

LEBANON

A world of activities in one small country



Do you want comfort, exciting things to do, new places to see, a touch of history, natural beauty, friendly faces, then say, why not Lebanon? Its sun, sea and sites, historic and natural, make Lebanon a visitor's dream. With mild winters, warm springs, sunny summers and colorful autumns it is a destination for all seasons. Whether you are high on its lofty peaks, or enchanted by its terraced valleys, or simply lazing on its sandy beaches, the subtle spirit of Lebanon whispers: relax and enjoy it.

Things to do anytime

- **Take a walk, jog or hire a bike** along the seaside promenade and watch the sunset behind the impressive Pigeon Rock in Roauche, Beirut.

- See the colorful **handicrafts** in the traditional souks of Zouk, North Beirut near Jounieh.

- Discover the **ancient ruins**, Roman baths, markets and buildings, recently uncovered in Beirut Central District.

- Visit the **Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum**, the author of the "The Prophet", in Bcharreh.

- Visit the **majestic Cedars of Lebanon**, from which King Solomon built his temple. (North Lebanon)

- Discover high quality Lebanese handicrafts at the (Artisan or) **Artisanat du Liban** in Ain Mreisseh, Hamra and Gemmayzeh, Beirut.

- Discover **Qadisha valley**, the Holy valley, with its monasteries and hermitages.

- Taste the **delicious Lebanese wine** while touring wineries in the Bekaa valley.

- Visit the **Hakel fossil museum in Byblos** with its wide variety of fossils, featuring mainly fish, found in the area as well as other Lebanese regions. A number of rare specimens come from private collections in addition to the museum's collection.

- **Enjoy strolling between mosques and churches** in Beirut Central District better known as downtown or sit in open air café watching the world go by.

- You can **scuba dive** in the Mediterranean, ski in Faraya or go **rafting** on the Assi River... a world of activities in one small country.

For archaeology lovers don't miss

- **Jeita Grotto**, a spectacle that defies description, it is composed of a dry upper gallery and a lower gallery with an underground lake that is seen by boat. Stalagmites and stalactites meet together in a fantastic décor.

- **Baalbeck Temples**: One of the world's most amazing archaeological sites can be found in the Bekaa plain. An ancient site, which came into its glory after the invasion of Alexander the Great, who elevated it to the rank of Heliopolis, the City of the Sun. With the Roman conquest and the construction of major temples the town developed into an important religious site. The Acropolis of Baalbeck is among the largest and best preserved

corpus of Roman architecture in the world. This monumental sanctuary is made up of three main temples: the temple of Jupiter, the Bacchus temple and the temple of Venus.

Where to stay

Lebanon enjoys a rich and ever growing collection of deluxe 5-star hotels. Most international hotel chains are present in Lebanon as well as some excellent 4- and 3- stars hotels. There are also a budget hotels and the Lebanese Youth Hostels Federation can host youth groups at very low prices.

Nightlife

Lebanon enjoys a wonderful nightlife and entertainment ranges from solo guitarists to orchestras and floor shows, from the traditional dabké to oriental or belly dancing.

Lebanese cuisine

One can dine in elegance on fine European cuisine or at a rustic seaside cafe. Taste Lebanese cuisine which is immensely popular and surprising in its diversity. It is known above all for its mezzé, countless dishes of savory hors-d'oeuvres that form the traditional starter to a meal, accompanied by the famous "Arak", a traditional local drink.

Eating out cheaply is very easy, with a wide variety of traditional "fast food" dishes and sandwiches available at snack bars and prices range from 2,000 to 3,500 LL.

Other activities

For those who love outdoor activities, as well as ecotourism, special clubs offer excursions to different parts of Lebanon for:

- Paragliding at the Cedars
- Canoeing or kayaking on the Awwali River
- Climbing Mount Sannine
- Exploring deep caves
- Organizing trekking or rock climbing
- Camping
- Horse riding
- Turtle watching in Tyre



- Moonlight fishing in Byblos
- Wine tasting in the Bekaa
- Mountain biking at Laqlouq, Cedars and Qornet as Saouda
- Kite flying at Tyre Coastal reserve
- Bird watching at Ebel el Saqi.

Special eco tourism project

The Al Jord Project was born from a concern to develop and preserve the mountains and forest of Hermel, Akkar and Donniyeh. These areas known as Jourds are presently endangered by non-renewable exploitation of their natural resources.

Al Jord is a company that creates a new viable economic cycle and redistributes benefits locally through a fair partnership and local employment, with the concern of developing the region for the benefit of its population and the preservation of its unique environment.

The company is promoting, operating and planning ecotourism activities in the area with strict ecological concerns. It is operating from a 400,000 site located at 2,100m altitude with a unique open view on 100km of raw nature.

Tips for tourists

Getting Around

Public transport in Beirut is almost exclusively by service-taxi where you have to share the taxi with other passengers. The drive will cost you 1,000 – 1,500 LL while taxi will cost from LL 5,000 to LL 10,000 depending on the distance covered. The bus service covers Beirut, the suburbs and other cities and villages. Cars can be hired by holders of international driving licenses who are over 21.

Local Time

GMT + 2 hours in the summer and + 3 hours in the winter.

Passports and visas

A valid passport and a Lebanese visa are required for foreigners wishing to enter Lebanon. Visas should be obtained in advance from Lebanese embassies abroad or can be obtained for most Arabs, European and American nationalities at the airport.

Currency

The currency is the Lebanese Lira, or the Lebanese pound, and US dollars are accepted everywhere, with a standard exchange rate between dollar and the lira.

Languages

Arabic is the official language of the country. The use of French has been widespread since the French Mandate period and English is the language of business. You'll certainly not have problems expressing yourself, since most Lebanese are at least bi-lingual.

For more information visit: www.destinationlebanon.gov.lb