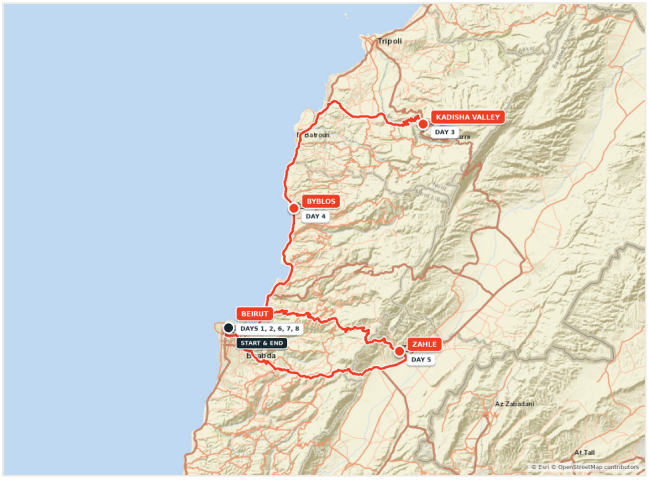
ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Lebanon Encounters

COUNTRY(IES)	Lebanon
TOUR TYPE	Small Group
TRANSPORT	A/C car/minibus/coach
GROUP SIZE	Min: 2 | Max: 16
DURATION	8 days
STARTS	Beirut, Lebanon
ENDS	Beirut, Lebanon
MEALS	Breakfasts - 7, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 0

TOUR ROUTE MAP **8 Days**



ROUTE: **Beirut** (Start) → **Kadisha Valley** → **Byblos** → **Zahle** → **Beirut** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

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

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive in Beirut, transfer to hotel

Meet the representative at Beirut International Airport and transfer directly to the hotel. Once settled into the accommodation, enjoy the remaining time at leisure. You may relax after the journey or explore independently if you wish, keeping the arrival day flexible before the more structured sightseeing and activities that follow.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Beirut International Airport**
  Arrive at Beirut International Airport and meet your tour representative at the arrivals hall. You will be assisted before beginning your transfer into the city to check in at your hotel.
- **Transfer from Beirut Airport to City Hotel**
  Take a comfortable transfer from Beirut International Airport to your hotel in the city. This short journey brings you into Lebanon's vibrant capital to begin your stay.

- **Free Time in Beirut**
  Enjoy free time after your arrival to settle into your hotel or explore the surrounding streets at your own pace. Beirut's lively atmosphere offers plenty of cafés and shops within easy reach.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Beirut hotel	None	Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour, Single Room Supplement (LBSGLE)

DAY 2 Jeita Grotto, Harissa cable car & Baatara Gorge

From Beirut, the day visits Jeita Grotto before climbing to Harissa and the Our Lady of Lebanon sanctuary overlooking the Mediterranean. Continue to Baatara Gorge and its dramatic vertical landscape, then visit Douma Village with its traditional stone architecture. The route finishes on the approach to the Qadisha Valley, linking several distinctive natural and cultural settings in Lebanon's mountains.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Beirut to Jeita**
  Leave Beirut and drive into the nearby hills towards Jeita. Pass coastal suburbs before heading inland to the grotto area.
- **Explore Jeita Grotto**
  Explore the impressive Jeita Grotto, a vast network of limestone caves featuring striking stalactites and stalagmites. Depending on water levels, you may visit both the upper galleries on foot and the lower caves by boat.
- **Drive from Jeita to Harissa**
  Continue by road up the mountainside to Harissa above Jounieh Bay. Enjoy increasingly panoramic views of the coastline as you ascend.
- **Explore Harissa (Our Lady of Lebanon)**
  Visit the important Christian shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa and ascend by cable car to the hilltop basilica. From here, enjoy sweeping views across the Bay of Jounieh, one of the Middle East's most beautiful coastlines.
- **Drive from Harissa to Baatara Gorge**
  Drive inland through mountain scenery to reach the Baatara Gorge sinkhole. Journey past rural villages and terraced hillsides on the way.
- **Explore Baatara Gorge**
  Discover the Baatara Gorge sinkhole, a dramatic cavern with three natural stone bridges and a seasonal 255-metre waterfall. The site offers spectacular views, short walking trails, and a chance to explore the surrounding mountain village of Douma.
- **Drive from Baatara Gorge to Douma Village**
  Travel a short distance to the traditional mountain village of Douma. Arrive in time to wander its old streets and squares.

- **Explore Douma Village**
  Stroll through Douma, known for its stone houses and red-tiled roofs. Enjoy a traditional lunch and experience rural Lebanese village life.
- **Drive from Douma Village to Qadisha Valley**
  Drive onward to the scenic Qadisha (Holy) Valley. Arrive at the monastery or guesthouse where you will spend the night.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Qadisha Valley monastery or guesthouse	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 3 Qadisha Valley, Cedars Ski Resort & Becharre

Spend the morning in the Qadisha Valley before travelling to Becharre for a visit to the museum dedicated to Kahlil Gibran. Continue to the Cedars area and see the famous Cedars of God before heading down towards Byblos. The remaining time there is free, giving you an opportunity to relax or explore independently after a day that moves from mountain landscapes and monastic heritage to Lebanon’s ancient Mediterranean coast.

ACTIVITIES

- **Hike the Qadisha Valley**
  Enjoy a short morning hike through the Qadisha Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its dramatic cliffs and hidden monastic caves. The valley offers peaceful scenery, historic hermit sites, and beautiful natural landscapes.
- **Drive from Qadisha Valley to Becharre**
  Travel from the valley up to the nearby town of Becharre. Enjoy views over forested slopes and mountain peaks on the way.
- **Explore Becharre (Gibran Museum)**
  Visit the Gibran Museum in Becharre, dedicated to the life and works of Lebanese poet and artist Kahlil Gibran. Explore his manuscripts, paintings, and personal belongings in the village where he was born.
- **Drive from Becharre to Cedars of God Forest**
  Drive from Becharre up towards the high mountain slopes above the town. The road leads to the famous cedar groves.
- **Explore Cedars of God Forest**
  Explore the Cedars of God, one of Lebanon's last surviving ancient cedar groves mentioned in the Old Testament. This protected forest offers beautiful mountain scenery and a glimpse of the country's national tree.
- **Drive from Cedars of God Forest to Byblos**
  Descend from the cedar forests and drive west to the coastal city of Byblos. You travel from mountain scenery back down to the Mediterranean shore.
- **Free Time in Byblos**
  Enjoy a free morning to wander Byblos' markets and seafront at your own pace. Relax in cafes or browse local crafts in the old souk.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Byblos hotel	Breakfast

DAY 4 Morning in Byblos, Ksara Winery

Spend time at leisure in Byblos before travelling inland to Ksara for a winery visit. The stop provides an introduction to Lebanese wine production and the history associated with the estate. Afterwards, drive onwards to Zahlé and enjoy some unstructured time in the town, moving from the coastal surroundings of Byblos into the very different agricultural landscapes of the Beqaa Valley.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Byblos**
  Enjoy a free morning to wander Byblos' markets and seafront at your own pace. Relax in cafes or browse local crafts in the old souk.
- **Drive from Byblos to Ksara**
  Travel from Byblos to the Ksara region, passing coastal landscapes and rolling inland hills. This scenic route leads you toward Lebanon's historic wine-producing heartland.
- **Explore Ksara Winery**
  Visit Chateau Ksara, Lebanon's oldest winery, known for its vast cave tunnels used as natural cellars. Enjoy a guided tour of the historic site followed by a wine tasting session featuring the estate's renowned varieties.
- **Drive from Ksara to Zahlé**
  Continue from Ksara to nearby Zahlé, a charming town in the Beqaa Valley. The short journey offers views of vineyards, fertile plains, and the surrounding mountains.
- **Free Time in Zahlé**
  Spend free time in Zahlé, a pleasant town in the Bekaa Valley. Enjoy its riverside promenade, cafes or relaxed evening atmosphere.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Zahle guesthouse	Breakfast

DAY 5 Baalbeck & Anjar

Visit Baalbek first and focus on its major Roman religious complex before travelling onwards to Anjar. The second site preserves an unusually clear example of Umayyad town planning, with public buildings, baths and commercial areas still visible. These two archaeological locations form the entire supported sightseeing programme, and the afternoon concludes with the drive back to Beirut without adding wineries or other Bekaa Valley stops.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Zahlé to Baalbek**
  Travel from Zahlé deeper into the Bekaa Valley to reach Baalbek. See fertile fields framed by surrounding mountain ranges.
- **Explore Baalbek Temple Complex**
  Explore the vast Baalbek temple complex, one of the greatest surviving examples of Roman architecture. Wander through monumental temples dedicated to Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury, each showcasing intricate stonework and extraordinary preservation.
- **Drive from Baalbek to Anjar**
  Drive from Baalbek to the nearby Umayyad site of Anjar. Cross the Bekaa Valley past orchards and villages.
- **Explore Anjar Ruins**
  Visit the Umayyad ruins of Anjar, a planned 8th-century city built by Caliph Walid. Discover its mosques, palaces, baths, and over 600 ancient shops that once formed an important commercial hub in the Bekaa Valley.
- **Drive from Anjar to Beirut**
  Travel from Anjar back to Beirut through the scenic Bekaa Valley and surrounding mountains. This afternoon drive brings you to the city for your overnight stay.
- **Free Time in Beirut**
  Enjoy free time after your arrival to settle into your hotel or explore the surrounding streets at your own pace. Beirut's lively atmosphere offers plenty of cafés and shops within easy reach.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Beirut hotel	Breakfast

DAY 6 Deir al Qamar, Beiteddine & Beirut City Tour

Begin in the Chouf Mountains with time in Deir al Qamar, a historic stone village that once served as Lebanon’s capital. Continue to Beiteddine Palace and explore its courtyards, mosaics and refined nineteenth-century architecture. Return to Beirut in the afternoon for a city tour including the Souks, Corniche, Downtown and Pigeon Grotto, combining mountain heritage with a broad introduction to the capital’s urban and coastal character.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Beirut to Deir al Qamar**
  Travel from Beirut into the Chouf Mountains toward the historic village of Deir al Qamar. The scenic drive passes traditional stone houses and terraced hillsides, offering a glimpse of rural Lebanese landscapes.
- **Explore Deir al Qamar**
  Explore the historic village of Deir al Qamar, once the capital of Lebanon in the 17th century. Its narrow lanes, stone houses and historic squares showcase the character and heritage of the Chouf region.
- **Drive from Deir al Qamar to Beiteddine Palace**
  Continue from Deir al Qamar to the nearby Beiteddine Palace through winding mountain roads. The short drive offers views of forested hills and traditional villages along the route.

- **Explore Beiteddine Palace**
  Visit the 19th-century Beiteddine Palace, an architectural masterpiece built by Emir Bashir. Its ornate courtyards, arched halls, and preserved interiors reflect the luxury and craftsmanship of the Ottoman era.
- **Drive from Beiteddine to Beirut**
  Travel from Beiteddine back to Beirut, descending from the Chouf Mountains toward the Mediterranean coast. The drive offers changing scenery as rural landscapes give way to the vibrant capital.
- **Walk Through Beirut City**
  Take a city walk through Beirut, exploring its blend of modern architecture, historic quarters, and coastal scenery. Highlights include the Beirut Souks, the Corniche, downtown landmarks, and the famous Raouché Pigeon Rocks.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Beirut hotel	Breakfast

DAY 7 Tyre & Sidon

Travel through southern Lebanon with visits first in Tyre and then Sidon. Tyre provides the principal archaeological focus, while Sidon adds the Sea Castle, Great Mosque, Khan el Franj and old souks. After completing the scheduled sightseeing, continue north to Beirut. The day remains centred on the named Phoenician, Crusader and urban heritage sites without introducing additional stops beyond those provided.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Beirut to Tyre**
  Drive south from Beirut along the coast towards Tyre. The journey follows the Mediterranean shoreline past several coastal towns.
- **Explore Tyre Archaeological Site**
  Explore the ancient city of Tyre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site rich in Phoenician and Roman history. The archaeological area showcases extensive ruins, coastal views, and centuries of cultural significance.
- **Drive from Tyre to Sidon**
  Leave Tyre and drive north to Sidon. The short coastal drive links two of Lebanon's most historic ports.
- **Explore Sidon Sea Castle**
  Visit Sidon, one of the oldest Phoenician cities, known for its Crusader Sea Castle and historic old town. Explore its mosques, old markets, and traditional caravanserai, reflecting centuries of coastal Lebanese culture.
- **Explore Sidon Great Mosque (Al in Omari Mosque)**
  Visit the historic Sidon Great Mosque, a significant medieval Islamic landmark built over a former Crusader structure. Its courtyard, arches, and restored prayer hall reflect centuries of Lebanese coastal heritage.
- **Explore Khan el Franj**
  Explore Khan el Franj, a 17th-century caravanserai built for merchants and travelers. Its stone courtyard and arcaded rooms offer insight into Sidon's former role as a major Levantine trading hub.

- **Explore Sidon Old Souks**
  Walk through Sidon's atmospheric old souks, filled with traditional workshops, spice stalls, and local crafts. These narrow market streets reflect the city's vibrant everyday culture and historic trading traditions.
- **Drive from Sidon to Beirut**
  Travel north from Sidon along the Mediterranean coast to reach Beirut. This scenic transfer links two of Lebanon's most historic and vibrant cities.
- **Free Time in Beirut**
  Enjoy free time after your arrival to settle into your hotel or explore the surrounding streets at your own pace. Beirut's lively atmosphere offers plenty of cafés and shops within easy reach.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Beirut hotel	Breakfast

DAY 8 Beirut free time. Departure airport transfer

Spend time at leisure in Beirut before your scheduled airport transfer. There are no organised visits during the free period, allowing you to rest or explore independently according to your departure time. Later, drive to Beirut International Airport and complete the final transfer of your stay in Lebanon, bringing the organised services to an end at the terminal.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Beirut**
  Enjoy free time after your arrival to settle into your hotel or explore the surrounding streets at your own pace. Beirut's lively atmosphere offers plenty of cafés and shops within easy reach.
- **Drive from Beirut to Beirut International Airport**
  Transfer from your Beirut hotel to Beirut International Airport for your onward flight. This short drive marks the start of your travel day as you depart Lebanon and head to Egypt.
- **Depart from Beirut International Airport**
  Check in for your departing flight at Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport. Your Lebanon Encounters Tour services conclude here.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/a	Breakfast	Extra day in Beirut - post-tour

INCLUDED

- 5 nights in 3 to 4-star hotels in Beirut & Byblos
- 1 night in guesthouse/hotel in Zahle
- 1 night in monastery accommodation in Qadisha Valley
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- Entrance fees to sites visited
- All sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Wine tasting in Ksara Caves
- English speaking guide for all tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (7 breakfasts, 1 lunch)

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (free on arrival for most nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- 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), many mountain roads in Lebanon are closed due to snow. During this period the tour will be adjusted to avoid the drive from Becharre to Zahle across the Col des Cedres. All the same places will be visited and the same activities included, but the itinerary will run as follows...

Days 1-2 - As above

Day 3 - Morning Beirut City Tour, then head to the Baatara Gorge to see the sinkhole, before finishing at the Qadisha Valley. Lunch included, and overnight at the Monastery or nearby guesthouse.

Day 4 - Morning hike in the Qadisha Valley, visit Becharre and the Cedars, then return to Byblos for overnight.

Day 5 - Explore Byblos, then drive to Zahle via Beirut, with stops on the way to discover Harissa by cable car, and to explore the Jeita Grotto. Overnight in Zahle

Days 6-8 - as above

Tour Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

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

paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

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

Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

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

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Beirut - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

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.

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

This tour uses a mix of accommodation including good quality 4-star hotels in Beirut and Byblos, a comfortable guesthouse Zahle and rooms in a separate new block at Monastery of St. Anthony in Qozhaya. Rooms at the monastery are simple but comfortable and en-suite and you may join the monks for their morning prayers.

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

2 Winter & Summer Route Changes

Winter route adjustment:

During the winter months (normally from December until sometime in May), many mountain roads in Lebanon are closed due to snow. During this period the tour will be adjusted to avoid the drive from Becharre to Zahle across the Col des Cedres. All the same places will be visited and the same activities included, but the itinerary will run as follows...

Days 1-2 - As in summer
Day 3 - Morning Beirut City Tour, then head to the Baatara Gorge to see the sinkhole, before finishing at the Qadisha Valley. Lunch included, and overnight at the Monastery or nearby guesthouse.
Day 4 - Morning hike in the Qadisha Valley, visit Becharre and the Cedars, then return to Byblos for overnight.
Day 5 - Explore Byblos, then drive to Zahle via Beirut, with stops on the way to discover Harissa by cable car, and to explore the Jeita Grotto. Overnight in Zahle
Days 6-8 - as in summer

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3 Dates & Prices

Small-group departure dates run regularly all year round, starting on Saturdays. The tour is also available privately on any other dates if our group tour dates don't work for you or if you would prefer to travel in just your own party. Please contact us for more information and prices to fit your preferred dates and number of travellers.

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4 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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5 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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6 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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7 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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8 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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9 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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10 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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11 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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12 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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13 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

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

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14 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).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

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.

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15 Before you travel

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

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

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

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

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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16 Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their

portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can’t fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon’s efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you’ll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.

- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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17 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

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18 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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19 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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20 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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21 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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22 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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23 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: Dipheria, 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.
