

Mountain Trails of Lebanon

Trip Code: LMT

Version: LMT Mountain Trails of Lebanon



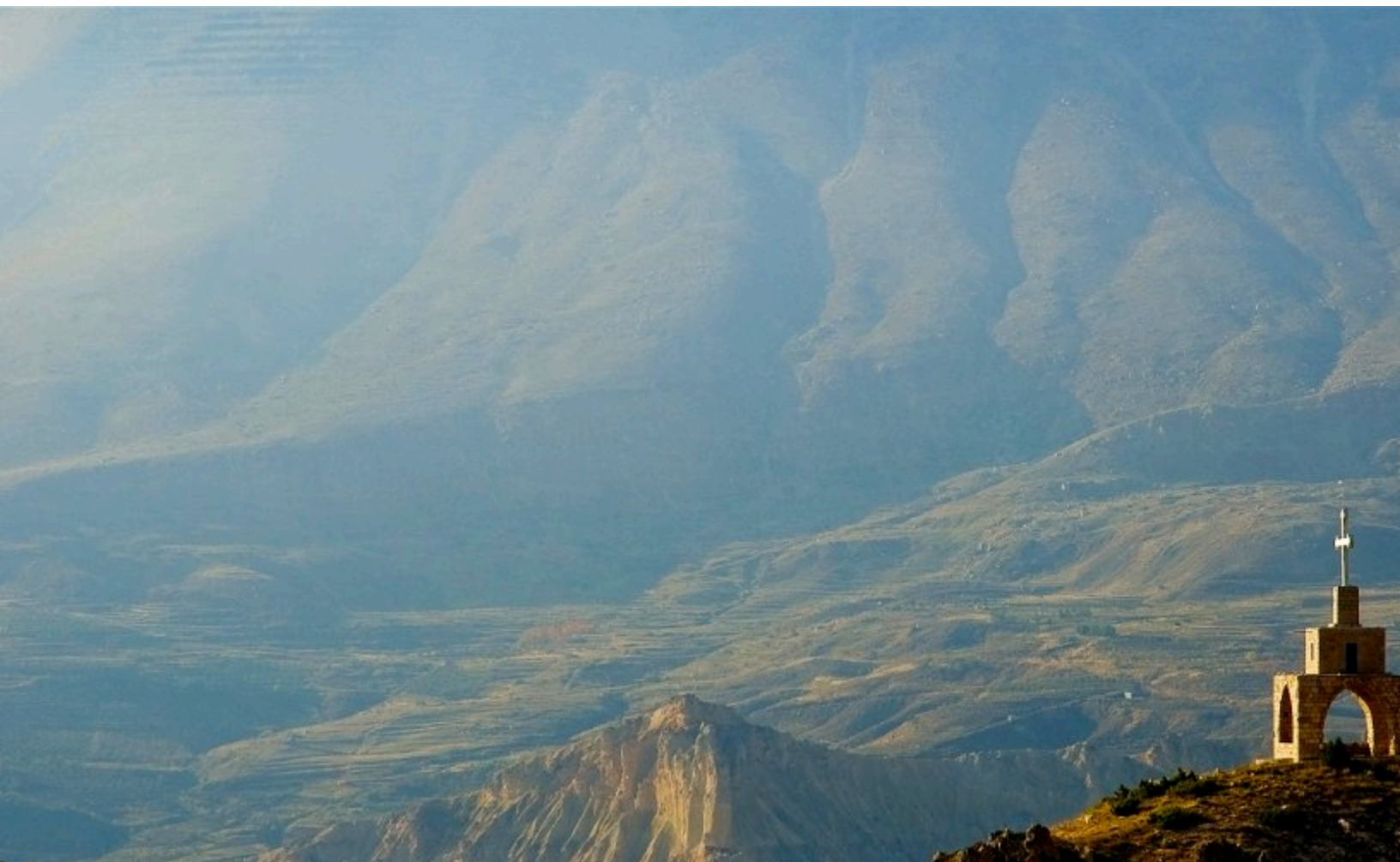
WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk along some of the most beautiful sections of the Lebanon Mountain Trail
- Explore the souk and the Crusader sea castles at Sidon
- Marvel at Lebanon's diverse and dramatic landscape and stately cedar trees
- Sample fine wines at one of Lebanon's vineyards and feast on Levantine cuisine
- Relax in the 9000 year old Mediterranean seaside town of Byblos

AT A GLANCE

- 6 days trekking
- 2 days sightseeing
- Max altitude - 2700 metres
- Join at Beirut

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 8 Breakfasts
- 7 Lunches
- 5 Dinners
- 5 nights Hotel
- 3 nights Guesthouse

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This one week walking holiday follows some of the best sections of the Lebanon Mountain Trail, a 470km path that links an intricate web of ancient, interconnected tracks and footpaths. A feast for the senses, Lebanon's tiny size belies the wealth of adventure and experiences it has to offer. This is a place where East meets West and where modernity and antiquity converge; ancient cities, several thousand years old, alongside vibrant, pulsating metropolises. The majority of its people live along the narrow strip of Mediterranean coast, whilst inland the landscape ranges from vineyards and remnant groves of cedar trees to impressive mountain ranges that run the length of the country. Our route winds its way through a number of national reserves and biospheres that protect an impressive array of flora and fauna including jackals, hyenas and wolves. A deviation is made to hike high on the southern slopes of Qurnat as Sawda (at 3088 metres the highest peak in the Levant) before returning to the trail to discover the early Maronite troglodyte monasteries in the UNESCO-listed Qadisha Valley. Along the way, there is time to explore the Crusader sea castle at Sidon and to immerse in the region's fascinating ancient history. Lebanon is also highly regarded for its delicious food, influenced by Turkish, Arab and Mediterranean cuisine, and there will be ample opportunity to sample the numerous specialities of the Levant and perhaps one of the remarkable wines produced in Lebanon, a result of 5000 years of viticulture.

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is perfect for those who like a combination of enjoyable walking, ancient history and one of the world's finest cuisines. Nestled between the Middle East and the Mediterranean, Lebanon enjoys dry, hot summers, although the cool air of the mountains offers respite from the heat and makes trekking very pleasant. There are 6 days with trekking on this holiday, with an average of 4 to 5 hours and one longer day of around 7 to 8 hours which leads up to the high point of the trip at 2700 metres on the southern slopes of Qurnat as Sawda. There are a couple of easier options to replace this longest walk for anyone who chooses not to do it - including a 1 to 3 hour loop in the Tannourine Cedar Reserve (where that longest walk starts). During the walking days, your main luggage will be transported to your next overnight accommodation, leaving you to carry only a day sack for your personal effects such as a jacket, water and lunch. Accommodation is a mix of comfortable, tourist-class hotels and charming, rustic accommodation including convent run guesthouses. Please note that rooms may be communal at some of these more traditional style

lodgings (3 nights) and you may be sharing in a small, mixed-gender dorm.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Beirut. A single timed transfer from Beirut International Airport is provided.

Meet at the group hotel in Beirut. A single timed transfer from Beirut International Airport to the hotel is provided.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Explore Sidon. Transfer to Jezzine. Trek through the pine forests of Bkassine. Overnight Jezzine.

This morning we drive south (40mins) to the Mediterranean city of Sidon, once one of the most important cities of the Phoenician empire. Ancient texts document the skill of Sidon's glass-producing artisans, upon which the city's wealth and power was built. During the 13th century, the Crusaders constructed a castle on a small island just off the coast to establish their presence. The invading Mamluks destroyed most of the original castle, but later restored it for their own use, adding the narrow causeway that still connects it to the mainland. We will spend some time exploring the castle, visiting Sidon's ancient labyrinth-like souks and its soap museum.

After lunch, we transfer (40mins) up to the mountains and Jezzine where we will stay tonight. Jezzine and the surrounding area is well known for its cascading waterfalls, deep caves, religious sites and ancient ruins. On arrival, we will walk through the pine forests of Bkassine, a side trail of the Lebanon Mountain Trail, before checking into our hotel. A welcome and gentle introduction to trekking in Lebanon.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
360M



Descent
360M



Time
2 - 3 hrs trekking



Distance
8KM

DAY 3

Trek on the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) from Jezzine to El Khreibe, visiting the fortress remains at Niha. Overnight Khreibe.

We start our trek from Jezzine on the LMT, a long distance route stretching 470km along the spine of Lebanon. We walk through beautiful Mediterranean landscapes, stopping to visit the Fortress of Niha. This ancient strategic site, carved into the face of vertical cliffs, was built to monitor the routes between Sidon and the Beqaa Valley. It was here that Fakhreddine, Emir of Lebanon, hid whilst being pursued by the Ottomans for encouraging resistance against Lebanon's imperial rulers in the 17th century. We continue trekking, passing shrines and pilgrimage stops on the way to El Khreibe, located in the transition zone of the Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve, where we settle into our rural guesthouse for the evening.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Guesthouse		Ascent 850M		Descent 915M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 16KM
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DAY 4

Trek on the LMT from El Khreibe to Barouk through the Shouf Biosphere Reserve. Winery visit. Transfer to Baskinta.

On our second full day on the LMT, we trek from El Khreibe into the Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve. This biosphere is the largest in Lebanon, covering 5% of the country and is home to striped hyena, jungle cats, jackals, wild boar and wolves. Keen birders will be spoilt too, with beautiful examples of hoopoes, black kites, bee-eaters, hobby falcons and honey buzzards. We wander through the ancient cedar forests that lend their name to the reserve, some of which are claimed to be thousands of years old. The cedar is the national tree and actually features on the flag of Lebanon.

We meet our vehicles at the end of the day's trek and drive over the Maasser Chouf pass via a panoramic mountain road with views to Quaraoun Lake and Mount Heron. We descend to Kefraya, world famous for its vineyards and enjoy a visit to a winery to taste some of the finest Lebanese wines. Afterwards, we continue our drive to Baskinta. Tonight we will stay in guesthouse style accommodation at the Mar Sassine Convent, run by the Maronite nuns.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Guesthouse		Ascent 850M		Descent 915M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 14KM
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DAY 5

Walk on the Baskinta Literary Trail. Transfer north to Tannourine.

Located at the foot of Mount Sannine, Baskinta is the birthplace of several Lebanese writers, poets including Amine Maalouf, Michael Neaimé and others. So this morning we will hike on the Baskinta Literary Trail, which runs alongside the LMT. The trail winds between terraces of apple, cherry and walnut trees. After lunch, we will head north via winding mountains roads to Tannourine, making a brief stop en route to visit the Chasm of Baatara to view its 3 natural bridges. Overnight at the Monastery of Deir Houb (dedicated to Saint Anthony the Great) in Wata Houb.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Guesthouse		Ascent 460M		Descent 340M		Time 2 - 3 hrs trekking		Distance 9KM
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DAY 6

Trek on the south side of the Qurnat as Sawda mountain range and visit the Cedars of the Lord.

Making a reasonably early start, we have a short transfer from the monastery to the start of our walk at the entrance to the Tannourine Cedar Reserve. Today we will make a full day hike above the Holy Valley, crossing a dramatic landscape with far-reaching views. Starting out at around 1800 metres, we will climb gradually to 2600 metres at a high pass on the mountain road between Al Arz (The Cedars) and Aainata. This is the most challenging walk of the holiday, but the panoramic views will be our reward; the vista can stretch all the way to Cyprus on a clear day. Meeting up with our transport we have a short drive to see the 'Cedars of the Lord' a grove of trees so special that they were added to the UNESCO list of World heritage Sites in 1998. Overnight at nearby Al Arz (1850m) which is a ski resort in winter. There are easier options today for anyone who would rather not complete this long day-hike.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 1200M		Descent 400M		Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking		Distance 19KM
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DAY 7

Trek on the LMT through the Qadisha Valley. Transfer to the seaside town of Byblos and relax.

After a short transfer, we will begin our trek through the stunningly beautiful and verdant Qadisha Valley, which was also awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 1998. This gorge is also known as the Holy Valley, on account of the large number of Christian Maronite communities, who built their monasteries here, sheltered from persecution by the natural walls of the gorge. As we trek, we come across troglodyte monasteries and hermitages secreted away in the valley floor and walls. After our trek we

transfer to ancient Byblos, situated on the coast. This is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, having been first settled in around 8000BC and has been continuously inhabited since 5000BC. We are free to spend the rest of the day relaxing by the sea and may wish to enjoy a well-deserved and refreshing dip in the Med.

Meals: **B L**


	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 900M		Descent 1000M		Time 3 - 4 hrs trekking		Distance 13KM
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DAY 8

Explore the ancient town of Byblos. Transfer to Beirut via the caves of Jeita. Guided tour of downtown Beirut.

In the morning, we visit some of the important historical sites of Byblos, each telling a story of countless events and empires stretching over 9000 years. Awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 1984, excavations have uncovered layer upon layer of evidence, from Neolithic and Egyptian periods through to the Crusaders and Ottomans. Now known for its sandy beaches and seafood restaurants, it is emerging as one of the most sought-after destinations for visitors in the Middle East. After our exploration of Byblos, we set off to Beirut, stopping off at the remarkable limestone caves at Jeita, where we can observe stunning stalactite and stalagmite formations. On our arrival to Beirut, we have the opportunity to explore the restored downtown on foot. This evening would be an ideal opportunity to seek out a nice Lebanese restaurant for a celebratory last meal.

Meals: **B L**

	Accommodation Hotel
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DAY 9

Departure day. A single timed transfer to Beirut International Airport is provided.

The holiday ends after breakfast. A single timed transfer to Beirut International Airport is provided.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- Entrance fees for national reserves
- museums and monuments

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Departure Taxes (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Beirut.

A single transfer from Beirut International Airport to the group hotel is provided in the evening of Day 1.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, there will be a single transfer back to Beirut International Airport.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation

Meal Plan

Included in your holiday price are all breakfasts, 7 lunches and 3 dinners. We recommend you budget for £10-£15 for each lunch and dinner.

Food & Water

Lebanese food consists of a broad range of Levantine dishes that draw their influence from Mediterranean, Arabic and Turkish cuisine. Lebanese cooking offers an abundance of fresh seafood, pulses, grains, vegetables and fruit. Chicken is eaten more than red meat, but you will find lamb dishes along the coast and goat on the menu in the mountains. Dishes include baba ghanoush, a dip made from chargrilled aubergines; falafel and shawarma kebabs. Hummus is a staple dish and is often eaten with pita bread. Baklava is a dessert made from layered filo-pastry filled with nuts and date syrup or honey. Dishes are often served in a mezze style; a vast array of smaller dishes creating an array of enticing flavours. Alongside your dishes you will nearly always be served delicious salads such as tabbouleh and fattoush. A traditional accompaniment to meals in Lebanon is arak, an anise-flavoured spirit and the national drink. Lebanon also has a history of wine-making going back several thousand years, and there are some wine producers creating some fantastic wines such as Chateau Musar and Chateau Ksara.

Accommodation

Accommodation has been specially selected to enrich your experience and to support social and economic enterprises in rural communities. The group will stay in a comfortable, centrally-located hotel in Beirut on the first and last nights of the itinerary. There are also hotel stays in Jezzine, Cedars and Byblos, all providing twin-sharing accommodation. Whilst exploring the more rural and mountainous regions, the group will stay in a local guesthouse on Day 3 and an eco-lodge on Day 4. The accommodation is basic but the welcome will be charming and warm. At both the guesthouse and the eco-lodge it will be necessary to share in small groups, where depending on group make-up, males and females may have to share on these two nights only. The guesthouse has bunkbeds and the eco-lodge has simple rooms with mattresses on the floor. When in the Qadisha Valley, the group stay in a reserve in small timber chalets nestled in the woods.

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost in the hotels only. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

Spending Money

Approximately £150 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) should be allowed for tips, soft drinks, snacks, non-included meals and miscellaneous expenses. You should budget around \$20-30 for each of the non-included dinners.

You can choose to take your money in pounds sterling, dollars or euros, although dollars are more widely accepted, and can often be used in shops and restaurants. There will be the opportunity to change money into local currency at many restaurants and supermarkets, your tour leader will advise the best places to change money en-route. It is better not to use ATMs as they are subject to a fee and very unfavourable exchange rates. Credit cards are useful and it is a good idea to carry on in case of an emergency.

Guidance on Tipping

In Lebanon it is usual to tip staff, including your tour leader and driver, if you are happy with the services provided. We suggest you coordinate these tips as a group and as a rough guide we recommend £20 - £30 per person to be shared between the tour leader and driver . Tipping is widespread in Lebanon and you may also wish to tip for good service from local guides and hotel staff, but restaurant tips are included in the holiday price. The exact amount should be determined by the group and the tour leader will give advice on the appropriate levels.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels or large kit bags are both suitable for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

General Information

Passport & Visas

British citizens can normally apply for a free single entry tourist or family visit visa on arrival. British Overseas Citizens and British Protected Persons will need to get a visa before travelling to Lebanon. Persons of Palestinian origin may also require a visa before travelling, or may be required to carry additional documentation with them when travelling. Entry requirements are subject to change, so you should check with the Lebanese Embassy before you travel.

Passports should not have a Israeli visa or stamp of arrival or departure on any of their pages. Passport holders with an Israeli stamp risk being refused entry to Lebanon at the airport passport control.

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Currency

The unit of currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese Pound.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 3 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

Lebanon enjoys a Mediterranean climate characterised by long, hot, dry summers and short, cool and wet winters. Temperatures range from 5°C in January to 38°C in August. Temperatures can soar further when the Saharan wind known as the Scirocco blows in from the south. The mountains of Lebanon, however, are subjected to much cooler temperatures. During the summer the temperature will hover around an average of 27°C and cool considerably in the evening.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Lebanon (Bradt Travel Guide) by Paul Doyle
- Saffron In The Souks: Vibrant Recipes From The Heart Of Lebanon by John Gregory-Smith
- Pearls On A Branch: Oral Tales by Najla Jraissaty Khoury
- Ottoman Odyssey: Travels Through A Lost Empire by Alev Scott
- Tears of Bacchus: A History of Wine in the Middle East by Michael Karam and Hugh Johnson
- Flavours of Lebanon by Gail Shammass

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

You **SHOULD** bring the following items:

- Hiking boots / Sturdy approach shoes
- Water bottles - 1 litre x 2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Trainers or sandals for sightseeing and evenings
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- At least 1 long sleeve shirt with collar (for sun protection)
- T-shirts

- Warm jacket (eg. Fleece)
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Lunch box (tupperware type container)
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses and sunhat
- Daypack of approx 30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

The following items are optional:

- Shorts
- Small towel
- Trekking poles (highly recommended)
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Swimwear
- Spare laces
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[-> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for joining in Beirut. Single timed transfers to/from Beirut Airport are provided at the start/end of the holiday.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Beirut. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the afternoon, arriving in the evening later that day. Return flights will depart in the early morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving late morning.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

KE is the only UK operator offering this walking itinerary in Lebanon. We have created an exciting nine day itinerary to showcase the best of this enigmatic country, with a perfect blend of mountain walks and cultural immersion. Come and see why we rate Lebanon as one of the most exciting trekking destinations in the Middle East.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 18/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change