

Lebanon

Beirut



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Lebanon
Ministry
of Tourism

Beirut

THE MODERN CAPITAL WITH THE PRESTIGIOUS PAST

Beirut teems with perceptible vitality and energy that are reflected through its position as the Lebanese capital from a geographic standpoint: a headland that drives through the deep blue sea while dominated in the background by the breathtaking mountains.

The cosmopolitan and modern city is the home of more than 1 million people, and constitutes the very heart of the country's economic and cultural life.

Daughter of Venus, Beroë, mother of the laws, Lebanon's star...all these epithets do not suffice on their own to summarize several centuries of rich history.

Legend has it that the city was founded by the god El in homage to his beloved wife, the goddess Berout. In order to protect the city, he offered it to Poseidon, god of the sea, and to the Cabiri, the gods of navigation.





The Semite name of the city (Birut) is derived from the word “Bir”, Arabic for well. The city was given the name after several underground fresh wells were found in it.

The city boasts a glamorous past, and 5000 years ago, it was a prosperous port on the Canaanite-Phoenician coast, and an important commercial center, as well as a crossroad for eastern and western civilizations. In the renowned tablets of Tell- Al-Amarna that go back to the 14th century BC, the city was said to be a well-defended one that was under the ruling of King Ammounira.

In the Roman era, the city became a prosperous colony that was dubbed “Colonia Julia Augusta Felix Berytus” in homage to the daughter of the emperor Augustus, whose husband commander Agrippa decorated the city with urban installations (theaters, courtyards, baths, passageways, meeting halls) and built in a collection of statues related to the great leaders of ancient world.

With Augustus at the helm of the city, the inhabitants enjoyed tax exemption according to the “ins italicum” law, since the city was a Roman colony. *Septimus Severus* chose the city in the 3rd century to be the site of the law school that attracted students from all over the ancient world. The school was the tribune of many prominent jurists such as Gaius, Paulus, Papinianus, Ulpianus, and the praetorian prefect of Illyria Anatoly the Beiruti, and it shone

over the east region. Justinian assigned many professors who taught at the Beirut law school to put forth the legislative code that was the source of western laws for centuries.

The city lived a golden era until the Byzantine epoch. Throughout a 1000 year-span, the city gradually lost its past splendor until the 18th century. Just like other coastal cities, Beirut was occupied several times, and each occupation brought along destruction and bombings separated by intermittent periods of prosperity. This is why, when walking in the city, you feel the ancient presence of Canaanites, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, and French, unravel a warm mixture of cultures, and communicate with a populace that mixes current tendencies with reinvented nostalgias, languages, civilizations, and disturbed rebirths of historical problems.

During World War I, the Turkish governor Azmi Pasha ordered that most of the ancient quarters and neighborhoods be demolished in order to build a new city that combines oriental style and Mediterranean charm using an urban European conception. Built with yellow stones and decked with small balconies, the ancient city's buildings go back in majority to the Ottoman era and the French mandate.

THE CAPITAL OF CULTURE AND ECONOMY

Situated at the crossroad of international exchanges with its universities, hotels, hospitals, and shops, the city is also a center of leisure and R&R.

Beirut is certainly witnessing a boom: it is a cosmopolitan city where economy and culture meet each other, listen to each other, and converse. These



activities are rooted in the past and step into the 3rd millennium at the same time, and tens of thousands of people are welcomed to the city every year to attend sundry events such as fairs, colloquiums, exhibitions, and international summits. You can see people jumping between theaters, designer fashion shows, opening ceremonies, concerts, book fairs, music festivals, cinemas and comics, before pausing to watch the sun as it sets behind the Mediterranean sea with their feet dipped in the water.

During the 2nd half of the 19th century, the city witnessed a sudden commercial surge that amplified its exchanges with the west; it became an administrative, economic, and cultural center, which allowed it to be chosen as the capital of the great Lebanon in 1920 and subsequently that of the independent Lebanese State in 1943.

After World War II, the Lebanese government adopted flexible financial laws that led to an economic boom. Lebanon's location as the crossroad between the East and the West helped it become a financial and banking center as well as a free currency exchange center. Lebanon's activities are mainly focused on banking institutions such as import-export, where Beirut's seaport and airport emerge as 2 centers of transit transport to the Arab countries.

The city became a hotbed for commercial, financial, touristic and artistic activities, and downtown Beirut became once again Lebanon's beating heart and the spot where Lebanese people and foreigners meet, there you can hear countless languages being spoken as people chatter across the tables.

THE CITY THAT NEVER DIES

Beirut, a port city above all, survived many natural catastrophes and managed to rise from the ashes every time it was struck by Mother Nature. The city was victim of many earthquakes, but that of 551 was accompanied by a monstrous tidal wave that destroyed it. The city was also victim of many fires that left it in ruins, and it took it some time to get back on its feet. Subdued and conquered by several



enemies along history, and having survived 15 years of continuous hostilities (1975-1990), Beirut was righteously dubbed “the city that refuses to disappear”, for the countless calamities and hostilities that rained down on Lebanon failed to weaken the Beirutis’ resolve to be reborn. In fact, they intend to see the “Mediterranean’s pearl” rebuilt and rekindling its glorious past.

RECONSTRUCTION

Downtown Beirut’s reconstruction and restoration project was put forth thanks to the efforts of the late Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik El Hariri, owner of Solidere (Lebanese company for the development and reconstruction of Beirut). The project stretches over 180 hectares that include hotels, offices, and residential buildings. More than 500 000 square meters that were regained by the process will provide the necessary space that will allow for the construction of 2 ports for pleasure boats, an



exclusive space for joggers, and a green park. Moreover, the plan that will be implemented throughout a 30-year span (1994-2024) includes modern infrastructure for roads, urban public services, and port activities.

With little chance, a major part of the city's history had been restored before the reconstruction work was done. In fact, the city became since 1994 a home for archaeologists who toiled on uncovering the different eras that the city lived. Many sites were recently

Beirut's chronology

600.000 – 10.000 BC : Paleolithic and Epipaleolithic periods

10.000 – 4500 BC: Neolithic period

4.500 – 3500 BC : Chalcolithic period

3500 BC : Beginning of the Canaanite period

14th century BC: Beirut appeared in history on the Tell al Amarna tablets under the name of Biruta.

1200 BC : Beginning of the Phoenician period.

332 BC : Beirut opens its gates to Alexander the Great.

140 BC : the city was burned down during the Seleucid war between Antiochus VII and Tryphon, and remained in ruins for an entire century.

64 BC: the Romans led by Pompey conquered the Middle East.

312 : Power is passed on from Rome to Byzantium.

551 : Berytus was completely destroyed by a massive earthquake followed by a tidal wave.

560 : a fire finalizes the havoc that was wreaked on the city in 551.

635 : the city was conquered by the Islamic armies that put an end to the Byzantine era and introduced Islam.

1110 : the Crusaders conquered the city.

1187 : Beirut was conquered by Saladin, king of Damascus, after the battle of Hattin.

1197 : Retaking of Beirut by the Crusaders .

1291 : the city was besieged by the Mamlouk' armies.

1516-1919: the Ottoman domination period.

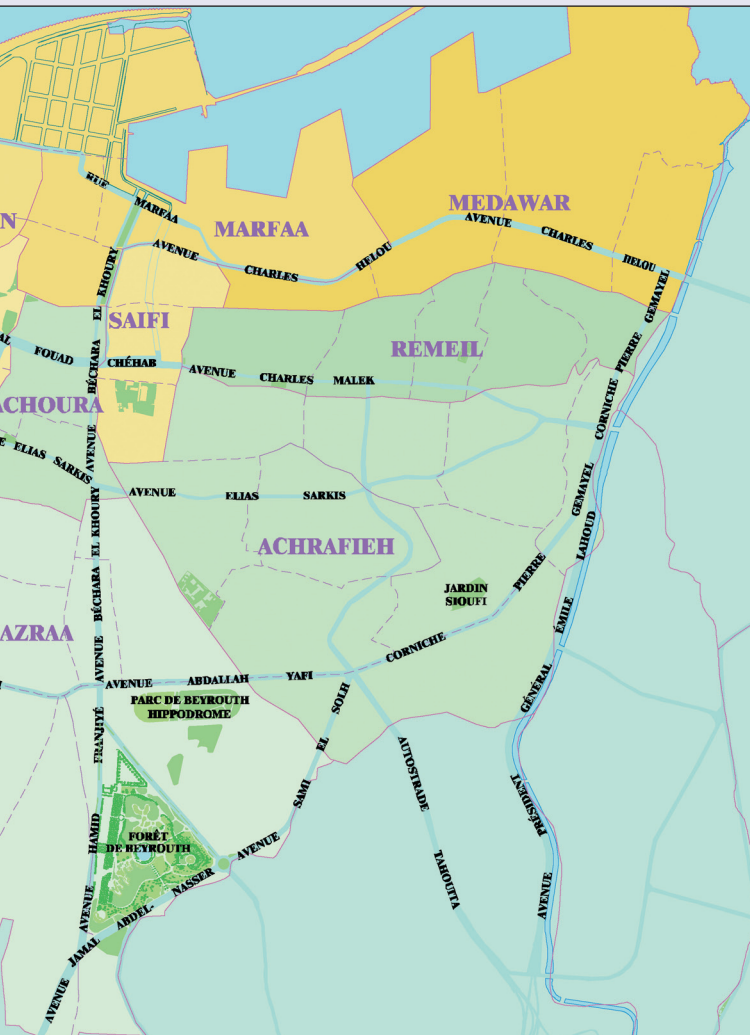
1920: Beirut became the capital of the great Lebanon under the French mandate.

1943: proclamation of Lebanon's independence.

1975-1990: the Lebanese war ravaged downtown Beirut.

1993-2009 : Reconstruction of downtown Beirut.





discovered, and the visitors can stand in awe as they feast their eyes on the marvelous city's treasures. Religious and public neighborhoods and buildings in downtown Beirut were classified and highlighted. The city's main features were preserved and a particular adaptation of different sectors was renovated. The old souks managed to regain their ancient splendor, while the residential buildings were able to shake off the dust, thus giving birth to new residential quarters that are characterized by a new architectural pattern and show the city's modern side.

EXCAVATIONS REVEAL BEIRUT'S HISTORY



Downtown Beirut that was almost completely destroyed by 30 years of continuous battles was hiding a true historical and archaeological treasure that is obvious in the remaining vestiges of Ottoman, Crusader, Abbasside, Omayyad, Byzantine, Roman, Hellenistic, Persian, Phoenician, and Canaanite civilizations. These treasures and archaeological sites were later integrated into public parks.

The General Directorate of Antiquities has been continuously excavating since 2005; Digs are mostly related to urban excavations in many areas of Beirut, namely Ashrafieh, Badawi, Gemmayzeh, Saifi, the surroundings of the National Museum and Justice Palace, in addition to Minat el Hosn, Zkak el Blatt, Mrayjeh among others. The General Directorate is acting in coordination with archaeologists from the Lebanese University, the American University of

Beirut (AUB), Saint Joseph University (USJ), as well as the Holy Spirit University in Kaslik.

Among the important discoveries of Beirut are the main architectural elements of the Roman hippodrome at Wadi abu Jmil, along with private baths and remains of a huge cultic complex at Gemmayzeh which dates back to the Roman era. There, 4 altars were found including 2 with inscriptions that imply dedications, one of them to the Heliopolitan Triad (Jupiter, Venus and Mercury) while the other is offered to the marine goddess Leucothea, daughter of Cadmus. Moreover, several residential rural installations have been uncovered near the religious compound, in addition to a water piping system, and remnants of Roman baths with a big ground mosaic, along with a number of ancient coins.

Excavations also came across expansions of ancient Roman Beirut necropolis. And, for the first time to the south of Beirut, Roman installations were found, in addition to Prehistoric tools dating back to as far as 200 000 years B.C.

Excavations are still lighting upon the remaining past of Beirut since Prehistory to the Middle Ages, including the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Arab eras. Among the most recent discoveries, there are collections of statues, potteries, unique glass objects, amid other remnants such as ceramics furnaces, and bronze workshops.

MUST-SEE NEIGHBORHOODS

Achrafiyeh

Achrafiyeh is located to the east of Beirut, perched on a hill. Before the 30's, it was inhabited by a limited number of Beirut families, then became a growing agglomeration during the sixties and having its



population multiply in numbers during the Lebanese war (1975-1991) as people were moving away from demarcation lines. Nowadays, Achrafiyeh is a residential neighborhood and a prosperous commercial area par excellence, and its location allows it to be an administrative zone that is the banks' and maritime companies' choice, as it neighbors downtown Beirut and the Beirut port. However, this doesn't mean that Achrafiyeh and its Sassine square don't enjoy a bustling nightlife, without forgetting the shops, the commercial centers, the movie theaters, the restaurants, and the nightclubs.

The Monot Street

Originally a residential neighborhood, this street was the location of the demarcation line during the war and was nearly destroyed. New buildings were erected after the war, while the old ones were renovated and turned into pubs and restaurants.



Gemmayzeh



Mostly residential, the neighborhood maintains its architectural and social authenticity while opening up to modernity. The neighborhood evolved almost ten years ago, and nowadays, it sports the St. Nicolas stairway that constitutes a unique public and cultural space where artists and painters exhibit their works. Today, Gemmayzeh is the place to be for the spirited Lebanese youngsters who enjoy its particular ambiance.



Verdun

Situated a little further than Hamra, this neighborhood witnessed considerable economic growth in the late 90's. It is known for being a crossroad for cultures and business, and it is the first choice of several companies and banks, without forgetting its reputation as a neighborhood that sports luxurious apartments where Arab and foreign tourists seek refuge. The neighborhood is also home to several designer shops, prominent Lebanese designers, and hotels.

Hamra

Situated to the west of Beirut, Hamra is a fascinating street that boasts several shops, businesses, hotels, cinemas, theaters, and residential neighborhoods. It offers sundry points of attraction, but most of all, it is the first choice for students who seek some rest and exuberance in Hamra due to its proximity to the American University of Beirut. The neighborhood is home to many designer shops and small businesses and offers a wide array of choices for strollers and tourists with a shopping whim.



MAIN INSTITUTIONS AND SITES

The Ministry of Tourism

Established in 1948 as the General Tourism Commissariat, its main task was promoting Lebanon in the world and keeping an eye on tourist enterprises and professions. In 1966, as the tourism sector in Lebanon evolved, the ministry was established. The General Directorate of Tourist Affairs is part of the ministry and is in charge of the promotion and investments in the tourism sector as well as the control of tourist companies and establishments. The ministry also comprises tourist information centers that are mainly located in archaeological and tourist sites all over the country in addition to a central bureau inside the ministry's headquarters.

The Beirut municipality



The building was erected in the 1920's with a neo-Islamic architectural touch. The upper floors currently house the administrative offices of the Beirut municipality whereas the ground floor accommodates many shops. While the building was being constructed, a treasure of jewels was found in the vestiges of a Byzantine city; those jewels are currently on display at the National Museum.

Beirut international airport (Rafik Hariri's international airport)

Located almost 9 km south of the capital, it is the only operational commercial airport on Lebanese

territory. The airport was inaugurated in 1954 and was one of the most modern airports in the region until the 1975' hostilities, where only the Middle East



Airlines (MEA) and the Trans Mediterranean Airways (TMA) continued to operate. The runways were renovated in 1982 and 1984 but were unfortunately targeted by Israeli air raids. After the guns fell silent, the airport was still functional, but restoration was necessary. As a result, a reconstruction plan was launched in 1994; the plan included the construction of a new terminal and 2 new runways that were built according to international standards.

The Beirut Hippodrome

Inaugurated in 1923 and surrounded by a pine forest that was grown during Prince Fakhreddine II's rule, the Beirut hippodrome



became a spot for social meetings between Beirut and French people. International horse races were organized there since 1944. Unfortunately, the hippodrome wasn't spared during the war and it stopped working for several times especially in 1982 after its total destruction. Afterward, activities took back little by little till 1991 when the hippodrome had its complete start-up.

The Pine residence

Built with an oriental architectural touch, the palace was first used as a military hospital before becoming a casino where noble and rich people used to meet. In 1922, during the French mandate, the palace and the neighboring gardens became the

property of the French consul who chose it to be his residence, and currently, the palace is the residence of the French ambassador in Lebanon.

The “Sanayeh” Garden

The oldest public park in Beirut was fitted out in 1907 by the Turkish governor of the city Khalil Pasha in many sectors. The garden houses millenary trees of all sorts, and its name “Sanayeh” is the Arabic word for art crafts that were taught in the nearby buildings which currently house the Ministry of Interior.

Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure Center – BIEL



The center hosts meetings, books or cars expositions, festivals, theater plays, and concerts. It is a crossroad for music and leisure.

The “Camille Chamoun” Sports City

The city was designed after the Roman coliseum and its construction began in 1954. It was inaugurated by its promoter, H.E president Camille Chamoun in 1957. The city was initially a project that comprises an open stadium that can host 50.000 spectators, an omni sports palace, an olympic swimming pool, another semi-olympic closed swimming pool, and tennis courts. Unfortunately,

the budget that was dedicated to the project allowed for the construction of the open stadium and the omni sports hall. The city became ever since a spot for sport manifestations and activities and witnessed a golden era until it was destroyed by an Israeli air raid in 1982.



The city regained its architectural glory and its status as the beating heart of local and international sporting activity when it hosted the Pan-Arab games in 1998 and the Asian football cup in 2000.

The Golf Club



The golf club is an enchanting scene of green spaces and an 18-hole championship course. This course receives golfers all year long thanks to the moderate climate. Moreover, the club sports tennis courts, a swimming pool,

and a sauna, and friends can get together in the marvelous pavilion that overlooks the course and includes several restaurants and bars.

Raoucheh and the Corniche



The al manara (lighthouse) corniche stretches between Ain-El-Mrayyseh and Ras Beirut. The corniche runs alongside the sea, offering the strollers a relaxation space where you can find

joggers and lovers enjoying their time. The neighborhood is known for its sea resorts and hotels, and many restaurants and cafes sit at the roadside,



offering the visitors scrumptious cuisine and a relaxing panoramic view. The Beirut lighthouse borders the corniche from the south, and the street was named after it. It is worth mentioning that several prehistoric tools were found near the pigeon grotto (Raoucheh), and those tools can be found at the Lebanese Prehistory Museum (USJ).

The name “Raoucheh” is in fact nothing but the Arabic version of the word “rocher”, french for “rock”. These 2 large rocks broke up with the shore and are currently standing 60 meters high as if they were keeping watch over the place.

The hotels’ neighborhood

It is the area that stretches between downtown Beirut and Ain el Mreyseh corniche. It is known for the large number of national and international hotels, such as the St. George Yacht club that was built in 1933 following the most modern architecture back then. The hotel had its share of destruction during the Lebanese conflict and still awaits repairs, namely after the attack that claimed the life of the former Lebanese PM Rafik el Hariri in 2005.

The neighborhood also includes the “intercontinental



Phoenicia” hotel that was built in 1961. The hotel was completely restored after the war and boasts an elegant modernity. It hosted the 2000 Arab summit and the 2001 French-speaking world summit, as well as many local and international conferences and colloquia.

Maison de L'Artisan

This house enjoyed splendid architecture in 1999 after the completion of the restoration work. Currently, it hosts many restaurants that overlook the sea as well as a boutique that sells souvenirs and artisanal items. Its proximity to the hotels' street makes it a hotspot for clients seeking leisure and tranquility at the seaside.

MUSEUMS

The National Museum

The national museum is unique since it only exhibits antiquities that were unraveled on Lebanese territory. Built in the 1930's, the museum is considered one of the richest museums in the Middle East as the antiquities that were exposed inside grew tremendously in numbers with time. The invaluable antiquities tell the story of peoples and civilizations that had conquered Lebanon and lived in. The museum was severely damaged during the Lebanese war (1975-1990), but thorough restoration work was undertaken to restore its past glory as the conservator of the Lebanese heritage. It received visitors between 1995 and 1998 before undergoing a second restoration operation to make it consistent with the demands of modernity. In 1999, the museum was reopened to visitors who can travel in time while walking across its 3 floors packed with antiquities.







The Robert Mouawad Museum



Known earlier as the Henry Pharaon Palace, the museum was entirely restored by the renowned jeweler and artist Robert Mouawad. The museum comprises a wide array of antiquities, jewelry, Chinese porcelain, carpets, and books. The decorative

elements, the mosaics, and the jewels are all artifacts that were made with extreme glamour and finesse, thus combining a future vision with the cultural roots of a glorious past.

Visitors can stand in awe as they lay eyes on formidable artifacts: miniatures, icons, wooden or metal relics, and potteries that go back to the period between the 12th and the 20th century.

The Sursock Museum

The museum is just the villa of Nicolas Sursock, which was built in 1912. In 1952, the latter gave it to the Beirut municipality that turned it into a hotel until 1960. Since 1961, the villa became an art spot where national and international artists, painters, sculptors, and photographers meet to exhibit their masterpieces.



The AUB Archeological Museum

The museum was founded in 1868 and includes a wide array of antiquities and objects that cover the entire ancient history of the region. This collection represents several aspects of civilizations as it displays flint, currencies, mosaics, and prehistoric tools.

The Lebanese Prehistory Museum-USJ

The museum was inaugurated in 2000. It exposes the results of researches conducted by the Jesuit order as well as a collection of tools and references regarding discoveries that are relative to Prehistoric periods in Lebanon. The museum is currently entrusted to the faculty of Letters and Human Sciences at the St. Joseph University. Several pieces that go back to the Prehistoric Age are exhibited along with the region where they were found and their age.

The Discovery Planet

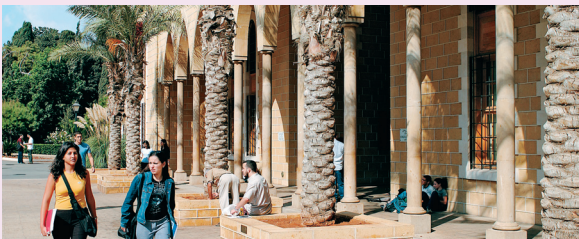
The Discovery Planet is a kids' museum where local, regional, and international expositions are held. The museum seeks to provide interactive meetings with the kids through fairs, experiences and workshops.

The artistic expositions' center at the discovery planet is reserved to Lebanese and Arab artists.

UNIVERSITIES OF BEIRUT

Known as a business crossroad, Beirut is also a cultural and educational capital. In fact, it houses several education and higher education establishments, including 5 major private universities:

The American university of Beirut (AUB)



Situated in Ras Beirut, the university stretches over a forest that is rich in both fauna and flora. It was founded in 1866 as a higher education establishment and grew over the years to include faculties of medical sciences, pharmacy, business, engineering, agriculture, health, and human sciences.

St. Joseph University (USJ)

The St. Joseph University is the first Catholic higher education establishment in Lebanon. It was founded in 1875 by the Jesuit order to disseminate education in the region and train students to become professional cadres. The university is located on the Damascus road, and the campus grew gradually: it currently comprises 4 campuses in Beirut and a modern hospitalization center, the “Hotel Dieu de France” hospital, which was inaugurated in 1923.

The Higher Business School

The school is housed inside a building that goes back to the 19th century and was built by the St. John order as a hospital. The school offers Lebanese students higher education similar to that of France.

Lebanese-American University (LAU)

The current Lebanese-American University became one in 1992 after being considered a higher education school that was named the Beirut University College. After that, the university started growing as higher education became a necessity.

The Arab University of Beirut (BAU)

Located in Beirut, the Arab University of Beirut, a private higher education institution, is a culture center that was founded in 1960 by the “al Birr wal Ihsan” society (the charity and compassion society). The university intends to serve Lebanon and the Arab nation by providing specialized higher education in several academic sectors.

DOWNTOWN BEIRUT

NEIGHBORHOODS

The Saifi village

On the outskirts of downtown Beirut stands a small agglomeration that has a traditional Lebanese architecture, the Saifi residential

neighborhood. The area had its share of destruction during the Lebanese conflict, but akin to downtown Beirut, it had its share of restoration and renovation in order to regain its former glory. New average-sized buildings were erected in order to finalize this residential set that enjoys a Mediterranean architecture, which is characterized by the pastel colorings and the arcade windows.



Wadi Abu Jmil



Built in the mid 1800's, this sector is the old Jewish neighborhood in Lebanon. Located at the foot of the Grand Serail, its buildings were inhabited by refugees

that left them almost in ruins. Currently, the neighborhood is part of SOLIDERE's reconstruction and renovation project.

THE SQUARES

The martyrs' square

This square is also known as the canons' square or the bourj square. It has been Beirut's beating heart for ages. It was erected in the memory of the



Lebanese martyrs who were lynched by the Turks in 1915 and 1916. In the 18th century, the borj al hachich square was dubbed the canons' square after the Russian army set up its heavy artillery there in order to control the city, a situation that only lasted for a few months. The first monument that honors the martyrs was the work of Youssef al Howayek; it represented 2 women: one being Christian and the other being Muslim, and is currently on display at the Sursock museum. In 1960, it was replaced by a masterpiece that was achieved by the Italian sculptor Marino Mazacurati; it represents the martyrs who paid with their lives, holding a torch in their hands and leading the way for future generations. It was restored at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, all the while preserving the 1975-1990 war stigmata. Completely devastated during the war, the square was the first excavation field and an integral part of the postwar reconstruction plan.

Star square or Nejme square

Inspired by its French counterpart, it reflects an architectural fusion that combines French, oriental, and modern influences. The clock tower that was erected in 1933 by Michel El Abed stands in the center of the square. The square is bordered with restaurants and cafes, and is a junction between many several restored souks.



The Riad al Solh square

Known until 1950 as the Sour square (the wall's square) due to its proximity to the ancient city's walls, the square was named after the father of the Lebanese independence H.E Riad al Solh, the first Lebanese Prime Minister in 1943. After the war, it was restored and a statue of Riad al Solh was erected

in there. The square neighbors a road that bears the same name and that was since the 1950's and 1960's a major business pathway comprising several banking, financial, and administrative institutions.



THE GARDENS

The Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden

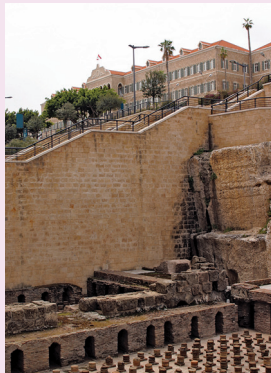
Facing the new United Nations building and the Riad al Solh square, a 6000-square meter garden was set up and dedicated to the author of the internationally renowned book “The Prophet”, Gibran Khalil Gibran. Inside its green plots, the garden comprises an abstract sculpture that represents Gibran’s chest, a fountain surrounded by trees, and six obelisks.

Hadiqat al Samah (the forgiveness garden)

This public park was set up over the Cardo Maximus site and other archaeological vestiges, which allow it to offer visitors green spaces dotted with vestiges and ruins from Beirut’s past. It was later surrounded by the Saydet el Nourieh church, Greek Orthodox St. George church, the Maronite St. George church, Greek Catholic St. Elias church, the Mohammed al Amine mosque and the Mansour Assaf mosque.

The Roman baths garden

This garden that is dotted with waterfalls and terraces embellishes the Roman thermal baths by joining the scents and colors of the Mediterranean Sea. The garden hosts open air festivals and musical shows.



THE CHURCHES

The Greek Orthodox St. George cathedral



The church was first built in 1767 on Crusaders and Byzantine structures neighboring the Roman law school and is considered one of the oldest buildings in the city. Its iconostasis,

fresco, and icons were heavily damaged during the war, and during the restoration process, the icons were renovated by Russian and Greek artists. The cathedral is erected on the ruins of a church that goes back to the Crusades era and built on the ruins of a Byzantine church. Could it be the Anastasia church?

The Greek Catholic St. Elias cathedral

Neighboring the “Place de l’Etoile” square, this church that goes back to the 18th century was built with a Byzantine oriental touch and boasts a magnificent marble iconostasis. The church was restored in 1994 and its restitution was accomplished off in 2003.

The Maronite St. George cathedral

Built between 1888 and 1894 with a neoclassical architecture, this church that is very similar to the Marie Majeure church in Rome was the highest building in Beirut before the war. It was fully restored after the war and is currently the Episcopal seat of Beirut’s Maronite archdiocese.

The Capuchin St. Louis church

Built in 1864 and inaugurated in 1868, the church was supposed to fulfill the Latin community’s needs in Beirut. During the war, the church was



burned and shelled several times, while the restoration works began in 1994 to regain its past splendor.

The Evangelical church

Built in 1869 by the Anglo-American missionaries to fulfill the needs of Beirut's Protestant community, the church was completely destroyed by the shelling in 1976 and rebuilt using the same stones in 1998.

St. Maron church – Gemmayzeh

The roman-style church was built in 1875. It is known for its arcades and quarried stones, and its beauty is reflected in its stained glass windows and its white marble altar which is surmounted by a portrait of St. Maron that was painted by Daoud el Corm.

The Maronite St. Elias church – Minat el Hosn

The original building goes back to 1907. The church was built on the ruins of a small ancient Maronite church. The yellow-stone church was restored in 2002 and its windows were painted by the French artist Jack Guiton.

The Armenian Catholic Sts. Elia and Gregory church

When constructed in 1860, it was the first Armenian Catholic Church. It has been demolished and rebuilt in 1901 in order to be expanded thus to hold a greater number of believers. In 1950, it had the same fate of destruction aiming to build on its location the cathedral of Sts. Elia and Gregory at the time of the Cardinal Agajian.

THE MOSQUES

The Grand al Omari mosque

It is the largest mosque in Beirut, and its name pays homage to the caliph Omar Ibn Al Khattab. It was built on the ruins of an ancient Byzantine church



that was in turn built on the ruins of Roman thermal baths. The crusaders transformed the mosque in 1150 into a cathedral dedicated to St. John, before the Mamlouks

definitely turned it into a mosque in 1291. Thus, it became the grand mosque of the city during the reign of King Al Achraf Khalil.

Its architecture is reminiscent of that used in oriental basilicas with the use of Roman capitals on the external and internal parts of the building.

Zawiyat Ibn al Arraq

Built in 1517 by Mohammed Ibn al Arraq al Dimashqi, the building was originally an Islamic theology school during the Ottoman rule. It was discovered in 1991 in the cleanup activities that were kicked off after the Lebanese conflict.

The Emir Assaf mosque

Also known as the Bab al Saraya mosque due to its proximity to the Emir Assaf's Serail, the mosque lies facing the municipal palace. It was built by the Emir Mansour Assaf (1572-1580) on the ruins of a Byzantine church that was dedicated to the Savior.



The Emir Mounzer Mosque

Also known as al Nafoura due to its original fountain, the mosque was built in 1620 by the Emir Mounzer,

governor of Beirut, on the ruins of an ancient structure from which 8 granit columns remain in the mosque's courtyard.

The al Majidiyyeh Mosque

Originally, the building was an ancient maritime citadel in Beirut, and it was turned into a mosque in the middle of the 19th century by the Sultan Abdul Majid (1839-1861) and named after him. The mosque was destroyed in the 15-year Lebanese conflict but was restored afterwards, and another minaret, higher than the original one, was added to it.

The Abu Baker Mosque (or the dabbagha mosque)

It goes back to the year 1294, to the Mamlouk epoch. It was demolished in 1915 to give way to modern public roads before being rebuilt during the French mandate. The mosque sustained heavy damage during the Lebanese war only to be restored and reopened in 1999.

The Mohammed al Amine Mosque



The mosque was erected near the Martyrs' square with an Ottoman and oriental touch. It was built with yellow stones and has a blue cupola with 4 minarets that stand 65 meters high. The former Lebanese PM Rafik Al Hariri is buried within the mosque's boundaries.

RUINS AND VESTIGES



The glacis

Tourists can see 3 of them: the first was constructed in 2 stages: during the first stage, it was erected above the city's fore walls with irregular stones while the second stage was conducted later in order to block the chicane entrance.

The 3rd glacis is made of sea pebbles and goes back to the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age.

The 5 columns (also known as the 40 martyrs' columns)

Located to the left of the Maronite St. George church, those columns were discovered in 1963 and were part of a colonnade in Beirut during the Roman era.

The Roman exedra

Elements of this semi-circular cultural building were discovered west of the Maronite St. George cathedral in 1963. They were displaced and rebuilt on the outskirts of the Charles Helou Boulevard near the port entrance.

The Roman baths

Uncovered in 1968-1969 behind the banks' street, the thermal baths were covered with ruins during the Lebanese war. The site was cleaned up after the war and became a spot of extensive excavations between 1975 and 1997.



4 columns and their architraves

Those columns are located in the center of the “Place de l’Etoile” square facing the parliament. They were discovered in 1968-1969 while the clock tower also known as “al Abed clock” was being moved.

Columns with molded architraves

These columns were brought from the roman basilica’s peristyle, a part of which was found in the 1940’s between the “Place de l’Etoile” square and the Grand Mosque. They have been set up ever since facing the National Museum on the Damascus road.



The mosaics floor

The mosaics that we see in the middle of the National Museum square originate from a

Byzantine church that was discovered in the 1950's in Khaldeh, south of Beirut, during the construction of the Beirut International Airport.

The Cardo Maximus

Fragments of this cardo were revealed in the churches' neighborhood near the "Place de l'Etoile" square. The 40 martyrs' columns that are located there could have been part of a tetrakionion, a monument that provides a junction between the Cardo Maximus and the Decumanus Maximus at the very spot where the latter changes direction.

The Medieval Wall

It is a Crusaders' and Mamlouks' wall that was discovered in excavations which were carried out north of the Weygand Street along the ancient wall of Maronite patriarch Howayek.

The Crusaders' castle

We can see the remains of this castle that was erected near the port during the crusades. This castle was first demolished in 1860 during the expansion of the old port, and the 1995 excavations unraveled several parts of the castle walls. Those parts have shown that the structures were solid and fortified by Roman columns placed in headers.

The Grand Serail

Built in 1853 by the Ottomans as a military barracks, this humungous building was the headquarters of the French governor during the French mandate and became the headquarters of the Lebanese Prime Minister after independence.

The Antoun Bey Khan

A department store, whose architecture is inspired by that of the Ottoman "Khan" (caravanserail), has been built on the location of the Antoun Bey Khan. The courtyard was transformed into a central atrium with a glass ceiling.

The Ottoman military hospital

Facing the Grand Serail, stands this huge building which was built in 1860 to serve as a military hospital. It housed the Justice palace since the beginning of the French mandate until the 1960's, and today, after its renovation, it became the headquarters of the development and reconstruction council.



The clock tower

Located near the Grand Serail, the tower was built in 1897 and restored in 1994.



Beirut



Lebanon - Ministry of Tourism

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