



Lebanon Traveler

Lebanon 8,000 LBP

A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut | Issue 11 | June - September 2014

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traditional**
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ice cream*

MEET
the carpenters
of the sea

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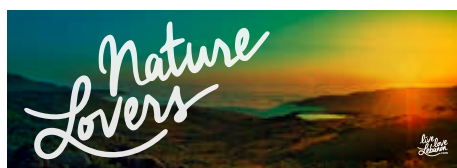
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Off the Beaten Track

Lebanon deserves to be rediscovered, in the beauty of its nature and its people. This is why the Ministry of Tourism launched an original campaign aiming to promote the country in a new way, revive the dynamism of the sector and enlarge the scope of traditional tourism.

Live Love Lebanon is the name of our new campaign, which intends to show Lebanon like never before, off the beaten track. Our purpose is not only to attract foreign tourists but also to encourage Lebanese people to discover their own country. This is our contribution to promote sustainable development. By proposing affordable vacations, we aim to boost the number of visitors to all Lebanese regions, cities and villages, during the summer and all year round.

Culture, nature, wine, adventures and beaches... There is something for everyone in Lebanon!

This new campaign, spearheaded by a new website, allows visitors to access any village in Lebanon and to take advantage of special three to six-day tourism packages, sleeping in lodges, B&B and hotels and discovering areas known only by locals.

Our packages appeal to lovers of festivals, hiking, culture, nature, water skiing, green tourism, religious sites, old stones... just to mention a few of the suggested activities and programs.



The last three years were rough on our small but beautiful country. However, we do not intend to stand idly by while Lebanon needs our energy, dynamism and creativity. We want to make things happen!

The challenges of the last two or three years are behind us and there is a new atmosphere of stability. There is no reason why there won't be a revival of tourism. We hope that our Live Love Lebanon campaign operates like a lucky charm and, as of today, starts bringing back tourists to our beloved country.

*Michel Pharaon,
Minister Of Tourism*

CONTRIBUTORS



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Annie Dilsizian is an American journalist who studied journalism at California State University, Northridge, and went on to work as a Hollywood publicist for six years, rubbing shoulders with the stars. She swapped the red carpet for Lebanon, ten years ago and after some time working within PR and copywriting in Beirut she became the editor of Taste & Flavors Magazine.



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Derek A Issacs is a journalist and editor, who has been published in the UK, Lebanon and across the Arab Gulf. He has interviewed stars such as Vivienne Westwood, Snoop Dogg, Pamela Anderson and Latifa, to name but a few. He has lived in the Middle East for 15 years, has three dogs, a rabbit and a parrot. Currently, he is the Editor of Hospitality News Middle East.



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Log on to our new online platform, lebanontraveler.com, and re-discover the country's hidden gems.





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Live, Love, Lebanon? Easy.

In Lebanon we certainly don't need an excuse to show our patriotism towards the country, but the Ministry of Tourism's new campaign **Live Love Lebanon** shares the love with foreigners. Live Love Lebanon, is a new platform to target international tourists and show what the country has to offer from its cuisine and landscapes to nightlife and culture. The MOT will offer eco tourism packages to best enjoy the country responsibly.

Share the campaign and show your overseas friends what they're missing out on! livelovelebanon.com #livelovelebanon



Travel Lebanon

The Garden Show & Spring Festival this year has a special inclusion as Beirut's iconic Hippodrome comes to life in summer bloom. The Travel Lebanon Festival is supported by USAID as part of the Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development Project (LIVCD) which aims at increasing economic opportunities in rural areas. Travel Lebanon will bring together leaders in rural tourism and invites visitors to rediscover their own country. It marks the beginning of a campaign to pool resources to build a stronger rural tourism sector, decentralized from the major cities. Major players in the rural tourism industry will be present from local municipalities and artisanal craftsmen,

to eco-lodges and outdoor associations to show the Lebanese the riches on offer beyond the capital city.

As part of the event, Lebanon Traveler will launch its new online platform, the website lebanontraveler.com.

the-gardenshow.com, May 27-31, 5-11pm



On promoting rural tourism

Beyond Beirut and Lebanon Traveler brought together 39 participants active in the tourism sector, including representatives from USAID, the Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development (LIVCD) and Development Alternatives INC. (DAI) for a workshop on **Cooperation and Common Action in Rural Tourism in Lebanon**. The workshop was the initial stage in developing an eventual road map to highlight the lesser-traveled riches found within Lebanon's rural regions which will help boost local economies beyond the major cities. Priorities identified during the workshop included working on better marketing and communications, more business linkages and raising awareness on rural tourism and conservation. The roots have been laid to help create a more self-sustainable rural tourism industry.

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Cedars Camel Trophy

When Paul Fakhoury's friends, relatives and colleagues asked if they could join him on his trips deep into the Lebanese countryside in his off-road 4x4 vehicle outings, he had an idea. Why not turn his four-year hobby into a job, a business, a way of life? So he set up **Cedars Camel Trophy** a little over a month ago and he hasn't looked back since. Based in Kfardebian, Keserwane, Fakhoury's activity company offers outdoor enthusiasts a unique off road tour into the beautiful mountains of Kfardebian.

"It started as a hobby, a passion," Fakhoury says. "But it made sense to turn it into a business. There is no better way to see the beautiful views of the Lebanese mountains." With each car holding four people and a fleet of more than 10, the adventurous off road tour through the mountains can be a group activity. Professional off-road drivers take groups through stunning landscapes and there is even an opportunity to take to the wheel

yourself. Cedars Camel Trophy can organize homemade Lebanese food, BBQs and saj to be enjoyed along the way. And if you fancy spending a weekend in the mountains, an overnight camp can be arranged.

Enjoying the Lebanese countryside, of course, comes with a certain level of respect and Fakhoury and his team make sure to have the minimal impact on the environment. There is an environmental awareness that runs throughout their project. With the forests of Lebanon fast disappearing, for every Land Rover taken into the countryside, with the collaboration of Kfardebian's municipality, they plant a tree.

The off-road tours are customizable to their clients, meaning any tour preferences; special activities or birthday or family themed event can be incorporated.

70 170114 - 03 675150
cedarscameltrophy.com



Local first in Tyre Caza

Local Action Group in Tyre (Tyros LAG) launches the second edition of an exhibition for local and traditional products in Tyre Caza in June to help promote the traditional food and artisanal products the city is known for. The first of its kind in the region, the project that has an eco-tourism core, aims to strengthen tourism in the area and promote local product development. The exhibition highlights products and traditions characteristic to the area such as Litani Zaatar (known for its high concentration of volatile oil; citrus and tropical fruits; organic vegetables; bulgar and feekeh wheat; carob and pomegranate molasses and traditional artisanal works such as pottery and porcelain. This activity is held in a frame work of "Socio-economic of the rural population of southern Lebanon" promoted by italian ngo, CTM Onlus in partnership with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture, and co-funded by the Italian Development Cooperation.

07 740216 tyroslag.org



Sanayeh Garden reopens

Beirut is certainly lacking in green public spaces and so the soon to open refurbished **René Moawad, Sanayeh Garden** will no doubt provide welcome relief. As Lebanon Traveler is released, the restoration project, launched by Azadea Foundation in May 2013 will open to the public, with an opening ceremony on June 1.



This historic 20,000 square meter garden, nestled in the heart of Beirut will feature a renovated kids play area, tracks for jogging and biking, an amphitheater space dedicated to cultural performances, exhibition space and for those craving for solitude, a reading area.

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CULTURE

Beirut Cinema Week

Fondation Liban Cinema (fondationlibancinema.org) and the Lebanese Film Festival (lebanesefilmfestival.org) have joined together with a shared vision to promote independent Lebanese cinema. They will launch **Beirut Cinema Week**, which will include various events with the aim to create a platform to help the Lebanese cinema industry develop. As part of the festivities, Beirut Cinema Project will act as a platform for Lebanese filmmakers to get advice and consultation from international industry experts. One of the project's central aims is to create a dynamic film market, thus helping to strengthen Lebanese film production on an international level.

*Metropolis Empire Sofil, Sofil Center
01 204080 - beirutcinema.org
June 6-11*



Call for artists

Kroum Ehden launched the **#tfannan** initiative in April; a call for artists to leave a memorable creative imprint for the public to view in the resort. They have made a call for artists across a variety of fields, from photography and carving to writing, singing and designing, to have the chance to perform live at Kroum Ehden or exhibit their artwork. Submit your work to the Kroum Ehden jury

*01 206806, kroumehden.com,
info@kroumehden.com*



Arab culture begins with the image

On May 2, the **Arab Image Foundation (FAI)** was awarded the UNESCO Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture in Paris, giving credit to the work they have done over the last decade to collect and preserve photographic archives of the region's heritage. Established in Beirut in 1997, the FAI has built a collection of more than 600,000 photographs stretching from the mid 19th century to the present day. FAI have led regional

development in photography, channeling their knowledge to help other cultural institutions and individuals to create similar projects. The UNESCO Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture, first created in 1998, acknowledges only two laureates, whose role has been pivotal in spreading greater knowledge of Arab culture, every year.

fai.org.lb

Trees' talk

A unique project from local music producer, ESC, gives a voice directly to the cedar trees of Lebanon to promote conservation. ESC composed the track "**3,000 Years**," using a rhythm extracted from inside a Lebanese cedar tree, with the help of bioacoustics engineer Derek Shirley. In collaboration with Jad Jazzy Jay, the raw rhythms of the cedar tree were transformed into a house track. All proceeds raised from the track will go directly towards cedar conservation.

vrecords.bandcamp.com/releases



Bourj Hammoud culinary trail

The gastronomical delights of Bourj Hammoud were visited by a high caliber group of foodies, during this year's HORECA, with a special journey, organized by **Lebanon Traveler** into the backstreet restaurants, spice shops and street food joints of the area. 20 international chefs, who made up the jury of the HORECA culinary section, started their visit at Badguer (01 240214), who collaborated on organizing the tour. The Armenian center for artisans and restaurant gave a presentation about the Bourj Hammoud district and an introduction to Armenian

food after which the chefs learned how to make manti, a traditional dish of dough parcels stuffed with meat. The tour continued through winding streets to sample lentil kibbeh from Restaurant Ara (03 947169) and basterma, the air-dried cured beef, from Basterma Bedo (01 261439) among others stops there was a visit to the popular spice shop, Café Garo (01 261287). After pausing to hear the traditional songs of a local accordionist, the tour ended at Mayrig Restaurant (01 572121).

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Terrebrune Hotel

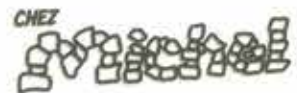


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BOOKS



A guide to the forests of Lebanon

Elsa Sattout and Hala Zahreddine's new 352-page book "**Native trees of Lebanon and neighboring countries: A Guidebook for Professionals & Amateurs**" (2013, NDU Press Publisher), out now, is an important resource for biodiversity academics and enthusiasts alike. The first in a series of volumes on the assets of Eastern Mediterranean forest ecosystems and plant diversity, it provides a comprehensive study of the 68 tree species found in Lebanon and the region. Along with rich color photographs, the book compiles detailed information for each species including a botanical description, information on ecology and conservation status and sophisticated propagation methods, along with the flowering and fruiting season for each tree. It also features a foreword from Vernon H. Heywood, Professor Emeritus, University of Reading and President of the International Association of Botanic Gardens.

The book encourages the protection and growth of native tree species, promoting their use in home gardens, parks, public gardens, streetscapes along with reforestation projects. "Native trees of Lebanon and neighboring countries" is an essential read for all nature lovers and biodiversity researchers; the perfect guide to take out on the field and explore Lebanon's rich forests.

Books revisited: Houda Kassatly

This month's Lebanon Traveler cover photo was taken by Lebanese photographer and anthropologist, Houda Kassatly. Her previous published output are bookshelf essentials; her rich photography bring the region's culture and heritage to life.

De Pierres et de Couleurs

(Of Stones and Colors: The Life and Death of Homes in Beirut)

This step back into the city's disappearing past documents the demise of Beirut's architectural heritage buildings.

Les Camions Peints au Liban d'Aujourd'hui

(Trucks Painted in Lebanon Today)

Kassatly's book documents the creative expression of the Lebanese trucker through photographs of their painted trucks and typography that vary from poetry to jokes.

Of Earth and of Light: Northern Syria's Dome Houses

Co-authored with German researcher Karin Peutt, "Of Earth and of Light" looks at the traditional dome houses in rural Syria.

Terres de Bekaa

(Lands of the Bekaa)

A book dedicated to the unique houses spread across Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.



ON THE NET

WHO TO FOLLOW

@BeirutColors A platform for those who think the city is missing color to create street art.

@OldBeirut A nostalgic step through Lebanon's past.

@baldati An open network for Lebanon's villages that promotes sustainable tourism.

@LebanonWeather Heading to the beach? Get live tweets on the country's current weather.

@TrellaLB Award winning blogger and cyber activist, Imad Bazzi.

@LebanonTraveler The latest news on eco-tourism, the country's hidden gems and travel tips all year round.

BEST OF THE BLOGS

Ecocentra

Blog, Ecocentra gathers together eco-orientated news from all around the region.

ecocentra.wordpress.com

Green Prophet

A sustainable voice for green news from the Middle East; this online platform's stories have been picked up by major news outlets such as Al Jazeera and the NY Times.

greenprophet.com

Dirty Kitchen Secrets

An essential food blog that takes readers on a journey through Lebanese food culture from Lebanese-American writer Bethany Kehdy, the author of "The Jewelled Kitchen."

dirtykitchensecrets.com



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Through the eyes of an expat

Hospitality News Editor and resident in Lebanon for 12 years, **Derek A. Issacs**, takes us on a 'journey by bus' through the Metn, the country's Mount Lebanon region

THE 'MROUJ CIRCULAR'

Being British, traveling by bus is as natural to me as eating labneh is to the Lebanese. But one can't deny that public transportation is a challenge in this small diverse country. Yet, bus journeys are possible and "slow travel" gives you the chance to take in the view and meet interesting characters en route.

One particular route is serviced by a rather splendid bus, or more to the point, a Dodge. These stalwarts of public transportation are easily spotted due to their brightly colored striped livery. Seemingly, they are the pride and joy of each individual driver, who constantly blows the foghorn to attract potential passengers standing by the roadside.

It is clear that each driver takes pride in his bus. The driver's cab is usually

adorned with all manner of kitsch. Ornaments adorn the hood, most probably as lucky charms to win fortune's favor.

'ALL STOPS TO MROUJ'

The journey is a circular route that leaves Dora and travels through Beirut's northern suburbs and upwards through the mountain towns of Bikfayeh, Chouier Ain El Sindiane, Dhour Chouier and Boulogne, before terminating at the tiny village of El Mrouj, which in English translates to 'The Meadows'. On its return journey, 'The Mrouj Circular' journeys back through Boulogne and Bikfayeh with some buses taking an alternative route back to the capital, via Baabdat, Broumana and Beit Meri, a highly recommended journey.



The highlight of the journey is leaving Beirut at a minimal cost (LL3,000 one way), as well as being able to breathe in copious amounts of fresh air while sitting back to watch the passing views. Once the city suburbs are left far behind, the views become spectacular as the bus journeys high above villages, dotted with red-roof traditional villas amidst pine forests.

At the terminus of Mrouj, it is almost as if passengers alighting have arrived at the end of the world, greeted by the fields and mountains beyond St Takla Square, in which sits a church of the same name.

A chat with a local convenient store owner reveals that before the civil war, Mrouj was quite the epicenter of social activity and once even housed a cinema. Today it is welcomingly quiet with the only activity being a long line of snack bars and cafes and a delightful, vintage funfair that patiently awaits younger visitors.

WALKER'S PARADISE

Around the village, there are many hiking trails, hidden in pine forests, for the energetic. For those less initiated, the roads in the nearby village of Metn

are ideal for a stroll. I chose the latter, walking from Mrouj via Boulogna and Dhour Chouir to the larger town of Bikfayeh. A gentle walk, it is interspersed with grand mansions of the wealthy, some of which are deserted.

With the sound of the wind and wild flowers as companions, the walk itself takes about two hours and is mainly downhill. The magnificent Grand Hotel, Bois de Boulogne, is worth a stop. The hotel's wood paneled interiors and vintage furniture speak of the '50s. Popular with Sunday day trippers, it's a great stop to fuel up on cappuccino or wine and a hearty Lebanese meal.

In comparison to the villages of Mrouj and Boulogne, Dhour Chouir is bustling. Its main street is 'souk like' in that each outlet is traditionally shuttered with wooden doors and provides for the collective sustenance of its locals. For day trippers it's another viable watering hole, where locals are friendly. Further down is the bustling mountain town of Bikfayeh. The town itself retains its mountain look featuring red-tiled houses amidst ancient pine forests. Off route there are

WHAT TO SEE

* **Bikfayeh Flower Festival**

Main street, May 24-25

04 983983

* **Mrouj Annual Festival, September.**

* **The Naas, a natural spring which is known for its curative powers.**

* **Saint Elias Chwayya Monastery, a Maronite and Greek Orthodox complex with a church, built in 1590.**

WHERE TO EAT

Grand Hotel, Bois de Boulogne

hotelboisdeboulogneliban.com

Giorgio Mediterranean Restaurant, near Bikfayeh

03 360073

Bottega, Bikfaya

04 984 555

Restaurant Fadel, Naas

04 980979 - 03 259979

Lola, Meat House and Winery, Naas

04 983440 - 71 062706

WHERE TO SLEEP

Grand Hotel, Bois de Boulogna

04 295100

hotelboisdeboulogneliban.com

One To One Hotel, Dhour Choueir Square Dhour Choueir

04 391 270

Locanda Corsini, Naas, Bikfayeh

04 982689 - locandacorsini.com

numerous Lebanese restaurants in Naas, a neighboring village up a rather steep climb. However, fear not, there are ample restaurants and cafés in Bikfayeh to ward off hunger pangs.

Bikfayeh plays host to the annual 'Festival of Flowers' (May 24-25), blooming since 1934. On this weekend a variety of decorated 'floats' parade through the town's main street, with live music bazaars, and the election of three beauty queens.

It is from Bikfayeh that the homeward bus journey begins. If you are looking for more spectacular views of traditional Lebanese villages and towns, then the route via Baabdat, Broumana and Beit Meri is recommended. And if you're up for it, the walk from Bikfayeh to Broumana is a pleasant one too, another town from which you can get the return bus back to Beirut.

The wealth of domestic tourism

Local eco-tourism expert, **Pascal Abdallah** explains why domestic tourism is the one of Lebanon's biggest assets



Domestic tourism might be said to be the backbone of the tourist industry. It is the first to recover after economic or security crisis in a country, and reduces seasonality gaps. And, it is one of the easiest to sustain, whether practiced for visiting friends and relatives (VFRs), for business, leisure, religious purposes or any other form. It allows people to discover the beauty of their own country and connect to it on a deep level. Lebanon has a lot to offer its residents in terms of internal visits. Its natural diversity and stunning landscapes, combined with the hospitable attitude of rural dwellers is a premium ingredient to the successful domestic tourism experience.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DOMESTIC TOURISM

In many countries the only means of building an economy is tourism, in others it still has a considerable impact on their economy. The total contribution of tourism represents 46.7 percent of Macau Peninsula's GDP (The World Travel and Tourism Council, WTTC, Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism Report, 2012) and 9.7 percent in France (Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Report, France, 2013), while in Lebanon it represents 25.1 percent (WTTC, Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism Report, 2012).

Domestic tourism seizes a large part of tourism in developed countries such as the UK, which has a population

of 64 million population and yet the number of domestic visitors reach approximately 128 million per year (UK Tourism Statistics, 2012), and in France, a country with a 66 million population, it reached 203 million (Direction générale de la compétitivité de l'industrie et des services, DGCIS, enquête SDT, 2013).

According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) it is estimated that out of the 4.8 billion tourist arrivals every year (2008 figure) worldwide, 4 billion, or 83 percent, correspond with domestic tourism (UNWTO, 2012). In light of these impressive figures, the importance of domestic tourism and its impact on economic and social development shouldn't be under-estimated.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DOMESTIC TOURISM?

- Knowledge of the destination: domestic tourists know the destination, its language and its customs. They need to experience something unique and as a result are often more demanding.
- Destinations are nearer, which makes visits more frequent and repeated.
- Prices are lower due to 88 percent using land transport by bus or car; as a result the domestic tourist seeks alternative accommodation and stays for longer periods.

- Their social composition is broader: domestic tourism involves high to modest individual or household incomes.
- It's generally concentrated geographically and better distributed throughout the entire country.
- Overall expenditure is higher than with international tourism.

IT'S YOUR COUNTRY. BE RESPONSIBLE!

All forms of tourism should set an ideal to follow the principles and standards of responsible tourism, with an aim to ensure a positive experience for both the visitor and host community

- Respect the differences found in local cultures
- Support local businesses by buying local (and natural) products
- Use the services of a local guide
- Use environmentally friendly accommodation
- Adopt the "leave no trace" approach while visiting natural areas
- Support all forms of nature protection by visiting protected areas
- If needed, use the services of a professional licensed tour operator, reducing the risk of accidents and increasing the amount of satisfaction with the product



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The rural escape

Deep in the rural south of Lebanon, the small village of Chebaa has a lot to offer local tourists



The village of Chebaa, nestled in the South East mountains close to the border with Syria, is a beautiful destination to discover. The landscapes are rich; steep sun-bleached rocky hills are dotted with trees. Signs of rural life – from shepherds leading their goats to farm hands picking fruits – are everywhere.

Chebaa resident, Ramiz Dalli, an activist and head of the Cheeba Association Rural Development (CARD), who focus on bringing relief and organizing community based interventions to the rural community of Chebaa, makes for the perfect local guide. He will lead you along the stairs of Chebaa and through the narrow streets to discover old houses that sit in the sun on the slope overlooking the east, facing the majestic Mount Hermon. Visit the 19th Century St Georges Church and the Sayfallah Khaled Bin al-Waleed Mosque, from 1937, both built in the local grey stone of Chebaa. They can be discovered while exploring the narrow straights of the village, located on the stairs that lead down to the river, Nabaa el-Maghara.

At the riverbed is the village’s unique Chebaa Watermills Museum, composed from two refurbished watermills. One has been transformed into a museum and the other, still powered by water, shows how Lebanon’s ancestors used to grind all kinds of grain. The back yard behind the museum is the perfect stop for lunch, with a picnic buffet organized by guide Dalli.

For hiking lovers there is a picturesque trail that runs from the Wady Jenaam up to Nabaa ej-Jawz, where stunning waterfalls, falling under the shade of walnut trees, set the scene on the terraces of local restaurants. The orchards of cherry trees provide a mid-hike snack of the delicious Chebaa cherries.

For the more adventurous, Chebaa also offers mountain climbing on an equipped rock slope site facing the village, with an incredible view overlooking the Nabaa el-Maghara water source.

WHERE TO EAT

Picnic prepared by local women, organized by Ramiz Dalli, 03 672262.

WHERE TO SLEEP

Hasbayya Guesthouse; Wael Chmeiss, 03 909596
Hotel Dana 07 831000, in Ebel es-Saqi

GO WITH A GUIDE

Pascal Abdallah, Responsible Mobilities, 03 218048
Local guide, Ramiz Dalli, as above

WHAT TO DO

A two day trek organised by Dalli, to the 2,814 summit of Mount Hermon, where ancient ruins can be found. Overnight camping is possible.

HOW TO GET THERE

Head south to Az-Zahrany, then go east towards Nabatieh. You’ll reach Chebaa by crossing Aain Qeniya and Shouaiyya villages.



CHÂTEAU FLORENTINE

THE REBIRTH OF A NATURAL JEWEL
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10 Summer Destinations

As the countryside landscapes come to life, with plants and flowers in full blossom, it's the summer months that are best for exploring the rich nature that Lebanon has to offer

1 Jabal Moussa

Located in the region of Keserwan-Ibail, **Jabal Moussa** (jabalmoussa.org) was recognized as the third biosphere in Lebanon in 2009, as part of the UNESCO Network of Biosphere Reserves under Man & Biosphere (MAB) program. The area is a huge stretch of natural beauty including villages such as Yahchouch, Ghbeleh, Qehmez, Nah red Dahab, Ain el Delbeh, Al libre and Chouwan. The vast landscape is richly diverse and its mixture of ecological systems gives life to a variety of species of plants and animals, hence it's become an important research site. The Biosphere Reserve organizes hikes through the reserve and the tours take a responsible tourism approach including lunch prepared by the local community in Mchati and an overnight stay in the local Dimitriades Guesthouse (71 307301) in Ghbéleh Village. Jabal Moussa Ecotourism Manager Christelle Abou Chabka can book the hikes, a local guide and lunch (71 944405, 09 643464). (christelle.ach@jabalmoussa.org).

2 Tour by bike

Cycling Circle (03 126675, Facebook group: [cyclingcircleLB](#)) was founded by Karim Sokhn in 2011, to unite cycling enthusiasts and provide a platform from which to enjoy Lebanon by bike. “I set up Cycling Circle because there was a need for cyclists to come together. It’s a growing culture in Lebanon,” he

says. The group doubles up as a social awareness movement, with the ambition that the humble bike can bring positive change. Their recent event, the Baskil Bicycle Festival, showed the potential of bicycles to alter the landscape of the city. Their weekly night rides around Beirut offer a different perspective to

the city and the chance to join other likeminded cyclists. At the beginning of June, Cycling Circle will start 3-5 hour weekend cycling tours beyond Beirut, passing through areas such as Byblos, Batroun, Keserwan and Mount Lebanon. If you don’t have your own bike, Cycling Circle can arrange a rental.



3 Alternative lodgings in rural Lebanon

DHIAFEE Program ([dhiafeeprogram.org](#)) first established in 2006 by ANERA ([anera.org](#)), is a platform that raises awareness on alternative tourism lodging in Lebanon, off the tourist map. This year, ANERA launched the "Support to Rural Hospitality Businesses in Lebanon" project with funding from USAID, to help develop rural hospitality. “In spite of a rich variety of tourism sites throughout Lebanon, there was a gap of awareness regarding the existence of rural hospitality businesses,” says the DHIAFEE Program’s Maysoun Korban. “The DHIAFEE Program established this network, which increased economic opportunities in rural communities and improved the tourism sector.”

A variety of beautiful guesthouses are spread across Lebanon, under the project that offers the authentic rural experience. It’s an opportunity to explore beyond the beaten track at a low cost,

while practicing responsible tourism, with guesthouses available everywhere from Qobayet in the North, to Nabatiyah in the South.

ANERA will be present at the Travel Lebanon event, Garden Show & Spring Festival at Beirut Hippodrome - May 27 to 31.



4 Well-Being Weekend

Beautiful unspoiled forests, dramatic cliffs and deep valleys characterize Ehmej, making it the perfect location for **Well-Being Weekends**. It offers a return to the authenticity of the Lebanese village, combined with pampering, relaxation and life coaching. You'll get the chance to breathe in the rich scents of the local flora, learn the distillation techniques of aromatic plants and flowers, discover local bee hives, hidden within ancient oaks and feast on nature's harvest. There are a variety of day programs on offer, through **Encounter With the Wild** (LL120,000) you'll explore the local flora species with a guide, and be introduced to aromatherapy. **Bees and Hives** (LL90,000) offers a field workshop with apiarist and bees. Other day packages include **Customized Perfume and its Itemization** (LL180,000) and **Jam Making and Fragrances** (LL112,500) including a jam making workshop from a secret local recipe.

Well-Being Lounge
71 714248
info@wellbeingtrade.com
wellbeinglounge.com



5 Summer holiday in the great outdoors

Peaks Resort (09 333311, peaks.com.lb) is a unique concept nestled in the foothills of Feytroun, Keserwan, at 1,300m altitude with vast grounds that are the perfect cooling summer retreat. "The resort is spread across 100,000sqm of land, full of pines, apple and cherry trees, lavender and a truly wild landscape," describes owner Paul Ariss. During July and August they dedicate a summer program to families and children aged 8-14 with 12-day-long summer camps. Kids can enjoy adventurous activities in the heart of the countryside, trying their hand at everything from hiking, mountain biking, rappelling, climbing, archery, and badminton and even tackle the high rope course and zip line. For the football-crazy, Peaks Resort also host football camps with Emile Rustom, who has over 25 years of football training. 8-14 year olds can learn the basics of football, fine tune their techniques and enjoy football training in the great outdoors.



6 An escape to the mountains of Keserwan

Less than 44km from Beirut, it's easy to disconnect from city life and immerse yourself in nature and history, following the new **Trail of Wadi el Salib**. The trail that stretches over 4km, takes you back to the ruins of the old village where the ancient agrarian community, between the villages of Kfardebian, Feytroun and Qlay'aat, Daraya, used to live. The abundance of water from the high mountains of Kfardebian that

streams through Wadi el Salib River encouraged the development of an old village and plantation terraces with many water mills and presses. During a two to three hour hike you can discover what's left of the village landmarks: an old Ottoman bridge, ruins of old mills and grape presses, along with the crumbling remains of a silk factory and churches. In addition to hiking, visitors can enjoy rappelling, rock climbing and soon archery and Tyrolean traverse.

The Heritage and Culture Association (Erth wa Thakafa) have created a trail and a picnic area and three ancient houses have been rehabilitated into guesthouses. Stay in Auberge Beity Kfardebian (03 214871) and while in the area sample local produce at Atayeb Kfardebian, Samira Zgheib (03 845257). For the local experience take guides Nassib Akiki (03 386639), Naim Mehanna (70 941573) or Charbel Sfeir (03 473718.)



Photo courtesy of Naim Mehanna

7 Religious sites of Tannourine

With 18 different religious communities in Lebanon, religious icons, monuments and sites dot its lands. Tannourine counts more than 26 religious sites including the **Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great** in Wata Houb and **Saydet Harissa** and the **Crusader Church of Mar Challita** in Tannourine Fawka, where the Saint is honored at an annual feast on August 20.

Tannourine is rich in rocky chapel caves like the Qadisha Valley's Hermitage of Saint Serge with the remains of medieval frescos in Wata Houb. There is **Saydet El Bzaz** (Our Lady of the Breast) or **Saydet El Chir** (Our Lady of the Cliff), the **Convent of Mar Doumit** and the monastery in the middle of the cliff of Mar Yaacoub (Saint Jacques) in Tannourine Tahta, only accessible to cavers and climbers. NEOS (03 733818, neoslb.com) can arrange tours to Lebanon's religious sites.



Photo courtesy of Nour Farra-Haddad



8 Rural routes

Think of Byblos and Batroun and the ancient cities and their historical ruins come to mind, but the rural region has a rich history that stretches back centuries. It has been home to numerous passing civilizations and their presence is still visible in a region dotted with archeological sites. The **Association for Lebanese Development and Culture (ALDEC)** was initiated in 2009 to help sustainable development here.

El Kherbe-Haqel is just one of many villages to visit. The area is ripe with fossils, which can be seen in **Haqel Museum** (*Rizkallah Nohra, 03 708287*). Take local guide Elham Achkouty (*09 770776*) to discover the area including **Mar Sassine Church** (St. Sisinius), situated next to the oldest oak trees in Lebanon. You can even extract fossils in the quarry with tool rental from Linda Nohra Hakiyany (*03 604969*). An online brochure (infopromag.com/uploads/Presentation_Aldec_brochure_low.pdf) can help plan your trip.

9 Tour of the shepherds

It's easy to be envious of the life of a shepherd, spending endless days connected to nature with time to philosophize while leading the flock. It's a seemingly pure, simple existence and a tranquil one, spending life with nothing but the sounds of sheep and the wind through the trees. 33 North organize the unique tour, "**Experiencing Unforgettable Moments With The Shepherds**" between June and October to sample the shepherd's life and spend a weekend in beautiful landscapes. The tour starts with a night camping in Bedouin tents and eating dinner with the shepherds of Mnaitra Plateau; it's a chance to experience the nomadic way of life and explore Bedouin traditions. After rising and a breakfast with the shepherds, there's a 20km hike along the highland trails from Ouyoune Es Simane, Mnaitra to Aaqoura where a rural lunch stop awaits in a local guesthouse. The cost for groups of 5-10, LL420,00; 11-15 LL375,000 includes transportation, all meals, 33 North mountain leader and insurance.

33 North
03 454996 - 71 331138
33-north.com



10 Summer festivals beyond Beirut

Away from the prestigious big players of the festival world in Lebanon, during summer months rural regions and smaller towns also come alive, with most municipalities holding a festival to mark the summer months. **Hammana Cherry Festival**, organized by Hammana Municipality and Souk El Tayeb, will take place this summer (hammana.com). This year, from Jul 10-12, Beit Misk presents **Summer Misk** (01 212121); a festival that will bring Balkan-music maestro, Goran Bregovic and Salsa Latin jazz master, Yuri Buenaventura. **Dbayeh Summer Festival** (03 800449) is held in mid-July, a small-scale family-orientated festival on the waterfront. In Byblos at the **Second Street Book Market** you can buy, sell and even exchange books (09 542020, Jun 7-8; Jul 5-6, 10am-9pm).

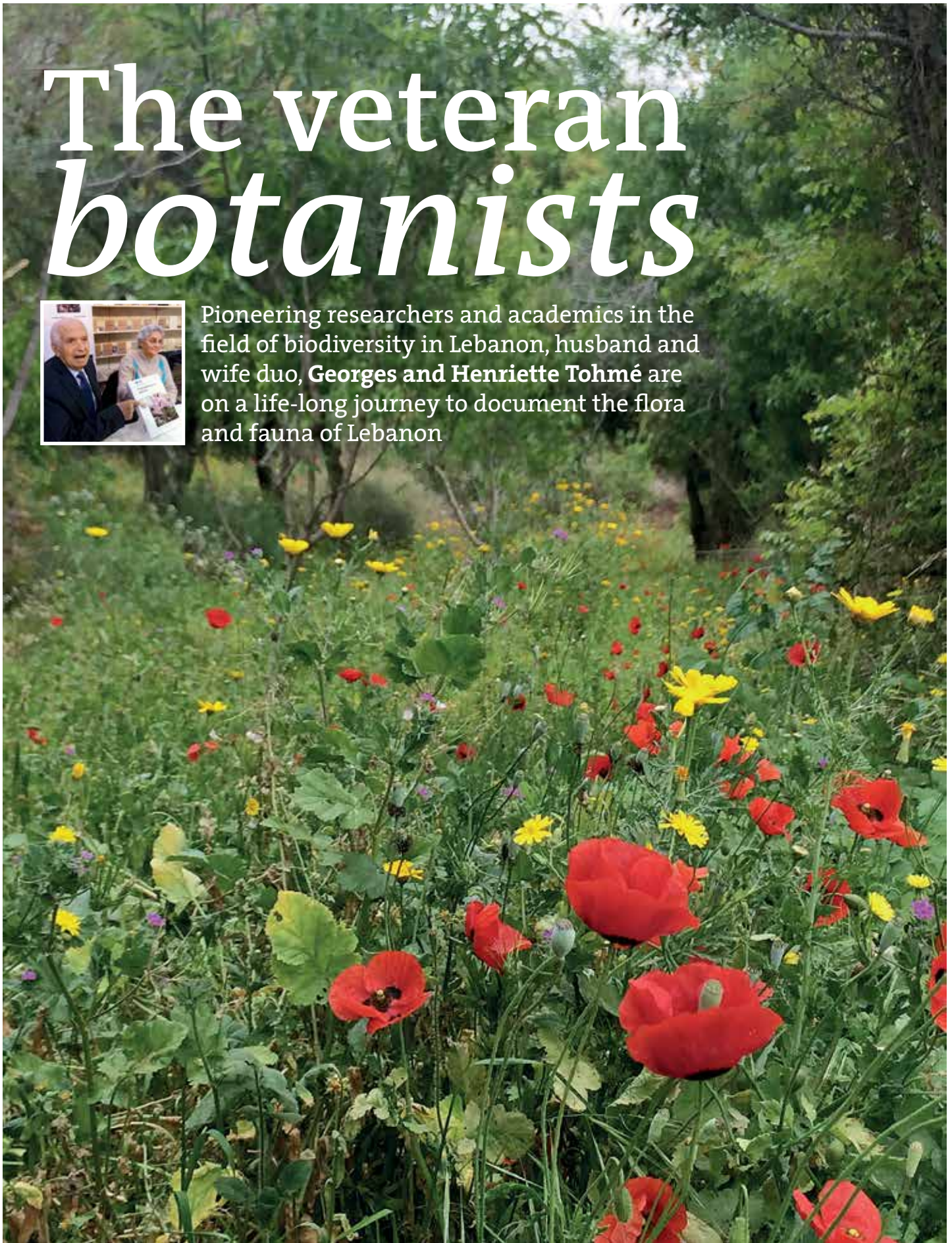
Douma Festival (03 349036) takes place from mid-July to mid-August, featuring a special Russian-themed weekend, in collaboration with the Russian Cultural Center, marking the history of Russian residents in the village since 1889. The **Ehdeniyat International Festival** (06 664466, ehdeniyat.org) features music concerts and family activities from Jul 25 - Aug 22, bringing to the Ehden Symposium Spanish singer, Julio Iglesias (Jul 25), Ziad Rahbani (Aug 2), Kazen Al Saher (Aug 8-9) and Music Hall In Concert featuring eight artists (Aug 22). The **Mzaar Summer Festival** (04 521061, Aug 13-17) features an impressive fireworks display on the 14; an exhibition with artisans and daily entertainment.



The veteran *botanists*



Pioneering researchers and academics in the field of biodiversity in Lebanon, husband and wife duo, **Georges and Henriette Tohmé** are on a life-long journey to document the flora and fauna of Lebanon



Inside a 1950s Achrafieh apartment block, Georges and Henriette Tohmé sip on Arabic coffee with a pile of botany and wildlife books surrounding them. The long-married couple have dedicated their lives to the study of nature in Lebanon and pioneered documentation and research in the field. Perhaps unusually, they have built their careers together; from documenting plant specimens in the field to co-authoring books that have covered everything from the flora of Lebanon to ants and birds – with Henriette hand sketching the accompanying illustrations.

Georges started working in botany in 1959 when the study of Lebanon's unique ecosystems barely existed. It was a field of research that him and his wife pioneered and now most of the professors of biology in Lebanon's universities are their ex-students. "We were the first to document Lebanon's wildlife," Georges says. "Nobody had spoken about biodiversity here. Henriette and me wrote many books on the ecology of Lebanon, studying the influence of temperature, rainfall and other factors."

Henriette brings out the couple's life's work, an extensive flower and plant encyclopedia. "Illustrated Flora of Lebanon," released at the end of 2013, documents Lebanon's rich and varied biodiversity in plants and flowers. Their second edition, it is the work of years of painstaking research in the field, hunting for flowers and plants all around the country, once thought extinct.

In total, the Tohmé's have identified 2,612 plant and flower species, with 108 unique to Lebanon, including the plant, *Salvia Peyronii*, first discovered in Lebanon 200 years ago, but long thought disappeared. "For such a small country Lebanon is rich in biodiversity," Georges says. "Within one-and-a-half hours from the sea to the mountains you pass through six different eco systems." Henriette continues, "There is a big variety of plants here because there are a big variety of biotopes; the beach, the lower mountains, upper mountains, high peaks, the valleys and the Bekaa Valley which is very unique for plant species."

Georges and Henriette bring out book after book from their extensive library; they know every botanist who has ever studied the ecology of Lebanon by heart, from a Russian studying Arabic in Beirut back in 1896, who wrote "Beirut and Mount Lebanon at the first step of the 19th century," to the English botanist P.H. Davis, of whose discoveries in the book "Flora of Turkey" on the Syrian side of the Anti-Lebanon mountains they were pleased to uncover for the first time in Lebanon.

They are also early environmentalists who pioneered the discussion about protection of natural habitats before it became a hot topic. "On 5 June 1973, I proposed the first natural reserve in Lebanon on the Palm Islands of Tripoli," says Georges. "It was an international meeting for towns on the Mediterranean sea to help protect [the habitats of] migrating birds. The president of the Lebanese Republic at the time was so interested he told the police not to let anyone on these islands with a gun to hunt anymore. Everyone was in disbelief," he laughs. In '74 Georges wrote a study on how to prepare the Chouf Cedars as a natural reserve. Henriette likewise made one on Ehden, Tannourine and later in Tyre, all of which have now become protected areas.

For Georges and Henriette passing their knowledge on to the next generation has always been essential. "We are biologists from the beginning but have always been teachers," Henriette says. "We want to give what we know to the younger generation and we learn very much from them."

Though Georges retired 20 years ago, the couple are both still active in the field and their work is never done. While many species of plants disappear, new ones sometimes appear in the most unexpected places. Not long after their book "Illustrated Flora of Lebanon," came out, the couple discovered a new species of flower, growing out of the wall of the American University of Science and Technology (AUST), just around the corner from their home, after they had searched for its existence all over the Lebanese countryside. A sign perhaps that their work will never end.

lebanon-flora.org

THE WILD FLOWERS OF LEBANON

Cyclamen libanoticum

Native to the mountain region of Lebanon, at 750-1400m, the Lebanon cyclamen has peppery-smelling flowers that turn from white to pale pink.



Iris Sofarana

A unique plant species found only in the high-altitude mountains of Lebanon, in danger of extinction from unsustainable agriculture and picking by locals and plant traders.



Papaver umbonatum

Often confused with the *Papaver Rhoëas*, corn poppy, common in Europe, this flower, otherwise known as the semitic poppy, is unique to Lebanon and Palestine.





Seeking solitude

The overwhelming silence of a convent makes it the perfect spot to escape the city and unwind. With over 60 spread around the country, they are an ideal base from which to explore Lebanon's rural parts

If solitude is what you're after there is certainly nothing like the silence of a convent to help you escape from the fast-pace of modern life. Monasteries and nunneries line the landscapes of Lebanon, hidden in rural parts, and make the perfect base for exploring the countryside. Humble and basic, if you're looking for luxury accommodation, look elsewhere, but the convent escape can provide an alternative lodging experience and an insight into a life unknown. They are also hubs for religious tourism, for those looking to gain an intimate perspective on religious life in Lebanon or as a base for pilgrimage to the country's holy sites.

Communaute des Beatitudes (09 790820, 09 790821. Bealiban.com. LL18,000;

LL37,500 inc. food) is near impossible to find, which is part of its charm. Located in Gharzouz in Mount Lebanon, it's a modern-built monastery for the relatively new community of the Beatitudes in Lebanon. Winding country roads will lead you past farmers tending to their cattle, orchards of olive trees, crumbling ancient ruins hidden among overgrowth and wild flowers. From the long approach a small stone tower with a cross peeps out from a blanket of trees blooming in different shades of green and yellow. Father Joseph, is the friendly and approachable head of the monastery who will happily tell you about the history of the Community of the Beatitudes. Established within the Catholic Church as part of the Charismatic Renewal Movement, the community was founded in France in 1973.

Here you can experience the Beatitudes simple community life; the small group of brothers and sisters don't have any employees, rather they work with their own hands, so their time is divided between growing food, cooking, cleaning and praying, along with their mission outreach work and the organization of religious tours. Their tours, offer the visitor everything from A-Z; "We try to give an inner aspect of Lebanon," Father Joseph says. "We take visitors to fabric factories, the soap factory of Saida and they will visit both mosques and churches and be able to meet with local Sheikhs."

The monastery is spacious and the rooms simple but clean, mostly with shared bathrooms, though a few rooms



“As a place I love it. The view is sublime”

have en suite. Take a room facing their Mary Queen of Peace Church and you'll look out on the lands of tranquility. The views that stretch for kilometers are overwhelming and the perfect backdrop for some quiet thought and reflection.

For Father Joseph, who has been based here since '98, two years after the Lebanese branch of the Community of Beatitudes was established, it's the perfect location to live. "As a place I love it. It's still and calm but not far from Jbeil. The view is sublime," he says. "We have breakfast outside next to the vines and a view from Beirut to Tripoli."



View from Communauté des Beatitudes

WHERE TO SLEEP

Beit al Kahen

This monastery has 67 beds and can host big groups; it's worth passing by alone to take in the impressive modernist '50s futuristic church.

*Donation LL30,000, inc. breakfast
03 288211, Maad*

Deir El Moukhalles

This Greek Catholic Monastery was founded way back in 1711; and its location has even older roots.

*Single and dormitory rooms
LL15,000-LL30,000, inc. breakfast
07 975064/5, Joun*

Oasis St Basile

A welcoming place to spend the night at a budget cost. Though they mostly host spiritual retreats and pilgrims, they have an open door policy.

*LL52,500, inc. breakfast
09225176, Sister Andree 71 433226
Zouk Mikhael, Keserwan*

Deir St. Georges Al Chir

Stay in the silence of the Lebanese countryside for a minimal price, all meals are included.

*LL60,000, inc. breakfast, lunch, dinner
05 271151, Bmekkine*

Community Abana, Our Father (Notre Deir Abana)

If its silence you're after Deir Abana will deliver. This unique silent retreat convent offers plenty of space for contemplation. You can bring your own food; lunch can be enjoyed in the garden, in perfect silence.

*Lebanese LL22,500; foreign visitors
LL52,000, inc. food
Brigitte, 03 153721, Toula, Batroun*

Saydet Qannoubine Convent

Spend a weekend in the Qadisha (Holy) Valley for stunning views and a real escape from city life.

*Single rooms, double and dormitories
LL22,500, Inc. breakfast
71 714342 - 06 645505
Qadisha Valley, Wadi Qannoubine*

Qozhaya, House of Prayers, Saint Anthony the Great Monastery

This monastery dates back to over 1000 years. The near by foyer has 20 rooms and is open to the public.

*Single LL45,000
06 995504/5
qozhaya.com, Qozhaya, Qadisha Valley*



Below the *surface*

Descend deep below the water's surface and discover the tranquil beauty of Lebanon's undersea world



**“ Dive safe and
enjoy the
underwater show ”**

Lebanon is certainly blessed by its geographical location. With a coastline set along the temperate Mediterranean Sea, the country is a perfect starting point to explore water activities. Most people are content with a quick dip in the water, but few venture down below to see the hidden wonders of the underwater world, just below their feet.

The north of Lebanon has some great spots for snorkeling and diving. Fresh water springs stream into the sea and despite overfishing and environmental pollution there is still plenty of life to see down there. Experiencing the magical calm of the deep sea, with little more than a mask, fins, and pure will, is an unparalleled activity.

Just ask Marcos Hado. This 38-year-old Lebanese marine biologist and freediving instructor has been snorkeling and freediving since he was a child. While living in the Caribbean, he submerged as deep as 72 meters in a single held breath – an astonishing feat that seems to defy physics. There are many who consider it to be a dangerous sport and certainly freediving comes with its risks but with the proper preparation it can be thoroughly enjoyable and safe. Looking forward, Hado is currently preparing to set the 100-meter constant weight record this year.

So, what is the appeal of freediving? “There is nothing quite like it,” says Nagi Chartouni, a 70 year old Lebanese interior designer, who has been diving and snorkeling off Lebanon’s shores for many years. According to Chartouni the roots of freediving, also known as apnea, can be traced back thousands of years to pearl diving and Mediterranean deep-sea fishing. One of his favorite spots to dive is off the coast of Chekka under rugged cliffs to discover caves that attract a multitude of fish like groupers, mullet and colorful blennies. Turtles are also visible in the clear northern waters especially during the winter months.

“If you venture down deeper you will be rewarded by schools of amberjack,” says Hado. He manages to catch fish most days, with a harpoon or spear, sometimes only a few kilos a day, other days much more.

A few months ago, he caught a 75-kilo mammoth tuna, an incredible feat that caused quite a stir on the local diving scene. But freediving is not just about the catch. It is the stillness of the deep, the shades of blue, which attract divers. Anyone who has been underwater will tell you that it's the best way to reduce stress, to let go. And the deeper you go, the calmer you become.

So, just put on your mask and fins and you are ready to dive. As with any other sport you should have a certain level of fitness and good breathing techniques to be able to snorkel and freedive. Hado insists that freediving is an extreme sport and it should be taken seriously. "Be responsible and well informed," he says. "Dive safe and enjoy the underwater show."

Sabina Llewellyn-Davies



Photos courtesy of Marco Hado

WHERE TO SLEEP

Mayouli, Batroun Mountains

71 000516 - [f MayouliBedBreakfast](#)

A charming bed and breakfast in the hills of Batroun, surrounded by fruit orchards.

Beit el Batroun, Thoum

03 270049

A guesthouse hidden in the hills above the sea.

San Stephano Resort, Batroun

06 740366 - [sanstephano.com](#)

A four-star resort located on the Batroun seaside.

Les Colombes, Aamchit

09 622401 - [campinglescolombes.com](#)

A campsite and bungalows with their own private terrace. Amazing location set on a rugged cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea in the seaside village of Aamchit.

WHERE TO EAT

Furn el Sabaya, Aamchit

09 624466

A favorite for a quick daytime snack while heading to the seaside. The Zgheib sisters who run this bakery in Aamchit serve delicious eggs, baked in whole meal dough, spiced up with local herbs. Take away their sublime speciality, the muwaraka, dough stuffed with chopped walnuts and almonds, perfumed with orange blossom and rose water.

Jammal, Batroun

06 740095

This fish restaurant, right on the beach, is easy to miss; tucked away in a creek. Enjoy an ice-cold beer with the catch of the day while dipping your toes in the water. The surrounding rocky enclaves are perfect for snorkeling and fresh water springs offer a chilled swim even on the hottest summer days.

Pierre and Friends, Batroun

06 744930

This gem of a place is true to its name. The proprietor, Pierre, has been settled on this pebbled beach for decades and will tell you that all clients are friends. Here you can savor the catch of the day, delicious salads, chilled wine and cocktails into the early hours of the morning.

Skipper, Batroun

03 156402 - [batrounwatersports.com](#)

Lebanon's water sports enthusiasts gather at this chilled out pub in the heart of Batroun for a drink and a bite to eat after a day hitting the waves. It is also home to the Batroun Water Sports Club and its proprietor Malek Daou, a Lebanese windsurf champion, is always on hand for a friendly chat and to tell you about the good diving spots.

GO WITH A GUIDE

Marcos Hado, freediving instructor

03 964406

[marcoshado.com](#)

WHERE TO GO

The best spots for snorkeling and freediving are along the rocky shores of North Lebanon: Aamchit, Mounisif, Berbara, Fadouss, Enfeh, Chekka and Palm Island.

WHERE TO BUY

Diving equipment from Samir Sport Tabarja Branch

[samirsport.com](#)

ESSENTIALS

Mask The mask is the most important piece of equipment for snorkeling or freediving. It should fit around your face to create a watertight seal and be comfortable

Snorkel Choose a contoured snorkel to reduce the drag when you are gliding through the water

Fins Go for a comfortable set of fins and ask an expert to advise you on the right fit and size

A snorkeling vest For children, a vest offers flotation and protection from the sun

Wetsuit To offer protection in winter, best to keep warm with a wetsuit. There are many varieties so get expert advice

Sunscreen Reapply 50 SPF waterproof sunscreen

An underwater camera To capture your underwater adventures



CHEZ SAMI

Restaurant

Maameltein 03/910520 - 242428

09/910520 - 646064

Fax: 09/646164



TAKE ME THERE





'Silence in the mountains,' Cedars

Photo courtesy of Charbel Bouez Visual Communication



Chasing *the sea*

From the golden sands of a public beach, to pebbled bays and luxurious beach clubs, Lebanon Traveler takes you on a tour of some of the beach highlights along Lebanon's rich coastline

With the rising temperatures, there's a completely different perspective to life across the summer months in Lebanon, as the city empties out and Beirut's migrate to the coast. With a coastal strip that stretches the 225km length of the country, the beach is never far out of reach and yet everyone has their favorite beach spot to recline in the sun, enjoy fresh seafood and the glistening Mediterranean until the sun sets.

Central

For those not wanting to spend the morning sat in traffic with the mass exodus of city dwellers to the coast, the Beirut beach provides a day in the sun without the hassle. Where much of the Lebanese coastline is eaten up with pricey private beach clubs, Beirut's public stretch of beach, **Ramlet al-Baida**, located south of the Corniche just beyond the famous Pigeon Rocks, is a must see. It's a tad scruffy, but full of character with visitors from all walks of life. Families gather for a picnic and nargileh [water pipe] with a sea view, couples stroll along the wave's break and children play football, making it perfect for people watching. We can't vouch for

the cleanliness of the sea here though; instead settle in with a book on the sand against an iconic backdrop, lined with legendary '60s buildings, a memory to Raouche's once grand past.

If escapism is what you're after, **La Plage** (01 366222, *Ain El Mreisseh, Corniche*. *Facebook: La.Plage.Beirut*) has it all on offer. The polar opposite of its scruffy neighbor, Ramlet al-Baida, this private beach club and restaurant is where Beirut's young, glossy socialite crowd hang out. At La Plage luxury is the name of the game; cushioned beach beds and attentive waiters will have you pampered in no time. And dining on the pier from the extensive menu is the cherry-on-top. Close by is the sun-lover's paradise, **Sporting Club Beach** (01 742481, *Manara, Beirut*) which remains almost un-changed since opening back in the '60s. Its concrete minimalism gives it a retro charm and the area around its three pools gets packed out with a down-to-earth family orientated crowd during holiday season. After the sun sets, Beirut hipsters flock to see international DJs at the now renowned party, Decks on the Beach. **St. Georges Yacht Club**

(03 958379, *stgeorges-yachtclub.com*. *Ain Mreisseh, Beirut*) offers a day in the sun within walking distance from Beirut's Central District. Dubbed "Beirut's playground since the 1930s," it's an iconic part of Beirut's heritage and its name is still synonymous with a time when Beirut was an essential holiday stop for Hollywood film stars.

North

Veer Boutique Hotel and Resort (09 222623, *veer.com.lb*) located in Zouk Mikhael, Kaslik is a must visit. Set upon a beautiful stretch of coastline its contemporary design offers luxury to the extreme; luxury accommodation with a sea view including a boutique hotel, beach rooms, villas and four underwater bungalows. The lagoon by night is simply stunning. Beach club, **Praia** (09 221216, 03 806806, *praialebanon.com*. *Facebook: Praiaresort. Zouk Mosbeh Sea Road*), only a short drive from Beirut is unique in its design. Run by Cinco Lounge and Le Maillon Group, expect the beach party vibe, with a crowd catching some sun between rooftop bar hopping. A bar divides the pool in two, ensuring



Photo courtesy of White Beach

jump (with caution.) Joining serves coffee all day long as well as delicious fish for lunch and dinner.

Just before Batroun, one of the oldest cities in the world, lies a strip of some of the most picturesque beaches in Lebanon. **Pierre & Friends** (03 352930, Facebook: Pierre-Friends) attracts the cool Beirut crowd who come for the seafood but stay for the drinks. Despite the party atmosphere the music is not overwhelming and the beach still maintains a laidback mood. On the same strip is **Bonita Bay** (06 744844, 76 744844, bonita-bay.com) a more refined experience of tranquility for those wanting seafood in finer settings. A short walk down is **White Beach** (06 742404, 06 742505, whitebeachlebanon.com, Facebook: White Beach Lebanon.), popular with a more down-to-earth crowd and families. First set up in the late '80s,

the drinks keep flowing. Though many public beaches in Lebanon are not well maintained, **Jbeil Public Beach**, just north of the port, is a reliable choice. The curved bay with pristine white sand is full of life throughout the summer. Here is where you can get to the true essence of beach life. If you don't feel like bringing food a few humble cafes serve up basic food.

Along the way to the North look out for hidden coves, which dot the coast. South of Byblos, in the sleepy coastal town, Fidar, is one of the country's best kept secrets; a small unspoiled tranquil pebble cove, hidden behind holiday apartment buildings. Locals though, are obviously

in the know so get there early to find the best spot. Family-run restaurant, **Stellamar** (09 478203) that looks down on the cove, serves up delicious Lebanese mezze, along with the perfect homemade arak accompaniment. 2km South of Batroun is **Joining** (03 517492, Kfar Abida), a small but popular café with the perfect location. A clean public beach formed from hefty rocks that provide a direct platform into the sea, is yours to explore for free. Entering the sea is recommended with jelly shoes or else getting in and out can be precarious. The rocky seascape makes for interesting sea exploration and dramatic rocks provide a spot for adventurous youngsters to



Photo courtesy of Praia



Photo courtesy of Marc-Antoine Kikano

it has a solid menu of fresh seafood and Lebanese mezze – don't miss the Lebanese sushi, and the story behind it from the friendly owner.

Follow the coastal road all the way to Tripoli for a trip to the stunning **Palm Islands Nature Reserve**. Located 5.5km Northwest of Tripoli, the three islands were declared a protected site by UNESCO in '92 and made into a nature reserve the following year. The islands are home to endangered loggerhead turtles, rabbits, rare monk seals and hundreds of species of migratory birds. An oil spill in 2006 had a catastrophic effect on the island's habitat and recovery efforts are still being made to help the return of its finely balanced eco system. The islands are best seen during July-September. You can pick up a free permit from Tripoli's tourist office and negotiate a price to get there from one of many boat owners along Al Mina Port.

SOUTH

Not far from Beirut, the beaches of Jiyeh offer a stretch of unspoiled sands. **Jonas Beach** (07 995000, jonas.lbgo.com) was the first beach to open in the area, back in '83 and it remains the most charming. Circular yellow and green umbrellas that dot the beach give Jonas a distinct retro feel, and the beach stretches on for what seems like forever. A snack bar offers basic fast food and there's also a

full menu of simple homemade Lebanese cuisine. Many sports activities are on offer from volleyball and canoeing, and there is a children's play area. On the same strip, but a world away, is **Orchid** (07 996303, 03 040420, orchid-resort.com), a stunning white luxury beach club, with colorful flowers spilling over the stone walls. The pool area, lined with beach beds, is impressive enough, but if you're really looking to splash out you can rent a private Royal Hut (LL600,000) which comes complete with a private terrace, bathroom and Jacuzzi. If you're not quite relaxed enough, a massage in the in-house Body & Soul Spa should do the trick.

You've not completed the Jiyeh experience until you've spent a day at Beirut favorite, **Lazy B** (70 950010, lazyb.me). This relaxing beach club, set in the midst of a green landscape, offers something for everybody. There are three freshwater pools, including one for kids, three natural swimming pools, a children's playground with organized activities and an opening onto a huge stretch of golden beach. Highlights include an Italian and Lebanese restaurant, four poster beds for horizontal reclining and, of course, the absence of music. On the same strip of Jiyeh is beach club, **Bamboo Bay** (03 513 888) which has a tropical feel.



Photo courtesy of Scylax



Photo courtesy of Lazy B





Scylax Escape (Info 03 073111, events 03 074111) is a highly anticipated new resort in Jiyeh, set to open in early July. Its unique design, by Jean Bou Doumit, has a respect to the surrounding landscape and as such its white lounging areas, accommodation – including bugs, chalets and beach huts complete with private Jacuzzis – is set upon grassy banks. With a large infinity pool and a Plain D'eau area with eight Jacuzzis you won't want to leave when the sun goes down.

It might be a long 84km drive from Beirut to Tyre, but it's certainly worth the effort. South of the city is the **Tyre Coast Nature Reserve**, a 7.7sqkm stunning stretch of white sands that are among the cleanest in Lebanon. The reserve is a nesting site for rare migratory birds and sea turtles and fresh springs that flow into the sea also make for varied sea life biodiversity. The beach shacks along this stretch of public beach are simple to the extreme and basic plastic tables and chairs and umbrellas form unpretentious restaurants. **Cloud 59** (03 517996) is one of the best, a simple shack that plays the perfect chilled soundtrack and attracts a crowd of devoted regulars from Beirut who make it their weekend hangout. Seafood and Lebanese mezze here is cheap and you can enjoy beers in the shaded baroque beach club or at the sea's edge.

If you're looking for a unique experience, away from the crowds, **Orange House** (07 320063, 03 383080, orangehouseproject.com) is at the southern most tip of the Lebanese coastline and makes for a picturesque weekend retreat. Run by environmentalist Mona Khalil this homely B&B has a family feel and is the base for her activities helping to preserve the nesting site of the endangered turtles that come to the shore during nesting season to lay their eggs. With only three guest rooms its advisable to book a few weeks in advance. Foreigners will need a permit to pass the checkpoint just before the B&B, which can be obtained from Sidon's army headquarters. You can get involved in the turtle conservation project while staying at the Orange House, or kick back and enjoy one of Lebanon's wildest and most beautiful beaches.



REACHING THE BEACH BY SEA

We all know summer traffic to the beach can be painful, so why not instead kick back and relax and travel the coast via sea? Luxury Yachts & Cruises offers a variety of daily tours with unparalleled views of the coastline framed by the mountains, while cruising 100m from the shore. You can swim in crystal clear water out at sea when the boat docks, try your hand at watersports such as banana boating and jet-skiing and get a view of the impressive private villas that line the coast. They have four tours on offer including Beirut By Sea, Jounieh Bay, Byblos City and Aamchit Harbour that all include lunch. There's certainly nothing like arriving by boat. Go with a big group for cheaper cost per person. 01 880122, 03 569956, Luxuryyachtsandcruises.com

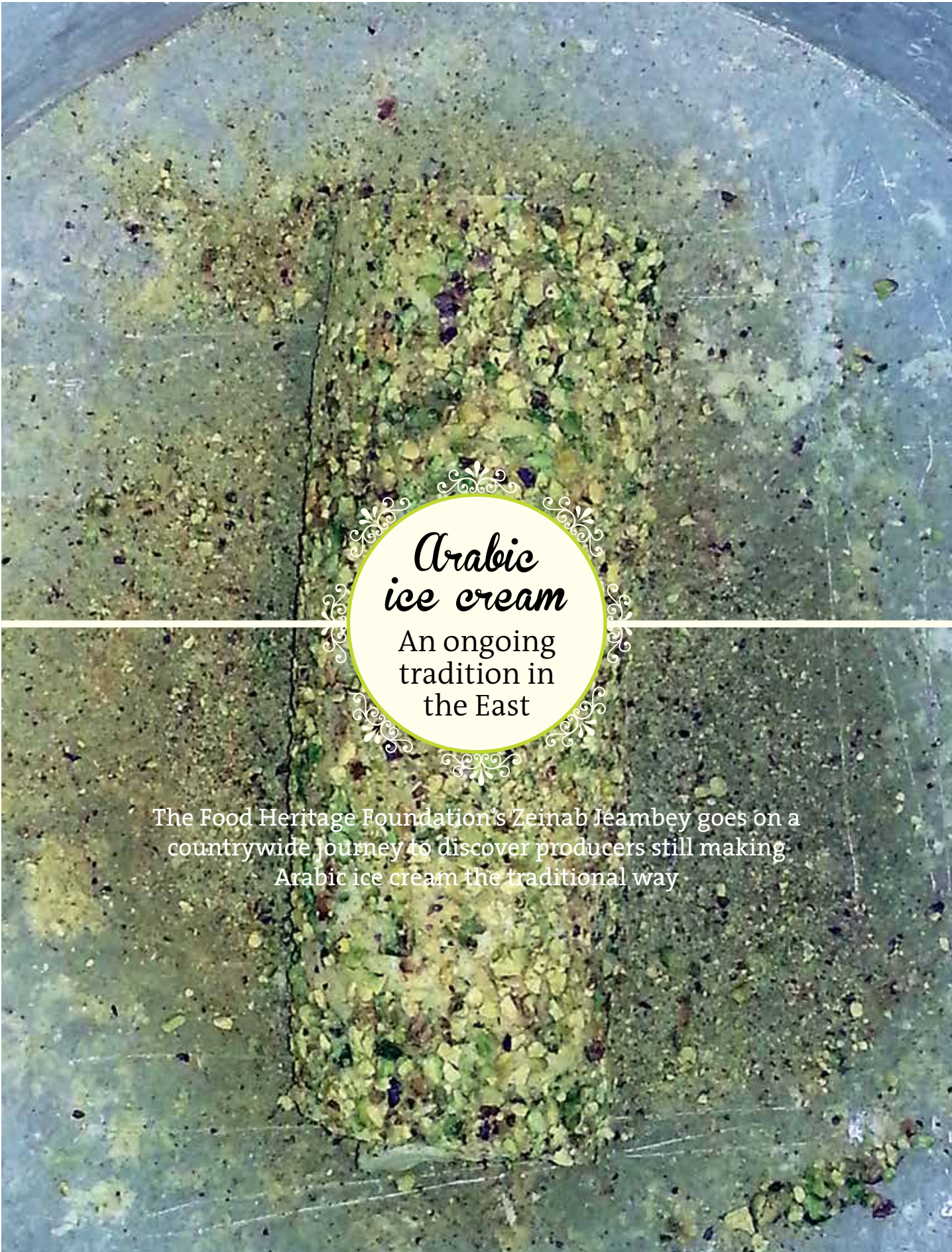


CLEAN UP

With such a rich stretch of coastline in Lebanon, it's saddening to see rubbish piled up on its beaches. Luckily there are several NGOs and community actions working to clean them up. Operation Big Blue Association (01 742700, operationbigblue.org) is one of the most active. The environmental NGO, founded in '97, held their first big beach clean up on 11 May and will continue throughout the summer. Other community-instigated movements have proved successful such as the Adopt A Beach Program in 2011 by Beach Body Tan (beachbodytan-lebanon.com). "The idea was that we can begin somewhere; picking up a piece of garbage is certainly within reach," says co-owner of Beach Body Tan, Ester Lascar. With help from the community, they successfully cleared Fartouch Beach, Byblos, in the summer of 2011. Get involved in a local beach clean up campaign and do your bit to keep them clean.

MINISTRY O

OF TOURISM



*Arabic
ice cream*
An ongoing
tradition in
the East

The Food Heritage Foundation's Zeinab Jeambey goes on a countrywide journey to discover producers still making Arabic ice cream the traditional way

The history of ice cream making stretches back centuries and its evolution has been extensive to become the delicacy we enjoy nowadays. From ice flavored with fruit juices or fruit pulp or frozen milk sweetened with honey, fruits and nuts and thickened with starches, eggs or gums; endless were the combinations and techniques of ice cream making in ancient times. Despite its many evolutions, the traditional preparation of Arabic ice cream “Bouzet al Da” can still be found across Lebanon.

The Arab world’s connection to ice cream can be traced back to a distant past; during the Arab reign in Andalusia, ice was brought from the Sierra Nevada Mountains around present day Granada and served as a delicatessen in the court of the Caliphs, the Islamic rulers of Arabic Andalusia. Flavored with fruit juices and sweetened with sugar or honey, it was a sought-after refreshment in the midst of the summer heat and was called sherbet, the precursor word of our current day sorbet. For the Caliphs residing in Damascus, ice was brought from Mount Hermon to cool milk during the process of ice cream making.

Originally, the rich ice cream, Bouzet al Da, was called Qaymaa al Arab. Arabs have a long history of raising cattle and have always been big milk consumers. Freshly collected milk was placed in containers to cool overnight, after which it was transferred to other containers for heating and pasteurization. Due to the coolness of the night, the inner edges of the original container would be covered with a thick cream lining. Producers would scoop it from the container walls with their hands, forming a shape resembling a cone of cream, hence the nomenclature Qaymaa al Arab; Qaymaa being the diminutive of Qomee or cone.

Unlike traditional ice cream in Europe, Arabic ice cream is thicker and more elastic. It consists mainly of milk, cream, salep, mastic gum and sugar. The combination of these ingredients produces a rich creamy taste and a gummy texture. Salep powder, extracted from the tuber of a type of orchid, helps the icecream thicken and adds flavor. The mastic gum, a resin extracted from the mastic tree, is responsible for the



chewiness as well as the flavoring of the ice cream.

Bouzet al Da’, is a traditional version of Arabic ice cream, the name referring to its manufacturing technique, where milk that has been heated with salep, mastic gum and sugar is then frozen and pounded with a big wooden pestle until it reaches a thick, elastic consistency. To this thick mass, cream and pistachio are added. The ice cream is folded into a Swiss-roll shape, and coated with more shredded pistachio nuts.

Lebanese cities and villages are abundant with signs of Arabic ice cream shops yet not all are the traditional Bouzet al Da’, though they still take the name Arabic ice cream. A stop at Bouzet Al-Nashawati in Khalde, 12km south of Beirut, sheds light on the details of Arabic ice cream making. “The uniqueness of [Bouzet Al-Nashawati] resides in the use of salep powder and mastic gum,” Ghassan Hamad, the store’s manager explains. “The difference between the regular Arabic ice cream and Bouzet al Da’ lies in the larger quantity of salep and gum used giving it a thicker consistency, and in the pounding technique, used only in the preparation of Bouzet al Da’”. The pounding time and technique – which defines the degree of firmness of the ice cream and thus its chewiness – remains the secret of the ice cream chef.

Founded by Mr. Mohammad al Nashawati in 1920, the **Bouzet el Nashawati** shop specializes in Bouzet el Da’, and produces and distributes all across Lebanon.

The original and most common flavor of Bouzet al Da’ is ashta, or clotted cream, rolled in pistachio nuts. The small shop located in Khalde, experiments with unusual mixtures and flavors beyond the basic, such as Bouzet al Da’ made with chocolate, rolled in hazelnuts, or an original flavor made with mulberry or strawberry and rolled in pistachio or hazelnut. For lovers of the regular Arabic ice cream, an array of different flavors can be found such as pistachio, cashew, almonds, hazelnuts and ashta in addition to many fruit flavors with natural fruits used in the making. In the fruit ice cream, Al-Nashawati does not use milk.

From the coast to the heart of the Bekaa valley, the village of Saghbine hides a hidden treasure, the small-scale ice cream maker, Joseph Masrouaa’s **Saghbine Natural Ice Cream**. He inherited the tradition of ice cream making from



his father. Masrouaa is also the local barber and his ice cream shop and barbershop are neighbors. The small ice cream shop, located in the main street of the village, is low-key with the simple sign “Saghbine Natural Ice Cream. Lemonade”.

It’s not difficult to get Masrouaa talking about his ice cream-making passion. He quickly reveals a fact that sets his ice cream apart from many others; he uses fresh goat’s milk from local farmers rather than from the milk of cattle, to prepare his ice cream, as well as fresh ingredients for his fruit and citrus flavors. As he fills cones of ice cream for tasting, the elasticity of the ice cream is visible. “The quality of salep used is key in achieving the desirable consistency of the ice cream,” Masrouaa explains. He insists that “the salep from Istanbul is the best!”

Masrouaa creates his basic mixture of milk with salep, mastic gum, orange blossom water and sugar. Processed in his ice-cream machine, this mixture develops into a milk-flavored ice cream, with rich, mouth-watering aromas of salep and mastic. To the original recipe he adds fresh blended fruits to create fruit-enhanced flavors. Saghbine Natural Ice cream shop’s flavors change with the season’s fruits – expect everything from almond, milk, chocolate, strawberry, pistachio, honeydew melon, watermelon, lemon and mulberry. And, his lemonade is as famous as his ice cream and totally worth a try.

Arabic ice cream remains one of the highlights of delicacies the Middle East has to offer, with vibrant flavors that characterize the region such as rose, ashta, pistachio and mulberry. With the summer approaching and the temperatures rising, we invite you to hunt out the hidden frozen gems across the country. Explore the traditional small-scale ice cream producers from village to city and taste for yourselves. This ancient tradition is still alive and well in Lebanon and in its taste the food heritage of the past lives on.

f *foodheritage* - 71 731437



WHERE TO TASTE

Saghbine Natural Ice-cream

08 670078 - Saghbine Village, Main Street, Bekaa

Bouzat Al-Nashawati

05 801032 - Khalde highway, Khalde

Al Malek Sweets

01 815007 - Tarik Al jadide, near Al Makased Hospital, Beirut

79 157546 - Basta street, facing the Police Station

Specializes in Arabic sweets and Bouzet el Da' Ashta Flavor, using fresh milk, salep, cream and mastic gum

Hanna Mitri

01 322723 - Mar Mitr Street, Achrafieh

Esh'esh (El Mina, Tripoli)

Traditional lemon ice cream

Bouzet Zakariya

Deftar Plaza [Sahet Deftar] Tripoli

Bouzet Awad

03 301547 - Achkout roundabout, Achkout

Open from April to October
Fresh seasonal fruits are used to make the flavors for this traditional Arabic ice cream. Another highlight is the rose water Arabic ice cream, handmade from distilled roses. They're also well known for their Roulot Ashta, an ice cream made from ashta

Ya Mal Al Sham

71 874093 - Saida main entrance, Facing Point Center, Saida

The owner, Jalal Abou Al Shamat, of this restaurant-café makes the traditional Bouzet Da', distinctive for its strong salep flavor



Saghbine Natural Ice Cream



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Carpenters of the sea

Building the boats for the fishermen of Lebanon, one modest workshop in the southern city of Saida continues the tradition of boat building



The ancient port town of Saida has an emotional connection to fishing, with the trade passed down from one generation to another over the years. Take a walk down the corniche on any day, under a bright blue sky and relentless sun, and fishing's prevalence here is clearly visible. Rows and rows of fishing boats line the harbor, recently returned from their daily early morning

fishing expedition. Fishermen sit along the seafront, fixing endless tangled nets, their faces browned by a life out at sea; an indoor fish market is a hive of activity, displaying the catch of the day from various sellers. The scent of fish, fresh or grilled, flows through the city.

Hidden out of public view, on the edge of the harbor, is Nasser Accad's boat

building workshop. In the center stands the skeleton of a boat, like the ribs of a whale, in its early stages of production. Here, the smell of freshly cut wood and sawdust overwhelms the scents of the ocean. A group of men sit drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes, pausing between the day's labors.

The tradition of boat building in Lebanon stretches back centuries, and though the techniques might have changed, the fishing boats themselves are still modestly simple. Accad, a tall man of few words with the hands of a carpenter, inherited the trade of boatbuilding from his father, a Palestinian carpenter who used to work in Jaffa, Palestine, and Egypt, but fled to Lebanon in 1948.

For Accad, boatbuilding is the only life he's known and it's a trade that's been passed down through his family. His small team of carpenters includes his brother Webhe and 17-year old son Ahmed, who has worked with his father for four years along with another carpenter Hassan Kalo. They each have their own specialism in the process of building fishing boats. Accad believes boatbuilding is a labor of love. "I love everything about it. I go home at night after a day's work and still think about it;



Boat builder Nasser Accad



how I can make it better," he says. "I can't not think about it. It's my passion."

Accad moves towards the 9m long boat in progress and points to the spine, stretching from one end to the other. This curved piece of wood, named the brim, is always the first piece to be sculpted; this one is carved from three pieces of Keena wood, the most common in Lebanon. Afterwards the ribs of the boat are cut from a mold – of which many hang from the wall on one end of the warehouse – with a mechanical sawing machine and then connected to the brim with sturdy nails. This creates the core of the boat, from which the other essential pieces of wood are added from the burden boards that line the inside of the boat, to the stern that flows along the bottom. Once complete, this boat will carry four fishermen to sea and be able to bring back 10-20 kilos of fish.

The boats are made for a harsh life at sea, durable through challenging weather with a lifespan of at least 20 years before restoration is needed. "The wood's lifespan is endless," Accad says. "Even after 20 years it's not the wood that is damaged, but the nails which need replacing."

The boats, which vary in size, take around two months to build, so the small four-man team can build around four-eight per year depending on demand, with each one being sold for the modest price of around USD 8,000. With boatbuilding hubs limited to the towns of Saida, Tyre, Sarafand and Tripoli, Accad has built many of the fishing boats in this harbor and around the country. Though the elemental shape of these traditional fishing boats remains the same, models vary in their details with every port having a preference – in Tyre there's a preference for smaller boats, in Beirut they prefer a roof.

The profession of boat building has of course made huge evolutions over the years. "There's been a revolution. Like with the car there are new shapes, new ways to build, it's modernized," Accad says. "My father would cut all the wood by hand. Technology has cut down the hours we spend working. My father would start his day at 6am, now we start at 8am."

Here, the family of carpenters doesn't only spend their life on land, their relationship with the sea is strong, and for pleasure they head out to sea to

fish at 3am on most days. Though the carpenters have ongoing trade, it's also prey to the unstable situation in Lebanon and can sometimes be slow moving. "If [the situation in] Lebanon gets better and there is an evolution I will make an evolution in my work; there would be much greater potential and a demand for bigger boats," Accad says. Still, for Accad there is no other work he'd rather do. "If you don't love it, you can't do it," he adds.

Later on in the day, fisherman Mahmoud Alely, a friend of Accad and the carpenters, strolls into the harbor, after being out at sea since 7am. He jokes that he was "born a fisherman," and as he spent his early years out on the sea with his father it was certainly in his blood. He seems to know everyone in Saida, stopping to speak to fishermen repairing their nets along the way, and nodding to restaurant owners – many who buy fish directly from him – that line the seafront.

He stops at a small modest boat made by Accad over ten years ago; it's his own sea companion, which he named Lulu. He visits the sea alone every night at 3am to make a living. "It's certainly a difficult profession," Alely says. "People don't have much money so the prices of fish can't go up. There are fishing laws but they're not working," he says, referencing to the overfishing that has made stocks in Lebanon shrink. Since the days Alely used to fish with his father, as the climate has become warmer, many fish have disappeared and there is much less quantity. But, new species are always appearing and he remains cheerful. His profound connection to the sea is obvious, even his calm nature appears to reflect the stillness of the water today. You could say that Alely and Accad are part of a circular process of which the sea remains a constant. After another decade or so out at sea, Alely will return his boat Lulu, to Accad to revive its lifespan and so the process continues.



“I can't not think about it. It's my passion”

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Woven roots

From the coastal towns of the north, to the mountainous villages of Lebanon, basket making is rooted in Lebanese tradition

There's a distinct nostalgia attached to traditional Lebanese hand-woven basket crafts, which are often seen piled up on the roadside for sale along the coastal roads of the country. Visit Saida or Tyre and you'll see their connection to the sea, where they have a strong presence in the harbor, filled with fishing nets or used to carry the morning's fish. In rural parts, these rustic baskets were used to carry figs, olives and fruits during harvesting season, or flat woven circular mats were used to dry keshik on the roofs of houses in mountain villages.

Beyond the rural regions of Lebanon, traditional baskets also found their purpose in daily urban life. Visit the old neighborhoods of Beirut and see baskets dangling down from the high balconies of crumbling heritage buildings. These woven vessels await the shop owner's goods.

In Lebanon, the two types of basket weaving stretch back centuries. One is made from woven reeds and is common all across the region and sold cheaply; the other is a rarer tradition unique to Aamchit, made from woven palm leaves. The basket-making techniques and uses vary by region. In Al-Kouachra, 3km from the northern border with Syria, halfah, esparto grass, is used to create multicolored mats and trays. In Hermel prayer rugs are woven from colored corn straw. And, in villages such as Zghorta and Bcharre in the North, Kefraya in the Bekaa and Saida in the South they specialize in rougher braided cane or wicker to create larger baskets for the transportation of fruits, report Manal Ayoubi and Rim Tizani in their book "Lebanese Handicrafts: Keep Lebanon in Your Mind."



Aamchit itself developed its own version of basket weaving using palm leaves, a softer more delicate technique that is a time-consuming art, made entirely by hand. It can take hours to prepare, and weaving the leaves is a way of passing the time, which is why it was once a common tradition in these slow-moving sleepy seafront communities.

Architect and designer Mona Yazbek, who lives in Aamchit, is something of an expert in the tradition of basket weaving, specializing in the rare art of weaving from palm leaves. She first became interested in the Aamchit tradition for its long past and the potential for its form to evolve and find a place in contemporary crafts. Almost a decade ago she began to work with weavers to develop modern designs and play with the form. Yazbek believes the tradition of basket weaving in Aamchit stretches back to the 19th Century. "The people of Aamchit were traders, they would travel across the region from Iraq and Syria to Egypt and trade in dates and the oriental butter *samneh*, or *ghee*, [clarified butter with a rich taste,]" she says. "They also brought back the art of weaving from Basrah, in Southern Iraq. In Aamchit there were lots of palm trees; the horizon was full of them. Now we still have many but there used to be much more. It was natural for this art to begin."

The palm weaving of Aamchit is unique in the Mediterranean for its simplicity. First the palm leaves are dried before being cut and prepared. Next they are woven and sewn together, depending on the shape. "If you compare the weaving of Aamchit with the [other] types that exists in the Mediterranean, Iraq, and Syria, it's the same weaving. But somehow in these places it's still used as a practical use for everybody. It takes the shapes and colors that they lost here. They have a simple way of doing it," Yazbek says.

Though the coastal road of Aamchit is still lined with humble shops selling baskets, it's now a struggle to find artisans still working on the palm-leaf basket weaving in the town, once the epicenter in Lebanon for the tradition.

Georges Zgheib's modest family store (70 515600 - 70 154419) has stood by the roadside for 40 years in Helweh, bordering Aamchit. The store's every corner is filled with hand woven artisan items; shelves are piled high with different shaped baskets precariously balanced atop each other.

Though foreign-made baskets have more recently infiltrated Georges Zgheib's stock, due to cheaper production costs and easier access to materials, the Lebanese-made baskets stand out for their handmade weaving and simplistic rustic look. "Originally baskets were used during harvest season for gathering figs and olives," says Katie Zgheib, the daughter of Georges, who has the relaxed character of someone who spends every day next to the sea. "They're part of our heritage."

Though baskets are now rarely used for harvesting the fruits of the land

and sea, replaced with plastic crates as production has grown, Zgheib maintains there's still a market for the handcraft, though it's certainly seasonal. But as with many artisan crafts they are at risk of being lost to the past, with the effects of globalization and cheaper production costs in the Far East. "The tradition of basket-making isn't dead, but you might say it's half dead," Zgheib says. "There's not enough demand and the cost is expensive as the craft is so time consuming. Luckily we own our place, so there isn't much cost. If we had to rent we couldn't afford to keep it going."

Further along the same road is **Gharwy** (03 243376), another well-known basket seller that stands opposite a big pile of reeds amongst the grassy wasteland overlooking the sea. Owner Walid Gharwy first established his shop 22 years ago, trading in basket products; he also works in decoration, landscaping and wood.



“We used to have more Lebanese-made baskets for sale, especially when they were used for collecting fruits and vegetables and to lower from the city balcony,” Gharwy says. “Now their main use is home decoration. Though customers are always looking for new designs, there is sometimes a trend towards the old traditional weaving.” Though Gharwy’s store still stocks Lebanese baskets made using the traditional hand-woven reeds and palm leaves, he also imports products from China and the Far East. “There’s a lack of raw materials here,” he says, “designs aren’t very adaptable and locals just can’t compete with the cheap prices of products from abroad.” For him though, the key to its sustainability is to find a way to evolve the tradition and adapt to changing tastes.

With the ancient Aamchit tradition of basket making at risk of disappearing, Yazbek has made several attempts to revive the tradition and preserve its heritage. “When I had this idea of trying to do new shapes through basket-weaving there were only very old people still working within this craft. I tried to interest a younger generation and found two people interested in working with it, but they left to the States in 2006,” Yazbek says.

“The weaving tradition is kind of slow because many of the known weavers died,” she says. Until now, Yazbek works with one of the few remaining traditional palm leaf weavers in Lebanon. Abi Ramia, now in his 80s, is based in the mountains above Byblos and still does the work of ancient weavers. “He has been doing it his whole life,” Yazbek says. “You don’t do it as a job, you do it while you’re looking at your children, cooking, or having a coffee. It’s like knitting. It’s a leisurely pastime

Though a revivalist movement might be slow, Yazbek continues to evolve the art form, creating new designs with the experienced techniques of Abi Ramia, that can be found in EddéYard, in the souks of Byblos. She still has hope that the ancient tradition can evolve and find its place in the contemporary world, so its future will not be lost.



“The ancient tradition can evolve and find its place in the contemporary world, so its future will not be lost”

MOUNTAIN SUMMER CAMPS and FOOTBALL CAMPS at PEAKS RESORT



SUMMER CAMPS

La Réserve-Afqa and Peaks Resort team-up together for fabulous children's vacations!

At Peaks Resort a summer home where kids, boys and girls, 8 to 14 y.o. can live, laugh, learn and have more fun and sports than they ever imagined possible! 100'000 sq.m private green domain, sports trails and courts, comfortable rooms, delicious food, friendly supervisors, full safety and a fabulous activities program.

Three residential sessions in July

Session 1: July 7th. > July 18th.

Session 2: July 21st. > August 1st.

Session 3: August 4th. > August 13th.

FOOTBALL CAMPS

A Première in the Mountains of Lebanon. National Head Coach Emile Rustom leads the Residential Football Camps at Peaks Resort.

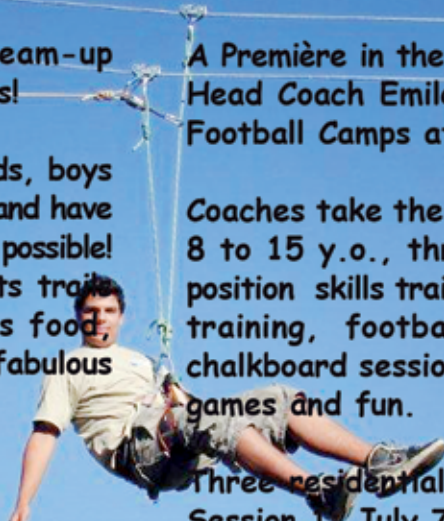
Coaches take the young athletes, boys and girls, 8 to 15 y.o., through a complete program with position skills training, speed, strength and agility training, football film study and classroom chalkboard sessions. And lots of outdoor sports, games and fun.

Three residential sessions in July

Session 1: July 7th. > July 12th.

Session 2: July 21st. > July 26th.

Session 3: August 4th. > August 9th.



Welcome to summer as it was always meant to be!
Welcome to Peaks Resort!



MADE IN LEBANON

POP ART LEBNANI

Designer **Rana Salam** has always had a strong connection to her Lebanese roots. Living in London for over two decades did not sever any ties, rather it evoked a new art movement inspired by her home country's street culture



Graphic designer, artist, author, entrepreneur and mother are just a few of the labels you can give Rana Salam. She's often dubbed a modern day "Renaissance woman," but considering the diverse fields she has worked within and mastered you might say this is a gross understatement. As one of the most well-known and celebrated designers in the Middle East, her work has defined a generation and decorated it with bright and vibrant colors. A graduate of Central Saint Martins and the Royal College of Art in London, her degree in Middle Eastern pop culture led to her first job of creating window displays for the renowned UK department store, Harvey Nichols. Other signature Rana Salam projects include the interior design and branding of Lebanese restaurant, Fakhreldine, London; Smallville Hotel in Beirut and Comptoir Libanais – a London based restaurant and cookbook of the same name; and she authored the cult classic, "The Secret Life of Syrian Lingerie."

How does your Lebanese heritage inspire you?

Heritage is a source of inspiration to a past that many choose to forget. When I used it in my work, mainly in a nostalgic way, people loved it and I awoke all their senses to images that were long forgotten to them. I realize how people wanted to celebrate and hold on to those images. We have been so brainwashed by the media to hate our country and ourselves. I remind people how brilliant we are through our heritage.

What is your design process?

My design process is very much like a good cook, [I start with] great ingredients (ideas) and mix them up to create an amazing dish (result). I go about this by doing ground research – never from behind my computer – and then I go back to the studio, brainstorm with my team and we develop ideas together. It's not always easy and we want to make sure we are creating something new and delicious.

How and why did you get into design?

My father was an architect and he always inspired me. I used to love going to his office, it always felt 'cool' and impressive. I was always creative at home and both my parents encouraged me to develop

this skill. I never thought I would be making a business out of it. So I consider myself very lucky to be doing what I love.

How is Lebanon's design scene evolving?

The design scene in Lebanon is growing with a handful of design entrepreneurs. It's very important to have design leaders in this country to keep the standard [high] and to inspire the next level of design graduates. We must keep quality and innovation as a priority, as there is a tendency to breed mediocrity in this field.

What's the best advice you can give to new designers?

I always say to new designers that it's very important to constantly be curious, observe and play. Brush up not only on your design skills but also your business skills; otherwise you will be eaten alive!

mishmaoul.com
Rana Salam Design
 01 217244
 Bohlock Bldg, 3rd Floor
 Abdel Wahab el Englizi Str, Beirut

OUR FAVORITES

Rimen Flower Grey Ya Salam

Vibrant "Ya Salam" cushion with darker flowers and colorful pomegranate and pistachio. LL165,000



Ice Cream Tea Towel

A digitally printed tea towel celebrating Middle-Eastern street stories, it illustrates the classic Cortina ice-cream. LL30,000

Um Kulthum & Tahiya Paper Cups Set

These graphic cups can be used to serve your best ice cream, coffee or sweets. LL22,500



An art lover's *sanctuary*

Curator and museum expert, **Juliana Khalaf**, takes us on a cultural journey beyond the country's capital. She explores the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum (MACAM) in Alita, a new platform for Lebanese artists





“The mission is to document Lebanese artists”

When one thinks of Byblos and its surroundings, ancient civilizations and archaeological ruins come to mind. Though, last June, nestled on a hilltop in Alita, about 7km from the coast, a factory space made from concrete and brick that once produced drawing boards and chalk for classrooms, was transformed into an art museum representing the careers of contemporary Lebanese artists from the 1950s until today. Set upon a luscious green estate, large bronze and steel geometrical garden sculptures lead up to the entrance of the **Modern and Contemporary Art Museum (MACAM)**, which has already become an important port of call on Lebanon’s cultural map.

Art historian Cesar Nammour and his collaborator Gabriela Schaub are the charming founders of MACAM and are on hand to guide guests through the story of the museum’s inception. Having worked as an industrialist, Nammour’s passion has always been to write about Lebanese artists and propagate their work to a broad audience, and this museum realizes that life-long dream.

“In the ‘80s artists that had no space to work would use this factory as a studio to create unique works of art. Since then the space organically grew and continues to grow into a creative space to promote the arts and artistic practices,” explains Nammour. “Now the official mission of this non-profit institution is to document Lebanese artists who began their careers from the ‘50s onwards. By collecting their artworks as well as publications recollecting their careers and lives we aim to preserve their memory.”

In the vast 2,000sqm space with a seven meter high ceiling, classical music playing in the background sets a relaxed atmosphere in which to explore the unique display of sculptures, divided into four categories by material: stone, metal, wood and ceramics. The art pieces span different eras. On show in one corner are marble sculptures by the famous Lebanese sculptor Michel Basbous from the ‘50s, whose own museum displaying his and his two brother’s work is located only a few km north in Rachana. Geometrical carved wood sculptures by the avant-garde artist Saloua Raouda

Chouair popular in the ‘60s, handmade ceramic tiger-striped glazed bowls by Dorothy Salhab Kazemi from the ‘70s, and more recent figurative bronze creations by Raffi Tokatlian, shed light on MACAM’s rich and exceptional collection. Another exhibition space in the museum is dedicated to impressive contemporary installations by conceptual artists like Nada Sehnaoui and Mario Saba.

MACAM’s activities extend beyond what is exhibited within the halls; Nammour and Schaub organize competitions to encourage amateurs and professional artists alike to create artworks based on specific materials. “We feel it’s important for all kinds of people, regardless of age or professional background to experiment and participate in artistic activities,” says Nammour. To create a dynamic project, they organize lectures and workshops around these competitions. One recent theme focused on the age of bronze brought with it a bronze casting competition and lecturers were invited to elaborate on the subject. Nammour and Schaub are also working towards MACAM becoming an education hub and learning laboratory that offers public programs and they have dedicated a space to schools and children.

The MACAM tour ends in the cafeteria where fresh citronella tea from the surrounding gardens and coffee is served up. In the same space is the bookshop with a wide variety of books written on Lebanese art and artists such as “Resonances: 82 Lebanese Artists Reviewed by Helen Khal.” Their extensive catalogue can be found online on fineartspublishing.org. There is also a workspace for kids to explore their artistic talents on the very chalkboards that were once produced in this warehouse, perfectly connecting the past to the present.

MACAM

03 271500 - macamlebanon.com

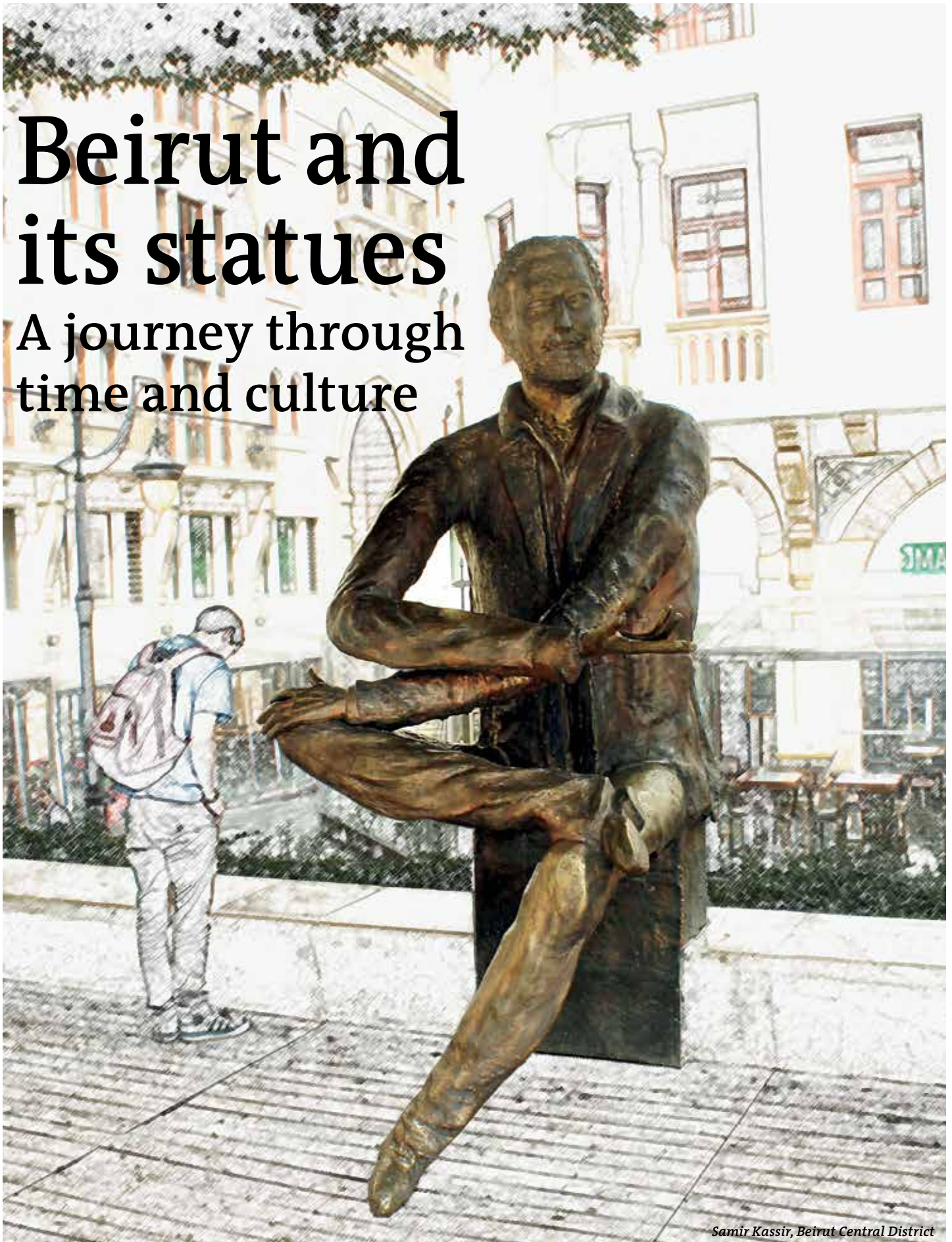
Alita, Jbeil

Open Fri-Sun, 12pm - sunset; Tue – Thur by appointment.

Entrance LL8,000 adults; LL5,000 under 18; LL15,000 with guide; free on first Sunday of each month

Beirut and its statues

A journey through time and culture



Samir Kassir, Beirut Central District

Statues, some standing bold, others crumbling and forgotten, mark many of Beirut's corners. Though many remain unknown, they reveal the vibrant history and iconic figures of Lebanon

Beirut is certainly a unique city, with many flaws, yet also many hidden gems. Its pockmarked streets still hold reference to the past, while colliding with the present. This constant contrast between different eras is part of the city's charm. Despite a deeply entangled and complex history, Lebanon's political leaders have always honored the figures of the past, constructing statues to remember the great individuals who left their mark on the country's image, from politicians and journalists to poets and freedom fighters.

For a first-timer to Beirut, or even locals who pass the city's silent icons without noticing, taking a tour around the city's historical statues is a perfect way to discover the country's history.

MESSAGES OF PEACE

Any tour of Beirut's statues has to include the city's most iconic, the Martyrs' Square statue. Located in Martyrs' Square, in the heart of Beirut's Central District cornered by the Mohammad Al-Amin Mosque, the Martyr's Square statue stands in the center of a concrete wasteland of endless parking lots. It was first erected in 1960, to commemorate the hanging of six Lebanese nationalists by Ottoman occupiers in 1916 and it features four figures cast in bronze. A woman holding a torch represents freedom, and she holds a fellow man by the waist while two wounded men lie on the floor

looking upwards, symbolic as a message of hope and liberty. During the war, it was badly damaged, and several bullet holes and missing limbs are still visible, despite the statue's restoration. Issam Khairallah, artist and head of the Restoration Department at the Beaux Arts Faculty at the Université du Saint Esprit Kaslik (USEK), who oversaw its restoration, purposefully left the scars of war, in hope that "its memory would prevent repetition."

Close by, in front of the iconic An Nahar newspaper headquarters, is a statue of the writer and journalist Samir Kassir seemingly sitting comfortably in the shade of a small garden. After studying in Paris, Kassir returned to Lebanon and became a notable journalist, contributing to newspapers such as the French political review, *Le Monde Diplomatique* and London-based pan-Arab daily, *Al-Hayat*. He also built a reputation for his popular weekly column in *An Nahar*, hence the statues proximity with the newspaper's headquarters. He dedicated his life to defending Lebanese independence, the Palestinian cause and Syrian democracy. His statue is a testimony for the ongoing fight for peace and equality.

POLITICIANS, POETS, MARTYRS AND THE COMMON MAN

The tour continues on towards Riad Al Solh Square, where a statue of the man the square was named after is



Martyrs' Square Statue

evident. Al Solh was the country's first prime minister who, with Lebanon's first post-independence president Bechara el Khoury, implemented the National Pact, which went on to form Lebanon's constitutional structure still in effect today. The document acts as an agreement that each of the three main religious communities in Lebanon has political power. Because of this, Riad al Solh is still considered one of the most important Lebanese politicians since Lebanon's independence, even though he only was in office from 1943 to 1951, over the course of two terms. Bechara el Khoury has his own statue in the square also named after him in Ras El-Nabeh. He stands boldly, looking out over what has become a transport hub, where pedestrians wait for buses to Hamra or Dahieh.

Just a few dozen meters away, located on a leveled grass installation next to the Grand Serail, stands the statue of another prominent politician, Rafic Hariri, who was assassinated in 2005. His name is synonymous with the recovery of Beirut after the war, after he helped with



Gibran Khalil Gibran, facing UN House



Rafic Hariri, in front of the Grand Serail

Heading east towards the Armenian-populated Bourj Hammoud, a monumental statue commemorating the Armenian genocide dominates the Armenian roundabout. Continuing on to the port of Beirut, is the prominent bronze statue of a Lebanese emigrant, acknowledging the Lebanese Diaspora, who left their home country to settle all around the world. Its back faces the city, as it points towards Mexico in reference to the thousands who left for the distant country over the last 100 years. Mexico City itself has its own version of the Lebanese emigrant. Lebanese-Mexican artist Ramis Barquet designed the statue in 1979, to commemorate the first Lebanese emigrant from the mid 1800s.

Though the city is already dotted with numerous statues, as time passes many more icons are commemorated and more statues appear every year. Lebanon's politicians, artists, victims of unrest and the everyday man don't fade into the past, but continue to be immortalized into statues. And, although it is easy to pass by these statues without a second thought, sometimes it is worth pausing and taking the time to appreciate Beirut's unique atmosphere – a mix of past and future, evolving at its own pace.

Paul du Verdié

the restoration process in the flattened Downtown district once the civil war was over.

But politicians and journalist are not the only ones remembered through statues in Beirut. Heading west, near the highway that links Achrafieh and Hamra, facing the UN House, is a garden, which is home to the statue of Gibran Khalil Gibran. This world-renowned Lebanese poet and painter is often compared to William Blake. His most-famous work, the collection of poetic essays "The Prophet," became one of the best sellers of the 20th Century in the United States. In this garden, the delicate beauty of his words seems to resonate with the blossoming trees and the kids playing, oblivious to the noisy city that surrounds them.

Going back towards Achrafieh, two unique statues can be found in the small Saint Nicolas Garden, facing the Greek Orthodox Saint Nicolas cathedral. Both date back to Phoenician times, and represent two political rulers who were beheaded for their actions... and their statues were accordingly "modified". Despite this grim history, the garden is a perfect place to escape the stress of the city. There is even an ancient sundial, made of stone, though lacking its metal stick to shadow the hour.



Lebanese Emigrant Statue, Beirut Port



Riad el Solh



Bechara el Khoury



Armenian Genocide Statue

SUMMER
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CHILL OUT &
REDISCOVER
GLAMOUR & THE
BEST VIEW FROM
THE HIGHEST
LOUNGE IN
THE CITY.

The Roof
THE ROOF

FAMILY GETAWAYS

Nour Farra-Haddad gives her family-friendly tourism tips around Tannourine and Douma. Spend a leisurely day trip in either, or enjoy a weekend taking in the two neighboring towns at once



Tannourine

Tannourine, located in the Batroun region, is a rocky and mountainous area with sharp slopes and a deep valley, famed in the Fairouz song “Aala Hadir El Bosta.” 75km from Beirut, at an altitude of 1500m, Tannourine village (tannourinevillage.com) shares its name with a cedar forest of some 60,000 trees, the second largest reserve in Lebanon. Tannourine hosts numerous archeological sites dating from the Roman-era onwards and is well known for its ancient monasteries.

SLEEP

Tranquility at The Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great. Rooms under renovation, dormitories available (06 500220, *Houb, Tannourine*) or green sleeping at Eco Dalida, Cedar Forest (Ecolodge 71 679055, 03 679055.)

EAT

Eat at Eco-Dalida Lodge *at the entrance of Tannourine Forest* (03 679005) and Lebanese mezze on the riverside terraces of Wadi el Deir restaurant (06 520918; 03 523563) *Tannourine Tahta*).

WHAT TO SEE

Take local guides Georges Sarkis Harb (03 679055) or Challita Tanios Harb (03 223428) for a local perspective on the area. The Tannourine Cedars Forest Nature Reserve (arztannourine.org) is unmissable. The stunning mountainous landscape, with cedars seemingly defying gravity and growing on vertical slopes, is impressive. Tannourine hosts a remarkably large number of archeological sites dating from the Roman-era onwards.



Douma

Douma is full of traditional red-roof houses, and sits 1050m above sea level. The town has been inhabited since at least the time of the Romans, in 317AD. The majority of the housing was built between 1881 and 1914, the golden age of life of Douma, financed by money sent from emigrants. Its ground is rich and welcomes cultures such as olive trees and grapevines.

SLEEP

Try the mythical round-shaped, Hotel Douma (06 520202, 03 611406, hoteldouma.com), Mar Yaacoub El Hosn Convent (06 740030, 03 723755) or sleep under the stars at Camping Douma (03-697738.)

EAT

Don't miss out on tasting Zahlawi ice cream in the old souks, Hotel Douma organize great brunches on Sundays

during the summer season.

Travel a little further and stop at Chalalat Nahr el Joz restaurant in Kfarhelda (03 289970) for delicious Lebanese mezze with a waterfall view.

WHAT TO SEE

Stop by Kamel Farm (03 749286; kamelfarms.com) in Douma, a family business specializing in agriculture and organic farming selling products certified by LibanCert, and guaranteed without pesticides, GMOs, antibiotics and other chemicals.

Douma Village and its old streets are also worth an afternoon's exploration. See remains from different eras of Greeks and Romans and the Ottomans. This village is a living architectural museum of the Ottoman era, with a gated old souk and terracotta roof-tiled houses.

Golden Tulip Hotel de Ville



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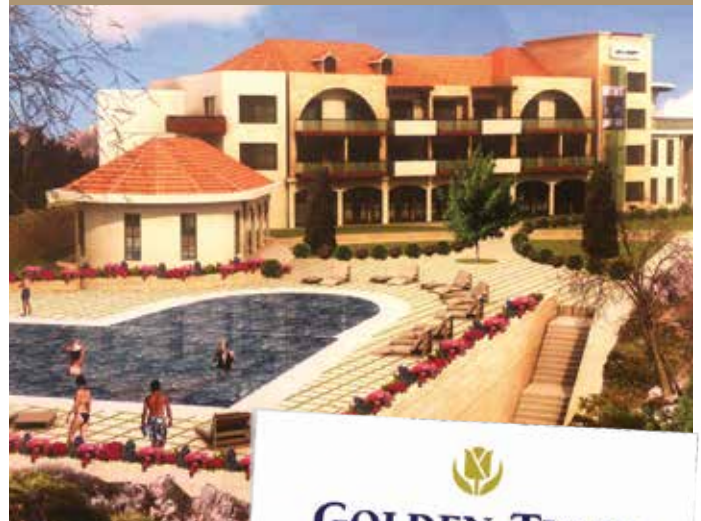
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AGENDA

JUNE

Sun 01



Hiking in Bkassine Pine Forest, Jezzine Caza

The hike passes by charming traditional Lebanese heritage houses and into the wild.

Minimum 12 people. LL45,000 Adventures in Lebanon

Grands Prix Ete 2014

Horsing in the iconic setting of Beirut's Hippodrome. 01 664200

Hiking in Ghosta

Explore Mount Lebanon's Ghosta and its surrounding countryside, the home of renowned Lebanese painter, Daoud Corm and journalist Phillipe Ziade. *Minimum 20 people. LL34,500 Baldati*

Hiking and wine tasting in Dhour El Choueir

After meeting in Dora at the crack of dawn, you'll head up to one of Lebanon's favorite summertime mountain retreats for a day-long hike and a tasting of the local wine as reward. *LL35,000; LL30,000 for group of 5+ or children Dale Corazon*

Deir Mimas

A hike around a region in south Lebanon steeped in history. Take in ancient olive groves, monasteries and religious sites and archaic bridges. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA. Vamos Todos*



Fri 13



Saydet Al Qalaa Night Hiking

Only 35km from Beirut, but on this beautiful night walk you'll see the stars clearly. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

FOR DAILY EVENT
UPDATES VISIT

LEBANONTRAVELER.COM



Fri 06

Visit Baalbek, Anjar, Ksara

A half-day trip, including lunch, around the Bekaa valleys iconic sites. *LL120,000 Nakhal*

Sun 08



Kayaking in Litani River

A day to get your adrenalin pumping, with kayaking along the stunning Litani River. Lunch included. *LL97,500 Adventures in Lebanon*

Hiking in Baakline

A hike through the Chouf region's historically important Baakline; the birthplace of Lebanon's roots. *LL35,000; LL30,000 for group of 5+ or children Dale Corazon*

Sun 15



Blaouza Jobbeh, Crest Hermtiage

A hike through the jaw-dropping landscapes of the Bcharre district.

Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek

Ammou'a Shir El Sanam Forest

A trail through the forest in full summer bloom. *Minimum 20 people. LL40,500 Baldati*

Site visit from Mar Semaan Aitou to Deir Hamatoura

A hike from the monastery built into the rocks in north Lebanon at an altitude of 1100m and down through rich pine forests, ending in Deir Hamatoura in Kousba and a monastery visit. Lunch

included. *Minimum 12 people. LL45,000 Adventures in Lebanon*

Bsetine Al Ossi Hike

A hike to one of the most stunning waterfalls in Lebanon. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Visit Cedars, Bcharre & Kozhaya

A trip to the iconic cedars of Lebanon, the holy valley and birthplace of famous writer Khalil Gibran and end in the monastery half built into the valley, with a panoramic view. Lunch included. *Minimum 3 people. LL112,500 Nakhal*

Sat 21



Al Qamouaa

A hike through the protected forest of Al Qamouaa. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Climbing, rappelling in Balaa

After meeting in Antelias carpark, facing St. Elie at 7:30am, an adventure day awaits. Try your hand at climbing and rappelling at Baatara gorge waterfall. *LL63,000 Dale Corazon*

Visit Jeitta, Byblos & Harissa

Visit Lebanon's iconic tourist sites; Jeitta grotto, ancient town of Byblos and the mountain village of Harissa with an impressive view to the sea. Including lunch. *Minimum 3 people. LL135,000 Nakhal*

Sun
22



Niha Chouf, Cliff Fortress and a Sanctuary

A hike through Lebanon's mountainous Chouf district, passing through the sleepy town of Niha, famous for its olive groves, grape, apple, plum and almond production. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Cherry Picking Day

Summer's here and so is cherry season. Enjoy the harvest. *Byblos & Beyond*

Falougha

A hike through the tranquil mountain village of Falougha. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Sun
29



Hiking trip in Falougha

If you want a break from the city, a hike through Falougha offers the perfect respite. *Byblos & Beyond*

Jbaa Chouf; Old oaks and caravan trail

A hike that follows the old merchant route through forests and sleepy villages in the Chouf Mountain Region. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Wine Tour

A day sampling wines from local producers. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*



Thu
26



Visit Sidon, Tyre & Maghdouche

A cultural and historical visit to these ancient cities of south Lebanon. *Minimum 3 people. LL105,000 Nakhal*



JULY



Fri
04

Visit Beirut, Beiteddine & Deir El Kamar

A cultural tour that takes in three must visit tourist sites including the grand 19th Century Beiteddine Palace and the neighboring traditional villafe, Deir El Kamar, the former home to Lebanese governors during the 16th-18th centuries. *Minimum 3 people. LL120,000 Nakhal*

Sat
05



Palm Island, Tripoli

A trip to the three islands that make up the Palm Islands Nature Reserve, just off the coast of Northern city, Tripoli. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Fri
11



Assia Night Hike

A hike by moonlight in the Batroun region village, filled with religious and archeological sites. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Beirut Historical Tour

A half-day tour through the historical icons of Beirut's Central District. Including lunch. *Minimum 3 people. LL52,500 Nakhal*

Sun
06



Rafting & Kayak

Come Sunday, if you're feeling adventurous a day rafting and kayaking should satisfy. *Byblos & Beyond*

Khirbet Qanafar, West Bekaa; dominating Qaraoun Lake

A hike around the picturesque Bekaa region, taking in the impressive reservoir. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Rahbe Akkar

A trip to the beautiful village of Rahbe, in north Lebanon. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Sat12
Sun13



Tyre Special Weekend

A weekend by the sea, discovering the ancient Phoenician city of Tyre and its beaches. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*



Sun
13



Barouk Chouf, Cedar reserve

A trek through the iconic cedar trees of Lebanon in the Barouk Forest. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Ascension Korent Al Sawda

A hike to the top of the highest peak in the Middle East, Korent Al Sawda, at an altitude of 3083m. *Byblos & Beyond*

Hiking Tannourine-Balaa sinkhole

A moderate 10km hike to the impressive Balaa sinkhole. *Meeting point Furn el Chebbak, facing Sagesse University, 8am. LL40,000. Breakfast & transport included. ProMax*

Fri
18



Beiteddine & Deir El Kamar

A half-day trip to Beiteddine Palace and the historic neighboring village. Including lunch. *Minimum 3 people. LL90,000 Nakhal*

Sat
19

Palm Island, Tripoli

Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos

Visit Jeitta & Byblos

A half-day trip to the stunning cave of Jeitta and back down to sea level to the ancient coastal city of Byblos. *Minimum 3 people. LL97,500 Nakhal*



Sun
20



Falougha; Jabal al Knayseh

A hike through the mountainous town of Falougha, the site of the first flag erected in Lebanon. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Sightseeing Tour, south of Lebanon

A trip around the major historical tourist sites of the south. *Byblos & Beyond*

Akkar Atika

A hike through the El Qamou'a area, which features a forest with over 10 million trees; including the oldest Juniper. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Wed
30



Annoubine

A hike through the deep, beautiful valley Annoubine. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Sun
27



Tarchich; Jabal Sannine

A hike through Mountain Sannine, part of the Mount Lebanon Range. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Al Arz to Bekaakafra

A hike taking in the Cedars Forest in the Al Arz region of Bcharre, which stands at 1900m altitude. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Hiking at Kfardebian

By winter, a ski resort, by summer a stunning green place of tranquility, a hike through Kfardebian brings the ultimate relaxation. *Byblos & Beyond*



Destination: Beirut



You don't have to go beyond Beirut for a historical visit. Bruno Chaptini, head of the Phoenicia Hotel's concierge department,

takes us on a journey into the past

Historical visit

Start the tour at the ancient Roman Baths, next to the Grand Serail. The impressive ruins, uncovered during reconstruction of the area, have been made into a green public garden. Afterwards continue to the Saint Georges Greek Orthodox Cathedral, the oldest Orthodox Church in Beirut,

located on Nejme Square. The church underwent several restorations throughout its history due to natural disasters, erosion, and intentional destruction. During the Lebanese Civil War, the church was burned and destroyed with most of its belongings. The 1995 excavation of the site, led to the discovery of the remains of three other churches and part of the Roman colonnades. These artifacts were incorporated into an underground museum located directly below the cathedral.

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AUGUST

Sun
03



Sannine, Jabal al Mzaar

A mountain trek not far from Beirut. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Hiking, Old churches at Hardine

Situated 80km North of Lebanon, the small, sleepy village of Hardine is home to 30 churches, making it the perfect picturesque setting for a hike. *Byblos & Beyond*

Fri
08



Laqloug night hike

You've never seen the still dark night until you've been for a night hike around the mountainous Laqloug. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Fri
15



Mar Antonios Qozhaya

A hike around breathtaking landscapes near one of the oldest monasteries of the Qadisha Valley. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Ouyoun al Simane, Jurd al Aqoura

A trek around the Kfardeblian area, passing through one of the highest villages in Lebanon. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Sun
17



Cedars Jobbeh; High Plateaus

A hike through the mountainous plateaus of the Cedar forest. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Al Wazzani

A hike around deepest southern Lebanon, around a small Lebanese village just north of the Israeli border. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Explore Jezzine

The landscape of Jezzine, located 40km south of Beirut, are surrounded by mountain peaks, pine valleys and a dramatic waterfall. *Byblos & Beyond*

Sun
10



Be a farmer for a day

Take your kids away from the TV and give them an experience they won't forget; a day at the farm. They'll milk the cows, collect the eggs from the hen house and taste fresh farm produce. *Byblos & Beyond*

Tannourine; cedar reserve

A hike through a magnificent unspoiled stretch of natural beauty, and the site for most of Lebanon's natural water. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Qornet Sawda

A hike around the highest point in the Levant, standing at 3088m above sea level, provides a cool climate to escape the summer heat. Notable for being the site mentioned that Noah replanted a sacred tree, after the flood. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Sat
16



Aqoura; Jurd of Tannourine

A hike through the rural beauty surrounding mountain village. Aqoura, in the Jbeil district. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Rafting

Cool off in the river with an adventurous day rafting. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Sun
24



Ehden (Zawiyeh); cedar reserve

Enjoy a hike around an area of unspoiled beauty taking in ancient ruins from the Byzantine era. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*

Wadi Jahannam

Hike around the stunning natural landscape of Wadi Jahannam, north of Tripoli. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Hiking in Jannet Chouwen valley & river

A hike around the Ktarba area. Lunch included. *Minimum 12 people. LL52,500 Adventures in Lebanon*



Wed
27

ATV Adventurous Trip from Zaarour to Chouf

Take a shared ATV around the Chouf area, opening up the countryside for you to really explore at an adventurous pace. Lunch included. *LL165,000 Adventures in Lebanon*

Sat
30



Wine Tour

Sample the delights of Lebanese wine in this tasting tour. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Sun
31



Ammouaa

A hike through the northern district of Akkar, through 1000-year old forests of junipers, oaks, cypresses, cedars and Cilician firs. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Vamos Todos*

Jurd An Njas (Denniyeh); high spring

A hike around the cedar region of Jurd An Njas. *Minimum 5 people. Price TBA Liban Trek*



4th Beirut Cooking Festival

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NOVEMBER
Beir, Lebanon

beirutcookingfestival.com



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ONGOING ACTIVITIES



Wine, Gastronomy & Cultural Heritage

Minimum 4 people. Price TBA. Cyclamen

Visit Baalbek, Ksara & Anjar

Minimum 20 people. LL90,000. Lunch & transport included. Kurban Travel

Chouf region: Beiteddine, Deir el Qamar, Al Shouf Reserve

Minimum 7 people. LL144,000. Lunch included. Saad Tours

Visit Jeita Grottoes & Harissa

Minimum 20 people. LL49,500. Lunch included. Rida International

Ehden & Bnachi Lake

Minimum 20 people. LL100,000. Wild Discovery

Visit Nabi Ayla village with lunch in Ferzol

Minimum 15 people. Adults LL75,000; kids LL45,000. Lunch & transport included. Neos Tourism

Ellah Forest Hiking in Akkar

Price TBA. 33 north

Monastic Wine Trip

LL67,500. Club Grappe

Paragliding

LL180,000. Club Thermique

Jeep Safari Chouf

Minimum 4 people. LL180,000. Lunch & transport included. Safari Lebanon

Biking Tannourine, Cedars

2 day package. Minimum 7 people. LL127,500. Lunch & transport included. Sports4life

Rappel & Mountain Climbing in Lebanon

Afqa. 2 day package. LL360,000. Lunch and transport included. FootPrints Nature Club

Hiking in Darb Al Sama Under the Full Moon

LL25,500. Transport included. WalkLeb



Spotlight: Up in the air

There's no experience like gliding through the air in a tandem with a bird's eye view on the city below. Jounieh-based Exit to Nature offer daily paragliding tandems with the experienced paraglider, Alain Gabriel, which involves one-hour prep time and a 10-20 minute flight (LL180,000. Mon-Fri 2pm-sunset; Sat 1pm-sunset; Sun

All Day). Once you've been up in the air you may just get hooked, so luckily the adventure group also offer Paragliding Courses at levels A, B and C for those looking to fly solo.

03 559992
exittonature.com
f Exittonature



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Saad Tours

01 393100 - libantrek.com

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04 718790 - ridaint.ae

Wild Discovery

01 565646 - wilddiscovery.com.lb

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04 922999 - baldati.com

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71 443323 - adventuresinlebanon.com

Vamos Todos

03 561174 - vamos-todos.com

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03 733818 - neoslb.com

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03 876112 - footprintsclub.com

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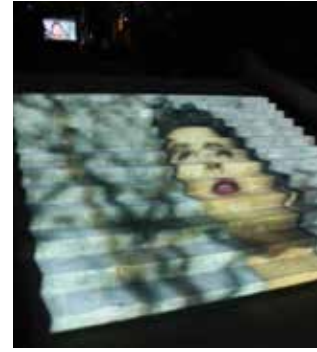


FESTIVALS

Cabriolet International Film Festival

May 30 – Jun 1

Now into its sixth edition, this charming short film festival has the theme of Relationship this year. They'll screen local and international short films on the old stairs of Gemmayzeh.



The Lebanese Film Festival

Jun 6 – Jun 9

Held as part of Beirut Cinema Week (Fri 6 – Wed 11), this year's edition of the LFF features 40 Lebanese films with a jury that includes Nadine Labaki, Nadia Turincey, Hernán Belón and Pierre Abi Saab. There is also a focus on Argentinian cinema, a grand finale awards show, La Nuit des Mabrouk and the new film market, Beirut Cinema Project.



Beirut Spring Festival

June 3–7

The sixth edition of this festival created by the Samir Kassir Foundation. It has a unique multi-dimensional program across a variety of disciplines. Unusually, the entrance is free, as a way to give Lebanese society at every level, access to original, non-commercial artistic works. 01 397334/1, beirutspringfestival.org.

“Gravitational Waves” by Retouramont

(Jun 3, 9pm. Beirut Souks, Ajami Square. Free entrance.) Gravitational and sonorous experience of contemporary dance.

“Smashed” by Gandini Juggling (Jun 4, 9pm. Sunflower Theatre, Tayyouneh. Free entrance.) A mesmerising mix of circus and theatre.

Voices of Hostages (Jun 5, 6pm. Dawawine, Gemmayzeh. Free entrance) An open discussion dedicated to journalists risking their lives to tell the truth.

“Our Fathers” by Babakas (Jun 6, 9pm. Babel Theatre, Hamra. Free entrance) An emotive meditation on fatherhood.

Salt and Blood (Jun 7, 9pm. Samir Kassir Square. Free entrance) An exceptional line-up of Lebanese and Syrian music talents including Nasser Deen Al Touffar, Sayed Darwish and Hello Psychaleppo!

Beiteddine Art Festival

Jun 26 – Aug 9

This annual music and arts festival is set in the beautiful 200-year old Beiteddine Palace in the Chouf Mountains. Its endless courtyards, tiered arches and Byzantine mosaics make for a stunning setting for a music festival. 01 373430 - beiteddine.org. Beiteddine Village, Chouf Mountain region. Tickets available at all Virgin Megastore Branches, 01 217810, ticketingboxoffice.com

Magida el Roumi (Jun 26, 8.30pm. Tickets LL45,000-LL300,000) The Lebanese diva takes us on a journey through her discography with a special focus on her most recent releases.

Joss Stone (Jul 2, 9pm. Tickets LL60,000-LL150,000) The British soul/R&B singer first rose to fame in 2003 with her debut album “Soul Sessions,” since then she’s swept up an armful of awards including a Grammy, oh and over 11 million album sales!

Waed Bohassoun, Kudsi Erguner and Fawaz Baker (Jul 10, 9pm. Tickets LL60,000-LL105,000) Syrian singer and lute player, along with nay virtuoso, Erguner and oudist Baker. They’ll be joined by two music ensembles from Aleppo and Istanbul.

Katie Melua (Jul 18, 9pm. Tickets LL60,000-LL180,000) One of the most successful British recording artists of the last 20 years.

Tribute to Zaki Nassif (Jul 19) The Lebanese Band Association for the Promotion of Music (LeBAM) and Al Fayha Choir make a musical tribute to the Lebanese legend.

A Titanic Triumph (Jul 25-26, 9pm. Tickets LL45,000-LL150,000) An outstanding modern dance performance based around the most famous shipwreck of all time.

Kadim Al Sahir (Aug 1-2, 9pm. Tickets LL45,000-LL270,000) The Iraqi singing legend, otherwise known as “Ceasar of Arabic Song” returns to the Beiteddine Festival.

Antigone (Aug 7-9, 8pm. Tickets LL60,000-LL105,000) The world renowned Lebanese director, Wajdi Mouawad presents his unconventional adaptation of Sophocles’ play.

Al Kawanin wal Manakel (Jun 26 – Aug 9) The private collection of Mohamad Barakat of intricate braziers.

Hidden Treasures of the Higher Shouf (Jun 26 – Aug 9) An exhibition of photographs that explores the mountainous region’s heritage sites.

BEITEDDINE ART FESTIVAL 2014



ماجدة الرومي
Grand Opening
 with **Magida El Roumi**
June 26 8:30 PM

USD: 200, 150, 100, 60, 30
 LBP: 270 000, 225 000, 150 000, 90 000, 45 000



Star of Soul, Pop and R&B
Joss Stone
July 2 9:00 PM

USD: 100, 80, 60, 40
 LBP: 150 000, 120 000, 90 000, 60 000



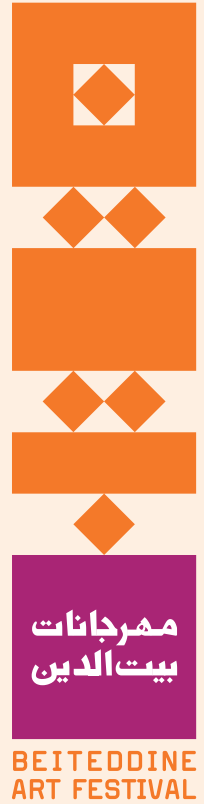
موشحات وصوفيات
July 10 9:00 PM
 A tribute to Sufi Masters & Muwashahat Legends
Kudsi Erguner & Waed Bouhassoun

USD: 70, 40 • LBP: 105 000, 60 000



Katie Melua
Blues/Jazz/Folk
July 18 9:00 PM

USD: 120, 90, 60, 40
 LBP: 180 000, 135 000, 90 000, 60 000



Titanic
 Ballet National de Marseille
A modern dance show
July 25 & 26 9:00 PM

USD: 100, 80, 60, 30
 LBP: 150 000, 120 000, 90 000, 45 000



كديم الساحر
Kadim Al Sahir
August 1 & 2 9:00 PM

USD: 180, 120, 90, 60, 30
 LBP: 270 000, 180 000, 135 000, 90 000, 45 000



Antigone
 by Wajdi Mouawad
 with the participation of Bertrand Cantat
August 7-8-9 8:00 PM

USD: 70, 40 • LBP: 105 000, 60 000

Exhibitions

June 25 - August 9

Al Kawanin wal Manakel

Discover Mohammad Barakat's private collection of traditional handmade heaters and braziers.

Hidden treasures of the Higher Shouf

A fascinating journey into the hidden treasures of the Higher Shouf exploring heritage sites. Conservation project by C.A. Zaher Ghossaini.

Photos by Eddy Choueiry, Aslan Joumblatt, Walid Rachid and Fadi Baddour.

Off Festival

June 21 9:30 PM

Métamorphoses

A sound and light show inspired by the Metamorphoses of Ovide & Kafka, implemented by the ALBA University students. Free entrance

July 19 9:00 PM

A tribute to Zaki Nassif

By the Lebanese Band Association for the Promotion of Music (LeBAM) and Al Fayha Choir.

www.beiteddine.org



Tickets on Sale:

All Virgin branches
 01 999 666 ext.1

Itihad Bookshop:

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Fete de la Musique

Jun 21

Held in celebration of World Music Day, the streets come alive during this one day festival at night. From the amateur to the professional, Lebanon's music scene comes together to perform in various locations across the city. 01 420234, 03 913014. Various locations. Free

Jounieh International Festival

Jun 27 – Jul 13

This family orientated festival, brings two weeks of festivities to the town of Jounieh, always kicking off with a bang, with an impressive firework display along the coast. All concerts take place in Fouad Chehab Stadium. (jouniehinternationalfestival.com) Tickets available at all Virgin Megastore Branches, 01 217810, ticketingboxoffice.com

Fireworks and Opening Ceremony (Jun 27, 10.30pm) The opening night is centered

Jim Beam Rocks Music Festival

Jun 27

The first edition of this rock festival brings together rock talents from Lebanon and the region including The Wanton Bishops, Who Killed Bruce Lee, Pindoll, Jay Wud, Lazy Lung, Sandmoon, Bandage, Meen and The Coolcumbers;

around the waterfront with a special night boat gathering, boat event and VIP Boat for the opening ceremony, along with a VIP dinner. The seven minute synchronised fireworks along the coast of Jounieh Bay has become a yearly crowd puller.

Kids & Family Day (Jul 4, 6-10pm) This family-friendly day is perfect for the kids to run riot on bicycles, roller blades and skateboards along the coastal front of the city.

Go Jounieh (Jul 5, 6-10pm; Jul 6, 9am-2pm) Community spirit will be at a peak on this weekend full of outdoor activities.

Elias Rahbani & His Orchestra (Jul 2.

along with headlining act Finnish rock band and blast from the past; The Rasmus. La Marina Joseph Khoury, 7pm-1am. Tickets LL45,000-LL90,000



Tickets LL45,000-LL225,000) The Lebanese composer, producer, arranger and musician from the legendary Rahbani family, makes a rare appearance.

Zaz (Jul 3, 8.30pm. Tickets LL45,000-LL225,000) The French singer-songwriter, Isabelle Geffroy (aka Zaz) mixes jazz with soul and acoustic.

Imagine Dragons (Jul 7, 8.30pm. Tickets LL75,000-LL135,000) This alternative rock band from Las Vegas will be sure to set the night on fire.

The Voice Tour (Jul 10, 8.30pm. Tickets LL60,000-LL225,000) NBC's The Voice Tour brings together the TV show's past stars and season finalists.

Byblos International Festival

Jul 3 – Aug 19

With its first edition in 2003, Byblos International Festival is the newest of the three big B's of the summer – Byblos, Baalbeck and Beiteddine. It has quickly established itself as a front-runner for music – bringing both legends and rising talents to the stage. Set picturesquely on Byblos Harbour, music fans eagerly await the line-up each year. 09 542020 - 03 538536 - byblosfestival.org. Byblos Port. Byblos. Tickets available at all Virgin Megastore Branches, 01 217810, ticketingboxoffice.com

Lang Lang (Thu 3 Jul, 9.30pm. Tickets LL90,000-LL300,000) Hailed by the New York Times as the "hottest artist of the classical music planet," pianist Lang Lang is certainly a showman when it comes to his performances. He'll be accompanied by the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra.

Marcel Khalife (Thu 17 Jul, 9.30pm. Tickets LL75,000-LL180,000) One of the most respected oud players around today, musician Khalife has been a solid presence in the Lebanese and regional music scene since the '70s.





© Detlef Schneider

THURSDAY 3 JULY, 21:30
LANG LANG

With his charismatic stage presence, passionate playing and astounding technique, Lang Lang has been hailed by The New York Times as the "hottest artist on the classical music planet". A showman as much as an artist, this superstar pianist has played sold-out concerts in every major city around the globe. Accompanied by the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maestro Darrell Ang, Lang Lang will perform Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no.2 as well as a selection of solo pieces by Chopin among others. His first concert in Lebanon is undoubtedly a historical date for music lovers!

90 000 LBP, 120 000 LBP, 187 500 LBP, 300 000 LBP



© Mazaffer Salhan

THURSDAY 17 JULY, 21:30
MARCEL KHALIFÉ

Singer, composer and one of the world's most acclaimed oud players, Marcel Khalife has been, since the 1970s, a vital presence in the Arabic music world. His first appearance at Byblos Festival will be marked by an impressive production: accompanied by the Al Mayadine Ensemble, a choir of 60 singers, and 80 musicians of the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maestro Harout Fazlian, this legend with a rebel soul will sing the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, Adonis, Ounsi El Hage and Joseph Harb among others, revisiting four decades of a brilliant repertoire.

60 000 LBP, 90 000 LBP, 112 500 LBP, 150 000 LBP, 180 000 LBP



© Whit Pageant

SATURDAY 19 JULY, 21:30
YANNI

Legendary composer and performer Yanni is back in Lebanon by popular demand! After two full house concerts at the festival last year, he will play an all-new show in Byblos: accompanied by his world-renowned musicians and vocalists, Yanni will perform audience favorites as well as selections from his latest studio album, *Inspirato*. A positively exciting experience by a truly global artist: this spectacular and breathtaking live event is for all the fans who couldn't find tickets last year as well as those who'd like to renew this magical experience.

75 000 LBP, 112 500 LBP, 150 000 LBP, 225 000 LBP, 300 000 LBP



TUESDAY 29 JULY, 20:30
MASSIVE ATTACK

Iconic British band Massive Attack are widely considered to be the founders and catalysts of trip hop. Their unique "Bristol sound" remains one of the most influential of the last 20 years and tracks such as "Protection", "Teardrop" and "Paradise Circus" have shaped the collective memory of several generations. Currently touring their latest show in the biggest summer festivals, Massive Attack are pushing their audiovisual exploration of propaganda even further: expect a groundbreaking collision of music, visuals and technology!

Standing: Regular 90 000 LBP, Golden Circle 150 000 LBP; Seated: 75 000 LBP, 112 500 LBP, 150 000 LBP



© Stefan Schijmants

SATURDAY 2 AUGUST, 20:30
EPICA

With over a decade of touring and six studio albums, Dutch symphonic metal band Epica have established themselves as one of this genre's leading acts. Fusing operatic female vocals with progressive and gothic elements, they created a trademark sound and acquired a cult following in the process. Renowned for their intense live shows, combining bombastic soundscapes and striking visuals, Epica's set at Byblos promises to be unforgettable.

Standing: Regular 75 000 LBP, Golden Circle 120 000 LBP; Seated: 60 000 LBP, 90 000 LBP, 120 000 LBP



© Dani Bendo

TUESDAY 5 AUGUST, 20:30
STROMAE

Belgian born singer-songwriter Stromae has shot to stardom with the release of his 2nd album *Racine Carrée*. Selling over 2.5 million copies around the globe, the French-speaking phenomenon has taken the world by storm! His last three singles ("Formidable", "Papaoutai" and "Tous les mêmes") have all been huge hits, continuing where he had left off in 2010, with the multi-platinum selling, dance-floor killer "Alors On Danse". With fans of all ages, Stromae has set fire to the biggest venues and festivals with his extravagant shows and now he's bringing his secret formula to Byblos. Alors on danse?

Standing: Regular 90 000 LBP, Golden Circle 150 000 LBP; Seated: 75 000 LBP, 112 500 LBP, 150 000 LBP



© Alexis Mayson

WEDNESDAY 6 AUGUST, 20:30
MULATU ASTATKE | IBRAHIM MAALOUF

Mulatu Astatke is regarded as the father of Ethio-jazz, a unique blend of traditional Ethiopian music, jazz, funk, reggae and Latin rhythms. His big breakthrough came in 2005 when eight of his tracks were used in Jim Jarmusch's movie *Broken Flowers*. Winner of the Best Jazz Artist award in the 2013 edition and the Best World Music album in the 2014 edition of the "Victoires de la Musique", Lebanese trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf plays a rare mix of jazz, blues, Middle Eastern, and Afro-Cuban music with his quarter-tone trumpet.

This magnificent evening will bring together these two artists and their bands for an exclusive double-bill!

60 000 LBP, 90 000 LBP, 120 000 LBP, 150 000 LBP



WEDNESDAY 13 AUGUST, 20:30
GUY MANOUKIAN

Lebanese musician, composer and pianist, Guy Manoukian has been a key musical player both locally and internationally for the last decade. Not only has he worked with the biggest names in the US, but his fusion of oriental melodies with modern arrangements has taken him all over the world, selling out concerts in Singapore, Santiago de Chile and the Sydney Opera House. In his first appearance since the release of his chart-topping 2014 album *Nomad*, Guy Manoukian will perform his greatest hits, accompanied by Maestro Elie Alya and his orchestra alongside special guest Mario Reyes from the Gipsy Kings family.

60 000 LBP, 90 000 LBP, 120 000 LBP, 150 000 LBP



TUESDAY 19 AUGUST, 20:30
BEIRUT

With a name like that, it was just a matter of time until American band Beirut got invited to perform in Lebanon. These indie-rock darlings play a mix of Balkan folk, French chanson and Mexican marching band music. Their current lineup includes a ukelele, an accordion and a brass section: the perfect combination to whip crowds into a frenzy! Switching between ballads and more upbeat numbers, Beirut will electrify Byblos with their energy and enthusiasm!

Standing: Regular 75 000 LBP, Golden Circle 120 000 LBP; Seated: 60 000 LBP, 90 000 LBP, 120 000 LBP

All prices are VAT inclusive.

Tickets are sold at:



Downtown Beirut, ABC Ashrafieh, ABC Dbayeh, Beirut Souks, Crowne Plaza Hamra, City Mall Dora, Dar el-Shimal Tripoli, Hussam Bookshop Baakline, Al Ittihad Bookshop Saida and Byblos Venue

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Yanni (Jul 19, 9.30pm. Tickets LL75,000-LL300,000) The popular Greek composer and musician returns to Byblos Festival after two full house concerts in 2013.

Massive Attack (Jul 29, 9.30pm. Tickets LL75,000-LL150,000) The legendary British band opened up the doors to trip hop. Their pioneering impact on music sent ripples around the world that can still be felt today.

Epica (Aug 2, 8.30pm. Tickets LL60,000-LL120,000) The Dutch symphonic metal band fuse female operatic vocals with progressive and gothic elements.

Stromae (Aug 5, 8.30pm. Tickets LL75,000-LL150,000) There's a buzz around French-speaking Belgian singer-songwriter, Stromae who has established himself in both hip hop and electronic music.

Mulatu Astatke and Ibrahim Maalouf (Aug 6, 8.30pm. LL60,000-LL150,000) The godfather of Ethio-jazz, Mulatu Astatke blends Ethiopian music with jazz, funk, reggae and Latin rhythms. He'll be joined by Lebanese trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf.

Guy Manoukian (Aug 13, 8.30pm. Tickets

LL60,000-LL150,000) The Lebanese Musician, composer and pianist has made a big name for himself around the world fusing Oriental melodies with modern arrangements.

Beirut (Aug 19, 8.30pm. Tickets LL60,000-LL120,000) If you've ever typed "Beirut" into Google, you'll know the prominence of this American folk indie band. With a lineup that includes ukulele, accordion and a brass section they have a Balkan feel to their emotionally-driven melodies. First established in 1956.

TBC Zouk Mikhael International Festival

Jul/Aug

This miniature but prestigious music festival usually keeps things classical, which makes sense considering its location in Zouk Mikhael's Roman amphitheater. Each year they bring a handful of refined music legends from classical to Oriental or jazz veterans. zoukmikhaelfestival.org for schedule updates



Baalbeck Festival

Aug 1 – 31

This iconic music festival is a vibrant part of Lebanon's cultural heritage. First established in 1956, over the years the festival has been responsible for bringing musical icons to Beirut such as Miles Davis, Nina Simone, Oum Kaltoum, Ella Fitzgerald and Johnny Halladay, along with the realization of the Rahbani Brother's iconic musical plays. Held within the historic setting of Baalbeck, inside the ancient temple ruins, the location alone is worth going for. baalbeck.org.lb. Tickets available at Virgin Megastore Branches, 01 217810, ticketingboxoffice.com

Assi El Hellani in Assi Al Helm (Aug 1. Tickets LL60,000-LL180,000) The adored Lebanese star, Assi El Hellani, who has performed all around the world, will showcase Assi Al Helm as part of Oriental Nights on the steps of the Temple of Bacchus with a full orchestra and dancers.

Angela Gheorghiu (Aug 3. Tickets LL105,000-LL300,000) A recital from the famed Romanian soprano diva who first came to fame after appearing in Georg Solti's '94 adaptation of La Traviata.

Dhafer Youssef Septet (Aug 10. Tickets LL60,000-LL150,000) The renowned Tunisian oudist and singer will be joined by Turkish clarinetist Husnu Senlendirici and Norwegian guitarist Eivind Aarset.

The 7 Fingers presents "Sequence 8" (Aug 16. Tickets LL60,000-LL150,000) The Canadian collective bring their new impressive acrobatic performance to the steps of the Temple of Bacchus.

G rard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant (Sun 31. Tickets LL120,000-LL330,000) Two giants of French cinema lend their talents to the text of Marguerite Duras "La Musica Deuxi me," in a dramatic performance centered around a woman, a man and their relationship.



Beirut Holidays

Jul 29 – Sep 6

This relatively new festival to the circuit, closes the summer and brings an impressive line up of mainly regional stars to Beirut. All concerts at Beirut Souks. Facebook page: BeirutHolidays. Prices TBA. Tickets available at Virgin Megastore Branches, 01 217810, ticketingboxoffice.com

Georges Wassouf (Jul 29) The legendary Syrian pop singer.

Fares Karam (Jul 31) Dabkeh singer.

Tamer Hosny (Aug 2) The famed Egyptian pop singer.

Artistat!! by Ziad Rahbani (Aug 7) A musical journey from the local legend, Ziad Rahbani.

Wadhi El Safi Tribute (Aug 12) A tribute to the legendary Lebanese singer and musician who passed away last year,

Elissa (Aug 21, 9pm) The Lebanese diva, who's built a world-wide reputation.

Garou (Sep 6, 9pm. Tickets LL75,000-LL200,000) The Canadian singer, Garou first rose to fame after a performance in Notre Dame de Paris and the number one hits "Belle," "Seul," "Sous le Vent."



al khan al maksoud

In the Arab world, Khan - caravansary - was a place of welcome and rest for travelers. In deciding to build a traditional Lebanese restaurant, arcenciel aims to spread our culinary heritage and stands for the hospitable traditions of the Middle-East.

khan@arcenciel.org
tél : 961.3.124.279



auberge Saint-Michel

Auberge Saint-Michel and Beit el Hana guesthouse in Maasser el Chouf are the ideal destination for a rejuvenating colorful escapade. Managed by arcenciel, it aims at promoting our natural and cultural heritage and strengthen social cohesion. auberge Saint-Michel is a proud member of Hostelling International (HI) and the Lebanese Youth Hostels Federation (LYHF).

auberge@arcenciel.org
tél : 961.5.350451.2



domaine de Taanayel

Property of the Jesuit fathers since 1863, arcenciel took in charge the management of a 230 hectares domain in 2009. arcenciel aims to develop its agricultural terrain while conserving local biodiversity and promote ecotourism by welcoming people from all across the country and worldwide.

domaine@arcenciel.org
tél : 961.8.540066



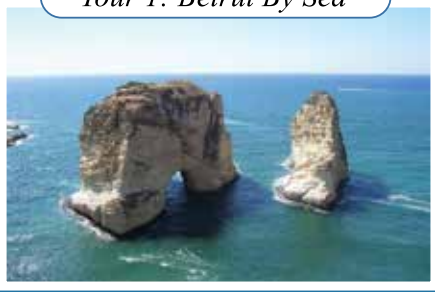
ecolodge

Faithful to its vocation of contributing to sustainable development, arcenciel build in 2006 a youth hostel, the ecolodge in Taanayel, near the arcenciel center. The Taanayel ecolodge's mission is to promote the traditional clay architecture in the Bekaa and strengthen social cohesion. ecolodge is a proud member of Hostelling International (HI) and the Lebanese Youth Hostels Federation (LYHF).

ecolodge@arcenciel.org
tél : 961.8.544881



Tour 1: Beirut By Sea



See the Beirut Coastline and discover its beautiful landmarks along the shoreline from Beirut harbor till its international airport. Enjoy a delicious seafood lunch in one of its seaside restaurants and stroll in its new/old downtown shopping area.

The excursion can last up to 8 hrs, inclusive of 4 hrs of cruising and 4 hrs of lunch and leisure time at downtown Beirut.

Departure from Dbayeh Marina every morning at 10:00 AM.

Tour 2: Jounieh Bay Tour

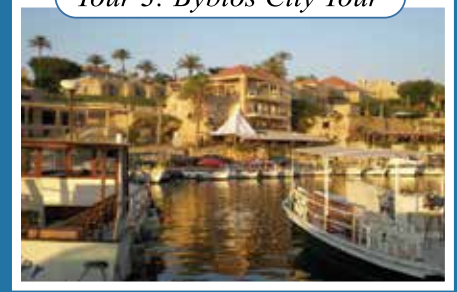


Enjoy a cruise along one of the most beautiful bays in Lebanon with its historic houses, beautiful green hill sides and important land marks of Cathedrals, Telefrigue (cable car) to Virgin Mary's statue at Harisa, Casino du Liban, etc... Seafood lunch can be served in one of its many seaside restaurants while swimming and water sports can be enjoyed within the protected waters of the bay.

Optional Add-ons: Visit Casino du Liban, stroll along Jounieh's historical shopping areas. Inclusive of 3 hrs cruising and 5 hrs of lunch and leisure time.

Departure from Dbayeh Marina every morning at 10:00 AM.

Tour 3: Byblos City Tour

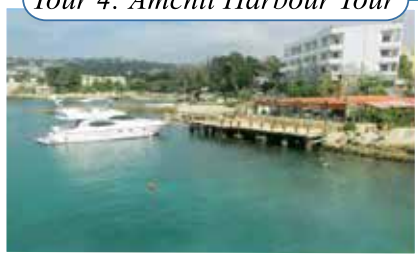


Cruise to Byblos' historical harbor that was built by the crusaders, embark on a guided tour of its historical castle, the wax museum and its old souk. Enjoy all the historical quarters, Churches, and alley ways, and enjoy a seafood lunch at one of its seaside restaurants overlooking the ancient harbor.

Cruise inclusive of 3 hrs cruising time and 5 hrs of lunch and leisure time.

Departure from Dbayeh Marina every morning at 10:00 AM.

Tour 4: Amchit Harbour Tour



Enjoy a cruise along the coast line extending from Dbayeh Marina passing by Kaslik, Jounieh bay, Tabarja, Safra, Edde Sands, Byblos and other seaside picturesque scenes. Dock at the "Le Cap" restaurant and enjoy a superb seafood lunch and experience a swim in crystal clear waters at the adjacent bay.

Cruise includes 4 hrs of cruising and 4 hrs for lunch and leisure.

Departure from Dbayeh Marina every morning at 10:00 AM.

Optional Add-Ons:

- ♦ Water sports (Banana, Jet-Ski, Donuts, etc...)
- ♦ Hotel pick up.
- ♦ Premium bar.
- ♦ Lunch at selected seafood restaurants.

*Price is inclusive of Fuel, Crew, Soft Drinks & Tid-bits.



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