

LEBANON

Lebanon officially the **Republic of Lebanon** is a country in Western Asia, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered by Syria to the north and east, and Israel to the south. Due to its sectarian diversity, Lebanon evolved in 1942 a unique political system, known as confessionalism, based on a community-based power-sharing mechanism. The cedar tree is a prominent feature of the Lebanese flag. It has been used as a symbol by the Maronite Christians of Lebanon since the 18th and 19th centuries

History

The earliest known settlements in Lebanon date back to earlier than 5000 BC. Kassem Nayif archaeologists have discovered in Byblos, which is considered to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, remnants of prehistoric huts with crushed limestone floors, primitive weapons, and burial jars which are evidence of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic fishing communities who lived on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea over 7,000 years ago.

Lebanon was the homeland of the Phoenicians, a seafaring people that spread across the Mediterranean before the rise of Cyrus the Great. After two centuries of Persian rule, Macedonian ruler Alexander the Great attacked and burned Tyre, the most prominent Phoenician city. Throughout the subsequent centuries leading up to recent times, the country became part of numerous succeeding empires, among them Persian, Armenian, Assyrian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Seljuks, Mamluks, Crusader, and Ottoman.

Geography

Lebanon is located in Western Asia. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west along a 225-kilometre (140 mi) coastline, by Syria to the east and north, and by Israel to the south. The Lebanon-Syria border stretches for 375 kilometres (233 mi) and the Lebanon-Israel border for 79 kilometres (49 mi). The border with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in Syria is disputed by Lebanon in a small area called Shebaa Farms, but the border has been demarcated by the United Nations.

Climate

Lebanon has a moderate Mediterranean climate. In coastal areas, winters are generally cool and rainy whilst summers are hot and humid. In more elevated areas, temperatures usually drop below freezing during the winter with frequent, sometimes heavy snow; summers are warm and dry. Although most of Lebanon receives a relatively large amount of rainfall annually (compared to its arid surroundings), certain areas in north-eastern Lebanon receive little due to the high peaks of the western mountain front blocking much of the rain clouds that originate over the Mediterranean Sea.

Population: 4,017,095

Currency: Lebanese lira (LL)

Getting there & away

Beirut International Airport is Lebanon's only airport. The national carrier, **Middle East Airlines** has an extensive network including flying from Beirut to and from Australia, Europe and the Middle East. The airline has a pretty good safety record. There are no air services or trains operating within Lebanon, but the country is so small (you can drive from one end to the other in half a day) that you don't really need them. Additionally the bus, minibus and service taxi network is extensive, reasonably efficient and cheap. Buses travel between Beirut and all of Lebanon's major towns. There are three main bus pick-up and drop-off points in Beirut. Taxis are usually elderly Mercedes with red license plates and a taxi sign on the roof. For travellers considering day trips from Beirut, hiring them

is not a bad option, as they are comfortable, solid in case of accidents and have seat belts, a rare thing in Lebanon.

More information

For more information on Global Relocation Consultants (GRC) expat relocation services and mobility management please visit our website: www.grconsultants.org