

Lebanon 8,000 LBP

Lebanon Traveler



+ ULTIMATE
SUMMER GUIDE

A publication of Hospitality Services | Issue 24 | May - Oct 2018

**5 GREAT
LAKES
TO DISCOVER**

**GET
CAMPING!**

**GUESTHOUSE
GETAWAYS**

**LEBANESE
DESIGNERS'
CORNER**

**4 SPLENDID
PALACES**

**50+
RED-HOT
SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

**BEIRUT'S
CONCIERGES
TELL ALL**

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
ALIA & KHALED
MOUZANNAR
SENSATIONAL SIBLINGS**

**MAKING WAVES!
AWESOME WATER SPORTS**



nour

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Nour Fine Armenian Cuisine is a new concept mixed between traditional Armenian cuisine and traditional Armenian bakery while also mixing famous Lebanese dishes to provide a unique blend of flavors and tastes that suits all tastes.



- **Opened:** February 10, 2018.
- **Owners:** Elie Ishkhanian, Taline Ishkhanian, Shant Kulbashian, Armen Arevian.
- **Covers:** 50 persons.
- **Average Price per person:** USD 25.
- **Typical Dishes:** Itch, Mante, Soubeureg, Lahm Bi Ajin, Kabab Karaz, Kabab ourfali, Basterma with Egg, Armenian Wines.

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Lebanon Traveler

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We welcome views on any relevant subject. The editor reserves the right to select and edit letters. Please e-mail your comments to lt@hospitalityservices.com.lb

All the information disclosed in the magazine was provided by the parties concerned by each publication and checked to the highest possible extent by the editors. However, the magazine cannot ensure accuracy at all times of all information published and therefore could in no case be held responsible should any information reveal to be false or insufficient.



Cover photo by Dany Faddoul

Born and raised in Batroun, Dany spends most of his time at the beach where his love for water sports got him into photography. He took the cover photo with his drone in Batroun, which is famous for surfing and its beautiful beaches.

Follow him on

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Baalbeck. Photo: Peter Ghanime

Summer adventures

It's difficult not to love summer in Lebanon. Despite the intensity of the heat and humidity, this is a magical season. It is a time where we can enjoy lazy days on the beach and dance all night on rooftops. We have boundless amounts of energy and feel that anything and everything is possible. We want to make the most of every moment and explore every inch of the country. Summer is ultimately the season of exciting adventures.

This is a recurrent theme in our summer 2018 issue of Lebanon Traveler. We unlocked some of the country's best-kept secrets for you to discover over the coming months, from magnificent palaces to epic lakes.

We took a look at charming new guesthouses around the country and went camping in Shouf and in Fakra. We also got the lowdown on backpacking and headed to Hermel for the weekend. Inevitably, we ended up on the beach where we tried a few new water sports. We literally went everywhere!

In addition to the magazine, we are thrilled that we can now bring you more news, activities, destinations and trip ideas through our uplifted website. Our aim is to be your travel companion and take you on an adventure around the country. We want to live the journey with you.

Finally, and most importantly, we would like to thank our fantastic contributors for supporting Lebanon Traveler with their wonderful words and photographs.

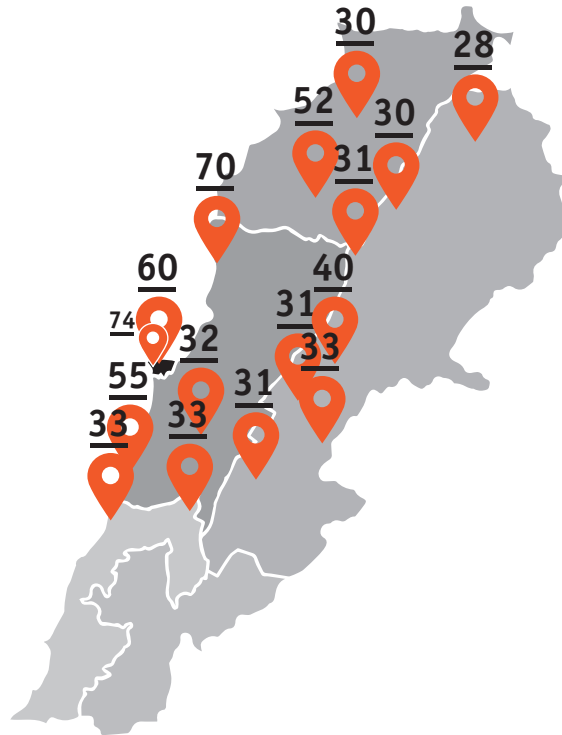
Embrace the adventures that lie ahead and enjoy the ride!

lebanontraveler.com

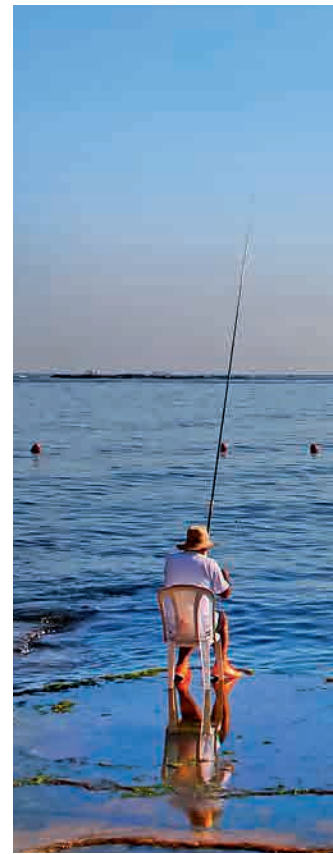
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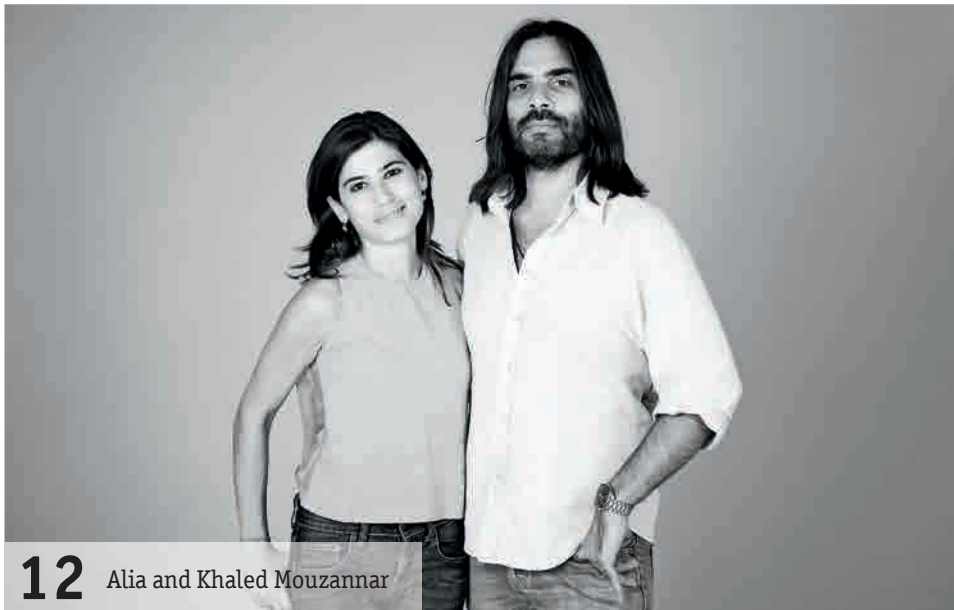
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🌐 [food-heritage.org](#), [lebanontrail.org](#)



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🌐 [infinitecurl.com](#) 📍 [infinitecurl](#)



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🌐 [notesofatraveler.com](#) 📍 [notes_of_a_traveler](#)



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🌐 [elsasattout.com](#)



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📍 [rgsworld](#)



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📍 [joe.sokhn](#)

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by Zakhrafa

This customized geometric ring, designed by Arab artists and crafted by artisans, will make you stand out from the crowd.

Starting from 180,000 LBP (120 USD), @ [zakhrafashop](#)



APRON

by Rana Salam

Discover popular images and stories of the Middle East with this digitally printed cotton apron.

52,500 LBP (35 USD), [ranasalam.com](#)



JEWELRY BOX

by Nada Debs

This modern take on the traditional box will make sure you always store your jewelry in style.

525,000 LBP (350 USD), [nadadebs.com](#)



T-SHIRT

by Inoui

Named after granny Nazira who embroiders the cup by hand, wear this t-shirt in honor of "Ahwet Nazira."

60,000 LBP (40 USD), @ [inoui.beyrouth](#)



LEBANON CHOCOLATE BOX

by Chocolate & Sunshine

Express your love for the country in the tastiest way possible with this box of decadent chocolate.

55,500 LBP (37 USD)
@ [chocolateandsunshine](#)

BOUGIE CANDLE

by Hubert Fattal

Let the wonderful aromas of the Middle East and orient permeate your home with these elegant bougie candles.

90,000 LBP (60 USD), [fragranceshubertfattal.com](#)



TRADITIONAL SOAP

by Masbanat Awaida

Made by hand, Slow Soap fuses local products with a touch of Lebanese art and cultural heritage. Part of the "YAD" collection, an initiative by UNIDO supporting 19 Lebanese handcrafters.

15,000 LBP (10 USD), Tripoli, 06 431768



BABEL

BABEL BAHR

BABEL BAY



Summer Tastes Better
with Our Progressive Lebanese Cuisine

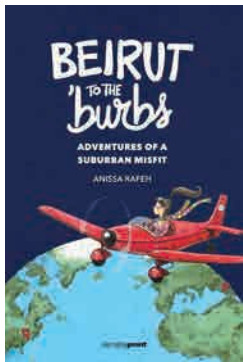
Dbaye Highway, +961 4 546 546

Zeituna Bay, Minet el Hosn, Beirut, +961 1 370 846

Amchit, Jbeil, Blvrd Prs. Sleiman, +961 9 620999

WHAT'S ON THE BOOK SHELF?

We visited the Lebanon section of our local bookshop to see what people are reading.



BEIRUT TO THE BURBS

by Anissa Rafeh

A memoir on the pleasures and perils of a Lebanese woman navigating suburbia, Anissa Rafeh's hilarious book explores the essential life skills required to survive in suburban America after 18 years of living the high life in Beirut.

Price 21,000 LBP (14 USD)



PASSING TIME

by Fouad El Khoury

"Passing Time" is a photo book containing images of Lebanon taken by Khoury between 1960 and 2017.

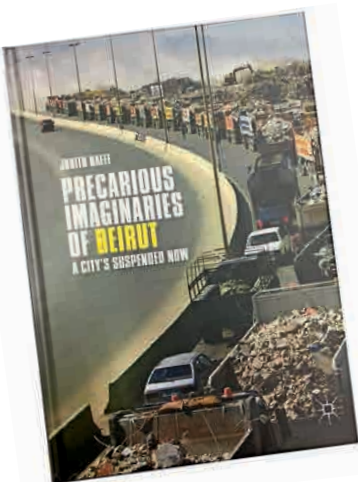
Price 105,000 LBP (70 USD)

PRECARIOUS IMAGINARIES OF BEIRUT: A CITY'S SUSPENDED NOW

by Judith Naeff

Naeff's cultural analysis of the post-war city revolves around different perceptions of Beirut and its volatility through time and space.

Price 123,000 LBP (82 USD)



10452: LEBANON THROUGH THE LENS OF RIMA HAGE

by Rima Hage

Serving as an introduction to Lebanon, "Lebanon Through the Lens" features around 200 images from over 90 towns and villages that capture the beauty of the country.

Price 25,000 LBP (16.67 USD)

TRAVEL, LEARN AND EXPLORE LEBANON

Kids can have great fun learning about Lebanon with this educational box containing a 32-page book, which covers Lebanon's history, culture and heritage. The box also includes a puzzle.

Price 30,000 LBP (20 USD)



CINEMA IN LEBANON

by Raphael Millet

Millet's book serves as a tribute to Lebanon's film industry, documenting its history through exclusive interviews and hundreds of images.

Price 127,500 (85 USD)



5 MINUTES WITH PATRICK BAZ

AUTHOR OF "CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON"

YOU ARE A RENOWNED WAR PHOTOGRAPHER. WHAT MADE YOU SHIFT FROM DOCUMENTING WAR TO DOCUMENTING CHRISTIANITY IN LEBANON?

After I ended my long career as an international war photographer, I decided to return to my beloved Lebanon to recharge my batteries. When I came back in 2015, the whole region was in turmoil over the massacre of different minorities at the hand of extremist groups.

Having conversed with members of the Christian community, one question was constantly repeated: "What will become of us?" They looked at me as if I held all the answers.

So, after photographing death for three decades, I chose to photograph life.

WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU SEEK TO DELIVER IN YOUR NEW BOOK?

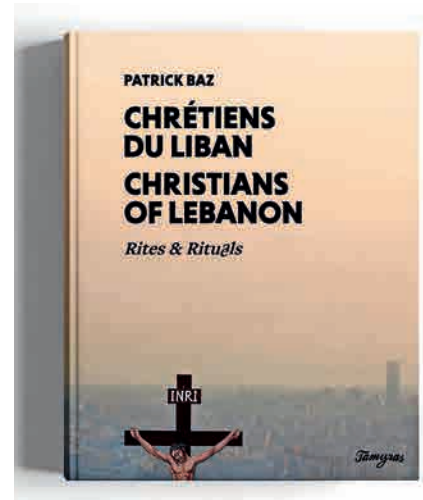
I never intended to deliver a message or take a historical or thematic approach to the subject, but rather a visual and humanistic one, devoid of judgement. I just captured what I saw.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE CHRISTIANITY?

I don't think there is a better way to portray the current situation of Lebanon's Christians than through a visual testimonial. I embarked on a journey to discover the community I technically belong to - the very community I grew up in.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DOCUMENTING OTHER RELIGIONS?

I would love to document other religions and communities, but it's a long process.



"Christians of Lebanon" is available at bookshops around the country and online for 90,000 LBP (60 USD).

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MOUZANNAR MAGIC

Alia and Khaled Mouzannar are siblings who share a passion for the arts. Having built successful careers in jewelry and music respectively, we sat down with the duo to talk about their upcoming projects and their close relationship.





The Cache Ring

ALIA

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE A CAREER IN JEWELRY DESIGN?

Funnily enough, my brother! He inherited our mother's musical talent, while our father's flair for design was passed down to me.

Coming from a long line of jewelry designers, it was inevitable that one of us would continue the family tradition. Actually, I always had a passion for art, painting, photography and theater so Khaled encouraged me to work in the family business but to do it my own way.

WHAT INSPIRES YOUR CREATIONS?

Emotion plays a big role. The jewel becomes an object full of possibilities and every piece of jewelry I create carries a story. Poetry, music, children's drawings and so many other things inspire me. I just sketch my own ideas in a tiny notebook and then on paper. I don't think about how it could be produced at that stage – I'm guided by my sketches.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR MODULAR EARRINGS. WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM?

I was influenced by the way ancient jewelry was made and wanted to inject a futuristic design element. My modular range is quite interesting as it is very versatile: one piece can be worn in different ways and at different times. The earrings are foldable, detachable and overlapping so you can have real fun wearing them.

YOU STUDIED ARCHITECTURE AT UNIVERSITY. DO YOU FIND IT HAS HELPED IN YOUR WORK?

I have the mind of an architect – it is a very structured and focused mind when it comes to my design and this is the key to my work. Between architecture and jewelry it's just a question of scale plus the processes are inverted. Instead of creating a space for a person to move around in, jewelry is worn as a part of the body, an extension of one's personality.

YOU WON THE PRESTIGIOUS SDE AWARD DURING THE HRD 2011 IN SHANGHAI. HOW DID IT AFFECT YOUR CAREER?

It was a beautiful moment. I had never before received such important international

recognition so it drove my career forward.

The competition, led by HRD, selects five designers out of 1,450 worldwide and allows them to create a piece of jewelry with diamonds and showcase it in Shanghai. It was such an honor to display my modular bracelet, which can be worn by a man and/or a woman.

Apart from receiving the SDE Award, the collaboration with the late Zaha Hadid and the House of A&W Mouzannar, which culminated in a beautiful line of jewelry, was another career highlight. I think there's still a lot to accomplish though. I'm just starting my journey.

BEING CREATIVE TYPES, WAS THERE ANY FRIENDLY COMPETITION BETWEEN YOU AND KHALED GROWING UP?

As we each had our own way of expressing ourselves, we were always more like comrades than competitors!

KHALED HAS COMPOSED SOME INCREDIBLE MUSIC. WHICH PIECE HAS STOOD OUT MOST FOR YOU?

All of Khaled's music touches me. I feel great emotion every time I hear one of his songs.



KHALED

DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO WORK IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

Yes, music was my first passion so working in the industry came very naturally to me.

HOW DID YOU START COMPOSING MUSIC FOR FILM?

I was young and had very close friends who were studying to be film directors. They used to ask me to create music for their visuals. This process allowed me to read scripts and to compose the music before even seeing the images. I discovered that my music gave these pictures a completely different feeling.

IF YOU COULD HAVE COMPOSED THE MUSIC FOR ANY FILM, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE?

Zeffirelli's Jesus of Nazareth.

WHAT IS THE "KHALED MOUZANNAR" SIGNATURE IN YOUR MUSIC?

I'm very much inspired by Latin American music, which was prominent in my childhood thanks to my mother. She was a musician who grew up in that part of the world. I also studied classical music under the guidance of the Lebanese-Armenian composer Boghos Gelalian and I'm, of course, moved by oriental melodies. I think this mix of cultures and the way I put them together with my personal touch creates my signature.

DO YOU AND ALIA OFFER ARTISTIC ADVICE TO EACH OTHER?

Not really, but we do take on board each other's opinions.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE PIECE OF JEWELRY DESIGNED BY ALIA?

Alia's reinterpretation of classical jewelry into contemporary creations is unique. I particularly like her "Cache Ring."

WHAT HAS BEEN THE PINNACLE OF YOUR CAREER?

Well, I have an unopened bottle of Champagne in my fridge at the studio that has been there for the past 20 years and I don't know when I will open it! Having said that, our Palme d'Or nomination for "Capharnaüm" at the Cannes Film Festival makes me really proud.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

I have a lot to do with "Capharnaüm," which I also produced. After the Cannes Film Festival, I'm performing at the Baalbeck International Festival on 8 July 2018.

Since this interview, "Capharnaüm" received the prestigious Jury Prize at the 71st annual Cannes Film Festival.

WHERE ALIA AND KHALED LIKE TO

EAT LEBANESE FOOD

At home sharing their dad's cuisine

GET AWAY FROM IT ALL

Ain Zhalta for Alia and Batroun for Khaled

CHILL OUT WITH FRIENDS

LUX for Alia and Bread Republic for Khaled

HAVE A COFFEE

The restaurant at the Sursock Museum

relax

Mövenpick Hotel Beirut is the ultimate destination for business and leisure.

Our fully equipped meeting facilities and exquisite sea view rooms are sure to meet your needs. A unique getaway is best enjoyed by swimming in our outdoor Olympic pool, enjoying a relaxing massage, and savouring an exceptional gastronomic experience.

20 IDEAS FOR AN ULTIMATE SUMMER

If lazing on the beach all summer long isn't quite your thing, don't sweat it. Travel blogger **Nadine Chemali** has some great suggestions to help you get the most out of the season.



Photo: Joe Sokhn

1. ENJOY THE SPECTACULAR METEOR SHOWER

The Perseid meteor shower lights up the sky in August. Head to Falougha, Ouyoun el Siman, Ehden, the Cedars, Ehmej or Tannourine to see this glorious natural phenomenon. Just remember to take a blanket with you and, most importantly, to wish upon a star!



Photo: Joe Sokhn

2. SLEEP OUTDOORS

Camping is a great activity to enjoy with friends and one of the best ways to get closer to nature. Choose a destination you have never been to before and plan your trip. If you need some guidance, refer to page 68 for our top camping suggestions.

3. GO CHERRY PICKING IN HAMMANA

The pretty village of Hammana is famous for its sweet and succulent cherries. To celebrate the June harvest, there is an annual karaz festival, which draws in a crowd from across the country.

Join Hammana Municipality's cherry picking event on 10 June for a day of fun (05 530049).



Photo: Peter Ghanime

4. HAVE BREAKFAST IN TRIPOLI

Tripoli is a fantastic destination for food lovers thanks to its authentic Lebanese cuisine and delicious sweets. Start your day with a traditional *foul* and *hummus* at Akra (06 438500) or a mouthwatering *knefe* at Hallab 1881 (06 444445).





Photo: Joe Sokhn

5. PRACTISE YOGA AL FRESCO

Grab your yoga mat and find a spot in Horsh Beirut to practise your sun salutations. With majestic pine trees all around, you'll soon forget you're in the heart of the bustling city.



6. GET ON A QUAD BIKE

Summer is all about new experiences so why not try quad biking. It's a pure rush of adrenaline and a great way to explore Lebanon's mountainous areas such as Sannine and Kfardebian.



Photo: Joe Sokhn

7. VISIT A LOCAL FESTIVAL

Summer evenings are rather magical in Lebanon's villages when festival season begins. Although many festivals are organized around the country, the smallest ones are often the most traditional, like those in Mayrouba, Jezzine, Ghalboun and Akkar.

8. TRY FISHING

Although fishing requires plenty of patience and perseverance, it can be a great way to relax. If you need a hand, just ask one of the many fishermen dotted along the coast, particularly in Tyre. They will most certainly be happy to give you some tips.



Photo: Nidal Majdalani

9. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN NATURE

Enjoy the peace and quiet of dawn and watch the sunrise in the beautiful Ain Zhalta forest of the Shouf Biosphere.



Photo: Nidal Majdalani

10. WATCH OUTDOOR MOVIES

The Cabriolet Film Festival (cabrioletfilmfestival.com) is an annual event that takes place in Gemmayze (June) and in Byblos (August). Showcasing a number of short films over the course of several nights, the festival aims to address topical issues and highlight the work of talented independent filmmakers.



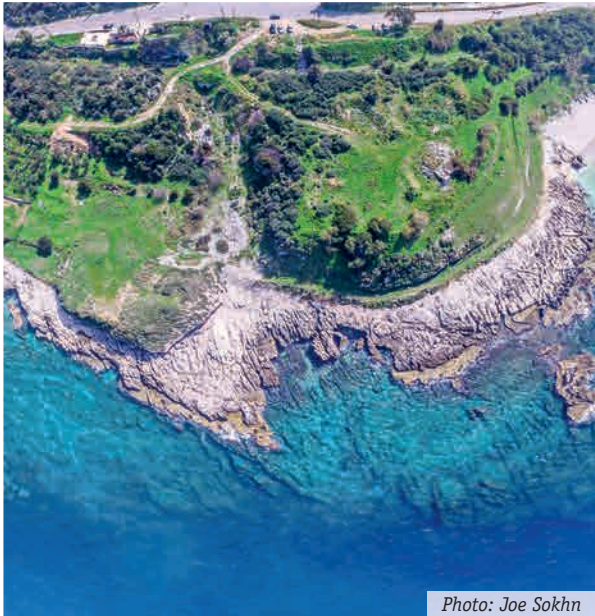


Photo: Joe Sokhn

11. SWIM SOMEWHERE UNIQUE

Despite the fact that the coast gets busy with sunseekers during the summer, there are still some marvelous swimming spots devoid of crowds. The public beach in Kfarabida (near Batroun) is heavenly, with crystal clear waters perfect for bathing.

14. GRAB A SUNSET DRINK

Wind down after a long day and watch the sunset as you sip a cool drink at one of Beirut's popular rooftop bars. Check out our selection on page 60.



Photo: Nidal Majdalani



Photo: Rayan Badaoui

12. COOL DOWN WITH A TASTY LEMONADE

No trip to Batroun is complete without a refreshing glass of lemonade to round off the day. Pass by Hilmi (70 173036), Em Georges or Tony Daou's to enjoy some fresh and tangy homemade juice, guaranteed to hit the spot.



Photo: Krystel Riachi

13. GO TO A WINERY

Even if you've been to some of the country's larger wineries, there are a number of boutique ones that deserve a visit. Many offer guided tours and special lunch packages, such as the charming Sept winery (70 570170) in the hills above Batroun.



Photo: Nidal Majdalani

15. HAVE LUNCH BY THE RIVER

Feast on delicious Lebanese *mezze* with the sound of running water to serenade you as you eat. Have an authentic lunch by the river in Hermel, Zahle or Baskinta.



Photo: Joe Sokhn

16. TRY A NEW WATER SPORT

Get active and get wet by having a go at an exhilarating water sport such as surfing, diving, paddle boarding or windsurfing. Check out page 42 for our picks.

17. ENGAGE YOUR INNER ARTIST

You don't need to be a seasoned artist to sketch your summer memories. Join an event run by Urban Sketchers (70 161788), an enthusiastic group who are on a mission to sketch their way around the country. Their events are free, fun and cathartic!



18. VOLUNTEER FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Our summer bucket list wouldn't be complete without some time spent volunteering. One of the best ways to contribute is by cleaning the beach with groups like Operation Big Blue Association (03 670890) and Save Kfarabida that organize regular clean-ups.



Photo: Joe Sokhn



Photo: Joe Sokhn

19. SPEND TIME WITH LOCAL FARMERS

Learn about Lebanon's food heritage by spending time in the country's rural areas, where you can take part in activities such as *mouneh* preparation, olive harvesting and goat herding. Darb el Karam (71 676267) is an association that promotes traditional and culinary practices in Shouf and West Bekaa.



Photo: Joe Sokhn

20. CLIMB A MOUNTAIN

Several ecotourism specialists organize guided climbing trips across the country for all levels, from beginners to more advanced. Challenge your body and your mind by joining a climb in Akoura, Tannourine or Laklouk with Vamos Todos (09 635145, vamos-todos.com), Dale Corazon (70 986118, dalecorazon.com) or Footprints Nature Club (03 876112, footprintsclub.com).

infinitecurl.com

LEBANON'S LADY OF LUXURY



Dagmar Symes, a native of Germany, is the first woman to serve as GM of Phoenicia Hotel Beirut and Le Vendôme Beirut. In a candid interview, she talks about her journey to Lebanon and what made her fall in love with Beirut.



DAGMAR'S FAVORITES

LEBANESE DISH

I eat almost everything Lebanese, which is why I cannot name a favorite dish. I love how fresh and natural ingredients are here and how Lebanese food is shared leisurely.

LEBANESE RESTAURANT

Due to my position as GM of Phoenicia Hotel Beirut, I have literally tried all the restaurants in town. Some of my favorite Lebanese spots are Babel (04 546546/04 542842), Em Sherif (01 206206/70 919119) and Mayrig (01 572121).

BAR

I often grab a drink and listen to good music at Joe Peña's (01 449906/03 053093) because it's a symbolic place for me. Bar du Port (71 444006) is another spot I frequent and somewhere I took an immediate liking to. If I feel like taking things to another level, I go to Music Hall (03 807555), Iris (03 090936) or Pacifico (01 204446). It all depends on the crowd I am with.

COFFEE SHOP

I enjoy spending a lazy Sunday afternoon at Starbucks in Zaitunay Bay. It's a great place to people watch and their coffee hits the spot.

HIDDEN URBAN GEM

Every time I walk around Beirut, I discover a new gem to add to the list! The streets around Sursock are full of old Lebanese houses that have been beautifully preserved.

PLACE TO UNWIND

One special summer spot is Colonel Beer Microbrewery (03 743543) in Batroun. The place is simple, authentic and offers a little bit of everything in an unpretentious way.

With 20 years of experience in the luxury and hospitality sectors under her belt, having worked for brands including BVLGARI, Louis Vuitton and Kempinski, it is no wonder that Dagmar Symes was intrigued by a career opportunity in a Middle Eastern country she knew nothing about. "I was curious and decided to investigate: I liked everything I read about Lebanon so I decided to take the plunge and move here in 2013."

While local hoteliers were simply selling hotel rooms, Symes was eager to sell experiences to a destination she was getting to know herself. "Lebanon is often misunderstood: it's not what you see on the television as there is so much more to it."

Symes explains that it took a year to get used to the Lebanese culture and the "flexibility" of the community. "Once I understood, I started to really enjoy it. As a foreigner, the country is a mix of vacation and professionalism. I walk around with a child's enthusiasm, which is how individuals like myself can remind the Lebanese just how beautiful their country is!"

It is evident that Symes has embraced the chaotic nature of life in Lebanon despite being an extremely disciplined individual. Born and raised in Germany, she admits to finding the local quirks rather amusing, such as the power outages and nonsensical traffic jams. "To me, these things are a charming part of what makes this country special, as crazy as that might sound. This is especially true when you come from a

country like Germany where everything is so organized. When I go back now I find it rather boring!"

Though Symes has always lived some distance away from her place of employment, she currently resides where she works, at Beirut's iconic Phoenicia Hotel. Surrounded by luxury, she confesses that she values simplicity, particularly in Lebanon. "While luxury for some may mean owning extravagant and expensive items, for me it is time spent enjoying nature. I am a people person and there is nothing I love more than being with others. The Lebanese have an outstanding sense of hospitality and generosity, for which I have great respect."

“ This is home to such an extent that I cannot imagine myself going back to Germany ”

Lebanon has clearly had a long-lasting effect on the softly-spoken German. In the five years that Symes has been in the country, she says she has come to realize that she is a local. "This is home to such an extent that I cannot imagine myself going back to Germany. What I like about this place is that with a little elbow grease, virtually anything is possible. Irrespective of how messy things get, people always find a way and I simply love that."

DISCOVER RURAL TOURISM

Lebanon Traveler and the USAID supported LIVCD project teamed up to promote a number of enterprises working in the rural tourism value chain in Lebanon. Check out who they are and how to get involved.

AGNES VARIS CENTER FOR WOMEN

The Agnes Varis Training Center for Women, located in Taanayel, supports women who wish to work in the fields of hospitality or management by providing them with valuable training to help them become more financially independent.

arcenciel.org



AUBERGE BEITY

Auberge Beity is a friendly hostel nestled in the mountains of Kfardebian. Stay at the auberge and take part in seasonal outdoor activities which help to support local residents.

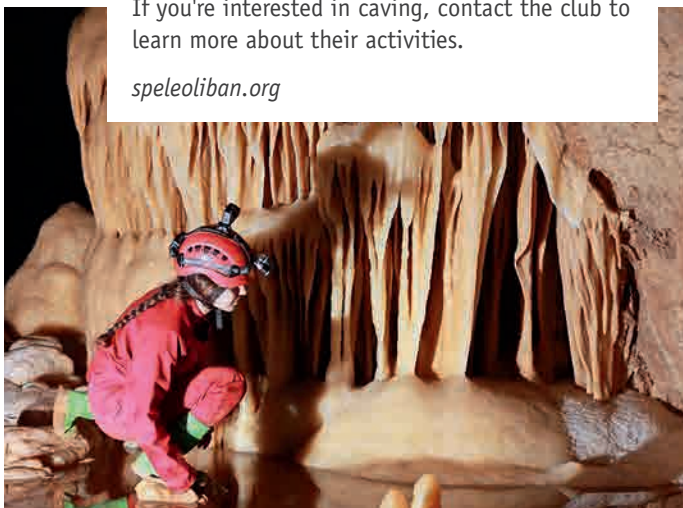
beity.org

CAVE ATLAS

The Cave ATLAS Lebanon project surveys caves found in the Metn area so they can be better protected by the local community and policy makers.

If you're interested in caving, contact the club to learn more about their activities.

speleoliban.org



ARZ TANNOURINE

The Tannourine Cedars Forest Nature Reserve in North Lebanon was created in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment to protect one of the country's largest and densest cedar forests.

Go hiking this summer and discover more than fourteen monasteries and churches along the reserve's 16km hiking trail.

arzannourine.org



Jahna's

Seasonal Artisanal Products

HOMEMADE & HOMEGROWN
100% PRODUCT OF LEBANON



Our Story

Jahna is an artisan who is passionate about producing exclusive tastes extracted from her own garden. Unlocking the authentic savors of Lebanon, all of our produce are homegrown under the Mediterranean sun, and our products are created savoring the respective season in which they blossom. What makes Jahna special are her exquisite recipes and unique methods that she has collected through her extended experiences and from many generations back.

**All natural, no artificial colors or flavors,
no preservatives or additives.**

CONTACT [+961 3 469 713](tel:+9613469713) or info@jahnas.com

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Visit our blog for more inspiration

www.jahnas.com



DARB EL KARAM

Darb el Karam is a food tourism network in West Bekaa that promotes rural food culture. Witness traditional farming methods by contacting the association who will connect you with local farmers, shepherds and food producers.

food-heritage.org

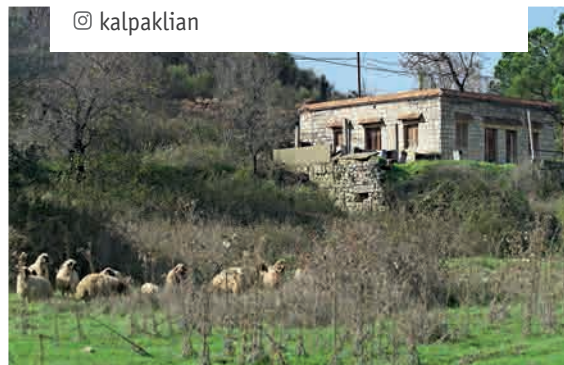


GHINEH GUESTHOUSE

Ghineh is a village in Keserwan surrounded by green hills.

Nestled in the center is Ghineh Guesthouse, an ideal escape for nature enthusiasts.

© kalpaklian



ECOLOGDE TAANAYEL

Ecolodge Taanayel was built in 2006 by arcenciel to promote sustainable ecotourism in the region.

Book a night at the traditionally-inspired lodge for an authentic experience in the Bekaa.

arcenciel.org



HORSH EHDEN NATURE RESERVE

Rich in biodiversity, the Horsh Ehdén Nature Reserve is home to a number of rare and endemic plants as well as the country's last protected community of wild apple trees. Admire the magnificent cedar, juniper and fir trees that flourish in this beautiful lush green area.

horshehden.org

THE SOUKS OF RASHAYA AL WADI

The old souks of Rashaya date back to the 17th century and are among the oldest in Lebanon. Wander around and pop into some of the local shops renowned for their traditional crafts, particularly silver jewelry and stove making.

rashaya.org






AL KHAN AL MAKSSOUD RESTAURANT

Come enjoy exquisite Lebanese dishes and mezzes at the traditional restaurant, Al Khan al Makssoud, an ideal green space for parties, team building, workshops or any other customized events.

This restaurant is part of arcenciel's responsible tourism network, which aims to promote social reintegration and preserve Lebanon's cultural and natural heritage.

08.544.881 / 03.124.279

 [khanalmakssoud](#)  [ecolodge.aec](#)





RAS EL MATN

Light on Attractive Ras el Matn is a rural tourism project with a mission to help develop the town's tourism sector by promoting its touristic destinations, products and services, thus supporting the local community and economy.

Take a road trip to the area and enjoy a sunset hike.

raselmatn.org



SLOW FOOD BEIRUT

Slow Food Beirut's objective is to implement strategies in Lebanon to safeguard local food identity while supporting local agricultural production. An important part of the organization's work is to raise awareness of small-scale food producers in Lebanon.

slowfoodbeirut.com



SPNL

The Society for The Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) in partnership with Al Shouf Cedar Society (ACS) is working on a joint project designed to protect the ecologic and socio-economic resilience of the Shouf Mountain landscape. The plan is aimed at restoring and strengthening the socio-cultural fabric, thus sustaining the biodiversity and cultural values of the area.

spnl.org

TRAVELWISE

Taking visitors on an adventure, Living Lebanon specializes in off-the-beaten-track experiences in Lebanon, from high-quality organized group tours to customized trips.

Participate in one of their excursions to see a different side of the country.

living-lebanon.com



ZAHLE MUNICIPALITY

In 2013, Zahle was adopted within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a "Creative City of Gastronomy."

Recognized as the "Bride of the Bekaa" and the capital of generous hospitality and delicious food, be sure to visit the city this summer.

zahle.gov.lb





European Union

European Regional
Development Fund



The Social, Economic and Environmental Development Services, (SEEDS-Int) is a non-for profit civil company dedicated to impacting the lives of the people we serve. Within the framework of **SIMRA Project** (Social Innovation in Marginalized Rural Areas), SEEDS-Int is supporting the Social Innovation Action for the Cooperative of Jana al Ayadi as a local social innovation aiming at supporting the women of Deir el Ahmar in making their business more sustainable .through providing them with improved marketing practices and delivery services. The SIMRA project is funded by the European Union’s horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 677622”. It aims to advance understanding of social innovation and innovative governance in agriculture, forestry and rural development, and how to boost them, in marginalized rural areas across Europe and around the Mediterranean, including non-EU countries. Seeds-Int is

Jana Al Ayadi

Transforming cooking from a daily burden to a source of economic return is the drive of the Women in Deir Al Ahmar to establish Jana Al Ayadi, a Lebanese Women Processing Cooperative producing Natural Authentic Lebanese food known as “Mouneh”. The cooperative is owned and managed by women and its sustainability depends on the quality they provide and the added value they create compared to other products.



Jana al Ayadi benefits from the support of many organizations, attracting tourists to the region and supporting their community in the organization of social cultural and religious events.

Jana al Ayadi Products:

A wide range of natural products 100% free from any colorants, prepared from the finest fruits and vegetables, cereals and herbs of the Bekaa:

- Dried fruits
- Jams
- Preserves
- Cookies
- Delicacies
- Food preserved in Oil
- Pickles
- Syrups
- Distilled products
- Vinegars



Deir Al Ahmar-North Bekaa, Lebanon Phone: +961-8-320375 Mobile: +961-3-116958

5 THINGS TO DO IN HERMEL

Located over 140km from Beirut in northeast Lebanon, the town of Hermel has a lot to offer visitors. With archaeological ruins dating as far back as the Neolithic period and a rugged landscape brimming with hiking opportunities, we uncover its top treasures with **Peter Ghanime**.

1 GO RAFTING ON THE ASSI RIVER

Also known as the Orontes River, the 571-kilometer-long Assi flows through Turkey and Syria. Approximately 46km of the river runs in Lebanon, mainly in Hermel.

The river is spectacular as is the surrounding nature. If you're feeling adventurous, take part in a rafting, kayaking or canoeing trip by contacting a local specialist like Assi Club (78 900952) or Rafting Squad (03 080790).



Photo: Vamos Todos

2 ADMIRE THE HERMEL PYRAMID

Sitting on top of a hill six kilometers south of the town is Hermel's magnificent pyramid. The structure, believed to date back to the first or second century, was constructed as a means of defense against invading armies.

A fence has been erected around the pyramid to help preserve it, but one can still admire this unique monument from afar.



Photo: Rana Tanissa

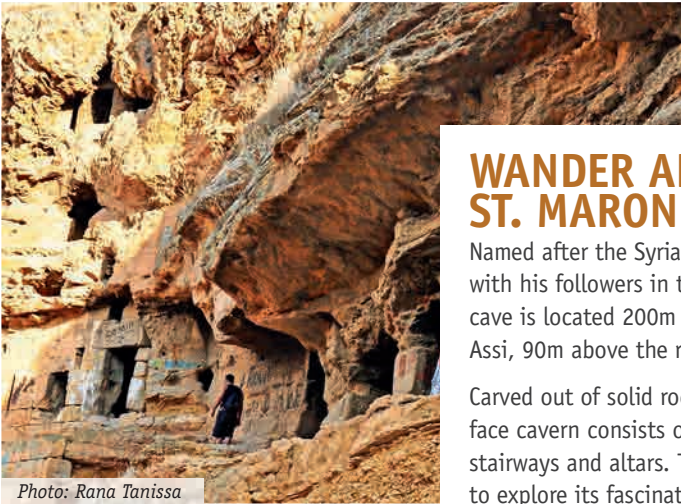


Photo: Rana Tanissa

3

WANDER AROUND THE ST. MARON MONASTERY

Named after the Syriac monk who lived there with his followers in the fourth century, the cave is located 200m from the source of the Assi, 90m above the river.

Carved out of solid rock, the impressive cliff-face cavern consists of three levels with rock stairways and altars. Take the steep walk up to explore its fascinating interior.

WHERE TO EAT

Chir el Assi

Sit in the pretty garden area and have a traditional Lebanese meal overlooking the river at Chir el Assi (03 020498).

Jannat Al Assi

Famous for their fresh trout, Jannat Al Assi (03 454980) is a cozy riverside restaurant serving delicious Lebanese food. The glorious Assi and lush greenery beyond form the perfect backdrop to enjoying an extended lunch. Try to stay until the sun sets for a truly memorable experience.

WHERE TO SLEEP

Apart from campsites, there are several eco-lodging options in the area around Hermel.

Al Kwakh

Run by local women, this eco-lodge consists of three traditional houses with mud chimneys. A number of activities, such as hiking, rafting, biking, rock climbing and cooking, can also be arranged for guests. 03 454996/70 359659

Al Jord

Open exclusively during the summer, this eco-lodge provides fully-equipped Bedouin-style bungalow tents. Guests can also pitch their own tents on site. Activities like trekking, cycling and donkey riding can be booked through Al Jord as can transportation from Hermel. 03 458702/03 958094

Lazzab Club and Lodge

Located in the heart of the Lazzab forest, this lodge offers simple accommodation in mud huts. It is also possible to pitch a tent on the grounds of the property and guests can take part in the lodge's organized hiking trips. 03 797569/71 146915, lazzab.net

4 TAKE A SCENIC ROAD TRIP

One of the most famous roads in the region is the road from Dennieh to Hermel. Winding around mountains studded with limestone rock and flecked with cedar trees, you will find the region's native juniper trees. Many of the trees date back centuries and some appear to be growing out of the rocks.

Be ready to make a few stops on the way to take in the awesome scenery and keep your camera handy for some fantastic shots of this remarkable landscape.



Photo: Vamos Todos

5 ENJOY A HIKE

Hermel is the perfect destination for hikers who are looking for a different kind of adventure. Its barren plains offer magnificent views that extend almost all the way across the Bekaa. Go hiking with a tourism provider like Vamos Todos (09 635145, vamos-todos.com).

If you want to experience the real Hermel, consider a camping trip and wake up to an unspoiled vista as the sun rises. For those who prefer to be on a campsite with facilities, the Assi Club (78 900952) and Chir el Assi Rafting Club (03 020498) offer areas where you can pitch a tent.



Photo: Vamos Todos

5 CAPTIVATING LAKES

Soothing the sight and the heart, biodiversity conservationist **Elsa Sattout** unveils the hidden treasures of five of the country's most impressive lakes.

OUYOUN ORGOSH

On the eastern foothills of Qornet El Sawda, the highest peak in Lebanon, lie the lakes of Ouyoun Orgosh. Feeding water to the arid surroundings populated by old Grecian juniper trees, the lakes are an important resting area for migratory birds during mid spring and late fall.

The most scenic route to Ouyoun Orghosh is from Bcharre in North Lebanon. The road crosses the Anti-Lebanon Mountains where, at 2,000m above sea level, you can enjoy the stunning views of the Kadisha Valley and the Cedars of God. As you traverse the rugged hills towards the east of the Bekaa Valley, make sure you stop at the Qornet El Sawda to take in the 360-degree panorama of the coast and the valley's eastern plain.

There are a number of Lebanese restaurants in the area which are perfect for a traditional lunch, including Hala (70 138296), Restaurant el Samak (70 982761), Zein (06 672553/03 699919), Golden House (03 947542/70 964858), Al Rabih (03 382385) and Al Bouhayra (03 544967).



Photo: Joe Sokhn



Photo: Khaled Taleb

OUYOUN EL SAMAK

The magnificent lakes of Ouyoun el Samak are located 30km northeast of Tripoli (95km from Beirut). Bordering the districts of Dennyeh and Akkar, the interconnected, emerald-green lakes are surrounded by striking mountains. There is also a spectacular waterfall that can be observed at close range on a suspended foot bridge.

Given the natural splendor of the area, it is not surprising that the site inspires artists, photographers and attracts a vast number of hikers.

The Ouyoun el Samak Restaurant (70 121844) is a popular lunch destination thanks to its incredible position overlooking the waterfall. Feast on delicious Lebanese *mezze* items while you enjoy the sound of cascading water. Alternatively, have a picnic by the side of the lake and soak up the beauty of the nature that surrounds you.

YAMMOUNEH

The beautiful Yammouneh Lake lies in the basin of Yammouneh village, 110km northeast of Beirut (27km northwest of Baalbeck). The lake is home to the only endemic fish in Lebanon, known as the Levantine minnow.

For a fantastic adventure, hike the six-hour trail to the lake from Akoura, where you will cross the peak of Mount Makmel and continue downhill towards the Yammouneh nature reserve. Once you reach the reserve, you will see juniper, wild apple and kermes oak trees.

The selection of Lebanese restaurants surrounding the lake is plentiful so just wander around to find your perfect spot.



Photo: Nidal Majdalani



Photo: Ragheb Ismail

LAKE QARAOUN

Qaraoun is an artificial lake located in West Bekaa. The lake is fed by the Litani River, the longest river in Lebanon. It is recognized as a resting site for around 20,000 migratory birds crossing the Bekaa Valley in early summer and late fall.

The lake is a popular destination for families during the summer months thanks to the delightful boats that provide trips for visitors.

A hike around the lake will take you into agricultural lands on the eastern side where you can wander around olive orchards.

TAANAYEL

The lake is set within the charming village of Taanayel, in the heart of the Bekaa Valley. Offering visitors a peaceful oasis to truly get away from it all, the lake can be accessed from Taanayel Convent (at a small fee), which is located near the entrance of the village.

Apart from the convent, there is a beautiful, small chapel near the lake. Visitors can rent bikes or enjoy a horseback ride to explore the pristine grounds.

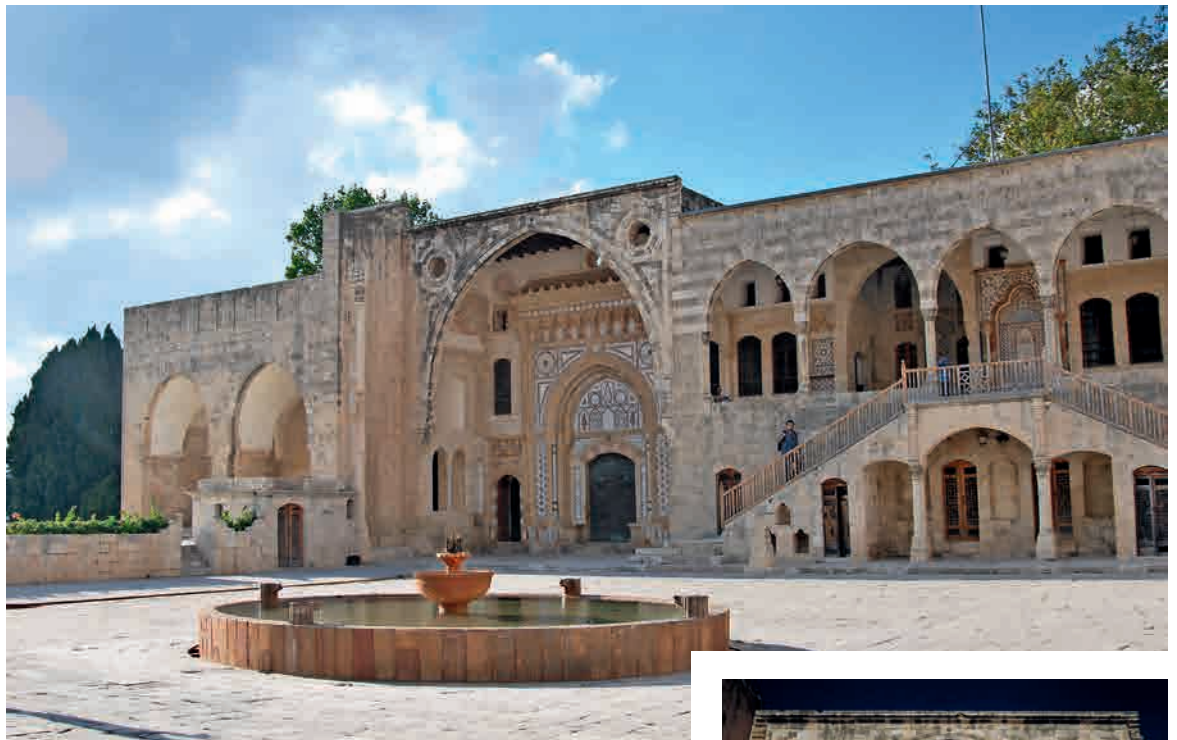
For a typical Lebanese breakfast, head to the convent (08 540066), known for its artisanal goods and healthy dairy products. For lunch, book a table at Khan el Maksoud (08 544881/03 124279) where you will be served delicious dishes made with locally-sourced ingredients.



Photo: Ragheb Ismail

4 GRAND *Palaces*

It's no secret that Lebanon has witnessed periods of great prosperity throughout its history, with countless palaces across the country standing testament to that fact. With the support of the **Lebanese Ministry of Tourism**, we explore four of these incredible gems.



BEITEDDINE

Once home to Emir Bashir Shehab II, Beiteddine is perhaps the most well-known palace in Lebanon. Having taken 30 years to build, Beiteddine is nothing short of an architectural masterpiece. The singularity of this monument's dainty architecture is what makes it so beautiful. The palace is filled with opulent rooms featuring intricate mosaics. So great is the beauty of Beiteddine that it is said the Emir amputated the hands of the architect who built the palace so its

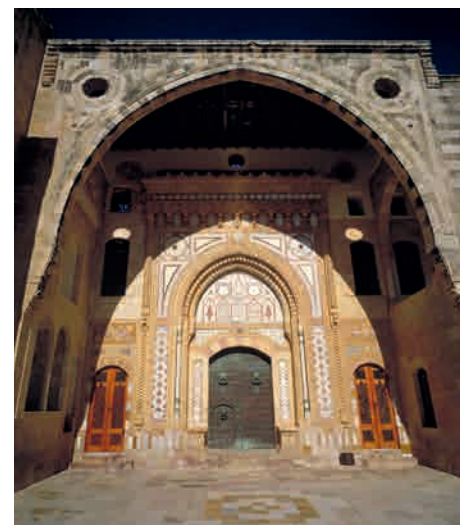
splendor could never be replicated.

The palace was taken over during the Ottoman period and subsequently during the French Mandate. Today, a large section of the palace is open to the public and an annual summer festival is hosted in its stunning courtyard.

Entrance: 10,000 LBP

Hours: Daily from 9 am to 5 pm. Closed on Monday and official holidays.

Beiteddine, Shouf, 05 500077





DEBBANE

Built in the 18th century, the Debbane Palace features a blend of Ottoman and Arab architecture. The first two floors of the three-story building contain lavishly decorated rooms, oozing in history. The third floor is an open rooftop offering a panoramic view of Saida.

Having already been restored once, the palace suffered a great deal of damage during the Lebanese Civil War. The Debbane Foundation, which began working on a second restoration in 2000 to preserve the palace's historical and artistic significance, hopes to reopen it as a museum.

Entrance: Free

Hours: Daily from 9 am to 6 pm. Closed on Friday.

Saida Street, Saida, 07 720110

SERHAL

This palace was a true labor of love, built by Farid Serhal in 1964. Inspired by the books and great works of art he had collected over the years, Serhal decided to construct a palace fusing elements from around the world to capture various parts of history: Roman, Byzantine, Arab, French, Spanish and Italian Renaissance. Unfortunately, Serhal passed away before the project was completed. Today, the palace is full of antiques, mosaics, sculptures and carpets.

Hours: By appointment only. Contact Joe Harfouch to arrange a visit (03 353293).

Kfarhouna Road, Jezzine



ANJAR

Although Anjar only witnessed a brief period of prosperity, the ancient ruins of its great palace can still be seen today. Set in the heart of the city, the palace was built in the early eighth century under the rule of Caliph Walid Ibn Abdel-Malik, depicting the Umayyad period and its civilization, the first Islamic dynasty that thrived on commerce at the time.

Entrance: 6,000 LBP

Hours: Mon-Sun from 9 am to 6 pm

Anjar, 08 370645/71 808417

The Lebanese Ministry of Tourism actively works to promote the country's cultural and historical treasures through its websites.

mot.gov.lb, destinationlebanon.gov.lb



THE AROMA OF ZAAATAR

Cherished for its distinctive taste and aroma, *zaatar* is one of Lebanon's most flavorful herbs. **Zeinab Jeambey** from the Food Heritage Foundation explores the different varieties and what makes each unique.



Photo: Fady Aziz

The harvesting of wild *zaatar* takes place in the country's rural areas during spring. Wild *zaatar* is enjoyed fresh or dried, while dried *zaatar* is used to make the various mixes found on the market.

In Lebanon, there are different types of wild *zaatar*. Though they are collectively called "*zaatar*" in Arabic, they are actually of different genera and species from the same botanical family, the Lamiaceae. These include *Origanum syriacum*, *Origanum ehrenbangi*, *Thymus vulgaris*, *Satureia thymbra* and *Thymbra spicata*. Characteristically aromatic, these herbs

may be used for treating gastrointestinal ailments including nausea, indigestion and bacterial infections.

ORIGANUM SYRIACUM

"*Zaatar zoubaa*" or Lebanese oregano is our main type of *zaatar*, which is dried, pounded or ground and mixed with sumac, sesame seeds and salt to make the famous and delectable *zaatar* mix.

The fresh velvety leaves can also be eaten in a mixed salad with tomatoes, onion and olives. A popular dressing for this salad is a combination of lemon juice, pomegranate syrup, sumac and olive oil. This type of

zaatar is often used to replace spinach when making *fatayer*, a traditional savory pastry.

THYMUS VULGARIS

This variety of *zaatar* is a must in every household due to its medicinal properties. An effective remedy for mild food poisoning, the herb is high in two main aromatic oils, thymol and carvacrol, which help to control and neutralize food-borne bacteria.

Culinarily speaking, *Thymus vulgaris* is often pickled, a process that reduces its pungency, and is best consumed with grilled meats or with fresh cheese and olives in a salad.

food-heritage.org

mayrig

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF
AUTHENTIC ARMENIAN CUISINE



Tucked away in Beirut's Gemayzeh quarter
Mayrig is a guardian of the Armenian culinary heritage
not only recreating its recipes but also celebrating the
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  [mayrigbeirut](https://www.instagram.com/mayrigbeirut)



A JOURNEY BACK TO THE GOOD THYMES

When Fady Aziz wanted to spend more time in the countryside away from his desk, his mind went back to his childhood in South Lebanon. Growing up in a family that always admired the craft of *zaatar* making, Aziz decided to invest in his own thyme plantations to produce all-natural mixes for his brand, The Good Thymes. We learn more about his products and the online store.

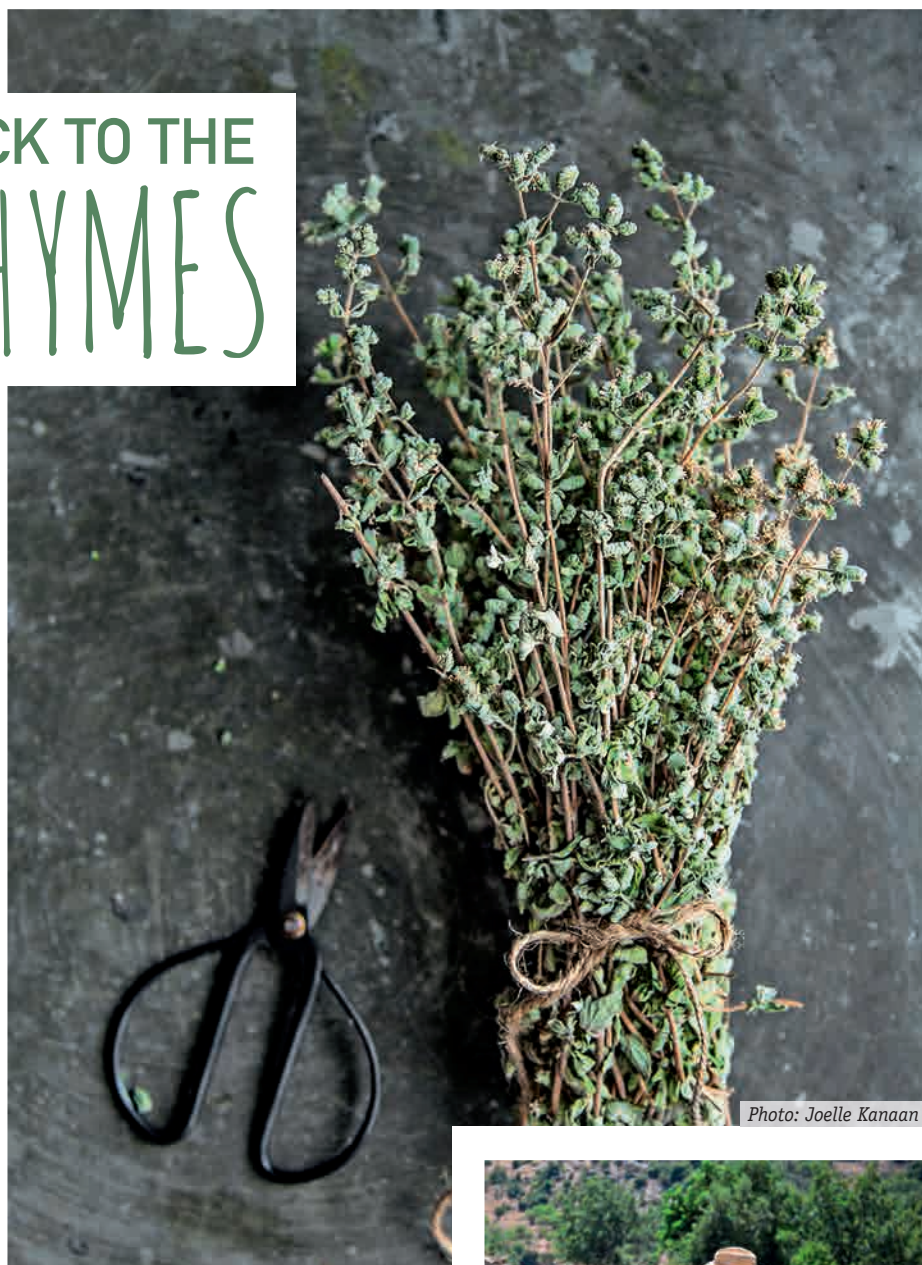


Photo: Joelle Kanaan

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ZAATAR AS OPPOSED TO OTHER HERBS OR SPICES?

I like to think of The Good Thymes as a family affair and *zaatar* is something we are all crazy about at home. So when the time came for me to have my own project, I naturally wanted to work on something I truly love.

HOW INVOLVED ARE YOU IN THE PRODUCTION PROCESS?

I spend my weekends at the farm and at the workshop overseeing the growing process and the procurement of all the ingredients we use. My wife and I are the only ones who blend the final secret mixes. We have an amazing team of workers, including

housewives and students, who come from the village to help us.

HOW WOULD YOU BEST DESCRIBE YOUR BRAND?

A superior, natural and authentic product that represents Lebanese taste and savoir-faire abroad.

HOW CAN PEOPLE VISIT YOUR FARM AND WORKSHOP?

The workshop is open to the public every weekend. It's a great way for visitors to see how we make our *zaatar* and taste the end product. Prior appointments are necessary to visit the farm but everyone is welcome.

thegoodthymes.me



Photo: Joelle Kanaan



IT'S IN OUR NATURE

جزيرة
THE
JEZZINE
REGION

ESCAPE • EXPLORE • EXPERIENCE

THE COFFEE STORYTELLERS

There's something rather magical about Lebanon's community of *kahwajes*, a tradition that has survived centuries. **Rita Ghantous** takes a closer look at the people behind the coffee.



With their folkloric costumes, the clicking sound of the Arabic coffee cups (*fanajin*) they carry in their hands and the mesmerizing aroma from their traditional Arabic coffee pot (*dallah*), *kahwajes* never go unnoticed. Their presence intrigues the young, while offering the old a brief trip back in time.

Proud of their craft, they spend hours preparing their coffee, meticulously brewing the coffee beans at home and adding their own secret ingredient to the mix: that is why the coffee of each *kahwaje* has its own unique flavor.

Kahwajes are frequently found in public areas, street markets and at touristic sites, where, for a small fee, they offer their delicious brew to passers-by. They are wonderful storytellers, who take great pleasure in talking to their customers.

Traditional Lebanese restaurants often employ *kahwajes* to serve a complimentary cup of coffee to guests after an appetizing meal. They are

testament to the hospitable and generous nature of the Lebanese.

In certain rural regions, *kahwajes* play an important part in ceremonies, from the festive, like weddings to the sad, like funerals.

Author Timothy Hutchins, who refers to coffee as the "wine of Araby," details in his book "Coffee Culture" the social importance of the *kahwaje* to the Arab community, noting their role in popularizing and spreading coffee culture in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Artists such as renowned Lebanese painter Hassan Jouni have captured the essence of the typical café of Beirut in their paintings.

For a country where the past and present intertwine, and where coffee is inherent to local custom, the *kahwaje* is a reminder of Beirut's bygone years and living proof that the tradition is very much alive.

THE KAHWAJE

Nassib Selman Talih has been serving coffee for 56 years at Phoenicia Hotel Beirut's Mosaic Restaurant. He is the longest serving *kahwaje* in Lebanon.

"The tradition of drinking Arabic coffee continues to play an important role in Lebanese culture. It is a symbol of generosity and warm hospitality, qualities that this nation is famous for. Offering guests a cup of coffee at the end of their meal is intrinsic to the Lebanese restaurant experience. It reaffirms how proud we are of our heritage and I think that is why I have been in this profession for so long.

Being a *kahwaje* has given me the opportunity to meet incredible people: I have rubbed shoulders with presidents, royalty and celebrities. I have served coffee to thousands of guests with the same dedication and love yet I cherish those who visited the hotel as children and later returned as adults to see me again and drink my coffee.

I take great pride in my craft and plan on serving coffee to guests for as long as I can."



CAFÉ YOUNES: A TALE OF THREE GENERATIONS



During the 19th century, like many other Lebanese, Amin Younes Senior left his beloved homeland with fire in his soul and a dream in his heart. He set his sights on Brazil, which was experiencing a period of great progress thanks to the export of coffee.

Amin soon started learning the secrets of the coffee trade and spent the next 20 years working for Brazil's coffee barons. Throughout this time though, he nurtured a dream: to open his own coffee business in the country he loved most, Lebanon.

In 1935 that dream came true. Amin launched his coffee business, which would later become one of Lebanon's most inspiring stories. Café Younes' first branch opened in Beirut's vibrant Bab Idriss neighborhood. But things were not plain sailing. With the outbreak of World War Two, the Lebanese currency crashed, causing Amin to lose a major part of his life savings.

Despite his financial struggles, he remained focused on building a coffee empire, roasting and grinding on the premises and

distributing his coffee throughout Lebanon. His perseverance paid off and by 1960, Café Younes opened in Hamra with one of the first espresso machines in the country.

By this time Amin's son, Souheil, had joined the business with his wife, making Café Younes a family affair. The couple went to trade fairs and roasters in Italy and Germany in search of the latest innovations, best products, identifying regional preferences for certain coffee roasts and mixes. They created blends named after the places they visited, such as the "Marjeouini Blend," which, decades later, remains one of their most popular.

Souheil, like his father, was a self-made man who believed that hard work pays off. He made sure to instill this thirst for success into his son, and successor, Amin Younes Junior.

Once at the helm, Amin Junior knew that the Younes brand was mature enough for the next stage of expansion, taking Café Younes from the place that serves the best coffee in town, to one that also offers delicious food.

Today, the Café Younes brand is stronger than ever, serving coffee to the old and young with as much authenticity and passion as the very first day it started.

cafeyounes.com





KAAL EL RIM, BEKAA

"This calm oasis is one of my favorite hidden spots in Lebanon. I could spend hours admiring the undulating green hills speckled with olive trees, the small body of water and the magnificent mountains in the background."

By Clement Tannouri, @chasseurinstants



HIT THE WATER

If you're on the lookout for a new adventure, take advantage of the country's 210km of coastline and give these water sports a try.



Photos: Dany Faddoul

SCUBA DIVING

The best way to enjoy Lebanon's underwater treasures is to go scuba diving. Not only can you get up close and personal with marine life including sharks and stingrays, you can also explore some epic shipwrecks off the coast, like the famous vertically positioned HMS Victoria.

How to get started

Nasser Saidi from the National Institute of Scuba Diving in Lebanon says: "When you're starting out, you need to take a few

courses. First, we go over the basics of how to dive, what equipment is necessary and how it functions. Then, we move on to practical courses and end with an exam. Passing the exam provides you with a diploma. If you do not wish to go through this process however, you can opt to dive with an instructor."

Equipment

There's no need to purchase any equipment as the facility provides everything you need, namely a mask, fins, a wetsuit and a diving tank.

Where to go

One of the most popular diving sites is Tyre, thanks to its glorious reefs and rich marine life. Sea turtles are common in the area.

Other diving facilities can be found further north, reaching as far as Tripoli.

*National Institute for Scuba Diving in Lebanon (01 739203/03 959385)
Dive the Med Club, San Stefano Resort, Batroun (03 119002)*



WINDSURFING

This sport involves two key elements: wind and waves. Windsurfing combines a board and a sail. The sail is used to control the board on the water in accordance with the wind. Malek Daou from Batroun Water Sports says: “Windsurfing, especially for beginners, requires a minimum of winds blowing at five kilometers per hour. This means you can windsurf practically all year round.”

How to get started

Sign up for a course at a windsurfing center like Batroun Water Sports, where an instructor will show you what to do and how to maneuver your board. Malek says: “Practice and dedication are crucial to mastering this sport. You need to practice at

least three to four hours a week and enjoy being at the beach, because you’re going to be there quite a lot!”

Equipment

You’ll just need to grab your swimsuit and a towel as the windsurfing facilities will provide the rest.

Where to go

For most of the year, the winds that blow over the country are westerly, hitting the shore more profoundly the further north you go. This makes almost any spot from Byblos onwards suitable for windsurfing.

Batroun Water Sports, Batroun (03 156402)



SURFING

Lebanon’s surfing community has grown and a few facilities offering instruction have opened up over recent years. Ali Al Amine, owner of Surf Lebanon, says: “When we think of surfing, we tend to picture a tropical island with huge waves, but this is far from accurate. Over the last six years, surfing has gained traction in Lebanon and there are some great surfing spots up and down the coast.”

How to get started

Take a lesson to learn the basics with a center like Surf Lebanon, certified by the ISA (International Surfing Association). It’s important that you practice in different weather conditions in order to understand the way the sea changes and how to read the water.

Ali says: “Get comfortable swimming around currents and waves. Core strength is crucial so burpees and pushups go a long way. A valuable tip I give is that when in doubt, don’t paddle out. If you feel you are not

ready to go further out to sea, then don’t – it’s not worth the risk.”

Equipment

Surf centers will provide you with everything you need to hit those waves, but if you prefer to get your own gear you will require a surfboard (of course!), a wetsuit (for surfing in winter), a surf leash (for safety in case you fall off your board), surfing wax (for a better grip on your board), earplugs (to protect you from surfer’s ear), sunscreen and sunglasses (for summer).

Where to go

Batroun, Jiyeh and Byblos are popular destinations for surfers. The stronger winds are found around the northern town of Batroun, making it a good option for wind-related water sports like windsurfing. Towards the south, winds tend to lose strength.

Surf Lebanon, Jiyeh (71 900322)

Board’n’Surf, Byblos (03 734601/03 283413)

CREATIVE

Lebanon

We love discovering new design concepts. Take a look at these 10 creatives who displayed their work in a collective space curated by **Bleu Design Consultants** at the 25th edition of HORECA Lebanon.



ELIE SAAB for The Rug Company

Featuring an oversized floral design in teal, gun metal and green on shimmering silk, “In Bloom” challenges the traditional concept of a rug. The blooms burst out from both ends of the rug and reach for the center to create an elegant mirror pattern.

01 322090,
therugcompany.com

CAROLE MAALOUF ABOUD Yosama

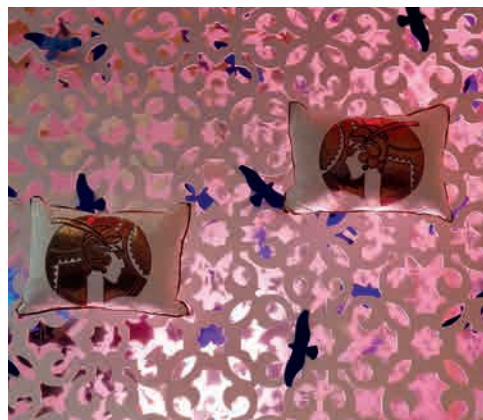
Inspired by balloons, “Take me Away” is a colorful 3D metal sculpture. Representing a wish to float away and discover the world from above, it is made using two layers of metal.



CLAUDISE SAHYOUN Les Ateliers de Claudise

Decorative cushions for a bed are just as essential as those for a couch. The two pillows are made of a white velvet fabric and embroidered with a rose gold thread, creating a dialogue within the space.

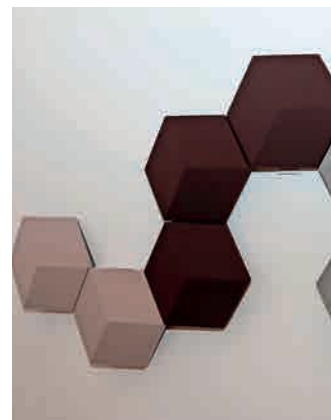
atelierclaudise.com



CESAR DEBBAS C. Debbas & Fils - Bang & Olufsen

Combining superb sound with customizable design, “BeoSound Shape” is a wall-mounted wireless speaker system.

01 974400, debas.com.lb
bang-olufsen.com/beirut



DANA ALAAEDDINE
Fluirt

The "Notch" is a concentric table. The inner circle is made of marble, carved out of the outer steel that creates the legs of the table. Visually, it pivots around an axis.

03 030667/71 670962,
 fluirt.com



ROY JIBRIN
Brin Design Cloud

The "O Y Chair" mixes raw materials, lines and shapes. The unorthodox combination of materials plays a role in holding the armchair together without the use of any fasteners.

brin.space



CAMILLE TARAZI
Maison Tarazi

These decorative mirrors are made of walnut wood and feature a floral mother of pearl inlay.

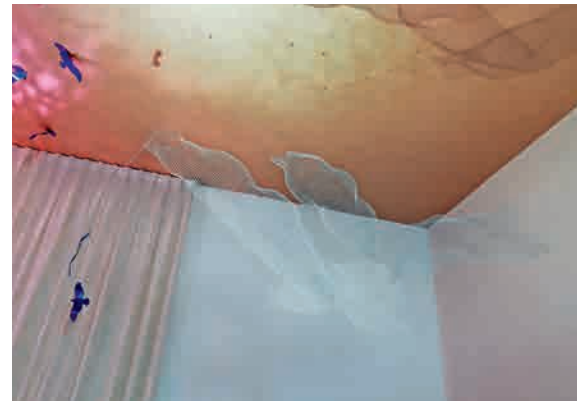
01 568288,
 maisontarazi.com



SAMER SAADE
Fabraca Studios

Using a custom mold, the disrupted wire mesh structure resembles a cloud formation. The installation hangs very lightly in the space and is lit from underneath.

03 917501, fabracastudios.com



GEORGE MOHASSEB
Wood&

This hand-made piece has sides with strips and brass legs that create a retro-modern look. Its originality comes from the integrated light, making it much more interactive than conventional bedside tables.

01 513136, woodand.com



YEHIA KASSAA
Colortek

"3D Roche" belongs to the haute couture family of products by Colortek. The range blends technology and technique, allowing architects and interior designers to create one-of-a-kind decorative effects.

01 303414, colortek.eu



DESIGNERS' CORNER

JOANNA CONSTANTINE



Joanna Laura Constantine is a Beirut-based jewelry designer whose work has taken the fashion world by storm. Winner of the Vogue Arabia Fashion Prize, Constantine's designs are an extension of her persona, each piece reflecting her passion, resilience and eclectic style.



Featured in countless esteemed publications such as Elle, Vogue and W Magazine, Constantine's jewelry has been worn by fashion icons including Kim Kardashian West, Rihanna, Bella Thorne, Eva Green and Jessica Alba, to name just a few. Her designs have also appeared in advertising campaigns for L'Oreal, Air France and Campari.

With an ever-growing international audience, Constantine talks about her style, designs and the future of her brand.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE WOMEN THAT WEAR YOUR JEWELRY?

The women that wear my pieces tend to be modern and confident.

WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF JEWELRY YOU BELIEVE EVERY WOMAN SHOULD OWN?

A pair of statement earrings can help elevate any look.

YOUR WORK HAS BEEN FEATURED IN MANY INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS AND HAS BEEN WORN BY SOME INCREDIBLY TALENTED WOMEN. WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER THUS FAR?

Rihanna's stylist tagged me on Instagram when Rihanna wore my mini leaves and pearl choker necklace to the Grammy Awards. It was unforgettable.

WHO WOULD YOU LOVE TO SEE WEARING ONE OF YOUR PIECES AND WHY?

I would love to see Her Royal Highness Queen Rania of Jordan wear one of my pieces as I really admire her beauty, persona and the causes she supports.

YOUR DESIGNS ARE MINIMALIST YET BOLD AND UNIQUE. WHAT HAS HELPED YOU ACHIEVE THIS STYLE?

Listening to what my clients want and need has helped me enormously. I also keep an eye on trends and integrate some of these

into my designs. I like designing statement pieces that are very modern and wearable both day and night.

IN WHAT WAY DOES LEBANON INSPIRE YOUR COLLECTION?

Lebanon is home to me: it will always be my source of inspiration and the place where I design and produce all of my jewelry.

WHICH PIECE OF JEWELRY DO YOU ALWAYS WEAR AND WHY?

I always wear my double-faced horn pendant necklace. I feel it brings me good luck.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE JOANNA CONSTANTINE BRAND?

I'd like to continue designing and creating unique pieces and to increase the visibility and distribution of the brand worldwide. We have just launched our e-shop, which is a very exciting step for us.

joannalauraconstantine.com

NADA DEBS



Nada Debs is an internationally-acclaimed conceptual designer. She is known for her multidisciplinary design creations and for an artistic output that flows with emotional resonance. Imbued with exquisite craftsmanship, every piece tells a story.



Debs grew up in Japan and was educated in the US. Although she has spent considerable time traveling the world and living in a number of countries, she currently resides and works in Beirut.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO RETURN TO LEBANON AFTER SO MANY YEARS ABROAD?

I felt the urgent need to return to my roots and rediscover personal elements of my identity that I only experienced during brief visits to the country. I found myself thoroughly charmed by the very complexity of Lebanese culture and the wider Middle East.

WHEN DESIGNING, WHAT IS IT THAT INSPIRES YOU? WHAT DO YOU SEEK TO CONVEY IN YOUR WORK?

Life itself can be very inspirational. At times, I am inspired by certain trends in contemporary fashion, a great work of literature or a marvelous city I recently visited. In my work, I seek to find a graceful

balance between various elements, to create articles of contemporary design that achieve a sense of unified harmony.

HOW HAS LEBANON INFLUENCED YOUR CREATIVITY?

Lebanese culture is exceptionally rich and vibrant. We have an ancient history of incredible craftsmanship that continuously refuels my creative processes.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ESSENCE OF YOUR BRAND?

Ultimately, my brand is about reinventing craft and placing it within a modern context. I strive not only to preserve traditional craftsmanship, but to widen design boundaries while continuing to preserve inherent core values. I refer to this branding process as “hand-made heart-made.”

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT?

It has to be when I opened my very first showroom, in 2003. I had no idea of the

kind of reaction I would receive from the public to my furniture and accessories.

OUT OF ALL OF YOUR CREATIONS, WHICH HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE?

I must admit to liking our most recent collection, Funquetry. Essentially, the design is based on the craft of marquetry, only I turn the concept over and inventively play with its inherent design ideas and attributes.

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED CHANNELING YOUR CREATIVITY IN ANOTHER WAY?

If you closely study my brand, you will see that I manage to channel my creativity through various items. I begin with furniture and home accessories, all the way to the creation of scarves, handbags and other fashion items. I perform according to inspiration and have a lot of fun doing so.

nadadebs.com

HUBERT FATTAL



Lebanese perfume pioneer Hubert Fattal, the mastermind behind Fragrances Hubert Fattal, is bottling his memories scent by scent.



With the help of experts in the French perfume capital Grasse, Fattal has developed an exquisite line of fragrances. Among his collection are perfumes that capture the very essence of traditional Lebanese notes like cedar and orange blossom.

Inspired by his travels and his heritage, we learn more about Fattal's exceptional work.

YOUR PERFUMES FEATURE A STRONG CONNECTION TO LEBANON AND THE ARAB WORLD. WHY IS THIS?

I consider myself Middle Eastern, Mediterranean and oriental so I began with two fragrances to channel this sense of identity. The distinctive smell of cedar wood in Beiteddine was the inspiration behind Eau de Cèdre, a strong, masculine fragrance. Its counterpart, Deep Rose, is very feminine and romantic. It reminds me of my aunt and grandmother: very rosy, almost old fashioned with a touch of orientalism.

My newest perfume is Dark Light, enveloping white flowers: tuberose, jasmine and gardenia. It's a contrast of fresh scents and very representative of the orient.

HOW WOULD YOU ADVISE SOMEONE ON FINDING THE RIGHT PERFUME?

Just trust your heart, your head and mood. I wouldn't say there is one particular perfume because it depends on the season, time of day and what you're wearing. Perfume is a very intimate thing: you wear it on your skin and it creates a story.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN DEVELOPING YOUR COLLECTION?

Taking it from a personal brand to a more established one, which is still a daily challenge. We're trying to find ways to develop our network and become more represented internationally.

WHAT SCENT TRIGGERS A FOND MEMORY FOR YOU?

Because of the war in Lebanon, my father decided to buy a plot of land in Cyprus near Fig Tree Bay where he built a house. We would go and spend most of our summers there, enjoying the sandy beach and family picnics. I created my Fig Tree Bay fragrance because of that dear memory of my childhood.

WHICH PERFUME DO YOU WEAR AND WHY?

I use them all but today I used Cèdre Vert. My perfumes are not gendered, although some are more floral than others.

BESIDES LEBANON, WHICH COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN INSPIRATIONAL TO YOU?

India, Cyprus and Egypt, where I spent a lot of time. I like romantic places.

IN ADDITION TO YOUR PERFUMES, YOU HAVE AN EXCITING RANGE OF CANDLES. TELL US MORE.

I come from an artistic background and because I love interior design, I felt I needed to come up with something that would create atmosphere in the home. We currently have Batikh, a fresh burst of watermelon with orange blossom notes, Geranium, which is subtle and oriental and May Rose, a floral fragrance. I'm introducing my newest candle, Pomelo, in May.

fragranceshubertfattal.com



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Legendary hotels



Lebanon's historical hotels have some amazing stories to tell, as travel blogger **Krystel Riachi** reveals.

MIR AMIN PALACE

It takes only a 30-minute drive from Beirut to travel back to the 19th century as you reach Shouf, one of Lebanon's best-preserved and prettiest regions. Here, you can't miss Beiteddine's impressive Mir Amin Palace Hotel. Originally the residence of the last Emirs of the 19th century, more specifically the youngest son of Emir Bashir II Chehab, the palace was turned into a luxury hotel that today hosts 22 beautifully restored and elegantly decorated rooms and suites.

The Mir Amin Palace is no ordinary hotel. Whether you decide to sleep in the Haramlek royal suite, the Salamlek imperial suite, the junior suite, or any other room, you will feel like an Emir, even if it's just for a night. The renovations have preserved the heritage values of the palace. The royal furniture and imperial antique style, not to mention the majestic setting of the palace itself amid beautiful courtyards and flowing fountains, will make your stay simply historic

Beiteddine, 05 501315/03 900924, miraminpalace.com

PHOENICIA BEIRUT

As invincible as Beirut itself stands the Phoenicia Beirut hotel, with its proud façade that has been glittering for more than 55 years. One of the first hotels to define luxury hospitality in Lebanon, the Phoenicia was initially designed by renowned American architect Edward Durell Stone to become a hotspot for the international jet set. Renovated after the Lebanese Civil War by international designers Martin Hulbert of Fox Linton, Inge Moore and Summer Williams, the hotel's facilities were re-launched in 2000, with a sophisticated taste wrapped in modernity.

With its 446 rooms and suites, a variety of refined restaurants, banquet halls, fancy shops, and outstanding premium service, the Phoenicia Beirut remains an iconic emblem of Lebanon, and a worldwide reference of exemplary hospitality.

Beirut, 01 369110, phoeniciabeirut.com





PALMYRA HOTEL

With a stunning view over the ancient Roman Heliopolis ruins, stands the Palmyra Hotel in all its majesty. Built in 1874, the hotel is representative of Baalbeck's golden era. Deeply rooted in a culturally-imbibed city, Palmyra has always been synonymous with Baalbeck itself, the historically documented City of the Sun and the destination of tourists from around the world. Having hosted royalty and famous international icons such as Jean Cocteau, as well as Lebanese artists like Fairouz and Sabah over the decades, Palmyra is a true invitation to a cultural escape in Lebanon's breathtaking Bekaa Valley.

Waking up to the beautiful sight of Baalbeck ruins from one of the hotel's 30 traditionally-preserved rooms is not everything Palmyra has to offer. With an outdoor garden, a sunny rooftop, a vintage bar, and an all-day restaurant, not to mention a priceless collection of art pieces and the hotel's wall of fame, a day at Palmyra revives the glory of the past in a setting that faithfully depicts the charm and authenticity of a place and an era celebrated by so many.

Baalbeck, 08 370230/08 370011

AL BUSTAN

Founded on the vision of entrepreneur Emile Bustani to build a landmark of hospitality in the mountains of Lebanon, Al Bustan hotel opened its doors in 1967, four years after Emile died. Achieving her husband's dream, Laura completed the project, naming the hotel Al Bustan in reference to her husband's family name and the word "garden" in Arabic.

Perched on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, Al Bustan, renovated after the Civil War and run to date by three generations of the Bustani family, offers a luxurious and intimate experience imbued by family tradition and heritage.

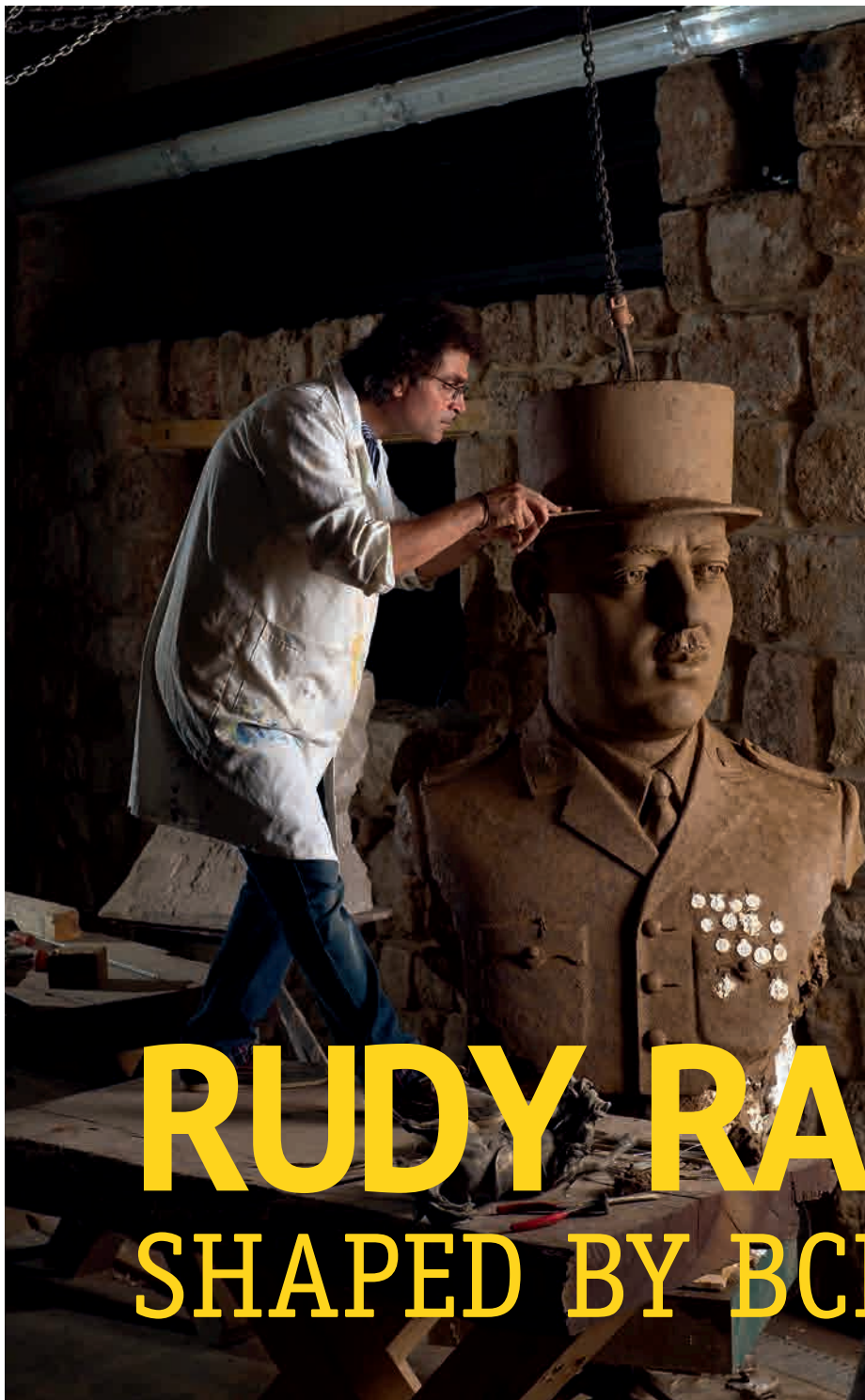
The hotel offers 117 thoughtfully furnished rooms and suites, an art space and lush gardens. The L'Espace Hammam and Spa is one of the newest features at the property, where guests can enjoy outstanding health and beauty treatments in a beautifully designed space.

Al Bustan also hosts an annual festival of music and performing arts. Established in 1994, the Al Bustan Festival remains one of the country's most eagerly awaited cultural events.

Beit Mery, 04 870400, hotelalbustan.com

notesofatraveler.com





RUDY RAHME: SHAPED BY BCHARRE



Rudy Rahme is no stranger to Lebanon's bustling art scene. The artist and poet has spent the last three decades creating magnificent sculptures, earning him immense respect at home and abroad. We learn more about his work and where he draws inspiration from.

"The type of nature in Bcharre has had a big impact on me, especially because the valley is right next to Mount Makmal, where, in no time, you find yourself 1,400m above sea level," Rahme says. "The contrast between the valley and the mountains, and the fact that there isn't a single tree like the next or



“ Bcharre’s nature is the foundation of my art ”

thank the French, I told them I wanted to carve the three dead cedar trees that had died during the 1985 storm, but I wanted to carve them right where they stood. They would form a trinity to represent the name of the forest (God’s Forest) and that’s how it started.”

The trees, currently carved, are part of an on-going project with a total of 12 trees to sculpt. “We want to make something out of these dead trees, not just throw them away,” he adds.

Rahme’s next ambitious project is to work on an entire church. While he has done work in churches before, this would be a first for the artist.

“Right now I’m working on a project honoring Raya Chidiac, the woman who was recently killed in Miziara,” he explains. “We’re going to build a church named Santa Maria Goretti, because Santa Maria died in a similar way.”

“This church will be a place where you can really see the ‘Rudy Rahme’ stamp,” he adds, “and will take about a year and a half to two years to complete. There are still a lot of details to work out, but it’s a project that I’m very excited about.”

VISIT THE RUDY RAHME MUSEUM

Witness Rahme’s work firsthand by visiting his workshop and museum (by appointment only). A number of exceptional sculptures, including a nine-meter-tall statue of Jesus, can be found in the pretty gardens surrounding the property, which in itself is a modern masterpiece.

Nahr el Kalb, 09 226766/03 262662
rudyrahme.com

a rock similar to its neighbor, is inspiring. It is the clay of your art and what makes you an artist.”

Born in 1967 in Bcharre, North Lebanon, Rahme studied at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA) and the Spinelle Academy in Florence, Italy. He represented Lebanon at several sculpture symposia in Lebanon, France, Italy, Switzerland and the Gulf countries – scoring awards such as the gold medal for Lebanese poetry and the Sursock Museum Award.

Some of Rahme’s most iconic works include “Windmill of Time” at the Jeita Grotto, the various sculptures at the entrance to Beirut’s UNESCO Palace and the altar at the Church of St. Joseph in Mtayleb, Metn.

Despite all of his success, however, Rahme remains humble, considering his talent a gift from God, inspired by nature and his rural upbringing.

“When I sit to sculpt, memories of the Kadisha Valley, its movement and energy, come flooding back. This appears in many of my works. Bcharre’s nature is the foundation of my art.”

One of Rahme’s major achievements is “La Martine Cedar,” carved from dead cedar trees in Bcharre, which would later become the world’s tallest wooden sculpture at a height of 39m (recognized by Guinness World Records).

“I wasn’t really intending to produce the world’s tallest wooden sculpture,” he reveals. “I was part of the Cedar Committee from a young age and they wanted to thank the French people who had supported them.”

“I used to see how people cut our cedar forests to make tiny souvenirs and would think, ‘Why are we cutting them down? We should preserve them,’” Rahme continues. “When they asked me what we could do to

SACRED JOURNEYS TO THE MAQAMS OF THE PROPHETS

Religious anthropologist, researcher and founder of NEOS Tourism Consultancy **Nour Farra-Haddad** takes us on a trip to two pilgrimage sites, the maqams of Nabi Nouh in the Bekaa Valley and Nabi Younes on the coastal plain of Jiyeh, 30km south of Beirut.

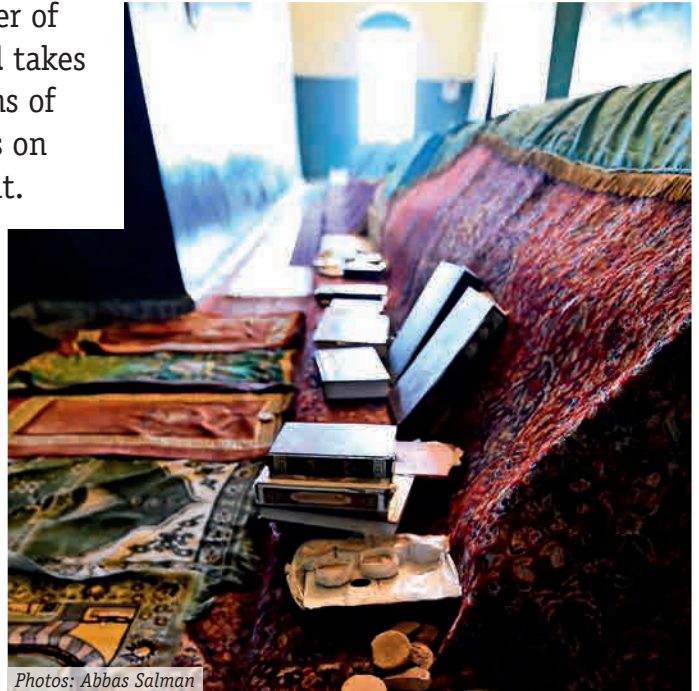
MAQAM NABI NOUH (PROPHET NOAH), KARAK

The village of Karak is located in the Bekaa Valley, a few kilometers north of Zahle. The maqam (shrine) and the mosque of Nabi Nouh are located side by side in the middle of the village. The maqam is used by believers to make vows for benedictions. Others come to the mosque for ritual prayers, particularly on Fridays. Christians and Muslims inhabit the village, and just a few hundred meters from the maqam stands the church of St. Anthony.

To reach the maqam and the mosque, visitors have to cross a garden and a cemetery. At the entrance of the site is a fountain, considered by some worshippers to be sacred.

The maqam was built on the remains of a Roman temple. The stones used for the foundation are spectacular, and at the entrance of the holy site you can see a small altar representing Jupiter. Inside the mosque, Roman letters decorate the top of the modern columns, and stones are carved with flowers and geometric patterns. Many orientalist and travelers, like Nabulsi, visited the site and described it as impressive because of the large tomb, measuring around 25m in length. Locals believe that the Prophet Noah was a large man and was buried bent in two. Others believe that it is not the Prophet Noah who is buried here but his son Kirik, who drowned in the great flood by ignoring God's instructions and those of Noah. Many say that the village is named after him and that Noah's Ark reached the Bekaa Valley after the flood.

Worshippers practice various rituals, such as lighting candles, using the sacred stone, the mahdaleh, touching the *darih* (tomb) and walking around the tomb while they pray, to ask for good fortune from the prophet.



Photos: Abbas Salman

WHAT TO DO IN THE AREA

The town of Fourzol lies just a few kilometers from the holy site. Wadi al Habis (the Valley of the Hermit) is two-and-a-half kilometers from the center of Fourzol. Monks and hermits once lived in the valley caves and there are a number of tombs, shrines and sanctuaries cut out of the rock dating back to Roman and Byzantine times. It is said that these caves suggest an isolated but intense monastic life.

Niha is a stunning town just a few kilometers from Fourzol where one can explore two Roman temples, one named after the god Hadaranis and the other after Atragatis, the Syriac-Phoenician goddess. Both temples were constructed around a stream during the second and third centuries. A small temple dating back to the first century lies at the entrance of the site.

Two kilometers away, a road leading higher into the mountains will get you to the Roman temples of Hosn Niha, which are isolated from the village in a wonderful, breathtaking frame amid hills and fertile terrain. Other Roman sites, such as Qasr Naba and Tamnine, can be visited in the area as well.

Only five kilometers away is Zahle, where you can visit the famous sanctuary of Our Lady of Zahle and the Bekaa Valley, and enjoy a delicious lunch by the Berdaouni River.



Oum Mhammad, who takes care of the maintenance of the maqâm, says that visitors of all faiths visit the shrine for its *baraka* (benedictions).

WHAT TO DO IN THE AREA

A short walk from the maqâm is the old archaeological site of the Byzantine settlement of Prophyreon, just in front of the sea, with its cathedral dating back to the sixth century.

You can visit the sanctuary of Our Lady of Khaldeh on your way to Jiyeh and continue thereafter to Saida, where you can wander around the old town, the famous Sea Castle, Khan El Franj, the soap museum and the stunning Debbane Palace.

MAQAM EL NABI YOUNES (PROPHET JONAH), JIYEH

On the coast between Damour and Saida is the coastal town of Jiyeh, where it is thought the Prophet Jonah (Nabi Younes) was spat out of a whale, a story documented in the Old Testament.

In Phoenician times Jiyeh was known as Porphyreon, a thriving natural seaport. Modern day Jiyeh is distinguished by seven kilometers of sandy beaches, a rarity along Lebanon’s mainly rocky coastline. This amazing stretch of sand and surf is host to a number of trendy beach resorts.

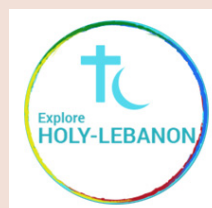
The maqâm is a medieval shrine dedicated to Jonah. At the entrance stands an old tree that was struck by lightning and only half of the tree survived. In front of the main gate there is a dried-up well, known to have been miraculous. Inside the shrine there is an old mihrab and a small chamber holding one of the supposed tombs of Jonah. The main room, serving as a mosque, is divided with a curtain to separate the men from the women. At the end of the main room is another room, very small in size, which is covered with ex-votos and houses a *darih* surrounded by a grid. The mosque was constructed using ancient Roman and Byzantine ruins taken from a nearby dig. Corinthian capitals are also part of the building, decoratively carved on the inside wall.

LEBANON’S FIRST RELIGIOUS TOURISM APP

Holy Lebanon is a travel e-guide promoting religious-based tourism and supporting the sustainable development of local communities across the country.

Introducing Lebanon as an attractive destination full of interesting sites to discover, the guide lists thousands of religious attractions, rituals and events, as well as names and details of service providers.

Embrace Lebanon’s religious diversity and take advantage of this practical and comprehensive tool by downloading the free application (available on the AppStore and Googleplay from 7 June 2018).



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An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. The water is a vibrant turquoise, transitioning to a deeper blue further out. Several boats are scattered across the water, including a large white yacht and several smaller motorboats. The shoreline is rugged and rocky, with some greenery visible. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a perfect summer day.

YOUR SUMMER STARTS HERE.

TURN THE PAGE TO DISCOVER

BEACHES • ROOFTOP BARS • BACKPACKING • KIDS' ACTIVITIES

TURNING UP THE HEAT

Summer just wouldn't be the same without time spent at the beach. **Amber Consulting** guides us around the best spots along Lebanon's coastline to soak up the sun this season.

HOT 2018 OPENINGS

The hottest topic of summer 2018 revolves around the opening of Byblos' new Mykonian-style beach club, Pepperssea (03 003188). This elegant beach resort will be welcoming guests to sip on refreshing handcrafted cocktails, sunbathe by the pool and on the sandy shore, swim in the crystal waters of Byblos, and enjoy the delicious delights of the on-site restaurant.

CITY LIFE DESTINATIONS

Summertime reaffirms Beirut's status as the capital that never sleeps. Ras Beirut's famous coast invites city lovers to spend their day under the golden sun and continue their evening sipping drinks on the city's most famous rooftops.

St. Georges Yacht Club & Marina (03 958379) is perfect for those seeking a few hours under the sun. The famous club boasts two pools and a view overlooking the beautiful marina.

Set in Ain el Mreisseh's La Plage complex, Madame Bleu (01 366222) is a luxurious urban swimming destination.

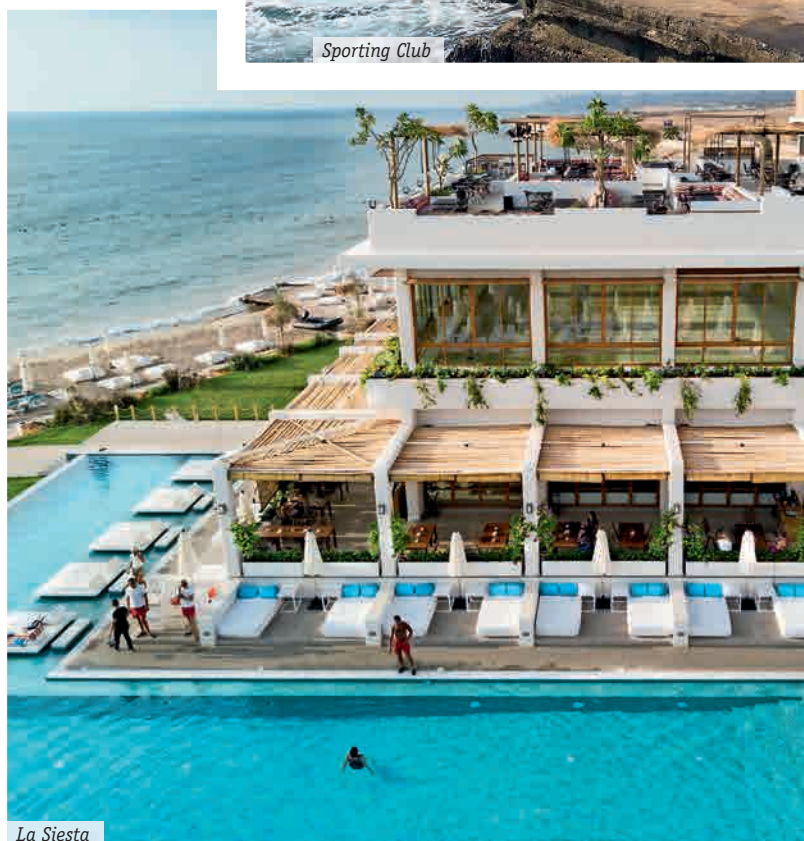
Accessed via a private underground tunnel in the middle of Beirut's Corniche promenade, the Riviera Beach Lounge (01 373210) offers a high-end experience with its VIP pool, plush lounge areas and a seafood restaurant, Chez Zakhia.

Sporting Club (01 742482) is one of Beirut's oldest natural rocky spots where one is certain to get a perfect tan while gazing at the Mediterranean.

Long Beach (01 742496) is another urban retreat located near Sporting Club.



Sporting Club



La Siesta

UPSCALE WELLNESS

While established clubs like Laguava Resort (03 141413) in Jiyeh and Eddésands Hotel & Wellness Resort (09 546666) in Byblos have remained popular, newer resorts have popped up over recent years.

Kalani (76 504050) is a serene beach club located in Halat. Tastefully designed by award-winning architects to be the ultimate escape, Kalani features an infinity pool, a high-end restaurant and bar, and breathtaking views of the Mediterranean.

Reinventing the beach experience, Orchid Beach offers a unique getaway. With one beach resort in Jiyeh (03 040420) and a beach lounge in Batroun (71 949404), the adults-only concept aims to pamper its clientele with impeccable service and an exquisite F&B experience.



Lazy B



Madame Bleu



Riviera Beach Resort

FAMILY COMFORT

Located just 10 minutes away from Beirut, La Siesta (05 815555) is a beachfront resort equipped with all necessary amenities including a sandy beach, pools, a Mediterranean restaurant, a rooftop café, chalets for rent, a kids' area and water sports.

Damour Beach Resort (76 883737) features an infinity pool, beach huts and a kids' outdoor play area next to the beach.

In Jiyeh, Lazy B (70 950010) is a relaxing beach resort perfect for families. The space is thoughtfully designed with three swimming pools, natural creeks, several restaurants and a playground for children.

Eddésands Hotel & Wellness Resort (09 546666) in Byblos is a vast beach resort offering luxurious amenities and countless beach activities for all ages including jet skiing, beach volleyball and kite surfing.

SECRET SPOTS

Cloud 59 (03 517996) is set on Tyre's sandy shore. The chilled-out spot is a popular destination for beach lovers, where they can enjoy tasty seafood, Lebanese *mezze* after surfing the shimmering waves.

Anfeh, around 70km north of Beirut, continues to be a favorite among those looking for crystal clear waters to dive into. Reminiscent of a Greek village, with its white and blue color scheme, Anfeh's Tahet el Rih gathers a collection of restaurants along its rocky shore such as Chez Fouad (70 830117), 3al Ba7er (70 554417), Salim Sur Mer (03 330472), Paralia Bar (78 955811) and Istirahet el Khal (03 306585).

Joining (03 517492), on Batroun's rocky shore, hides a simple yet delicious seafood restaurant and, most importantly, a clear blue sea.

HIP BEACH BARS

A selection of funky beach bars can be found in Batroun and Amchit, and while everyone knows Pierre & Friends and KAPTN, there are some other options in the area.

AMCHIT

June (70 553399) is a new resort overlooking the Mediterranean Sea from the top of a hill in Amchit. The place also hosts performances by young acoustic singers and bands on cool summer evenings.

BATROUN

Tonic Beach Bar (76 585874) is a tropical bar where visitors can enjoy tiki cocktails and unwind until sunset.

With its ice-cold natural pool, Ô-Glacée (06 741841) offers guests a simple experience, with access to kayaks and windsurfs.

Isla (76 369361) is a pebble bar just next to Ô-Glacée.

Playing songs from noon till sunset, Dany's Beach Bar (70 709706) invites beachgoers to sip cocktails on the flying beds and dance until sunrise.

Colonel Beer, Batroun's beer brewery, has extended its project to reveal its latest dog-friendly summer concept: Colonel Reef (03 743543). The simple beach bar offers a selection of the brewery's locally-crafted beers and provides visitors with chill-out areas, a long bar and water sports.

amber-consulting.com

UP ON THE ROOF

Open from late spring to early fall, Beirut's rooftop bars never fail to attract a party loving crowd. **Hodema Consulting Services** shows us the top rooftop destinations in town.

CAPITOLE

With a breathtaking view over Beirut, Capitole is an elegant and intimate dining destination where you can enjoy an extensive selection of cocktails while rubbing shoulders with a well-heeled crowd.

What's special? The beef carpaccio platter served with truffle oil, seared tuna tartar and honey marinated black cod.

Riad El Solh Square, Downtown, 70 302402



LA PARRILLA

If you're in search of a restaurant with a panoramic sea view and delicious food then look no further. La Parrilla's summer edition, on top of the Warwick Palm Beach Hotel, boasts a stylish interior and a tantalizing Argentinian menu guaranteed to satisfy your taste buds.

What's special? The lomo (beef tenderloin) and caipirinha cocktail.

Warwick Palm Beach Hotel, Ain El Mreisseh, 03 919119

THE ROOF

Escape the humidity and head up to the 26th floor of The Four Seasons Beirut for an evening of pure decadence. From the superior service to the luxurious surroundings, you're in for a treat. Be sure not to miss the live bands that perform on certain nights of the week and, of course, the sunset.

What's special? The blended signature cocktail made with fresh fruits and Asian flavors.

Four Seasons Hotel Beirut, Wafic Sinno Ave., 01 761000

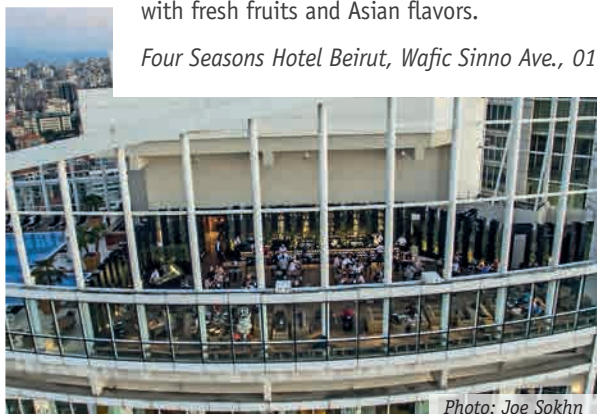


Photo: Joe Sokhn

CHERRY ON THE ROOFTOP

Located on the sixth floor of Beirut's Le Gray hotel, Cherry on the Rooftop invites you to kick back and enjoy tasty bites and drinks. The bar frequently hosts live performers at the weekend.

What's special? The homemade sushi, punch and lychee Martini.

Le Gray Beirut, Martyrs' Square, 01 962888





COOP D'ETAT

A rooftop known for its chilled vibes and trendy crowd is Coop d'Etat in Mar Mikhael. The bar does not operate a dress code, thus making it an unpretentious and fun place to hang out. Expect to hear a mixture of 80s and jazz music as you sip your drink.

What's special? The nachos and sangria.

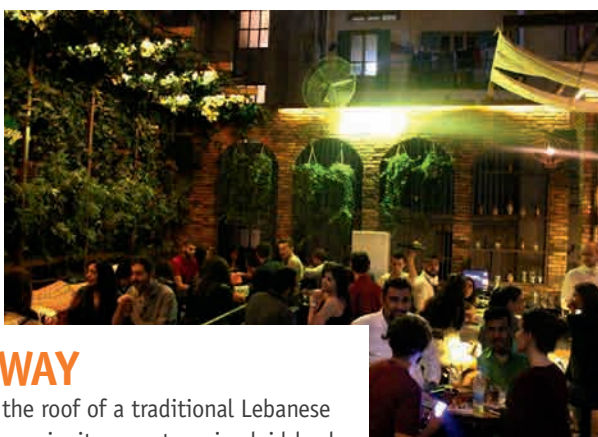
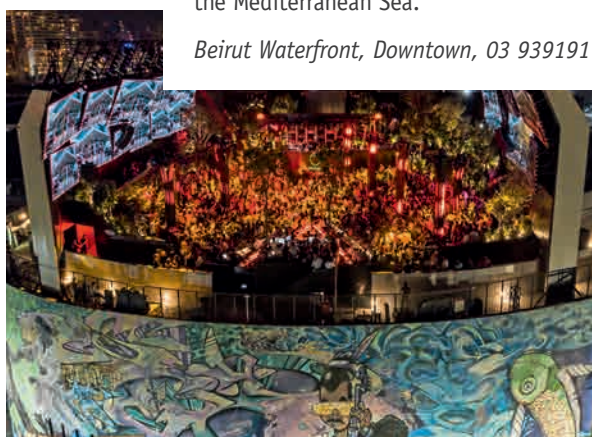
Pasteur St., Gemmayze, 71 134173

SKYBAR

Ranked as one of the world's best bars, SKYBAR has placed Beirut on the international party map. Known for its awesome music and incredible design, incorporating mirrors, fragmented screens and powerful lighting, there is no place more glamorous to dance the night away.

What's special? The spectacular view of the Mediterranean Sea.

Beirut Waterfront, Downtown, 03 939191



STAIRWAY

Located on the roof of a traditional Lebanese house, Stairway invites you to enjoy laid-back summer evenings in Beirut's artsy Mar Mikhael neighborhood. The happy hour from 5-8 pm is perfect for winding down after a long day at work.

What's special? The tiki cocktail

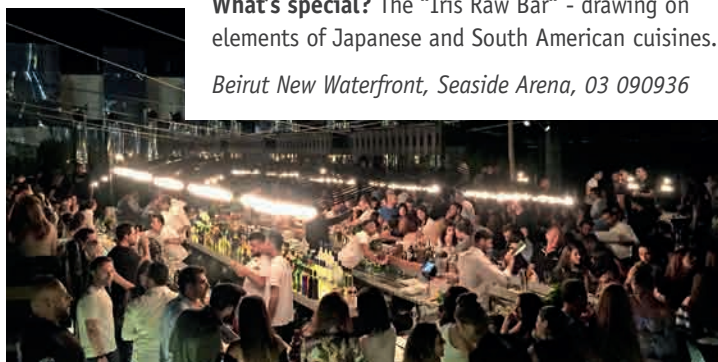
Armenia St., Mar Mikhael, 76 777091

IRIS

Having just moved to a new location at Seaside Pavilion, Iris offers guests a spectacular view of the Mediterranean as they savor the taste of skilfully mixed cocktails and international dishes. The venue also hosts international bands and renowned DJs.

What's special? The "Iris Raw Bar" - drawing on elements of Japanese and South American cuisines.

Beirut New Waterfront, Seaside Arena, 03 090936



DIRTY LAUNDRY

Redefining the lounge experience, Dirty Laundry is a hip urban kitchen and bar where you're guaranteed a great night. Get cozy on the rooftop with a drink in your hand and prepare to spill your deepest, darkest secrets!

What's special? The squid croquetas in black ink and garlic mayonnaise confit, and the "Death by Chocolate" dessert.

Armenia St., Mar Mikhael, 81 331333



hodema.net

GRAB YOUR BACKPACK

We got the lowdown on backpacking around the country with a couple of Lebanon Travelers!



Lebanon is known for its undulating mountains, lush valleys and glistening coastline, making it a great destination for backpackers. We spoke to two enthusiasts about the best way to backpack around the country by drawing on their own experiences.

JOEY HARB - GO WITH THE FLOW

"Backpacking is a form of low-cost traveling," says Joey Harb, an avid backpacker who decided to film his four-day trip around Lebanon and post it on YouTube. "We decided to film our trip to show backpackers around the world the beauty of our country and to encourage them to come here."

Harb and his friends managed to cover around 70 percent of Lebanon during their adventure by hitchhiking from one place to the next and sleeping in tents. "The first driver was a farmer who took us from Tannourine to Bcharre. The second was a truck driver who then took us to the Bekaa Valley."

JOEY'S ITINERARY

Day 1: Byblos - Batroun - Tannourine

Day 2: Tannourine - Hadath El Jebbeh - Bcharre - Deir El Ahmar - Baalbeck - Zahle - Chtoura

Day 3: Chtoura - Qab Elias - Kefraya - Maasser El Chouf - Al Mukhtarah - Baakline

Day 4: Baakline - Al Mukhtarah - Bater - Jezzine - Marjayoun - Bent Jbail - Ain Ebel - Yarine - Naqoura - Tyre - Saida - Beirut - Byblos - Batroun



MARIO AL ALAM - PLAN A LITTLE

"Overall, the experience was insane," says Mario Al Alam, who spent seven days backpacking around Lebanon. "You challenge your body and mind. You need to be physically and mentally prepared for the experience."

Al Alam and his group prepared for their trip by studying maps of the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) and drawing out their route.

MARIO'S ITINERARY

Ehden - Qannoubine - Bcharre - El Arz - Bazoun - Hasroun - Harissa - Arz Tannourine - Tannourine el Fawka - Autostop to Batroun

WHO TO CONTACT

The Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA) is a great reference for everything related to the LMT. Maps can be purchased from their office (*Ghaleb Center, Sacré Coeur Hospital St., Baabda, 05 955302*).

DON'T FORGET TO PACK

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Map and compass | 8. Dry food |
| 2. Sunglasses and sunscreen | 9. Water and filtration bottle |
| 3. Extra clothing | 10. Emergency shelter |
| 4. Flashlight | 11. Camera |
| 5. First aid | 12. Portable phone charger |
| 6. Waterproof matches/lighter/candles | (or just disconnect!) |
| 7. Repair kit | |



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Indigenous white grape of Lebanon

SCHOOLS' OUT!

The holidays are just around the corner, which can be a daunting prospect for parents eager to keep their children entertained outdoors. **Mums in Beirut**, Lebanon's first online platform for parents, lends a helping hand with some useful suggestions.



SANAYEH GARDENS

As one of the oldest and largest public spaces in the capital, the garden is a popular destination for walkers, joggers and children. There are a number of well-designed play areas for kids to swing and slide for hours on end.



NEJMEH SQUARE

This is a safe place for kids to ride bikes and scooters as it is fully pedestrianized. There are also a lot of birds that children can feed thanks to the trees that surround the massive clock.

HORSH BEIRUT

A haven in the heart of Beirut, Horsh Beirut offers visitors 300,000 square meters of beautiful green space to enjoy. It is the perfect destination for a family day out and a place for children to run wild.

BEIRUT WATERFRONT

The waterfront esplanade has views of the Mediterranean and the summits of Mount Lebanon to the east. It is clean and flat so kids can ride their bikes on the wide pavement.

CORNICHE

The Corniche is one of Beirut's most iconic spots. Lined with palm trees, it is a nice place to walk with kids and admire the Mediterranean Sea. Beirut by Bike offers bike rental, a great option for older children.

BEACHES

There are a number of child-friendly beaches providing special swimming pools and play areas for the young. Some recommendations can be found on page 59.

mumsinbeirut.com

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RESORT PRIVILEGES

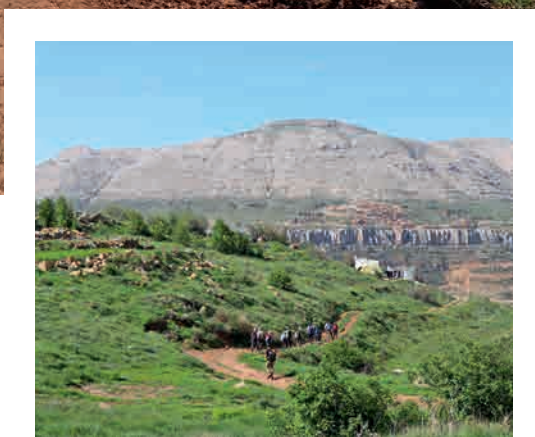


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PROTECTING THE LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL



The **Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA)** has spent the past decade working relentlessly on developing, promoting and protecting the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT).

Today, the trail attracts around 30,000 travelers per year. International travelers as well as the Lebanese diaspora are drawn to living the unique community-based experience, the thousands of years of history, the diversity of the terrain and the breathtaking landscapes and nature reserves.

While the association's recognition is worldwide (it is a member of the World Trail Network and has established friendship trails in Canada and South Korea), its priority remains to empower local communities to promote and protect their local heritage. Municipalities, youth, local guides, local clubs, service providers,

partners from civic society, nature reserves and the public sector are all being engaged, on different levels, in the association's various initiatives.

Today, only 20 percent of the LMT is protected. The remainder of the trail is threatened by the unplanned and unsustainable development of Lebanon's mountains and by a lack of law enforcement. This is why the LMTA recently launched "Hike it. Protect it." - a campaign to raise awareness of the need for new laws to protect the trail and the mountains as well as a sustainable basis for their development.

Learn more by visiting lebanontrail.org.



HADATH EL JEBBEH

Where Heritage Embraces Nature!



WHERE TO EAT?

Auberge Hadath El Jebbeh	03/220756
Saj Lalo - Bakery	03/398568
Saab bakery	03/653724
Ward café Trottoir	03/621652
Flamingo	70/684970
Adrenaline - Pub & Night	03/450703
Butchery Chedrawi	76/337589
Claud Bakery	03/435085
Falafel & More - Snack	70/969916
Chez Coco - Snack	03/147086
Butchery Chedrawi	03/946624
Diwan el roumi	71/942853
Hawra restaurant	03/802091

WHAT TO SEE?

Hadath el Jebbeh Cedars Forest

St. Daniel church 1110 - 1113

Assi grotto - 1283

The village old Fountain

Ancient Sarcophagus

St. Simon peak

The old St. Doumit tree

IT'S CAMPING SEASON



TAFLA, SMAR JBEIL

Tafla (71 749448) is located in the town of Smar Jbeil, which is well known for its fortress and a dozen or so churches. Smar Jbeil is recognized as one of the oldest Lebanese villages, where one can find remnants dating back to the Canaanites and Phoenicians such as catacombs, sarcophagi, mills and wells. The village is built on a rocky cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and the coast of Byblos and Batroun.

Visitors to Tafla can either take their own tent or rent one locally. For something more comfortable, rooms are available in the campsite's charming villa.

Where to eat

While food is available at Tafla, you may wish to head to the main square of Smar Jbeil for a sandwich or a *manouche*. There's also a good selection of typical seafood restaurants on the coast, including White Beach (06 742505), Club House – Lebanese Yacht Club (03 608219) or Le Cap (09 623397).

What to do

The rural area of Batroun is very interesting. On the way up to Smar Jbeil, pass by Rachana and visit the open-air museum of sculptures. You will probably spot an artist from the Basbous family at work.

In Smar Jbeil, take time to explore the religious sites: the church of Our Lady, St. Nohra and St. Takla. The crusader fortress is also worth visiting. Continue towards the east where you will find the monastery of St. Joseph in Jrabta (the sanctuary of St. Rafqa) and the monastery of the saints Cyprian and Justine (the sanctuary of St. Hardini and Blessed Estephan Nehme) in Kifane.

Founder of NEOS Tourism Consultancy and author of "Eco Lebanon: Nature and Rural Tourism" **Nour Farra-Haddad** gives her tips on campsites around Lebanon that are perfect for an inexpensive and fun getaway.

CEDARS GROUND CAMPSITE, SHOUF

Ain Zhalta is a picturesque village in the Shouf district. In Bmahray-Ain Zhalta, one of the entrances of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, one can find the Cedars Ground Campsite (03 938187), open almost all year long to nature lovers. Visitors to the campsite can enjoy many daytime and nighttime activities such as fruit picking, stargazing and moonlight hikes.

Where to eat

Enjoy a meal by the campfire or an authentic Lebanese *mezze* at one of the famous local restaurants in Nabeh El Safa such as Yammine (05 230033) or Challalat Nabeh El Safa (05 230030).

What to do

Enjoy a spectacular hike in the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, where you will find some of the oldest cedar trees in Lebanon. Visit the pretty village of Ain Zhalta and continue on to Wardiyeh, a few kilometers away, to see incredible sculptures at the Assaf Museum and atelier (03 737528/71 211915, atelierassaf.org). End your journey in Batloun to discover the unique remains of the village demolished by an earthquake in 1956.





HILLHOUT VILLAGE, METN

Khenchara is a village in the Metn district, located between the towns of Bteghrine and Shoueir. Known for its traditional red-roofed houses and skilled stonemasons, it is home to Hillhout Village (70 757711), a charming 25,000-square meter retreat in the heart of the forest. It is popular with families and groups due to its magical location, offering guests a place to camp, a picnic area and an array of ecotourism activities.

Where to eat

Prepare some tasty treats or buy ready-made sandwiches and take advantage of the picnic area at Hillhout Village. Alternatively, enjoy cheese and wine at the winery of the St. John Monastery (03 203098/70 165277/04 270577, cavestjean.com). Other restaurants in the area serve typical Lebanese cuisine, while O Bois (70 345752) has an extensive international menu.

What to do

On the way to Khenchara, stop in Bikfaya to visit the churches of St. Elijah (Mar Elias), St. Michael (Mar Mikhael) and Our Lady of Deliverance. Khenchara is home to the Melkite Catholic Monastery of Mar Youhanna, which lies on a rocky hill and looks like a fortress built over a cliff. Do not miss visiting the monastery museum displaying traditional printing material and one of the oldest printing machines in the Middle East.

After Khenchara, continue towards Baskinta at the foot of Mount Sannine, the native village of Mikhail Naimeh (1889-1988), one of Lebanon's greatest writers and thinkers. The Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (lebanontrail.org) developed the Baskinta Literary Trail to celebrate the work of several acclaimed poets and novelists from the region, including Mikhail Naimy, Amin Maalouf, Abdallah Ghanem, Suleiman Kettaneh, Rachid Ayoub, and Georges Ghanem.

The beautiful village is also known for its wealth of religious sites, notably the churches of St. Elijah (Mar Elias) and St. Michael (Mar Mikhael).

CAMPING IN FAKRA, KFARDEBIAN

Situated in Mount Lebanon, at an elevation of 1,550m, Fakra is celebrated for its remarkable karstique rocks and Roman monuments: temples, columns, altars and tombs cut from rock. One temple rises spectacularly, nestled in thick rock. In Fakra, a bridge called Jisr al-Hajar (Stone Bridge) features a magnificent arch measuring 38m in height.

El Nawawis campsite (03 256709), close to the famous Roman temples, occupies a massive 20,000-square meters. It boasts a camping area, a picnic area and a number of bungalows. Another picnic and camping area, Abou Maroun (09 300218), is also available in Fakra.

Where to eat

Grab some essentials and have a picnic at El Nawawis. If you prefer eating at a restaurant, head to Anater (09 300818), Qalaat Fawaz (03 928061) or Chez Chaker (09 341800) where you will be served a Lebanese feast.

What to do

Once you have seen the natural bridge and the Roman ruins of Fakra, you can continue to Chabrouh to have a nice walk near the dam and visit the monastery of the resurrection. From there, take the road toward the largest statue of St. Charbel in Lebanon, perched on the mountain top.



Abou Maroun

Guesthouse Gem: ZITA FIDAR



The latest addition to the **L'Hôte Libanais** family is a spectacular, modern guesthouse by the sea. **Reem Joudi** explains more.

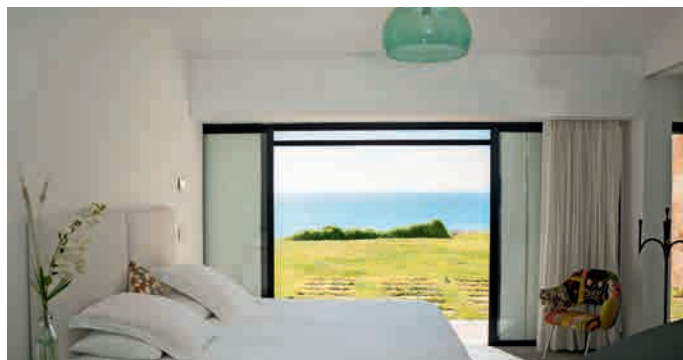
Zita Fidar is a lot of things all in one. It is an architectural landmark, designed and executed by Lebanese firm Raed Abellama Architects in 2011; it is a luxurious home a mere stone's throw from inviting Mediterranean waters; and it is the most recent addition to the L'Hôte Libanais family of guesthouses.

Located in the quiet town of Fidar, a short drive from the historic city of Byblos, Zita Fidar is an ideal escape for those in search of quietude and uninterrupted sea views.

The home comprises six rooms, each decorated in an elegant, minimalist style, so that guests can enjoy the views to the full. Indeed, Zita Fidar's design was carefully thought-out to ensure there would be no disruption to the surrounding views.

The living and dining spaces are at the guesthouse's entry level, while private rooms are located at lower levels and positioned as close to the sea as possible, making sunrises and sunsets truly magical.

Zita Fidar is a unique, multi-sensorial experience: its owner, Karim, is passionate about architecture, visual arts and music, and has



Photos: Georges Rouhana

imbued the home with his three passions in a tasteful manner. You can say that the spirit of the house is musical: it serves as an exhibition space, hosting art and music events regularly throughout the year.

As L'Hôte Libanais' first guesthouse in the Byblos area, Zita Fidar's contemporary exterior is a melodious juxtaposition to the nearby Phoenician city. Guests can easily switch between both worlds, starting their day with a swim in the sea, followed by a dip in the property's outdoor pool and continuing on to Byblos for an afternoon of incredible history.

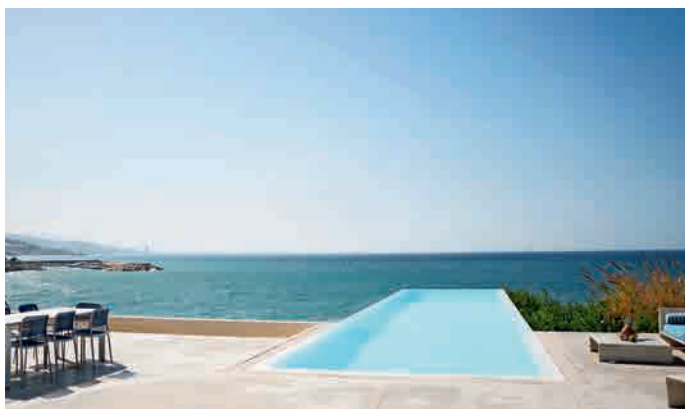
If Zita Fidar's unique architecture, wonderful views and beautiful spirit are not captivating enough, guests can enjoy fresh, organic meals, cold-pressed juices and specialty coffee for breakfast.

Where to eat

If you're looking to explore culinary treats beyond the healthy eats at Zita Fidar, you can stop by Bourj Al Fidar, a casual dining space which specializes in fresh seafood and traditional Lebanese cuisine.

Rooms starting from: 375,000 LBP (250 USD) including breakfast.

hotelibanais.com



سطيحة الفلمنكي عالروشة تزينة
و بأعلى الألوان نقرشت



Rural Escapes

Travel blog **Notes of a Traveler** takes us on a journey to discover two new guesthouses, where you're guaranteed a very warm welcome.



DOMAINE DE CHOUCHÈNE

Domaine de Chouchène in Qab Elias was the private residence of the Touma family for many years before its doors were opened to the public in 2017. Currently, there are five rooms to accommodate guests, while the two century-old traditional houses next to the main building are being renovated to host more visitors.

What's special about Domaine de Chouchène is the surrounding area, which is abundant in flora and fauna. Guests can enjoy a morning walk in the forest followed by a traditional breakfast by the river.

What to do in Qab Elias

The trails of Chouchène allow visitors to discover the village of Qab Elias while enjoying its most important landmarks. Two trails are available: Tarik Fakhreddine and Tarik el Kroum. Whether you opt for the first or the second, don't miss the Plaza of the Cross, affording panoramic views over Qab Elias, the Plaza of Fakhreddine, the ruins of an ancient fort dating back more than 500 years, and the Haidara Ruins.

71 543522, [f domainedechouchane](#)

notesofatraveler.com

BEIT MATTA

Managed by the lovely Matta sisters, Jeanne and Christine, Beit Matta is a charming mountain residence in Jarjouaa, South Lebanon.

The siblings take great pride in making guests feel at home, inviting them to enjoy freshly baked *manouche* and organic produce from the garden. They are also generous with their time, sharing their passion for their village and their heritage.

The house comprises five double rooms and a lovely garden with a mini pool.

What to do around Jarjouaa

Al Rehan Grotto

Known as the Jeita of the South, the Al Rehan caves are home to stalactite and stalagmite formations and naturally-carved statues.

Jezzine

The beautiful town of Jezzine is just 10 minutes away from Jarjouaa and offers plenty of exciting sites for visitors including the waterfalls, the fifth highest in the world, and the Kanaan Palace, which dates back to the late 1800s.

03 419648, [f BeitMatta](#)

lebanontraveler.com



Enhanced Socio-Economic status of women in south Lebanon

The Lebanon Family Planning Association in Partnership with Ricerca e Cooperazione are implementing a project under AFKARIII program funded by the European Union and managed by the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform.



The Project aims to strengthen socio-economic status of women in the marginalized regions of South Lebanon through economic empowerment.

The specific objectives are:

1. Enhancing capacity building of 180 women entrepreneurs in South Lebanon by end of project.
2. Strengthening the institutional capacity of Kawkaba & Hasbaya Women Cooperatives

The expected results that will be achieved at the end of the project:

1. The institutional capacity of the women Cooperatives in Kawkaba & Hasbaya has been developed and more women from the region have joined to become members.
2. Twenty Five (25) members of the cooperatives have been trained and have enough experience in needs assessment, defining strategic objectives and work plans, are able to attract resources and are open to local, regional and national initiatives.
3. Nine (9) training courses have been implemented to build the capacity of the targeted women, on food safety and the Hazards Analysis and Critical Points (HACCP)
4. Nine (9) training courses will be implemented on standardization of products in order to create a unique label and brand for the different products.
5. A marketing strategy has been defined and put in place this will include Contracts with distributors have been signed in order to sell the branded products in a more efficient way.
 - 5.1 The branded labeled products will be sold on line through existing platforms.
 - 5.2 the products will be sold as well in the seasonal exhibitions that take place in different regions
 - 5.3 The women have ownership of the project and are bringing in new ideas to expand and enhance their work.





A FIVE-STAR DAY WITH THE HOTEL CONCIERGES

We asked the four Les Clefs d'Or concierges in town to give their insider tips on the best things to discover in Beirut.

FOUR SEASONS



ROXANE FERSANE
Head Concierge

DESIGNERS

Roxanne says, "We have some extremely talented **Lebanese designers** so I often encourage my fashion-savvy guests to visit some of their boutiques and ateliers."

Elie Saab (*Elie Saab bldg., Beirut Central District, 01 981982*)

"Saab's creativity has placed Lebanon on the international fashion map. Specializing in bridal wear and haute couture, his designs are elegant and stylish."

Cynthia Raffoul (*Gouraud St., Gemmayze, 01 443491*)

"Raffoul's 'Sur-Mesure' collection tailors unique pieces of jewelry revealing each client's story."

L'Atelier Rififi (*Rue Achrafieh, 01 219982*)

"As the only haute-couture designer for kids clothing in Lebanon, Rififi creates beautifully tailored occasion wear."

Boudi Dib (*Rahbani St., Antelias, 03 921976*)

"Dib specializes in made-to-measure suits and shirts for men, playing with lightweight fabrics to create exquisite cuts."

Sarah's Bag (*Rue Du Liban, Tabaris, 01 575585*)

"Flaunting funky designs to reflect Lebanon and its culture, Sarah's Bag is a great place to purchase an eye-catching souvenir with a twist."

PHOENICIA



FADI ABI RAMIA
 Assistant Head Concierge

ARTISAN STORES

Fadi says, "There are many skilled **artisans** in Lebanon and several shops where you can purchase pretty and decorative hand-made items."

Orient 499 (*Omar Daouk St., Minet el Hosn, 01 369499*)

"Orient 499 has a beautiful range of products made by hand such as abayas, soaps, ornaments and jewelry."

L'Artisan du Liban (*Pasteur St., Gemmayze, 01 564907*)

"This shop is a popular destination for tourists looking for contemporary Lebanese handicrafts."

Mouawad Artisans (*Antoun Gemayel St., Hamra, 01 351343/03 946890/71 485132*)

"Run by a father and son, Mouawad Artisans produce stylish handicrafts, accessories in brass, copper, stainless steel and leather, and affordable jewelry. You can even watch artists at work in the workshop."

Adora Boutique (*Monot St., Achrafieh, 01 397902*)

"Visit Adora for a wonderful selection of kaftans, accessories, bags and jewelry made by Lebanese designers."



LE GRAY



CHLOÉ CHELALA
 Assistant FOM and Head Concierge

ART SPACES

Chloe says, "One of the things I love most about Lebanon is its rich art scene and I enjoy visiting the many **art spaces** in town."

Aishti Foundation (*Antelias Highway, 04 717716*)

"Built on the site of an abandoned sugar factory with views overlooking the sea, the gallery has an impressive collection of modern art celebrating freedom and power."

Ayyam Gallery (*Beirut Tower, Zeitoune St., Downtown, 01 374450/51*)

"Located in Downtown, Ayyam showcases the work of some of the top contemporary artists in the Middle East."

Alwane (*Saifi Village, Saifi, 01 975250*)

"With a variety of paintings, sculptures, and jewelry that span decades, Alwane's contrasting art pieces are fascinating."

Art Lab (*Gouraud St., Gemmayze, 03 244577*)

"Art Lab represents over 20 artists, most of them Syrian. The collection is beautiful and inspiring in equal measure."

Janine Rubeiz Gallery (*Majdalani bldg., Avenue Charles de Gaulle, Raouche, 01 868290*)

"This gallery displays classic and contemporary Lebanese art by masters as well as emerging talents."



LE ROYAL



MILAD FRANCIS
 Head Concierge

MUSEUMS

Milad says, "Lebanon has a remarkable history spanning thousands of years, evidenced in several **museums** in town."

Beirut National Museum (*Museum St., Achrafieh, 01 426703*)

"The museum's collection of archaeological artifacts is overwhelming, with some dating back to the prehistoric age and the Mamluk period."

Nicolas Sursock Museum (*Greek Orthodox Archbishopric St., Achrafieh, 01 202001*)

"In my opinion this is Lebanon's most important art museum, showcasing the work of local and international artists."

Lebanese Prehistory Museum (*Saint Joseph University St., Achrafieh, 01 339702*)

"This incredible museum exhibits artifacts collected during the 19th century by the Jesuit fathers. The collection documents the evolution of the Lebanese."

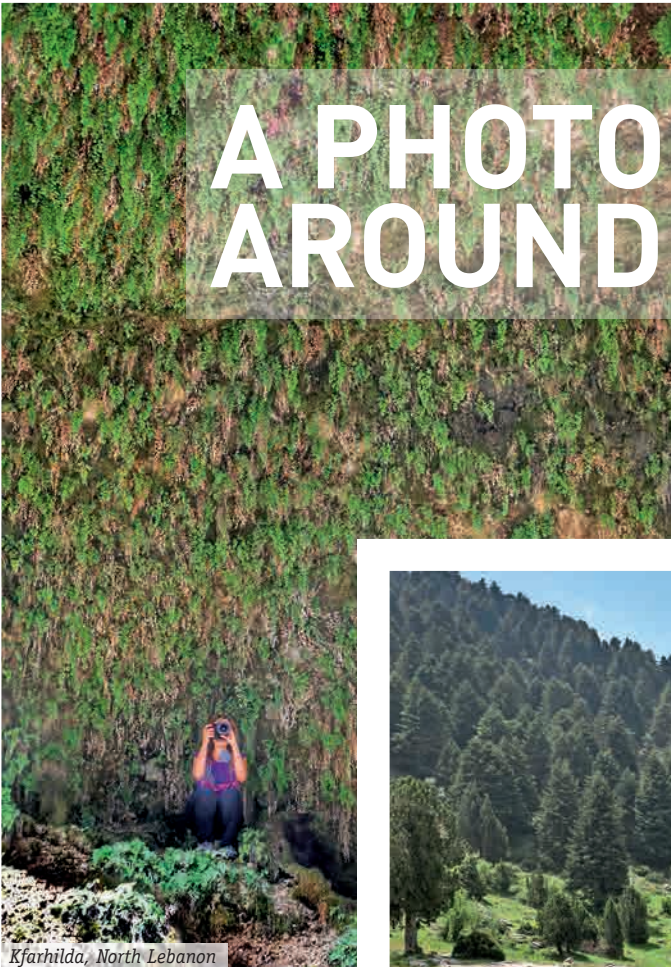
AUB Archeological Museum (*American University of Beirut, Bliss St., Hamra, 01 340549*)

"This is one of the oldest in the Middle East and holds a vast collection of items from Lebanon and neighboring countries dating back to the early Stone Age."

A PHOTO AROUND

JOURNEY LEBANON

If a picture is worth a thousand words, these photographs speak volumes. Instagrammer and explorer **Nidal Majdalani** shows us Lebanon through her lens.



Kfarhilda, North Lebanon



Akkar, North Lebanon



Ammiq, Bekaa



Saida, South Lebanon



Niha, Bekaa



Falougha, Mount Lebanon

© nidal.majdalani

Check out [@lebanontraveler](#) on Instagram for other pictures we love and stay tuned for our next photo journey!

DO...DARE...DREAM



Louvre Hotels Group under Jin Jiang's ownership is part of a platform which includes more than 6,000 hotels - 640,000 rooms - 300 destination. 9 clearly differentiated brands from 2-5 stars.

In line with the group's strategy to build its presence in emerging markets, Louvre Hotels has outlined an aggressive expansion plan for the Middle East and North Africa region, with an emphasis on the mid-market segment. The group currently operates 62 hotels with over 9,600 rooms while it plans to exceed 100 hotels in the Middle East by 2020.



Louvre Hotels
GROUP

SAVE THE DATE



Whisky Live Beirut

Grab your agenda and mark down these events.

JUNE

JOUNIEH SUMMER FESTIVAL

Where: USEK Campus, Kaslik
When: 16 - 29 June

With performances by Wael Kfoury (23 June) and James Arthur (29 June), this year's show promises to be a big hit.

BEIRUT DESIGN WEEK

Where: Around Beirut
When: 22 - 29 June

Bringing together more than 25,000 visitors at over 150 events in various locations around Beirut, Beirut Design Week showcases the best of Lebanese and international design.

SUMMER MISK FESTIVAL

Where: Beit Misk
When: 22 & 28 June

This year, Beit Misk welcomes Guy Manoukian and Abu (22 June). The festival will also feature British chart-toppers Clean Bandit (28 June).
71 211121, [f MiskEntertainment](#)

JULY

BATROUN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Where: Batroun
When: 1 - 25 July

Kick your summer up a level and take part in all sorts of fun activities from a bike festival (1 July) to a windsurf challenge (16 - 25 July).
06 422262, [batrounfestival.org](#)

BEER, WINE, SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Where: Batroun
When: 8

Get ready to discover Lebanon's best beer, wine and seafood from a large selection of vendors from around the country (part of the Batroun International Festival).
06 422262, [batrounfestival.org](#)

BAALBECK INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

When: 8 July - 17 August
Where: Bacchus Temple, Baalbeck

For the first time in its six-decade history, the festival will host a musical-comedy theater performance of "Illa Iza" by Georges Khabaz (10 - 11 August). Other performances include a live concert by renowned composer Khaled Mouzannar (8 July) and a tribute to Oum Kalthoum by Marwa Nagy and Mal Farouk (20 July).
01 373150, [f BaalbeckInternationalFestival](#)

BEITEDDINE ART FESTIVAL

Where: Beiteddine Palace
When: 12 July - 11 August

After a long hiatus, the legendary Ziad Rahbani is making his long awaited comeback on the first and second night of the festival (12 - 13 July). Other performances include the Antonio Cades Dance Academy (19 July), Ute Lemper (25 July), Kadim Al Saher (27 - 28 July), Carla Bruni (30 July) and the Cirque Éloize (9 - 11 August).
01 349060, [beiteddine.org](#)

CEDARS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Where: Bcharre
When: 13 - 28 July

Known for its rich program of musical, cultural and environmental activities, Shakira's concert on the opening night of the festival (13 July) is definitely an event not to miss.
09 261201, [cedarsinternationalfestival.org](#)

UNITE WITH TOMORROWLAND

Where: Seaside Arena, Beirut
When: 28 July

For the second consecutive year, Lebanon will be connected live to the Tomorrowland mainstage in Belgium.
[tomorrowland.com](#)

AUGUST

BYBLOS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Where: Byblos
When: 1 August - TBC

As a festival first, an all-standing concert will be taking place with international hit-makers The Chainsmokers (1 August).
09 542020, [byblosfestival.org](#)

EHDENIYAT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Where: Ehdn
When: TBC

Following last year's successful performances, Kadim el Saher is back by popular demand for two consecutive concerts (4 - 5 August).
76 908020, [ehdeniyat.org](#)

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بيروت

IBRAHIM MAALOUF IN CONCERT

Where: Batroun
When: 11 August

Watch the incredible French-Lebanese trumpeter, composer and arranger Ibrahim Maalouf in concert (part of the Batroun International Festival).
06 422262, batrounfestival.org

SEPTEMBER

LEBANON LATIN FESTIVAL

When: 5 - 10 September
Where: Eddé Sands Resorts, Byblos

This Latin extravaganza is hosting over 90 artists, 15 DJs and more than 100 workshops to spice up the end of the summer season.
03 727240, lebanonlatinfestival.com

BATROUN MEDITERRANEAN FILM FESTIVAL

Where: Batroun
When: 6 - 9 September

If you're into foreign films then this one is for you. Apart from film screenings, the festival will also be hosting competitions, workshops, and concerts.
06 422262, batrounfestival.org

WICKERPARK FESTIVAL

Where: Batroun
When: 8 September

This zero-waste grassroots alternative music festival brings together new and emerging bands and plays a major role in the dynamics of the alternative culture in the country.
wickerparkfestival.com

BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR

Where: Seaside Arena, Beirut
When: 19 - 23 September

Seeking to reaffirm Lebanon as the design hub of the Middle East, Beirut Design Fair will once again showcase contemporary and vintage furniture and design objects from 45 exhibitors.
beirut-design-fair.com

BEIRUT ART FAIR

Where: Seaside Arena, Beirut
When: 20 - 23 September

Celebrating its ninth edition with more than 50 galleries representing over 20 countries, this year's art fair will present a focus exhibition dedicated to Lebanese photography.
beirut-art-fair.com

BEIRUT RESTAURANTS FESTIVAL

Where: Trainstation, Mar Mikhael, Beirut
When: 28 - 30 September

With over 50 restaurants, cafés and bars serving delicious food and refreshment, as well as a jam-packed program of live music, you won't be able to resist this popular event.
01 480081, f BeirutRestaurantsFestival

OCTOBER

WHISKY LIVE BEIRUT

Where: Seaside Pavilion, Beirut
When: 18 - 20 October

Discover the most exquisite whiskies from around the world and take part in tastings and masterclasses to learn more about rare and limited edition bottles.
01 480081, whiskylivebeirut.com

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

HIKING

Vamos Todos (*03 917190, vamos-todos.com*), **Dale Corazon** (*70 986118/70 997062, dalecorazon.com*), **33 North** (*03 454996, 33-north.com*), **Footprints Nature Club** (*03 876112, footprintsclub.com*), **Promax** (*03 955642, promaxsports.com*)

CYCLING

Cycle Circle (*03 126675, cycling-circle.com*), **Beirut by Bike** (*03 435524*) and **CycloSport** (*01 446792/03 974736, cycloportlb.com*)

CLIMBING

Lebanese Climbing Association (*03 112338, climbinglebanon.com*)

CAVING

Spéléo Club du Liban (*78 891855, speleoliban.org*), **ALES** (*03 849097, alesliban.org*)

PARAGLIDING

Club Thermique (*03 933359, clubthermique.org*)

SKETCHING

Urban Sketchers Lebanon (*78 891855, f uskLeb*)

Visit lebanontraveler.com to keep track of all the exciting events taking place across the country



Beirut Restaurants Festival

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BRUNA TOHME



TV personality, branding consultant and girl-next-door **Bruna Tohme Zein** talks about her career on the small screen and her relationship to Lebanon.

YOU GREW UP IN SAUDI ARABIA BUT YOU'RE ORIGINALLY FROM MARJAYOUN IN SOUTH LEBANON. WHAT MADE YOU RETURN TO LEBANON?

I returned to Beirut with my family at the age of 10 to attend school. I remember it being a bit of a culture shock at first but I quickly adapted.

YOU HAVE HOSTED SHOWS ON LBCI AND MBC AS WELL AS OTHER STATIONS. HOW DID IT ALL START?

I was at NDU studying graphic design when LBC approached me for a casting. Things happened very quickly after that and I found myself hosting a number of entertainment shows such as a music show on MBC4 called "CokeStudio." From there I went on to do numerous other things including the daily lottery on LBCI.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

When I'm not working as a branding consultant for my agency Bird Media Design or as a TV host, I'm with my little boy Jude and my family. Whenever I get some time to myself, I like to read, watch a movie or see friends. I also volunteer at CHANCE Association, which supports children with cancer.

WHAT HIDDEN GEM IN LEBANON WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO TOURISTS?

I would say gems! The beaches in Tyre are wonderful and Chouwen is an incredible destination for hiking. Anfeh is also beautiful, although it has become more developed.

WHERE DO YOU GO TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL?

As a child, I spent most of my summers in the Metn area. Its green mountains and beautiful houses left a lasting impression on me. For the past few years I've been going to Aley and Bhamdoun. I'm mesmerized by the old houses and traditional architecture.

PICK THREE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE LEBANON

Unique, entertaining and wonderful.

TIPS ON MARJAYOUN FROM BRUNA TOHME

Wander around the olive groves.

Enjoy a bite at Layali Al Moulouk. The neighborhood cafes and restaurants are fun and unpretentious.

Escape the crowd by the Litani River. My father spent much of his youth there enjoying picnics with his friends.

Don't miss seeing Beaufort Castle, the Church of St. George, built in the early 1900s, and the Monastery of St. Hanneh.

Buy the best virgin olive oil and the tastiest olives as well as all your *mouneh* items.

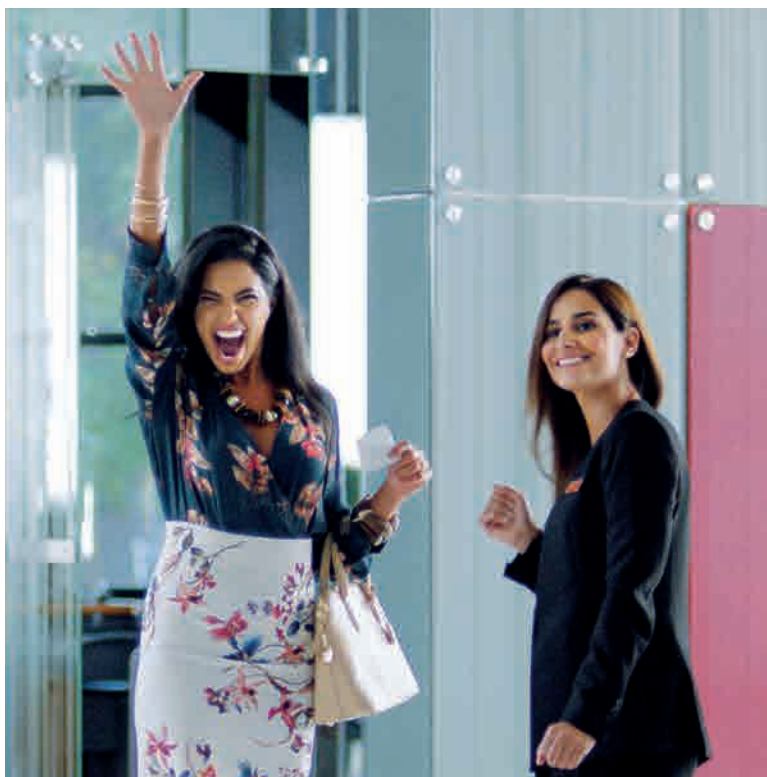
Don't leave without taking pictures of Marjayoun's green landscapes and stunning mountains.



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