

# Lebanon Discovery

**Country(ies):** Lebanon

**Tour type:** Private

**Transport:** A/C car/minibus

**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 12

**Days:** 8 Days

**Start location:** Beirut, Lebanon

**End location:** Beirut, Lebanon

**Departs On:**

**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, Baatar 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: Welcome to Beirut. Transfer to hotel

On arrival into to Beirut International Airport you will be met by a representative and transferred to your hotel for check in. The rest of the day is free to settle in and explore the busy surrounding Hamra district of the city.

**OVERNIGHT:** Beirut Hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour

## Day 2: Explore Tyre and Sidon

Today we'll spend the full day in South Lebanon. We kick off in Tyre - 85km from Beirut - which is known as the greatest of the Phoenician city-states, with its golden age coming during the reign of Hiram, the most famous of the Tyrian kings. Today, UNESCO lists Tyre as a World Heritage Site.

Your next stop is Sidon, or Saida, another important Phoenician city-state. Saida is a rapidly-growing town and the administrative and commercial capital of Lebanon's south, but its original wealth came from the murex trade producing valuable purple dyes, as well as glass manufacture, which was some of the best in the world at the time. The town has one of Lebanon's best old souks which you can spend time exploring, tasting some of the many local drinks and snacks on offer. You can also visit the Crusader Sea castle, Khan El Franj (Inn of the Foreigners) and the Great mosque before returning to Beirut

**OVERNIGHT:** Beirut Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Barouk City Tour, Barouk Cedars - Deir El Qamar - Beiteddine Palace

You have a busy day today, starting with a tour of Beirut itself. Beirut is a city of contrasts, with beautiful architecture and small houses nestling in the shadows of tall modern buildings. The city also still shows the signs of its more recent troubled past. You'll pass through Downtown and the Corniche, and see the Pigeon Grotto.

Leaving Beirut, you head into the countryside and your first view of Lebanon's famous Cedar forests in the hills of the Barouk Nature Reserve. The reserve contains the cedar forests of Barouk, Maaser el Shouf and Ain Zhalta-Bmohray and is an Important Bird Area (IBA) and Ecotourism area, hosting 32 species of wild mammals, 200 species of birds and 500 species of plants. There'll be time for a short walk amongst the cedars before you continue through the Chouf Mountains to Deir El Qamar. Translating literally as 'monastery of the moon', this charming village once served as the capital of Lebanon in the 17th century. Your next stop is the nearby Beiteddine Palace which was built in the 19th century over a period of 30 years by Emir Bechir II Chehab around a former Druze hermitage. Today it counts as one of the best surviving examples of old Lebanese architecture. You finish the tour today at the village of Zahle on the edge of the Bekaa Valley.

**OVERNIGHT:** Zahle Guesthouse

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Baalbek ruins, Anjar and Ksara Caves wine tasting

You start today with a drive through the fertile Bekaa valley to Baalbek - called Heliopolis or “the City of the Sun” by the Greeks and Romans. This site is quite possibly the best preserved of any ancient temple complex in the Middle East and one of Lebanon's best highlights. Many of the temple buildings are still largely intact having survived earthquakes, wars and the stresses of time.

Next, continue to visit Anjar, the only significant Umayyad site in Lebanon, which was founded in the 8th century by the Caliph Walid following a Roman city plan. The presence of its palaces, bath houses and mosques lead historians to believe that this was an Imperial residence, while its location and the find of around 600 different shops also strongly indicates that the main purpose of the settlement was commercial.

You finish the day at the Ksara caves, which today form an important part of the Chateau Ksara winery, which still uses the 2km system of underground caves to store its wine. Winemaking has been carried out in Lebanon for around 5000 years and it is believed that the Romans also used these caves to store wines. The temple of the Roman god of wine, Bacchus, is at nearby Baalbek. Jesuit priests started the Chateau Ksara winery in 1857 and it has grown over the years, especially following the period of French governance, to feature grape varieties such as carignan, muscat and ugni blanc. The climate of the Bekaa Valley makes it perfect for growing grapes, and the Chateau is now perhaps most famous for cabernet sauvignon and syrah blends which are popular with wine connoisseurs worldwide. Your tour there will include a visit to the Chateau and the caves, and wine tastings (and purchases) are available following the tour.

*Note: During the winter season we will return to Beirut from Ksara and spend the night there, rather than in Zahle.*

**OVERNIGHT:** Zahle Guest House

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 5: Scenic mountain drive to the Cedars & Becharre. Qadisha Valley walk**

You'll leave the Bekaa Valley today and head up on a scenic drive through the mountains up steep roads with some sharp switchbacks to the Col des Cedres (2581m) before descending slightly to the Cedars Ski Resort and a small grove of Lebanese cedars (*Cedrus Libani*). These groves are part of the original extensive forest that once covered the whole of the Mount Lebanon range. The trees are mentioned in the Old Testament and are the country's national symbol.

After stretching your legs at the Cedars, you continue driving on winding roads through the mountains to Becharre which is famed for being the birthplace of Khalil Gibran, Lebanon's most celebrated literary figure, author of “The Prophet”. The picturesque museum of Khalil Gibran has excellent views out over the Qadisha valley and contains hundreds of his paintings and manuscripts.

In the afternoon you explore the nearby Qadisha Valley, also known as the Holy Valley where the early Maronite community established itself. The valley is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and has steep sides dotted with springs, waterfalls and many ancient monasteries and churches. The valley is a popular hiking spot and you can spend time this afternoon taking to some of the trails before heading to your hotel in the Cedars or Becharre.

*Note: During the winter months you will do your Beirut city tour this morning and then drive to the Qadisha Valley and on to the Cedars from the west, rather than from the eastern side of the mountains.*

**OVERNIGHT:** Cedars Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 6: Walk to Baatara Gorge Sinkhole, on to Byblos**

There are more scenic highlights today, as you head down from the hills to Tannourine and take a short walk to the spectacular Baatara Sinkhole. This Jurassic limestone gorge here has 3 natural rock bridges, and in spring the melting snow from the nearby mountains creates a waterfall that descends 255 metres into the sinkhole below. You can extend your walk through the countryside here, or visit the nearby village of Douma. A traditional Lebanese lunch is included today before you continue on to Byblos for a relaxing afternoon. If you'd like more time hiking in the Qadisha Valley, you could do that this morning before visiting Baatara Gorge in the afternoon en-route to Byblos.

**OVERNIGHT:** Byblos Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: Harissa Cable Car, Jeitta Grotto, Byblos

The final visits included on your tour are a short drive from Byblos, including a cable car trip up to the Basilica at Harissa where you can enjoy great views of the Middle East's most beautiful bay. Our other stop is to explore the cave system at the Jeita Grotto. The upper and lower galleries here contain one of the world's largest and beautiful collections of stalactites and stalagmites. Depending on the season and water levels the tour here explores the caves both on foot and by boat.

The rest of your afternoon is then free to explore the coastal town of Byblos - reputed to be the world's oldest continually inhabited city. Nowadays, its charming Phoenician harbour, popular cafe culture, and the rich archaeological and historical heritage make Byblos one of the most enchanting places to visit in Lebanon.

**OVERNIGHT:** Byblos Hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Free time in Byblos. Departure airport transfer

Your time is free to explore Byblos further and do some final sightseeing or souvenir shopping before we transfer you to Beirut airport for your departure flight (approx. 45 min drive). The tour can also be extended to add more time in Byblos or elsewhere in Lebanon if you wish.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Extra day - post-tour

## Included

- 6 nights in boutique/4-star hotels in Beirut, Byblos & Becharre
- 1 night in guesthouse/hotel at Zahle
- 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
- Traditional Lebanese Lunch on day 6
- English speaking guide and driver
- 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 from Encounters Travel](#))
- 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 route adjustment:**

During the winter months (normally from December until sometime in May), the road between Baalbek and Bcharre is closed due to snow. During this period the itinerary will be adjusted so that you return to Beirut for the night of Day 4, instead of spending it in Zahle. You then head to Bcharre from the other side of the mountains on Day 5 and continue the tour from there.

# Options

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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.

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## 1. Accommodation

This tour uses a mix of good quality boutique style / 4-star hotels in Beirut, Byblos and the Cedars and a local guesthouse in Zahle. Accommodation is based on twin 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. These are subject to change to alternative properties of a similar standard. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation for a private tour.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

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## 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. Vehicles will be selected to be comfortable for the number of travellers in the group.

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## 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.

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## 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 happy to suggest flights to go with the 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).

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

### Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully,

many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## 5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

Our **small-group tours** in Lebanon run with a minimum of 2 and maximum of 18 travellers in the group.

**Tailor-made tours** are priced based on 2 people travelling with a driver and guide for the sightseeing visits and touring. Discounts and customised quotations will be provided if you are travelling as a family or in a larger party.

In Lebanon we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## **10. Time**

The time in Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon is GMT plus 2 hours and in UAE GMT plus 3 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.

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## **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.

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## **12. Money - Lebanon**

The local currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese Pound (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.

Due to the huge recent devaluation of the Lebanese currency, if you withdraw money from an ATM or pay for things with your credit card you will be charged the official bank exchange rate which is very different to the actual operating rate used locally. We therefore recommend that you bring enough US Dollars or Euros in cash with you to cover your required spending money during the tour and do not plan to use your credit card while in Lebanon. You can change this hard currency to Lebanese pounds at the current rates while you are there - please ask your guide for assistance on appropriate places to change your money.

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.

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### 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 Lebanese climate varies widely from hot days in the summer to cold and wintry days in the winter. At night, especially in the mountains, the temperatures can drop quite dramatically. So you must pack for cool and potentially wet conditions. Formal dress (eg. suits & ties) is not required. Modesty rates highly in some parts of Lebanon, especially for women, so to respect the local culture and people, we recommend all clothes are loose fitting and not revealing. Shorts (not hot-pants) are OK in tourist sites, as are T-shirts, but these should not show too much bare flesh (we suggest that your shoulders should remain covered). When visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered. Bikinis and swimwear are however commonplace on some of the country's beaches.

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

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### 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.

Note - pricing and availability should be reconfirmed for the Eid el-Adha period (19-23 July 2021, 9-13 July 2022)

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### 15. Winter & Summer Route Changes

On Day 5, the standard (summer) itinerary for this tour travels north through the Bekaa Valley from Zahle, before taking the Ariz-Baalbek Road up into the mountains to the Cedars. This road is often blocked with snow during the winter making this route impassable. During this period (generally December until sometime in May) all the same places will be visited, just in a slightly different order and routing:

Day 4 - Baalbek, Ksara Caves and Anjar. Return to Beirut for overnight

Day 5 - City tour in Beirut, Qadisha Valley walk, Becharre. Overnight at the Cedars

Day 6 - Visit the Cedars, then continue as before to the Baatara Gorge and Byblos

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### 16. 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 may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). 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.

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## 17. 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.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or 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.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*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.*

## Covid-19

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).**

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## 18. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy

directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## 19. 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 Encounters Travel 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).

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## 20. 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/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](https://twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

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## 21. 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.



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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.

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