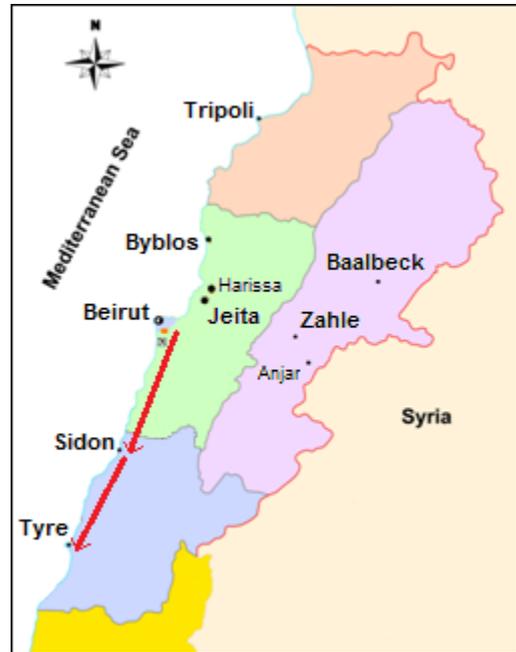


## Excursion : Tyre, Sidon & Echmoun

Dep	Arr	Duration	Details
08:00	09:30	90 min	Depart Beirut to Tyre
09:30	10:15	45 min	Visit the Imperial city
10:15	10:30	15 min	short drive to 2 <sup>nd</sup> site
10:30	11:30	60 min	Visit the Necropolis
11:30	12:15	45 min	Drive back to Sidon
12:15	12:45	30 min	Visit the Sea castle
12:45	13:45	60 min	Lunch in Sidon
13:45	14:15	30 min	Visit the old souk
14:15	14:45	30 min	Visit soap museum
14:45	15:00	15 min	Visit the caravanserai
15:00	15:10	15 min	Drive to Echmoun
15:10	15:45	30 min	Visit Echmoun temple
15:45	16:30	45 min	Drive back to Beirut
	16:30		Arrival to Beirut

**Duration of excursions: 8 hrs 30 min**



### **Description of excursion:**

From Beirut, drive via the South coastal road to Tyre. Visit one of the largest Roman sites in the region (announced a world heritage site by UNESCO), the "imperial city" on the semi-island, then short drive to the main land for visiting the Roman hippodrome, the Roman-Byzantine necropolis and a triumphal arch.

From Tyre return through the same coastal road back to Sidon for visiting the sea castle dating back to the Crusaders period and walk through the old Mamluk souk; visit the soap museum then the caravanserai "Khan El Franj". On the way back to Beirut visit the Phoenician temple dedicated to the healing god "Echmoun" which was built by the King of Sidon Echmounazar II. Return to Beirut.

### **Description of sites:**

#### **Tyre**

Also known as Sour (Rock) was built during the Phoenician time on a small rocky island near the coast. Tyre was the second largest city in Phoenicia. In the 10th century BC, the Phoenician King "Hiram" of Tyre constructed two ports and a temple on the mainland sector of the city. This was the year, when the famous industries of Phoenician glass and purple dye were developed. The citizens of Tyre successfully defeated Nebuchadnezzar behind the city's walls for 13 years. Alexander the Great also laid siege to the city for 7 months, finally overwhelming the Island City by building a great causeway from the shore to the island. After the Hellenistic period the Roman built on the ancient ruins a large city with a huge necropolis outside the Roman city and the largest hippodrome ever built in the ancient world during the Roman period. In 1980, Tyre's impressive Roman and Phoenician remains prompted UNESCO to make the town one of its World Heritage Site.



## **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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> Century, plus a “Khan” caravanserai and the traditional soap factory.

## **Echmoun temple**

The temple of Echmoun, situated in the south of Lebanon about 40 km from Beirut and 1 km from Sidon on the Awwali River, was dedicated to the healing God “Echmoun”, who was identified with “Asklepios” the Greek God of medical art.

Building was begun at the end of the 7th century B.C. by Echmounazar II (king of Sidon), and later additions in the site were made in the following centuries. It holds also ruins dating back to the Hellenistic, (Temple and holy sanctuary), Roman, (Temples and Roads) and Byzantine, (Churches and Mosaic) periods.

It is from belief in the healing power of Echmoun and the snake banded on his caduceus that we get the sign of the medical profession that is now used worldwide.

The excavations in this site begun in the year 1963 but still not finished. It is the only place in Lebanon where visitors can see an ancient temple half of its ruins still hidden under a huge hill.