

## Lebanon Culinary Tour ♦ Program

*An exclusive 8-day culinary and cultural tour for 4 to 8 persons*



N.B: In the program below, a personal local guide and transportation with air-conditioned minivan is included.

### Day 0 - Beirut:

- ✚ Arrival in Beirut with Pick-Up from Airport.
- ✚ Check-in at your Boutique Hotel in Beirut: This small hotel is located in a nicely renovated mansion with a charming vintage sitting & dining area and a colorful terrace, situated in one of Beirut's vibrant area's known for its traditional architecture.
- ✚ Guided Tour in Beirut (Optional): No country should be visited without exploring its capital and this definitely holds true for Lebanon. For most, Beirut breathes the spirit and has the dynamics of Lebanese life. It is marked by the scars of the Civil War (1975 - 1990) and recent political developments, yet also represents the creation of events that bring people together and makes them move forward and forget about the past. Inhabited by about two million people, Beirut is a city full of history, emotions and division. During an enriching walking tour, your guide will take you on a journey through the expected and unexpected sides of the capital's old ruins, urban architecture, socio-religious markers and forgotten places.
- ✚ Arabic Night in Beirut: You will experience a real Arabic night out! For dinner, you will be treated on a large selection of hot and cold Lebanese mezze with Lebanese wine, while a belly dancer and an Arabic singer will entertain you during the night.



### Day 1 – Beqaa Valley:

- ✚ Breakfast & Check-out at your Hotel in Beirut.
- ✚ Cooking Session with Lunch at a Table d'Hote in West Beqaa: Your host will be a lady with an amazing taste and who became known for her creativity in preparing seasonal Lebanese food. As May is the eggplant and tender vine-leave season, the following 3 main dishes will be cooked:
  - Stuffed eggplants and yogurt
  - Lebanese style moussaka
  - Wine leaves stuffed with goat labne
  - Lebanese dessert is also included
- ✚ Visit to Two Local Wineries: You will visit the following wineries, where you will enjoy a wine tour and tasting and learn all about Lebanese wines:
  - Chateau Kefraya: Established in 1979 and located in the gorgeous surroundings of West Beqaa, this is the second largest winery of Lebanon. The wine tour here includes a train ride through the attractive vineyards.
  - Chateau Clos St Thomas: A small professional and passionate family-run winery, surrounded by a large garden and a chapel. It's the first winery producing a white wine exclusively made from a Lebanese grape called Obaideh.



- ✚ Check-in & Free Time at Your Boutique Guesthouse in Zahle: This boutique hotel in Zahle has a lovely garden with a swimming pool, and offers great views on the surroundings of Zahle.
- ✚ Dinner with Wine at Chateau Khoury: Chateau Khoury is a great example of the new dynamic wineries in the country, introducing some new grapes such as Riesling, Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris. Here, you will enjoy a 3-course French dinner, including a selection of their wines.
- ✚ An overnight stay at a boutique hotel in Zahle with a lovely garden offering great views on the surrounding Beqaa Valley.

### Day 2 - The Shouf Mountains:

- ✚ Lunch and Check-out at Your Guesthouse in Zahle.
- ✚ A Guided Walking Tour in Deir el-Qamar: Signifying Monastery of the Moon, Deir el-Qamar is a small and charming Christian town located in a serene environment just an hour away from Beirut. In 1590, the town became the capital of Mount Lebanon after a water shortage in Baaqline forced Fakhr el-Dine Maan II to shift his power base to another location.
- ✚ Check-in & Free Time at your Guesthouse in Deir el-Qamar: This attractive guesthouse, with tastefully decorated bedrooms with private bathrooms and balconies, is surrounded by vegetable gardens and colorful terraces overlooking Beiteddine and Deir el-Qamar.
- ✚ A Cooking Session with Dinner at your Guesthouse: During a 3-hour cooking session, you will prepare the following dishes:
  - Gundelia with yogurt
  - Falafel
  - Pumpkin kebbeh
  - Karouba cookies
  - Maacaron

For dinner, you will enjoy the cooked dishes along with salads, appetizers and dessert. Lebanese wine will be served during the cooking session and dinner.

### Day 3 - Beiteddine & Batroun:

- ✚ Breakfast & Check-out at your Guesthouse in Deir el-Qamar.
- ✚ Visit to Beiteddine Palace: You will enjoy a 2 hours' guided visit to Beiteddine Palace, a spectacular example of early 19th-century Lebanese architecture, displaying an abundance of beautiful structures, antique furniture and fine mosaics.
- ✚ Lunch & Beaching at a Beach Resort in Byblos: You will enjoy a lunch and an afternoon of sunbathing and swimming at Byblos' most famous beach club.
- ✚ Check-in at Your Guesthouse in Batroun: In this lovely guesthouse just outside of Batroun, rooms are surrounding a lush garden full of fruit trees and little sitting areas.
- ✚ Cooking Session with Dinner in Batroun: You will enjoy a 2-hour sea food cooking session, during which you will prepare the following two main courses:
  - Siyadiyeh (fish, onions and rice)
  - Kebbit Samak (fish kebbe)

For dinner, the prepared dishes will be served with fattouch, hummus, pickled sea weed, fruits, lemonade and coffee.



### Day 4 - Qadisha Valley:

- ✚ Breakfast & Check-out at your Guesthouse in Batroun.
- ✚ Visit and Hike in Qadisha Valley: You will discover the spectacular scenery and beautiful nature of Qadisha Valley, home to the first Christian monasteries of Lebanon. After a visit to Mar Elisha, your guide will take you on a 2.5 hour breathtaking loop hike through the valley, where you will visit five more monasteries

and hidden (cave) churches, two of them being normally closed to the public. He will share with you the stories of the monk and hermit life in the monasteries, and tell you about the many saints worshiped in the area. On your way, you will enjoy a picnic with a freshly prepared lunch bag filled with home-made pleasures.



- ✚ Check-in & Free Time at your Guesthouse in Hadath el-Jebbeh: This charming and friendly auberge originates from 1928, and following renovation was re-opened as a guesthouse in September 2014.
- ✚ Home-Cooking Session & Dinner in Hadath el-Jebbeh: During this home-cooking session, you will prepare shish barak: dough stuffed with meat and pine nuts, and cooked in yogurt, garlic and coriander. After the cooking session, a dinner with shish barak and several other dishes will be enjoyed.

### Day 5 - Tannourine & Douma:

- ✚ Breakfast & Check-out at your Guesthouse in Hadath el-Jebbeh
- ✚ Hike in the Tannourine Reserve: The Tannourine Nature Reserve is one of Lebanon's densest cedar forests and home to 25 percent of the country's cedars. The rocky terrain and steep slopes in this stunning mountainous landscape are perfect for hiking and climbing.
- ✚ Lunch at a Guesthouse in Douma: During this lunch - a real local culinary experience - you will be treated on delicious home-cooked and typical local dishes, prepared by the lady of this friendly family-run rural guesthouse.
- ✚ Check-in & Free Time at Your Guesthouse in Douma: Located in a beautifully restored 19th century house, this guesthouse offers a comfortable and most hospitable home away from home.
- ✚ Cooking Session & Dinner at Your Guesthouse: During your cooking session, you will learn how to prepare a typical dish from the region called maakroun b'toum: Lebanese noodles and potatoes with garlic. For dinner, tabboule, shanklish, hummus, kebbeh bil sayniyeh and of course the maakroun b'toum will be served.



### Day 6 - Baatara & Aqoura:

- ✚ Breakfast & Check-out at your Guesthouse in Douma.
- ✚ Visit to Baatara Sinkhole with Picnic Lunch: This impressive 255-meter deep, three level huge limestone cavern was eroded by water over a period of 160 million years. In winter and spring, the 90-meter waterfall runs fiercely down three natural bridges, providing some stunning images.
- ✚ For lunch, a picnic at the sinkhole will be enjoyed.
- ✚ Check-in & Free Time at Your Guesthouse in Aqoura: This guesthouse is surrounded by cherry and apple trees, and has a beautiful shaded garden with many areas to relax and enjoy the silence and great views. The ideal place to enjoy a proper rural experience.
- ✚ Cooking Session & Dinner at Your Guesthouse: During the cooking session, you will prepare the following dishes:
  - Tbaybiseh: an unique and yummy vegetarian dish made with burghol, pumpkin and onions
  - Potatoes with walnuts



The dinner will of course include the Tbaybiseh and potatoes with walnuts, which will be served with loubieh bil zeit and a generous selection of tas Lebanese mezze, followed by a delicious mixture of Lebanese desserts with coffee and tea.

### **Day 7 - Byblos, Jeita Grotto & Beirut:**

- ✚ Breakfast & Check-out at your Guesthouse in Aqoura
- ✚ Walking Tour in Byblos: Byblos is a charming and laid-back village and the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world with a UNESCO World Heritage Site status since 1984. It has a picturesque ancient fishing harbor and an attractive and quiet historical center; at some places surrounded by old walls. Presumably, it is in Byblos where the Phoenicians created the first 22 letter phonetic alphabet. This alphabet was adopted by the Greeks in 800 BC, and later became the foundation of our modern Latin alphabet. During your guided walking tour, you will visit Byblos' main landmarks: the Souks, Saint Jean-Marc cathedral, Byblos port, Byblos Fossil Museum and the famous archaeological site with Crusaders Castle.
- ✚ Lebanese Pottery-Cooked Lunch: A Lebanese lunch, exclusively cooked using the traditional pottery (foukhara) cooking technique, including Lebanese wine, water and soft drinks.
- ✚ A Visit to Jeita Grotto: Jeita Grotto is one of the most fascinating grottos in the world. The astonishing nine kilometers long cave has some splendid and stunning rock formations and is filled with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites - a must see if you visit Lebanon! You will visit the upper caves and enjoy a cruise in a boat in the lower water basin.
- ✚ Check-in & Free Time at Your Hotel in Beirut: You will be staying at a recently opened urban hotel, located centrally in one of Beirut's most vibrant and cosmopolitan areas. The hotel is equipped with a swimming pool, a gym and a cafe/restaurant.
- ✚ Armenian Dinner in Beirut: With its many Armenian inhabitants, Beirut is famous for its Armenian cuisine. During your dinner, you will enjoy some famous dishes at Beirut's most popular authentic Armenian restaurant.



### **Day 8 - Departure**

- ✚ A Breakfast & Check-out at your Hotel in Beirut: Breakfast will be served from 7:30 till 9:30 pm. Check-out can be performed till noon.
- ✚ Transfer to Beirut Airport