



Your passport to adventure

Lebanon Encounters

Country(ies): Lebanon

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C car/minibus/coach

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 8 Days

Start location: Beirut, Lebanon

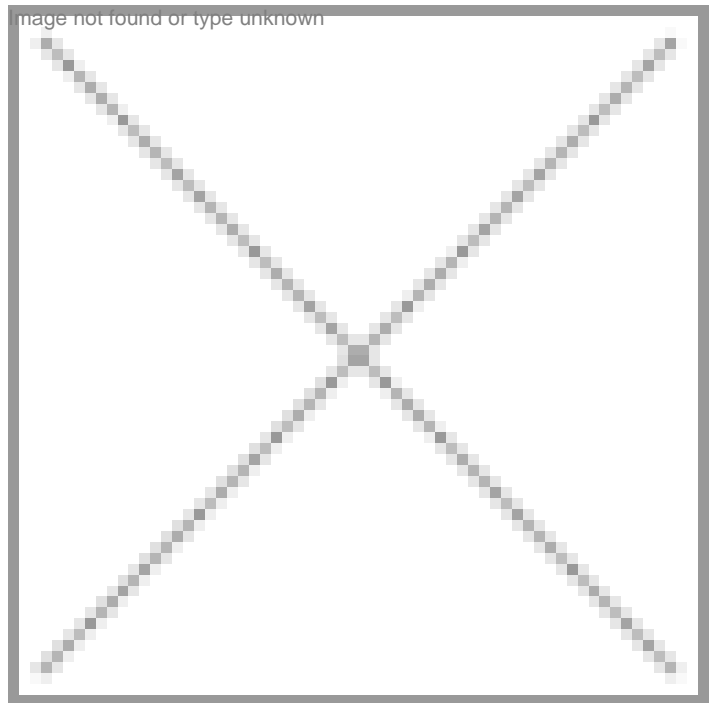
End location: Beirut, Lebanon

Departs On: Saturdays

Meals: Breakfasts - 7, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 0

Highlights: Beirut, Beiteddine Palace, Tyre World Heritage Site, Sidon Souk, Baalbek temple complex, Ksara Caves wine tasting, Cedar Forest, Qadisha Valley, Baatarra Gorge & Waterfall, Byblos harbour & history, Jeita Grotto, Harissa cable car

Places Visited: Beirut, Beiteddine, Tyre, Sidon, Aanjar, Baalbek, Bcharre, Qadisha Valley & Byblos



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Beirut, transfer to hotel

After arriving at the Beirut International Airport our representative will meet you and transfer you to the hotel. You'll have some time to settle in before we run through the itinerary with you. Once you're up to speed, you have the rest of the day free to explore Beirut at your leisure.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Single Room Supplement (LBSGLE) || Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour

Day 2: Barouk Cedars Nature Reserve, Deir al Qamar & Beirut tour

After breakfast we head to our first destination, the Barouk Cedar Nature Reserve, also known as the Al Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve, which is the largest nature reserve in Lebanon. More than 500 species of flora and 32 species of fauna call this sanctuary home.

Next, we drive to the Chouf Mountains to visit the village of Deir al Qamar – which means "Monastery of the Moon". The village is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the capital of Lebanon during the 17th century.

Our next stop is the beautiful Beiteddine Palace – constructed in the 19th century by Emir Bashir, is exceptionally well-preserved and is a testament to the opulence of the time. Now, it hosts the annual Beiteddine Festival and the Beiteddine Palace Museum.

The remainder of the day is spent touring Lebanon's capital, Beirut – It is one of the oldest cities in the world, and has had a turbulent history, both ancient and modern. Highlights visited include the Beirut Souks, the Corniche, and the downtown region. We will also see the Pigeon Grotto, or the Rock of Raouché, a famous natural formation rising out of the sea.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Tyre & Sidon

Today we'll start touring the South of Lebanon. We kick off exploring Tyre, also known as Sour in Arabic – it is more than 4,000 years old and was a great ancient Phoenician city. Tyre is filled with important historical landmarks and is currently a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Our next stop is Sidon, another ancient Phoenician city, which became wealthy due its excellent production of glass and a purple dye extracted from murex – a type of shellfish. It is now a fast-growing city, and important both administratively and commercially. We'll visit the Crusader Sea Castle, the great Mosque, Khan el Franj, and many other fascinating sites.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Baalbeck, Anjar & Ksara Caves

Today we head to Baalbek – called "Heliopolis" or "City of the Sun" by the Romans and Greeks, which is home to a famous temple complex that is very well-preserved. This complex was built as a sanctuary dedicated to worshipping the Heliopolitan triad of god- Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury.

Our next stop is Umayyad city of Anjar, located in the Bekaa Valley. This city was founded in the 8th century by Caliph Walid – it provides evidence of excellent town-planning and features mosques, palaces, and baths. It also features 600 shops, indicating that it was an important commercial centre.

The last stop of the day is at Ksara Caves – here you'll find the oldest winery in Lebanon. The caves are approximately two miles long and were used as cellars to store the wines. You can expect a guided tour of the caves and the winery where you can sample some of the finest wine Lebanon has to offer.

OVERNIGHT: Zahle guesthouse/hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: The Cedars Ski Resort, Becharre & Qadisha Valley

Today, we head to The Cedars Ski Resort – famous for skiing and snowboarding. The area known as the Cedars of God is found nearby, and contains the last remaining groves of the cedar forests.

We will later explore a nearby village of Becharre – the birthplace of the iconic novelist and poet of Lebanon, Kahlil Gibran – the village contains a museum dedicated to him, featuring his paintings and manuscripts. Later in the afternoon we will visit another UNESCO World Heritage Site, Qadisha Valley, known as the Holy Valley, and the Holy River, Nahr Qadisha, flows through it. We will spend the night in the Monastery of St. Anthony.

OVERNIGHT: Mar Antonios Kozhaya Monastery

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Baatara Gorge and Sinkhole

This morning you will have the option of starting the day with early morning prayers with the monks of the monastery. Later after breakfast, we will visit the unique Baatara Gorge sinkhole, where during the winter and especially rainy periods a 255-metre waterfall cascades into an enormous cavern known as the Baatara Pothole - this is a spectacular natural phenomenon and is perfect for a short hike.

A traditional Lebanese lunch is included today. We finish the day in the beautiful coastal town of Byblos and where the rest of the evening is yours to explore.

OVERNIGHT: Byblos hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Byblos, Harissa & Jeita Grotto

Today we start by touring Byblos, another ancient Phoenician city that has been inhabited since 5000 BC and is famously known as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Byblos is filled with significant historical and archaeological sites, and also features a lovely Phoenician harbour.

Next, we visit Harissa – known for containing an important Christian shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary, known as Our Lady of Lebanon. We take a cable car to the top of the Basilica, from where we can enjoy a spectacular view of the Bay of Jounieh.

Finally today we experience a thrilling visit to the spectacular Jeita Grotto. Here a system of limestone caves spans a distance of almost 9 kilometres, and contains one of the largest collections of stalactites and stalagmites in the world.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Beirut free time. Depart for home

Today is the last day of the tour. The time is yours free to explore Beirut until you are transferred to the airport for your departing flight home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra day in Beirut - post-tour

Included

- 5 nights in 3 to 4-star hotels in Beirut & Byblos
- 1 night in guesthouse/hotel in Zahle
- 1 night in monastery accommodation in Qadisha Valley

- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- Entrance fees to sites visited
- All sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Wine tasting in Ksara Caves
- English speaking guide for all tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (7 breakfasts, 1 lunch)

Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (free on arrival for most nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Hotel gala dinner supplements if applied on Christmas & New Year's Eve
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Winter Season adjustments:

During the winter season from December till March, the monastery accommodation at Mar Antonios Kozhaya, and the tours on Days 4-6 may be adjusted subject to the weather conditions (as snow does sometimes close some of the roads). Should this be the case, the itinerary will be adjusted to suit the current conditions. Should any locations/activities be missed, they will be replaced by other tours and activities in Lebanon that are not affected by the winter weather.

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$69.00

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Beirut - post-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$69.00

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Single Room Supplement (LBSGLE)

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$265.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the

exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

Tour Notes

1. Accommodation

We use good quality 4-star hotels on this tour. Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the hotels normally used on this tour. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. Our routes in Lebanon and the small distances involved mean that we use private vehicles throughout this tour.

3. Transfers

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

4. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very provide suggestions for flights to go with your tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Nearly all our Lebanese tours start and finish in Beirut airport (BEY).

5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In Lebanon we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. At Encounters Travel we only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. Please check our website for more details and profiles of some of our most famous guides.

6. Entrance Fees

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. If you visit any sites not mentioned in the itinerary then you will need to cover the entrance fee costs.

7. Tipping

Tipping is common practice in Lebanon, as a sign of appreciation for services provided. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. GBP 5 / USD 8 per person per day would be appropriate.

8. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions.

In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

Egypt: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A

Jordan: Tetanus, Hepatitis A

Israel: Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis

Lebanon: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A

Malaria is not generally present unless it has been contracted abroad; you do not need to take malaria prophylactics.

More information is available here: [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), [Israel](#), [Lebanon](#)

Note: We are aware of some places in Egypt using 'black henna' instead of pure brown henna. Black henna contains a chemical dye PPD (paraphenylenediamine) which can result in severe allergic reactions and resultant scarring. To be safe we recommend avoiding any henna tattoos while in Egypt unless you are certain they are using pure brown henna.

9. Passports and Visas - Lebanon

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

For many nationalities visiting Lebanon a visa on arrival is possible at Beirut International Airport. This applies to most countries of the Commonwealth, European Union, Russia, Japan and the US continent. Even if you are eligible for a visa on arrival, it is prudent to check up to date requirements with your nearest Lebanese consulate.

Other nationalities may require a visa prior to arrival and to obtain this in advance, please contact your local Lebanese embassy or consulate or a visa agency for details.

IMPORTANT: The Government of Lebanon denies entry to Israeli passport holders, Israeli visa holders (valid or expired) and those with any evidence of travel to Israel within their passport.

10. Time

The time in Egypt, Jordan and Israel is GMT plus 2 hours. Daylight saving adjustments have historically been applied in some years but not others. At present it appears that there will be no daylight saving changes in Egypt 2016 and beyond, though this may change at short notice (with a resulting impact on flight times and schedules). In Jordan and Israel, daylight saving of one hour is generally applied between the end of March and the end of October, making it GMT plus 3 hours. Exact dates vary from year to year and sometimes the changes may be scrapped altogether.

11. Voltage

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already.

If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

12. Money - Lebanon

The local currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese Pounds (called Lira). You do not need to arrange to bring any Lebanese currency with you as exchange facilities are available in the international airports and in most hotels, banks and bureau de changes in major towns. You should try to obtain and keep hold of small denomination notes or coins on you during the tour as these are useful for toilets, tips and small purchases. ATMs are readily available in major towns and many local shops will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge additional fees - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

While in Lebanon you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in local currency, though tips for guides and drivers may be paid in hard currency (GBP, USD, EUR).

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 25-35 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

13. What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Lebanon. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips – you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

Luggage limits: There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

Clothing: The climate in Lebanon varies widely from hot days in the summer to cool and sometimes wet days in the

winter months. At night, especially in the deserts, the temperatures can drop quite dramatically. So you must pack for cool conditions. Formal dress (eg. suits & ties) is not required. When visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

Other items: We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

14. Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.

15. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You can pay your deposit or full balance online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer. We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

16. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

If you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally, or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

17. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected. Financial failure insurance is provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of their tour.

Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

18. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Egypt Uncovered shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

19. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/EgyptUncovered

www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

20. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.

['Travel Aware' campaign](#)

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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
