

Excursion : Sidon, Deir El Qamar & Beiteddine

Dep	Arr	Duration	Details
08:00	08:45	45 min	Depart Beirut to Sidon
08:45	09:15	30 min	Visit the sea castle
09:15	09:45	30 min	Visit the Caravanserai
09:45	10:15	30 min	Visit the old souk
10:15	11:15	60 min	Visit the soap museum
11:15	12:15	60 min	Drive up to Deir el Qamar
12:15	12:45	30 min	Visit Deir El Qamar
12:45	13:45	60 min	Lunch in Deir el Qamar
13:45	14:00	15 min	Depart to Beiteddine
14:00	15:30	90 min	Visit Beiteddine palace
15:30	16:30	60 min	Drive back to Beirut
	16:30		Arrival to Beirut

Duration of excursion: 8 hrs 30 min

Description of excursion:

From Beirut, drive via the South coastal road to Sidon. The visit starts with the sea castle dating back to the Crusaders period then the caravanserai "Khan El Franj" and after walk through the old Mamlouk souk to the soap museum for visit. Through the same coastal road drive back to Damour then up towards Deir el Qamar, en route enjoying the beautiful scenery and the green Shouf mountain.

Deir el Qamar, a village with white houses and red tile roofs, built on steep slopes of the mountain. This town was the residence of governors of Lebanon in the 16th to 19th century. Visit the city and continue short drive by bus to Beiteddine for visiting the Palace of Beiteddine which was built by Emir Bechir II (1788-1840) and serves today as the summer residence of the Lebanese presidents since 1943. Return back to Beirut.

Description of sites:

Sidon

Sidon also called Saida is said to mean "fishing", and even today fishermen moor their boats in the small picturesque port. The town is a mere 40 kilometers south of Beirut and is known as the Capital of the South. It was the third great Phoenician city-state, rivaling Byblos and Tyre as a naval power. In Darius' time, towards the end of the 6th century BC, it was the capital of the fifth Persian Satrapy and a showplace of buildings and gardens. Through time the city shared many other cities on the Lebanese coast the same destiny and was destroyed by an earthquake in 551 AD.

In early 13th century AD the Crusaders captured the rebuilt town after 47-days of siege, and in their turn they added to the city many fortresses on the sea side and in the main land. 70 years later the city was recaptured by the famous Saladin. Nowadays besides its famous "Sea Castle" built by the Crusaders on small islands off the coast and connected to the mainland by a causeway, the city offers many more monuments of the past such as a traditional under cover "Souk" (market) in the old city center dating back to Mamluk period 15th Century, plus a "Khan" caravanserai and the traditional soap factory.



Deir el Qamar

Located in the Shouf Mountains, 40 kilometers South of Beirut, this village with its white houses and red tile roofs is built on steep slopes of the mountain. This was the residence of Governors of Lebanon in the 16th to 19th centuries. Many historic buildings have been restored to their former glory.

Beiteddine

In Arabic, Beiteddine means “house of faith”. 43 kilometers away from Beirut stands this magnificent palace built at the beginning of the 19th century by Emir Bechir, who reigned over Lebanon for more than 50 years. With its arcades, galleries and rooms decorated by artists from Damascus, this building is a model of eastern architecture.

Today the palace houses a museum of ancient weapons, costumes and jewelry as well as an archaeological museum and a museum of Byzantine mosaics.