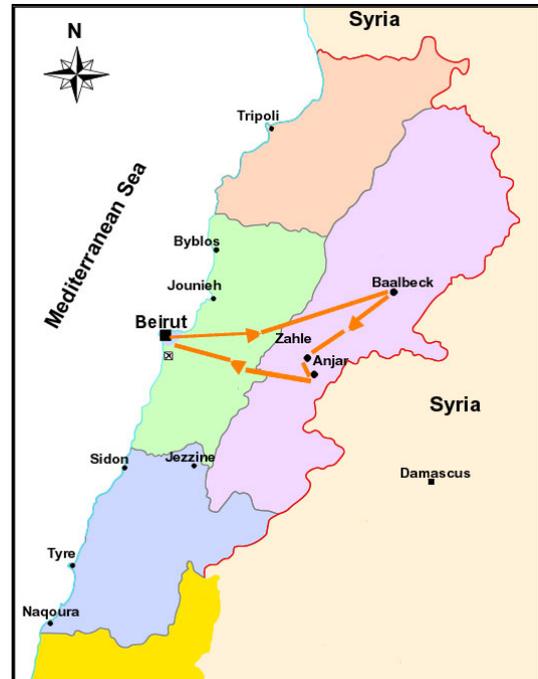


## Excursion: Baalbeck, Ksara & Anjar

Dep	Arr	Duration	Details
08.00	10.00	120 min	Depart Beirut to Baalbeck
10.00	12.00	120 min	Visit Roman temples
12.00	13.00	60 min	Drive back to Zahle
13.00	13.30	30 min	Visit Ksara Winery
13.30	14.30	60 min	Lunch at Ksara Restaurant
14.30	15.00	30 min	Drive to Anjar
15.00	16.00	60 min	Visit the Umayyad city
16.00	17.15	75 min	Drive back to Beirut
	17.15		Arrival to Beirut

**Duration of excursion: 9 hrs 15 min**



### **Description of excursion:**

From Beirut, climb Eastward passing Dahr El Baidar and Chtaura. A magnificent view of the fertile Bekaa valley stretches ahead, then to the North-East until we reach the city of Baalbeck. Visit the largest and the greatest, ever built, well preserved Roman temples of Bacchus & Jupiter. See, also, one of the biggest stones ever quarried for building purposes. Drive back to Zahle for visiting Ksara Winery and its underground caves dating back to the Roman period besides to taste and discover one of the best undiscovered wines. Lunch will be served in Ksara winery to discover the real taste of the famous traditional Lebanese Mezza with local wine. Drive South-East towards Anjar to explore the ruins of the only Umayyad town discovered in Lebanon. Return to the hotel in Beirut.

### **Description of sites:**

#### **Baalbeck**

The Roman temples of Baalbeck, in the Bekaa valley 85 kilometers from Beirut, make up the largest and best-preserved corpus of Roman architecture. The Acropolis occupies the top of an artificial hill built up of different layers of habitation.

Its temples, dedicated to Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus, were constructed between the first and third centuries AD.

In the large temple known as "Jupiter temple" six of the fifty four giant columns that originally surrounded the sanctuary survive today. The temple has an impressive podium and a vast rectangular courtyard where sacrifices were carried out. The sanctuary is reached through a propylaea (monumental entrance) and hexagonal forecourt.

The town of Baalbeck has major remains from Islamic times including the grand mosque, built by the Umayyad with material borrowed from ancient monuments, and another mosque built in Mamluke times near the spring of Ras El-Ain.



### **Ksara Winery**

Château Ksara is Lebanon's oldest winery, founded in 1857 by French Jesuit priests. It is also a household name in the Lebanon thanks to being the biggest producer (close to three million bottles annually) and a prominent presence in every shop, restaurant and café for its wines. Discovered in Ksara underground tunnels around two kilometers of original Roman caves beneath the winery and vineyards, where the temperature (13 °C), all the year through, is ideal for storing wine in special wooden barrels imported from France . Ksara farms 348 hectares of vineyard in the Bekaa Valley, without the use of chemical herbicides.

### **Anjar**

In the Bekaa valley, some 58 kilometers from Beirut. Anjar was built by the Umayyad Caliph Al – Walled in the early 8th century AD. The town's plan, which is reminiscent of Roman camps, features two main streets that cross at right angles. Inside the city's strong fortifications are the remains of two palaces, souk, two hammam and a mosque.

Located on the old route linking the Bekaa with Damascus, Anjar was built on the ancient town called Gerrha, founded by the lituraean Arabs whose priest-kings ruled the cults of Baalbeck, Niha and other sights. In the Greco-Roman era it was called Chalcis. Today the name of Gerrha is retained in the word, Anjar, which simply means "source of Gerrha" (Ain Gerrha). It stands unique as the only historic example of an inland commercial center and is one of the few remnants of the "Umayyad" era, the first hereditary dynasty of Islam.