

BEST SELLER

Highlights of Lebanon and Jordan

LEBANON - TRIP CODE LLJ

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Uncover Lebanon's fascinating history on this one week holiday. Stand in front of the vast Roman ruins at Baalbek, discover Crusader castles and Phoenician ruins and see the reminders of the civil war on a walking tour in Beirut.

- **Cedars of God** - See the 1000-year-old Lebanon Cedars set high above the Qadisha Valley
- **Coastal Cities** - Uncover the rich heritage and maritime histories of Byblos and Batroun on the Mediterranean coast
- **Lebanese cuisine** - Taste red wine in the Bekaa Valley and feast on fresh hummus, labneh and falafel in the narrow streets of the souks

INCLUDED MEALS	TRIP STAFF	TRANSPORT	ACCOMMODATION	TRIP PACE:	GROUP SIZE:
Breakfast: 15 Lunch: 2 Dinner: 4	Explore Tour Leader Driver(s) Local Guide(s)	Bus Flight	13 nights comfortable hotel 1 nights simple monastery 1 nights simple tented camp	Moderate	10 - 16

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Beirut

Arrive in Beirut, Lebanon's historic capital city. Broken down into many different districts on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea, Beirut is a city of contrasts and home to a diversity of ethnicities, languages, religions and cultures.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to welcome you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting and offer information on where to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Beirut at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport (BEY), which is around 30 minutes from the airport depending on traffic. Due to flights arriving throughout the evening on day one, the official welcome meeting will take place after breakfast on day two.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to take a walk along the sea front or go in search of freshly-cooked falafel to get a taste for the Middle East.



ACCOMMODATION:
Le Commodore Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Stand on Beirut's Green Line, discover Roman ruins and stroll along the Corniche

After breakfast we'll make our way to the National Museum, starting here we can begin to understand the civilisations that have shaped Lebanon. The museum is located at the end of the Green Line, this line divided the city during the civil war and for those 15 years the museum was closed, its facade suffering serious damage throughout the conflict. Thousands of artefacts are on display including sarcophagi from the Phoenician period to ornate mosaics from the Roman city of Baalbek.

Moving further down the Green Line we'll visit Martyrs Square and the Mohammad Al Amin Mosque. The mosque resembles the Blue Mosque in Istanbul and it's minarets stand at 65 metres tall making it a very useful navigation tool!

Much of the city has been rebuilt since the war ended but there are plenty of reminders of the 15 year civil war that Lebanon lived through, we'll pass the bullet-ridden Holiday Inn which still stands, with talks of demolishing the building or preserving it still taking place.

Walking along the Corniche is a must when in Beirut, and we'll join locals drinking strong, sweet coffees as we go. With the sea to one side you can take stop, take in the city landscape and start to understand how the city was divided during the war and how the regeneration projects have created modern-day Beirut.

Our hotel is based in the Hamra neighbourhood and was used as a base for worldwide journalists covering the war. Before dinner tonight we'll take a drink in the bar and understand a little more about what life was like in Beirut between 1975 and 1990.



ACCOMMODATION:

Le Commodore Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Visit Sidon's Phoenician sea castle and narrow souks before driving in to the Chouf Mountains

This morning we'll leave the city and drive south to Sidon. Once an important trade port on the Phoenician sea route, Sidon is now a busy seaside city, where remnants of its ancient past can be found at every turn. We'll start at Qalaa al-Bahr, a defence sea castle built in 1228 by the crusaders. The castle is a great display of how each civilisation built on the previous one, with Roman ruins used by the Crusaders to add support to the walls, then the Ottomans arriving and building a mosque on the west wall of the castle.

We'll explore the souk and the renovated khans, including Khan al-Franj which dates back to the 17th century and once operated as an 'inn for foreigners', offering lodgings for many the merchants and traders that travelled through on the way to Mediterranean.

There are many good spots to eat in Sidon and we'll have lunch here by the coast before moving inland to the Chouf area of Lebanon. Our base for tonight is the sleepy village of Deir Al-Qamar, set on a hilltop looking down towards the coast it is a great place to relax watch the sunset.



ACCOMMODATION:

Deir al Oumara Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Discover Beiteddine Palace and experience a traditional Lebanese lunch. Travel to Baalbek

We'll have a relaxed breakfast today before checking out and taking a short drive to the the 18th century Beiteddine Palace complex. Beiteddine translates to 'House of Faith' and the palace is built on the remains of a Druze hermitage. The design is an intricate mix of Italian Baroque architecture and Arabian styles which perfectly symbolised the power and wealth of it's creators.

Crossing over the Chouf Moutains we'll descend in to the fertile Bekaa Valley and drive to the village of Ammiq, set on the slopes of Mount Lebanon. Here the villagers mostly work in agriculture and are using less intensive, more environmentally friendly methods of farming. We'll have lunch in Tawlet Ammiq, their restaurant which celebrates traditional recipes using the freshest ingredients.

This afternoon we will continue our journey through the Bekaa Valley and stop at a small winery to learn about Lebanon's wine industry and of course sample the range of red wines produced.

At the end of the day we'll drive to the town of Baalbek, known as the 'City of the Sun'. Staying close to the ruins we'll be able to get a sense of the incredible Roman site that we will discover tomorrow.



ACCOMMODATION:

Palmyra Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 5 - Explore the vast Roman ruins at Baalbek and travel to Byblos

Today, we will see the jewel in Lebanon's ancient crown; Baalbek.

After breakfast we'll walk through the town to one of the world's finest remaining examples of Roman architecture. The details of Baalbek's true origins and history are a highly emotive topic among historians and archaeologists but it's widely agreed that the site dates back some 5,000 years. The site is a dedication to the gods of Jupiter, Venus and Mercury, and was classed a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. Entering through the forecourt into the remains of the Hexagonal court you can begin to imagine the city at its peak. The Temple of Bacchus is without doubt the highlight of the site with its ornately decorated stonework, niches and columns surrounding an ancient theatre.

We'll spend plenty of time exploring the site and in the afternoon we leave Baalbek and make our way back to the coastline and the city of Byblos. Another ancient port city rich in history and home to some of the earliest known inscriptions using the Phoenician alphabet. We'll take a short walk to the 12th century Crusader castle to explore this archaeological site and take in panoramic views over the ruins and surrounding coastline from the top of the castle's keep. The castle is the main attraction here but there are ruins in various stages of decay dating as far back as the Bronze Age, and the site is an excellent example of the many reigns of power that have ruled this area over the millennium.

The rest of the day will be free to shop in the old Ottoman souks, choose a quiet spot for a strong coffee, or alternatively head down to the fisherman's' harbour to watch the sunset over the Mediterranean. There are many choices for an evening meal but the seaside location means a great selection of fresh fish options.



ACCOMMODATION:

Ahiram Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 6 - Free morning in Byblos then drive to St Anthony's Monastery in the Qadisha Valley

We have a relaxed start to the morning with free time to watch the fishing boats in Byblos harbour, pick up some souvenirs in the souks or just grab a coffee and take in the views.

In the afternoon we'll drive up in to the mountains, to the fertile terraces of the Qadisha Valley. We'll stop to see the Cedars of Lebanon Forest, and weather permitting we will walk for one hour among cedars that are over 100 years old.

Due to forest regulations we cannot guarantee that the forest will be open for walking. After an unusually long winter in 2019 the authorities have confirmed that it will remain closed until mid-June to ensure the new cedar seeds have had time to settle after the snow melts.

After seeing the cedars we will make our way to St Anthony's monastery. Dating back to the 12th century, the monastery is still in operation today under the control of the Lebanese Maronite Order, home to resident hermits and the centre of many pilgrimages. We'll be spending the night in the simply-furnished guesthouse that has been built within the monastery grounds. The rooms are either twin or triple share and all have en-suite bathrooms.



ACCOMMODATION:

St Antoine Monastery (or similar)

Grade: Simple Monastery



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Join the early morning prayers, discover dramatic limestone formations at Jeitta Caves and return to Beirut

We'll wake early this morning to the sound of the monastery bells ringing and there will be an opportunity to attend the monks' morning prayers inside the church. The Catholic service is spoken in Arabic and everyone is welcome to attend. After the service, there will time for breakfast before a 90 minute hike in the valley. The gentle walk follows dirt paths, surrounded by fruit trees and the route

offers spectacular views through the valley and is a great chance to look back at the monastery which is built into the cliff face.

Around mid-morning we will leave the monastery and the Qadisha Valley behind, travelling back towards the Mediterranean coast to Batroun. One of the world's oldest settlements dating back over 5,000 years, Batroun has played an important role in different phases of ancient civilisation but is now a relaxed coastal city. Together with our leader, we will walk around the ancient sea wall, the fort and the old souk before free time for lunch. For a refreshing break, be sure to try a glass of the Batrounian lemonade - it is said that people come from near and far to try it and the locals fiercely debate who makes the best!

We will then start our journey back to Beirut. On the way we'll make a stop at Jeitta Caves. The caves were discovered by chance by an American missionary, out on a hunting expedition he fired his gun towards the sound of running water and investigated more on hearing the echoes! The upper section of the cave has a 750 metre pathway allowing you to walk beneath giant stalactites and look down on the river water and stalagmites below. The entrance to the caves is a little touristy with a toy train and gift shops but once on in the caves photography is banned and noise is kept to a minimum giving you the chance to fully appreciate this impressive feat of nature - where it takes at least 100 years for 1cm of new rock to form.

Returning to Beirut we'll celebrate the last night of the trip with a traditional mezze dinner. In Lebanon food is such a key part of family life and is an experience to be enjoyed rather than a necessity; tables are covered generously with small mezze dishes that are shared and accompanied with home-grown wine. There is something for everyone and particular favourites include fresh tabbouleh salad, grilled meats and smoky baba ghanoush.



ACCOMMODATION:

Le Commodore Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 8 - Fly to Amman in Jordan

This morning you will say goodbye to your fellow travellers and Lebanese leader as the Lebanon part of your trip comes to an end. You'll be transferred to the airport in time for your flight to Amman where your Jordan adventure will begin. Depending on what time of year you are travelling you will either have

free time to explore Beirut or Amman today. If you are travelling January to September you will have free time in Beirut and if travelling October to December then your free time will be in Amman as flights are earlier in the day.

Arrive into Jordan's capital city Amman. Amman as we know it now is a young city but it's set upon one of the oldest continuously inhabited areas in the world with early references dating back to 7000 BC. Now home to almost half of the country's population, it is a fascinating city of contrasts, where the very ancient and the brand new collide.

On arrival into Jordan you will receive assistance with your visa and will receive a complimentary transfer from Queen Alia International Airport (AMM), which is around one hour from our hotel.

Due to a majority of flights arriving in the late evening, your Jordanian leader will meet you for the welcome meeting tomorrow morning. This evening you will find information including meeting times on the Explore hotel notice near reception.



ACCOMMODATION:
Toledo Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Guided visit to Roman Jerash; spend the afternoon exploring the Amman Citadel

This morning we drive the short 30 mile journey north of the capital to the ancient Jerash. Populated for over 6,500 years, the city's golden age was in Roman times when it was conquered by General Pompey and became one of a confederation of ten important Middle Eastern cities, known as the Decapolis League. Now, because of the way it has been preserved in sand before its excavation last century, it is widely acknowledged as one of the best-preserved Roman provincial towns in the world. Walking around the colonnaded streets, soaring hilltop temples, handsome theatres and the chariot-racing stadium, it is easy to imagine Roman life carrying on around you. All this is just the tip of the iceberg - it is estimated that only about 10% of city has been uncovered.

After lunch we'll travel back into the city to visit Amman's historical centre and spend some time discovering the Citadel - Jabal al-Qal'a. The Citadel stands on a hill, the highest point in Amman, and artefacts found at the site signify that the area has been a royal city for thousands of years and is believed to have been fortified during the Bronze age some 3,000 - 4,000 years ago. Earthquakes and invasions

have certainly taken its toll on the Citadel but two pillars of the Roman Temple of Hercules still stand strong, and some buildings of 7th century Umayyad Palace can still be explored.

The evening is free to relax. You may wish to take a short taxi ride to Rainbow Street, popular with Ammanis and tourists alike, this narrow, cobbled road is lined with coffee bars, souvenir shops, restaurants and bars. As the city is largely dominated by highways, Rainbow Street is a lovely escape that is best discovered on foot, plus a great place to try fresh, homemade falafel.



ACCOMMODATION:
Toledo Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Visit holy Mount Nebo and see Byzantine mosaics in Madaba before travelling to the 'rose city' of Petra

An early breakfast this morning ready for a prompt departure to Madaba - a town with a strong Christian heritage and aptly dubbed the 'City of Mosaics'. Around 90 minutes from the capital, Madaba is home to hundreds of Byzantine-era mosaics, the most famous of these is the 6th century map of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Created with two million pieces of vividly coloured local stone, it is believed to be the oldest surviving map of the holy land.

Continuing on for another 20 minutes, we will arrive at Mount Nebo; referenced in the Old Testament as the place that Moses once stood to look over the Promised Land. This sacred location is important to many devoted pilgrims and on a clear day offers views out across the Dead Sea, Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

Later this morning we carry on travelling south, just as traders, armies and pilgrims have done before us, along the impressive 5,000 year-old King's Highway to Kerak. Imposingly situated on a rocky outcrop next to the road and containing a maze of stone-vaulted halls and passageways, this ancient Crusader stronghold is the most famous among a chain of fortresses built for the Holy War against Islam.

Our packed day of sightseeing ends with a short drive to Petra - without doubt Jordan's most valuable treasure. We can look forward to a couple of days spent here to really get under the skin of this awe-inspiring site. We arrive in time to take an optional candlelight tour of the ancient city. Abandoned centuries ago, this other-worldly place is enhanced by the play of light and shadow to create an

altogether magical experience.



ACCOMMODATION:
Edom Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - A full day to discover the magnificent archaeological site of Petra

Over the next two days we get the opportunity to discover Petra and to soak up this mysterious city. Our entrance fee for both days is included, giving us the chance to truly do justice to this jewel with an in depth visit.

Defined by John Burgon with the illustrious words 'A Rose Red City half as old as time', Petra is a UNESCO World Heritage Site as well as one of the new wonders of the world. This ancient city carved in the rocks has retained its grandeur throughout the centuries and although much has been written about it, nothing really prepares you for the impact of this unique site.

After a guided orientation tour which will take us to some of the key areas, we have the rest of the day to explore in our own time. Most of what can be seen today was built by the Nabataeans - an industrious Arab community who settled here more than 2,500 years ago, growing wealthy on tax proceeds from passing silk and spice trade. Petra's spectacular setting deep inside a narrow desert gorge adds to its majesty. The site is accessed by walking through a kilometre-long chasm (known as the Siq), the walls of which soar to a height of 200m. Petra's most famous monument, the Treasury, appears dramatically at the end of the Siq, carved out of the sheer, dusky-pink rock face. Miraculously well preserved, this massive 43 metre-high facade dwarfs everything around it and perfectly represents the engineering genius of these people. The existence of this site had been kept secret for centuries by the local Bedouins and only revealed to the West by the Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt in 1812. After the decline of the city, due to shifting trade routes and a series of earthquakes, the Bedouins continued to use the sophisticated water system created by the Nabataeans to make the most of the water coming from the perennial stream and the flash floods; a precious oasis in the middle of an inhospitable desert.

While you wander through literally hundreds of tombs, temples and colonnaded streets, your mind finds it easy to picture caravans loaded with frankincense, spices and textiles travelling through the Siq. The site is excellent for photography and the best time to take pictures is either early to mid-morning or late afternoon, as this is when the angled sun highlights and enhances the natural red, pink and orange colours of the rocks.

Please note: Depending on your chosen departure date, the hotel location in the Petra area may vary; all hotels we use are three star and are either located a 5 - 10 minute walk away from the visitor centre, or a 25 minute walk away from the visitor centre in the town of Wadi Musa. For groups based in Wadi Musa

transport will be provided to and from Petra Visitor Centre on day 4 and on day 5 options are a 25 minute walk or a taxi for around £2-£4 each way. Please ask an Explore Sales Consultant or refer to your final documentation for a final hotel list.



ACCOMMODATION:
Edom Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Full free day to explore Petra; take the chance to trek up the Royal Tombs

Today is free for you to discover more of Petra's beautiful and awe-inspiring buildings and scenery. You may choose to climb the steep path to the 'High Place of Sacrifice' for a stunning view over Wadi Araba and the Negev Desert, or trek up to the impressive 'Monastery' - Petra's largest monument.

This evening we'll visit a small, family run restaurant for a Bedouin cookery demonstration. The the chef will show us how to cook a traditional main meal and Jordanian sweet before we sit down for our dinner.



ACCOMMODATION:
Edom Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 13 - Explore Wadi Rum desert by 4WD and camp in a Bedouin camp under the stars

Today is all about embracing the Wadi Rum desert experience in its authenticity, as we have the once in a

lifetime opportunity to live the lifestyle of the nomadic Bedouin people. This morning we will leave Petra by bus and head to Wadi Rum Visitor Centre where we will transfer into 4WD vehicles for an exhilarating two hour jeep drive through the desert. This is a great chance to see the most spectacular and untouched parts of Wadi Rum.

Wadi Rum occupies a region of 74,000 acres and as described by T.E. Lawrence, is 'vast, echoing and God-like...'. Monolithic outcrops of granite rock and sandstone rise out of the desert with a drifting blanket of sand between them. It is at its most impressive at the beginning and end of the day when the soft light and blue sky create a coppery effect on the sand. The Bedouins learnt to live with this hostile environment 3000 years ago, choosing the partnership with the camel for their survival. They understood the importance of keeping on the move and interpreting the elements, in order to find food and water. This afternoon we have the chance to experience a camel ride and learn about this precious alliance between the dromedary and the nomads.

After sunset, we enjoy the Bedouin hospitality around the campfire under a blanket of stars; a great setting to share stories while sipping mint and sage tea. A traditional zarb, consisting of a chicken or a goat meat (vegetarian options available) cooked under the desert sand, is served as well as a delicious selection of mezze.

The campsite we use presents the opportunity to experience traditional Bedouin living arrangements in a large communal style goat hair tent, which provides the best protection against typical desert extremes of hot and cold weather. The tent is laid out with rugs, mattresses, pillows and blankets and is where each tribe would commune to eat, sleep and socialise, as well as a fire pit to sit around and enjoy some local sweet tea. Far away from the tourist centre, roads and within the Wadi Rum protected area, the camp is intimate and provides great views over the desert. A toilet and wash block with limited washing facilities is also available during our stay. Private tents can be paid for locally should you wish, subject to availability.



ACCOMMODATION:

Muhammed Mutlak Wadi Rum Camp (or similar)

Grade: Simple Tented Camp



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 14 - Spend time by the Red Sea in Aqaba; an option to join a snorkelling trip

After all the exploration of the last few days, today we can enjoy a relaxing day in Aqaba on the Red Sea. Famed for its preserved coral reefs and unique sea life, your Leader will be on hand to arrange an optional snorkelling trip.

If you don't have your sea legs, there are a number of beaches to choose from or you can spend the afternoon drinking tea in one of the many cafes.



ACCOMMODATION:
My Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 15 - Visit the Dead Sea, the lowest point of Earth before travelling back to Amman

This morning we depart Aqaba and travel for around four hours to the the Dead Sea. Officially the lowest point on the earth's surface, this unique water body has an amazingly high salt content (33%) which means that no animal life survives and it is almost impossible to sink. The experience of floating naturally is unique and relaxing on the calm sea. We'll spend a couple of hours this afternoon at a tourist beach, where food and drink can be purchased and we use of showers facilities.

Finally, we drive on to Amman and spend our last night in the bustling capital with free time to do some last-minute shopping and sightseeing. To mark the end of your trip, you may choose to enjoy a traditional or cosmopolitan meal, washed down with some excellent Jordanian wine, in one of the capital's many restaurants.



ACCOMMODATION:
Toledo Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 16 - Trip ends in Amman

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Amman.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Amman at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to depart from Queen Alia International Airport (AMM), which is a one hour drive from the hotel depending on traffic.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Lebanon

Climate

Lebanon has a Mediterranean climate. The summers are hot and humid, mild weather in spring and autumn; winter can be cold with some snow and can drop to sub zero from December to March.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	3 Pin Flat	Islam, Christian	Arabic, French

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Jordan only

Petra - Petra by night JD17.00 pp; Ottoman bath JD25.00 pp;

Little Petra JD17.50 pp for return transportation from Petra.

Wadi Rum - Camel trek JD20.00 pp.

Aqaba - Snorkelling on coral reef including lunch and snorkelling kit JD35.00 pp; Snorkelling from Boat (snorkelling equipment included) JD35.00 pp; Berenice Private Beach club - entrance fee JD10.00 pp.

Clothing

May to mid-June is spring time and October to November is autumn time - layers and/or a sweater are suggested especially for the cooler evenings and a waterproof jacket.

November can have heavy rains which can feel colder, an umbrella and warm sleepwear for nights 4 & 6 would be useful.

June to September is summer time in the Middle East - lightweight clothing and layers are best, and a hat for sun protection is essential. Remember swimwear!

It can still be cooler at altitude in the Qadisha Valley and in the desert at Wadi Rum, especially in the early mornings and evenings, so a sweater and light jacket are advisable.

December to April is winter time in the Middle East - by the coast it remains relatively mild, so we recommend layers and a waterproof jacket. At this time, snow is common throughout the Qadisha Valley in Lebanon, plus the nights and mornings can get very cool in the desert, so please bring suitable warm clothing including warm sleepwear for nights 4 & 6.

Women are advised not to wear shorts or dresses that are too revealing as this can be disrespectful and attract unwelcome attention in the souk and old town areas - loose fitting trousers are ideal. Women should also cover their head and shoulders when entering a mosque and men should wear long trousers.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended for the valley and ancient sites, while trainers and sandals may be preferred for the towns.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a day sack. Hotel porters are not always available, so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend US\$3.00 per person per day (US\$21 per person per week) as a guideline.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will

account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 35.00 per person for group tipping.

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

International Departure Taxes

The Jordanian government levies on all travellers a departure tax of JD10.00 per person. For travellers departing by air this is usually included in the taxes on the airline ticket and thus nothing will be collected from you at the point of departure. For those travellers departing by land, this will be collected by the immigration authorities at the port of departure from Jordan.

Lebanon

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6 - 10	£15-18	£2.5 - 4	£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Lebanese Pound and US\$ is accepted throughout. Please note you will probably receive Lebanese Pounds in change when using US Dollars.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

UK Sterling is widely accepted though exchange rates. We recommend carrying all your money in cash as Travellers Cheques are increasingly difficult to cash. See also note below.

Where To Exchange

In major towns and the airport.

ATM Availability

ATMs are available.

Credit Card Acceptance

Widely acceptable in cities and hotels.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques although still the safest way of carrying money are difficult to cash in Lebanon and thus we recommend against taking them. There are high commission charges on travellers cheques on a per cheque basis so, if using, we suggest you take high denomination cheques. Proof of purchase may be necessary for encashment of Travellers Cheques.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Accommodation notes

Lebanon

Lebanon's tourism infrastructure is well developed but standards can vary across the country. In Beirut and Byblos we stay in well-located, comfortable properties. Rooms are clean and offer en suite facilities. In the Chouf mountains we stay in an historic building originally built as a palace in 1827. The property is built from ancient stones in a traditional Ottoman style and features a courtyard with sweeping views of the surrounding mountains. Rooms all have en suites. While in Baalbek we stay in an old but charming hotel that is rich in history and has kept its doors open every day since it opened in 1874, including through two world wars and the country's civil war. The hotel has been visited by kings, queens, and heads of state, plus occupied by the Ottomans and the British and has hosted celebrities including Ella Fitzgerald. The hotel sits across the road from the site of Baalbek offering a prime location with a touch of faded glamour. The hotel's age and antiquity does mean hot water can be unreliable and there is no air conditioning. Rooms are twin and en suite. In the Qadisha Valley, we sleep a comfortable guesthouse within the grounds of St Anthony's. The simply-furnished rooms are in a new block, twin or triple share and all have en suite bathrooms.

Jordan

Jordan's tourism infrastructure is well developed and standards are generally good. However, due to the recent considerable rise in tourism in Jordan, hotels are experiencing very high demand for rooms, particularly in and around Petra. This high demand can lead to lower levels of service and quality, as well as occurrences of overbookings, which are often notified to us at a late stage. For this reason, we would like to emphasise that hotel accommodation, including the standard of, is subject to change.

Depending on your chosen departure date, your hotel location in the Petra area may vary. All the hotels we use are three star and are either located on the main road very close to the main Petra gates, or are a 25 minute walk away in the small town of Wadi Musa. For groups based in Wadi Musa transport will be provided to and from the site on day four, and on day five you can either walk or take a local taxi for around £2-£4 each way. From the hotel in Wadi Musa you can enjoy excellent views of the sprawling town and archaeological site below.

Our chosen desert camp in Wadi Rum boasts a stunning location in a little visited part of the Wadi. We camp in a communal Bedouin tent and all bedding is provided. There is even a proper toilet! This campsite also has a handful of separate tents, and if availability allows there may be the option to upgrade to your own twingle tent if you wish. The cost for this should be paid in cash to your Tour Leader and is \$40 per twin tent and \$30 for a single.

Please note that some hotel swimming pools in Jordan may operate separate timetables for men and women.

Please ask an Explore Sales Consultant or refer to your final documentation for a final hotel list.

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Lebanon: British, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and America passport holders can apply for a single entry visa on arrival valid for one month (foc).

Please note British Overseas citizens and British Protected Person will need to obtain a visa prior to travelling. Persons with Palestinian heritage should check with the Lebanon embassy if they need to obtain a visa prior to travelling.

All passports must have a minimum of 6 months validity from the date of entry into Lebanon. Please note that any passport that contains an endorsement or a visa for Israel or stamps from other countries' border crossing points with Israel, regardless of whether it has expired, will not be accepted for visa on arrival or by the Lebanese embassy.

All visitor's names will be checked upon arrival against a database for individuals wanted for/convicted of offences in Lebanon. If you are concerned you have a common name please travel with a copy of your birth certificate that includes your parents names to permit additional checks. Where names are matched against the database, the individual may be detained.

Please be aware that entry may also be refused to some countries if your passport bears stamps or visas (valid or expired) from certain countries. Please bear this in mind when booking/traveling to certain destinations as it can negatively affect your future travel plans.

Jordan: Jordan: The Jordanian government have announced that from 01 June 2015, all visa fees will be waived for tourists of British, American, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian nationalities on arrival at an international Jordanian airport. There are however, certain conditions that each tourist of

these nationalities must meet in order to gain the free visa. Most of these are already met by Explore trips; however flight information, passport details and arrival date into Jordan all have an effect on qualifying for the free visa. Please see below for the category that is applicable to your flight arrangements:

The following information relates to the above nationalities travelling on flights to Jordan arranged by Explore arriving on the first day of the tour: In order to qualify for the free visa, the above nationalities must advise their passport details at least 14 days prior to your departure date to Explore and must be met by a representative who will assist with the visa process, this is already arranged by Explore as part of the transfer arrangements from the airport to the start of the tour.

The following information relates to the above nationalities with Land Only arrangements arriving on the first day of the tour: In order to qualify for the free visa, these tourists must advise their passport details at least 14 days prior to your departure date to Explore and must be met by a representative who will assist with the visa process. Land Only customers of the above nationalities arranging their own flights to arrive in Jordan on the first day of the tour must advise their full flight details to Explore at least 7 days prior to your departure date. We will then arrange for the representative to meet you as part of the transfer arrangements from the airport to the start of the tour.

The following information relates to the above nationalities arriving in Jordan prior or after the first day of the tour: In order to qualify for the free visa, tourists of the above nationalities must advise their passport details at least 14 days prior to your departure date to Explore and must be met by a representative who will assist with the visa process. To qualify for the free visa, you must contact Explore at least 7 days prior to your departure date to arrange and purchase a private transfer. We will then arrange for the representative to meet you as part of the transfer arrangements.

Please Note: For all tourists of the above nationalities that do not advise their passport details and for all above nationalities that arrange their own travel arrangements and do not advise their flight details to Explore within the above specified timelines, the Jordanian visa fee of JD40.00 (approximately £45) will be applicable. This must be paid on arrival at an international Jordanian airport in order for individuals to gain a visa to enter the country.

All other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate to determine if they are applicable for the above free visa on arrival or must gain a visa prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive

package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

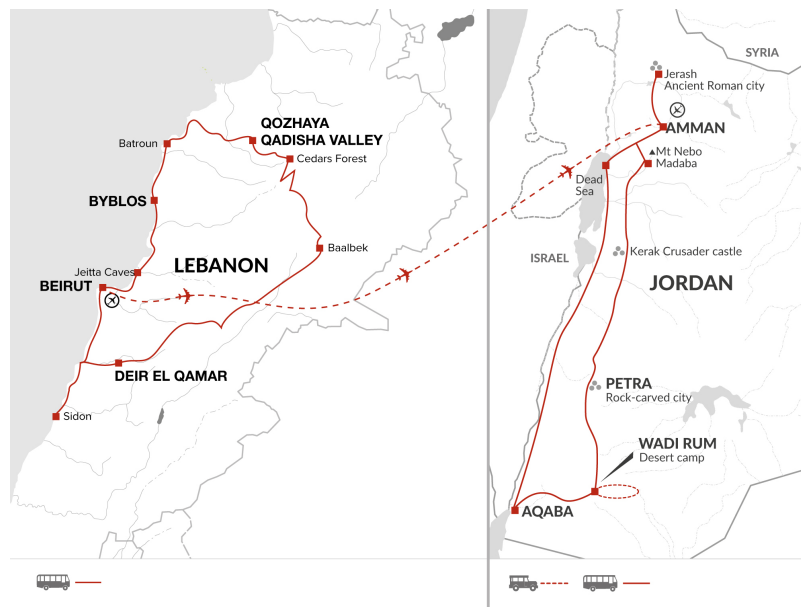
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Lebanon

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Ramadan



Highlights of Lebanon & Jordan (Summer itinerary)

In 2022, Ramadan runs from 02 April to 02 May. Read more about [travelling during Ramadan](#).

The following 2022 departures of Highlights of Lebanon and Jordan will coincide with Ramadan:

26 March 2022

02 April 2022

09 April 2022

16 April 2022

23 April 2022

30 April 2022

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS

PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS