



Photo: Piotr Chrobot/Unsplash.com



Yulia Grigoryeva/Shutterstock.com



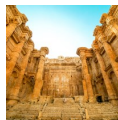
Eva Mont/Shutterstock.com



Henrique Pacini/Shutterstock.com

Beirut is the perfect destination for seasoned travellers: here, East and West intertwine in intricate ways, creating a city so magnetic that few are able to resist its powerful draw. Much has changed over the latter half of the twentieth century - Beirut rising to become glitterati central in the 60s but falling from grace during the bloody Civil War — but the city is alive and kicking, enticing travellers with superb gastronomy, the Middle East's most vibrant nightlife and close proximity to the ancient towns of Byblos and Baalbek.

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One of the best archaeological museums in the Middle East, the National Muse...

THE CITY



Anton_Ivanov/Shutterstock.com

The latter half of the 20th century was extremely tumultuous for Beirut, a city which became the battle ground for a bloody Civil War that claimed thousands of lives. The Green Line separating the Muslim West from Christian East is still clearly identifiable by the lush vegetation sprawling across this once no man's land, and sobering war memorials, such as the decrepit Holiday Inn hotel which only saw one year in operation preceding the start of the Civil War, serve testimony to the horrors experienced by locals a mere three decades ago.

Visitors to Beirut will benefit greatly from taking a guided city tour designed to provide a deeper understanding of historic and political context. Today's Beirut is a much safer and more secure place with a distinctive buzz and joie de vivre, but do remain vigilant if you plan to set out exploring on your own, and make sure the city's volatile southern suburbs do not sneak their way onto your itinerary.

DO & SEE



Yulia Grigoryeva/Shutterstock.com

Beirut makes for a fantastic base to explore the rest of the country once the city's captivating neighbourhoods are over and done with. The best way to explore the city is to set out on foot (the public transportation system will likely appear confusing to outsiders) or by bike, hitting major historic landmarks like the old town's Roman Baths, natural wonders like the Pigeon Rocks just off the Corniche, and the upcoming neighbourhoods of Mar Mikhael and Gemmayzeh along the way.

The Corniche and Pigeon Rocks



Walk (or bike) along the Corniche to witness the leisurely flow of life by the Mediterranean; if you head south towards the Raouche neighbourhood, you will eventually come to one of Beirut's most iconic natural sites: the Pigeon Rocks, limestone formations jutting out of the sea. Come at sundown for shisha with a view.

Photo: diak/Shutterstock.com

Gemmayzeh & Mar Mikhael Neighbourhoods



To discover an edgier, hip side to the city, walk down the thoroughfares of Armenia Street (Mar Mikhael) and Gouraud Street (Gemmayzeh), and soak in Beirut's undeniable cool. There are plenty of attractive brunch spots and swank art galleries around (check out the St Nicholas Stairs in the summer for some al fresco art).

Photo: Yulia Grigoryeva/Shutterstock.com

Sursock Museum & Palace



The Sursock Museum of modern art occupies the villa once inhabited by its founder, Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock, who instructed successors to turn the building into an art museum. The will was well-executed: the Sursock Museum is now among Beirut's most attractive, with free entry and guided tours. Its namesake palace is closed to the public, but certainly worth a look.

Photo: Bertil Videt/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)
Address: Greek Orthodox Archbishopric Street, Ashrafieh, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 202 001
Internet: www.sursock.museum

American University of Beirut



Founded in the 1860s by an American missionary, the lush, sprawling campus of the prestigious American University of Beirut is a pleasure to stroll around. It offers something of a journey into the city's pre-war days. There is an excellent

archaeological museum on-site, along with a number of art galleries, and a great many nonchalant feline residents (cats), who famously inhabit the premises.

Photo: Jeremiah Castelo/Shutterstock.com
Address: Bliss, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 350 000
Internet: www.aub.edu.lb

National Museum of Beirut



One of the best archaeological museums in the Middle East, the National Museum of Beirut provides an excellent overview of the region's history. Highlights include the world's largest display of sarcophagi, a line-up of 31 with naturalistic-looking carved faces, a reconstructed Roman tomb, and a collection of bronze Phoenician figurines uncovered at Byblos. The museum is located on the once volatile Green Line.

Photo: Elie plus/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)
Address: Museum Street, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 426 703
Internet: www.visit-lebanon.org/leisure/touristic-attractions?param1=220

Byblos



The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Byblos is a treasured city, reportedly the first one to be inhabited by Phoenicians, going on to serve host to a sequence of mighty civilisations (from Egyptians to Ottomans) over the following millennia. It's an easy day-trip from Beirut to see early settlements dating back to the B.C., the 12th century Crusader Castle, and the ancient

Phoenician port.

Photo: Yulia Grigoryeva/Shutterstock.com

Château Ksara



The historic winery hidden in the Bekaa Valley east of Beirut makes for a fantastic day trip. Tours of the underground caves are held daily, and on-site dining is available at the adjacent restaurant.

Photo: Raki_Man/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)

Address: Ksara, Lebanon

Phone: +961 8 801 662

Internet: www.chateauksara.com

Temples of Baalbek



The splendid Roman Temple of Baalbek is among Lebanon's most important archaeological monuments, an ancient place of worship with barely any competition among similar structures in the ancient world. Plan your trip around the Baalbeck International Festival for live music and plays held in the town.

Photo: FredChimelli/Shutterstock.com

DINING



Nastya Dubrovina/Shutterstock.com

Eating out in Beirut is a foodie's holy grail: culinary influences mix and mingle in the Levantine cuisine, and so do international restaurants along the city streets. You are equally as free to tuck into a manakish (Levantine "pizza" of sorts) while taking puffs from the ubiquitous shisha as you are to put away a trendy poke bowl. Lebanese cuisine is the definition of comfort food, featuring delicious specialities like kibbeh (made with ground beef or lamb), everyone's favourite hummus, falafel, and kunafeh - for dessert.

Here's a list with the top restaurants in Beirut, Lebanon:

Makan



If Makan's rotating menu of international (most often Asian) specialities and an aesthetically pleasing interior of a historic Levantine villa (with an incredibly atmospheric courtyard) weren't enough, Makan also operates on a rather unusual concept of allowing guests to pay what they please (or "what they think is fair") for the meal. The same goes for Motto, Makan's sister establishment a few blocks down Armenia Street - the primary culinary focus here is on Indian

flavours, with different regions featured every week.

Photo: Timothy Christianto/Shutterstock.com

Address: Patriarch Arida, Beirut

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 12pm-12am, Sun 12-5pm

Phone: +961 70 954 057

More Info: Suggested payment for dinner: 35,000 Lebanese pounds

Onno



Once featured on Anthony Bourdain's glorious "No Reservations" culinary TV-show, Onno has stayed up to par with its scrumptious Armenian specialities, as well as some dishes very unfamiliar to the western palate (fried sheep pancreas, anyone?). It's a true feast, so come hungry.

Photo: HelgaBragina/Shutterstock.com

Address: Ibrahim Abdul Aal, Beirut

Phone: +961 1 740 948

Babel Bay



If you're ready to splurge, few places are better than Babel, a fine dining restaurant located right by the marina. The selection of dishes is abundant, with fresh fish and seafood being a particular highlight. Service is, likewise, impeccable.

Photo: Mike Dexter/Shutterstock.com

Address: Zaitunay Bay, Beirut

Phone: +961 1 370 846

Internet: www.babelrestaurant.com

Tawlet



Considered by gourmands and laymen alike to be one of the best restaurants in the city, Tawlet is a Beirut institution, known for the quality of the food and for its hip and elegant style. It only opens for lunch, offering a traditional sample buffet, made with the freshest organic ingredients.

Photo: Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com

Address: 12 Rue al-Nahr, Mar Mikhael, Beirut

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 1pm-4pm, Sat 12pm-4pm

Phone: +961 1 448 129

Internet: www.tawlet.com

Email: info@tawlet.com

More Info: Chalhoub Bldg

Seza



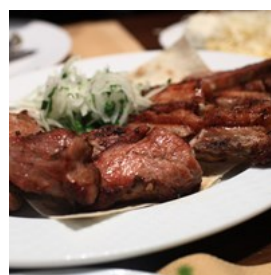
This lovely and quirky local Armenian-Lebanese fusion restaurant has a welcoming and homey feeling to it, with great decor and ambience. On the menu are hearty servings of home-made specialities including kibbeh and kofta (meatballs in cherry sauce), among many others.

Photo: Anatoly Tipliyashin/Shutterstock.com

Address: Rue Patriarch Arida, Mar Mikhael, Beirut

Phone: +961 1 570 711

Mayrig



Another Armenian restaurant, Mayrig stands out for its impeccable decor and ambience. Visitors can dine outdoors in the small garden or stay inside and admire the columns and beautiful

decoration inside while enjoying the very best of Armenian cuisine.

Photo: Chubykin Arkady/Shutterstock.com
Address: 282 Rue Pasteur, Beirut
Opening hours: Daily 12pm-12am
Phone: +961 1 572 121

CAFES



EYJAN/Shutterstock.com

Beirut's celebrated cafe culture means you'll be spoilt for choice when it comes to having a strong cup of Lebanese coffee or a casual meal. Many local cafes also serve shisha (or hookah), which is commonly enjoyed by locals any time of day or night.

Here are some of the best cafes in Beirut:

Ahi Poke



Cashing in on the Hawaiian poke bowl craze that's been steadily taking over the globe over the past few years, Ahi Poke serves the coveted dish smack in the heart of Beirut's hip Mar Mikhael. Bowls can be customised based on one's preferred ingredients.

Photo: Magdanatka/Shutterstock.com
Address: Armenia, Mar Mikhael, Beirut
Phone: +961 3 747 135

El Denye Hek



In the heart of Beirut's busiest districts, El Denye Hek is a popular Lebanese eatery, part cavern part intimate garden. Service is prompt and offerings abundant. Come for a traditional Lebanese breakfast or a mighty feast of dinner or lunch.

Photo: pil76/Shutterstock.com
Address: Armenia, Beirut
Phone: +961 71 476 666

Al Falamanki



When in Raouche, settle in for a feast at Al Falamanki, whose casual ambience and waterside location have earned the place repeat customers in abundance. Few experiences beat sharing a water pipe at sundown, and if you get peckish, there always are plenty of manakish varieties to choose from. Further location in Monot Street operates 24/7.

Photo: Chubykin Arkady/Shutterstock.com
Address: Salaheddine El Ayoubi, Raouche, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 808 011
Internet: www.alfalamanki.com

The Lebanese Bakery



Anyone who's laid eyes on a double egg-topped manoushe from The Lebanese Bakery will simply have to have it - resistance is futile. If that variety doesn't tickle your fancy, one of the menu's many surely will.

Photo: Loredana Bitculescu/Shutterstock.com
Address: Salim Bustros, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 337 807
Internet: www.thelebanesebakery.com

BARS & NIGHTLIFE



AlessandroBiascioli/Shutterstock.com

Living up to its somewhat unexpected title of the Middle East's "Party Capital", Beirut never hesitates to throw a great one. Summer is prime party season when the city's breezy terraces fill up with revellers and poolsides get crowded with sunbeds. Action commonly goes on till dawn, persisting well after the first rays of sunlight. Dress to impress: many upper-scale establishments have a dress code and face control in place.

Here are some of the best bars and nightclubs in Beirut:

B 018

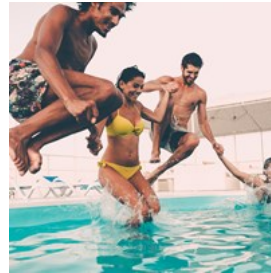


The iconic B 018 started out as a house party during the tumultuous 1980s, but having moved to its current location has grown to make lists of the world's hottest nightlife venues. The action goes on underground, but the retractable roof makes for a fantastic setting directly underneath the night sky. Celebrity musicians and DJs make frequent appearances; mind that no food or

snacks are served and drinks are only offered by the bottle.

Photo: bbernard/Shutterstock.com
Address: Quarantina, Beirut
Phone: +961 3 800 018

The Sporting Club



The legendary Sporting Club has persevered through some of the most tumultuous years in Lebanese history and come out on the other end unscathed - so much so, in fact, that it almost qualifies as a living museum of the Lebanese 1950s. No longer an exclusive hangout for the jet-setting crowd, The Sporting Club now welcomes all.

Photo: g-stockstudio/Shutterstock.com
Address: Ra's Bayrut, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 742 200
Tickets: Entrance fee applies
More Info: Pool and beach facilities available; there is a seafood restaurant on site.

Saint-George Yacht Club & Marina



Damaged severely during the Civil War, the iconic Saint-George no longer functions as a hotel, but still stands as part of the Marina complex frequented by local elites and expats. Pop-up parties are held by the poolside during the summer; there is a bar and restaurant on site.

Photo: Here/Shutterstock.com
Address: Ain Mreisseh, Beirut
Phone: +961 70 652 655
Internet: www.stgeorges-yachtclub.com/pool.php

Ferdinand



Ferdinand is a feisty bar with class, that serves excellent cocktails and a wide selection of locally produced beers. Fun vibes are Ferdinand's main draw, but the house burgers are certainly a very close second.

Photo: DisobeyArt/Shutterstock.com

Address: Mahatma Gandhi, Hamra, Beirut

Phone: +961 1 355 955

Iris



The stylish rooftop Iris is a place few can find fault with: it can both be a relaxed sea-view terrace and a full-on DJ party spot, with live music weekends and a stable clientele of locals that can at times feel a tad too sizeable. Drinks are mixed by skilled bartenders.

Photo: Jacob Lund/Shutterstock.com

Address: Beirut New Waterfront - Seaside Pavilion Rooftop, Beirut

Phone: +961 3 090 936

Internet: www.irisbeirut.com

The Grand Factory



A premier concert venue and party location, The Grand Factory is known to electro music fans as Beirut's best night time hangout, one that hosts artists performing in varying genres. One comes here to dance the night away, and no setting could be better than The Grand Factory's rooftop with a view of the mountains and the sea.

Photo: bbernard/Shutterstock.com

Address: Al Rehban, Beirut

Phone: +961 71 694 469

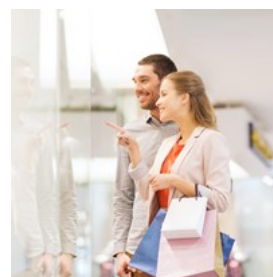
SHOPPING



LEBANESE NOSALGIA/Shutterstock.com

Shopping is a blast in Beirut, although do not expect much in the way of an oriental marketplace: the Beirut Souks are a polished shopping complex with dining and entertainment, and luxury department stores like Aishti see moneyed shoppers from Beirut and outside come through their doors. Local products worth buying include art and handicrafts produced by Lebanese artisans (fabrics, ceramics, metalwork and more).

Beirut Souks



The polished Beirut Souks are far from an Oriental understanding of a boisterous marketplace. Stores that line these tranquil streets include upscale international names like Louis Vuitton, D&G, Armani, and more - along with more affordable high street brands. The Souks are more than just a shopping complex, with entertainment options, street markets and attractive public spaces.

Photo: Syda Productions/Shutterstock.com

Address: Waygand, Beirut

Phone: +961 1 957 000
Internet: www.beirutsouks.com.lb

Souq al Ahad Sunday Market



Weekends see the Souq al Ahad fill up with vendors selling all manner of goods, from books to knick knacks and original antiques, most sold at prices that are simply unbeatable.

Photo: [pixfly/Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com/user/pixfly)
Opening hours: Sat & Sun 7am-7pm

L'Atelier du Miel



Skip the magnets: a nicely packaged jar of Lebanon's very own natural honey makes for a souvenir miles ahead of any trinket. There are a surprising many kinds of honey to choose from, along with other honey-based treats. The Mar Mikhayel location also contains a trendy cafe.

Photo: [Alinute Silzeviciute/Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com/user/Alinute)
Address: Tabaris, Next to BLC Bank, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 565 975
Internet: www.atelierdumiel.com

Orient 499



Sophisticated jewellery, interior decor items, cosmetics, pieces of clothing and more are all carefully selected from across the region (nationally and internationally). The brand prides itself on supporting "sustainable luxury", so do expect prices slightly above average.

Photo: [Ditty_about_summer/Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com/user/Ditty_about_summer)

Address: 499 Omar Daouk, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 369 499
Internet: www.orient499.com

L'Artisan du Liban



Started by a non-profit aiming to support local artists nearly four decades ago, L'Artisan du Liban now boasts two locations (a further one in Clemenceau St.) where artwork, woven rugs, embroidery, home decor items and jewellery all made exclusively by Lebanese craftsmen and women are on sale.

Photo: [Walid Nohra/Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com/user/Walid)
Address: Pasteur, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 564 907
Internet: www.lartisanduliban.com

ABC Mall



If one-stop shopping is more your thing, head to the capital's most popular shopping centre, ABC Mall, and browse through local and international brand-name stores with dining and entertainment conveniently at hand.

Photo: [blurAZ/Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com/user/blurAZ)
Address: Alfred Naccache STR, Mar Mitr 2065, Beirut
Phone: +961 1 212 888
Internet: www.abc.com.lb

TOURIST INFORMATION



diplimedia/Shutterstock.com

Safety



Keep up-to-date with travel safety advice when planning a trip to Beirut and all thorough your stay. While most visits are trouble-free, there is a

risk of terrorism present at all times, especially so in crowded areas and around dates of political significance, such as elections.

Governments of many countries advise against travel to some parts of Lebanon (particularly around the borders with Syria and Israel, and around refugee camps) and the southern suburbs of Beirut, where threat of terrorism is especially high.

Photo: Victor Z/Shutterstock.com

Passport / Visa



Citizens of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates do not require a visa to enter Lebanon and stay for up

to 6 months in a year for the purpose of tourism,

provided they have no Israeli marks or stamps in their passports and a nonrefundable onward ticket; same applies to citizens of Jordan for stays of up to 3 months a year.

Visa on arrival is granted under the above conditions to nationals of the European Union, much of Europe, the USA, Mexico, Canada, China, Australia, and many other countries across Asia and South America. If you do require a visa, an application must be made in advance via a Lebanese embassy or consulate closest to you.

Please visit the General Security web page for up-to-date information.

Photo: TukTuk Design/Shutterstock.com

Internet: www.general-security.gov.lb/en

Best Time to Visit



June through August are some of the hottest months, but these are also the months when Beirut's celebrated party scene is at its most

active, revellers gathering by the poolsides, on rooftops and by the Med.

Spring and autumn have milder temperatures and are better fit for slow-paced city exploration and hikes. December through March are the height of ski season, when winter sports enthusiasts flock to the surrounding slopes.

Photo: VectorA/Shutterstock.com

Airport



The Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport is Lebanon's primary international air hub, and the main point of entry for the majority of visitors.

There is no official public transportation service connecting the airport to the city, so travellers will need to either pre-arrange a private transfer, get a cab or rental car on arrival, or use a ride sharing app such as Uber or Careem (the latter being the by far cheapest option).

Another option is to try and catch one of the mini buses that transport airport workers to and from the city; no official schedule is available for those, but you may get lucky.

Photo: Juan Garces
Internet: www.beirutairport.gov.lb

Public Transport



Although the Beirut public transportation system is rather extensive

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair

Taxi



There are both private and shared taxis available for hire; all fares must be negotiated in advance. With shared taxis, which are cheaper, the driver might pick up a number of passengers along the

route, and you can try and join one already en route by naming your destination to the driver.

Ride sharing apps like Uber and Careem are another convenient way of getting around.

Allotaxi
www.allotaxi.com.lb

Lebanon Taxi
+961 1 353 153

White Taxi
+961 1 513 593
www.whitetaxi.me

Photo: ArrivalGuides

Pharmacy



The American University of Beirut contains one of the best medical facilities in the Middle East. Al Madina Pharmacy, corner of Hamra & Nehme Yafet

Photo: Gemma Garner
Opening hours: 24/7
Phone: +961 1 349 349

Post



Don't count on Liban Post for speedy delivery, but use one of the central locations (downtown Riad El Solh or Hamra) if you must. For more time-sensitive parcels or letters, try a private provider like DHL.

Photo: Andy Fuchs
Internet: www.libanpost.com

Telephone



Dialling code +961 1
(zero followed by 7 digits
locally)

Photo: Jardson Almeida

Electricity



Two- and three-pin plugs
of type A, B, C, D and G
are all in use; 220 V/50
Hz.

Photo: Stirling Tschan

Population

Urban: 433,249
Metro: 2.14 million

Currency

Lebanese pound

Newspapers

Lebanon Daily Star
Al Akhbar

Emergency numbers

Tourist Police:
+961 1 752428
+961 1 752429

Police: 112
Civil Defence: 125
Fire: 175
Red Cross-Lebanon: 140
General Security: 1717

Tourist information

Tourist Information Beirut
550 Central Bank Street, Hamra, Beirut
+961 1 340 940
www.mot.gov.lb