

LEBANON, KUWAIT, DOHA and JORDAN (optional)

March 29th to April 6 (or April 10)

Tour Leader: Stefano IONESCU

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- Day 1 - Fri, 29 March **Arrive in Beirut**
Arrive in Beirut by individual flights (possible connections through Rome or Istanbul). Transfer to **Radisson Blue Martinez Hotel**, an excellent and well located hotel with swimming pool and spa. For participants who will arrive earlier we will have an optional walk for a first contact with Beirut. Dinner t.b.a. (D)
- Day 2 - Sat, 30 March **Beirut**
8:30 - Meeting during breakfast for an informal presentation;
9:00 - Tour of Beirut by private coach: Roman Baths, mosques, churches, bank street.
10:30 - Guided visit to the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab and Mamluk sections of the [National Museum of Beirut](#). Visit Sursok Palace (to be confirmed).
Free time for a rest or to explore Beirut.

4:30 - Visit Hadi Maktabi Gallery, <http://www.hadimaktabi.com/>
Hadi, who is a world carpet expert will deliver a 30 min lecture on the Royal Persian carpets, loaned to the Louvre. Special show of borrowings from private family collections: Persian carpets including Qashqai, Caucasian rugs, Ottoman textiles ecc.

7:30 - Dinner at the Gallery: authentic Lebanese cuisine and Persian sweets & tea.
Meet local collectors and carpet connoisseurs. (B, D)
- Day 3 - Sun, 31 March **Beirut, Byblos**
9:00 - Depart for Byblos, 50 km highway, along the coast about 1 hr drive;
Visit the 12th cent Crusader Castle and the old Souk, built during the Ottoman rule;
1:00 pm traditional Lebanese lunch with mezze and fish at the old harbour of Byblos, washed down with local wine (Pepe's Fishing Club, t.b.c.); 3:00 pm, return to Beirut.
5:00 pm - Guided tour of Sursok Museum (Oriental collection); (B, L)
- Day 4 - Mon, 1 April **Anjar, Baalbeck** (120 km)
After breakfast depart for Baalbeck via the road to Damascus.
Stop for refreshments at Khan al Maksoud, a typical village of the Bekaa valley;
Visit the 8th century Umayyad site of Anjar: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/293>

Lunch at **Ksara Chateau**, the oldest and the best winery in Lebanon.

Drive to Baalbeck. Watch a magic sunset from the terrace of the hotel.
Overnight at **Palmyra Historical Hotel**, opened since 1874. The hotel's halls are decorated with antique Persian and Turkish rugs on the walls and floors.
Buffet dinner at the hotel restaurant with local specialities. (B, L, D)

• Day 5 - Tue, 2 April **Baalbeck**

Guided visit to **Baalbeck**, an ancient Phoenician city, where a triad of deities was worshipped; known as Heliopolis during the Hellenistic period: Roman ruins, including the fabulous temple of Bacchus, the temples of Jupiter Baal, Venus and Mercury, the gigantic megalith Hajar el Hible. Light lunch at the hotel.

In the afternoon, visit the old Umayyad Mosque and a close village where local handicrafts are manufactured. Sunset drink and Dinner at the hotel. (B, L, D)

• Day 6 - Wed, 3 April* **Lebanon, Kuwait**

After breakfast, drive to [Deir el Qamar](#) 85 km / 2 hrs drive, notable for its 15th cent. Fakhreddine Mosque and for the Palace of Beiteddine (here to the right).

Lunch at Mir Amin heritage hotel.

2 pm - depart for Beirut International Airport 90 km/ 2 hrs drive.

Flight MEA 402, from Beirut to Kuwait: dep. 6:05 pm - arr. 9:20 pm (dinner served during the flight). Visa clearance and transfer to hotel in Kuwait City.

* 3 April marks the Prophet's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and then to heaven.
(B, L)

• Day 7 - Thur, 4 April **Kuwait**

Visit Dar al Athar Cultural Centre in Yarmouk where the **Al Sabah Collection** is stored <http://darmuseum.org.kw/the-collections/>. Meet the curator Mrs Salam (Sue) Kaoukji and view carpets which currently are not on display. Light lunch (t.b.a.).

3:00 pm - **DAI Amricani Center**: visit the exhibition of pre Islamic carpet fragments.

5:00 pm - City tour and stop at **Sadu House**, the museum of the Bedouin crafts.

Return to hotel. Dinner to be decided locally. (B, L)

• Day 8 - Fri, 5 April **Doha**

8:00 - After breakfast, transfer to the airport.

Flight Kuwait Air KU 617 from Kuwait to Doha: dep. 10:45 am - arr 12:10

Visa clearance and transfer to Al Merqab Souk Boutique Hotel. Free lunch.

3:30 pm - Visit the [Museum of Islamic Art Doha](#) open from 1:30 to 7:00 pm;

Evening to the Souk or walk on the Corniche to admire Doha's futuristic sky line.

Farewell dinner to be announced. (B, D)

• Day 9 - Sat, 6 April **Doha**

After breakfast, 3 hrs city tour to admire the modern architecture of Doha.

Transfer at the airport. (B)

End of the tour

For additional info please contact: stefano_ionescu@yahoo.it

VISA & FLIGHTS

Participants should apply for the visas and purchase the flights included in the programme of the tour, preferable on the airline website for better protection:

Wed, April 3 - MEA 402, Beirut to Kuwait: dep. 6:05 pm - arr. 9:20 pm

To be booked on the MEA website: <https://www.mea.com.lb/english/Plan-and-Book/Book-and-Buy>

Price Oct 20: UD\$ 230

Fri, April 5 - Kuwait Air KU 617, Kuwait to Doha: dep. 10:45 am - arr 12:10

To be booked on the Kuwait Air website: <https://www.kuwaitairways.com/en>

Price Oct 20: UD\$ 110

Do not hesitate to ask my assistance for booking the flights!

OPTIONAL TRIP TO JORDAN

(To be quoted according the number of participants and their preferences)

Sat, April 4 - Qatar Airways from Doha to Amman: dep. 4:15 pm - arr. 7:40 pm;

Price Oct 20: UD\$ 455

Overnight at Airport hotel or in Amman (according the participant's preferences).

- Day 10 - Sun 7 April **Madaba, Petra** 300 km / 4.5 hrs
Drive to **Mt Nebo**, approximately 817 meters above sea level, which provides a panoramic view of the Promised Land.
Madaba, known for its 6th-century mosaic map of the Holy Land in the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George.
Drive to Petra in time to watch the sunset. Overnight and dinner in Petra.
(B, D)
- Day 11 - Mon 8 April **Petra**
Guided visit to **Petra**, capital of the Nabatean Kingdom. This is one of the most precious cultural properties of man's cultural heritage (UNESCO world heritage site); For those who are not great walkers we will hire donkeys. (B, D)
- Day 12 - Tue 9 April **Wadi Rum, Aqaba** 170 km / 3 hrs
Drive to Wadi Rum desert, which features dramatic sandstone mountains like the many-domed Jebel Um Ishrin, and natural arches such as Burdah Rock Bridge. Prehistoric inscriptions and carvings line rocky caverns and steep chasms, such as Khazali Canyon. 3 hrs jeep tour through the desert.
Overnight in Aqaba. Farewell dinner. End of the tour. (B, D)
- Day 13 - Wed 10 April
Transfer to the airport. Here are 2 options from Aqaba:
Flight to Istanbul with TA 819: dep. 04:05 am - arr. 7:40 am
Flight to Amman with Royal Jordanian 305: dep. 7:40 am - arr. 8:30 am