



Bear Arabia International Trip

Lebanon - Syria & Jordan, September 2010

Full itinerary September 18th till the 25th Deadline: August 20th, 2010

Lebanese Part

Lebanon is a beautiful Levantine country in the eastern Mediterranean; a destination with a rich history that has witnessed the presence of multiple civilizations over thousands of years.

Due to this constant process of historical renewal, each time you visit this vibrant society, it is like visiting a different country with new experiences and sites.

Because of the ethnic mix between European, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern groups, and all that comes in between, the Lebanese offer an appealing variety.

This is a country to be visited during all seasons. At the right time of year, you can ski in world-class ski locations, featuring great runs and deep powder; go to the beach, with your choice of natural beauty or fashionable beach clubs, and then party into the wee hours of the morning — All in the same day!

The situation for the LGBT community in Lebanon has significantly improved over the past few years. Gay bars, cubs, restaurants, saunas operate freely and a LGBT centre has been created to cater to the community's needs.

Beirut is the capital and largest city of Lebanon with a population of over 2 million inhabitants. The first mention of this metropolis is found in the ancient Egyptian Tell el Amarna letters, dating to the 15th century BC, and the city has been continuously inhabited since.

Beirut's history goes back more than 5000 years. Excavations in the downtown Area have unearthed layers of Phoenician, Hellenistic, Roman, Arab and Ottoman remains.

Beirut was named the top place to visit in 2009 by the New York Times. It was also listed as one of the ten liveliest cities in the world by Lonely Planet in 2009.

If you wish to see the amazing and fascinating result of east meets west, then Beirut is your place to be.

September 18th

- You will be welcomed by our representative at Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport
- Transport to your hotel in Beirut
- An introduction to the touring program from our guide
- A 4-hour tour of Beirut, Lebanon's capital city. With its million-plus inhabitants, it buzzes with life and energy. Known as both the —Paris of the East and —the city that would not diell — the Lebanese capital is an exciting Middle Eastern metropolis.
- A light dinner at one of downtown Beirut's renowned restaurants, followed by a chance to enjoy the night life.
- Overnight stay in Beirut.



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September 19th

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning visit to the northern seaside town of Byblos; According to Phoenician tradition, it was founded by the god El, making it one of the top contenders for the —oldest continuously inhabited city title. It was there that the first linear alphabet, the predecessor of all modern alphabets, was born. The sarcophagus of Byblos' king Ahiram, now in the national museum, bears the oldest known Phoenician inscription. Byblos was also the center of the Adonis cult, the god of vegetation who dies in the winter and is renewed each spring. On our way back we will visit Harissa, located 600 meters from the coast and 26km from Beirut, with its wonderful panoramic view of the Bay of Jounieh. The Statue of the Virgin Mary, erected in 1908, has in its base a chapel with an external spiral staircase which leads to the top. There is also a cable car service from the bay to the mountain of Harissa. We will then visit one of the world's most beautiful underground caverns, Jeita. We will descend by elevator to the underground river and board a boat to sail the 623 meter long subterranean lake. From there we will head back to Beirut.
- An **optional** chance to enjoy Beirut's night life in one of the most vibrant clubs in town.
- Overnight stay in Beirut

September 20th

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Today we will have a visit of the stunning Roman ruins of Baalbek located in the Bekaa valley. Baalbek is the location of one of the largest and best preserved body of Roman architecture ever found. In the Jupiter Temple, six of the 54 giant columns that originally surrounded the sanctuary still survive. Our route will allow us to visit the Ksara caves. Built during the Roman period and covered by sand for centuries, the caves were chanced upon in 1898 by Jesuits who were hunting down a wolf that was eating their chickens. Ksara is now home to a world famous winery.
- Overnight stay in Beirut

September 21st

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Transport from your hotel back to Rafiq Hariri Airport for your return flight.
- **Or** those who would like to continue to Syria will join the Pullman to continue toward Damascus.





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Syrian Part

Along with Iraq, Syria is considered to be the cradle of civilization. A country packed with monuments, antiquities, archaeological sites, mosques, churches, synagogues, and the famous dead cities in the north that call out the glorious history of ancient nations. Syria has been a meeting point between eastern and western civilizations.

To the good luck of the tourist, Syria is still one of those well kept secrets with an abundance of beautiful and fascinating sites.

Foreign visitors are treated with warm hospitality and friendliness. The gay scene is subtle and keeps a low profile.

You should definitely go to Syria in order to immerse yourself in a world completely unlike your own; to enjoy the renowned sites of a country that has not as yet become an over travelled souvenir-ridden tourist trap.

For further information, please have a look at the article published in the Guardian:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2009/oct/24/syria-damascus-travel-news>

September 21st

- After a short drive, we arrive to the Lebanese-Syrian border crossing. Following the border formalities we switch to our Syrian bus to continue to Damascus.
- Check into our hotel
- Visit one of the world's oldest cities where many civilizations, such as the Armenians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Arabs, have left their marks over the centuries. Some of the most popular sites to visit are: The Umayyad Mosque, Al-Azem Palace, the Chapel of St. Ananias, St. Paul's Window, Saladin Mausoleum and the legendary Straight Street of Damascus.
- Dinner at a local restaurant
- Overnight: Damascus, Syria

September 22nd

- Free day in Syria
- Overnight: Damascus, Syria

September 23rd

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning check out, and either transfer to Damascus international airport for departure
- **OR** continue toward Jordan.





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Jordan Part

Jordan is a young country dense with history, full of natural wonders and historical sites, a well-travelled bridge between sea and desert, east and west. Situated just east of the River Jordan, it continues to be a bridge between ancient and new civilizations and an open air museum in almost all its entirety.

Petra, the ancient rose-red city carved in mountain rock is your ultimate and astonishing destination. It is as beautiful to see as are northern parts of the country, Umm Qais, Jerash with its wonderfully preserved Roman ruins, or the capital, Amman, and the mosaic city of Madaba. A world of mystery and wonderful hospitality is open for you just east of the River Jordan.

September 23rd

- After the Syrian – Jordanian border formalities we continue toward Amman for overnight.
- Visit of Amman's Down Town, the Roman citadel and amphitheater.
- Overnight: Amman – Jordan

September 24th

- Morning transfer to Petra
- After couple of hours in the road, we arrive to the magical site of Petra; where we will have a full-day excursion to the Nabataean city of Petra. On foot through the Siq' to the Treasury, then to the Street of Façades, the Theatre, Royal Tombs, Colonnaded Street, Byzantine church, the Temple, Monumental Arch, Qasr el-Bint Faroun and perhaps the climb up to the Monastery, el- Deir.
- Overnight in Petra

September 25th

- Morning check out and we will hit back the road to Amman
- Transfer to either the Amman international airport or your hotel for extensions.





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Notes

Airfare is not included in the tour price.

Prices

\$1950 (1 PAX – 1 person) – or 3400\$ (2 PAX - 2 persons)

Prices Includes

- Airport pick up
- Touring with licensed professional English speaking guide as per program
- Accommodation depending on the program
- Breakfasts when provided by the hotels
- Guiding and travel assistance

Price Excludes

- Meals and beverages
- Entrance fees to sites and attractions
- Expenses of personal nature
- Visas (payable at the borders – PS: Americans should purchase the Syrian visa before arrival)
- Departure taxes (note that it's free for Lebanon)
- Gratuities to guides and drivers
- Room upgrading fees
- Any extra night hotel stays

RE: VISA TO SYRIA

All tourists need a visa to Syria. UK and USA citizens must obtain this visa from the Syrian embassy in London/Washington D.C. The visa must be stamped inside your passport prior to your arrival to Beirut.

When applying for this visa, only mention that you are visiting Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. European citizens can purchase a Syrian visa at the Lebanese-Syrian border. The price is as per your nationality. If there is any indication in your passport that you have visited Israel, you will not be permitted to enter Syria nor Lebanon.

RE: VISA TO JORDAN

The cost of one entry visa for all nationalities is JD 10 (around \$14) for all nationalities and for multiple entries it is JD 20 (around \$28).

Please visit the following website for further details.

http://www.visitjordan.com/visitjordan_cms/GeneralInformation/EntryintoJordan/tabid/61/Default.aspx

