

A pilgrimage to

LEBANON

Led by Canon Daniel Burton

Monday 25th April – Tuesday 3rd May 2022



It is with a great sense of anticipation that I invite you to join me on this pilgrimage to Lebanon. It is now 20 years since I first visited and fell in love with this remarkable land with its vibrant and diverse geography, culture and history.



A small country, Lebanon includes cities and towns in the coastal plain, remote villages in the mountain ranges, and vineyards and farms in the fertile Beqaa Valley. We shall discover the contrasts of city life and rural communities. The population is 95% Arab consisting of a majority Muslim population (60%), both Shia and Sunni, and a substantial ancient Christian minority (40%) including Maronite and Orthodox. There is a small but significant Druze community. Bordered by Syria and Israel, it hosts a substantial refugee population of Palestinians and Syrians.

Lebanon is legendary in the Bible for its forests of cedars, and the ancient port towns of Tyre and Sidon have entered the annals of history. Jesus himself visited the region of Tyre (Mark 7:24). St Maron was active in the 4th Century, establishing a monastic asceticism which later took root in the Qadisha valley creating the Maronite tradition. These features are not simply landmarks of history, but afford living encounters today as we explore Lebanon's diversity. If you are tempted, do not put off making a booking as places are limited.

Canon Daniel Burton

Daniel lived in Ramallah in the Palestinian Territories in the 1980s. He was a trustee of BibleLands (now Embrace the Middle East) from 1993-2013 in which capacity he led numerous pilgrimages to the Middle East including Lebanon.

Today he is a Vicar in Salford, Greater Manchester, and a trustee of ABCD - Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability.

Day 1

Beirut arrival

We depart from London Heathrow on our flight to Beirut. On arrival we transfer to our hotel.

Dinner in restaurant.

Day 2

Beirut - Byblos - Tripoli - Bcharreh

Our initial visit is to Byblos (UNESCO World Heritage Site), location of one of the great trading cities of the early Bronze Age, and arguably one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in the world. Through its trading contacts with the Greek world, Byblos exported the alphabet to the West. The morning includes visits to the citadel and to the Romanesque St John's Church. In the afternoon, we visit the archaeological park, and monuments from the crusader period.

We continue to Tripoli, the second largest city of Lebanon, to visit St Gilles Castle - the Citadel of Raymond de Saint-Gilles, also known as Qala'at Sanjil and Qala'at Tarablus in Arabic; it is a citadel and fort on a hilltop. It takes its name from Raymond de Saint-Gilles, the Count of Toulouse and Crusader commander who was a key player in its enlargement. We shall then visit the old town.

The day concludes with a drive to Bcharreh for dinner and overnight.

Day 3

Qadisha Valley - Cedars - Bcharreh - Qozhaya

Today we visit the Qadisha Valley (UNESCO World Heritage Site), celebrated not only for its beauty, but also its early Christian monastic settlements (from 4th Century) and remote hermitages. We begin with the Cedars of Lebanon Forest (Arz Ar-Rab – Cedars of the Lord) including an opportunity for a short walk. One of the most beautiful places in the country, some of these majestic trees are many hundreds of years old; emblematic of Lebanon, they feature in the national flag. Bcharreh (Bsharri) is the main town of the Qadisha Valley, located at an altitude of 1450 meters above sea level. The road leading to this traditional town offers stunning views over its red-roofed houses and the lush



valley that surrounds it. We visit the Mar Saba Cathedral (Maronite Cathedral built in the late 1960s) and the Gibran Museum, located in a 19th Century monastery, dedicated to the life of the poet and artist Kahlil Gibran, who wrote 'The Prophet'. Continue with a visit to the thriving monastery of St Anthony of Egypt of Qozhaya (Kozhaya), in the upper level of the Valley of Qadisha. It belongs to the Lebanese Maronite Order, and lays claim to being one of the oldest monasteries in the valley.
Return to hotel in Beirut and overnight.

Day 4

Jeita - Harissa - Dog River

Today we visit the spectacular system of caves known as the Jeita Grottoes and described as the 'pearl of nature in Lebanon'. They provide a major source of the Nahr al-Kalb (Dog River). We shall visit the lower cave by mini train, enjoy the boat ride, and then take the cable car to reach the upper cave.

Later, we shall stop at the Dog River to visit the Stelae which encapsulate the whole of Lebanese history from the inscription of Ramesses the Great to Lebanese Independence: "The inscriptions include three Egyptian hieroglyphic stelae from Pharaohs including Ramesses II, six Cuneiform inscriptions from Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings including Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar II, Roman and Greek inscriptions, Arabic inscriptions from the Egyptian Mamluk sultan Barquq and the Druze prince Fakhr-al-Din II, a memorial to Napoleon III's 1860 intervention in Lebanon and a dedication to the 1943 independence of Lebanon from

France. As such, the site has been said to summarise all of Lebanon's history in one place." (Wikipedia).

The day includes a visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa, which belongs to the Maronite Patriarchate. It draws millions of faithful, both Christian and Muslim, from across the world.

Return to hotel in Beirut and overnight.



Harissa

Day 5

Beirut - Beirut Museum - Chtaura

All day in Beirut, a city reborn; the rebuilding programme followed

the Civil War (1975 -1990). The ruined 'Holiday Inn' has become a symbol of the war. Highlights include the beautiful Corniche offering views of the Mediterranean and Mount Lebanon, Martyrs' Square, the Al Omari Mosque and the Orthodox Cathedral. The renovation phase gave a unique opportunity for an archaeological study of the city. The earliest occupation dates to the Palaeolithic period, but the first urban phase belongs to the Middle Bronze Age (c. 3000 BC). We shall visit the remains of the Roman city of Berytus, famous in the third century AD for its law school. The major surviving monuments also date from this period, including a large Roman bath complex and one of the main thoroughfares lined with shops, luxury houses and a laundry.

We visit the National Museum with its excellent collections of Lebanon's cultural heritage.

We shall then travel to the town of Chtaura in the Beqaa Valley.

Dinner at Chtaura hotel.

Day 6

Beqaa Valley - Baalbek - Ksara Winery

Today we visit the fertile Beqaa (Bekka) Valley. We shall drive to the city of Baalbek, with its temple complex which includes two of the largest and grandest Roman temple ruins in a remarkable state of preservation: the Temple of Bacchus and the Temple of Jupiter. It was inscribed in 1984 as a UNESCO World Heritage site. We shall also visit the nearby quarry, which contains two of the largest monoliths ever quarried.

We continue with a visit to the Ksara winery for wine tasting. "Château Ksara is a Lebanese winery situated in the Beqaa Valley on the outskirts of the town of Zahleh. It was founded in 1857 by Jesuit brothers who preached and farmed in the area. The wines were initially made for the brothers' personal consumption but the winery became a commercial concern at the end of the Great War, when France was mandated what is now Lebanon and demand for wine soared. In 1973, after the Pope suggested the Catholic Church divest itself of all its profit-making interests, the winery was sold to a group of Lebanese investors. Château Ksara is currently Lebanon's oldest winery, producing 3 million bottles each year. There are 16 different wines." (Wikipedia)

Dinner at Chtaura hotel.

Day 7

Chtaura - Beiteddine - Deir el Qamar

Check out from hotel in Chtaura and drive to the Chouf Mountains. This region south east of Beirut is wild and isolated in some parts, and covered with small villages and terraced agricultural plots in others. Despite the historical



feuds between Christian Maronites and Druze, the Chouf district is still one of the most religiously diverse regions in Lebanon. Currently the region hosts equal proportions of Druze, Sunni Muslim, and Christian (Maronite and Greek Catholic) populations. The Druze and Sunnis each make up 30% of the population, and the remaining 40% is Christian.

We start our activities at the 18th Century Beiteddine Palace complex. Notable for its elegant mixture of Italian and Arab influenced architecture, it was built by the Emir Bechir. The palace contains important archaeological collections including stunning mosaics.

We continue with a visit to Deir El Qamar, including a walk through the village, enjoying the traditional Lebanese houses and style of architecture. The walk ends at a picturesque square complete with a lovely church.

The visit complete, we travel back to Beirut.

Day 8

Beirut - Sidon - Tyre - Beirut

After breakfast, we travel first to Sidon, the third largest city in Lebanon. It has a long history dating back to the 4th Millennium BC and beyond; in ancient times it was an important Phoenician city and commercial hub trading with Egypt. It grew wealthy from the production of glass and textiles, and held a favoured position with the great King of Persia. In their wars with the Greeks, the Persians relied on Sidon's navy. We shall visit the Temple of Eshmun, god of healing and patron god of Sidon, as well as seeing evidence of the Crusader past with a visit to the Sea Castle. Visit the old souk and the interesting Soap museum, which traces the history of soap production in the region; the

museum building dates from the 13th Century.

We continue to Tyre, the fifth largest city in modern Lebanon. A UNESCO-listed city, its vibrancy as a Phoenician trading port in ancient times is captured by the prophet Ezekiel: "Say to Tyre, that city standing on the edge of the sea, doing business with the nations in innumerable islands..." (Ezekiel 27:3). Tyre's wealth, through trade and manufacture, particularly of purple dye from the murex, was the benchmark from which all others were measured; the influence of the city's colonies spread right across the Mediterranean. We visit the two archaeological parks which show the wealth of Tyre in the Roman period. Return to Beirut for Farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 9

Beirut departure

After breakfast transfer to Beirut airport for our return flight to London Heathrow.

Itinerary subject to change.

£1775 per person

Included in the Price

- Return flights from London Heathrow to Beirut
- Accommodation for 8 nights in good hotels in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities on half board basis
- Transport by deluxe air-conditioned coaches
- Licensed English-speaking tour guide
- Entrance fees to all sites included in the programme
- Gratuities for guide, driver and hotels
- Airport taxes
- ATOL protection

Not Included in the Price

- Lunch and drinks
- Items of a personal nature & extras at hotels
- Single supplement £384
- Travel insurance
- Visa for Lebanon, currently free for British passport holders

How to Book

You can either book online at www.christian-travel.com or by completing the attached booking form and sending it together with your deposit of £200 (full payment if within 10 weeks of departure) to:

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36 Coldharbour Road, Bristol BS6 7NA

Please make cheques payable to
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Tel: 0117 973 1840
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Fitness

People of all ages are welcome, but, whatever your age, we must insist on a reasonable level of fitness. A number of sites involve rough walking.

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Passports, Visas and Vaccinations

Travellers are responsible for ensuring that they have a valid passport for travel to the relevant countries. A visa is required for British Passport holders visiting Lebanon. Details of how to obtain this will be sent with your final invoice. At the time this brochure went to press no vaccinations or inoculations are required for travel but you may wish to consult your own doctor for advice concerning this. If you have any queries regarding the above, we will be happy to help.

Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice please visit www.fco.gov.uk or call 0870 606 0290.

Further Information and Paying The Balance

Further information will be sent to you regarding any action that may be required approximately 12 weeks before departure.

A final invoice will also be sent at this time and the balance for the tour must be paid at least 10 weeks before departure.

Travel Information

Full travel information, including details of meeting points, flight times, accommodation and travel information, will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks before departure. Normally, tickets are not issued but are handed to you at the airport or departure point by our representative who will be there to ensure that you depart without a hitch and to deal with any last minute difficulties.

Travel Insurance

It is compulsory to have travel insurance for your booking. Holiday Extras have a range of policies available at very competitive prices.

You can obtain a quote online by visiting www.christian-travel.com or alternatively you can call 0871 360 2742 and quote ABTA number 93522.

Gratuities

Our normal procedure is to deal with tips on a group basis and these are included in the price. The tour leader will distribute them to the guide, driver and hotels on your behalf. Individual tipping is not recommended unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Room Check In and Check Out Times

The standard international practice is to let rooms from midday to midday. However times do vary. Check-in times are usually between 2pm and 3pm, check-out times between 10am and 12 noon on the day of departure. Therefore, if you check-in immediately after a night flight this would normally count as one night's accommodation. Similarly if your return flight is at night you will normally be required to vacate your room at 12 noon prior to leaving for the airport. Day rooms are subject to availability/cost and should be arranged locally with the accommodation management.

Brochure Printed January 2021

Please note that the cost of the tour may be subject to surcharges - please see the booking conditions. Currency exchange rates used £1 = US\$1.3194 as published in the Financial Times on 31st December 2019

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