



SYRIA & LEBANON

10 days/9 nights

D 1 - Monday - Your destination - Beirut - Damascus

Flight to Beirut.

From the Lebanese capital, we will take the road that gradually climbs towards the Syrian border, which we will cross before continuing to Damascus.

Overnight in Damascus.

D 2 - Tuesday - Le Hauran

This day will be devoted to the discovery of the dead cities of the Hauran volcanic massif, also called Jebel Al-Arab.

Shabba, the ancient Philippopolis, birthplace of Emperor Philip the Arab, has a theater, basilica and thermal baths. Suweida has preserved the temple and basilica, witnesses of the great wealth of this southern region of Syria.

Qanawat, ancient city of the Decapolis, has kept, from its heyday, two temples, one of which was transformed into a basilica during the Byzantine era.

Bosra is renowned for its theater, one of the best-preserved in the Roman world, which is truly impressive when viewed from the top of the bleachers. It was fortified in Muslim times by Saladin, which earned it this almost intact aspect.

Overnight in Damascus.

D 3 - Wednesday Damascus

Damascus, capital of roses and famous fabrics, has its roots in High Antiquity since its oasis saw the birth of one of the oldest villages in Syria, in the 7th millennium. Our visit to the capital of modern Syria will begin with the famous Archaeological Museum where the main discoveries made in the country are deposited: objects from Ugarit's excavations, Yarhai hypogeum, frescoes from the Doura Europos synagogue, reconstruction of the gate of the entrance to the Umayyad castle of Qasr el Hayr ...

We will then begin our discovery of the historic center by browsing the souks of the old town. We will notably visit the Azem Palace, once the residence of the Ottoman governor of Damascus, now the Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions.

In the afternoon, we will visit the Umayyad Mosque, one of the most beautiful in the Islamic world. The shrine recalls, by its size and splendor, the power of the first dynasty which reigned over Islam. Its immense courtyard, bordered by arcades, is decorated with rich mosaics on a gold background, enhanced with a vegetal decoration of unparalleled finesse. The grandiose interior houses the supposed and venerated tomb of Saint John the Baptist.

At the end of rue Droite, a former Roman cardo, we will reach the Christian quarter to visit the house of Ananias, where the man who restored the sight of the converted Saint Paul lived.

Overnight in Damascus.

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D 4 - Thursday Saidnaya - Maaloula - Mar Moussa - Hama

The whole day will be devoted to the presence of Christian communities in Syria, in the foothills of Anti-Lebanon.

At 1381 meters above sea level, Saidnaya is famous for its convent with a miraculous icon. This village, where the houses are built around a rock with a very old monastery at the top, is a famous place of pilgrimage. A steep climb is the only way to reach the monastery, which is said to date back to Emperor Justinian.

Not far from there, leaning against a high cliff, is the village of Maaloula and its monastery of Mar Sarkis, of Byzantine origin, where the use of the Aramaic dialect close to that which was in use in France was preserved for a long time. time of Christ.

The monastery of Saint Moses, Deir Mar Moussa in Arabic, occupies a spectacular site, the buildings taking pleasure in hugging the arid mountain. The interior houses a beautiful cycle of 13th century frescoes.

Road to Hama which will be our stopover for two days.

Overnight in Hama.

D 5 - Friday Palmyre - Hama

Leaving Hama, we will go deep into the Syrian desert to reach the oasis of Palmyra. The ancient Tadmor of the Assyrian texts was Hellenized after the conquest of Syria by Alexander the Great. From this period, few vestiges remain because the city was built mainly in Roman times according to an urban planning adapted to the designs of the time. The alliance, in its ruins, of Eastern and Roman influences, its exceptional setting, make it the most prestigious site in Syria. Capital of an independent kingdom, of which we know the bitter disputes between Queen Zenobia and Emperor Aurelian, then a Roman colony, caravan stopover city, Palmyra was the hub of trade in oriental products so popular with Westerners.

We will visit the sites which are still the witnesses of this prosperity.

Overnight in Hama.

D 6 - Saturday Hama - Marqab - Lattaqieh

Hama is the city of the great hundred-year-old norias on the banks of the Orontes, sung by Maurice Barrès, whose characteristic creaking fills the city with their complaint. We will visit the Azem Palace, an Ottoman residence transformed into a museum. It houses superb antique mosaics, one of the specialties of Roman Syria.

Approaching the coast, we will visit the castle of Marqab, imposing and dark Frankish citadel, which protected Banyas.

Along more or less closely the Mediterranean coast Then, we will reach Lattaqieh, Syria's seaport and the country's largest port.

Overnight in Lattaqieh.

D 7 - Sunday Château de Saône - Ougarit - Tartous

We will make a long climb to the castle of Saône in the djebel Ansariye. The remarkable Crusader fortress, with Byzantine origins, stands in a beautiful setting. Despite its sophisticated defenses, it was kidnapped by Saladin and his men, just before the Battle of Hattin, in 1187, which was to allow the Sultan to take Jerusalem back definitively from the Crusaders.



In a still beautiful landscape, we will return to the coast.

We will discover near Lattaqieh, Ugarit - Ras Shamra, one of the oldest sites in Syria where the famous "alphabet" exhibited in Damascus was found. It was also one of the liveliest ports on the Levantine coast, the center of a small kingdom with a thriving economy. The remains of the royal palace and the hill of temples are particularly evocative.

Night in Tartous.

D 8 - Monday Tartous - Amrit - Safita

Tartous, the ancient Tortosa, has preserved many vestiges of medieval times, starting with its splendid cathedral with towers on the facade. In the streets of the city, in many places you can see the remains of ribs with elegant arches.

In Amrit, an ancient Phoenician port, there remains an enigmatic sanctuary erected in the middle of a basin and a few tombs surmounted by curious monuments, called meghazils. Back on more mountainous roads to reach our stage of the day.

Overnight in Safita.

D 9 - Tuesday Safita - Le Crac des Chevaliers - Jounieh

From the castle of Safita, there remains a formidable dungeon, called Chastel Blanc, which dominates the entire surrounding region. It will be an excellent introduction to a visit to Crac des Chevaliers, the most famous of the Crusader castles in Syria, and also one of the finest examples of medieval military architecture, where Romanesque and nascent Gothic art mingle. Keeping an eye on the Homs Gap, an obligatory passage between the sea and the Orontes plain, it stands up its impressive stature in a landscape of great variety.

Taking the southern route, we will cross the Syrian-Lebanese border, before following the Lebanese coast to Jounieh.

Overnight in Jounieh.

D 10 - Wednesday Jounieh - Beirut – Your destination

In the morning, a funicular will drop us off in a few minutes at the foot of the statue of Our Lady of Lebanon, from where we can admire a breathtaking panorama of the bay. We will then reach Beirut, where we will walk on the ledge and have free lunch.

Road to the airport and flight to your destination.