

DINING OUT AND GASTRONOMY

Dining out is one of the best ways of really getting to know what Lebanon is all about.

The Lebanese diet focuses on herbs, spices and fresh ingredients, relying less on heavy sauces. Mint, parsley, oregano, garlic, allspice, nutmeg, and cinnamon are the most common seasonings.

Bread, a staple food in Lebanon, is served with almost every meal, most often as a flat bread, or pita. It is so crucial to the Lebanese diet that some Arabic dialects refer to it as “Eesh”, meaning “life.”

Fruit, vegetables, rice and bread out-weigh the amount of meat eaten in the average Lebanese meal. However, the most commonly eaten meats, poultry and lamb, make up some of the country's most popular dishes. The national dish, “Kibbeh” (or Kibbe), consists of a ground lamb and cracked wheat paste, similar to paté.

Mezze, a variety of flavourful hot and cold dishes, is another important part of the Lebanese diet. As many as forty small dishes are presented at once as either appetizers or as a meal itself. Hummus (chickpea, sesame seed and garlic paste), rice and meat wrapped in grape leaves, mashed beans, hot and cold salads, grilled seafood and meats (including kebabs, cooked cubes of lamb, peppers and onions), and pickled vegetables are most popular. Lebanese meals are rarely served in courses, but presented all at once. Tabbouleh (a salad made with cracked wheat) and Mujaddara (a lentil and rice dish) are also widely consumed.

Lebanon's variety of fresh fruits makes them popular after-dinner desserts. Melon, apples, oranges, tangerines, persimmons, grapes, and figs are great treats. Baklava, a sweet, flaky pastry, is usually associated with Greek cuisine. However, the Lebanese have embraced the dessert and normally prepare it with pistachio nuts, drizzled with rose-water syrup (the Greeks use walnuts and honey). “Ahweh” (strong, thick Arabic-style coffee) and the country's national drink, “Arak” (a colourless alcoholic beverage made with anise, also called “Lion's Milk” because it becomes white when mixed with water), are most commonly served with dessert.

About Lebanon: A Heaven on Earth!

Landscapes that change with the seasons, but are always bathed in the warm sun. The daylight rising over Lebanon brings endless opportunities of fun, beach, nature and outdoor activities. You'll never know what to choose. Whatever it will be, an unforgettable time awaits you under the shiny Lebanese sun.