

## Overview of Lebanon

Once occupied by Rome and Phoenicia, Lebanon is historically a melting pot of major civilisations. Today, it is home to some of the largest and best-preserved Roman sites in the world and offers tourists the rare opportunity to snorkel among submerged Phoenician ruins in the coastal cities of Sidon and Byblos. The pre-Roman site of Baalbek is perhaps the best place to see the region's intriguing past.

Sometimes called 'Paris of the Middle East', the capital Beirut is a trendy cosmopolitan city where a variety of languages, nationalities and religions transcend social barriers. Ironically, it suffered twin suicide bombings a day before the Paris attacks in November 2015.

The highlight of any visit to the Mediterranean country is the constant reminder of its role in world history, its location at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe making it part of a global network of trade ports during Roman times. The Beqaa Valley is one of the leading wine-producing areas in the world and has been the country's main agricultural region since the 1st century BC, when it was known as the 'granary of Rome'.

Lebanon has a remarkable natural landscape, especially when considering how much desert surrounds it. Each region varies in climate and topography, though the country's small size means travellers can pack their itinerary with daytrips to historic coastal towns and lovely mountain villages from Beirut.

Lebanon's bloody civil war ran from 1975 to the early 1990s and deeply scarred the country. The Lebanese people have tried to rebuild since then and an atmosphere of tolerance and open-mindedness has been the reward. Visitors can certainly enjoy safe and pleasant stays in this popular destination, though they should be aware of the socio-political situation at any given time as Lebanon still appears on consular warning lists.

Ski resorts, ancient cities, striking landscapes, gorgeous buildings, wonderful food, internationally renowned wineries, incredible shopping districts, red-hot nightlife and skilled artisans are all on offer in Lebanon.

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## Key Facts

### Language:

Arabic is the official language, though Lebanese Arabic is its own dialect, often a patois including at least one other language. French and English are the most common European languages and most people are bilingual.

### Passport/Visa:

Most foreign nationals can obtain a visa on arrival in Beirut (BEY), Lebanon, provided that they are holding confirmed return or onward tickets and the necessary travel documentation for their next destination. and they can supply a valid address and telephone number for themselves while in Lebanon. Holders of passports containing a visa for Israel (whether valid or expired, used or unused), or containing any Israeli stamps or endorsements, will not be allowed to enter Lebanon. It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

### Currency:

The official currency is the Lebanese Pound (LBP), which is divided into 100 piastres; the Lebanese Pound is locally known as the Lira. US dollars are accepted throughout the country. ATM machines are widely available in Lebanon except in isolated towns and cash can be withdrawn from banks during business hours. Credits cards are widely used.

### Electricity:

Electrical current is 230 volts, 50Hz. The European round two-pin plug is standard (type C), but a variety of other plugs are used.

# Travel to Lebanon

## Overview

Despite the years of civil war and corrupt government, intrepid travellers will discover that there is plenty to see and do in Lebanon, from the beaches and restaurants of Beirut, to magnificent mountain vistas, and the Roman ruins of Baalbek and Al Baas.

## Climate in Lebanon

Lebanon has three different climate zones: the coastal strip, the mountains, and the Beqaa Valley. Coastal areas experience a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, rainy winters. Mountainous regions have typical alpine climates and are cool in the summer and cold with heavy snowfalls in the winter. The Beqaa Valley has hot, dry summers and cold, dry winters with snow, frost and cold winds.

The sun shines for an average of 300 days a year and the average temperature in Beirut is 70°F (21°C), with a range of 50°F (10°C) in winter to 86°F (30°C) in summer. Coastal regions can climb to over 95°F (35°C).

## Health Notes when travelling to Lebanon

Health risks for travellers to Lebanon are not excessive. Update routine vaccines such as measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, chickenpox vaccine, and polio vaccine, as well as flu shots. There is no risk of yellow fever, and proof of vaccination is not required to enter the country; everyone 12 years of age and older should get fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before visiting. Typhoid vaccinations are recommended to all travellers, with the exception of those who intend to stay in Lebanon for only a short period and take their meals in major restaurants and hotels. This is especially applicable around the rainy season, when contaminated water may filter into the cities. Medical facilities and healthcare in Lebanon are good but expensive and all payments are expected in cash, regardless of insurance. Visitors should make sure their medical insurance covers any possible expenses, and they should consider provision for medical evacuation.

## Safety Notes when travelling to Lebanon

Safety warnings change regularly and Lebanon is unpredictable at best, featuring on numerous consular warning lists. Vigilance is essential, as family, neighbourhood, and factional violence is spontaneous, sporadic, and often lethal. Certain areas must be completely avoided, particularly at the Syrian and Israeli border. Any travel south of the Litani River is discouraged. Politically or economically motivated kidnappings occur, and other crimes, such as burglary, petty theft, vehicle theft, and break-ins, are present in Lebanon, but are low by international standards. Visitors should be streetwise and exercise normal precautions otherwise.

## Customs in Lebanon

Lebanon is a religious country where Islam and Christianity having the two largest followings. Though more liberal than surrounding destinations, visitors are still expected to dress and behaviour modestly at religious sites and during religious holidays such as Ramadan.

Cosmopolitan areas in places such as Beirut are far more liberal than the rest of the country and wider region, meaning travellers can relax and express themselves in more ways. Possession, use, and trafficking of controlled drugs are serious offences that carry custodial sentences. Most jurisdictions consider homosexuality a criminal offence.

Overstaying without the proper authority is also a serious offence. Photographing military personnel or installations and government buildings may lead to confiscation of photographic equipment and possibly imprisonment.

## Duty Free in Lebanon

Duty free allowances for travellers to Lebanon over 18 are 800 cigarettes, 50 cigars, or 1kg of tobacco, two litres of spirits and four of other alcoholic beverages, and perfume for personal use. All currencies in any form can be brought in without restrictions, though gold coins must be declared. A valid import licence is required for any arms or ammunition.

## Doing Business in Lebanon

Many businesspeople speak English but an interpreter may be needed. Work attire is conservative and local business customs may at times take precedence in an increasingly Westernised business environment, especially for smaller companies.

Business people consider it rude to negotiate without chatting over tea first. Direct eye contact, physical closeness and friendliness are important points for gaining confidence in a business meeting.

Cross-gender negotiations are more reserved and don't usually include physical greetings. Gift giving is common and it's worth asking a legal consultant to explain the legal boundaries of what could be considered a gift.

The working week runs from Monday to Saturday but some Muslim businesses may be closed on Fridays. Business cards are widely distributed.

## Communication in Lebanon

The international dialling code for Lebanon is +961. The outgoing code is 00, followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the UK). Hotels, cafes and restaurants offer WiFi in major cities; travellers can purchase local prepaid SIM cards for unlocked phones.

## Tipping in Lebanon

Tipping is customary in Lebanon and service staff are usually tipped around 10 to 15 percent of the bill. Porters, hotel staff, valets, and doormen usually receive a nominal fee, depending on the area, service, and establishment.

## Passport/Visa Note

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## Entry Requirements

### Entry requirements for Americans:

US citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least one month beyond their estimated duration of stay in Lebanon. A visa is required.

### Entry requirements for Canadians:

Canadian citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least one month beyond their estimated duration of stay in Lebanon. A visa is required for all travellers and can be obtained on arrival at Beirut International Airport for a maximum stay of one month. However, some visas do require prior arrangements with the Lebanese government to ensure longer stays.

### Entry requirements for UK nationals:

British citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least one month beyond their entry date into Lebanon. A visa is required for all travellers and can be obtained on arrival at Beirut International Airport for one month. However, some visas do require prior arrangements with the Lebanese government to ensure longer stays.

### Entry requirements for Australians:

Australian citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least one month beyond their estimated duration of stay in Lebanon. A visa is required for all travellers and can be obtained on arrival at Beirut International Airport for a maximum stay of one month. However, some visas do require prior arrangements with the Lebanese government to ensure longer stays.

### Entry requirements for Irish nationals:

Irish citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least one month beyond their estimated duration of stay in Lebanon. A visa is required for all travellers and can be obtained on arrival at Beirut International Airport for a maximum stay of one month. However, some visas do require prior arrangements with the Lebanese government to ensure longer stays.

### Entry requirements for New Zealanders:

New Zealand citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least one month beyond their estimated duration of stay in Lebanon. A visa is required for all travellers and can be obtained on arrival at Beirut International Airport for

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a maximum stay of one month. However, some visas do require prior arrangements with the Lebanese government to ensure longer stays.

**Entry requirements for South Africans:**

South African citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least one month beyond their estimated duration of stay in Lebanon, and need a pre-arranged visa to enter Lebanon. When prearranged, they can obtain a visa on arrival for a maximum stay of six months.

## **Tourist Offices**

The National Council of Tourism, Beirut: +961 0 1 343 073

## Lebanon Embassies

### In the United States:

Lebanon Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 939 6300.

### In Canada:

Lebanon Embassy, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 236 5825.

### In the United Kingdom:

Lebanon Embassy, London, United Kingdom (also responsible for Ireland): +44 0 20 7229 7265.

### In Australia:

Lebanon Embassy, Canberra, Australia (also responsible for New Zealand): +61 2 6295 7378.

### In South Africa:

Lebanon Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 012 430 2130

## Foreign Embassies in Lebanon

### American Embassy

United States Embassy, Beirut: +961 4 543 600.

### Canadian Embassy

Canadian Embassy, Beirut: +961 4 726 700.

### British Embassy

British Embassy, Beirut: +961 0 1 960 800.

### Australian Embassy

Australian Embassy, Beirut: +961 0 1 960 600.

### Irish Embassy

Irish Embassy, Cairo, Egypt (also responsible for Lebanon): +202 27 287 100

### New Zealand Embassy

Embassy of New Zealand, Cairo, Egypt (also responsible for Lebanon): +20 2 246 16000

### South African Embassy

South African Honorary Consulate, Beirut: +961 0 1 804 100.

# Currency

The official currency is the Lebanese Pound (LBP), which is divided into 100 piastres; the Lebanese Pound is locally known as the Lira. US dollars are accepted throughout the country. ATM machines are widely available in Lebanon except in isolated towns and cash can be withdrawn from banks during business hours. Credit cards are widely used.

## Exchange rate for 1 LBP - Lebanese Pound

<b>0.00 BMD</b> Bermudan Dollar	<b>0.00 EUR</b> Euro	<b>0.00 USD</b> U.S. Dollar	<b>0.00 GBP</b> U.K. Pound Sterling	<b>0.00 JPY</b> Japanese Yen	<b>0.00 CAD</b> Canadian Dollar
<b>0.00 CHF</b> Swiss Franc	<b>0.00 AUD</b> Australian Dollar	<b>0.00 UAH</b> Ukrainian Hryvnia	<b>0.00 KZT</b> Kazakhstani Tenge	<b>0.00 LYD</b> Libyan Dinar	<b>0.00 BOB</b> Bolivian Boliviano
<b>0.00 NPR</b> Nepalese Rupee	<b>0.00 OMR</b> Omani Rial	<b>0.00 QAR</b> Qatari Rial	<b>0.00 SGD</b> Singapore Dollar	<b>0.00 SEK</b> Swedish Krona	<b>0.00 TTD</b> Trinidad Tobago Dollar
<b>0.00 VEF</b> Venezuelan Bolivar	<b>0.00 DOP</b> Dominican Peso	<b>0.00 HRK</b> Croatian Kuna	<b>0.00 MXN</b> Mexican Peso	<b>0.01 XOF</b> West African CFA Franc	<b>0.00 PGK</b> Papua New Guinean kina
<b>0.00 BSD</b> Bahamian Dollar	<b>0.00 FJD</b> Fiji Dollar	<b>0.00 HNL</b> Honduran Lempira	<b>0.00 DZD</b> Algerian Dinar	<b>0.00 MMK</b> Myanma Kyat	<b>0.00 BWP</b> Botswana Pula
<b>0.00 PEN</b> Peruvian Nuevo Sol	<b>0.01 CLP</b> Chilean Peso	<b>0.00 AMD</b> Armenia Dram	<b>0.00 CZK</b> Czech Koruna	<b>0.00 MDL</b> Moldova Lei	<b>0.00 ISK</b> Icelandic Krona
<b>0.14 UZS</b> Uzbekistan Sum	<b>0.00 ILS</b> Israeli New Sheqel	<b>0.00 JOD</b> Jordanian Dinar	<b>0.00 KWD</b> Kuwaiti Dinar	<b>0.00 UYU</b> Uruguayan Peso	<b>0.00 MUR</b> Mauritian Rupee
<b>0.00 NIO</b> Nicaraguan Córdoba	<b>0.00 NOK</b> Norwegian Krone	<b>0.00 PLN</b> Polish Zloty	<b>0.00 SAR</b> Saudi Riyal	<b>0.00 LKR</b> Sri Lanka Rupee	<b>0.00 THB</b> Thai Baht
<b>0.00 AED</b> U.A.E Dirham	<b>0.00 BRL</b> Brazilian Real	<b>0.00 RON</b> Romanian New Leu	<b>0.00 HKD</b> Hong Kong Dollar	<b>0.01 XAF</b> Central African CFA Franc	<b>0.27 VND</b> Vietnamese Dong
<b>0.01 ARS</b> Argentine Peso	<b>0.00 XCD</b> East Caribbean Dollar	<b>0.00 GTQ</b> Guatemalan Quetzal	<b>0.00 MAD</b> Moroccan Dirham	<b>0.00 BHD</b> Bahrain Dinar	<b>0.00 PAB</b> Panamanian Balboa
<b>0.00 AZN</b> Azerbaijan Manat	<b>0.04 COP</b> Colombian Peso	<b>0.00 KGS</b> Kyrgyzstan Som	<b>0.00 HUF</b> Hungarian Forint	<b>0.00 TJS</b> Tajikistan Ruble	<b>0.17 IDR</b> Indonesian Rupiah
<b>0.00 EGP</b> Egyptian Pound	<b>0.01 KRW</b> South Korean Won	<b>0.08 PYG</b> Paraguayan Guaraní	<b>0.00 MYR</b> Malaysian Ringgit	<b>0.01 CRC</b> Costa Rican Colón	<b>0.00 NZD</b> New Zealand Dollar
<b>0.00 PKR</b> Pakistani Rupee	<b>0.00 RUB</b> Russian Rouble	<b>0.00 ZAR</b> South African Rand	<b>0.00 TND</b> Tunisian Dinar	<b>0.00 BBD</b> Barbadian Dollar	<b>0.00 BGN</b> Bulgarian Lev
<b>0.00 TRY</b> Turkish Lira	<b>0.00 PHP</b> Philippine Peso	<b>0.00 TWD</b> New Taiwan Dollar	<b>0.01 NGN</b> Nigerian Naira	<b>0.00 XPF</b> CFP Franc	<b>0.00 GHS</b> Ghanaian Cedi
<b>0.00 JMD</b> Jamaican Dollar	<b>0.00 ANG</b> Neth. Antillean Guilder	<b>0.00 BND</b> Brunei Dollar	<b>0.00 RSD</b> Serbian Dinar	<b>0.00 CNY</b> Chinese Yuan	<b>0.00 DKK</b> Danish Krone
<b>0.00 TMT</b> New Turkmenistan Manat	<b>0.00 INR</b> Indian Rupee				

## Overview of the Attractions in Lebanon

Despite the years of civil war and corrupt government, intrepid travellers will discover that there is plenty to see and do in Lebanon, from the beaches and restaurants of Beirut, to magnificent mountain vistas, and the Roman ruins of Baalbek and Al Baas.



## Public Holidays in Lebanon

	2021	2022
<b>Birth of the Prophet</b>	Fri. October 18	Tue. October 8
<b>New Year's Day</b>	Mon. January 1	Mon. January 1
<b>Orthodox Christmas</b>	Sat. January 6	Sat. January 6
<b>St Maroun's Day</b>	Fri. February 9	Fri. February 9
<b>Rafik Hariri Memorial Day</b>	Wed. February 14	Wed. February 14
<b>Annunciation Day</b>	Mon. March 25	Mon. March 25
<b>Good Friday</b>	Tue. April 2	Mon. April 15
<b>Labour Day</b>	Wed. May 1	Wed. May 1
<b>Resistance and Liberation Day</b>	Sat. May 25	Sat. May 25
<b>Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)</b>	Mon. May 13	Thu. May 2
<b>Assumption</b>	Thu. August 15	Thu. August 15
<b>Eid Al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)</b>	Mon. August 12	Tue. July 9
<b>Islamic New Year</b>	Fri. August 9	Tue. July 30
<b>Ashura</b>	Wed. September 18	Thu. August 8
<b>Independence Day</b>	Fri. November 22	Fri. November 22
<b>Christmas Day</b>	Wed. December 25	Wed. December 25
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	Thu. April 4	Wed. April 17