



LEBANON

THE LAND OF THE CEDARS

October 01 - October 09, 2024

Led by Tour lecturer and Guide Ghiath Abdallah

Lebanon has always been a well-traveled bridge between East and West, sea and desert, and so is dense with history. Above the layers of antiquity lies a land of mesmerizing beauty and contrast, from the modernity of Beirut, once known as the Paris of the Middle East, to the lush Cedars. Experience the warmth of its people, the tastes of its world-renown cuisine, the aromas of its souks, the majesty of its past, and explore some of the best-preserved Roman and Byzantine cities in the Near East, some of the most stunning Byzantine gems, as well as many of jewels of Islamic architecture! Explore the Phoenician cities of Sidon & Tyre and the well-preserved Roman city of Baalbek, and the town of Byblos with its multiple layers of civilizations.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Tuesday, October 01

Arrive in Beirut (LEBANON)



Upon arrival in Beirut, meet and transfer to *Rotana Arjaan Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight.

Wednesday, October 02

Beirut



After breakfast, head to visit the **Beirut National Museum**, where we will go back in time and discover the history of the region then head to **Downtown Beirut**, which includes contemporary high-rises, as well as, Parisian-style buildings constructed in the old tradition with beautiful wrought iron work, where the new blends well with the old. Visit the ruins of the **Roman Baths** near the Grand Serail, the **Parliament building, martyrs' square, Al-Omari Mosque, and St. Georges Cathedral**. Later take a walk along the Corniche and discover the beauty of the Raouche Rock. Also a stop at **AUB's museum** is a must. Founded in 1868, it is the third oldest museum in the Near East, after Cairo and Constantinople. It is a regional Museum with collections from 7 countries (*Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, and Iran*). The Museum was renovated in 1999 and reopened to the public in 2006. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, October 03

Beirut (Deir el-Qamar, Beiteddine & Barouk)



Begin the day with a visit to Shouf, **Deir El-Qamar** which means "Monastery of the Moon". It is a small & charming Christian town located in a serene environment just one hour away from Beirut, visit the **Kayssarieh Notre Dame Church** and the **Fakheredine Mosque**. Then head to visit **Beiteddine**, situated about 28 miles from Beirut and 2.5 miles from Deir el Qamar. Beiteddine, once the center of power of Lebanon, is home to the best and most spectacular example of early 19th century Lebanese architecture: **Beiteddine Palace**. Then continue to **Barouk** to visit one of the richest **cedar reserves** in Lebanon. Take in a breath of fresh air from the glorious

cedars of Lebanon. Return to *Hotel* in Beirut for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, October 04

Beirut (Anjar, Baalbeck, & Ksara)



Begin the day with a visit to **Baalbek**, an ancient Roman city located in the Bekaa valley, 53 miles away from Beirut. It makes the largest and best-preserved corpus of roman architecture left around. The acropolis occupies the top of an artificial hill built up of different layers of habitation. Head for a visit to the city of **Anjar**, which was founded by Caliph Walid I at the beginning of the 8th century. The ruins reveal a very regular layout, reminiscent of the palace cities of ancient times, and are a unique testimony to city planning under the Umayyad's. Later continue to **Ksara**, the home of the country's' oldest winery founded in 1857 by Jesuit Fathers. The wines are made with the highest standards with state of the art equipment; they also reflect the terror of the Lebanon's historic Bekaa Valley, an area that has been making wine for over 2,000 years. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, October 05

Beirut - Byblos



Begin the day with a visit to the famous **Jeita grottos**; considered among the most important natural touristic features of Lebanon for its magnificent sceneries. Jeita Grotto, which is a natural wonder, is a system of two interconnected caves and is, situated approximately 11 miles away from Beirut. It is the longest cave existing in the Middle East and is considered to be a pride of Lebanon. Head to visit the **Maronite Church**. Bkerke located 650 m above the bay of Jounieh, northeast of Beirut to meet a representative of the Maronite Church for an introduction on the history of Maronites. Then proceed to **Harissa**, "The Lebanon Lady", where the statue of the Virgin dominates a sanctuary (a chapel in the pedestal). We will enjoy the panoramic view from the top of the statue. Enjoy lunch at a Lebanese restaurant in the region then continue the drive to **Byblos**, and upon arrival transfer to *Byblos Sur*

mer Hotel or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, October 06

Byblos (Tripoli)



Begin the day with a visit to a region that holds one of the most important archeological sites in the area, considered the longest continually inhabited city in the world: **Byblos**. Enjoy walking through its castle, souks, cathedral port, restaurants etc., then continue to the capital of the north, a city that does not sleep, and rich in its culture and filled with the most loving people: **Tripoli**, Lebanon's second-largest city and despite being one of its poorest, it is rich in diversity and is a beautiful city to explore. There are always new places to visit and new things to do and then Make our way to the **Citadel of Tripoli**, the **Tripoli Harbor**, and the **Mosques** and **churches** of the city. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, October 07

Byblos - Beirut



The Cedars, a forest that has a unique assemblage of conifers, deciduous and evergreen broadleaf trees in an isolated phytoclimatic region with a highly varied topography, located just 5 miles from Bcharre. The Cedars are one of Lebanon's most beautiful nature reserves and home to the oldest cedar forest. Enjoy the view of the thousands year old Cedars grown at an elevation of 1,800 meters, then continue to **Bcharre**, which is the birthplace of the famous poet, painter, and sculptor Gibran Khalil Gibran, who now has a **museum** in the town that honors his work. In his home, discover his art and get the opportunity to see his personal belongings, his private library, and his manuscripts. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 08

Beirut (Tyre & Sidon)



Begin the day with a drive to **Sidon**, and visit the **Sea Castle**, **Khan El Franj** and **Soap museum**. Sidon is translated to 'fishery' or 'fishing-town', it is the third-largest city in Lebanon and is located in the South Governorate of Lebanon, on the Mediterranean coast, about 25 miles north of Tyre and 25 miles south of the capital, Beirut. Then we'll head to visit **Tyre**, second largest city in the south of Lebanon with its purest shores. We will enjoy lunch in Tyre, and then we'll continue to the old island of Tyre, to see the **Roman baths theatres** and the **old port**. Make sure to take a walk along the corniche and

enjoy the breathtaking view of the Mediterranean Sea. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 09

Beirut - USA



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$4,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$495.00

Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 14 participants

Trip Grade: I **Lodging Level: ******

American and English Literature from the University of Damascus and his additional study of the history, archeology, and culture earned him the title of a certified licensed guide. Ghiath moved to the United States and settled in New York. There, he earned an MBA. He is fluent in English and Arabic, and taught Arabic in a private college. His professionalism, charm, compassion, and kindness have never failed to deeply touch the hearts of our clients who are always very vocal in their praise for him!

About your Tour Manager... Ghiath Abdallah has been our guide, lecturer, and tour manager at Spiekermann Travel since 1994. He has guided most of our groups, as well as many of our esteemed individual guests. He is passionate about the history, culture, and food of the Middle East. He is a native of Damascus where his family still lives in the Christian Quarter of the Old City. He earned his degree in



Tour Includes:

- Airport-Hotel- Airport transfer.
- Accommodation at mentioned hotels or similar.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Transportation by deluxe air-conditioned coach.
- English speaking local guide.
- All tours as per itinerary & entrance fees to the sites and museums mentioned.
- 11% VAT at present time.
- Escort of lecturer (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA-Beirut-USA
- Lebanon Visa - (currently free for US citizens).
- Beverages and alcoholic drinks with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance. (Highly Recommended)

Trip Grade

I Easy: - Reasonably paced sightseeing, easy walking, but rather packed program with lots of visits and Beirut traffic is also notoriously bad and sometimes causes delays and requires doing some adjustments to the itinerary according to the road conditions. No particular physical challenges.

Lodging Level

**** **Luxury:** Regular style- usually large- hotels, typical western standard with ample venues, and full amenities. (4 or 5 stars).

