

Destination Lebanon

Lebanese Panorama

Discovery (7 days)

Lebanon has long enjoyed its privileged position at the crossroads of three continents, proving its resilience over millennia of razzings by foreign invaders & natural disasters. Before the recent years of civil war, Lebanon was the multi-faceted “jewel of the Middle East”, with souqs, ritzy hotels & cutting-edge fashions. Today the country has emerged from the civil war with its spirit & natural environment intact, if not its structure, Beirut in particular, rising from the ashes more alive than ever. Ancient cities, pristine mountains, spectacular gorges and the ambitious and worldly spirit of its people distinguish it as a destination within the Middle East.

Itinerary :

Day 01: Arrival at Beirut Int'l Airport, Meet & Transfer to hotel. Welcome drink.

Day 02: After breakfast, we drive to **Sidon**, which once was one of the most important Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean coast. We'll go visit the renovated khans and the **old souks**, where we probably encounter the locals (fish market) and learn more about the country itself. In the afternoon, we will join the **Chouf** Area, to visit the medieval palaces of the Lebanese rulers during the Ottoman period, in **Deir el Qamar** and **Beiteddine**. Accommodation and dinner in **Auberge**.

Day 03: We'll spend the morning in the Chouf **Cedar Reserve** of Maasser. This is a protected area representing 5% of the Lebanese territory, adequate for a moderate hike, through which we might come across several species of mammals and birds, extinct in other areas of the country. After crossing the Barouk mountain pass, we descend into the **Bekaa** valley, famous for its vines and fertile ground, and consequently go visit the **Ksara winery**, for wine tasting and a quick look at its “treasures” hidden in rock carved caves; a reminder of Bacchus, the divinity of wine, whose temple is found some 40 km to the North next to Jupiter's and Venus' as we come upon **Baalbeck**. **Hotel** accommodation.

Day 04: After breakfast, we prepare our 4x4 vehicles to climb to **Jabal Makmel** plateau via the highest springs of the Middle East, driving into off-road tracks and hiking between Juniper trees in a less visited area of the **Cedars** Mountains. In wintertime, this is a unique area for snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing. After a “panoramic” picnic lunch-pause on the “Col des Cèdres”, we move down to the Cedars for a walking visit and into the **Qadisha Valley** for accommodation into a dormitory style **monastery** carved into rock.

Day 05: The day starts with a moderate **hike** in the **Qadisha**, a classified “world heritage” scattered with chapels, hermitages and monasteries cut from rock, inhabited from the 3rd millennium BC to the Roman period, offering caves and rock shelters for the early maronite communities. Day ends in the pleasant town of **Byblos** on the Mediterranean coast, relaxing to the wave sounds and maybe go for a swim. **Hotel** Accommodation and dinner.

Day 06: Visit of the site and town of Byblos, whose history goes back to some 4000 years, revealing the vestige of the several civilizations that have occupied it from the Stone Age to the Phoenicians, from the Romans to the Crusaders. Many times destroyed and rebuilt, **Beirut** seems determined to maintain its charm, history and position on the international level. From the renovated central district to Bliss St- with its beautiful gardens and rich museum – passing by the Corniche by the seaside, to the more popular quarters of Basta, and the architecturally interesting Lebanese houses in Achrafieh, we spend the rest of the day re-discovering the capital Beirut, linking car drive and easy trek. **Hotel**

Day 07: Transfer to Beirut airport, and fly home.

Lebanese Panorama

Discovery & adventure

Group: from 4 to 16 pax

Team: Local Tour Leader

Transport Mini bus & bus

Accommodation: Hotels, Monastery, Auberge

Period: all year

■
Cedars Way
Adventure (9 days)

At the crossroads between East and West, Lebanon enjoys a very rich archaeological and cultural heritage that goes back to the times of the Phoenicians and further. While travelling about, sometimes in 4x4 vehicles and sometimes on foot, this programme allows you to discover the heart of the country's mountains and valleys and the cities, witnesses of the passing of some of the greatest civilizations of the Mediterranean area.

Itinerary :

Day 01: Meet and transfer to Beirut hotel.

Day 02: Hike in the mountains to the roman ruins of **El Bourj**. Then we drive by off-road vehicle to the Zaarour and **Sannine** mountains. **Auberge** stay at close to 2000 m.

Day 03: Early start by road to visit the Umayyad ruins at **Anjar** and later the majestic Roman temples at **Baalbeck**. Lunch break with traditional cuisine. We drive off to northern province of Hermel where we stay with a **local family**.

Day 04: **Off- road** in Wadi Fa'ra, eastern side of Mount-Lebanon. 2 hour **trekking**. Picnic panoramic Lunch. Off by 4x4 vehicles to the **Cedars** area. Stay in Maronite **Monastery**. Dormitory style.

Day 05: Down to valley of **Wadi Qadisha**. 2 hour **Trekking**. Off to **Byblos**. Visit Town and site. **Hotel** Stay and diner.

Day 06: Off and visit of **Jeita** grottos. Then old souk of Zouk Mosbeh. Lunch. Then off to the mountains at Baskinta (mountain countryside).

Day 07: Off and visit of **Beiteddine**. Lunch in **Deir El Qamar**. And off to Tyre. Felucca trip and swim. Overnight accommodation and diner with **local family**.

Day 08: Visit ruins, town and souks of **Tyre**, then off to **Sidon**. Lunch. Visit of the site. Back to **Beirut**.

Day 09: Transfer to airport & Fly home.

Cedars Way
Adventure
Group: From 4 to 12 pax
Team: Local Tour Leader
Transport: 4x4 vehicles
Accommodation: Monastery, Auberge, local family
Period: From April to November

■ Gardens of Lebanon

Trek (8 days)

Lebanon enjoys an advantageous position on the eastern Mediterranean coast at the meeting point of three continents. Well-watered, fertile and with a moderate climate, the country's main resources are its energetic people and its outstanding natural beauty. We will discover Mont Lebanon on foot, the villages and the Bedouins, the cliffs, the caves, craggy mountains and steep valleys, which makes this small country seem much larger!

Itinerary:

- Day 01 : Welcome at Beirut Int'l airport and transfer to the hotel.
- Day 02 : Depart to the **Bekaa Valley** for the visit of the Umayyad site of **Anjar** , the Caves of Ksara (wine tasting) and the famous temples of **Baalbeck**. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 03: Breakfast, then head off to the region of Akkar to begin the crossing on foot of **Mt Lebanon**, over the crests from Qammouaa to the **Cedars** in 3 consecutive days. First night stop: **Bivouac** overnight (double tents) & **dinner with « local farmer family »** at Marj el Tawil, a land of agriculture, not inhabited in winter.
- Day 04 : Traditional breakfast, then we continue our trek to Ain el Bayda, right below the plateau of **Qornet es Sawada**, **Home stay** accommodation and dinner, a typical style of the region.
- Day 05 : Today we climb the plateau of Qornet es Sawda, the highest peak of the Middle East at 3083m altitude (panorama***). Descend by late afternoon to the village of the poet and philosopher **Gibran Khalil Gibran** (the author of the Prophet), a town called **Bcharreh**, via the natural reserve of the Cedars. Hotel Accommodation at Bcharreh.
- Day 06 : We continue our trek by discovering the **Qadisha** Gorge - classified as world heritage by the UNESCO – through its numerous walking trails and intriguing natural and cultural variety. **Home stay** accommodation and dinner.
- Day 07 : Morning trek in the Qadisha (after breakfast), then off to the coastal town of Jbeil (**Byblos**) on the Mediterranean Sea. Free afternoon to relax on besides the sea waves . By late afternoon, we head to Beirut the capital. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 08 : Transfer to the Beirut Int'l Airport for the return flight.

Gardens of Lebanon
Trek
Group: from 4 to 12 pax
Team: Local Tour Leader
Transport Mini Bus & 4x4 vehicles
Accommodation: Camp, hotels, Homestay
Period: from May to November

Lebanon in depth

Discovery (12 days)

Itinerary :

- Day 01: Arrival at Beirut Int'l Airport. Transfer to hotel & welcome drink.
- Day 02: After breakfast , we head straight North to **Tripoli**, at 85 km from Beirut. Lebanon's second largest city, with a character of it's own regarding the customs and traditions that have disappeared elsewhere. We carry on to Qbayat, where we lodge in a modern **monastery** ,in comfortable rooms. Dinner & accommodation.
- Day 03: Morning begins with a moderate **hike** (at around 1200m above sea level) to **Aakkar el Atiqa**,a town that was a silk-rich community some 90 years ago. Through pine trees & next to Phoenician tombs we drive up to **Jabal Qammouaa** (1950 m), a picturesque less visited area, and off the beaten paths 4x4 tracks, before heading back to Qbayat. Same accommodation as day02.
- Day 04: After breakfast, we descend to the **Bekaa Valley** via **4x4** tracks until we reach the road to **Baalbeck**. Lunch and visit of the "City of the Sun" (Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus' temples). Dinner & Hotel accommodation.
- Day 05: Early transfer to **Qornet El Sawda** (3088m), via the highest springs in the Middle East, off-road at around 2000m, on the Jabal Makmel plateau (*ideal for snow shoeing & cross country skiing in winter*). After a "panoramic" lunch-pause, we come down to "**Horch Ehden Reserve**" (at around 1300m) for a trek into this splendidly well preserved "garden", home to 40% of the country's species. We move down into the **Qadisha Valley** just a few minutes away for accommodation in a rock carved **monastery**. Dormitory style accommodation and dinner.
- Day 06: This day starts with a soft **hike** in the **Qadisha** (also called the Holy Valley), a "Unesco classified world Heritage". Filled with caves and rock shelters inhabited from the 3rd millennium BC to the Roman period, the valley is scattered with chapels, hermitages and monasteries cut from rock. Day ends in **Byblos**, relaxing to wave sounds of the Mediterranean Sea. Hotel accommodation and dinner.
- Day 07: Visit of the site and town of Byblos, whose history goes back some 4000 years. From the Stone Age to the Phoenicians, from the Romans to the Crusaders, **Byblos** reveals the traces of the several civilizations that have occupied it. While the Tour Leader brings his own touch and decides with the group whether we should go swimming or check the beautiful view of **Jounieh** Bay in wire-car or visit the artisans in Zouk, this day is meant to be a buffer, before heading to Beirut. Hotel accommodation and dinner.
- Day 08: We continue our Lebanese panorama more to the South, to **Tyre** who is often mentioned in ancient texts, and it's glory spread far beyond its border. We have the opportunity to discover its underwater hidden treasures snorkelling, or just relax on the fisherman's "felucca" after the visit we shall be welcomed by a **local family**, and share their food and house. **Homestay** and dinner.
- Day 09: Breakfast the traditional way in the souk of Tyre, before heading to **Sidon**, also one important Phoenician port. We'll go visit the **old souks**, and renovated khans & learn more about the country and the residents. Transfer to the Chouf mountains, and visit of **Beiteddine** palace and **Deir el Qamar** village, both masterpieces of the Lebanese 19th century architecture. Accommodation and dinner in **Auberger**, closer to a 3 star hotel.
- Day 10: After breakfast, we'll join the "**Chouf Cedars Reserve**" (a protected area representing 5% of the Lebanese territory) for a moderate **hike**, through which we might come across several species of mammals and birds, extinct in other areas of the country. Back to **Beirut**. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 11: Visit of **Beirut**, From the renovated central district to Bliss St- with its beautiful gardens and rich museum passing by the Corniche by the seaside, to the more popular quarters of Basta, and the architecturally interesting Lebanese houses in Achrafieh, we spend the rest of the day re-discovering the capital Beirut, linking car drive and trek. Free afternoon. Hotel accommodation .
- Day 12: Transfer to Airport & Fly back home.

Lebanon in Depth

Discovery, easy hikes

Group: from 6 to 12 pax

Team: Local Tour leader and drivers

Transport: mini bus

Accommodation: Hotels, monasteries, Local families

Period: All year

Snow Adventure

Cross country skiing (9days)

Yes, you read correctly. With Plateaus as high as 2800 m. above sea-level coupled with the Mediterranean sun and blue skies, you can ski all-day in the unspoiled wilderness of the Mount Lebanon mountains. Camping out or staying at inns or with the local village families you will be able to experience first hand the Lebanese countryside and its beauty.

Itinerary:

Day 01: Meet and transfer to Beirut or suburb hotel.

Day 02: Early start for a full day's **cross-country skiing** in **Chabrouh** (Faraya region). Hotel.

Day 03: Departure to our **Lady of Harissa** (overlooking the bay of **Jounieh**), then to the Phoenician city of **Byblos**. Drive up the mountains to **Laqlouq**. Homestay Accommodation and dinner taken with a **local family**.

Day 04: Early start for a full day's **cross-country skiing** in **Laqlouq**. At the end of the day, we leave for the **Qadisha gorge**, also known as the holy valley where we spend the night in a Maronite **monastery**. Dormitory style accommodation.

Day 05: Full day **skiing in the Cedars** area (at over 2000 m alt.). Stay again at the **monastery**.

Day 06: Transfer to ski resort town of **Zaarour** in the Metn region. Full day of **skiing**. Overnight Beirut.

Day 07: Free morning to discover **Beirut**. In the early afternoon depart to **Baalbeck**. We spend the night with a local family. **Home stay** accommodation.

Day 08: Departure to visit the Umayyad ruins of **Anjar**. Then it's off to **Deir El Qamar** and **Beiteddine**. **Auberge** accommodation.

Day 09: Transfer to airport.

Snow Adventure

Ski

Group: from 4 to 12 pax

Team: Specialized Tour guide, local tour leader and drivers

Transport: Minibus / bus or 4x4

Accommodation: Hotels, monastery, local family

Period: from January to mid April

Combine Lebanon & Syria

On the road to Damascus

Discovery (12 days)

The following is a comfortable & easy itinerary, allowing in depth discoveries of Lebanon & Syria's major highlights, as well as local cultures & traditions. Ideal for family touring!

Itinerary :

- Day 01: Arrival and welcome to Beirut Airport and Transfer to Hotel.
- Day 02: After breakfast & a general briefing of the trip, we alternate walking & car drive into **Beirut**'s Central District through the morning visit. Many times destroyed and rebuilt, the city seems determined to rise from the ashes of the last war. We go on South to **Tyre**. **local home stay** & dinner.
- Day 03: We discover Lebanese traditional breakfast at **Tyre** before leaving to **Sidon** than visit the medieval town of **Deir el Qamar**. **Auberge** accommodation. Night walk in town.
- Day 04: Morning visit of **Beiteddine** Palace than descent into the **Bekaa Valley** to visit the wineries and the famous **Baalbeck** temples . Hotel accommodation.
- Day 05: After breakfast, we traverse the Mount Mnaitra to the **Cedars**, and visit **Gibran**'s museum in his hometown **Bcharré**. **Monastery** accommodation and dinner prepared communally.
- Day 06: **Qadisha** gorge easy hike in the morning. For lunch, we'll go down to **Byblos** and relax in the old town by the seaside, or go wandering in search for talented craftsmen. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 07: This morning, we'll cross the borders straight to **Aleppo** via **Tripoli**. Free afternoon to wander in the city's Bazaars. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 08: After tour of the **citadel**, khans and Great Mosque of **Aleppo**, in the afternoon, more to the Northeast, we head to the Byzantine site of **St Simeon**, surrounded by a Mediterranean nature. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 09: **Apamea** walk & visit than transfer to the "**Krak des Chevaliers**". We'll spend the evening in **Hama** famous for its waterwheels and cotton fabrics. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 10: Early morning transfer to **Palmyra** to visit the famous desert oasis, and the Temple of Bel. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 11: We spend the morning touring the Old Tombs before heading to **Damascus**. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 12: Free day for **Damascus** visit. Optional excursion to **Bosra** & back to Damascus, during the afternoon. Hotel accommodation.

Day 13: Transfer to Airport after breakfast, & fly home.

Destination Syria

■ Cradle of Civilization

Adventure (9 Days)

Syria's unique position at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe has made it a bastion of civilization. The country has been home to at least seven great empires, and a link of the trade-routes from the Indian Ocean to the Nile, Ugarit has developed the first alphabet in the world, Palmyra defies the tug of time, Damascus and Aleppo are believed to be the oldest cities still inhabited in the world. With authentic Middle Eastern culture, Syrians are most pleasantly helpful, hospitable and accommodating, whether on the green Mediterranean coast or inside the arid Syrian desert, always inviting us for some new stories around a cup of tea & adventure.

Itinerary :

- Day 01: Meet at Damascus airport and transfer to hotel.
- Day 02: Visit and discovery of this ancient city, **Damascus**: the **Umayyad Mosque**, the **Azem Palace**, the **national museum** and the **old souqs**. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 03: Depart to **Palmyra**. Located in the heart of the Syrian desert, this oasis will leave an important & big impression on us while staying in Syria. Walk around & visit the most beautiful Roman ruins of the Middle East. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 04: Depart **off the beaten track**, crossing the desert & some of the most authentic villages to **Rassafah**, via **Qasr el Hir el Charqi**, once dotted with prestigious gardens under the Umayyad. **Camp** set on the Euphrates border, and dinner.
- Day 05: Road to **Aleppo**, the second biggest city of Syria, and discovery of its myths & souqs, and fascinating citadel. Free afternoon. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 06: Early departure to the basilica of **Saint Simon**, then to the astonishing Dead Cities for a hike. Transfer to **Hama**, and hotel accommodation.
- Day 07: Discovery & visit **Hama** which is without doubt the most traditional city in Syria. Famous for its water wheels, which were used to carry water from the Orontes. Transfer to **Krak des Chevaliers**, a must-see mountain top Crusader castle. Accommodation in a charming monastery built in the sixth century, **Mar Moussa** near Nebek, « where time stands still ». Superb panorama from top, the trek up takes a few minutes though. Dormitory style accommodation and dinner.
- Day 08: Depart to visit the roman theatre of **Bosra**, via **Maaloula** where inhabitants still speak Aramaic language. Return to **Damascus** for last minute shopping, and dinner in town.
- Day 09: Transfer to airport and fly home.

Cradle of Civilization

Discovery & Adventure

Group : 4 to 16 pax

Team: local tour leader & driver

Transport: Minibus & bus

Accommodation: hotels, monastery & camp.

■
Syrian Steppe
Walks & Hikes (9 days)

Syria... over 185,000 sq km full of desert castles, fortresses and cities squirmed under the thumbs of empire builders from Rome, Persia, Egypt and Babylon. From the Northern Dead Cities, to the fertile Valley of the Orontes, we will walk to discover a nature and a land as generous as its people, and cities as old as time.

Itinerary:

Day 01: Arrival to **Damascus** airport, meet and transfer to **hotel**.

Day 02: Breakfast and briefing of the trip, before the visit of **Damascus**. We will spend the morning visiting the National Museum, the Umayyad Mosque and Azem Palace, all considered as the highlights of Damascus. Afternoon transfer to **Bosra**, and visit of one of the best conserved Roman theatres. **Hotel** accommodation in Damascus. Diner in town.

Day 03: We go on to one of the desert's wonder, the famous & impressive **Palmyra**. The afternoon visit of the Temple of Bel is highly recommended. By late afternoon, we'll **ascend the Arab Castle** hill, just before sunset, to benefit from the breathtaking view over the old city. **Hotel** accommodation.

Day 04: Early morning start to **Qasr el Hir el Sharqi**, an Umayyad castle from the 8th century in the midst of "nowhere", where once gardens used to grow thanks to preciously channelled water streams. We'll **walk our way between typical villages** of the area, through fields of cotton (if at the right season). **Camp** and diner at the **Euphrates** Nature reserve.

Day 05: Morning transfer to **Aleppo**, and full day visit of the city, through a tour of the citadel, the khans & souqs and the Great Mosque. **Free afternoon** to wander in the old covered bazaars.

Day 06: More to the North-West, we head to the Byzantine site of **St Simon**, surrounded by a mild Mediterranean nature, which is adequate for the start of **our trek to the Dead Cities** of Bara & Sergilla. Discovery of the **Ghab** Valley where the Orontes water is abundant and the land richly fertile before heading to **Hama**. **Hotel** accommodation in Hama.

Day 07: Morning **at Hama**, the city has beautiful gardens and Norias, on both sides of the Orontes river. The Norias were used to transport water via aqueducts to neighboring parts of the city and irrigation. Transfer to the **Krak des Chevaliers**. It stands 650m above sea level and commands the strategic valley depression between Tripoli and Homs, which stretches out to the Dead Sea and the Rift Valley. By the end of the afternoon, the only way to arrive to **Mar Moussa monastery**, is to **walk the panoramic path** over the Syrian steppe. Overnight, diner and **dormitory** style accommodation.

Day 08: Morning transfer to **Maaloula**, an ancient village carved into rock where inhabitants still speak Aramaic. Discovery walk before heading south to **Damascus**. **Free afternoon** to enjoy the souqs of the old town, Hamidiyyé being the most popular & Midhat Pasha, the roman Via Recta Christian or maybe try a cup of tea at the old railway station in the modern city centre, or observe the artisans at work next to the Tekkiyeh mosque. **Hotel** accommodation and diner in town.

Day 09: **Transfer** to Damascus **airport** for the return flight.

Syrian Steppe

Walking & trekking

Group: 4 to 16 pax

Team: local tour leader & driver

Transport: minibus & bus

Accommodation: hotels, monastery & camp

Period: all year

■
Syria in Depth
Cultural (10 days)

Itinerary:

- Day 01: Meet & Assist at **Damascus** International Airport. Transfer to the Hotel in Damascus for 3 Nights.
- Day 02: Morning tour of the oldest continuously inhabited city, visiting the Azem Palace, the Chapel of Ananias, the vibrant souqs and the inspiring Umayyad Mosque. In the afternoon, visit the National Museum.
- Day 03: Morning visit of **Bosra**, site of the most complete examples of a Roman Theatre. Afternoon at leisure.
- Day 04: Drive to Nebek to visit **Mar Moussa Monastery** on a cliff overhanging the panoramic Syrian steppe . Continue and visit of the imposing crusader castle of **Krak des Chevaliers**.
- Day 05: Morning drive to **Serjilla**, visit the most interesting of the **Dead Cities**. Continue to **Aleppo**. Stay at hotel.
- Day 06: Morning visit to the church of **St Simeon**. Afternoon, visit the city of Aleppo.
- Day 07: Transfer to **Apamea**, a significant Greco-Roman site. Continue to **Palmyra** via **Hama**. Stay 2 Nights.
- Day08 : Full day tour of **Palmyra**, the legendary oasis city, famous for Zenobia’s defiance of the Roman Empire. In the afternoon, up to the Arab Castle to have a panoramic sunset view overlooking the site.
- Day09: Morning at leisure. Then transfer to **Damascus** via the village of **Maaloula** where the language of Jesus, Aramaic, is still spoken. Accommodation in Damascus.
- Day10: Transfer to Damascus International Airport.

Syria in Depth
Culture & history
Group: 4 to 45 pax
Team: Local guide & drivers
Transport: minibus & bus
Accommodation: hotels
Period: all year

Combine Syria & Jordan

■ Umayyads and Nabateans

Discovery (16 days)

Travelling through two countries, there is plenty of time to enjoy the ancient & world-famous sites as well as the breathtaking scenery for which the Middle East is renowned. On this trip, there is plenty of time to enjoy the cities of Aleppo and Damascus as well as Petra, Palmyra and Wadi Rum. And the reward is a panoramic view of an intriguing area.

Itinerary:

Day 01 : Arrival, meet & assist at **Aleppo airport**. Transfer.

Day 02: Morning visit of **Aleppo** & Afternoon excursion to Basilica of **St Simon**. Aleppo: general first encounter, via a guided morning tour of the citadel, khans and Great Mosque, the places to visit are numerous and all exciting. In the afternoon, more to the Northeast, we head to the Byzantine site of St Simon the Stylite, surrounded by a Mediterranean nature. Return to Aleppo and hotel accommodation.

Day 03: Free morning to wander in the old covered bazaars, and ancient quarters (Jdeideh). **Aleppo** never stops from amazing its guests, pyramids of soap mix their smell with exotic spices, and if you get tired, check one of the traditional **hammams** (baths) and let yourself be treated to a bath you'll not forget. Midday transfer to **Apamea** then **Hama**. The city of Hama is one of the most attractive cities in Syria, with beautiful gardens and **Norias**, on both sides of the **Orontes**. Norias were used to transport water via aqueducts to neighbouring parts of the city for irrigation. Hama is also famous for its cotton works, and some shops even send their products to be sold at high prices in Paris, and Beirut. The people are amongst the most conservative but the town enjoys a peaceful atmosphere, which makes it very pleasant to stay. Accommodation in hotel Hama

Day 04: Morning transfer to the Castle of the Knights **Krak des Chevaliers**, via **Homs**. It stands 650m above sea level and commands the strategic valley depression between Tripoli and Homs that stretches out to the Dead Sea and the Rift Valley. Off to **Palmyra**; We go on to one of the desert's marvels, the famous & impressive Palmyra. The afternoon visit of the Temple of Bel is recommended, as well as a stop at the Arab Castle before sunset to have the benefit of the view over the sunlit old city. Hotel Accommodation in the new city's main street, at a 5-minute walk from the archaeological museum.

Day 05: Full day at Tadmor; Discover the **Palmyra** arts, traditions and architecture, as well as its fusion with Roman elegance through a morning visit of the ancient city of Tadmor. After extensive excavations over some 60 hectares, tourism is enjoying certain popularity next to the 40,000 inhabitants. Palmyra is an oasis almost in the middle of nowhere, 150km from the Orontes & 200km from the Euphrates, offering tasteful dates from numerous palm trees. The rise and fall of the city's most famous character, Zenobia, who ruled Palmyra from 267, when her husband died under suspicious circumstances, got the city burnt to the ground. An earthquake finished the job in 1089. Accommodation in Hotel.

Day 06: Morning transfer to **Damascus**, & free time to enjoy the souks of the old town, Hamidiyyé being the most popular & Midhat Pasha, the roman Via Recta Christian quarter mentioned in the Bible as the place where St Anania lived before healing St Paul and helping him to escape behind the city's walls. Try a cup of tea, at the old railway station in the modern city centre, or observe the craftsmen at work next to the Tekkiyeh mosque. The amateurs of chocolates and dried fruits will not be disappointed! Hotel accommodation.

Day 07: Full day visit of **Damascus**. We'll spend the morning with the guide for the National Museum, the Umayyad Mosque and Azem Palace, all considered as the highlights of Damascus. Free afternoon. Same accommodation as day 06.

Day 08 : Breakfast and morning transfer to **Bosra** to visit one of the world best preserved roman theaters. At around 140 km south of Damascus, Bosra is really worth the deviation. The spectacular volcanic black stone old town, was formerly a capital for the Nabatean empire (before Petra), additionally an important link for merchants on the caravan-road to Arabia. It witnessed the passage of the Prophet Mohammad and his encounter with the Christian preacher Bahira. Visit of the Roman theatre, baths and the

Arab citadel, and the recently excavated Basilica in the Old Town district, than passage of **Jordanian** border to **Jerash**. Hotel accommodation & free afternoon to relax (or optional free at Jerash town).

- Day 09 : Morning visit of **Jerash**. A Circassian community occupied the modern city itself since the end of the 19th century, to grow into a 22,000 souls town, a mix of different nationals, settling in and around an amazingly well preserved city of the Roman Decapolis. The ancient city of Gerasa reveals to the visitor its regional importance, through theatres, temples, and other beautiful architecture. Transfer to the lowest part on earth, the **Dead Sea**, via the Aghwar (**Jordan Valley**), a deep scar where most Jordan's fertile land is, the natural extension of the Ghab depression in Syria, all part of the 1,000km long Rift. At 400m below sea level, it is a unique experience, floating in water 6 times saltier than any ocean, in one of the world's most rugged desert landscapes. Day ends at **Amman**. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 10 : Morning transfer to **Mt Nebo**. The amateurs of mosaics & biblical sites can enjoy this Byzantine art, developed since the 5th century B.C. Then we follow the **King's Highway**, the road the caravan merchants coming from Yemen used to follow. After a quick visit of the crusaders citadel and lunch, we head south to **Petra**. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 11/ 12: Two full days to visit **Petra**. One of the highlights of our trip, Petra is a lovely ancient city created by the Nabateans in the sandstone of the Shara Mountains south of Jordan. Since its rediscovery, it has caught the imagination of many travellers, with its extraordinary coloured rocks & carved façades. The city retains its charm and mystery, despite the excavations & the numerous visitors who come in each year. Hotel accommodation, same as day 10.
- Day 13: Morning transfer to **Wadi Rum**, a mystical place that certainly merits a visit and a night out, made famous by Lean's epic film "Lawrence of Arabia". Through the tour in the Bedouin's 4x4 cars, we discover The Valley's long history, as stated by Thamudic, Nabatean & (later) Islamic inscriptions, and beautiful landscapes, weird shaped rocks & canyons, all surrounded by coloured desert sands, varying from red to yellow. **Camp** accommodation under double-tents.
- Day 14: After breakfast, we head to **Aqaba**. It is a beautiful location trapped between the **Red Sea** and the dramatically shaped desert mountains, where diving, snorkelling & other water activities can be arranged to enjoy wonderful Coral reefs, brightly coloured fish and sea grasses, or one can just walk around and enjoy the city's attractions. One-fifth of the species in the Red Sea are found nowhere else. Free afternoon, and hotel accommodation.
- Day 15 : Free morning & Transfer to **Amman**. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 16 : Transfer to airport & Fly home.

Umayyads and Nabateans

Discovery & culture

Group: 6 to 16

Team: Local Tour Leaders and driver

Transport: minibus / bus

Accommodation: Hotels, camp.

Period: All year

Destination Jordan

Jordan River and Wadi Rum

Adventure (8 days)

“Jordan is a beautiful country: wild, with limitless deserts where the Bedouin roam...The mountains of the North are clothed in green forests, and where the Jordan River flows it is fertile and warm in winter. Dotted with the ruins of empires once great, it is the last resort of yesterday in the world of tomorrow”- late King Hussein (may God bless his soul). Close your eyes as you wander through Jordan’s many natural & human-made wonders: you could be in any century, and let yourself be welcomed by the unparalleled Jordanian hospitality and warmth.

Itinerary:

Day 01: Arrival and Transfer from **Amman** Int'l airport to hotel.

Day 02: Depart to **Mujib Reserve** at the lowest point on earth, for a **hike** in Wadi Hidan, including swimming in the river bed. The Ibex and many extinct species were re-introduced into the reserve, thanks to the efforts of the local authorities. **Camp** and dinner.

Day 03: After breakfast, we **trek & swim** until we reach the lower part of the **Mujib Gorge**, for an abseiling descent under a waterfall , and off till we reach the **Dead Sea** where a unique floating experience awaits. Afternoon drive to **Petra**, via **Karak** and its fabulous crusader castle. Hotel accommodation.

Day 04: All day visit of the magnificent Nabatean city **Petra**, including a walk up to Umm el Biyara, a remote less visited “scenic” area of the site. Hotel

Day 05: Breakfast at the hotel, than we head straight to a less visited area of **Wadi Rum** called Disseh, for a **4x4** visit of this unique desert, and share lunch with a local Bedouin family under their desert tent. Afternoon climb of Jebel Burdah for approx. 2 hrs, with local **Bedouin** guide.**Camp** installation and dinner prepared by tour leaders and group.

Day 06 : In the morning we drive South for approx. 2 hrs, to Um el Adamy, the highest peak in the Hashemite Kingdom, at the Saudi Border; at the top we're rewarded by a breathtaking panorama, hard to forget. By the afternoon, we transfer to **Aqaba**. Hotel accommodation.

Day 07: A bumper day spent free at Aqaba, for snorkelling & diving between one the most beautiful coral reefs in the **Red Sea**. Hotel accommodation.

Day 08: Transfer to Airport & Fly home.

Jordan River and Wadi Rum

Active adventure & trek

Group: From 4 to 12 pax

Team: Local Tour Leader & drivers

Transport Bus and minibus & some 4x4

Accommodation: Hotels and camp

Period: March to May & October to November

■ Valleys of Jordan

Walks & Hikes (8 days)

When you walk through Jordan's many natural & human-made wonders, you realize you could be in any century, and find yourself welcomed by the unparalleled Jordanian hospitality and warmth. "Jordan is a beautiful country: wild, with limitless deserts where the Bedouin roam...The mountains of the North are clothed in green forests, and where the Jordan River flows it is fertile and warm in winter. Dotted with the ruins of empires once great, it is the last resort of yesterday in the world of tomorrow"- late King Hussein.

Itinerary:

Day 01: Arrival and greeting at **Amman** Int'l airport, then transfer to the hotel in **Madaba**.

Day 02: Depart to **Mt Nebo**, and the **Dead Sea**: time for a 'float' in the thick saline waters at 350m below sea level, and continue down the panoramic King's Highway which winds its way up and down many wadis, the largest being the spectacular **Wadi Mujib**. There are many stops of interest en route to punctuate the driving including **Karak** where we stop for lunch. The Nature Reserve at **Dana** aims to protect some of Jordan's endangered species, including ibex, mountain gazelle, wolf and red fox. As well as conserving wildlife, Dana has also managed to preserve the timeless traditions still practiced in the village. At sunset we should enjoy breathtaking views. Departing from Mujib, we head south to reach Dana Reserve. **Camp** accommodation in multiple share tents.

Day 03: After breakfast, we spend the morning exploring this fascinating reserve, taking a guided trek along old paths through the mountains. **Wadi Dana** drops from 1,500m above sea level to 100m below sea level as it plunges from the eastern plateau of the Great Rift Valley down to the Araba Valley. It is possible to gauge the remarkable variety of habitats ranging from semi-arid forests to sub-tropical wadis as we walk. Transfer to **Petra** by late afternoon and hotel accommodation.

Day 04: Full day visit in **Petra**, including a walk to the High Places. Hotel.

Day 05: Morning transfer to **Wadi Rum** which offers some of the most extraordinary desert scenery; we'll enter the desert from a less visited area and follow up with Rum's highlights on foot and with the help of the Bedouin's **4x4** vehicles. Although the traditional nomadic way of life is starting to disappear as some Bedouin succumb to the lure of fixed accommodation, many adhere stolidly to the old way. Living in such a hostile environment taught them long ago the importance of a friendly welcome and the ancient code of hospitality to travellers still survives. **Camp** (bivouac in dome dbl tents) and diner.

Day 06: Today, we take a guided climb of Jebel Burdah, up to the rock bridge. The scenery is breathtaking. We will join our **Bedouin hosts** for a typical after a walk to the observe the sunset. camp.

Day 07: Beyond **Wadi Rum**, the road drops sharply through dramatic scenery to **Aqaba**, Jordan's only port, a small town famous for some of the most beautiful coral reefs to be found anywhere in the world. We have time to lounge on the beach, swim, go snorkelling around the excellent coral or sail over the reefs in a glass-bottomed boat. Hotel.

Day 08: Transfer from hotel / **Aqaba** APT for the return flight.

Valleys of Jordan

Walks & hikes

Group: from 6 to 12 pax

Team: Local Tour Leader and driver

Transport: minibus and some 4x4

Accommodation: Hotels and Camps.

■

Magnificent Jordan

Discovery (9 days)

Jordan contains some breathtaking scenery and also historical and archaeological treasures, not least at Petra. . After a float in the Dead Sea and snorkel in the Red Sea, there is time to relax and unwind as well as explore. Most relaxing of all, perhaps, is the night spent in Wadi Rum; the solitude, star-lit skies and majestic desert scenery makes for an unforgettable experience.

Itinerary:

Day 01: Arrival to Amman airport. Transfert to hotel.

Day 02: Morning drive to visit Jerash then the Dead Sea. Accommodation back in Amman hotel.

Day 03: We follow the King's Highway via Mt Nebo & Madaba till Karak. After a quick visit of the crusaders citadel and lunch, we go on south to Petra.

Day 04 / 05: Two full days to visit Petra. One of the highlights of our trip, Petra is a lovely ancient city created by the Nabateans in the sandstone of the Shara Mountains south of Jordan. Since its rediscovery, it has caught the imagination of many travellers, with its extraordinary coloured rocks & carved façades. The city retains its charm and mystery, despite the excavations & the numerous visitors who come in each year.

Day 06: Morning transfer to Wadi Rum, a mystical place that certainly merits a visit and a night out, made famous by Lean's epic film "Lawrence of Arabia". Through the tour in the Bedouin's 4x4 cars, we discover The Valley's long history, as stated by Thamudic, Nabatean & (later) Islamic inscriptions, and beautiful landscapes, weird shaped rocks & canyons, all surrounded by coloured desert sands, varying from red to yellow. Bivouac accommodation under double-tents.

Day 07: After breakfast, we head to Aqaba. It is a beautiful location trapped between the Red Sea and the dramatically shaped desert mountains. Free afternoon

Day 08: We travel back to Amman this morning and the afternoon is free in the City Centre.

Day 09: Fly home.

Magnificent Jordan

Discovery & adventure

Group: from 5 to 16 pax

Team: Local guide & drivers

Transport: Minibus / bus and some 4x4

Accommodation: Hotels, camp

Period: All year

■ Escape to Jordan

Discovery (4/5 days)

Itinerary:

Day 01: Arrival to Amman airport. Transfert to hotel.

Day 02: Morning visit of **Jerash**. A Circassian community occupied the modern city itself since the end of the 19th century, to grow into a 22,000 souls town, a mix of different nationals, settling in and around an amazingly well preserved city of the Roman Decapolis. Transfer to the lowest part on earth, the **Dead Sea**, via the Aghwar (**Jordan Valley**), a deep scar where most Jordan's fertile land is, the natural extension of the Ghab depression in Syria, all part of the 1,000km long Rift. At 400m below sea level, it is a unique experience, floating in water 6 times saltier than any ocean, in one of the world's most rugged desert landscapes. Day ends at **Dana** Guesthouse.

Day 03: We spend the morning exploring this fascinating reserve, taking a guided trek along old paths through the mountains. **Wadi Dana** drops from 1,500m above sea level to 100m below sea level as it plunges from the eastern plateau of the Great Rift Valley down to the Araba Valley. Transfer to **Petra** for half-day visit. Hotel.

Day 04: Morning transfer to **Wadi Rum** which offers some of the most extraordinary desert scenery; we'll enter the desert from a less visited area and follow up with Rum's highlights on foot and with the help of the Bedouin's **4x4** vehicles. Beyond Wadi Rum, the road drops sharply through dramatic scenery to **Aqaba**, Jordan's only port, a small town famous for some of the most beautiful coral reefs to be found anywhere in the world. We have time to lounge on the beach, swim, go snorkelling around the excellent coral or sail over the reefs in a glass-bottomed boat. Hotel

Day 05: Transfer from hotel / **Aqaba** APT for the return flight

Escape to Jordan

Discovery of highlights in preparation to come back

Group: from 5 to 16 pax

Team: Local guide & drivers

Transport: Minibus / bus & some 4x4

Accommodation: Hotels

Period: All year

Journey in Land & Time

■ The Middle East in 4x4

Adventure (16 jours)

In just one program, TLB brings together the unusual and traditional. The program starts in Lebanon and typically extends from the beautiful Bekaa Valley and the famous Roman temples at Baalbeck, up Mount Lebanon to Qornet Sawda, the highest peak in the Middle East (3087 m.), back down to sea-level to visit the Phoenician port city of Byblos. In Syria, time is spent discovering the desert in the western and central part of the country, often camping there for the night. After the visits to the majestic site at Palmyra and to Damascus, the trip goes to Bosra's unbelievably well preserved Roman theatre and its Arab fortifications. Then on to Jordan, with a first stop at Jerash, then the "Pink City" of Petra, Kerak, down to the Red Sea at Aqaba, Wadi Rum and ending the trip in Amman.

Itinerary:

- Day 01: Meet and Transfer to hotel in **Beirut**.
- Day 02: Depart for **Sidon**, and visit of the Sea Castle, the Khan el Franj, and walk around the souks and fish market. Then off to 18th century village of **Deir el Qamar**, and the Palace of **Beiteddine**. **Auberge** accommodation in Deir el Qamar.
- Day 03: Early start to "**Chouf Cedar Reserve**" for an easy to moderate **hike**, before sliding down into the **Bekaa Valley**, for the wine caves of Ksara and then on for a visit of Roman temples at **Baalbeck**. Dinner & Stay in hotel in Baalbeck.
- Day 04: Off to **Jerash** in Jordan via **Bosra** in Syria We tour the site and the town and head to hotel with swimming pool. Dinner and accommodation
- Day 05: Departure for a swim in the **Dead Sea**, the lowest point on earth, then off to the city of **Karak** where we visit the Crusaders' castle, before the drive down to **Petra**. Stay and dinner at a Petra family-run inn.
- Day 06: Early start for a full free day visiting **Petra**. Accommodation and dinner at a Petra family-run inn.
- Day 07: Depart to **Aqaba**. Lunch on the beach. Possibility of snorkelling / scuba diving / visit of the city. In the early afternoon, drive north to **Wadi Rum**. Camping
- Day 08: Morning **Hike** and **4x4** tour of the desert. **Bedouin** lunch & off to Amman in the early afternoon .Visit of the city & Dinner. Accommodation at hotel.
- Day 09: Depart to **Damascus**, and discoveries walk into the oldest constantly inhabited city. Mosques, souqs, and palaces, this one of the highlights of the trip. Hotel accommodation.
- Day 10: Free morning in **Damascus** before we go visit the site of **Palmyra**, arguably one of the most beautiful roman ruins in the Mid-East. Stay in hotel.
- Day 11: Early Desert crossing by **4x4** through Djebel Bilaas to **Hama**, one of the most traditional cities in Syria, famous for its water wheels used to carry water from the **Orontes** river. Hotel Accommodation.
- Day 12: Off to the **Krak des Chevaliers**, a well preserved Crusaders Castle on the mountain top of Jabal Ansarieh, and a must-see for the visitor. Continue to **Baalbeck**, and visit of the "temple of the sun". Hotel accommodation.
- Day 13: We cross the eastern side of **Mount Lebanon** off the beaten track, till we reach the **Cedars**. Visit after lunch break, and drive down to **Wadi Qanoubine** / Qadisha Gorge for a 2-hour trek. Accommodation in **monastery**, dormitory style.
- Day 14: Depart to **Tripoli** famous for its soap making, for St Gilles castle visit, and the Teylan Mosque, strolling through the city's souqs and shops. After lunch we head to **Byblos**, for a free afternoon of the town visit or swimming. By the seaside Hotel accommodation and dinner.

Day 15: Transfer to **Beirut**, where we link walks and drives for the discovery of the city's main attractions and the less visited areas full of Eastern charm. Free afternoon to wander, and dinner in town. Hotel accommodation.

Day 16: Transfer to airport and fly home.

The Middle East in 4x4
Group: from 4 to 12 pax
Team: Local Tour Leaders & drivers
Transport: 4x4 vehicles
Accom.: Hotels, bivouac, local family, monastery.
Period: All year

■
Levant Smiling Sun
Discovery (15 days)

Itinerary:

- Day 01: Arrival to **Beirut** Apt, transfer to Hotel 3*.
- Day 02: Depart to **Sidon** after a guided tour around Beirut. Walk in the old souks and visit the Sea Castle / the Khan el Franj / the Hammams and the Great Mosque. Early afternoon, head To the Chouf & walk around **Deir el Qamar**, 16th/17th century palaces and khans. Accommodation at Deir el Qamar in **Auberge** style.
- Day 03: Morning visit of **Beiteddine** Palace Easy hike (1h) in the **Chouf Cedars** reserve (**panorama) Traverse Barouk pass, head to **Baalbeck** via Ksara winery, guided visit of underground caves & movie about wine making. Baalbeck temples visit, to Ras el Ain cafés walk (optional) Hotel accommodation.
- Day 04: Transfer into Jebel Mekmel to the **Cedars** Pass, (2500m alt ***panorama) via a hike in Wadi Faara, (summer prog.) down to Cedars visit, **Qadisha Valley Hike** (2h). [winter prog. goes North to Hermel & Aakkar, then joins the Qadisha Valley via Zgharta & Ehden] Hotel accommodation in Bcharreh.
- Day 05: Depart to **Syria**; border crossing, **Krak des Chevaliers** visit, Transfer to St. Simon visit near Aleppo stretch our legs out; 15th century htl accommodation in **Aleppo**.
- Day 06: Morning in **Aleppo**, Visit the souks, Great Mosque, khans, hammams & citadel. Head to the Euphrates in the afternoon, Discovery walk of the reserve and the Jaabar Fortress, and **bivouac** (camp) at the **Euphrates**.
- Day 07: Cross the desert South to "**Qasr el Hir el Charqi**" (Umayyad castle), picnic lunch, arrive to **Palmyra** in the early afternoon, free afternoon to visit the extraordinary oasis, optional walk to view the sunset over the old city from the Arab castle, hotel accommodation.
- Day 08: Early morning visit of the ruins, tombs and Bel temple before the heat, transfer to **Mar Moussa monastery** hike from the eastern side (the easy side-1h30)to reach the site, dinner & dormitory style accommodation.
- Day 09: Morning transfer and all day in **Damascus**. hotel accommodation.
- Day 10: Morning: border crossing to **Jarash**, visit and transfer to Ajlun to relax by the hotel pool. Hotel .
- Day 11: to Petra via the Jordan valley, the **Dead Sea** and the **Mujib Gorge** to wash up from the saline water, to **Petra** via **Karak** and the Kings Way, Hotel.
- Day 12/13: two full days at **Petra**.
- Day 14: to **Aqaba** snorkelling, and lunch, transfer to Wadi Rum and sunset walk, **bivouac** (camp) and dinner at **Wadi Rum**.
- Day 15: Around **Wadi Rum** highlights **4x4** trip, transfer to **Amman** via the desert highway, Hotel accommodation and dinner in down-town.
- Day 16: Transfer to Amman Int'l Airport for return flight

Levant Smiling Sun

Discovery

Group: from 6 to 16 pax

Team: Local Tour Leader & drivers

Transport: Minibus / bus

Accommodation: Hotels, Monastery, Bivouac.

Period: All year.

Theme Trips ...

Wine & Gastronomy

Lebanon (8 days)

Lebanon, named "the white one" by the prophet Jeremiah because snow covered it most of the year, is a long mountain range extending over a distance of about 160 km from southwest to northeast along the Mediterranean coast. Relatively to the dryness of the rest of the Arab world, Lebanon is particularly fortunate & famous for a mild, diverse and rich natural environment, which allows a wide range subtropical and traditional Mediterranean agriculture.

It is said that the Lebanese cuisine is one the best in the world; the people of the Land of Milk knew how to take advantage of an exceptional Mediterranean and Ottoman heritage, and developed it by the means of oriental finesse.

Lebanese culinary habits are indeed very oriental, as meals are taken rather late, gathering with family and friends, and take your time to enjoy the "mezzé", these delicious hors-d'oeuvres, before pursuing with main dish & deserts.

During this 8day trip, we will savour a variety of Lebanese dishes from different regions, based on four (4) major gastronomic themes and ingredients, learn how to prepare them, and focus as well on Lebanese wine & traditional Arak by a number of visits to the wineries on the coast and in the Bekaa Valley; since the cultural & culinary aspects are bonded, we will not miss out on the historical highlights that made what Lebanese are today. Baalbeck, Beiteddine and the natural refuge of the Qadisha Valley added up to the warmth of the Lebanese people, will convey to us an almost unforgettable Lebanese Panorama.

Itinerary:

- Day 1: Welcome and at Beirut's int'l airport, then transfer to the **hotel in Beirut**. Welcome drink and overnight at the hotel.
- Day 2: Free Morning until midday, then visit **Sidon** and lunch at Sidon's (Sayda) Rest house. In the beginning of the afternoon, transfer to **Deir el-Qamar and leisurely walk** in the old town. Visit of **Beiteddine** Palace then Dinner and Overnight at the hotel.
- Day 3: Morning descent into the **Bekaa Valley** to visit the wineries of Kefraya, Saint Thomas, Nakad and Heritage. Lunch at Kefraya winery, Diner at Zahleh restaurant near the famous Bardowni River and overnight at hotel in Zahleh.
- Day 4: Morning visit of the Umayyad city of **Anjar** before heading to Massaya, Wardy and Ksara wineries. Lunch at Massaya winery. Dinner and overnight at **Baalbeck** hotel.
- Day 5: Morning visit of the **Temples of Baalbeck**, before we traverse **Mt Lebanon** via the **Cedars** Pass at 2500m to The Cedars, and Bcharreh, the hometown of the author of the Prophet **Gibran Khalil Gibran** & museum visit. En route, we'll stop for lunch at 2000m at **Oyun Orghosh**, and try our luck "fishing trout". Transfer to the Monastery of the Carmelites winery, before the Dinner and overnight at the hotel in the Cedars.
- Day 6: After breakfast, we leave to the **Qadisha Valley**, a world heritage, for the Monastery of St Anthony of Qozhaya visit, and continue to the coastal town of Ghazir to **Chateau Musar** winery. Lunch at Byblos, and free afternoon to relax on the Mediterranean Sea coast. For Diner we will head to **Nahr el Kalb** (Dog River) to enjoy the freshness of the Valley and a festive "oriental" dinner. Overnight ay Jbeil hotel (Byblos).
- Day 7: Morning walk in the capital's **City Centre** and lunch at high standard restaurant at Beirut. **Free afternoon**. By late afternoon, we will transfer to the **mountains** for a typical Dinner. Back to Beirut & hotel accommodation.
- Day 8: Morning transfer to Beirut Int'l airport for the return flight.

Wine and Gastronomy

Group: 6 to 16

Team: Local Tour Leader and Communities & drivers

Transport: Minibus / bus

Accommodation: Hotels

Period: All year

Meeting Arab Christians

Lebanon & Syria (13 days)

Lebanon's name was mentioned 71 times in the Old Testament, its regions are referred to several times in the New Testament, and extra-canonical literature speaks about it in ten cases. The Old Testament is full of praise for Lebanon's natural beauty and resources. The cedars of Lebanon were the most precious and costly wood desired by rulers of the surrounding countries. In images of Lebanon's imposing heights, the wealth and variety of plants, and the sweet odor of its perfumes and fragrances, God's love for men and women is celebrated. Lebanon's role in the history of salvation becomes even more evident in the writings of New Testament authors. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, visited the Phoenician cities along Lebanon's coast, preached to the people there and healed the sick.

Itinerary:

- Day 01: Arrival at Beirut's Airport, and transfer to hotel in **Beirut**.
- Day 02: Rest at hotel in the morning, day begins at 11am; we head south to **Tyre** to visit both of the Egyptian Port and the Hippodrome. We'll have lunch at **restaurant**, located in the old part of Tyre by the Mediterranean Sea & **Meeting with the one of the personalities of the city**, and continue to **Saida** (Sidon) for an afternoon visit of the renovated Soap museum in Old Souks ran by the **Audi family**, whom we **meet** with in their renovated old typical house. Dinner in town and overnight in **Beirut**.
- Day 03: Morning Visit of the renovated **Beirut City centre** & the **National museum**. Lunch in **restaurant in Beirut**. Meeting with the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Beirut Mgr Audi. Dinner in restaurant in Beirut. Overnight hotel in **Beirut**.
- Day 04: Transfer to the Maronite Patriarchal town Bkerkeh at 20 km from Beirut, for the meeting with the Maronite Patriarch Sfeir. Transfer to North Lebanon and visit of the Monastery of St Anthony of **Qozhaya** in the Holy Valley of Qadisha where we can find the first printing press of the region. Lunch in restaurant at **Ehden**. Visit of the **museum** of the writer, philosopher and painter Gibran Khalil Gibran in the village of Bsharreh. Visit of the Cedars. (1800m). Diner and overnight at **Hotel**.
- Day 05: Transfer down to the coastal village of **Enfé** (Phoenician remains, salt production near Al Natour) . Visit of **Balamand** Greek Orthodox Monastery 12th century, and its recent university. Continue to **Tripoli** for lunch in restaurant and afternoon city/souq tour. Accommodation at **Hotel**.
- Day 06: Visit of the **Carmelite Monastery** and its butterfly museum in the village of **Qbayyat**, in the Aakkar region. Lunch in restaurant in Qbayyat. Transfer to the Bekaa valley for a meeting with the depute Mr. Fares and the community in the **village of Al Qaa** in the Northern Bekaa. Continue to Baalbeck. Dinner and overnight in **Hotel** at Baalbeck.
- Day 07: Visit of the **Temples of Baalbeck and lunch**. Transfer to Damascus and meeting with the **Syrian Catholic** community. Free time in the afternoon. Dinner in restaurant in the Old part of Damascus, and accommodation at the **hotel**.
- Day 08: Transfer and visit of **Saydnaya** and lunch, than we continue with the visit of **Maaloula** village, before we head to **Nebek**. This includes an easy walk to arrive to the **Monastery of Mar Moussa** for accommodation and dinner.
- Day 09: Transfer to **Aleppo**. Visit of the Jdeydé old district & Lunch in restaurant. Meeting with Archbishop of Aleppo Mgr. Jean-Barth & visit of the Citadel and the Great Mosque. Bath and Dinner in a Turkish bath (Hammam). Hotel accommodation in Aleppo.
- Day 10: Transfer and visit of **St Simeon** Byzantine remains. After lunch, Free afternoon in Aleppo for the souqs. Hotel Aleppo.
- Day 11: Transfer to **Hama** and walk around the Norias (water wheels) at the Orontes River and visit of Orthodox Icons. Continue to the **Krak des Chevaliers** for an afternoon visit. Continue to **Mashta el Helu** via **St George's Orthodox** Monastery. Overnight at **nearby hotel**.
- Day 12: Border crossing to Lebanon and **Byblos** visit. After lunch we head back to **Beirut** for a final tour of the city & free time. Diner in town; accommodation at **hotel** in Beirut.
- Day 13: Morning **transfer** to Beirut Airport

Meeting Arab Christians

Culture & meetings

Group: 6 to 14

Team: specialized local Tour Leader, drivers & local communities

Transport: Minibus / bus

Accommodation: Hotels

Period: All year

Week-Ends

At the Eastern part of the Mediterranean and the meeting point of 3 continents, Lebanon is at a step away from Europe and enjoys over 280 days of sun per year, which makes it a perfect destination for weekend escapes.

■ Escape to Lebanon

Cultural (4 days)

A program to discover the most important archeological sites in Lebanon. This trip will let you visit The Temples of Baalbeck – The Old City of Byblos & The Umayyad Site of Anjar. On the other hand, you will be astonished by the extraordinary Grotto of Jeita with its stalactite & stalagmite. Do not forget the wine tasting at Ksara winery...

Itinerary :

- Day 01: Meet & Assist at Beirut International Airport. Transfer to the Hotel in **Beirut** for Overnight.
- Day 02: Morning take the road leading to the Beqaa to visit the wonderful Temples of **Baalbeck**: Bachus – Jupiter & Venus. Continue to **Zahle** to visit **Ksara** Winery and have a wine tasting. Free time for Lunch. Then continue to **Anjar** and visit the only Omayyad site in Lebanon. Back to the hotel.
- Day 03: Breakfast in the Hotel. Visit of **Beirut**: down town where the new reconstructions took place, Solidère, the Pigeon's Rock in Raouche and the **National Museum**. Continue to **Jeita** and visit the Grottoes with its stalactite & stalagmite. Drive to Maameltein & take the cable car up to **Harissa**, "Our Lady of Lebanon", for a breathtaking view of the Bay of Jounieh. In the afternoon, continue to **Byblos** & visit the Old City: Crusader Castle, St John Church, Omayyad Mosque, Old Souk, Fishing Port... Back to Beirut for overnight.
- Day 04: Breakfast & transfer to Beirut International Airport for final departure

■ Beirut facing the Mediterranean

Meeting & Culture (5 days / 4 nights)

Lebanon has always manifested a great attachment to a rich cultural life, concerned with promoting the heritage and encouraging creation, in a secular atmosphere of cultural exchange. The Architecture of Beirut will not leave you indifferent. It might intrigue or seduce, but it witnesses the richness of a city where past and present, tradition and creativity cohabit, where stone and steel mingle.

Program:

Day 01: Meet and greet at arrival to **Beirut** airport then transfer to the hotel. Afternoon discovery of the city through a guided walk around Hamra street to Manara at the “Corniche”, accompanied by Beirut’s current artistic & cultural personality. Continue to the City Center, known for a long time as "Canon Square", it was renamed "Martyr's Square" after the executions that took place in 1919. Sore spot of the old Beirut, its public garden, its musical stall, its palm trees and cinema are what made it famous in the 1940s and 1950s. Recently, archaeological digs uncovered the remains of the small ottoman seraglio destroyed in 1951. Since then the place is a vast no man's land animated by many artistic installations. Finish the day in one of Beirut’s famous restaurants for diner & back to the hotel for accommodation.

Day 02: Morning meeting with a **journalist**, before departure to the Green Line, the separation between what East & West. Pause & visit of the **National Museum**:

Conceived by architects A. Nahas and P. Leprince-Ringuet, the Beirut National Museum is inspired by the greatness of Egyptians temples. Located on the boundary line that divided Beirut during the war (1975-1990), it was damaged and stolen, but a major part of its pieces was saved by the curators. In 1995, the building was taken in charge by the National Foundation for Heritage that restored it. The museum reopened its gates 4 years later offering a 7000 year old permanent collection. Till this day, the Beirut National Museum collection is still fed by ongoing archeological digs since 1992. The permanent collection of the National Museum testifies to over 8000 years of Lebanese history. On the Ground floor, some sarcophagi, columns, mosaics from the third century BC and the Byzantine era, are exposed. Many of those were discovered on Byblos and Tyre sites.

Day 03: Today we take a guided tour to the **Bekaa Valley**, for wine tasting at Ksara winery and visit of the Temples of **Baalbeck** as well as the Umayyad City of Anjar. In Beqaa's valley, undulating in the magnificent landscape, opens up the antique city of Baalbeck, to visit the Beqaa plain. categorised in UNESCO's world cultural heritage sites as being in a high degree of preservation. You can walk through rows of ancient ways between the three main temples and the houses that surrounded them.

The main monuments are: Jupiter’s temple with six very impressive columns remaining (height: 22 meters; bearing in mind that Athens’ “Acropolis” columns only measure 7.5 meters), Venus’ temple and Bacchus’ temple, better preserved, shows the extent of construction during this epoch. However, Baalbeck cannot be reduced to this site only. You must visit the Umayyad mosque, recently restored. Baalbeck’s festival is worth visiting. Great talents (Msistlav Rostropovich, Nina Simone, Compay Secundo for example) succeed one another on an open-air stage next to the Bacchus’ temple. The atmosphere is amazing and to be wondered at. Diner, and accommodation at Baalbeck or Zahleh.

Day 04: Today we head to **Achrafieh** district, to the Surssock museum, a magnificent 1912 mansion, houses temporary exhibitions of modern art. The permanent exhibition shows numerous works of Islamic art. Walk around Acharfieh with the company of one its residents, maybe a filmmaker or a painter then back to the hotel.

*During the afternoon, we head to one of country's oldest cities **Byblos**: Byblos city has constantly been inhabited since the sixth century BC until today. The actual town is made up of the old town, surrounding by medieval walls and of the modern town that progressively develops towards the mountains. Fishing port since Neolithic, it has miscellaneous influences (Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Fatimide, Mameluke, Crusader or Byzantine) leaving numerous vestiges. The old town holds around the port and the huge archaeological site, impressive because of its situation (diving into the sea) and its 8000 years of history. You enter through the crusaders' castle (12th century). There, for examples, the obelisks' temple (19th-16th BC), houses' foundations (dating from 3200 to 2000 BC), a royal necropolis and some sarcophagus succeed one another. Out of the archaeological site, the old Jbeil, of which medieval walls seem fixed, offers a perfect example of traditional architecture, well preserved and kept. Its tiny port and lovely alleys, all ochre stoned, invite long walks where churches (including the Crusader church of Saint John), chapels and houses are worth visiting.*

Diner at **Byblos** restaurant and back to Beirut hotel.

Day 05: Transfer to the airport for the return flight.



Our “**Family**” trips profit from all our attention in the their work out and above all in the leadership and liveliness while on trip, keeping a warm ambiance and sharing activities with each other, within the group.

The itineraries are adapted to parents accompanied with their children, meals are studied especially to satisfy young & older, ...learning about how traditional meals are cooked and all about the ingredients, the evenings spent around a nice camp-fire are filled with stories and local tales, for example.

During activities such as site visits, walking and off road driving, our team goes for exploration and orientation games, **safely** adapted within the trips' highlights, to attract the child's attention to constructive holidays and fun! ...in other words, easy holidays, within all security measures.