



# Mountains & Forests International Mountain Day Summit 2011



## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS :

- **Tree Planting in Tannourine**
- **Snow shoeing through gorgeous forests reserves**
- **Qadisha Valley Hike**
- **Summit on Lebanon's highest Peak, Qornet El Sawada at 3088m on International Mountain Day**
- **Visit to Khalil Gibran Museum**

Expect to be fascinated by the country and its rich culture – on this trip you will discover the real Lebanon - you will not want to leave!

## Day 1: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December Dubai—Beirut

Arrive to Beirut Airport, meet and assist at transfer to our hotel in Bsharre (about 2.5 Hrs drive). Meet out guides and briefing. Lunch at own cost. Afternoon free. Dinner and overnight at the Hotel.



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### **Day 2: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December Bsharre — Cedars reserve Snowshoeing— Bsharre**



Morning Departure from the village of the poet and philosopher Gibran Khalil Gibran (the author of the Prophet), to the cedars reserve, 120 km north east of Beirut, known to the Lebanese as Arz Errab (Cedars of the Lord). Cedars are among the last survivors of the immense forests that lay across Mount Lebanon in ancient times. The most famous Cedars are in Bsharre region where about 375 trees, some between 1200 and 2000 years old, stand on slopes 1950 meters high in the shadow of the 3088 meters peak of Qornet El Sawda (the highest in Lebanon). Snowshoeing for about 3- 4 hrs before returning to hotel

### **Day 3: Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December Bsharre—Tannourine reserve—Bsharre**

Today about half an hour drive will take us to Tannourine reserve, one among the big cedars reserve in Lebanon, Hike inside the reserve for 2/3 hrs Lunch Break and then Tree plantation session. Return to our hotel in Bsharre for dinner & overnight.

### **Day 4: Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December Bsharre—Ehden Reseve—Gibran Museum—Bsharre**

Breakfast at the Hotel then head out to the great outdoors. Today our destination is Ehden village next to Bsharre where a Nature Reserve is located containing a particularly diverse and beautiful remnant forest of the Cedars and pampered by mist and relatively high precipitation, a multitude of rare and endemic plants that flourish in it. Stands of cedars are bordered by a mixed forest of juniper, fir, and the country's last protected community of wild apple trees. During our snowshoeing through the forest, we might get lucky and spot an endangered Eastern imperial eagle or Bonelli's eagle, a Gray wolf, or a wildcat. Some plant species are recognized as medicinal plants. Ehden reserve is the only protected area in Lebanon containing the last remaining forest community of the endemic wild apple of



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Lebanon. Back to Bsharre. Visit to Khalil Gibran Museum ( see additional information at the end of the trips notes ) Dinner & overnight at the Hotel.

### **Day 5 Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December – Bsharre—Qadisha Valley Hike ( 5-6 hrs) —Bsharre**

Breakfast at the Hotel then transfer to The impressive Qadisha Valley, classified as an UN World Heritage Site, in Lebanon’s northern region is one of Lebanon’s best kept secrets. Inhabited since the 3rd millennium BC to the Roman period, the valley is scattered with cave chapels, hermitages and monasteries cut from rock. Since the Early Middle Ages generations of monks, and hermits found asylum here. At the bottom of this wild gorge runs the Qadisha River whose source is at the foot of the Cedars. Several walking trails lead through the valley along wild bushes, fir and pine trees to shady spots to enjoy a break. Back to hotel Bsharre for dinner and overnight. A good nights sleep before our summit day !



### **Day 6: Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December, International Mountain Day – Bsharre—Summit Al Sawda—Beirut**



Breakfast and an early start!

The name Qornat El Sawda might sound scary as it translates into the Black Peak, but it is pure Lebanese beauty. Many consider the location as a challenge to reach since it takes quite



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some time snowshoeing to reach the location. “Qornet El Sawda”, is the highest peak in Lebanon at 3088 m above sea level. Feel the energy of the mountain as we head to the summit. After a breathtaking trek and summit it’s time to say goodbye to the mountain and the forests and head in to the cosmopolitan city of Beirut .

Drive back to Beirut, dinner and overnight – time to celebrate our adventure !

### **Day 7 : Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December– Beirut – Dubai**

Breakfast at the hotel . Day at leisure to explore, chill out, shop- the choice is yours! Transfer to Beirut Airport for flight back. Many stories and memories to share !

The Lebanese are truly a unique blend of the Eastern and Western cultures. Expect to be fascinated by the country and its rich culture and the hospitality of the people will make you want to return to Lebanon again and again!

Investment : USD 1400 ( or Dhs / HK\$ equivalent) Single Supplement USD 330  
 Guaranteed to run with 12 clients . Max Clients 16

Price Includes
Tour Leader – Julie Lewis
Transport and transfers as per program in air conditioned minibus
6 nights Accommodation in 4* Hotel on twin share room basis
Meals on half board: 6 breakfasts & 6 dinners
English speaking guide and ski instructor



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Site entry fees for : Cedars of Bcharre and Tannourine, Gibran museum
Snowshoes & trek/ski pole rental for three days
Tree Plantation in Tannourine Forest
Entry fees to Gibran Museum, Tannourine Reserve and Ehden Reserve
Local taxes & VAT 10%

<b>Price Does Not Include</b>
Entry visa fee to Lebanon obtained upon arrival at USD 18 p.p
Flights to and from Beirut
Personal expenses and extras
Pre stay / post stay transfers and accommodation and airport transfers
Tips for hotel, restaurants, tour leader, local guide, driver, etc.
Travel insurance
Lunches

It is not normally possible (and it is certainly not necessary) to purchase Lebanese currency outside the country. Your travel money should be carried in the form of cash or traveler's cheques in US Dollars that can then be changed. Credit cards can be used to purchase goods and it is a good idea to carry one in case of emergency.

**GROUP LEADER AND SUPPORT STAFF:**

Julie will accompany the group throughout the trip along with a local guide plus a ski/ snow shoe instructor on days 2-6.

**EQUIPMENT:**

A more detailed packing checklist will be provided with your confirmation of booking.



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**ACCOMMODATION:** 4\* Hotels (Le Cedrus or similar in Bsharre, Palm Beach or similar in Beirut).

## LEBANON

*The position at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe has facts to make it, bastion of civilization.*

*A small country located on the East coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Southwest Asia. Lebanon (Loubnan in Arabic) was known in the 1960s as the Switzerland of the Middle East. Today, Lebanon has made progress to rebuild itself and regain its sovereignty since the end of the civil war devastating 16-year-old in 1991. With an area of 10,452 square km only and a population of 4.5 million, Lebanon is able to attract the attention of the world thanks to its rich history, its famous touristic sites, the large diversified cuisine as well as the great hospitality of the Lebanese!*

### Lebanon in brief

**Borders:** on the Mediterranean Sea, between Israel and Syria

**Government:** Lebanese Republic

**Total Size:** 10,400 sq km

**Population:** 3,971,941 (July 2008 est.)

**Capital:** Beirut

**Languages:** Arabic (official), French, English, Armenian

**Time:** G.M.T. + 2 hours / April – October: G.M.T. + 3 hours

**Climate:** Lebanon Mountains experience heavy winter snows  
Heavy winter clothing is advisable from November to March.

**Terrain:** narrow coastal plain; no desert; the Bekaa Valley separates Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains

**Electricity:** 220 volts AC, 50Hz. European-style two-pin plugs.

**Visa and passport requirements:** Group visa can be pre-arranged by our ground handlers TLB. Individual visa to be applied for in home country Passport valid for at least six months

**National Holidays:** There are several public holidays observed every year, as well as a balance of Christian and Muslim celebrations. The holidays of the Islamic calendar are observed depending on the lunar calendar.

**Cultural considerations:** In rural regions and some areas of Beirut conservative wear is advisable. Otherwise dress code liberal

**Currency** The local currency is the Lebanese pound (LBP)

**Credit Cards:** Credit cards are accepted most places

**Telecommunication:** Mobiles can be used in most Lebanon. Internet widely is available.

**Health and medical:** In Lebanon always drink bottled water. Health insurance is recommended as well as the appropriate vaccinations. Excellent medical facilities exist in Beirut.



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**FITNESS LEVEL:** A good level of fitness is required for this trip, being comfortable and experienced in the snow is essential. There will be daily briefings and you will be shown how to fix and use your snow shoes. Summit day on the 11<sup>th</sup> December will be demanding so get plenty of training in prior to the trip (strength and cardio) for advice on training please drop me a note/ let your personal trainer/ gym staff know what you are training for!

**CLIMATE:** Once we are on trek and we start to gain height, we can expect the daytime temperatures at 2500-3000 metres being around 20 to 25°C. Weather in mountainous areas is notoriously difficult to predict, white out's or even short-lived storms can occur at any time of the year. It is therefore necessary to come prepared for extremes of climate.

**VISA REQUIREMENTS:** No visa is required for travel to Lebanon by the holders of the following passports: European Union, United Kingdom, United States or Australia and New Zealand. Please note that your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of entry to Lebanon and that this entitles you to stay in the country for up to three months. You will need to be carrying a passport photocopy and one photo at the time of travel. A group visa can be arranged by our ground handlers in Lebanon subject to passport copies and details being received well in advance of our arrival.

**ALTITUDE:** With the summit being 3088m you are unlikely to experience any altitude related problems on this trip. When trekking at even modest altitudes it is important to drink plenty of fluids during the day and take high energy/ fat snacks to fuel the body.

**FIRST AID:** A medical kit will be carried by Julie and our guides. We also suggest you bring your own small kit along with any of your prescribed medications.



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Additional Information:  
**Gibran Museum**



One of Bsharre's most famous sons is Gibran Khalil Gibran. Skilful artist and author of 16 books, written in both Arabic and English, he is best known for *The Prophet*, which has been translated into more than 30 languages. His artistic achievements have been instrumental in attracting tourists to Lebanon in general and Bcharreh in particular.

Gibran was born on 6 January 1883 in Bcharreh. He emigrated to America with his family in 1895, but returned to Lebanon in 1898 to continue his study of the Arabic language at Al Hekme school in Beirut. During the summers, he would visit his father in Bcharreh. In 1902, he again travelled to the United States (to Boston), where tuberculosis claimed his sister Sultana and brother Boutros, and cancer took his mother. His travels then took him to Paris in 1908, where, with support from Mary Haskell, he studied art and met prominent artists like Rodin. The year 1910 saw him in London and learning about a whole new world of art and literature. In 1911, after having returned to Boston in late 1910, he moved to New York City. He died there on 10 April 1931.

On 22 August 1931, his body was repatriated to Bcharreh. There it remains, in the forest of the monastery of Saint Sarkis abutting the museum built in his name. This monument to his achievements was made possible by the youth of Bcharreh, Mary Haskell and the Lebanese community of Boston, all eager to fulfil the terms of Gibran's will by bringing his paintings and drawings to his native town and placing them on permanent display.



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## International Mountain Day

International Mountain Day is an opportunity to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build partnerships that will bring positive change to the world's mountains and highlands.

The UN General Assembly designated 11 December from 2003 onwards as International Mountain Day. This decision results from the success of the UN International Year of the Mountains in 2002 which increased global awareness of the importance of mountains, stimulated the establishment of national committees in 78 countries and strengthened alliances through promoting the creation of the Mountain Partnership. The theme for 2011 is Mountains and Forests – hence our trip to Lebanon home to many gorgeous forests and Qornet El Sawda.

Any questions ?

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