

BEIRUT

Gate way to the East

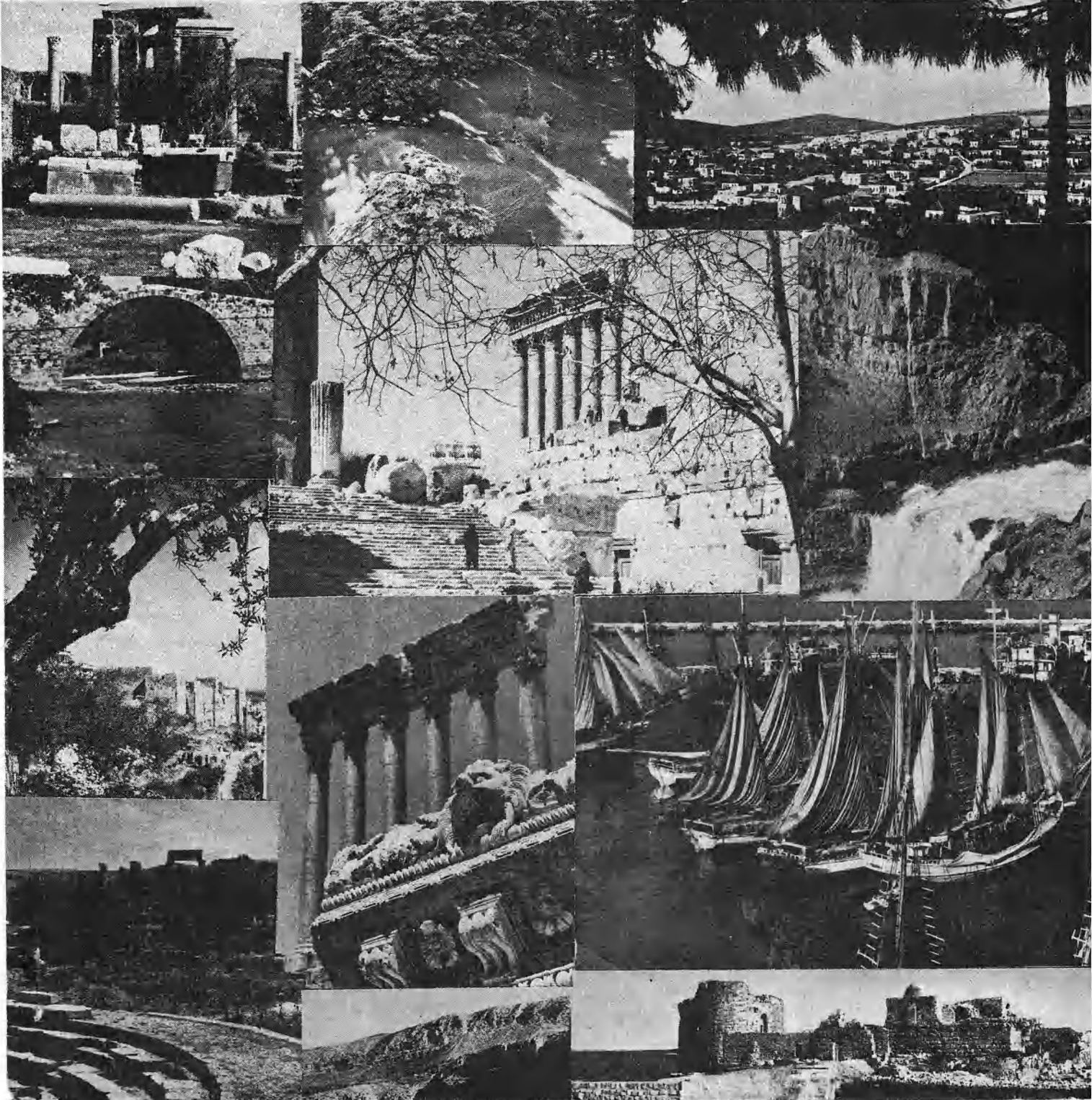


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* * * BEIRUT, LEBANON * * *

GENERAL INFORMATION: Beirut, the capital of the Republic of Lebanon, has a population of about 500,000. Often referred to as the Gateway to Asia, it is a commercial, industrial and financial center. Beirut not only handles most of the trade of Lebanon, but neighboring countries, Syria and Jordan and to a lesser extent, Iraq, are greatly dependent on its services as a terminal for transshipment and overland transfer. Perhaps the major factor influencing the country's development is its unique position as port and warehouse for a large part of the Near East. Lebanon is a country, traditionally, of merchants and traders - of middlemen rather than entrepreneurs and the reactions and attitudes of its peoples are strongly conditioned by their century old preeminence in these skills.

Beirut is a cosmopolitan city in a country which has been influenced for several thousand years by its location, the maritime importance it therefore assumed, and by the ebb and flow of races across and around the Mediterranean. In addition to the native Arabic, French is widely spoken as a result of long years of French influence, which dates back to the Crusades and was reinforced by the French mandate over Syria and Lebanon between the two world wars. Since 1945, when Lebanon became an independent republic, English has become popular. In educated circles, the influence of the American University, founded by Protestant missionaries in 1866, is strong. The Lebanese are a mixture of many ancient strains but are thought of as predominantly Arab. The country contains many Armenians and sizeable colonies of other nationalities notably French and Syrian. A particularly significant fact is that while most of the Near East is Moslem, a large percentage of Lebanon's population is Christian.

The present appearance of Beirut reflects its rapid growth during the past twenty years. Large office buildings and new shops lie next to colorful haphazard bazaars, and in the residential quarters, boldly modern facades of new apartment buildings rise among shabby dwellings dating from former years. Most streets are narrow and ill-suited for the hundreds of new American automobiles which vie with donkeys, goats, bicycles, carts, and pedestrians for right-of-way. Once outside Beirut, the typical settlement is the small village, unchanged over the years, whose bright tile roofs sprout wild flowers in every corner of the country. As prosperous and modern as Beirut has become, there are few of its citizens who do not identify themselves by mentioning the family village.

HISTORY: Beirut was an ancient Phoenician settlement. It first appears in history in a list of Thotmos III, in the early 15th Century B.C.. It was mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna tablets (1400 B.C.). Much later it fell to the Romans. Marcus Agrippa, a lieutenant of Augustus, captured the city in 15 B.C.



He made it a military colony with the title Colonia Julia August Felix Berutus. Herod the Great showed it favor by erecting many fine buildings and in Beirut was held the dramatic assembly before which Herod in person, arraigned his two sons and secured a majority sentence of death. Agrippa I and his son, Agrippa II added to its attractions a theatre and an amphitheatre. It was here that Titus celebrated the fall of Jerusalem and his fathers birthday with gladiatorial contests. In Roman times Beirut was famous as a home of learning, and was sought by many desirous of Greek learning.



After an earthquake, Beirut was never restored to its former splendor and in 600 A.D. the great public buildings lay strewn where they had fallen. In 635 it passed under blighting influence of Arab occupation of Syria. Baldwin I captured the city for the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1110. It became an object of struggle between the Crusaders and the Saracens until it was finally captured by the Mohammedans, thus marking the end of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Thereafter it was dominated by the Druse Emirs, although it technically belonged to the Ottoman Empire. The most famous of the Emirs was Fakhr-ed-Din, who did much to foster and develop its trade. The Turks forced their way into the city in 1763, and in 1789 the city was finally freed from the Druse interference.

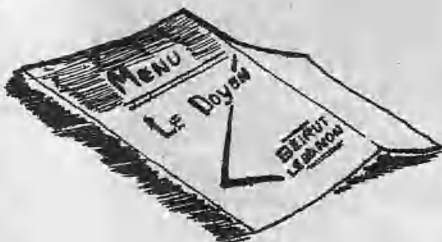
Beirut was occupied by the forces of Mehemet Ali of Egypt in 1830. He made the city his quarantine station for the Syrian coast, and all ships were obligated to come to its port, to the benefit of its trade. In 1840, the British and French bombarded and captured Beirut when they intervened in Syria to quell the revolt of Mehemet Ali against the Sultan. The French captured it in 1918 in a campaign against Turkey, and held it as a mandate until 1945.

HOTELS: There are many hotels in Beirut, listed below in order of desirability. Most hotels operate on the American plan, although arrangements can be made in advance for the plan desired. Rates vary from \$3.50 to \$10.00 for a single room, depending on the hotel and arrangements.

Bristol	Palm Beach
St. George	Regent
Normandie	Claridge
Eden Roc	Select

RESTAURANTS: There are well over a dozen restaurants in Beirut which range in degree from acceptable to excellent. Prices by U.S. standards vary from moderate for table d'hote to very expensive for a la carte meals.

Most of the restaurants serve a French-style cuisine. Some of the recommended establishments are listed below:



St. George Restaurant - very expensive
 Bristol Hotel Restaurant - very expensive
 Normandie Restaurant - moderate in price
 Le Grillion - very expensive
 Le Doyen (night club) - moderate in price
 Gardenia - two miles out; expensive
 Lucullus - moderate in price
 Angelo - less expensive than most

The following are some of the more exotic dishes which may appeal to you:

FARROUJ MISHWI..Chicken broiled over charcoal and eaten with a garlic sauce.

KAFTA MISHWIEH..Minced lamb mixed with finely chopped onion and parsley, broiled on a skewer over charcoal.

SHAWARMA & HUMMOS..Slices of highly seasoned lamb cooked on a slowly revolving pole beside a charcoal fire and eaten with chick peas ground to a paste and seasoned with garlic and sesame oil.

MAKSHI...Vegetables such as small marrows, cabbage, grape leaves and peppers stuffed with chopped meat rice and pine nuts.

KIBBEH NAYEH..Fresh raw lamb pounded with Bourghol (coarsely ground wheat) and seasoned with onion, pepper and salt.

Some of the more popular drinks are as follows:



Wines: Local wines are excellent and compare favorable with the French, German and other imported vintages. They are not expensive.

Arabic Coffee: Arabic coffee is the national coffee drink and will even be offered to you by shopkeepers. It is served in small cups. You may buy American or Swiss powdered coffee in practically all the cities you visit.

Drinks: Arak is the Lebanese national drink and is usually served with a wide variety of hors d'oeuvres called "mezzeh" together with Tabouli (a finely chopped salad mixed with Bourghol). Arak is made of grape alcohol and anis and looks exactly like water, but when water is added, as it should be, it turns a milky white.

Beer: The local beer is very good with a taste of its own. The two breweries in Lebanon are Almaxa and Laziza.

CLUBS AND BARS: The following clubs extend privileges to U.S. Naval personnel in Beirut:

St. George Anglo-American Club (Officers) - on the waterfront, south of the Normandie Hotel.

Lebanese Army Recreation Center (Enlisted Men) - Army Headquarters (near the National Museum)

Beirut Sporting Club (Officers and Enlisted Men) - Enroute to the airport (3.00 LP taxi fare). Nine hole golf course.

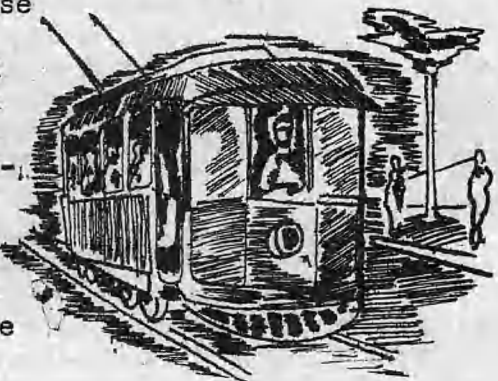


The American Community in Beirut usually sponsors a canteen during large fleet visits. This canteen is located in the Lebanese American Club which can be found on Rue de Sour near the waterfront, and approximately two blocks south of the Hotel Normandie. It is the aim of the canteen to provide dances nightly for your entertainment; refreshments can be purchased, and sandwiches will be supplied free of charge. In addition you will find fellow Americans there who will be glad to assist you with any information that you may desire regarding local conditions, as well as a writing room where you may wish to pen a letter home. It is hoped that an exchange desk will be in operation daily where you may exchange your currency, and be assured that you are getting the proper exchange rate.

TRANSPORTATION: Local transportation consists of taxis, buses and street cars. Streetcars are generally free to all personnel in uniform.

There is a type of transportation called a "service" which is a type of "jitney". It operates along many of the through streets and picks and deposits passengers anywhere along its route for a fare of 25 piastres each. A "service" can be recognized by its red license plate and the question "serveece?"

Regular taxi fares are from 1.00 pound to 1.50 pounds per group during the day and from 1.50 pounds to 3.00 pounds after 2200. It is best to settle on the fare BEFORE getting in the taxi for either long or short trips. Taxis are also identified by their red license plates. Taxis with meters installed can be called day or night by telephoning 21717. It is recommended that these taxis be used when possible.



SHOPPING: As everywhere in the world, "caveat emptor" (let the buyer beware) is the motto for shoppers in Beirut. Bargaining is the general rule. Often in fixed price shops, the owner will "make a deal" on a substantial sale. Since bargaining is an accepted part of the social life of the Orient, it is done politely and with good nature on both sides, and if an agreement is not reached, the parting is courteous and friendly.



As the world over, some antiques and archeological specimens may be counterfeits. There are however, several reliable, first class, oriental goods and antique shops, carrying dependable items at fair prices. Inquiry of members of the permanent colony is the best source of information of the shops of this kind.

The following are a few samples of items which may be purchased in Beirut:

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|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| antique coins | brocades | damask (misc. fabrics) |
| icons | carved wood | copperware |
| archeological specimens | druse chests | silks |
| jezzine cutlery | abayi cloaks | oriental rugs, carpets |

CHURCHES: There are several Protestant churches where services are conducted in English: All Saints (Anglican), Avenue des Francais, on the sea front, south of the port area, and the "Community" church of the American Community. Mass is celebrated three times on Sundays at the chapel of the Italian school; sermons are given in English.

SIGHTSEEING: Lebanon has many good tourist sights outside of Beirut. Because the country is small-120 miles long and only 30 miles at its widest point-it is easy to reach them. Among these sights are:



Baalbek: This little city, 56 miles from Beirut, is famous for its ruins of grand temples built when Rome was in its glory. Baalbek is far older than the Roman period. Lebanese traditions claim that Adam and Noah died near Baalbek, and that Cain and Abraham lived there.

Among the most impressive ruins are the temples of Jupiter and Bacchus and the great court of the altars, 380 feet long and 350 feet wide. The temple of Jupiter is 290 feet by 162 feet. Still in remarkable condition are two 400 feet long subterranean passages through which animals were brought to the temples for sacrificing.

Cedars of Lebanon: From this majestic grove of trees, the ancient pharaohs of Egypt obtained wood for boats and coffins, and Solomon got timber for his temple and palace. Today, the grove consists of about 400 trees, said to be 1,200 to 2,000 years old. The Cedars has become a popular ski resort area.

Byblos: One of the world's oldest cities, known to have been in existence more than 5,000 years ago. Ruins from various civilizations can be seen. It is only about 28 miles from Beirut. Many tourists combine it with a visit to the nearby Dog river outdoor museum.

There on a cliff are carved historical records of 19 conquerors who have passed through Lebanon, beginning with Rameses II about 3,200 years ago. In the same general direction is Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city, only 50 miles from Beirut.

Sidon and Tyre: Old cities of the Phoenicians, known for their ancient ruins. Sidon is 30 miles and Tyre 55 miles from Beirut.

Because Beirut has been more concerned with progress than with antiquity. The city itself offers few historical monuments. No traces remain of the original Phoenician city, only trophies in the National Museum, and the state-ly columns, found in recent excavations at the center of the city. The sole monument of the medieval period is the Great Mosque near Place de Martyrs.

Within Beirut, one of the most interesting places to visit is the American University, along with the French University of St. Joseph. The American University is the largest American educational unit outside the U.S.

ATHLETICS: The American University, Rue Clemenceau, Beirut usually makes available its athletic facilities through its athletic director. There are facilities for the following:

basketball
softball
football

tennis
swimming
badminton



In addition to the University, the YMCA has limited facilities available. There are also opportunities for sailing and water skiing.

Beaches: Beirut offers numerous beaches for recreation parties and swimming. All have bath house facilities. The major beaches located within a three mile radius of Beirut are as follows:

St. Michael
San Simone
Cot d'Azur

These are privately owned and the price of admission is 1.00 LP. They are located within 15 minutes of Beirut proper and may be reached by taxi. In addition, the Lebanese Army generally offers the facilities of its "Bain Militaire" to both officers and enlisted men, as does the American University. The latter two are not beaches.

CURRENCY: There are no currency restrictions in Beirut and purchases can be made in U.S. dollars at most shops in the city. Beirut is becoming an international money market, and all hands should beware of the currency dealings and counterfeit currency. The dollar is presently worth approximately 3.15 Lebanese pounds, fluctuating from day to day, but personnel can be assured of the highest available rate by exchanging currency either aboard ship or at a local accredited exchange point. There are 100 piastres in a Lebanese pound.

ACCEPTABLE



NOT ACCEPTABLE



Do not accept torn or mutilated currency which does not contain all four serial numbers on the bill (located on each corner of the bill). CURRENCY WHICH DOES NOT CONTAIN ALL FOUR SERIAL NUMBERS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

1 Lebanese Pound	30¢ (approximately)
3.15 Lebanese Pounds	1.00 (dollar)
315 Piastres	1.00 (dollar)
1 Lebanese Pound	100 Piastres

Again, it is stressed that exchanges of currency be made only at banks and through licensed brokers. Also, personnel are cautioned to exchange money prior to departure of the ship, lest they get "stuck" with it.

USS SPRINGFIELD



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