

# Detailed Itinerary

**Trip Name:** [10 days] People & Landscapes of Lebanon

## GENERAL

**Dates:** This small-group trip is offered on the following fixed departure dates:

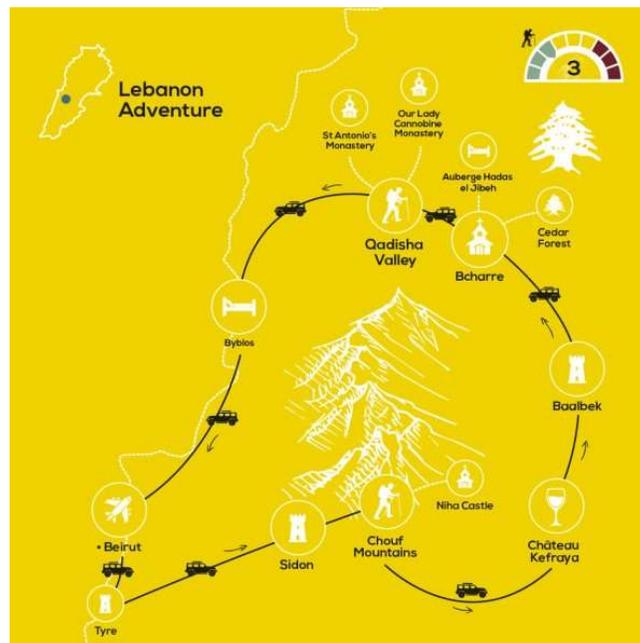
- October 29<sup>th</sup> – November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- February 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- April 15<sup>th</sup> – April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- October 28<sup>th</sup> – November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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*This adventure captures all the must-see destinations that Lebanon has to offer, whilst incorporating some short walks along the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) through cedar forests, the Chouf Mountains and the Qadisha Valley; to also experience the sights, sounds and smells of this beautiful country on foot.*

### Main Stops:

Beirut – Sidon – Tyre – Jezzine – Beit el Din Palace – Beqaa Valley – Baalbek – Qadisha Valley – Byblos



**About the Tour:**

We design travel for the modern-day explorer by planning small-group adventures to exceptional destinations. We offer a mixture of trekking holidays and cultural tours, so you will always find an adventure to suit you. We always use local guides and teams, and never have more than 12 clients in a group. Travelling responsibly and supporting local communities, we are small enough to tread lightly, but big enough to make a difference.

**DAY BY DAY ITINERARY****Day 1: Beirut [Lebanon] (arrival day)**

With group members arriving during the afternoon and evening, today is a 'free' day for you to arrive, be transferred to the start hotel, and to shake off any travel fatigue, before the start of your adventure in earnest, tomorrow.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

**Day 2: Beirut City Tour**

After breakfast and a welcome briefing, your adventure begins with a tour of this vibrant city, located on a peninsula at the midpoint of Lebanon's Mediterranean coast. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, having been inhabited for more than 5000 years, and our tour will include the most famous sites: the Green Line (line of demarcation during the Lebanese Civil War from 1975 - 1990), the National Museum displaying the famous

Phoenician gilded bronze figurines buried near Byblos, Mohammad Al Amin Mosque (also known as the Blue Mosque), ancient churches and Roman Baths. Enjoy the delicious Lebanese cuisine for dinner before your first taster of the nightlife of Beirut!

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast*

### **Day 3:** Explore Sidon & Tyre

This morning we drive out from the city, up into the mountains to Sidon (also known as Saïda), an ancient coastal city, set amongst citrus and banana groves. It is well known for its fresh fruit and sweets, including a specialty cookie called 'senioura'. We walk through the old souks before continuing to Tyre for its archaeological sites and old Fisherman's port.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast*



### **Day 4:** Jezzine & Beit el Din Palace

Jezzine is a summer resort for Beirut dwellers, surrounded by mountain peaks and pine forests. We visit the impressive Niha Castle, carved into the rock face of a cliff, and the elegant 19th Century Beit el Din Palace which showcases Arab design in spite of being the product of Italian architects! Tonight, we sleep in Auberge Kheribe, a beautiful old traditional Lebanese house.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



**Day 5: Wine tasting in the Beqaa Valley**

We enjoy a walk (2-3hrs) this morning in Masar el Chouf, before driving to the stunning Chateau Kefraya to visit its vineyard and partake of a little wine tasting (red and white blended wines and arak). We spend tonight in the beautiful nearby mountain town of Zahle, aka the 'City of Wine & Poetry', admiring its architecture and sophisticated nightspots.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast*

**Day 6: Visit the ruins of Baalbek**

We spend the morning in Anjar, a UNESCO World Heritage site before visiting the incredible Roman ruins at Baalbek. The ancient city ruins at Anjar were only revealed in the 1940s and date back to 705 - 715, during the Umayyad period, under Caliph Walid Ibn And Al-Malak. They help demonstrate how construction, architecture and Islamic art were all developing during this time. Lebanon Adventure 3 From one UNESCO site to another: the Roman Ruins at Baalbek, previously known as Heliopolis during the Hellenistic period. Here we enjoy one of the finest examples of Imperial Roman architecture, built over more than 2 centuries. The complex includes 2 huge, and very grand Roman ruins: the Temple of Bacchus and the Temple of Jupiter, the most significant outside of Italy.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



**Day 7:** Discover the Qadisha Valley

Bcharre is a small but welcoming mountain town with links to Kahil Gibran (1883-1931), author of *The Prophet*, who was buried in the C19th monastery built into the rocky slopes overlooking the town. From Bcharre we stretch our legs in arguably Lebanon's most famous cedar forest on the slopes of Jebel Makmel. Known locally as Arz ar-Rab (Cedars of the Lord), they are under the protection of the Patriarch of Lebanon who built a chapel in the cedar grove in 1848). From here we head into the Qadisha Valley (another UNESCO site), also known as the 'Holy Valley'. Its rocky cliffs have served for centuries as a place of meditation and refuge and it comprises the largest number of monasteries and hermitages dating back to the very first spread of Christianity. We also visit St Elijah's hermitage.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**Day 8:** Explore the beautiful Valley Region

With far too much beauty to absorb in the Qadisha valley in one day, we treat ourselves to another, to explore it further, at our leisure. We visit Our Lady Cannobine Monastery, partially cut into the rock and with some lovely C17th frescoes in the interior. After lunch in Abu Joseph Restaurant, we take the opportunity to enjoy a short walk along part of the Lebanon Mountain Trail, which extends for 470km through over 75 towns and villages,

attracting trekkers and day walkers alike. Tonight, we sleep in Qozhaya (St Antonio's) Monastery. There is a 90min walk up to the Monastery which is on rough terrain and has some steep sections. You need to be fit enough to manage walking uphill, and confident with uneven paths. It is possible to get a lift if required.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



### **Day 9: Enjoy Byblos**

Heading back down the coast, we visit the delightful port of Byblos. The town, previously the ancient Phoenician port of Gebal, is steeped in history. In fact, it is the oldest continuously inhabited town in the world. It was first occupied between 8800 and 7000 BC and is, unsurprisingly, another World Heritage Site. We visit the Old Souk and Citadel before driving back to Beirut to head to the Jeita Grotto in the Nahr al-Khalb valley. One of the world's great natural wonders, it is a system of interconnected karstic limestone caves spanning nearly 9 km, with the upper galleries housing the world's largest known stalactite. Open to visitors on foot and by boat, it is a Lebanese national symbol and well worth the visit. Only 18km North of Beirut, we don't have far to travel to return to the Capital for our final group dinner in the city and a night out on the town!

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Included meals: Breakfast*

### **Day 10: Fly out from Beirut**

We transfer you to the airport for flights out of Beirut. Time to plan your next adventure but it will be tough to find somewhere that has as much to offer as Lebanon!

*Included meals: Breakfast*

Note: At an appropriate point in your itinerary, in line with our approach of making travel worthwhile, we will be invited to learn about a local charity called FoodBlessed, based in Beirut and tackling hunger amongst Lebanon's poorest people. Any visit or opportunity to get involved will be optional.

## INCLUSIONS

- **Accommodation:**
  - 9 nights twin share accommodation (unless you have paid \$445 extra for a single room – note: no single rooms in the monastery, you will be with another traveler of the same gender).
- **Meals:**
  - 9 breakfasts & 4 dinners.
- **Transportation:**
  - All transfers, including airport transfers.
- **Permits, Fees, Guides:**
  - Full guided itinerary with qualified local English-speaking guide.
  - On some days, you may be joined by additional local experts for further information and guidance. This ensures you have information and support on your trip, with your Lebanese guide offering insight into local life, history and customs, as well as routes during walks.

## EXCLUSIONS

- **Meals:**
  - Lunches & 4 Dinners
    - Lebanon's cuisine is world famous. You can enjoy everything from street market snacks to luxury traditional and international dishes. As a result, and to give you the opportunity to make your culinary experience your own, we include just 4 of the evening meals on this adventure, in the price of the trip. Meals will still be arranged as a group so there is no hassle factor relating to the meals that are not included, but we have given you a free rein on choosing your own budget for the delicious dishes on offer.
  - Any meals on arrival date (note that clients usually arrive late in the evening)
  - Alcoholic drinks
    - Alcohol is widely available in Lebanon. It is among the oldest sites of wine production in the world, referred to by the Israelite prophet Hosea who lived from 780-725BC. 'Arak' is the Lebanese national drink

and is an anise flavored liqueur. Domestic and imported beers are available, but the beer is not as highly rated as the wine!

- **Transportation:**
  - Flights to/from Lebanon
- **Other:**
  - Visa
  - Insurance
  - Airport taxes
  - Souvenirs
  - Tips (allow approx. \$100 USD for local staff during your adventure)
    - Tipping is widespread in Lebanon and is much appreciated. Usually, waiters would hope for a 10-15% tip but do double check your bill as some places automatically add a 15% service charge.