@dm.net.lb) <<mailto:Ridatvl@dm.net.lb>>

# Touring *Photography*

Lebanon is a country of incredible variety: stunning beaches to dramatic mountain vistas, ancient ruins to lively city streets, almost everywhere you go you're likely to stumble across something picturesque. Shooting what you see as you travel can be one of the most rewarding parts of a journey and a great way to ensure you never forget the sights, sounds and smells of a country. Whether you're a seasoned photographer or just starting out, all it takes to get some great shots is a simple DSLR camera and an eye for three things: light, composition and moment.

Beirut Street Photographers, a group of local amateurs and professionals, organize frequent trips to parts of Beirut and further afield, for anyone interested in photographing Lebanon's bustling streets and welcoming people. Photography club Dar Al Mussawir also organize group outings to locations across the country and hold frequent photography workshops in English and Arabic. They also rent equipment, including cameras and tripods.





## A DAY TRIP TO THE SOUTH

If you fancy going further afield, follow in the footsteps of Jamal Saidi, Reuters' ex-chief of photography in Lebanon and Syria, who featured Sidon and Tyre, picturesque cities perched on the Mediterranean coast south of Beirut, in his book "Lebanon: Beauty Beyond Belief," released earlier this year. Easily accessible by bus or with the help of a local taxi company, these cities are the perfect places to take some shots imbued with history.

Sidon's stunning crusader sea castle is a great place to experiment with light, thanks to the beauty of the sunlight reflecting off the waves, which dapples the walls with ever-shifting patterns. The ancient stone souk, with its pedestrian-only alleyways, is also a wonderful place to capture children playing, photograph traditional artisans carving wood or welding metal, and spot the old wooden carts used to transport wares along the stone passageways.

For a change of scene continue on to Tyre, where the wide, palm-tree lined streets are the opposite of Sidon's warren-like alleyways. The peaceful harbor on the tip of the peninsula is a great place to photograph fishermen in action. Afterwards visit Tyre's stunning Roman hippodrome. Built to seat 20,000 spectators, it is the biggest and best preserved in the world.



## TWO DAYS IN THE VALLEY OF THE SAINTS

If dramatic views are more your style, why not take a leaf out of journalist and photographer Norbert Schiller's book and recreate the stunning photographs in "A Million Steps - Hiking the Lebanon Mountain Trail." Head up north to the stunning Qadisha Valley, known as the Valley of the Saints because of the wealth of monasteries, hermitages and convents tucked away on its tree-covered mountainsides. The small mountain town of Bsharre makes a great base.

Book one of the cosy rooms at the Bauhaus Chalets and Motel and spend a day wandering the breathtakingly beautiful valley. Free maps are available from the Lebanon Mountain Trail team, who can also recommend a local guide to help you seek out the best spots in safety.

The next morning take the old road up to the Qadisha Grotto, a fascinating cave filled with stalagmites and stalactites. Unlike the larger Jeita Grotto, where taking pictures is forbidden, here you are free to photograph the fascinating rock formations. In the afternoon, continue uphill to the Cedars. This beautiful grove of 375 trees, some of which reach heights of 35 meters, commands stunning views over the valley and is a testament to the beauty of the majestic cedar, which graces the Lebanese flag. >



*All photos courtesy of India Stoughton*

## AN AFTERNOON WALKING TOUR OF BEIRUT

One of the most interesting ways to get to know or rediscover a country is by observing the day-to-day rituals of those who live there. Among the best places to take photographs within Beirut is Bourj Hammoud, the Armenian quarter north of the Beirut River. Spend a few hours in the narrow alleyways, lined with stalls selling colorful heaps of spices, which lend themselves to candid shots of people shopping, relaxing in local eateries or strolling the streets.

Next, head south, towards the center of the city. After crossing the river you'll arrive in Mar Mikhael, a trendy, up-and-coming neighborhood where old buildings from the French mandate era provide an atmospheric backdrop. Continuing along the same street will bring you to Gemmayzeh, an urban hot-spot perfect for shooting a diverse range of people wandering the streets and Beirut's characteristic blend of old and new architecture.



### WHO TO GO WITH

Lebanon Street Photographers  
[lebanonstreetphotographers.org](http://lebanonstreetphotographers.org)

Dar Al Mussawir  
+961 1 373347  
[facebook.com/DarAlMussawirPage](https://facebook.com/DarAlMussawirPage)

*All photos courtesy of Jamal Saidi*

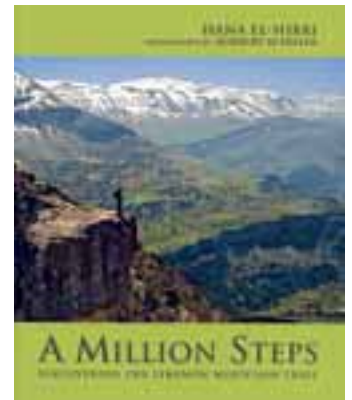
## BOOKS BY PHOTOGRAPHERS



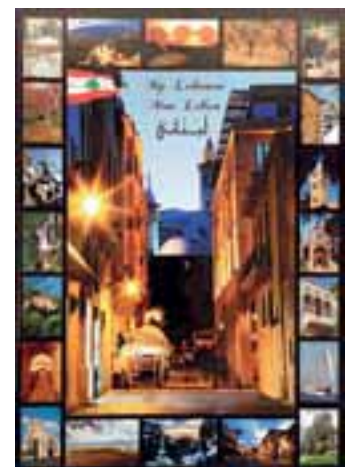
**Beauty Beyond Belief**  
by Jamal Saidi & Ayman Saidi



**The Lebanon**  
by Max Milligan



**A Million Steps**  
by Norbert Schiller



**My Lebanon**  
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# *Slow Food* Snail Trails



Author, photographer, food consultant and TV host, Barbara Abdeni Assaad tells us a thing or two about pomegranate molasses





***"A spoonful of pomegranate molasses is perfect to flavor meat stuffing for meat crescents"***

When lemon trees were scarce in Lebanon and the tangy taste, which we so much cherish was demanded, our forefathers came up with other ways to find sour and zesty flavors with different types of fruit. Local unripe grapes were crushed and the juice was boiled to a concentrate to make verjuice, *hoosroom* in Arabic. Another important condiment was made with sour pomegranate. Juice was extracted from the seeds of the fruit, strained and boiled into thick syrup producing pomegranate molasses, *debs remman* in Arabic. This thick dark brown liquid is very much appreciated today in many households and is also used in traditional restaurants throughout the country.

The taste of pomegranate molasses is intensely sour with a hint of sweetness and is an indispensable item in our mouneh, our local traditional preserves. To make *debs remman* is no small task. And do be careful working with pomegranates, as the juice will stain your hands and clothes. Invite the neighbors and get a huge pot going, as you need a minimum quantity to get good results.

A spoonful of pomegranate molasses is perfect to flavor meat stuffing for meat crescents. Cooks use a mixture of lemon juice and pomegranate molasses to deglaze favorites such as mankanek, Lebanese sausages, chicken liver or birds cooked in season. The outcome is a sweet and sour bliss!

The best pomegranate molasses is thick and sticky. To gauge this, tilt the bottle. Good molasses should move slowly and coat the sides of the bottle. Good-quality pomegranate molasses will also be a deep, rich red — so red that it appears almost brown or even nearly black. This is because pomegranate juice naturally darkens in color as the processor cooks off its moisture. >



*"This thick dark brown liquid is very much appreciated today in many households"*

## POMEGRANATE MOLASSES

**INGREDIENTS** Makes 1 bottle  
10 kg sour pomegranate  
40 g ground coarse sea salt  
Olive oil

### PREPARATION

Wash the pomegranates and dry with a kitchen towel. Trim the crown of the pomegranate using a sharp paring knife and then slice it. If the fruit is juicy, squeeze the fresh juice out using a lemon squeezer.

Alternatively, cut the outside skin around the pomegranate without touching the arils and separate the fruit into 5 to 6 wedges. Open the fruit with your thumb and scoop the arils into a clean dish, removing the white membrane. Blend the arils in a food processor or blender. Strain the liquid through a

sieve lined with a sterilized cloth.

Pour the liquid into a non-reactive pan. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring occasionally. Boil until the liquid thickens into a paste. The time of cooking may take about 2 hours, depending on the amount of juice extracted from the fruit.

Thoroughly skim the froth from the surface. Add the salt towards the end of the cooking. Mix thoroughly until it completely dissolves. Pour the syrup in a sterilized bottle. Top with olive oil to seal. Close the lid of the bottle tightly making sure the cover is well secured. Label the bottle and store in a cool dark place, if not for immediate consumption. Keep for a year.



## CHICKEN LIVER WITH POMEGRANATE MOLASSES

**INGREDIENTS** Serves 3 - 4  
½ kg chicken liver  
1 clove garlic  
2 tbsp pomegranate molasses  
2 tbsps vegetable oil  
Juice of 1-2 lemons  
Fine sea salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Few sprigs finely chopped coriander or parsley

### PREPARATION

It is important to clean the liver carefully, removing loose nerves or blood clots. You can ask your butcher to do this for you if you can't be bothered. Crush garlic with a little salt with a mortar and pestle. Add the pomegranate molasses

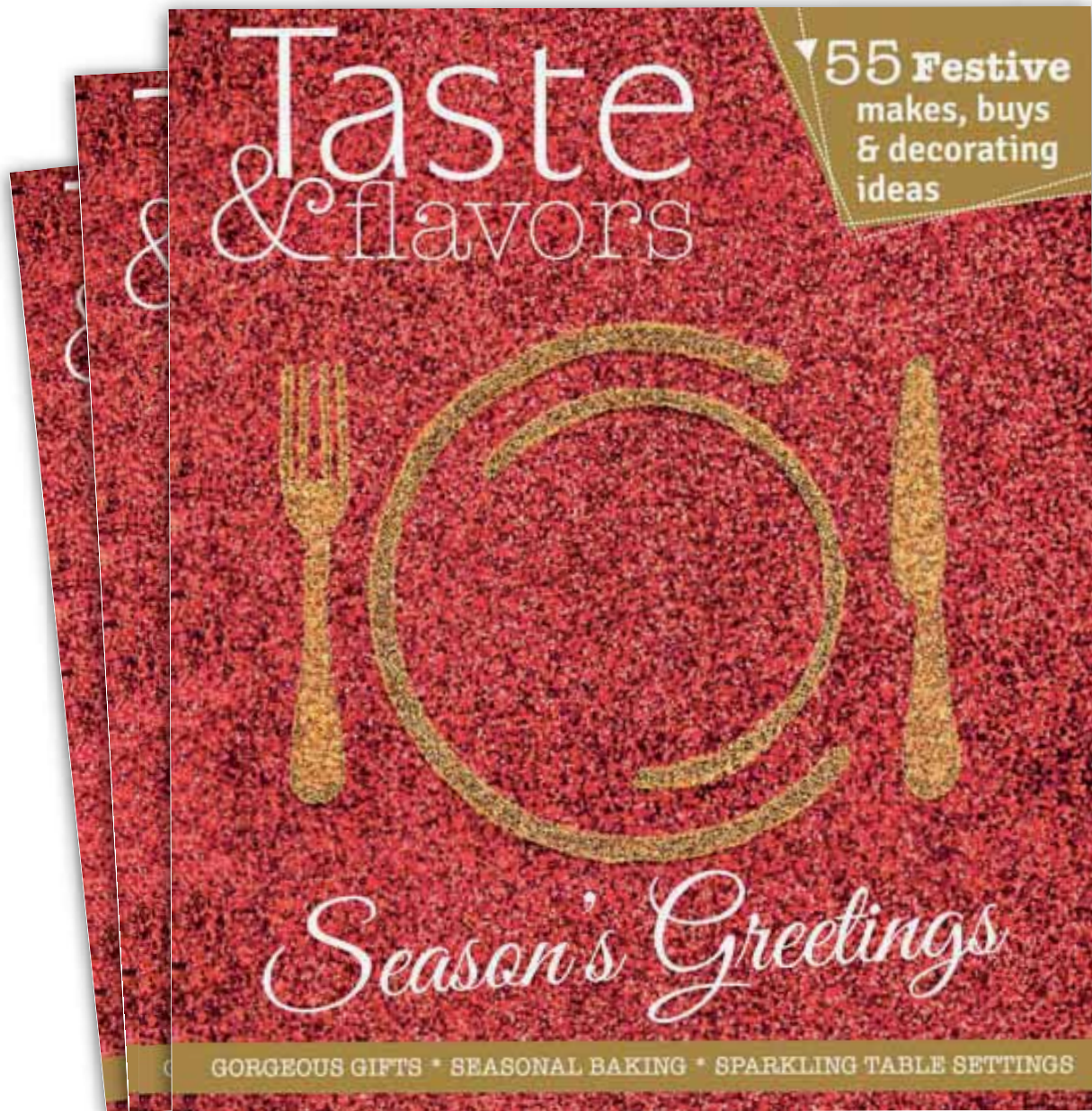
and lemon juice to the garlic mixture and set aside. I use only the best pomegranate molasses I can find. A friend whose village cultivates beautiful pomegranate trees makes it. Commercial brands can be of poor quality, so be wary.

Fry the chicken liver in a skillet with oil until golden brown. Don't overcook, as the pieces will become rubbery. Add the crushed garlic mixture and blend. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with chopped coriander or parsley. Serve warm

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# Is Coffee *Your Future?*

Can the first coffee of the day really 'tell' what will happen to you for the rest of that day and well beyond into your future?





Coffee reading has been around for centuries. But in recent times there has been a revival with Lebanon at the forefront of this resurgence. So, Lebanon Traveler sent it's reporter off to investigate. And after many cups of coffee and, hence sleepless nights, here is what he discovered.

But first, a brief history: The early origins of tasseography (coffee readings in this case) point to tea and China, that is until merchants began trading coffee across the Middle East, where Arab fortune tellers jumped the 'tea ship', so to speak, and began coffee readings in earnest.

This was way back in the 16th and 17th centuries and when elders of the community would secretly give readings to those desperately seeking a peek into their future. To keep the skill alive, coffee reading was passed down to family members throughout the generations.

### THE HERE AND NOW

Fast forwarding to the 21st century, it seems as if nearly every coffee shop in Beirut and beyond has a resident 'coffee reader': Kahwet Leila in Gemmayzeh, Cappuccino in Achrafieh, Public in Antelies, just to name a few. There are countless others; all you need to do is ask around.

Today, coffee reading in Lebanon is all about fun, or at least it should be, shouldn't it? However, the abundance of 'professional' coffee readers, some gaining almost celebratory status, with charges to match and even having a secretary to maintain a strict booking system and a waiting list that span weeks, says otherwise.

*"Coffee cups have to be heavy, white inside, preferable shaffé, and the person has to have taken at least a sip"*

### A HIDDEN ARMY OF COFFEE READERS

Away from its public face, there is a traditional unseen army of coffee readers, hidden within many residential buildings nationwide. Mothers, sisters, aunts and daughters (and male equivalents, although less so), double up as soothsayers for friends, neighbors and family.

Lebanon Traveler located Maria (who didn't want to give her family name), aged 44 and asked her to reveal the lowdown on coffee reading.

### How long have you been giving coffee readings and who taught you to 'read'?

I have been doing it for 10 years. My cousin who studied astrology taught me by explaining to me what the signs in the coffee cup mean.

### Do you believe in it?

No, it's not a belief but I do think some people are more intuitive than others. I just do readings for friends and family at home in Rabieh.

### How difficult is it to 'read' coffee?

It's not difficult because it's based on intuition and on the impression the reader gets from the person [having their cup read].

### How much do you charge?

Oh no, I don't charge. It's just for fun. I think the readers that sit in cafes and charge take advantage of people's despair. Always have a reading with a neighbor or friend just for fun. Never base your decisions in life on a coffee reading.

### Can anyone learn to 'read' or is it a gift?

I think some people are predisposed because they have a sense of receptiveness towards other people.

### Do the cups used for the coffee reading make a difference?

I believe so. They have to be heavy, white inside, preferable the shaffé type, and the person has to have taken at least a sip.

### Is there a certain time of the day when it is better to have a reading?

I don't think the actual time of day matters but apparently readings on a Friday are more accurate. But I have no idea why.

### So, tell us about an unusual reading.

I once saw a snake in my neighbor's coffee cup and the next day the neighbor found a snake in a lettuce she bought at the grocery store.

So, if you are Lebanese then the likelihood that you know a coffee reader on your street is quite probable. But what if you are a tourist just passing through? Well, you can ask around in cafés and pay for coffee reading services. But if you want to have your coffee read by a housewife and for free then your best bet is to make some Lebanese friends.

## GOOD TO KNOW

### THE 5 DIFFERENT CUP ZONES AND WHAT THEY MEAN

1. Part around the cup handle is connected to the love life
2. The left side of the cup handle represents the present
3. The bottom represents home and family
4. The opposite side of the cup handle represents financial situation
5. The right side of the cup handle represents the future

### INTERPRETATIONS

- Alphabet letters in the reading refer to the initials of a person, place, etc.
- Numbers refer to time, date and age or anything else connected with that particular number that shows in the reading.
- Numerous dots in one spot refer to message, kissing or travel.
- Straight lines are considered as clear paths and plans with specific goals. Wavy lines mean instability in your life.
- If the entire cup is filled completely with very small symbols and lines it means your thoughts are unclear.

### WHAT'S IN A WORD?

- Tasseography, also known as tasseomancy or tassology, is a divination or fortune-telling method that interprets patterns in tea-leaves, coffee grounds or wine dregs.
- The terms derive from the French word tasse (cup), which in turn derives from the cognate Arabic word tassa, and the Greeks suffixes -graph (writing), -logy (study of), and -mancy (divination).

### SO YOU WANT TO KNOW YOUR FUTURE? HERE'S WHERE TO GO.

- Beirut Corniche  
Usually at night time; seek and you may find.
- Manara Palace Café +961 1 363949  
No set times
- Café Rawda +961 3 679237  
No set times
- La Maison du Café +961 1 332300  
Wednesday & Friday
- Cappuccino Grand Café +961 70 771616  
Monday
- Public +961 4 444485/6  
Tuesday & Thursday
- La Tasse +961 3 679237  
Every day except Wednesday & Sunday.  
By appointment only.

*\*Times may change. Call to check beforehand*

# Meet the craftsmen of *Bourj Hammoud*

For those who haven't had a chance to explore this Armenian enclave, Lebanon Traveler has done it for you guided by designer Angelique Sabounjian



In the 1920's, a Lebanese entrepreneur called Hammoud built a tower on the eastern banks of the Beirut River. In those days the area was mostly swamps and marsh-land but that didn't deter him from his dream. His two-storey building hovered over the smaller homes below, made up of mostly Armenian refugees. What Hammoud and his neighbors couldn't have known at the time was that the area they called home would become one of the most densely populated districts in the Middle East and a virtual Mecca for craftsmanship –Bourj Hammoud (meaning the tower of Hammoud).

Even now, the municipality of Bourj Hammoud, originally founded by survivors of the Armenian Genocide in 1915, evokes a sense of mystery and intrigue. Over 80 percent of business owners are Armenian and around 77 percent of businesses are artisanal or

involve skilled labor. Venturing into its narrow alleyways is like walking into a cocoon. Those who know it well can attest to the fact that it is the center for creativity, where things are made by hand and where almost anything can be found. Jewelers, hat and bag makers, coppersmiths, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, ceramicists, weavers, and embroiderers are all jam-packed within 2.5 square kilometers. And, rumor has it that the glamorous world of Lebanese fashion can be traced back to these non-descript ateliers, where artisans quietly go about their work, unseen and uncelebrated.



In 2009, Angelique Sabounjian, a handbag and leather goods designer, set up shop in the community, next to a branch of her family's jewelry display and

packaging business. "It enabled me to explore and locate several vendors that I now want to share with those who are in the design sector," she said. During the 2013 Beirut Design Week, she gave guided tours, allowing participants to discover accessory suppliers, manufacturers and tanneries with the aim of introducing the different products and services they each provide.

We began our tour with Sabounjian at Pailiani Design, shoemakers for three generations. Shoemaking is a very popular craft in the Armenian community and according to Hrag Pailian, most Italians would be hard-pressed to distinguish Lebanese craftsmanship from their own. Pailian was in fact the former intern of the renowned Italian designer Guiseppe Zanotti and made one-of-a-kind handmade shoes for the likes of Hollywood celebrities during his stint in Italy. He chose to return to Lebanon and expand the family business, employing the same shoemakers his father did, twenty-six years ago. Sadly he described his future as being bleak due to the aging population of workers that are not replaced by a fresh crop of youngsters who frankly, find the work difficult.

Our second stop was the Embroidery Center for The Armenian Relief Cross in Lebanon (ARCL), founded in 1976 to meet the growing needs of economically deprived community members, by enabling young women to acquire a skill in sewing and embroidery. It also revives and preserves traditional Armenian embroidery and ensures regular income to ARCL's social and educational programs. The ladies working at the charming boutique were busy completing a table runner adorned with Marash embroidery, named after its city of origin. "Most Armenian women, regardless of their habitat, were

***"Most Armenian women, regardless of their habitat, were usually familiar with the art of making various kinds of fine needlework" >***

***"Shoemaking is a very popular craft in the Armenian community"***



usually familiar with the art of making various kinds of fine needlework,” said Sabounjian. “The center supports homemakers by providing steady work and conducts classes in an effort to pass on the art.” With the burden of preserving thirty centuries of rich culture, the ladies lamented over the loss of enthusiasm from the younger generation, but assured us that although it might look complicated, once learned, the work is enjoyable and very rewarding.

Next, we passed by the Tchakerian Brothers’ tannery to see where our fancy leather purses are dyed. Once the site of more than thirty factories along the Beirut River, Bourj Hammoud is left with just one tannery. We spotted the hides at H & V and Arti Moda, two of the bigger ateliers that produce handbags and accessories from A to Z, mostly for wholesale clients and several big-name designers. Although their client list is confidential, those who are in the know won’t deny seeing the famous faces of homegrown designers that trust and employ Bourj Hammoud’s artisans. “The amount of skill that’s available is unbelievable,” said Sabounjian.

After passing countless jewelers, dressmakers and backgammon makers, we wove our way towards a beautiful pink building that said “Badguèr”, the brainchild of the head of architecture and urban planning for Bourj Hammoud’s municipality, Arpiné Mangassarian.

The two-storey house is a promotional center for Armenian artisans as well as a restaurant serving traditional fare made by local housewives. It seemed that all of what we had encountered during the day was housed in Badguèr, from needlework and rugs to jewelry and art. Mangassarian’s motivation for creating the center was to give value to the people behind the craft, and open windows to the outside world in order to engage the masses.

In the documentary film “Bravehearts of Bourj Hammoud” Soniya Kirpalani describes this unknown side of Beirut as a vital component of the Lebanese cultural makeup, answering such questions as how a country living between war and global recession still have the inherent ability to be creative and how an emerging creative community can bridge their nation’s glorious past with their challenging future.



According to Kirpalani and her associate Sarah Thelwall, a strategist and consultant in the creative industries since 2001, “both designers and suppliers have been hit by the global recession and by the instability in the region. This has caused them to downsize their production and in some cases limit their sales to Lebanon rather than international clients,” said Thelwall. What they suggest and what Sabounjian has taken to heart is to create a formal design and manufacturing district with the aim of promoting the area as a production base for both local and international designers. This in turn would lead to the formation of a school to teach future artisans and ensure the preservation of the labor force. Most of all it would give craftsman the sense of value that they so desperately need and deserve after years of service.

Tours such as the one we were fortunate enough to take are bound to open the area up to potential markets and so will the varied perceptions of new visitors who see Bourj Hammoud for what it is - a potentially viable and valuable resource. Jason Steel, the current director of the Elie Saab Fashion Design Program at LAU, has fallen in love with “this vibrant and exciting place where artisans and ateliers produce beautiful work when not being pushed to work for rock bottom prices.” Steel has visited a number of amazing ateliers hidden in anonymous buildings and is already working on strategies to link new designers with industry to develop stronger markets in fashion, textiles, accessories and of course jewelry design - all of which are essential to regional growth. “Given the chance I would happily live in the dynamic and fabulous BH!”





## BOURJ HAMMOUD TOUR CONTACT LIST

### TOUR

#### Arti Moda

Metallic accessories for shoes, bags, belts and fashion wear  
Harboyan Trade Center Block B, Dora Highway  
+961 1 255540

#### Haddad Accessories

Metallic accessories for shoes, bags and belts  
Block 1, Harboyan Center, Tiro Street +961 3 217733

#### Youssef Assaker

Jewelry polish and plating  
Ground Floor, Harboyan Trade Center +961 1 242885

#### Tchakerian Tannery

Skin, hide and leather for bags, footwear, clothing and furniture +961 1 261516

#### Salem International Tannery

Skin, hide and leather for bags, footwear and clothing  
Ground Floor, Moucarri Center +961 1 264287

#### RPM Accessories

Shoe manufacturing atelier  
+961 3 984528

#### Armenian Relief Cross Artisanat

Der Melkonian Street  
+961 1 240586

#### Accessories House

Metal accessories for leather goods  
Street 71, Sector 4  
+961 1 241285

#### Boutons Mihran

Ribbons and accessories for clothing and couture  
Municipality road, facing Arine Center +961 256586

#### Tissue Mike

Textile merchant  
Sofia Hagopian Street  
+961 1 242821

#### Ets. Hovig

Leather and all kinds of shoe and bag accessories  
Arax Street 67, Sector 4 Building 23, Ground Floor  
+961 1 247252

#### Vartan Hakimian

Design and manufacture of accessories and leather goods  
+961 3462975

#### Pailian

Shoe making atelier  
+961 1 252339

#### Golden Articles

Metal accessories for shoes and bags  
Sector 5, 60th street, Building no. 21 +961 1 262010

#### Yorgui Shoe M.A.C.

Machines & accessories for footwear and leather goods  
Arax Street +961 1 259480

#### Magasin Magar Karayan

Sewing machines, spare parts and repair  
Marash Street +961 1 258569

#### V.S.B.

Leather cutting molds for shoes and bags +961 1 266928

#### Ets. OKA

Leather accessories atelier  
Arax Street + 961 1 267935

### OUTSIDE THE TOUR PREMISES

#### Mardini Establishment

Leather supplier  
Bourj Hammoud  
+961 1 487 728

#### H & V

Handbags & leather goods atelier +961 1 269 412

#### Leather Touch

Handbag & leather accessories atelier  
Sedd El Baouchrieh, Industrial City  
+961 3 833 407

#### Maison Harout

Shoe, handbag and clothing accessories  
Dora Highway, Rainbow Building +961 1 268 124

### RESTAURANTS IN BOURJ HAMMOUD

#### Onno

Facing Life Center Church  
+961 3 801 476

#### Varouj

Marach Street +961 3 882 933

#### Badguèr

Der Melkonian Street  
+961 3 652 235

#### Basterma Mano

Municipality Street  
+961 1 268560



# Metal *Beirut*



Artist Abdallah Hatoum documents the evolving Beirut landscape in a unique way



While most artists are busy recording the changing landscape of Beirut on film or with paint, one man is demonstrating a unique talent with a series of metal installations of urban sites ravaged by a civil war.

28-year-old Lebanese artist Abdallah Hatoum studied Graphic Design at the Lebanese American University, but he was never really satisfied with its limitations to print or digital artworks. "I also felt an absence of the tremendously rich Arabic design culture in its programs, which is a field I have a particular interest in," he says.



***"I reinterpreted them in a more fun and simplified way using Sufi poems of Al Hallaj instead of the verses"***

After working in Orient 499, an artisan boutique in Beirut, which offers bespoke Middle Eastern handicrafts, he became interested in object making. Working on the store's visual merchandising and displays really sparked his imagination. "It was more of an attempt to reconcile my desire to make things and in the meantime to express myself in a playground I identified with. It was the right place."

During his daily walks through the streets of Beirut he has become witness to the ever-changing signs of urbanization. He laments the lack of vision shown by developers, but, it also gave him inspiration to design a series of metal installations. Most are replicas of actual facades of old buildings in Beirut, biding their time until the wrecking ball hits. Some of his murals are accurate reproductions while others are dramatized.

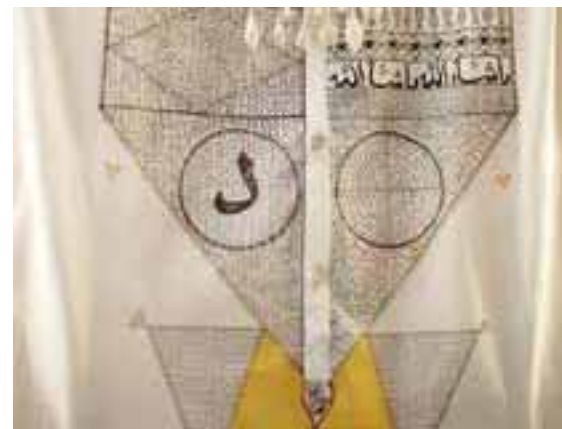
"The fact that these places and buildings are waiting to be brought down at any day to make room for money-hungry investors with terrible development plans gave me the urge to document them in a picturesque way."

He believes that every dilapidated building has a story to tell, a tale of bygone Beirut, an ancient city where cobbled streets were lined with beautiful ornate buildings. "Beirut, with its new urban jumble, has a lot of its collective memory erased. These murals try as much as they can to fictionally preserve landmarks that hold too much memory, for a lot of people." His material of choice



is metal because "it ages beautifully. It is also a very flexible material which offers so many options to work with."

Apart from these stunning installations Abdallah has also created a unique range of mirrors, as well as painted dresses and shirts inspired by the ancient talismanic robes custom made for high ranking figures in the Ottoman Empire. "They used to be worn as protection against



the evil eye and were inscribed with sophisticated calligraphy, Koran verses and astronomical calculations. I reinterpreted them in a more fun and simplified way using Sufi poems of Al Hallaj instead of the verses..." Apart from being utterly gorgeous, they are a truly modern take on history.

*Abdallah Hatoum's work is currently exhibited at Orient 499 in Clemenceau, Beirut.*

# Bedazzled *in Beirut*



Curator and museum specialist, Juliana Khalaf, visits MiM - the brand new mineral museum in the heart of Beirut

Lebanon's museum scene has a dazzling new addition: the MiM museum of minerals, which was inaugurated in October. This state-of-the-art public institution houses the rare and unique private compendium of minerals accumulated by Lebanese collector Salim Edde and now on public display.

The entrance to the museum is located on the grounds of the Sports and Innovation campus of the Université Saint-Joseph (USJ) in Ashrafieh, Beirut. On the underground level the wonderful world of geology is revealed in all its glory. Visitors are encouraged to learn in more detail through interactive screens (information available in Arabic, English and French), about the differences in chemical composition and crystal structure distinguishing various species, how these properties in turn are influenced by the mineral's geological environment of formation, including temperature, pressure and earthquakes, the cycle of the rocks and how they eventually evolve into minerals.

Equally interesting is the mention of the various ways and locations where these pieces were acquired. Edde, who was present at the opening ceremony of the museum, was delighted by the response he received from guests and media. "I have been collecting obsessively, through auctions, private collectors and museum collections for over 20 years, hoping

that one day I would share my passion with the public, and today is the day my aspirations have been realized."

The exhibit progresses into the main exhibition area, where the visitors are immersed into the beautiful manifestation of Mother Nature's work at its best, represented by 1,480 organic art pieces. The variety of minerals is divided into nine categories following the standard minerals classification system and then partitioned by continent and country of origin placing them in their geographical context.

As a grand finale the visitor can continue to the treasure room designed to enhance the appearance of the most precious minerals. They embody the finest examples of rough, uncut and unpolished gold and silver specimens, as well as precious stones like diamonds, topazes, emeralds, sapphires and tanzanite, and semi-precious examples of quartz, tourmalines and amethysts, just to mention a few.

MiM is the 2nd largest collection of minerals in the world, after the Sorbonne UPMC in Paris, where scientists, geology amateurs and jewelry aficionados, as well as school and university students and the general inquisitive public alike can unravel the wonders of the earth.







## DON'T MISS

---

- Radioactive minerals containing uranium and thorium
- Museum boutique with souvenir replicas of the pieces on display

## GOOD TO KNOW

---

- Location Innovation and Sports Campus, Saint Joseph University  
Damascus Street, Ashrafieh, Beirut  
Tel +961 1 421672
- Opening hours Tue-Sun 10am-1pm & 2pm-6pm
- Entrance Fee: Adults 6,000 LBP, Students and Children 3,000 LBP

## NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

---

Prehistoric museum (USJ campus)  
Beirut National Museum  
French Cultural Center

## WHAT TO BUY

---

At museum gift shop  
Souvenir stationary  
Mini replicas of the mineral collection

## WHERE TO EAT

---

Café des Lettres  
supplied by Mie Dorée at the French Cultural Center  
+961 1 420217  
Mum & I, Lebanese home cooking run by mother and daughter team  
+961 1 425650 / 425 660  
Goutons Voir (French bistro) +961 1 333644  
Younes Café +961 1 424515  
T-Square +961 1 612058  
L'Atelier - Mathaf +961 1 426474  
The Social at smallville +961 1 619999



# Beirut Vibes

There's something about Arabic music that fires up the atmosphere and gets us dancing. Whether you are Lebanese or a visiting tourist, you will surely find your fix among the upbeat venues we have selected for you

## NAWARA CAFÉ

Araybina Band every Saturday. Araybina Band has been making the Beirutis dance for at least a decade. Their repertoire consists of old and new popular songs, sure to accommodate the public's request on the spot! One thing's for sure; you will be shaking those hips all night long!  
*Hamra Bliss Street +961 1 363698*

## BOBO

Sukarah night on Thursdays. Arabic oldies on Fridays. A double offering from Bobo, where you can enjoy sukarah (means drunken in Arabic) night, a typical Lebanese evening with open arak, selected mezze and Lebanese music from all ages. If you could not make it on Thursday, make up for it on Friday where the DJ will play Arabic oldies beloved by all.  
*Hamra +961 3 384156*

## BLUE NOTE

A favorite among the Beirutis, here you will find good food, good mood and a great atmosphere. Blue Note's program

varies from week to week but there's always a special place for authentic oriental music from all over the region with a special emphasis on Lebanon. Reservation is a must.  
*Hamra +961 1 743857*

## WALIMAT WARDEH

Home made food in a warm ambiance that is more about the good times than the razzle dazzle. The food and the various musical programs over the week will delight you and include a fair share of oriental music. Make sure to reserve your place.  
*Hamra Makhoul Street +961 1 752320*

## AL DIRWANDI

Aside from a beautiful location overlooking the beach, Al Dirwadi is the place to go for a shisha, traditional food and some dancing. Good times guaranteed at this elegantly designed place.  
*Ain Mreisseh +961 1 366222*

## EM SHARIF

Saturday nights are a double treat at Em Sharif. Accompanying its

exceptional set menu of traditional Lebanese food, a local band will enchant you with traditional tunes that have become a part of the Lebanese heritage and culture. Reserve to insure your place.  
*Monot +961 1 206206*

## EM NAZIH

A place to mingle with Lebanese and foreigners from all over the world, Em Nazih's Friday night has become a staple in Beirut's nightlife. Low key with an unmatched relaxed atmosphere, the live band, which changes every Friday, will have you dancing all night long.  
*Gemmayze +961 76 711466*

## ZAWAYA CAFÉ

Every Saturday Khaled el Abdallah will give you a taste of the genuine and authentic Lebanese and Arabic tunes. He will enchant you with his voice and selection. Sit, have a drink with your shisha and go back to the golden days of oriental music.  
*Hamra +961 1 752535*



# Lebanese Wine *by the Glass*

Come rain or shine, wine is always on our mind and Lebanese wine is defending its place on the market. Lebanon Traveler has selected a few places where you can enjoy some of the new boutique Lebanese wines by the glass.

## RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS & PUBS

### OSTERIA

Casual pub run by an Italian-Lebanese couple. Their house wine changes regularly but they always make sure to include a local boutique winery on their list.

Mar Mikhael +961 1 566175

### URBANISTA

A café where people of all ages gather for good food, delicious desserts and a perfect glass of wine.

Gemmayze +961 1 567811

### GILT

This top-notch restaurant serves international cuisine with a special touch. And delicious Lebanese wine.

Downtown +961 1 967676

### GOUTONS VOIR

Pair a glass of local wine with delicious and unique dishes at this quaint French bistro.

Monot +961 1 333644

### GORDON'S CAFÉ

Conclude your shopping session with a glass of wine on the terrace while you take in the city buzz.

Downtown +961 1 962862

### THE HANGOUT

With a wide selection of Lebanese wines and a wine cellar that is open to visitors, this traditional Lebanese house with its international menu is an ideal place for a cozy winter dinner.

Gemmayze +961 1 566234

## WINE BARS

### CRU

In the top wine bar list on TripAdvisor, Cru is the place to go for good wine and good food.

Hamra +961 1 344565

### WINE TELLER

Wine expert Najib Moutran will raise your appreciation to wine with a variety of small dishes that are there to simply highlight your drink

Az Zalqa +961 4 722602

### THE WINE ROOM

With a traditional Lebanese setting, the Wine Room is the perfect place to enjoy wine on a rainy day.

Ashrafieh, Furn-el-Hayek +961 1 201520



# GETAWAYS

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



## *Fun with family and friends in Laklouk*

### **SLEIGH AND SKI**

on the beginner to intermediate slopes.

### **EMBRACE NATURE**

through a cross-country skiing adventure

### **EXPLORE**

the Balaa rock formations consisting of several houses and chapels carved into the rock

### **DRIVE TO**

the Balaa Gorge and discover a

magnificent mix of rock and waterfalls.

### **EAT**

Ricotta at La Vallée Blanche

+961 3 709604

Sunday Buffet at Shangri-la

+961 3 256853

Fresh organic fruits at Laklouk Farms

+961 3 589562

### **STAY AT**

Shangri-la Hotel +961 3 256853



## *Rural escape Zahle*

### **DISCOVER**

17th century Lebanese architecture of Geha House

### **FOLLOW**

the footsteps of ancient travelers and merchants from Syria, Iraq and Palestine at Souk al Blatt

### **CHECK OUT**

the largest bell tower in the country at Our Lady of Najat in the city and the abandoned railway in nearby Rayak.

### **ENJOY**

a visit to surrounding wineries

Chateau Khoury + 961 8 801160

Domaine Wardy +961 8 930141

Chateau Ksara +961 8 813495

### **EAT**

Lebanese at Casino Arabi +961 8 821214

Barbecue at Mashawi Massaad

+961 8 807677

Sweets at Patisserie Germanos

+961 8 805198

### **STAY AT**

Grand Hotel Kadri +961 8 813920

Arabi Hotel +961 8 821 214

Hotel Akl +961 8 820701



## *City break Sidon*

### **WALK AROUND**

the old souk and discover traditional architecture.

### **EMBRACE**

diversity and spirituality as you visit the Great Mosque and the St. Nicolas Greek Catholic Church

### **SEE**

the soap museum and learn the secrets of the ancient craft. And how people lived in the 18th century at the Debbane Palace Museum. Don't leave without natural goodies from the gift shop.

### **DRIVE TO**

the Temple of Eshmoun, a unique archeological site, where more than just the foundations have survived.

### **EAT**

Lebanese at Saida Rest House

+961 7 722469

Falafel Akkawi +961 7 730102

Halewe at Mounir Bsar +961 7 720158

### **STAY AT**

Yacoub Hotel +961 7 737733

Al Qualaa Hotel +961 7 734777



*Photo courtesy of India Stoughton*

# AGENDA

## December

### SUNDAY 15

Touristic visit & hiking in Chouf *Adventures in Lebanon*

Visiting Ammouaa *Baldati*

Hiking in Jabal Moussa *Byblos & Beyond*

Trekking in Khorbet Qanafar *Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Trekking (every Sunday) *Great Escape*

### Kids activity

Christmas happiness  
Decorate a children's center and distribute Christmas gifts  
*Neos Kid*

Hiking in Mokhtara-Bisri *ProMax*

Hiking in Abadieh *VamosTados*

### THURSDAY 19

Heritage tour of Kfarchleiman, Kfarhelda, Hamate & Batroun *Liban Trek*

### FRIDAY 20

Night hike in Anfeh *VamosTados*

### SATURDAY 21

Charity event "Hearts to Love & Hands to Serve!"  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Heritage tour of Blat, Annaya, Birket Hjoula & Behdaïdat  
*Liban Trek*

Personal Fitness Assessment  
*ProMax*

### SUNDAY 22

Hiking in Saghbine *Baldati*

Discover Hasbaya, Marjeyoun & Hima Ebl El Saki  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Trekking in Qalaat Morcos-Zbebdine  
*Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Hiking in Qadisha Valley  
*Cyclamen*

Hiking in Ammiq *Liban Trek*

Hiking in Hardine *VamosTados*

### TUESDAY 24

Charity event  
Christmas in Nabaa  
*VamosTados*

### THURSDAY 26

Heritage tour of Blat, Annaya, Birket Hjoula & Behdaïdat  
*Liban Trek*

### SATURDAY 28

Fossil excavation in Haqel  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Heritage tour of Kfarhay, Kaftoun, Bziza & Amioun  
*Liban Trek*

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



### SUNDAY 29

Hiking in Qadisha Valley  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Trekking in Maad - Ain Kfaa  
*Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Hike from Tannourine reserve to the village  
*Cyclamen*

Hiking in Sahel Alma *Liban Trek*

Hiking in Deir el Qamar-Gharifeh *ProMax*

Hiking in Wadi Salib  
*VamosTados*

### SUNDAY 5

Snowshoeing in Ehden Reserve  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Trekking in Hadtoun  
*Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Snowshoeing in the Barouk Cedar Forest  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Snowshoeing in Maaser El Shouf Reserve  
*Cyclamen*

Snowshoeing (every Sunday)  
*Great Escape*

Hiking in Habil *Liban Trek*

Hiking in Saydet al Qalaa  
*VamosTados*

## January

### THURSDAY 2

Heritage tour of Kfarhay, Kaftoun, Bziza & Amioun  
*Liban Trek*

Tour of the Jahlieh Valley (every Thursday)  
*Liban Trek*

### FRIDAY 3

Tour of the Ammiq Reserve  
*Liban Trek*

### SATURDAY 4

Heritage tour of Amchit, Maad, Eddeh & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

### MONDAY 6

Tour of the Bawali' Valley (every Monday)  
*Liban Trek*

"Twelfth night cakes" Timesharing at Beit El Raja  
*Neos Kids*

### TUESDAY 7

Tour of the Adonis Valley (every Tuesday)  
*Liban Trek*

### WEDNESDAY 8

Tour of the Ghabour Valley (every Wednesday)  
*Liban Trek*





Snowshoeing in Laqlouq  
*Vamos Tados*

Hike in Lamartine *VamosTados*

**THURSDAY 23**  
Heritage tour Blat, Annaya,  
Birket Hjoula & Behdaïdat  
*Liban Trek*

**SUNDAY 2**  
Snowshoeing in Maaser El  
Chouf Reserve  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

**SATURDAY 25**  
Heritage tour of Kfarhay,  
Kaftoun, Bziza & Amioun  
*Liban Trek*

Discover Amiq Wetland  
Reserve (World Wetland Day)  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Snowshoeing in Barouk,  
Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Tannourine  
Reserve *Cyclamen*

Wine tasting tour *Vamos Tados*

Hiking in Qteleh *Liban Trek*

**SATURDAY 25 -  
SUNDAY 26**  
Cultural weekend in southern  
Lebanon *Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Barouk,  
Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in the  
Bekaakafra Cedars *VamosTados*

**SUNDAY 26**  
Skidoo Adventure in Lebanon

**THURSDAY 6**  
Heritage tour of Amchit,  
Maad, Eddeh & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

Hiking from Ayto to  
Hamatoura *Byblos & Beyond*

**SATURDAY 8**  
Heritage tour of  
Kfarchleiman, Kfarhelda,  
Hamate & Batroun *Liban Trek*

Trekking in Kfarnabrakh,  
Chouf  
*Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Snowshoeing in Barouk,  
Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Hiking from Mazraet Al chouf  
to Wadi Bisri *Cyclamen*

Hike in Assia *VamosTados*

Hiking in Miziara *Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Barouk,  
Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

**SUNDAY 9**  
Snowshoeing in Falougha  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

The 2014 snowman  
competition *NeosKids*

Follow the animal footprint  
Horseback riding  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Snowshoeing in Qanat Bakich  
*Vamos Tados*

Snowshoeing from Baskenta  
to Zaarour *Cyclamen*

**THURSDAY 30**  
Heritage tour of Kfarhay,  
Kaftoun, Bziza & Amioun  
*Liban Trek*

Hiking in Brommana  
*Liban Trek*

**FEBRUARY**  
**SATURDAY 1**  
Heritage tour of Amchit,  
Maad, Eddeh & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Falougha  
*VamosTados*

**THURSDAY 13**  
Heritage tour of  
Kfarchleiman, Kfarhelda,  
Hamate & Batroun *Liban Trek* ➔

**THURSDAY 9**  
Heritage tour of Amchit,  
Maad, Eddeh & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

**THURSDAY 16**  
Heritage tour of  
Kfarchleiman, Kfarhelda,  
Hamate & Batroun *Liban Trek*

**SATURDAY 11**  
Heritage tour of  
Kfarchleiman, Kfarhelda,  
Hamate & Batroun *Liban Trek*

**FRIDAY 17**  
Night hike in Hamat  
*Vamos Tados*

Snowshoeing in Barouk,  
Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

**SATURDAY 18**  
Heritage tour of Blat, Annaya,  
Birket Hjoula & Behdaïdat  
*Liban Trek*

Meeting heroes!  
Visit to a fire station *Neos Kids*

Discovering the MIM Museum  
(The Mineral Museum)  
*Neos Kids*

Hiking in Deddeh Batroumin  
*Vamos Tados*

**SUNDAY 19**  
Snowshoeing in Tannourine  
Reserve *Adventures in Lebanon*

**SUNDAY 12**  
Snowshoeing in Zaarour  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Snowshoeing in Qanat Baqish  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Family Igloo competition  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Trekking in Wadi Qannoubine  
*Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Trekking in Chnaniir  
*Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Hiking in Hammana,  
Lamartine Valley *Cyclamen*

Skidoo from Faraya to  
Laqlouq *Cyclamen*  
Jahlieh hiking trip *Liban Trek*

Hiking in Sfaray *Liban Trek*  
Snowshoeing in Barouk,  
Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Cedars  
*Vamos Tados*



### FRIDAY 14

Hike in Ayoun Samak  
*VamosTados*

### SATURDAY 15

Divine wine tasting tour in Kfifan- Northern Lebanon  
*Adventures in Lebanon*  
Heritage tour of Blat, Annaya, Birket Hjoula & Behdaïdat  
*Liban Trek*

### SATURDAY 15 -

**SUNDAY 16**  
Valentine weekend in Douma  
*VamosTados*

## 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](http://exittonature.com)  
+961 3 559992

### SUNDAY 16

Snowshoeing from Bakich to Sannine  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Hiking from Kaftoun to Batroun  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Visit to Nabatye and Arnoun (Beaufort Castle)  
*Cyclamen*

Hiking in Hamatoura  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Barouk, Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

### THURSDAY 20

Heritage tour of Blat, Annaya, Birket Hjoula & Behdaïdat  
*Liban Trek*

**SATURDAY 22**  
Snowshoeing in Barouk, Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Heritage tour of Kfarhay, Kaftoun, Bziza & Amioun  
*Liban Trek*

**SUNDAY 23**  
Snowshoeing in Ehden Reserve  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Snowshoeing in Tanourine  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Visit to the temples of Baalbeck and wine tasting  
*Cyclamen*

Hiking in Khirbet Qanafar  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Arz Hadath  
*VamosTados*

### THURSDAY 27

Heritage tour of Kfarhay, Kaftoun, Bziza & Amioun  
*Liban Trek*

## March

**SATURDAY 1**  
Night flambeau snowshoeing  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Heritage tour of Amchit, Maad, Eddeh & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

Wine tasting tour  
*VamosTados*

**SUNDAY 2**  
Skidoo and snowshoeing  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Hike in Wadi Janaa at Nahr Ibrahim  
*Cyclamen*

Hiking in Qadisha  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Barouk, Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Hike in Lamartine  
*VamosTados*

**THURSDAY 6**  
Heritage tour of Amchit, Maad, Eddeh & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

**FRIDAY 7**  
Karaoke night  
*VamosTados*

**SATURDAY 8**  
Heritage tour of Kfarhleiman, Kfarhelda, Hamate & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Barouk, Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

**SUNDAY 9**  
Snowshoeing from Laqlouq to Ain El Lebneh  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

International Women Day  
Rachaya El Fekhar  
*Byblos & Beyond*

Visit to Saint Jean de Khouchara and the village of Choueir  
*Cyclamen*

Hiking in Bkassine  
*Liban Trek*

Snowshoeing in Barouk, Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Hiking in Machmouche Attine  
*VamosTados*

**THURSDAY 13**  
Heritage tour of Kfarhleiman, Kfarhelda, Hamate & Batroun  
*Liban Trek*

**FRIDAY 14**  
Night hike in Saydet Natour  
*VamosTados*

**SATURDAY 15**  
Snowshoeing in Barouk, Sannine, Laqlouq & Cedars  
*Liban Trek*

Heritage tour of Blat, Annaya, Birket Hjoula & Behdaïdat  
*Liban Trek*



## SATURDAY 15 & SUNDAY 16

Special Jezzine weekend  
*VamosTados*

## SUNDAY 16

Snowshoeing in Falougha  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Hiking in Bkassine *Cyclamen*

Hiking in Nahr el-Barouk  
*Liban Trek*

## Discover Lebanon

UNTIL 31 MARCH 2014

### Full day trips to:

- Baalbeck & Anjar
- Sidon & Tyre
- Cedars, Bcharreh & Qadisha
- Beirut, Harissa & Byblos
- Byblos & Tripoli
- Beirut, Jeita & Harissa
- Byblos, Jeita & Harissa
- Beiteddine, Deir El Kamar & Sidon
- Byblos & Jeita
- Beirut & Harissa

### Half-day trips to:

- Jeita Grottoes & Harissa
- Beiteddine & Deir El Kamar
- Beirut & National Museum
- Byblos

*Rida International*

## WINTER GETAWAY

2 nights B&B in Faqra  
Staying at Terre Brune Hotel 4\*  
*Saad Tours*

## CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY

2 nights, breakfast &  
Christmas dinner  
Staying at Crowne Plaza 5\*  
*Saad Tours*

## CELEBRATE NEW YEAR

Different New Year 2014  
*Adventures in Lebanon*

Turkey: Adana and Mersine  
*Baldati*

2 days and 1 night New Year's  
Eve celebration at Sohat  
Village, Falougha with a  
snowshoeing activity  
*Club des Vieux Sentiers*

Limassol, Dubai, Dead Sea,  
Istanbul & Sharm el Sheikh  
*OClub*

## ADDRESS BOOK

Adventures In Lebanon  
+961 71 443323  
*adventuresinlebanon.com*

Baldati  
+961 4 922999  
*baldati.com*

Byblos & Beyond  
+961 9 540857  
*byblosandbeyond.com*

Club des Vieux Sentiers  
+961 1 203988  
*cvslebanon.org*

Cyclamen Destination  
Nature  
+961 4 419848  
*tlb-destinations.com*

Great Escape  
+961 5 456121  
*greatescape.com.lb*

Liban Trek  
+961 1 329975  
*libantrek.com*

Neos  
+961 1 480376  
*neoslb.com*

O Club  
+961 1 870344  
*oclub-Lb.com*

Promax  
+961 3 955642  
*promaxsports.com*

Rida International Travel &  
Tourism  
+961 4 718790  
*ridaint.com.Lb*

Saad Tours  
+961 1 393100  
*saadtours.com*

Vamos Tados  
+961 3 561174  
*vamos-Todos.com*

\* 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](http://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 (Mathaf) 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](http://bloggingbeirut.com)

### Destination

[lebanondestinationlebanon.gov.lb](http://lebanondestinationlebanon.gov.lb)

### David Lebovitz

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



## USEFUL

## NUMBERS

### Beyond Beirut

+961 3 828141

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

### Ministry of Tourism

+961 1 340940

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



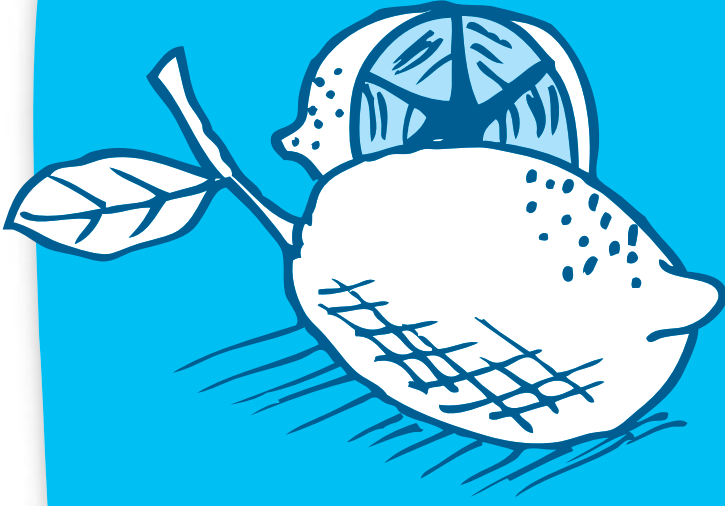
*Season's Greetings*



CHATEAU FLORENTINE



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



ليمون ✓  
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مراكبي ✓



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منحكى لغتك

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اختير أسرع  
البنوك نمواً  
في لبنان من

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