

Beirut Mini Break

Country(ies): Lebanon

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C car/minibus/coach

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 4 Days

Start location: Beirut, Lebanon

End location: Beirut, Lebanon

Departs On: Fridays

Meals: Breakfasts - 3, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 0

Highlights: Beirut city tour, Pigeon Rock, historic town of Byblos, Harissa cable car, Jeita Grotto, optional tours to Baalbek, Beiteddine Palace, Ksara Caves wine tasting and Aanjar

Places Visited: Beirut, Byblos, Jeita Grotto



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Beirut, transfer to hotel

Your Lebanon adventure begins in the capital city of Beirut. Your guide will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel in the city, where we will brief you on what to expect over the next few days.

If you've had a long flight, you have the rest of the day to rest or if you arrived earlier, you have time to explore your new surroundings at your leisure.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: None

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

Day 2: Beirut, Jeita Grotto, Byblos, Harissa by cable car

We start the day with a visit to the Jeita Grotto, which is a system of two separate, but interconnected, limestone caves spanning an overall length of nearly 9 kilometres. It boasts one of the world's largest and beautiful collections of stalactites and stalagmites.

Next, we visit Byblos, the world's oldest continually inhabited city. Its charming Phoenician harbour is rich in history and heritage and is one of the most intriguing places to visit in Lebanon.

We then make our way to Harissa - a mountain village which is home to one of the most important Lebanese Pilgrimage sites, The Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon. We'll explore the village via cable car, taking in the breathtaking views of the city and its bay.

Later in the day, we'll explore the capital city, indulging in its beautiful architecture, tall modern buildings and we will also explore down-town Beirut, visiting the Corniche, the Pigeon Grotto and the Beirut Souks.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Free day. Optional tours available

You have the day free to explore the city of Beirut at your leisure or you can choose to take an optional day trip. Prices are based on a minimum of 2 people travelling, with discounts available if more people take the tour. You can arrange these tours either in advance or while you are in Beirut.

Optional Tour 1: Visit Barouk Cedars - Deir El Qamar - Beiteddine Palace

This optional tour starts with a visit to the Barouk Cedar Nature Reserve, located in the Chouf district of Lebanon. The nature reserve is situated on the slopes of the Barouk Mountain and is home to the towering cedar forests of Barouk, Maaser el Shouf and Ain Zhalta-Bmohray.

The Barouk Cedar Nature Reserve is an important bird and eco-tourism area, in fact, the reserve is home to approximately 32 species of wild mammals, 200 species of birds, and 500 species of plants.

Next, we head to the Chouf Mountains to explore the village of Deir El Qamar, a name which literally translates to 'monastery of the moon'. The village was the capital of Lebanon in the 17th century.

We then visit the Beiteddine Palace built in the 19th century by Emir Bechir II Chehabi around a former Druze hermitage. The palace took over 30 years to build and today its considered to be one of the great surviving achievements of Lebanese architecture.

Optional Tour 2: Baalbek - Ksara Caves - Anjar

This optional tour starts with a visit to Baalbek, also known as Heliopolis or 'the City of the Sun' by the ancient Greeks and Romans who dedicated the main temple to Jupiter - the god of the sun and the two other temples Venus and Mercure - who partnered Jupiter in the triad of god.

Baalbek is one of the best-preserved temple complexes in the Middle East, with the monument staying intact through wars, earthquakes and much more. Next, we visit the Ksara Caves, which date back to the Roman period.

Your guide will take you on a tour of the caves and the winery here, which produces some of Lebanon's finest wine. Lastly, we visit Anjar, an important Umayyad site in Lebanon, which was founded in the 8th century by the Caliph Walid.

It is believed that Anjar was once an imperial residence due to its palaces, baths and mosques. It also has remnants of 600 shops, which indicates that the purpose of this settlement was primarily

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Cedars, Beiteddine & Deir El Qamar tour || Baalbek, Anjar & Vineyards tour

Day 4: Free time, transfer to airport

You have free time to explore Beirut on your own today. You will be collected at your hotel and transferred to the airport to board your flight home. Additional nights in the same tour hotel may be added if you would like to extend your stay (subject to availability).

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra day in Beirut - post-tour

Included

- Accommodation in a central 4-star hotel
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (3 breakfasts)
- 24hr airport arrival and departure transfer service
- Entrance fees to sites visited in the itinerary
- Sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- English speaking guide for all tours
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles

Excluded

- International flights
- Visa fees (free visa available on arrival for most nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available from Encounters Travel)

- Optional tours
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary (lunches & dinners)
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips
- Hotel gala dinner supplements if applied on Christmas & New Year's Eve
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

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

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

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

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

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

Cedars, Beiteddine & Deir El Qamar tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$95.00

This optional tour starts with a trip to the Barouk Cedar Nature Reserve, located in the Chouf district of Lebanon. Barouk Cedar is nestled on the slopes of the Barouk Mountain. The Barouk Cedar Nature Reserve is an important bird and eco-tourism area, in fact, the reserve is home to approximately 32 species of wild mammals, 200 species of birds, and 500 species of plants.

Next, we head to the village of Deir El Qamar, which once served as the Lebanese capital city during the 17th century before we visit the Beiteddine Palace built in the 19th century by Emir Bechir II Chehabi around a former Druze hermitage. The Beiteddine Palace took over 30 years to build and today its considered to be one of the great surviving achievements of Lebanese architecture.

Pricing is based on a minimum of 2 people taking the tour. Solo traveller supplements will apply.

Baalbek, Anjar & Vineyards tour

Min numbers:

Price: \$95.00

This optional tour starts with a visit to Baalbek, also known as Heliopolis or 'the City of the Sun' by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Baalbek is one of the best-preserved temple complexes in the Middle East, with the monument staying intact through wars, earthquakes and much more.

Next, we visit the Ksara Caves, which date back to the Roman period. Your guide will take you on a tour of the caves and the winery here, which produces some of Lebanon's finest wine.

Lastly, we visit Anjar, an important Umayyad site in Lebanon, which was founded in the 8th century by the Caliph Walid. It is believed that Anjar was once an imperial residence due to its palaces, baths and mosques. It also has remnants of 600 shops, which indicates that the purpose of this settlement was primarily commercial.

Single Room Supplement (LBTMBM)

Min numbers:

Price: \$135.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are happy to share a room with another traveller of the same sex, let us know and we will aim to pair you up. The supplement is payable if this is not possible, but it will be removed from your booking or refunded if a room share becomes available later. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour

Min numbers:

Price: \$50.00

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

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Beirut - post-tour

Min numbers:

Price: \$50.00

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability) on a bed & breakfast basis. Your airport departure transfer is not included and will be charged as an additional supplement if required based on the number of people in your party. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Tour Notes

1. Accommodation

We use a good quality 4-star hotel on this tour, located in central Beirut and within walking distance of the popular Hamra Street with its many restaurants, shops, bars and cafes. There is plenty to see and do on foot around the hotel.

Accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. Single travellers may share a same-sex twin room if one is available with another traveller in the group, or alternatively pay the single room supplement. This will be refunded if you would like to share and a room share becomes available later. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the hotels normally used on this tour. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation.

2. Transport

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

3. Transfers

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

4. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very 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).

5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

Our **small-group tours** in Lebanon run with a minimum of 2 and maximum of 14 travellers in the group.

Tailor-made tours are priced based on 2 people travelling. Discounts and customised quotations will be provided if you are travelling 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.

6. Entrance Fees

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

7. Tipping

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

8. Health and Vaccinations

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

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

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

Egypt: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A

Jordan: Tetanus, Hepatitis A

Israel: Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis

Lebanon: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A

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

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

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

9. Passports and Visas - Lebanon

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

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

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

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

10. Time

The time in Egypt, Jordan, 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.

11. Voltage

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

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

12. Money - Lebanon

The local currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese 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.

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

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

13. What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Lebanon. You should also bring a

small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips – you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

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

Clothing: The 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.

14. Dates & Prices

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

15. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You 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.

16. Travel Insurance

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

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

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the

form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

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 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.

17. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

18. Responsible Tourism

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

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

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the

local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).

- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and 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).

19. Follow Us Online

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

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

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

20. Before you travel

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

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

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

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



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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.
