

# LEBANON

## *Travel guide*



# Welcome to Lebanon

It's loud, warm, chaotic, and impossibly beautiful and we're so happy you get to experience it!

Here you'll find a few tips, local musts from the best places to eat and wander to the small details that make life here so special.

For any questions or booking help - just let us know! <3



# GETTING AROUND

*It's easy to move around Beirut - you can walk through most central areas or use **taxis** for longer distances. **Google Maps** works well here and will help you find restaurants, shops, or landmarks nearby.*

## AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Beirut–Rafic Hariri International Airport is about **20–30 minutes** from the city center (without traffic). Avoid taking random taxis at arrivals - it's best to **pre-book** a ride.

We recommend booking with **Allo Taxi** (app available). Your driver can wait for you inside the arrivals area with a name sign. You can also ask your **hotel or guesthouse** to arrange a trusted airport pickup on your behalf.

The average fare to central Beirut is around **\$25–35 USD**.

## TAXI

- **Uber** operates in Lebanon, mainly in Beirut and along the coast. You can book directly in the app, though most drivers accept **cash only**.
- **Allo Taxi** remains the most reliable local option, with fixed rates and professional drivers.
- If you're planning day trips outside Beirut, you can also book a **dedicated taxi or private chauffeur** for the day through.

# WHERE TO STAY



## *Staying in Beirut*

We recommend basing yourself in **Beirut** for most of your stay - especially in **Mar Mikhael**, **Gemmayze**, or **Ashrafieh**. These neighborhoods are lively, walkable, and very central.



## *For the Wedding*

For the **wedding celebration**, we suggest spending the night of the **4th and/or the 5th of June in Douma** - where the wedding will take place – or in **Batroun**, which is just 25 minutes away.

It's about **1 hour and 30 minutes from Beirut**, so staying nearby will make the experience much easier and more relaxed. More information about **accommodation options in Douma and Batroun** – including **special prices and group rates** – will be shared soon on the wedding website.



## *Exploring Lebanon*

If you're planning a **longer trip**, we highly recommend spending a few nights **outside Beirut** to discover the country's diverse regions.

Lebanon is full of **beautiful guesthouses**, each offering a unique glimpse into local life, design, and hospitality. For inspiration, check out **L'Hôte Libanais** (website or Instagram) – they curate some of the most authentic and charming stays across the country.

# FAVORITE STAYS

You can choose to stay in either a hotel or an Airbnb in Beirut - both options work beautifully if you pick wisely. Whatever you go with, just double-check that the place offers:

- **24/7 electricity** (generator or solid backup)
- **Reliable WiFi** and good internet speed
- **Air-conditioning** (especially important in warmer months)
- **A central location**

## ✨ In Beirut

- **Arthaus Beirut** – A refined boutique hotel set in a restored Lebanese villa in Gemmayze.
- **LOST Hotel Gemmayzeh & Ashrafiyeh** – Trend-driven, creative, and full of local energy.
- **Beit Tamana** – A charming, design-focused guesthouse
- **The Grand Meshmosh Hotel** – Friendly, easygoing, and ideally located in Gemmayze.
- **Zita Beirut** - Contemporary boutique hotel in Achrafieh
- **Beit Toureef HOME** – A warm, beautifully curated home-stay
- **Zanzoun Beirut** – An intimate guesthouse tucked away in Mar Mikhael.

## ✨ Outside Beirut

- **Beit Trad (Kfour)** – Serene countryside guesthouse with stunning mountain views.
- **Bkerzay (Chouf)** – Eco-lodge hidden in the mountains, perfect for a nature break.
- **La Maison des Sources (Ain Zhalta)** – Peaceful historic guesthouse in the forest.
- **Beit Noun (Mechmech)** – Contemporary design, sea and mountain views.
- **Al haush (Bekaa)** - Peaceful boutique farmstay in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley, offering rustic rooms, farm-to-table food, and a slow countryside escape.

# MONEY & PAYMENTS

*Many places in Beirut now accept cards - especially restaurants and hotels - but **cash remains essential** for taxis, markets, and smaller cafés.*

## Currencies

- The **Lebanese Pound (LBP)** and **US Dollar (USD)** are both used daily.
- Most restaurants, shops, and hotels now list prices in **USD**.
- When you pay in **USD**, you'll usually get your change in a mix of **USD and LBP**.

## Cards

- **Revolut** works perfectly in Lebanon, and you can pay **directly in USD** without hidden fees or bad conversion rates.
- Avoid paying by traditional bank cards (they often still process at Lebanon's old "official" exchange rate).
- ATMs exist, but not all dispense **USD**, and fees can vary. So bring enough cash and a **revolut card** with you to avoid withdrawals.

## Exchange Tips

- Bring **USD cash** from your home country - you'll get a better and more stable rate abroad than exchanging inside Lebanon.

# COFFEE, BREAKFAST & SNACKS

*Start your day the Beirut way - slow, sunny, and with great coffee (and always a man'oushe). These are our favourite spots to grab a morning brew or a traditional Lebanese breakfast before exploring the city:*

## ☕ Coffee & breakfast

- **Kalei Coffee Co. (Mar Mikhael & Hamra)** – A Beirut staple. Beautiful courtyards, roasted-in-house coffee, and a relaxed creative crowd.
- **Beyt (Gemmayze)** – Hidden behind Plan BEY gallery, this charming garden café.
- **Levant (Gemmayze)** – Warm and welcoming, serving Lebanese-inspired breakfasts.
- **Sip (Gemmayze)** – Minimal & efficient to grab & go.
- **Abou Chadi (Gemmayze)** – A classic neighbourhood bakery serving perfectly crisp spinach and cheese man'oushe.
- **The Lebanese Bakery (Achrafieh)** – Modern and delicious. Try the zaatar & labneh man'oushe with mint and cucumber.

## 🍦 Sweat treats

- **Hanna Mitri (Achrafieh)** – Unofficially Lebanon's best ice cream. Tiny, old-school, and legendary. All the flavours are divine. Try the croquant, pistachio, or halib (milk) (my personal favourite).
- **Douaihy Sweets (Sassine Square, Achrafieh)** – 10-15 min walk from Mar Mikhael; one of the most beloved pastry shops in Beirut. Great knafeh, baklava, and maamoul.

# LUNCH

*Whether you're in the mood for a casual bite or a proper sit-down meal, Beirut does lunch beautifully – bold flavours, fresh ingredients, and a mix of tradition and modern flair.*

## ✨ *In Beirut*

- **Em Sherif Deli / By the Sea / Museum / Café** – iconic Lebanese cuisine in four moods: the classic café, casual deli sandwiches, seafood by the sea, and the Museum's beautiful setting. Try at least one.
- **Loris (Gemmayze)** – Classic Lebanese dishes in a lively, colourful space.
- **Joseph Shawarma (Sin El Fil)** – A Beirut legend for perfect shawarma.
- **Union Marks (Mar Mikhael)** – Cool spot for creative comfort food and great burgers.
- **Badguer (Bourj Hammoud)** – In the Armenian district; hearty, authentic Armenian plates served with love.
- **Maryool (Mar Mikhael)** – Contemporary Middle Eastern with fresh flavours and cozy vibes.
- **Tawlet Souk El Tayeb (Mar Mikhael)** – Daily-changing home-cooked buffet, local and seasonal.
- **Souk El Tayeb Farmers' Market (Saturday)** – Grab a man'oushe from Emm Ali and local produce to take home.
- **Beit Kanz (Zokak el Blat)** – Social enterprise café in a traditional house with delicious Lebanese fusion dishes.

# DINER & DRINKS

*Whether you're in the mood for a casual bite or a proper sit-down meal, Beirut does lunch beautifully - bold flavours, fresh ingredients, and a mix of tradition and modern flair.*

## ✨ In Beirut

- **Aleb Beirut (Gemmayze)** – Natural wine and food bar with a cozy atmosphere, great music, and an easy-going crowd.
- **The Terrible Prince (Mar Mikhael)** – Great mood, great crowd, delicious sharing food and cocktails; cool vibe inside and a lively terrace outside.
- **Superchief (Mar Mikhael)** – Retro-inspired bar with DJs, a fun crowd, and great bites.
- **Kissproof (Gemmayze)** – Always buzzing; perfect for drinks & snacks.
- **Cyrano (Mar Mikhael)** – French-style wine bar with a relaxed terrace and great bottles.
- **Maracai (Gemmayzeh)** – Mexican-inspired bar with bold cocktails and good bites.
- **House of Butlers (Achrafieh)** – Elegant, classic cocktail bar with refined service.
- **Albergo Swim Club & Rooftop (Achrafieh)** – Timeless Beirut classic; poolside cocktails and skyline views.
- **Jacaranda (Mar Mikhael)** – Elegant restaurant tucked in a lush courtyard with nice dishes, natural wine, and a slower pace.
- **Baron (Mar Mikhael)** – Modern Mediterranean restaurant with a seasonal menu.
- **Father & Bun (Gemmayzeh)** – Restaurant and bar serving elevated comfort food and craft cocktails in a industrial space.

# BEACH TIME

*Lebanon's coastline is small but full of character - from old-school Beirut swims to laid-back coves and polished beach clubs.*

## **Close to Beirut**

**Sporting Club (Manara, Ras Beirut)** – A true Beirut icon since the 1950s. Rocky terraces, saltwater pools, and unbeatable sea views. Around \$20 entry. You can order food right to your transat - It's excellent. My ritual: carrots with Lemon to snack & Mexican beer first (you should try it), then a chich taouk sandwich.

## **For a Seated Lunch & Swim**

**Jammal (Batroun)** – Elegant seaside restaurant with a small private beach – perfect for a long lunch and a swim after. Entry included with lunch.

**Joining (Amchit)** – Minimalist and effortlessly cool, with infinity views, good food, and a local creative crowd. Free access – just order from the restaurant or bar.

**Fidar Beach House (Byblos coast)** – Seaside restaurant with lunch right on the water, good seafood and direct beach access. Free beach access with lunch.

## **For a Full relaxed beach Day**

**Lazy B (Jíyeh)** – Lebanon's best-known beach resort. Multiple pools, private coves, and attentive service in a relaxed setting. Around \$25–30 entry.

**Butlers Beach (Batroun)** – The chic seaside outpost of House of Butlers – Around \$30–40 entry.

 **Tip:** Always bring cash - not all beach spots take cards. Most offer showers, and full restaurant service throughout the day.

# SHOPPING

*Beirut's shopping scene is rooted in creativity and craftsmanship.*

## ⌚ Design, Crafts & Objects

- **Orient 499 (Clemenceau)** - Beirut institution for handmade crafts, textiles, and regional design.
- **Plan BEY (Gemmayze)** – Art, design, and books with a Lebanese twist.
- **Artisan du Liban (Achrafieh)** – Reimagined Lebanese crafts: ceramics, baskets, and textiles made by local cooperatives.
- **Beit Collective (Mar Mikhael)** – Contemporary homeware rooted in Lebanese craft and storytelling.
- **Selim Mouzannar (Achrafieh)** – Beirut's most celebrated jeweller. Fine pieces blending heritage with modern, effortless elegance.

## 🧵 Fashion & Vintage

- **Nouvelle Vague (Gemmayze)** – Curated vintage shop.
- **Vanina (Gemmayze)** – Creative studio and Lebanese brand merging fashion.
- **Dépôt Vente Beirut (Geitawi)** – Beirut's go-to destination for non curated vintage.

## 🧴 Beauty

- **Selma (Achrafieh)** – Lebanese brand known for its beautifully packaged hand soaps, lotions, and scents.
- **Helwé (Achrafiyeh)** – Handmade Lebanese skincare and body care made from natural ingredients.

## 🍯 Food & Local Gifts

- **Souk El Tayeb (Mar Mikhael)** – Held every Saturday morning, this market gathers local producers from across Lebanon. The best place to pick up edible souvenirs - zaatar, honey, spices, olive oil, and homemade jams.

# MUSEUM & ART

*Beirut's culture is a mix of history, resilience, and creativity - reflected in its museums, restored landmarks, and contemporary galleries. Here are some suggestions:*

## ✨ *In Beirut*

- **Sursock Museum (Achrafieh)** – A Beirut landmark housed in a Venetian-Ottoman villa, dedicated to modern and contemporary art. The museum is **free to visit**, with rotating exhibitions by Lebanese and regional artists. Don't miss **Em Sherif Museum Café** in the garden - perfect for coffee, lunch, or an evening drink after your visit.
- **National Museum of Beirut (Badaro)** – Lebanon's most important archaeological museum, tracing the country's history from prehistory to the Ottoman era. Beautifully restored and easy to visit.
- **Beit Beirut (Sodeco)** – A museum and urban memory space located in a restored war-scarred building. Offers a powerful glimpse into Beirut's modern history and architecture.
- **Marfa' Projects (Karantina)** – Contemporary art gallery supporting emerging Lebanese and regional artists. Minimalist, sharp, and always relevant.
- **Mim - The Mineral Museum of Beirut**. An impressive collection of natural minerals and crystals.

## *Beyond Beirut*

- **Nabu Museum (El Heri, near Batroun)** – A stunning seaside museum housing contemporary art, ancient artifacts, and rotating exhibitions.

# DAY TRIPS BYBLOS & BATROUN

*Byblos and Batroun are two charming coastal towns in the North. Byblos is one of the world's oldest inhabited cities. Batroun, is Lebanon's bohemian seaside town with great beaches. Below is an itinerary for a full day on the northern coast, but of course pick and choose your favourite parts.*

## **Byblos**

**9am** – take a Taxi & head first to Byblos and stroll through the beautiful Old Souks.

**11am** – visit the Byblos Citadel & Archaeological Site, including the Crusader Castle, ancient Phoenician port, Roman theatre, and old city walls overlooking the Mediterranean.

**12pm** – head to Batroun for a dip and some lunch. Here are a few options:

**Jamal restaurant** - a more upscale seafood restaurant right on the water. You can literally have lunch with your feet in the sea.

**Joining Beach** – public beach. You can stay for a quick dip before heading to lunch, or spend the day and eat there. The restaurant is very casual.

**Butler's Beach** – a laid-back beach spot with good food, comfortable sunbeds. There are also pools, & it is Kids friendly.

**Fidar Beach House** – this restaurant is right by a beautiful beach, enjoy lunch and a dip. Kids friendly.

**4pm** – drive 15 minutes & go for a stroll in the Batroun old souk. Wander through the stone alleyways & visit the Lady of the Sea chapel.

**5.30pm** – catch the sunset at Bolero or Almaza bay, before heading back to Beirut.

*If you choose to stay the night in Batroun, here are a few hotels: Be Batroun, Casa de Thoum, Beit el Batroun, Blue Marlin Batroun.*

# DAY TRIPS

## BEKAA VALLEY

*The Bekaa Valley is Lebanon's wine heartland, complete with wide open landscapes, beautiful vineyards, and long farm-style lunches. If you choose to do the full itinerary, we recommend finding a buddy or two and booking a driver for a full day.*

### **Bekaa valley**

**10am** – take a 1h15 cab to Château Ksara, Lebanon's oldest winery, founded by Jesuit monks in 1857. Do a quick tour of their Roman underground caves and enjoy a short tasting to start the day.

**12pm** – head to Tawlet Ammiq for a long countryside lunch, one of the most beautiful farm-to-table restaurants in Lebanon. Expect seasonal Lebanese dishes, homemade juices, and a warm, relaxed vibe. The terrace overlooks the entire valley.

**3.30pm** – continue to Château Kefraya for an easy, smooth afternoon tasting. The estate is huge and very scenic, with vineyards stretching toward the mountains. You can also take a short walk around the property or simply enjoy the views with a glass of wine.

**5pm** – drive back to Beirut, usually with beautiful golden light over the valley.

# DAY TRIPS

## BAALBEK

*Baalbek is home to some of the most impressive Roman temples in the world, complete with colossal columns, carved stones, and a scale that truly takes your breath away. You can visit Baalbek in a single day from Beirut, or turn it into a 2-day countryside escape by spending the night in the Bekaa – day one exploring wineries and long lunches, and day two dedicated to Baalbek. If you decide to stay overnight, two lovely options are **Al Haush**, a beautiful farm guesthouse surrounded by orchards, and **Tawlet Ammiq Guesthouse**, a cosy eco-stay overlooking the valley.*

**9am** – take a 1h45 drive to Baalbek, heading east toward the Bekaa Valley. It's an easy and beautiful drive in the morning.

**11am** – visit the Baalbek Roman Temples, one of the most important archaeological sites in the Middle East. Explore the Temple of Jupiter with its massive columns, the remarkably well-preserved Temple of Bacchus, and the smaller Temple of Venus.

**1pm** – lunch at the historic Palmyra Hotel, located directly across from the ruins. Built in 1874, the Palmyra is a landmark in its own right: original furniture, handwritten guest books, and a long list of iconic guests, from Jean Cocteau and Lamartine to Nina Simone and Charles de Gaulle. Lunch here feels like stepping into another era.

**1-3pm** – optional quick stroll through town, or simply enjoy a coffee back on the Palmyra terrace with a view of the ruins.

**3.30-4pm** – drive back to Beirut.

# DAY TRIPS

## CHOUF & DEIR EL QAMAR

*The Chouf is Lebanon's green mountain escape, complete with historic palaces, stone villages, cedar forests, and beautiful viewpoints.*

**9am** – take a 1h Taxi cab to Deir el Qamar, one of the most charming villages in the Chouf. Stroll through the old square, the stone alleyways, and the historic palaces scattered around the village.

**10.30am** – continue to Beiteddine Palace, Lebanon's most beautiful 19th-century palace. Wander through the courtyards, fountains, and halls, and visit the mosaic museum. It's calm, well-preserved, and very photogenic.

**12.30pm** – head to lunch in the mountains. Here are a few options depending on your mood:

- **Beit el Qamar** -cosy, authentic, and beautifully set in a restored stone house. Perfect for a warm, intimate lunch in the heart of the Chouf.
- **Mir Amin Palace** – classic, elegant, and perfect for a long lunch with panoramic views.
- **Bkerzay** – beautiful eco-village with a peaceful terrace and homemade dishes (also great for pottery shopping).

**3pm** – visit the **Chouf Cedar Reserve**, one of Lebanon's largest protected cedar forests. Enjoy a short walk among ancient cedar trees – the air is crisp and the setting is magical.

**6pm** – drive back to Beirut, usually with beautiful light over the mountains or you can also sleep in the region in guesthouses like Bouyouti, Bkerzay, La maison des sources.

# DAY TRIPS

## TRIPOLI

*Tripoli is Lebanon's northern cultural hub – a city of Mamluk architecture, bustling souks, legendary sweets, and a beautiful old seaside district. I recommend to visit with a guide, I know someone great – reach out if you need the contact.*

**9am** – start in the Old Souks, one of the richest craft and design hubs in the country. Walk through the spice stalls, copper workshops, soap khans and wood ateliers – centuries of craftsmanship in one place.

**10.30am** – head to the Rashid Karami International Fair, designed in the 1960s by Oscar Niemeyer. It's one of the most striking architectural sites in the Middle East: vast concrete curves, futuristic domes, open plazas, and surreal unfinished pavilions. Perfect for photography, design lovers, and anyone into modern architecture.

**12.30pm** – lunch in the city.

Akra – iconic for foul, hummus, and balila.

Abou Fadi – excellent, unfussy Lebanese grills.

**2pm** – stop at Hallab 1881, Tripoli's legendary pastry house. Their kuefeh, baklava, and mafroukeh are considered the best in Lebanon – no skipping this one.

**3pm** – continue to El Mina, the old seaside district with pastel buildings and a relaxed Mediterranean vibe. Wander the narrow streets, peek at old houses and doors, or sit for a coffee or juice by the water.

**5pm** – drive back to Beirut, or continue up the coast to Batroun or Anfeh.

# PRACTICAL INFOS

## **Phones & Internet**

*Data roaming is very expensive in Lebanon so make sure to turn off “Data Roaming” before you land, and buying a pre-paid SIM card once you arrive in Beirut. Meanwhile, hotels and restaurants offer WiFi.*

### **How to buy a SIM card:**

*Pre-paid SIM cards are available from two main providers: Alfa and Touch. Typical tariff: around US\$13 for ~2 GB of data + calls/texts. Just bring your passport to one of their stores and purchase your SIM.*

- **Touch store locator:** <https://www.touch.com.lb/autoforms/portal/touch/support/store-locator> **App Store+2Toters+2**
- **Alfa store locator:** <https://www.alfa.com.lb/en/find-a-store#storemap>
- You can also use **Simly**, an e-SIM service that works in Lebanon without needing to buy a physical SIM card. It's more expensive than purchasing a local card, but very convenient.

## **Tap Water**

*Simple: Don't drink tap water in Lebanon. Use bottled water or filtered water provided by your accommodation.*

## **Ordering Food & Delivery**

*Delivery is extremely easy and very common in Lebanon. People use apps like **Toters** to order almost anything - not just food. You can get groceries, pharmacy items, snacks, even a pack of cigarettes delivered to your door in minutes.*

## **Power Outages**

*Lebanon still experiences daily electricity cuts, but most hotels, guesthouses, and restaurants have a private generator, this means the power usually comes back within a few minutes.*

# PRACTICAL INFOS

## **Reservations**

*Lebanon runs almost entirely on reservations, especially in Beirut, Batroun, and on weekends.*

*Restaurants, beach clubs, wine estates, and even some cafés can fill up quickly — sometimes days in advance. It's best to book ahead, even for casual spots, to avoid surprises.*

## **Tipping Culture**

*Tipping is part of daily life in Lebanon and is always appreciated.*

**Restaurants:** 10–15%

**Cafés:** round up or leave a small tip

**Delivery drivers:** add a little extra when you can

**Taxis:** not mandatory, but rounding up is common

## **Military Checkpoints**

*In Lebanon You'll see military checkpoints on highways and at the entrances of some regions in Lebanon. This is completely normal and not a sign of danger.*

## **Traffic & Driving Etiquette**

*Traffic can be chaotic, especially in Beirut. Honking is normal, lane discipline is flexible, and scooters appear from everywhere. If you're not comfortable driving in these conditions, it's better to hire a driver for day trips.*

## **Important Phone Numbers**

**Melissa (WhatsApp call):** +330662929994

**Othman (WhatsApp call):** +33

**Lebanese Red Cross (Ambulance):** Dial 140 or +961 5 924 017

**Police:** Dial 112



SEE YOU THERE <3