

Lebanon

July 2018: In its 7,000 plus years of civilization Lebanon has seen many conquerors and wars most recently the 1975 – 1990 civil war that killed 150,000, wounded 200,000 and displaced one million people. Conflict still abounds with about 2 million refugees (mostly Palestinian & Syrian) living among the 6 million Lebanese, a war across the northeast border in Syria and hostility with Israel in the south. Destruction is visible everywhere and every inhabitant of the country has been affected.

On the Mediterranean and in the middle of the country is the capital Beirut (photos 1-4). With half of the country's population and 18 recognized religions, Beirut is one of the most cosmopolitan and diverse cities in the Middle East. Visually the city astonishes, war ruins juxtaposed with modern construction on most every street.

To the south is the Biblical city of Sidon (5) with the nearby Christian pilgrimage site of Maghdoucheh (6). Further south is Tyre (aka Sour) with its World Heritage Sites including the Al Mina excavation (7), Tomb of Phoenician King Hiram and the Roman Hippodrome.

Northeast of Beirut on the Syrian border is the Beqaa Valley, a stronghold of the Shi'a Hezbollah movement and Baalbek (aka Heliopolis) (8-14) this UNESCO World Heritage Site has been inhabited for over 8,000 years, reaching its pinnacle during the Roman Period. Despite wars and chaos, the site remains intact.



1 – Nijmeh Square



2 – Martyrs Statue and Mosque of Mohammed Amin



3 – Beirut Souks



4 – Beirut along the Corniche



5 – Sidon Sea Castle



6 - Maghdoucheh



7 – Tyre World Heritage Site



8 – Great Court of ancient Heliopolis



9 – Baalbek Ruins



10 – Temple of Venus



11 – Temple of Bacchus



12 – Hezbollah T-Shirt



13 – Palestinian Refugee Camp



14 – Saieda Khaoula Mosque