



ATTRACTIONS, INVENTORY AND MAPPING  
FOR ADVENTURE TOURISM

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# LEBANON





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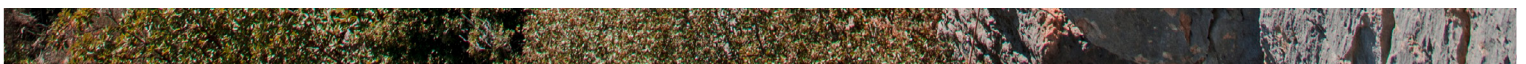
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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The below study covers the destinations where adventure tourism is already taking place in Lebanon and it's divided into 9 pilot areas covering the territory:

1. Akkar we covered the upper Akkar villages.
2. Minniyeh Donniyeh considered as an extension to the Akkar territory.
3. Zgharta Ehdén, covering Ehdén nature reserve.
4. Bchare, covering the Qadicha Valley.
5. Batroun, covering Tanourine Cedar reserve.
6. Byblos, covering Bentaél nature reserve, Ehmej village and Aqoura Mountains.
7. Keserwan, covering Chahtoul, Jabal Moussa Biosphere reserve, and Kfardebiane.
8. Chouf, covering the nature reserves.
9. Jezzine covering Jezzine town.
10. The adventure tourism sector is growing in Lebanon with tremendous urge for regulation and opportunities for development.

## AKKAR GOVERNORATE

It's the northernmost governorate of Lebanon. It comprises the single district of Akkar, subdivided into 121 municipalities<sup>1</sup>. Akkar is considered a high biodiversity area. Adventure tourism is a growing sector for this region and it is in an exponential expansion. The area have seen during the past couple of years a

rise in the promotion of adventure tourism along with the promotion of new hiking trails and destination. Till this date hiking, agritourism, snowshoeing, biking, Nordic and back country skiing are the only activities that are taking place in Akkar with a potential to develop other activities such as camping, canyoning, caving and rock climbing. In Akkar our study area covers the following towns of Menjiz, Qobayat, Akkar el Aatiqa, Fniadiq, Tachee, and Meshmesh. Menjiz is a destination for cultural tourism whereas the other mentioned towns are a destination for hiking and camping lovers. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses Akkar in section A1, 1&2.

## ZGHARTA DISTRICT

Zgharta Ehdén is a mountain village located on the South western face of Daher el Adib Plateau. Ehdén and Zgharta are two towns with the same population and families. Zgharta is the administrative locality whereas Ehdén is a summer and weekend destination for these families. Ehdén is located at 1400 m above sea level, it is the benchmark for biodiversity located in the Ehdén nature reserve and the hometown of the Kozhaya Valley part of the Qadicha Valley UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ehdén is an adventure tourism destination, visitors enjoy hiking, snowshoeing, quad, and four wheel drives vehicles, snowmobiling, rappelling, caving, camping, agro-tourism, and rope courses. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses Ehdén in section 5 and 6.

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1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akkar\\_Governorate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akkar_Governorate)

## **BCHARE DISTRICT**

District located in the North governorate is the hometown of the Bchare town home of the God Cedar forest, the original town of the famous writer and poet Gibran Khalil Gibran and the Qadicha Valley. Tourism in the district takes place in Bchare, Hasroun, Dimane, Bazouun and Hadath el Jebbeh (home of the mummified bodies). Bchare is home of the highest summit in the Middle East Kornet es Sawda 3088 m. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses Bchare in section 7&8. Several adventure tourism activities takes place in Bchare from hiking, rock climbing, caving, canyoning, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, alpine skiing, paragliding, atv, 4wd, snowmobiling and agro-tourism. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses Bcharre through sections 7 and 8.

## **BATROUNE DISTRICT**

It's a district South of Tripoli and North of Beirut. It is the hometown of Tanourine, Douma and Bechaaleh. Tanourine is the hometown of the cedar reserve, the biggest rock climbing sector in the Middle East, and the three bridges sinkhole. Douma is a typical Lebanese village, known for its red roof houses, old souk and cinema. Bechaaleh village is the hometown of the oldest olive trees in Lebanon (2500 B.C.). Batroune district is visited by different profile of visitors: from Scuba divers, windsurfers, hikers, rock climbers, cavers, campers, and snowshoers.

## **BYBLOS DISTRICT**

A major tourism destination. On the coast, the town of Byblos and its fortress are the cultural tourism map for almost all the tours taking place in Lebanon. 8 km from the coast, Bentaël nature reserve, a pine

forest protected and open for ecotourism lovers. Another reserve of Cedar trees in the mountains of Jaj opened with hiking trails and connected with its surrounding villages. 20 min from the coast there is Ehmej town that offers nature lovers an opportunity to hike and snowshoe on its 16 km of trails (a big part of them needs to be reopened). Agritourism is also taking place in Ehmej at La Vallée Blanche. Rock climbing in Laqouq at the Mokhada site along with alpine skiing in winter. Aqoura recently became a destination for hikers, snowshoers, river swimmers and campers. Aqoura holds Roueiss cave the second deepest cave in Lebanon with a distance of 6 km. the cave is visited by caving lovers to explore the underground world. Aqoura is also a destination for agritourism during the apple and cherry picking. Afqa town holds a rock climbing site, Afqa cave and waterfall, Afqa temple and a Juniper forest.

## **KESERWANE DISTRICT**

Considered the most visited tourism district in Lebanon. It covers a wide attractions of natural and cultural with events all over the year. Kersewane region is well developed in terms of infrastructure and existing tourism products. The coastal area is based on beach tourism and water sports. To mention the Lady of Harissa among the most visited tourism place in Lebanon. As for the mountain area tourism is developed based on winter sports and mainly alpine ski with quads, and snowmobile renting locations. Our study covers the mountain part where most of the tourism activities are taking place.

## SHOUF DISTRICT

Is the home of the three nature reserves and a fast growing destination for eco, nature and agritourism based activities. It covers wide variety of tourism offers and services. The Shouf can be considered a successful story for building eco and responsible tourism projects. The nature attraction in the Shouf is the biosphere reserve covering the areas of Ain Zhalta, Barouk, Maaser es Shouf and Niha.

## JEZZINE DISTRICT

A well know destination South of Lebanon. Jezzine offers natural and cultural attractions. From local cutlery, to pine forest and waterfalls. Jezzine offers a wide range of services, a diversity of accommodations and food services. Today Jezzine is working on launching its first DMO in the Southern region.



## **2. ATTRACTION INVENTORY FOR ADVENTURE TOURISM**

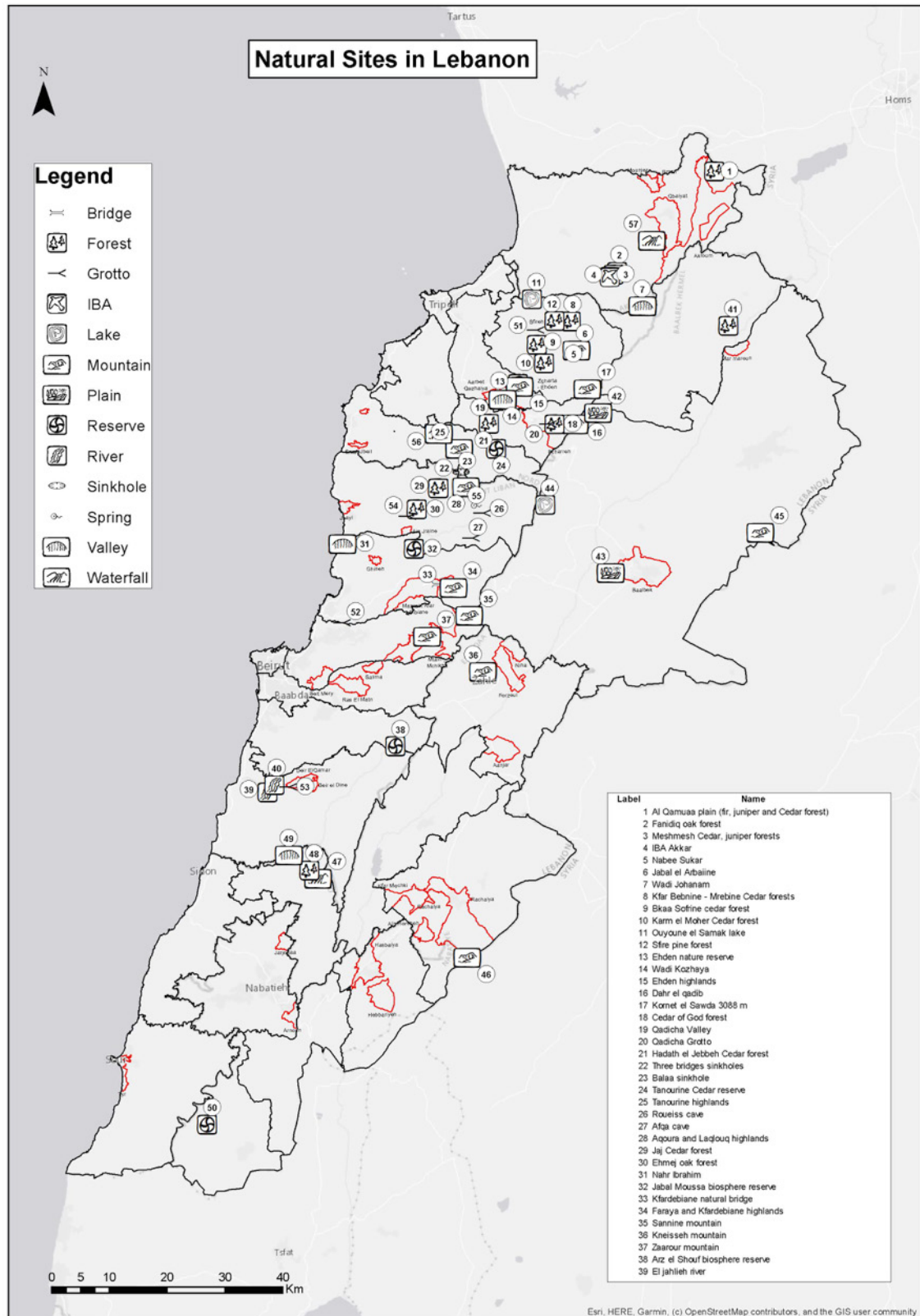




# 2.1 Attraction List and Mapping

## 2.1.1 Map Summary

### NATURAL SITES IN LEBANON





## NATURE RESERVES

Known for its richness in biodiversity and climate Lebanon is the richest country in the Middle East in nature reserves. These reserves are the focal point for the development of ecotourism and whole economy was developed around it. Today these reserves became destinations for a multitude of outdoor activities. These reserves went beyond nature preservations and are playing the role of agent of development.

### Other Natural Resources

#### Rocks and caves

Known for its richness in water, Lebanon resemble to a gruyere cheese. The country has an extensive list in caves and sinkhole. Jeiita as the deepest cave in Lebanon and the Middle East, a part of it is equipped and opened to public. Most of the caving activities in Lebanon is practiced under 4 national caving groups. Most of Lebanese caves and sinkholes are not equipped for tourists' visits and require special caving training.

Lebanon is known also for its solid rock formations. The limestone is the dominant type of rock. Due to this type Lebanon has today the biggest climbing sector in the Middle East. Rock climbing is becoming popular and more sites are being equipped.

#### Fresh Water

Although water is an abundant natural resource in Lebanon, with many springs, surface water and ground water sources, it is a badly managed natural resource with more than 20 percent of Lebanese people with no access to a public water network. Not to mention, deteriorating infrastructure often means that water is unsafe to drink and needs processing. This mismanagement of the Lebanese water resources is coupled with an insufficiency of official data about this resource<sup>2</sup>.

#### Lebanon wildlife

##### Fauna

Since the beginning of the 20th century, animal wildlife in Lebanon has been relatively eradicated. In the past the Lebanese mountains and plains were inhabited by Syrian brown bears, the Asian Leopard, the Persian lynx and various species of deer and gazelles. Even lions inhabited Lebanon before disappearing in the 16th Century. Wolves, wildcats, mongooses and squirrels can still be found but they are very scarce and far apart. Most remaining wild animal species are threatened with reptiles standing at 16.3% risk, birds 11 and mammals at 6.9.

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2. <https://en.annahar.com/article/927290-water-management-in-lebanon>

**Wild mammals:** hedgehog, bats, fox, jackal, wolf, stone martin, weasel, badger, striped Hyaena, jungle cat, wild cat, rock hyrax, wild boar, squirrel, porcupine, mole, field mouse, dormouse, hamster, jackal, extinct Lebanese mammals: brown bear and the fallow deer.

A wide variety of vertebrates, of which birds are the most abundant, are nowadays at a lower risk of extinction, especially after the decision of the government and the Ministry of Environment about banning hunting activities. Invertebrates, particularly insects, form the most abundant and widespread group of land fauna. Spiders are highly vulnerable and 21.8 % are endangered.

## Flora

Urban development, over-grazing, among other factors pose threat to the terrestrial flora found in Lebanon. This is especially the case with fodder plants and ferns, which face a 45.2% risk, endemic plants 41.3 % and medicinal plants 6.8 %.

## Lebanon Landscape

Highlands are quite abundant in Lebanon (3088 m highest peak). This small country comes with severe variability in weather conditions, soils, and socio-financial status. However, its natural and profitable vegetation are under extreme exploitation, since its protracted shoreline is being turned into a metropolitan city. Mountains, scattered prairies and wilderness occupy the biggest area in Lebanon (31%). And over one fifth of the country is covered by agricultural and annual outputs. Also,

it is announced that 30% to 50% of the population are engaged in the agricultural field or related activities.

Herding areas with prairies and trees add up to 15% of the total area and the arid rocks cover an area similar to forest land (7%). Fruit trees are well-known, well-liked and satisfy local needs alongside some export possibility. These trees occupy over 5% of the total area, which includes also vines, deciduous fruits trees, citrus and bananas. However, North and Mount Lebanon areas are rich with olive trees which remain the all-time major and durable output. Vegetables are grown during winter and summer and are continuously brought onto the market. The largest area used for vegetable production is in Mount Lebanon, being close to the city market. Lebanon is considered rich in biodiversity, each region is characterized by unique sociological characteristics and consists of a special group of plants and animals that reflect specific ecological conditions. However, this variability and favorable weather conditions are a direct cause of human overpopulation (400 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>), which exerts severe destructive pressures on the environment and threatens biodiversity conditions.

There are 4633 plant species and 4486 species in the animal kingdom.

Agricultural Biodiversity, the construction of tourist destinations and various other projects are destroying large, vulnerable areas where biodiversity is under serious threat. Introducing new, more profitable output varieties instead of traditional

ones puts pressure on local varieties and wildlife. The impact of overgrowth and natural hazards on the destruction of the natural habitat of many wild plants and animals should not be ignored. Animal biodiversity includes wild species and local breeds that are rapidly disappearing from rural areas, besides other domestic species that are no longer of economic importance. Furthermore, wild relatives are at risk of extinction due to depletion or relocation, and native species are slowly being replaced for their capacity. Farmers are mainly seniors, which is why very few are those still interested in landraces and local breeds. Monoculture and imported technologies dominate the farming system and render local planting material so inefficient in terms of economic quality and potential production of new systems<sup>3</sup>.

### Windmill

Wind is another readily available natural resource in Lebanon, particularly in its Northern district of Akkar. Electricity outages are still rampant across the country, and even in the country's capital, Beirut where it is cut at least 3 hours a day. According to the UNDP, Lebanon could produce 5,400 MW of energy from wind. Yet again, however, this resource remains largely untapped and unexplored, even though there are ongoing tests that report its potentials in Akkar, an area which is also significant for being a corridor for migratory birds.

### Solar Power

With nearly 3,000 hours of sunshine, Lebanon can produce up to 26% of its electricity from this natural resource. Solar farms can be part of the future of energy production which the Ministry of Energy and Water is currently having bids over<sup>4</sup>.

### Pine production and edible plants

Lebanon is known for pine trees where it is considered the dominant one. Most of our existing pines were planted between 1930 and 1950. Pine cones are considered an important ingredients in the Lebanese cuisine and there's an economy behind it where we still find today people that climb trees the traditional way in order to collect the cones. Pine cones are available on the market and with the recent economic inflation the kg is sold today for 335 Euro.

Edible wild plants still make up an integral part of the Lebanese diet in rural areas. This valuable connection with the land and its produces is an important characteristic of Lebanese rural life, where women are often the ones who take initiative in collecting, processing, storing and cooking those organic produces. More than being a matter of sustenance, this immediate relation with the earth represents a matter of pride and folklore to the inhabitants of those areas. Much of the Lebanese culinary traditions revolve around those habits, and some are still used for medicinal

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3. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/lb/lb-nbsap-01-en.pdf>

4. <https://lb.boell.org/en/2019/03/01/renewable-energy-lebanon-can-country-embrace-its-resources-sustainably>

purposes like alleviating skin irritation and anemia. The corona pandemic has notably restored some of those relations in some areas in Lebanon. Especially with people reconnecting with their lands in those areas and coming to understand the importance of cultivating it.

## Natural resources in pilot areas

**AKKAR** Upper Akkar Mountains are covered with forests of Lebanese Cedar trees, and Excelsa Juniperus, in addition to the presence of rocky slopes and grasslands for grazing. It is known to have the highest forest cover of 21% in comparison to 13% average in the whole country. This region is characterized by its high biodiversity (fauna and flora), by which there are at least 500 plant species, unique animal species such as the Persian squirrel and a huge number of birds (about 134 species) including the Syrian Serin that is globally threatened with extinction. This area is the first entry point for soaring bird migration into Lebanon<sup>5</sup>.

Menjiz is a medium level area for biodiversity. They have a type of oak found only there. As for Akkar it is high on biodiversity due to its endemic species and daily found discoveries, and we have the biggest fir trees forest in Lebanon. As for the fauna in Akkar region it is considered an IBA region.

The biodiversity in the **QADICHA VALLEY** is still unstudied but nevertheless it is considered medium level biodiversity due

to existence of oak, pine and Cyprus and plants next to the river sides and on rock terrain and one endemic plant.

**EHDEN DISTRICT** Ehden is considered the benchmark in biodiversity and it has endemic types of plants. Same for fauna.

**BATROUN DISTRICT** Tanourine reserve is medium level in biodiversity, considered the biggest cedar forest of Lebanon. It was for long time attacked by the cephalsia.

**BYBLOS DISTRICT** Bentaël is low in biodiversity due to its lower altitude and low humidity. We saw more plants but less endemic ones due to the lack of light that enters the forest because of the dense tree coverage. While walking the trees you can remark that there no sign of plants on the ground. It is one the rare reserve existing on the coast.

**KESERWAN DISTRICT** Keserwan consisting on the upper part is considered a medium in biodiversity. The assessment made on the LMT section crossing from Afqa to Faraya leading to Kfardebiane.

**JABAL MOUSSA** is rich in endemic plants, has a wide variety in plants and trees, same for the reptiles. Considered high in biodiversity.

**CHOUF DISTRICT** The Chouf is considered a high biodiversity and the reserve is classified as an IBA important bird area.

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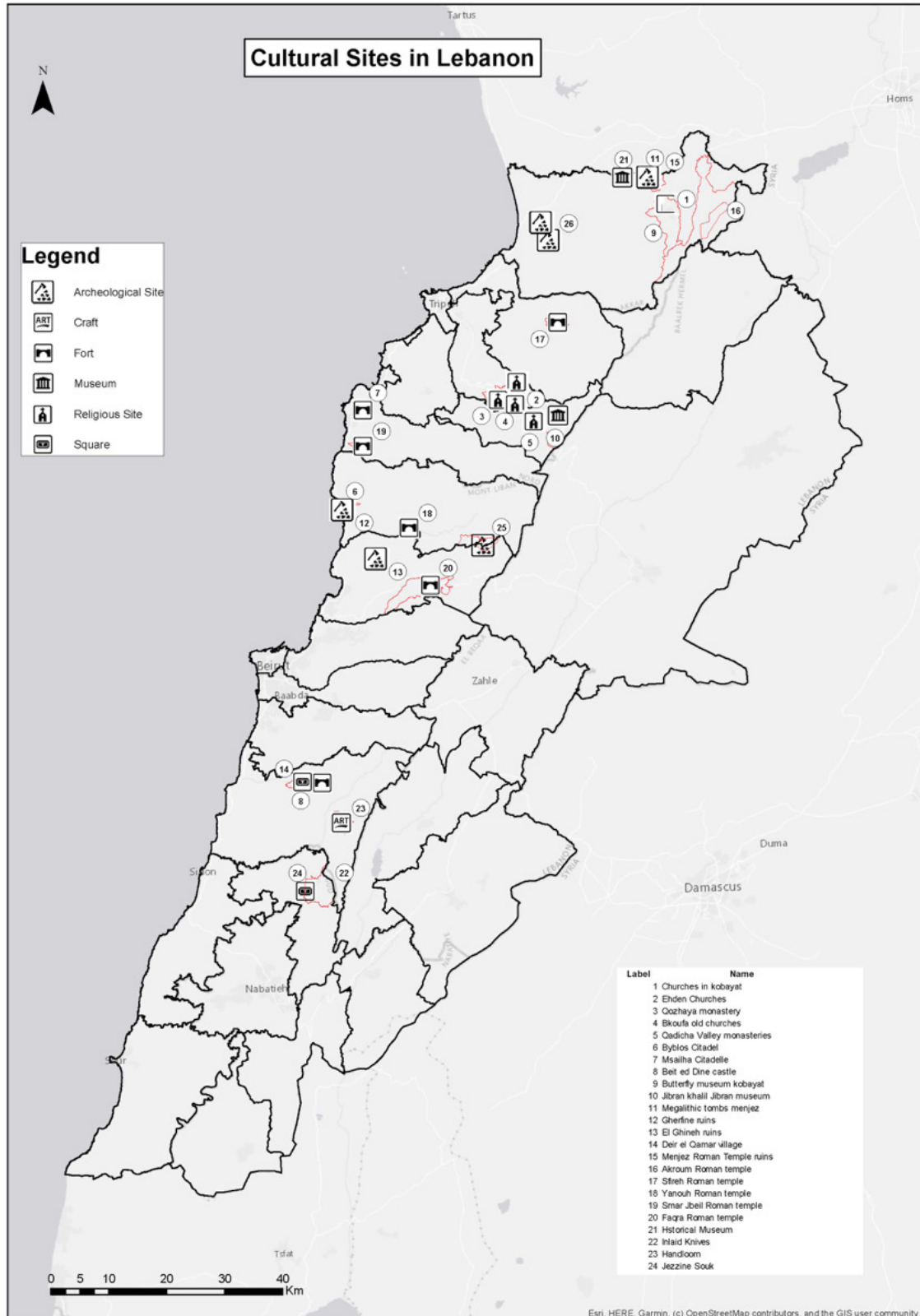
5. <https://www.spnl.org/hima/hima-upper-akkar/>

## 2.1.2 Cultural resources

### General overview

Lebanon's history has been shaped by its strategic location at the crossroads between the East and the West, and as the gateway to the Middle East.

### MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS





## ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE



Lebanon has more than 250 Roman temple that are geo-localised. The most visited one is Baalbek located in the Bekaa Valley, whereas other temples like Sfireh

in the North, and several temple around Mount Hermon are not well promoted or exiting on the tourism map.



### Phoenician route<sup>6</sup>

Lebanon was the motherland of the Canaanites/Phoenicians, the inventors of the alphabet, whose civilization flourished on the east coast of the Mediterranean for over 1000 years right until the invasion of the Levant. This small country has witnessed the rise and fall of many civilizations who have all added something to Lebanon's rich cultural heritage. The land was successively conquered by the ancient Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Crusaders, Mamluks and Ottomans. At the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Lebanon remained

under French rule in the Levant before gaining its independence in 1943. The Phoenicians, since their arrival in Byblos, have developed a unique and mythical society around their maritime trade and their beloved cedar. Tripoli, Batroun, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre and later the coastal cities of Lebanon were established. Inland, they ventured high into the Lebanon Mountains and down the eastern side into the Beqaa Valley. Furthermore, they founded the city of Baalbek as well as many other locations in the Beqaa region.

6. <https://icf.lau.edu.lb/images/phoenician-route-brochure-lebanon.pdf>

## Umayyad route

In Lebanon, the Umayyad route is a passage from the port cities that linked the eastern Mediterranean with the rest of the world to the Umayyad city of Anjar. Lebanese coastal cities had been the link between the two worlds since the second millennium BC. The archaeological and architectural remains of these cities testify to the succession of the former civilizations that once developed in the Mediterranean. They represent the richness of the cultural exchange in the Mediterranean since the embark of the Phoenicians in the European and North African Shores until now. These coastal cities are complemented by Anjar, which became known in the eastern Mediterranean in the early eighth century. By directly comparing the architecture and the entire heritage of this culture, this route presents an interesting short course in cultural history. Among the various architectural remains, urban

structures from different eras prevail in different fragments, characterizing multiple aspects of the daily life in these cities. This includes food, relationship with the natural environment and different landscapes. The Umayyad route connects the historic Lebanese coastal cities with each other and with the outback of the city of Umayyad as well. No matter what direction you take the cities are Tripoli, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon and Tyre. When departing from Beirut, you drive east to the Bekaa Valley where the Umayyad city of Anjar is located and the Baalbek Mosque. The coastal landscape consists of beaches, shores, populated areas on the west side of the road, and a range of mountains and hills on the east side. The mountains are most visible on the north side of the route, between Tripoli, Byblos and Beirut, then from Beirut to Tyre there is no end of green hills.







There are 5 Unesco Cultural Sites:

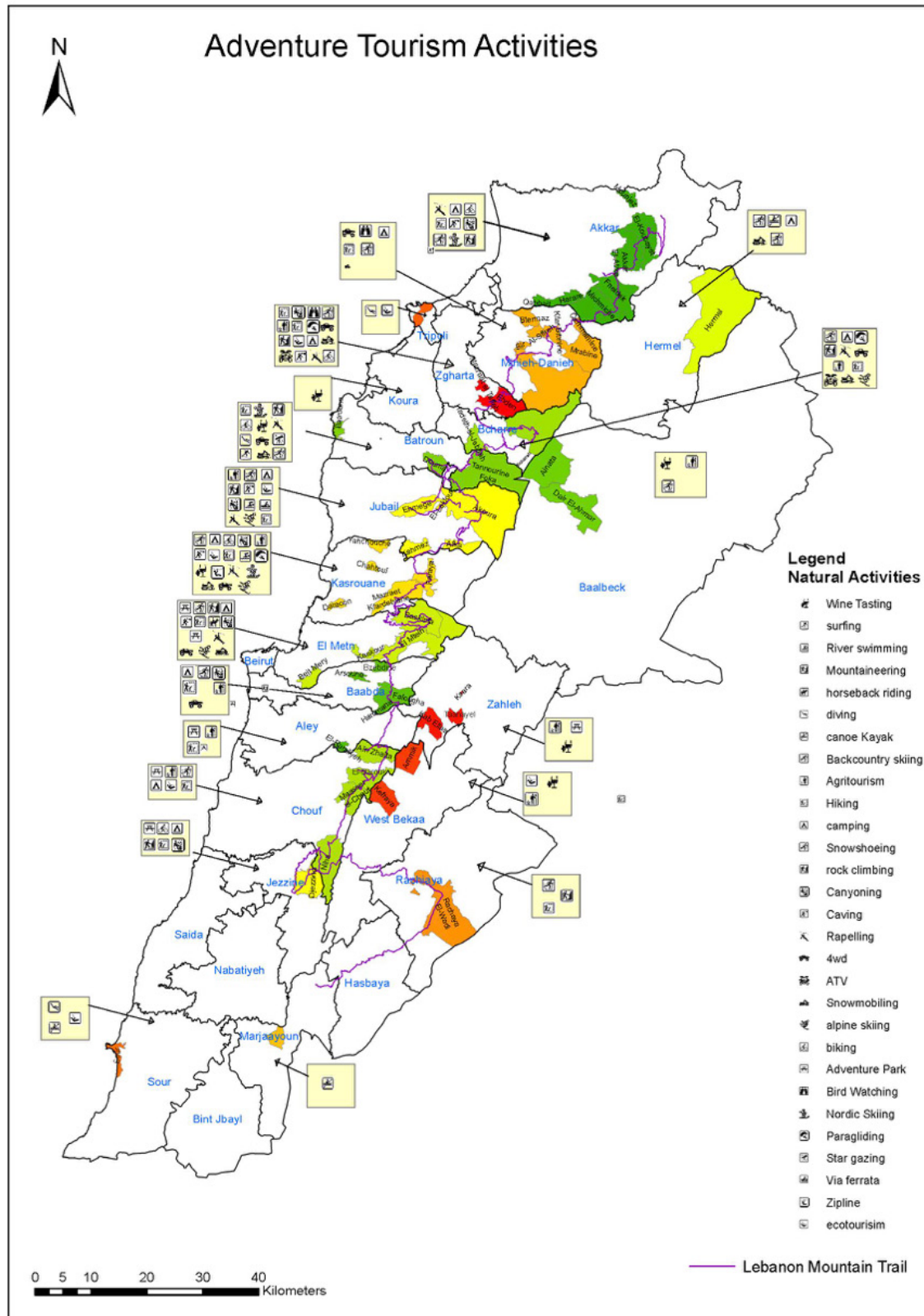
- [Anjar](#) (1984)
- [Baalbek](#) (1984)
- [Byblos](#) (1984)
- [Ouadi Qadisha \(the Holy Valley\) and the Forest of the Cedars of God \(Horsh Arz el-Rab\)](#) (1998)
- [Tyre](#) (1984)

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/lb>

## 2.1.3 Adventure activities

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES INVENTORY	
Hiking	Akkar, Donniyeh, Zgharta, Bechareh, Batroune, Keserwane, Maten, Baabda, Bekaa, Chouf, Jezzine
Trekking	The Lebanon Mountain Trail
Rock Climbing	Tanourine, Beit Mery, Jezzine, Laqlouq,
Caving	Meshmesh, Ehden, Bchare, Chatine, Ehmej, Aqoura, Afqa, Ehmej, Jezzine
Rappelling	Akkar, Donniyeh, Zgharta, Bechareh, Batroune, Keserwane, Maten, Baabda, Bekaa, Chouf, Jezzine
Canyoning	Mazraet el Teffeh, Naher Ibrahim, Hamana, Jezzine
Alpine Skiing	Bechare, Laqlouq, Kfardebiane (Mzar and Faqra), Zaarour.
Ski mountaineering	Daher el Qadib Plateau, Sannine, Mzar Kfardebiane, Mount Hermon Rachaya
Nordic Skiing	Kobayat (karm Chbat, Qamouaa), Bchare, Laqlouq, Kfardebiane
Snowshoeing	Akkar, Donniyeh, Zgharta Ehden, Bechareh, Batroune, Keserwane, Maten, Baabda, Bekaa, Shouf.
4WD	Ehden, Bchare, Tanourine, Kfardebiane, Zaarour
Quad and snowmobiling	Ehden, Bchare, Tanourine, Kfardebiane, Zaarour
Scuba diving	Batroun, Jounieh, Tyr
Sailing	Dbayeh
Wind / kite surfing/ SUP	Batroune, Tyr
Paragliding	Bchare, Ehden, Jounieh
Ecotourism	Nature and biosphere reserves: Ehden, Bentaël, Tanourine, Amiq, Shouf.
Agro-tourism	Menjz, Ehden, Ehmej, Aqoura, Tanourine, Bechare, Bechaaleh, Kfardebiane, Barouk.
Adventure Parks	Anjar, Maten, Bentaël
Rafting	Assi River Hermel
Kayaking	AL Awale River
Bird watching	Ehden, Amiq, Shouf, Anjar
River swimming	Keserwan, Chouf
Wine tasting	Bekaa, Batroun
Star gazing	Tanourine
surfing	Batroun

# MAP WITH ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES





## HIKING (RANKED #1)



Figure 1 hikers in the Doniyeh Mountains - Source: Gilbert Moukheiber / 33 North

Considered the most spread and famous outdoor sport in Lebanon. It goes back to the 50s' with the foundation of the first hiking club. Today hiking is practiced by a wide range of tour organizer (although it is not regulated). Many villages in Lebanon have developed their network of trails willing to attract visitors and position their areas on the tourism map.

Location:

- Akkar (Qobayat, Akkar el Aatiqa, Fniadiq, Meshmesh); Donniyeh (Qammamine, Botrmaz, Kfarbebnine, Bkaa Sofrine, Karm el Mohr, Bcheneta);
- Zgharta (Ehden, Kozhaya);
- Bchare (Qadicha, Daher el Qadib, Hasroun, Bazouun, Dimane, Hadath el Jebbeh);
- Batroune (Tanourine, Douma, Chatine, Bechaaleh); Jbeil (Ehmej, Jaj, Laqlouq, Aqoura, Aqfa, Lessa);
- Keserwane (Qamaz, Ebre, Yahchouche, Hiyata, Chhtoule, Mchete, Hrajel, Faraya, Kfardebiane); Maten (Baskinta, Mtein, Beit Mery, Broumana), Baabda (Hamana, Falougha, Tarchiche, Bezbaine, Kornayel);
- Shouf (the areas of the 3 nature reserve Ain Zhлата, Barouk, Maaser, Niha);
- Jezzine (Jezzine, Bkassine), Bekaa (Rachaya, Aitanit, Amiq, Kob Elias, Hermel, Ainata, Yamouneh, Rabiaa, Ouyoune Orgosh).

**Akkar Trails:** Akkar is considered the most pristine area in Lebanon and is a paradise for every hiker and mountaineer. It lies on the Syrian border and it is the starting point of the Lebanon Mountain Trail. Akkar covers 304 km of trails. Akkar today lacks infrastructure related to the promotion of the tourism sector.

**Ehmej** located 20 km from Byblos, Ehmej was among the first Lebanese villages to develop a network on 17 hiking trails extending today to 196 km.

**Keserwane Trails:** located in Mount Lebanon governorate, Keserwane District is home for many natural attractions. It offers a 160 km of hiking some of them are being reopened these days connecting villages together in order to promote responsible tourism. Keserwane has also the biggest ski area in the Middle East with 80 km of runs, it is also the home of Jabal Moussa a biosphere reserve and Wadi el Salib and many other hiking and nature destinations.

**Shouf Trails:** Located in Mount Lebanon governorate, the Shouf is a historical and administrative district. It is also home of three connected nature reserves considered the biggest nature reserve in Lebanon covering 5% of the whole territory. The nature reserves today a biosphere reserve covering the surrounding territories and covers a wide network of trails of 400 Km.

**Ehden Nature reserve:** known also as Horsh Ehden, considered the most diverse and rich nature reserve in Lebanon. It offers a network of hiking trails of 10 km inside the reserve and approximate 60 km of trails in the highlands.

**Tanourine nature reserve:** considered the densest Cedar reserve, of which 80% of the trees are Cedars. The reserve offers today a 60 km in the surrounding and around 10 km inside the reserve and all of them are opened to visitors and blazed.

**Bentael:** located in the Byblos district, consisting mainly of pine and oak trees, Bentael offers a network of 10 km for its visitors.



## TREKKING (RANKED # 2)



Figure 2 hikers in the Donniyeh Mountains - Source: Gilbert Moukheiber / 33 North

The Lebanon Mountain Trail, the first national and longest trail extends from Andqet in the North of Lebanon to Marjaayoun in the south, a 470-km (292 miles) path that transects more than 76

towns and villages at an altitude ranging from 570 meters to 2,073 meters (about 1,840-6800 feet) above sea level. The trail is marked with a blazing system (purple and white).



## CAMPING (RANKED # 3)



Figure 3 camping in upper Akkar Mountains - Source: Gilbert Moukheiber / 33 North

In Lebanon camping is becoming popular in particular that people were on a lockdown for 2 months because of COVID19. One can camp pitching their own tents and equipment in any land owned by the government or can choose to visit one of the campsite with facilities.

Fixed Campsites Ehden Aventure, Ehden Mountain activities, Chahtoul camping, Al Jord, Swings, Sharewood campsite, The cliff, Chahtoul, Cedars ground campsite, Pinea Camping, Glamping Lebanon, Al Sheer, Yahchouche, Douma Camping, Assi River Campsites.



## CYCLING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING



Figure 4 cycling - Source: Georges Wakim

Lebanon is the perfect destination for any type of bicycle fanatic looking for a thrill. From scenic nature routes to cosmopolitan thrill rides, these are the best cycling routes in Lebanon. Several

possibilities are available: one can cross the country from the North to South via the Lebanese coastal route, one can ride through the Bekaa Valley or even crossing the Lebanese Mountains.



## RAFTING / KAYAKING

Rafting is a growing sport in Lebanon. It is located North Bekaa on the Assi river in Hermel and Litani South of Lebanon.

15 actors are located in Hermel and one in the Litani area.



## CAVING

Lebanon is known for its limestone and rich underground world. Caving is mainly practiced within 3 national clubs. Lebanon holds around 600 caves and sinkholes. The deepest cave is called Jeiita with its 9 km of distance, only 900m are open and equipped to be visited by the public

whereas the rest is only accessible by caving. Lebanon's deepest sinkhole is 620 m. tourists can also enjoy caving in particular in the village of Aqoura home of the second deepest cave in Lebanon with a total development of 6km.





## CANYONING

Consisting of venturing into dry and wet canyons, jumping, swimming and abseiling. This sport is relatively modest and new to Lebanon. Although the topography can offer a high potential. Today 5 sites are equipped for the

practice of this activity. In terms of actors they is 5 entities who handle this sport. Camping spots in the following villages: Mazraet el Teffeh Zgharta, Naher Ibrahim, Hammana, Jezzine.



## ALPINE SKIING (RANKED # 4)

Considered since longtime the only winter activity. Lebanon has 5 ski resorts across the country located in Becharre, Laqlouq, Kfardebiane, and Zaarour. The season starts in mid-December to mid of March. A whole economy was built around these activities: mountain resorts, hotels,

restaurants, outdoor shops, snowmobile renting shops, bars. Alpine skiing is for the past 20 years new trends of activities started in the market. Snowshoeing considered today the main winter activities for hiking and nature lovers.



## PARAGLIDING

In Lebanon started in the early nineties. The experience is enriched by the diversity of the country's landscapes, with mountain and sea views that can be enjoyed from the sky. The activity can be practiced in tandem (with an instructor) or a solo flight

after enrolling in the course and getting the certificate. Places to practice: Ghosta, Jounieh, the Cedars of Becharreh, Shouf Cedars, Lessa, Miziara, Dedde, Annaya and Hammana.



## SKI MOUNTAINEERING, NORDIC SKIING



Figure 3 Ski mountaineering - Source: Gilbert Moukheiber / 33 North

Consisting of using skis with skins in order to climb mountains and enjoy the descent after the effort of the climbs. Mountains

of Akkar, Donniyeh, Bcharreh, Ehden, Tanourine, Aqoura, Laqlouq, Kfardebiane, Faraya, Baskinta, Shouf area, Rachaya.



## ROPE COURSES OR ADVENTURE PARKS

this activity came to Lebanon during the past 15 years. Consisting of high and rope course it is mainly built of a climbing tower, a rappelling activity, a zipline and

other rope bridges, monkey bridges... located mainly in AFDC center Ramliyah, arc en ciel Taanayel, Swing campsite.



## ROCK CLIMBING / ABSEILING (RANKED #5)



Figure 4 rock climbing - Source: Georges Wakim

Lebanon is known for its geological formation with a limestone dominance (70%). Steady and tough, the limestone can be considered an assets for rock climbing lovers. Lebanon holds the

biggest rock climbing outdoor site in the Middle East. Located in the village of Tanourine, Laqlouq, Beit Mery, Jezzine, and in the Shouf area.



## SNOWSHOEING



Figure 5 snowshoeing - Source: Khaled Taleb

Anyone that can hike can snowshoe. Snowshoeing came to Lebanon in the late 1990s as an alternative way to enjoy the beautiful winter landscape with no previous technical equipment and low

cost. The mountains of Akkar, Donniyeh, Bcharreh, Ehden, Tanourine, Aqoura, Laqlouq, Kfardebiane, Faraya, Baskinta, Shouf area, Rachaya are picturesque destination for snowshoeing lovers.



## SCUBA DIVING



Diving is widely developed along the Lebanese coastal cities. Diving centers offer dive courses and operate dive outings. Many diving sites are interested

in the Lebanese Mediterranean waters such as wrecks, submarine from WWI and other interesting sites. Location: Batroune, Jounieh, Beirut, Tyre.



## ECOTOURISM



Consisting of offering responsible tourism in protected areas. Ecotourism is only applicable in nature reserves. Nature reserves in Lebanon are located in Ehden, Tanourine, Bentaël, Shouf (Ain Zhalta, Barouk, Maaser es Shouf), Amiq wetland,

and the Palm Islands. Each reserve has a tourism unit that promotes tourism activities within the reserve area, they promote hiking tours, and educational programs.



## BIRD WATCHING



Lebanon has a huge potential to be a bird watching destination. Its geographic location places it at a strategic stopping point for birds along the African-Eurasian migration paths. Unfortunately bird watching is not seen nor promoted as a major activity, it is practiced in modesty

within some nature reserves. The hunting activity needs to be organized in order to be able to promote to place bird watching on the tourism calendar. Location: Akkar, Donniyeh, Ehdn reserve, Amiq reserve, Shou reserve.



## 4WD, QUAD / SNOWMOBILING

Motorized sports are famous in Lebanon. They mainly take place in the mountains. This type of activity needs to be organized as it can cause a negative impact on the environment and is considered of high risk if safety measures are not met. Most of the atv and snowmobilers practice the activity on the basis of renting the machine from 30' to a full day. As for

4wd it is mainly practiced by individuals enjoying equipping their vehicles in order to spend the weekend venturing through the mountains. A couple of events are organized every summer targeting 4wd lovers' joining in climbing hills and testing their skills and cars. Location: Ehdn, Becharreh, Tanourine, Faraya, Kfardebiane.



## AGRO-TOURISM



is getting popular, it is centered in rural and mountain areas; organized by tour operators with locals mainly for apple, cherry, olive and grape picking. Most of the

programs consist on a one day activity. Activity area: Akkar, Bcharreh, Aqoura, Taanayel, Rachaya, the Bekaa area.



## CULINARY ACTIVITIES



Consisting of edible plant picking, culinary courses: Deir el Ahmar, Ain Zebde, Aitanit, and the Shouf area

## 2.2 ATTRACTIONS LIST AND MAPPING IN PILOT AREAS

### Evaluation summary

One of the major challenges faced during the development of the study is the missing tourism (statistics and figures), the COVID 19 lockdown, and the degrading economic country status Lebanon is going through disabling tourism stakeholders to be motivated to bring support and information to the present study. We were unable to implement the ETIS as an indicator because we miss a system in place and tourism actors have no data for such system. This is an opportunity for us through the Medusa project to introduce a system on the national level to be able to create a data bank to be included in future studies.

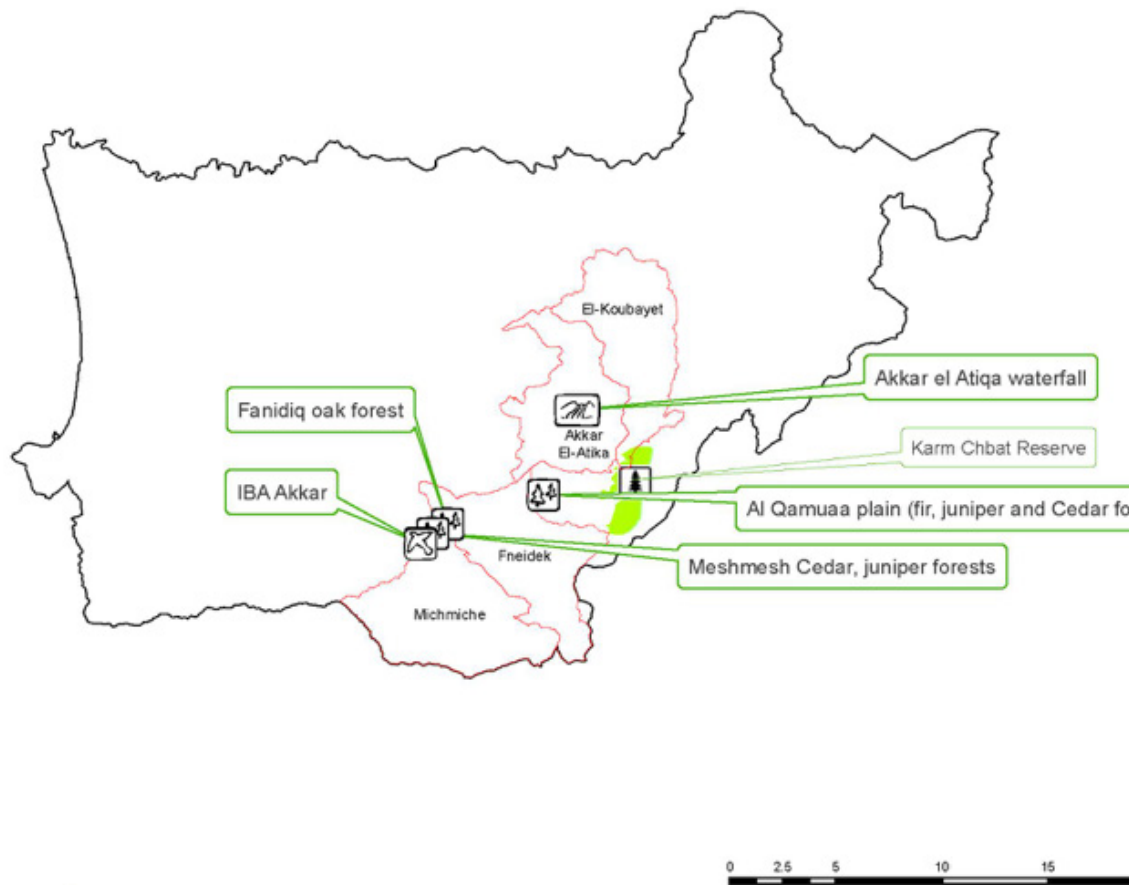
#### 2.2.1 Akkar

Akkar is considered the most deprived area of Lebanon with the richest natural attractions and forest diversity. Akkar offers natural picturesque areas for adventure lovers mainly the Qobayat mountains, Karm Chbat reserve, Qamouaa plain, Ourouba summit, Fanidiq iron oak forest, Meshmesh forests, and Akkar el Aatiqa forests. It lacks tourism infrastructure, the road conditions are bad, no signs for tourism attractions. Several nature tourism initiatives are taking place in particular the promotion of hiking with hiking trails delineation and development. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses three sections in Akkar (A1, 1, and 2) with local accommodations such as guesthouses

and monasteries. Akkar is also rich in cultural heritage: Menjiz offers cultural attractions from the Megalithic to the Roman era. Qobayat many churches, silk factory, butterfly museum; and Akkar el Aatiqa fortress. Tal Arka an archeological site located on the Akkar coastal area with a significant importance; sadly today the site is not highlighted nor listed on the tourism map. Akkar is considered a destination for nature lovers looking for experiences off the beaten trails. A project was initiated 15 years ago for the creation of the first national park for upper Akkar but till this date the project hasn't seen the light, and the study area "the Qamouaa plain" is under a land ownership conflict between three villages. On another hand the Qamouaa plain, the Karm Chbat forest, the iron oak forest of Fnaidiq, the Akkar el Aatiqa forest and Meshmesh forests need a serious plan for protection. These above mention forests, if preserved present a big potential for the development of eco and nature tourism based activities. When it comes to trails, much is being done recently as trail delineating and trail blazing. What is needed is trailheads with parking lots, interpretive and directional signs.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS – AKKAR

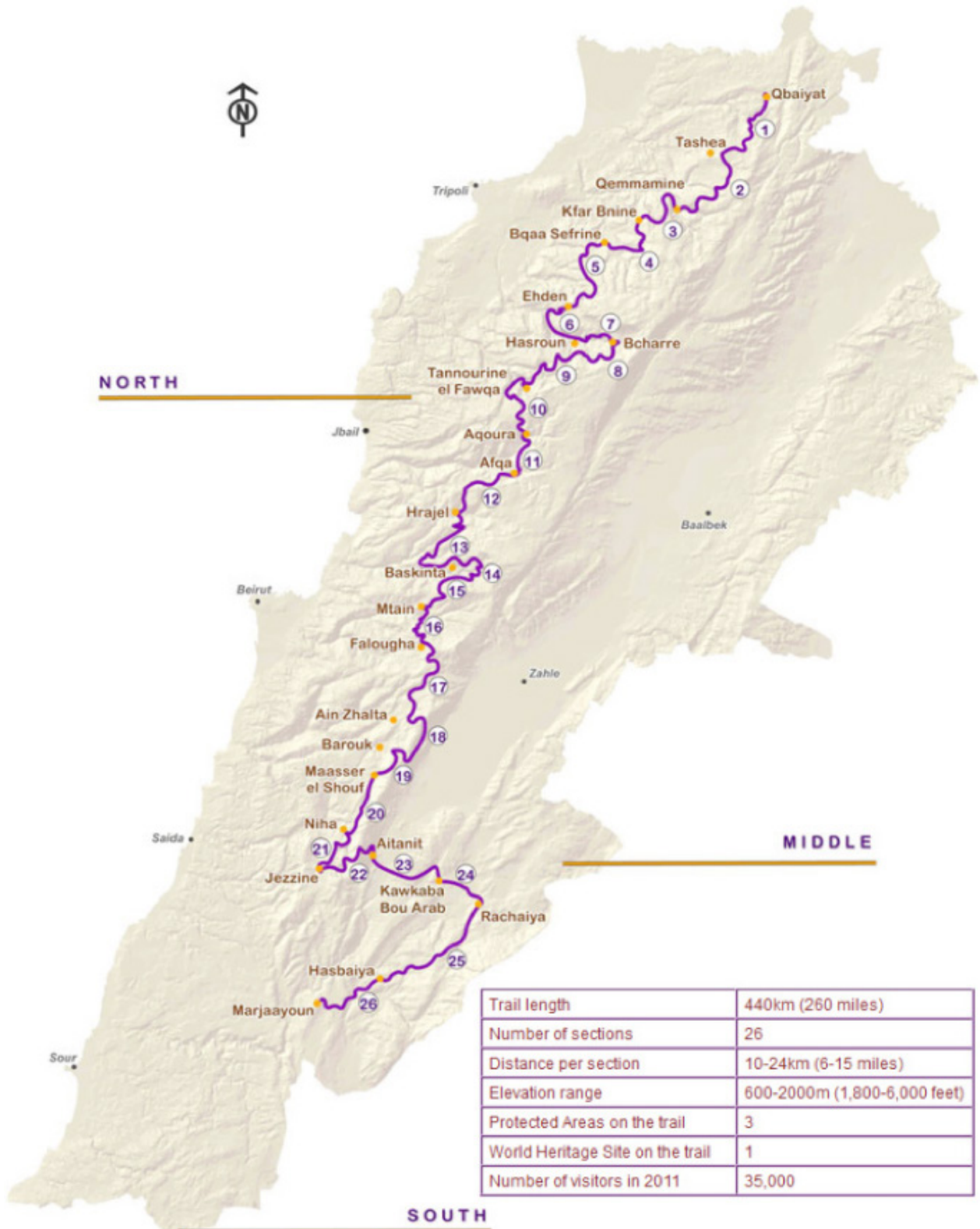








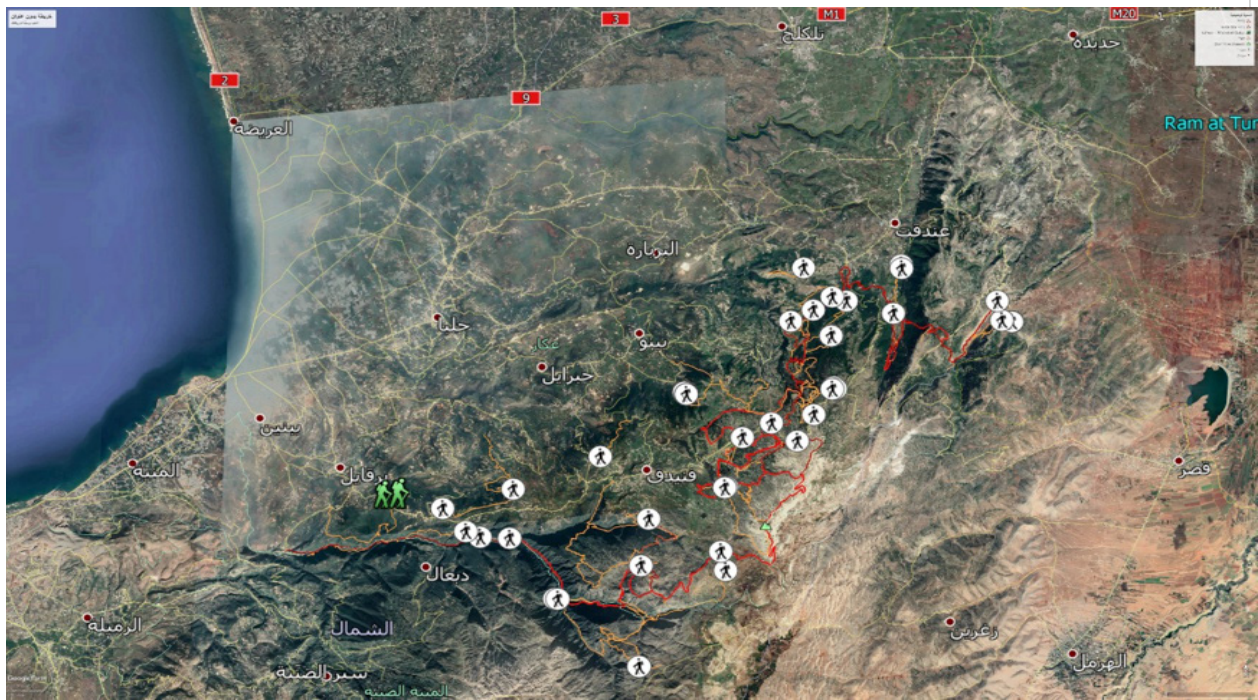
## Natural sites in AKKAR DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Lebanon Mountain Trail section A1,1,2	3	5	3

Note: 470 km crossing from North to South. [www.Lebanontrail.org](http://www.Lebanontrail.org). Needs protection on the national level, trail maintenance. The trail is blazed with purple and white.



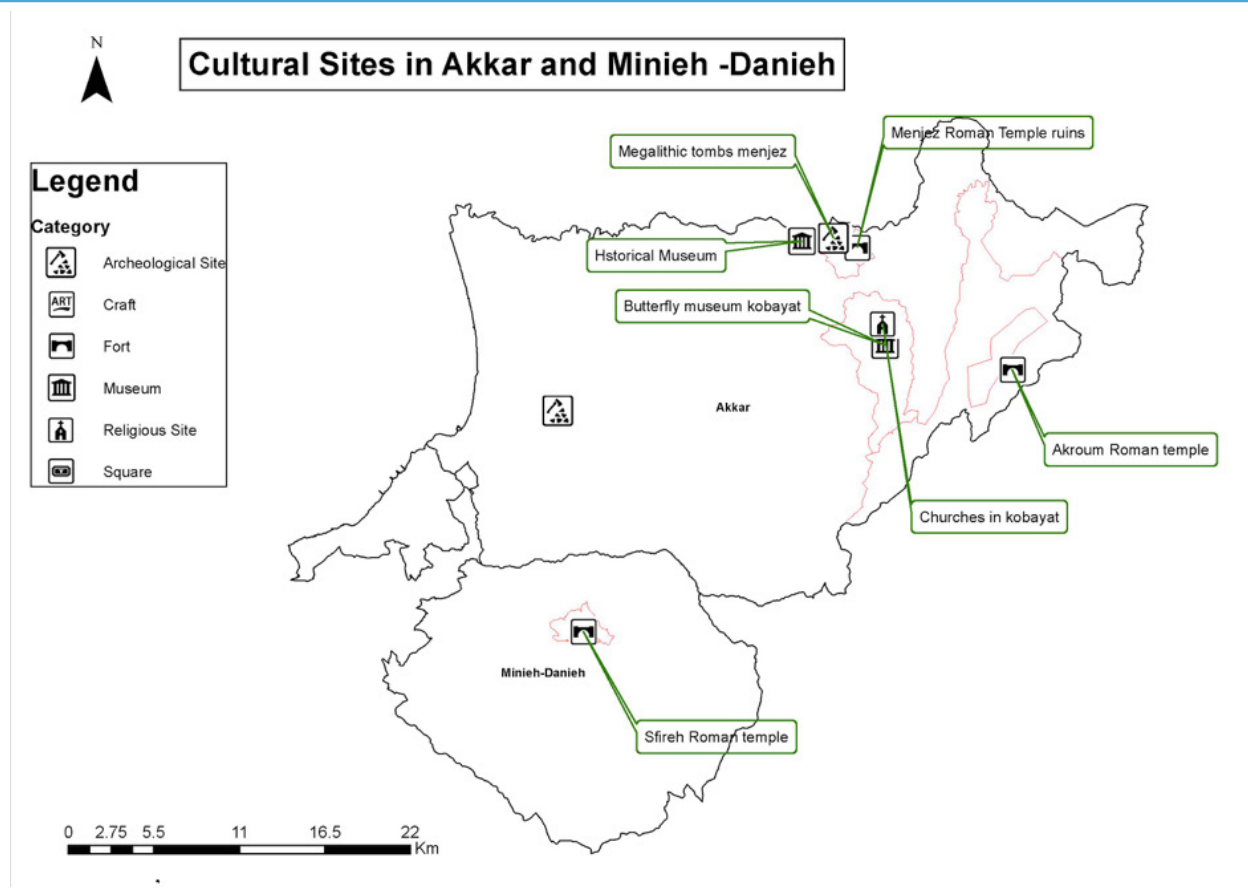
Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Karm Chbat Cedar reserve	2	4	4
Notes: Cedar nature reserve. One of the most beautiful Cedar reserves. But unfortunately it needs support and management for protection.				
	Kamouaa plain, forest	3	4	5
Notes: A well-known hiking destination rich in fir, Cedar and Juniper trees. There's a conflict between 3 municipalities on the ownership of the land. Protection measure should be put in place. Trails are blazed using green and red colors.				
	Fnaidiq forest	3	4	5
Notes: The richest fir trees forest in Lebanon. A well-known hiking destination and highly rich in biodiversity. Protection measure should be put in place.				
	Meshmesh Cedar forest	2	4	4
Notes: A well-known hiking destination and highly rich in biodiversity, an area where daily and new flora discovery is taking place. Protection measure should be put in place. Some of the trails are blazed using green and red colors. Akkar has potential of more than 300 km of hiking trails.				



	Ourouba summit	2	4	3
Notes: The highest summit in the Akkar district.				

# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



## MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



We are listing the attractions that are surrounding the pilot areas and can be part of tourism packages.

## Cultural Attractions in AKKAR DISTRICT



### North Lebanon – Akkar District – Menjiz

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Makaem el Rab, Jaalouk temple	2	2	3
Considered the only Roman temple in Lebanon built with basalt stones.				
	Crusader castle ruins ("Qalaat Felis")	2	1	3
	Lady of the Fort ("Deir Saydet El Qalaa")	3	1	3
	Menjiz tombs	3	1	3

An itinerary going through the dolmens of Menjiz

	Menjiz museum	2	2	3
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### North Lebanon – Akkar District – Qobayat

	Qobayat churches	3	1	2
	Butterfly museum	3	1	3

Notes: the only butterfly museum in Lebanon

### North Lebanon – Akkar District – Akroum

	Makaem el Rab, Jaalouk temple	2	2	3
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Roman temple, a large Byzantine church dedicated to Mar Shamshoum al-Jabbar (Saint Samson the Strong) and numerous cisterns. In the valley known as Wadi as-Saba', or Valley of the Lion, are two stels that appear to go back to Neo-Babylonian times. The area is rich in history, but it is forgotten and lack support and infrastructure.

### North Lebanon – Akkar District – Arqa

	Arqa archeological site	2	3	2
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Considered one of the most important sites in North Lebanon. An archeological site that goes back to Neolithic times and used to be a fortress

	Hosn Ibn Akkar	2	2	2
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# ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

## MAP WITH ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES



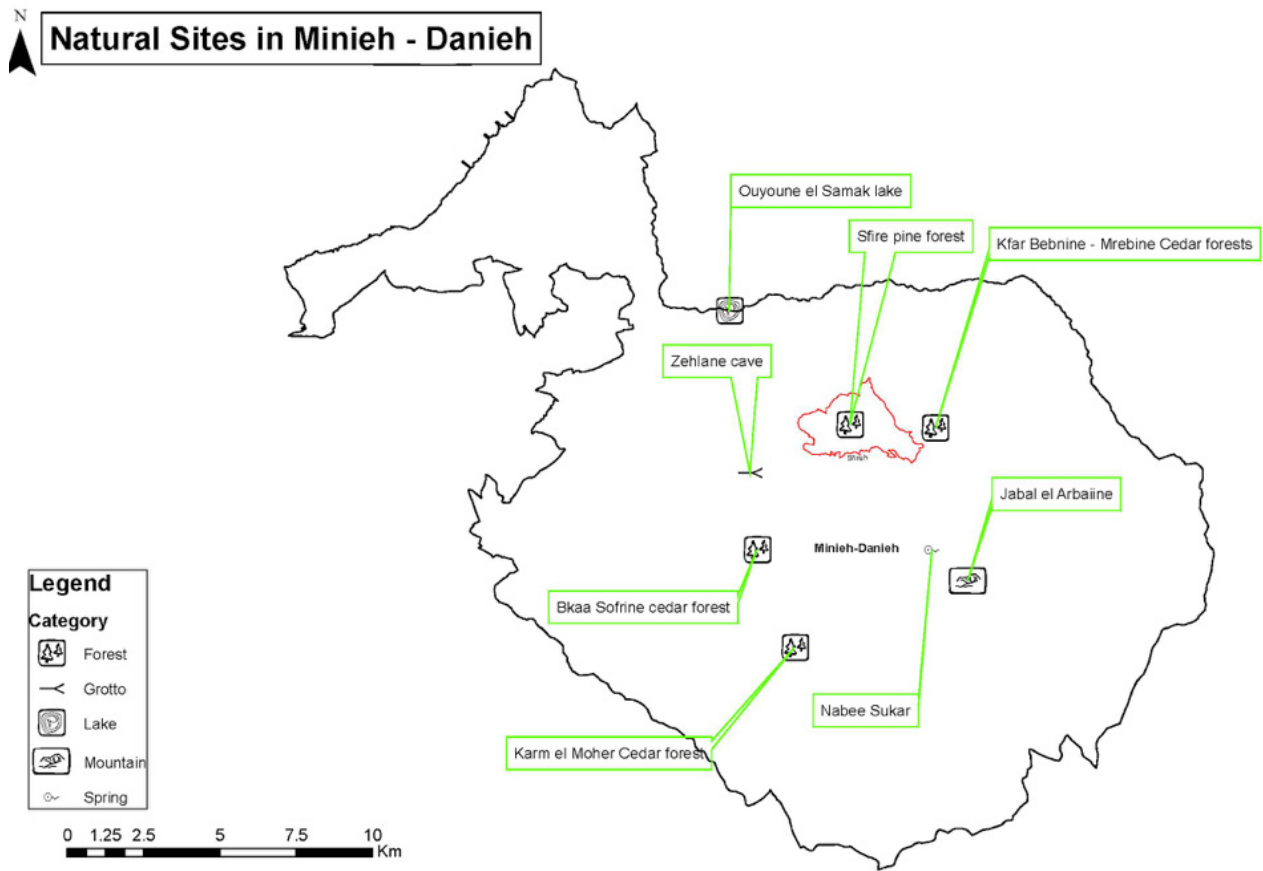
### 2.2.1.1 Doniyeh

Danieh is an extension of the Akkar wilderness and holds the highest plateau in Lebanon. Danieh offers deepest Valleys such Wadi Johanam considered the deepest Valley in Lebanon. The Sfireh village is town of the second biggest Roman temple. Cedar forest in Jairoun and Kfarbebnine are also a major attraction in the Danieh district but sadly these forests are being destroyed. The forest of Sfireh had new hiking trails within its domain. Dannieh is also an important bird area for migratory birds, but sadly they are being shot crucially. Danieh can


be considered a nature and adventure tourism attractions. Ten years ago an initiative was launched for the creation of a nature reserve, but sadly this initiative failed. Danieh Mountains need serious preservation plan and implementation in order to protect this natural capital. Several initiatives are taking place in the highlands: the scenic overlooking platform, a rural summer mountain village, Zehlan cave. Danieh lacks a network of good road conditions and tourism accommodations. Our concerns today is to turn the Danieh highlands into a 4wd destination resulting in damaging the highland ecosystem.




# NATURAL RESOURCES

## MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES



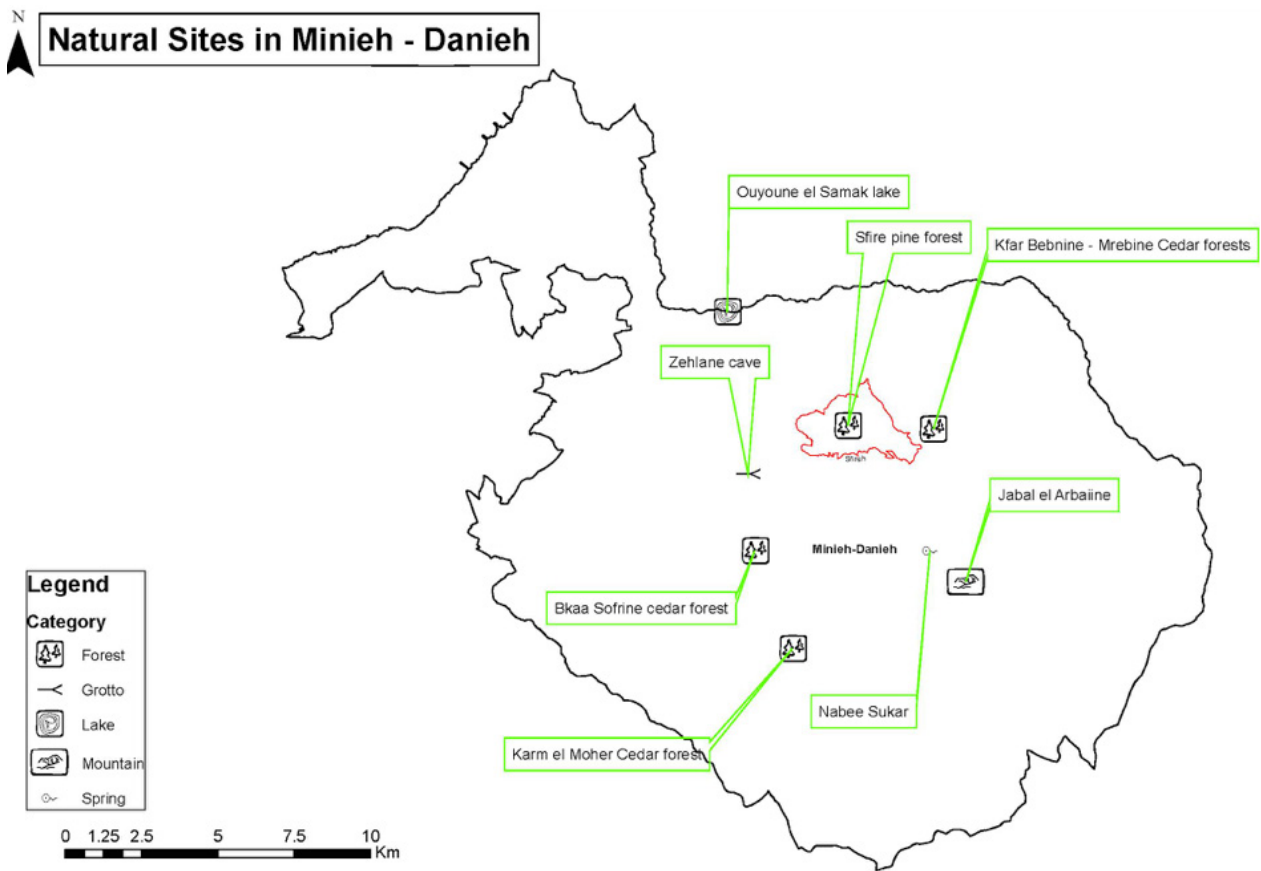
### Natural sites in DANIEH DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Wadi Jonaham	2	5	5
Notes: Considered one of the deepest valley in Lebanon, and a potential hiking destination. Protection measure should be put in place.				
	Mrebine and Kfar Bebnine / Cedar trees forest	2	4	4
Notes: Rich in cedar trees. The area is proposed to be a nature reserve. Protection measure should be put in place.				
	Highlands of Donniyeh	3	4	3
Notes: This part of the mountain needs to be protected and the promotion of soft adventure tourism such as mountain biking, hiking, back country skiing and snowshoeing.				
	Zehlane cave	4	2	3
Notes: Located in the Donniyeh district and open for public				

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Zod cave	2	3	3
Notes: Located in the Donniyeh district. Accessible by cavers only.				
	Sfireh pine forest	3	3	3
Notes: Considered among the biggest pine forest in Lebanon. Recently hiking trails were delineated inside the forest. Considered a hub for migratory birds, unfortunately hunting is not regulated in this area				
	Ouyoune es Samak lakes	4	3	2
A hiking destination. The site needs serious cleaning from garbage. Potential of developing a network of hiking trails with the surrounding communities.				


## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS





## Cultural Attractions in DONIYEH DISTRICT

### North Lebanon – Doniyeh District – Sfireh

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Sfireh temple	2	2	2

Second biggest Roman temple in Lebanon

### North Lebanon – Tripoli

	Saint Giles fortress	4	1	2
	Tripoli Souk	4	1	2
	Taynal mosque	3	1	2

### 2.2.2. Zgharta District

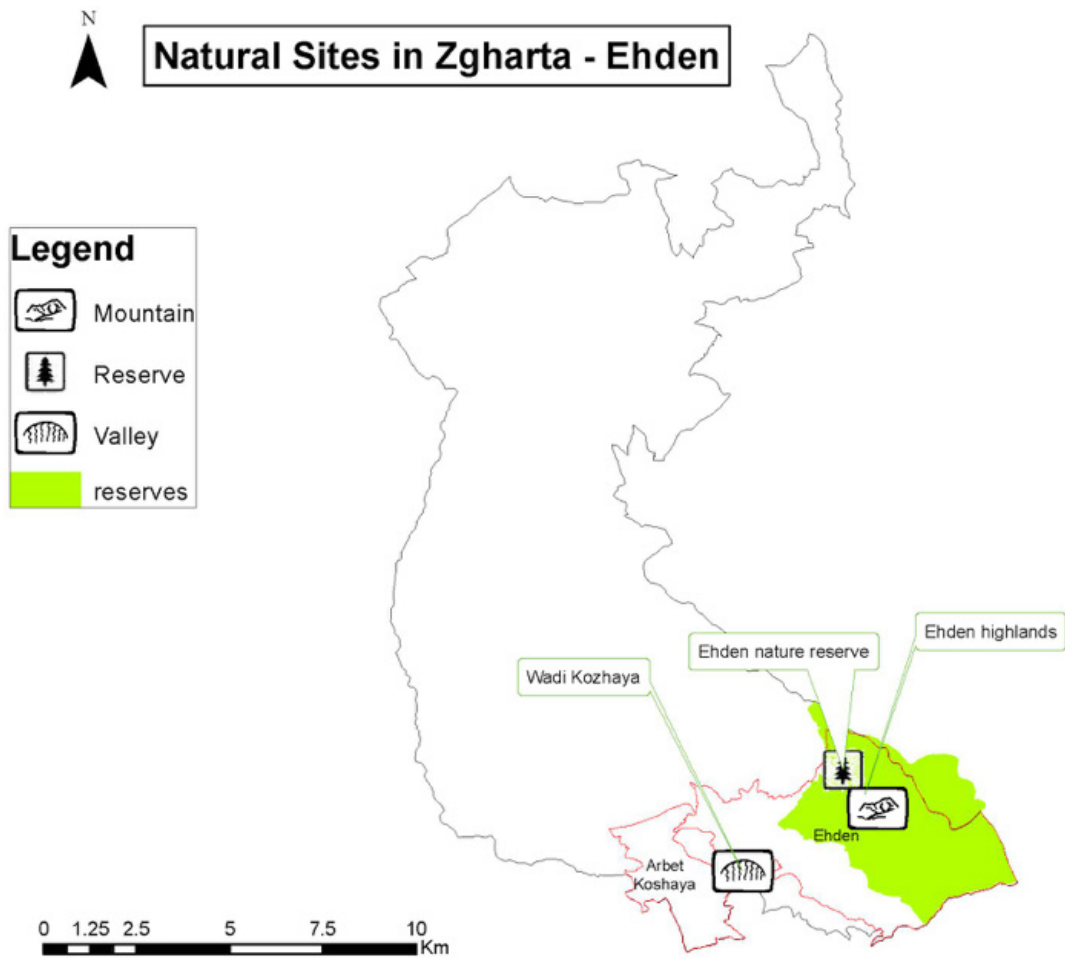
Zgharta and Ehden are two towns with the same population. Zgharta is the administrative and winter town, whereas Ehden is the summer town. During the old days people used to go through transhumance every year together moving during summer and winter. Today Ehden offers many attractions for the area and holds a Cedar nature reserve considered the benchmark for nature ecosystem and biodiversity. Ehden holds also the oldest Maronite church in Lebanon, Yousef

Beik Karam a national figure and Wadi Kozhaya part of the Qadicha Valley, a UNESCO world heritage site. Today Ehden is a summer town destination working on highlighting its attractions. Ehden is a multifaceted destination for natural, culinary and religious tourism. Attractions in Ehden are protected and highlighted. The nature reserve plays the role of the main attraction along with the highland for 4Wd lovers, hikers, paragliders, snowshoers and back country skiers.




# NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

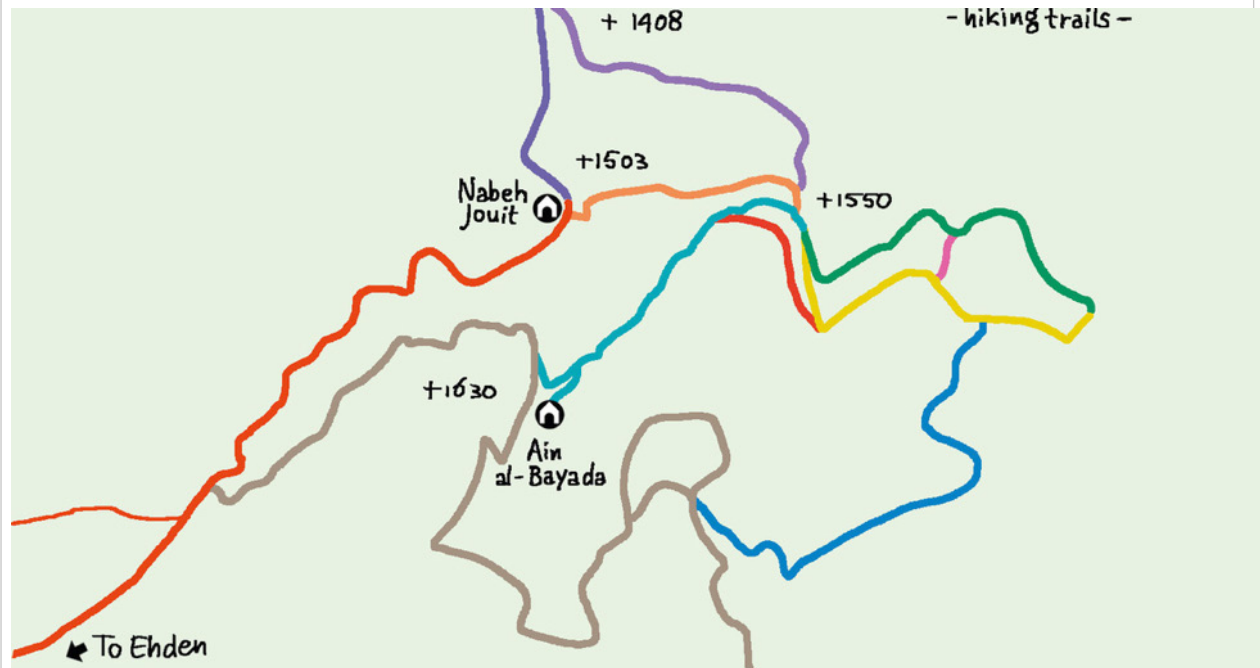
## MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



## Natural sites in ZGHARTA DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Ehden reserve	4	4	5

Notes: [www.Horshehden.org](http://www.Horshehden.org) Trails inside the reserve are marked with wooden signs.



Ehden highland

Notes: A destination for 4wd lovers in summer and snowmobilers in winter. This part of the mountain needs to be regulated and the promotion of soft adventure tourism such as mountain biking, hiking, back country skiing and snowshoeing.

	Qozhaya Valley (in quadisha)	4	4	5
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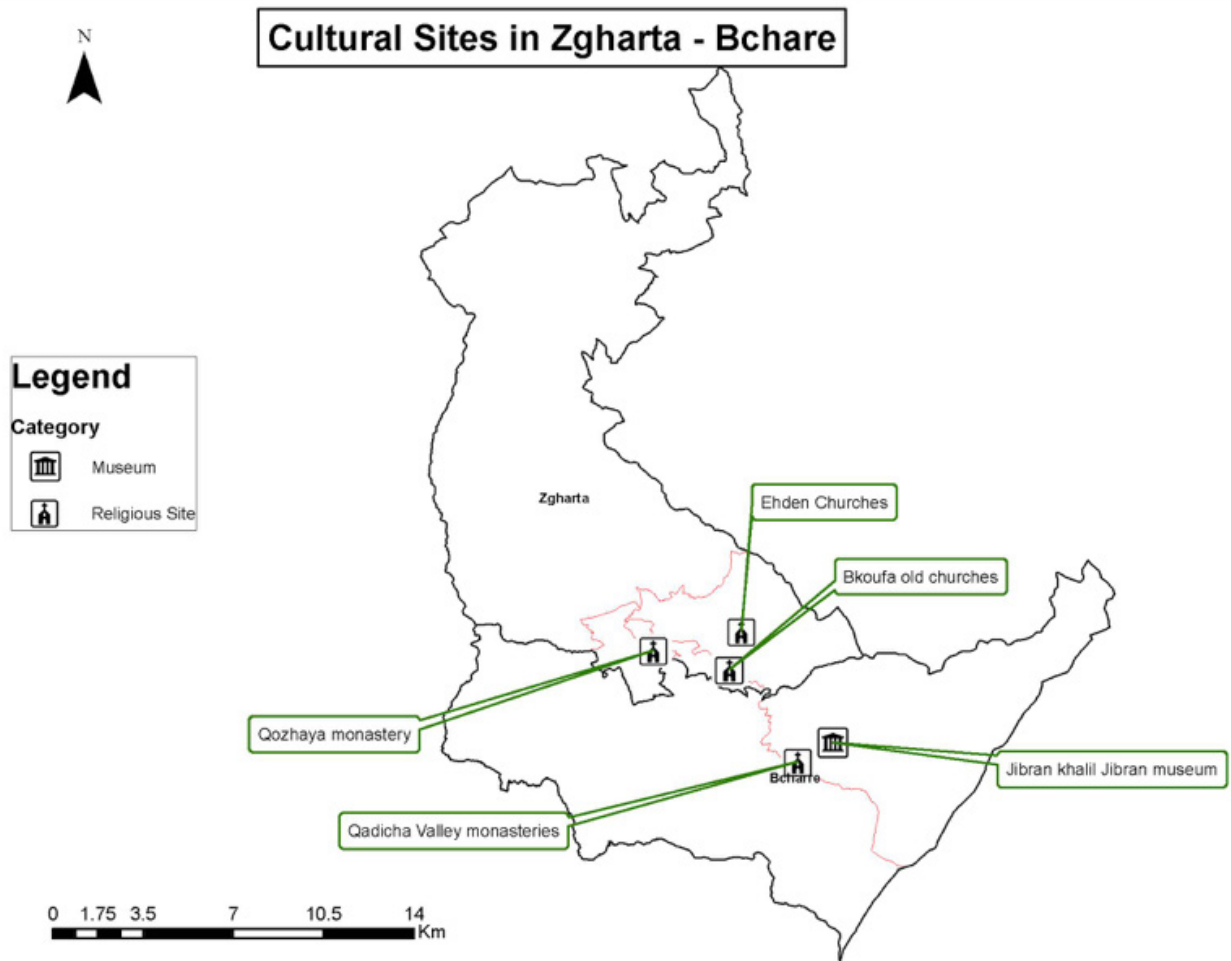
Notes: Part of the Qadicha Valley and holds one of the oldest monasteries in the Valley.

	Mazraet el teffeh waterfall	2	4	3
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Notes: A 100 m waterfall suitable for canyoning activities.

# CULTURAL ATTRACTION



## MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTION



We are listing the attractions that are surrounding the pilot areas and can be part of tourism packages.

# Cultural Attractions in ZGHARTA DISTRICT

North Lebanon – Zgharta District – Ehden

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Ehden churches	4	2	2
Including the oldest Maronite church in Lebanon.				
	Saint Antonios Kozhaya Monastery	4	2	2
An ancient monastery in Kozhaya Valley.				

## ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

### MAP WITH ADVENTURE ATTRACTIONS

#### Adventure Tourism Activities in Zgharta



- Legend**  
**Natural Activities**
-  Wine Tasting
  -  Surfing
  -  River swimming
  -  Mountaineering
  -  Horseback riding
  -  Diving
  -  Canoe Kayak
  -  Backcountry skiing
  -  Agritourism
  -  Hiking
  -  Camping
  -  Snowshoeing
  -  Rock climbing
  -  Canyoning
  -  Caving
  -  Rapelling
  -  4wd
  -  ATV
  -  Snowmobiling
  -  Alpine skiing
  -  Biking
  -  Adventure Park
  -  Bird Watching
  -  Nordic Skiing
  -  Paragliding
  -  Star gazing
  -  Via ferrata
  -  Zipline
  -  Ecotourism

0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10 Kilometers

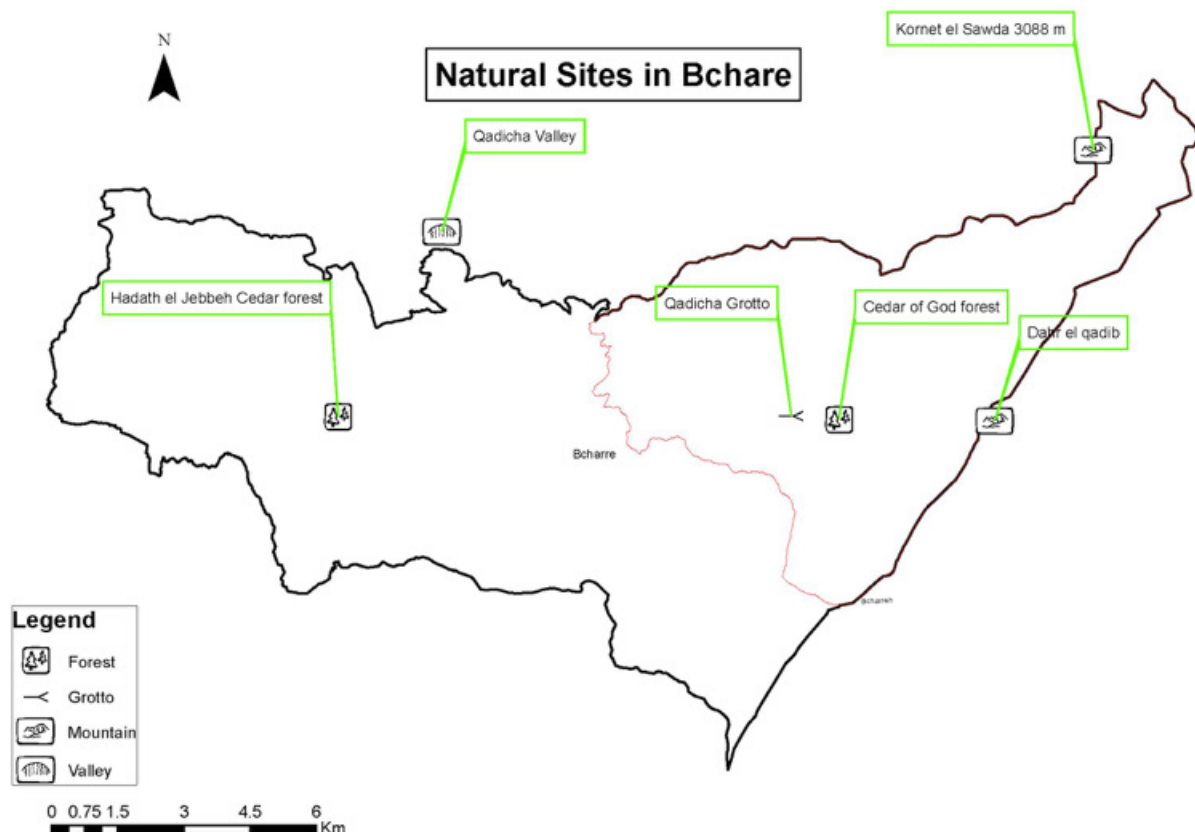
## 2.2.3 Bchare

Home of the UNESCO site the Qadicha Valley, and the hometown of the famous writer and poet Gibran Khalil Gibran and the Cedar of God forest. Bechare district offers a multitude of tourism attractions from religious tourism to cultural, nature and adventure tourism. Many initiatives took place since the development of the ski area located at the footstep of the highest summit in the Middle Kornet es Sawda 3088m. Bechare district is considered an all year round destination attracting different profile of visitors from hikers and pilgrimages willing to explore the Qadicha Valley through a wide




network of hiking trails, to alpine skiers, ski mountaineering, mountaineers willing to ascent the highest summit, hiking events in the forest of Hadath el Jebbeh . The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses the Bechare district through sections (5, 6, and 7). Worth mentioning Hadath el Jebbeh cave where the only mummified mummies were discovered, to the beauty of the Lebanese architecture and Red roof houses of Hasroune. The area offers a wide network of lodging facilities ranking from hotels, to homestays, monasteries. Information can be found online but most of the reservation are made via phone calls.

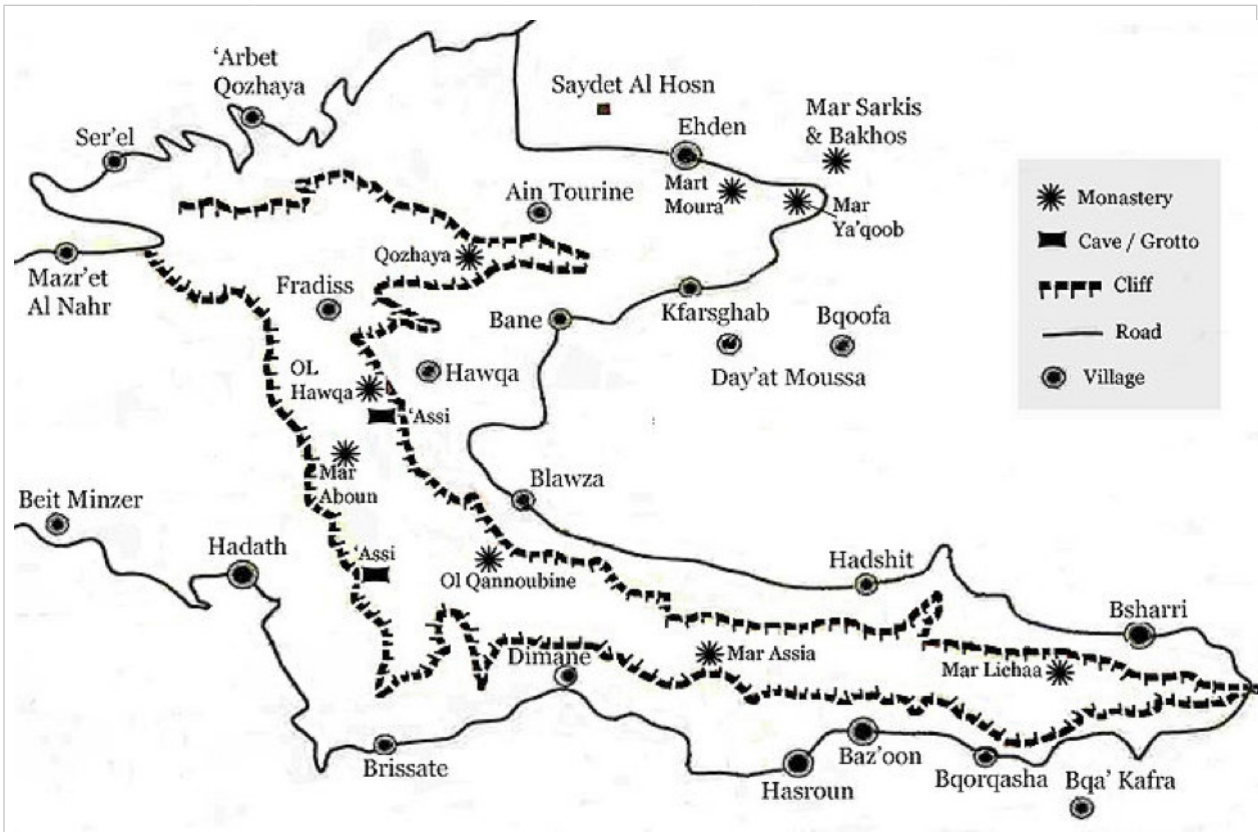
## NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

### MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



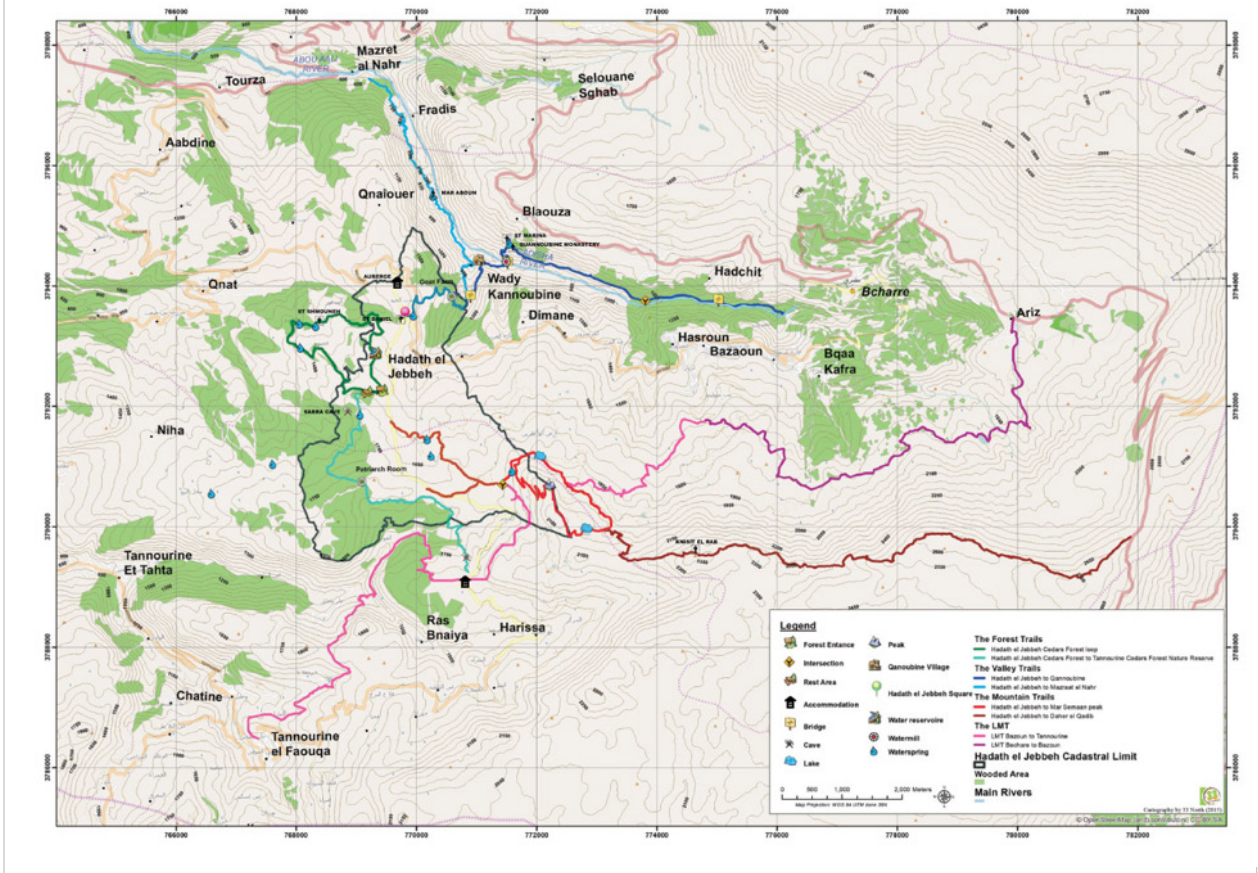
## Natural sites in BCHARE DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Jabal el Makmel & Kornet es Sawda	3	4	5
Notes: Highest mountain plateau in Lebanon that holds the Middle East highest summit Kornet es Sawda 3088m, a destination for hikers, 4wd, snowshoers, mountaineers and backcountry skiing.				
	Cedar of GOD forest	4	3	5
Notes: Oldest cedar forest located in the Bchare region at 2000 m above sea level.				
	Qadicha Valley	4	4	5
Notes: UNESCO world heritage site .equipped with hiking trails. A recent plan was developed to promote the area as a religious tourism destination.				



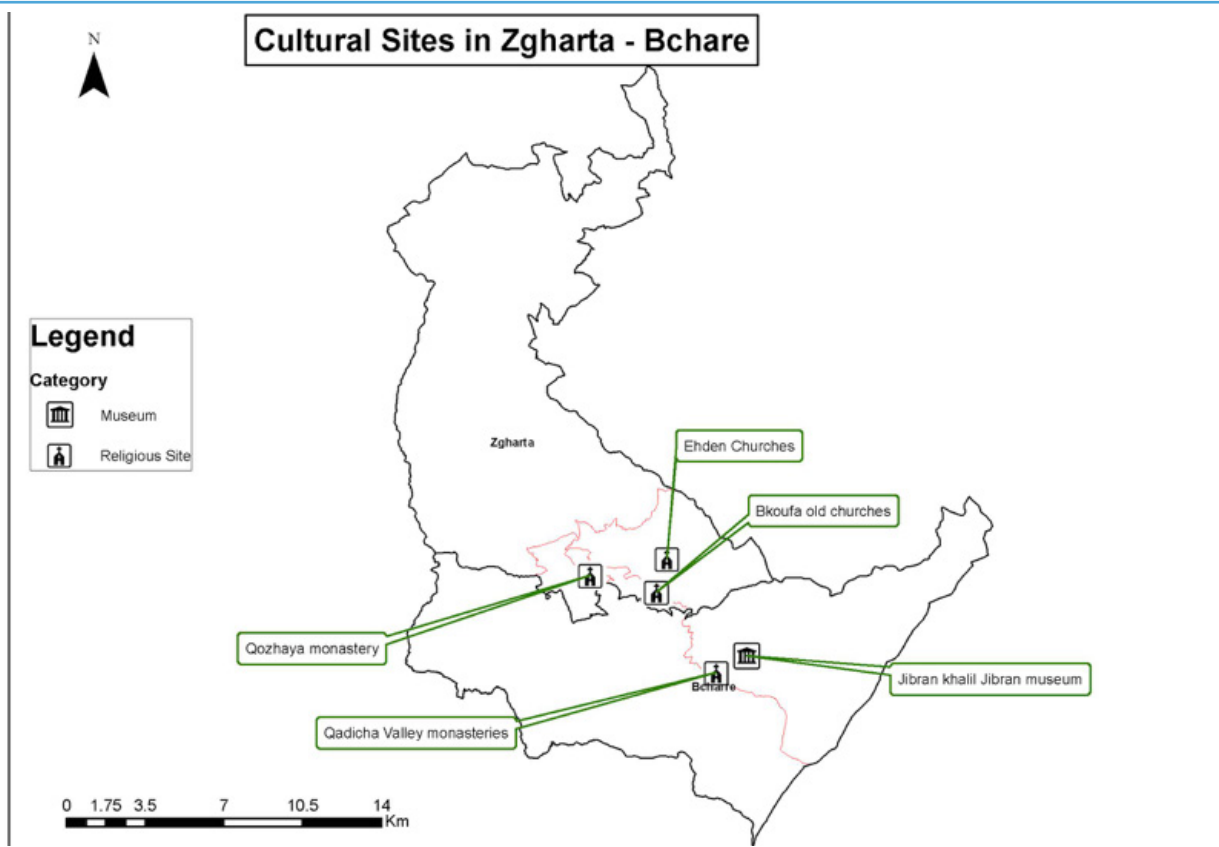
	Hadath el Jebbeh Cedar forest	3	4	3
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Notes: A hiking destination with blazed trails visited by hikers all year long. Trails are blazed with red, white, blue and yellow colors.






# CULTURAL ATTRACTION

## MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



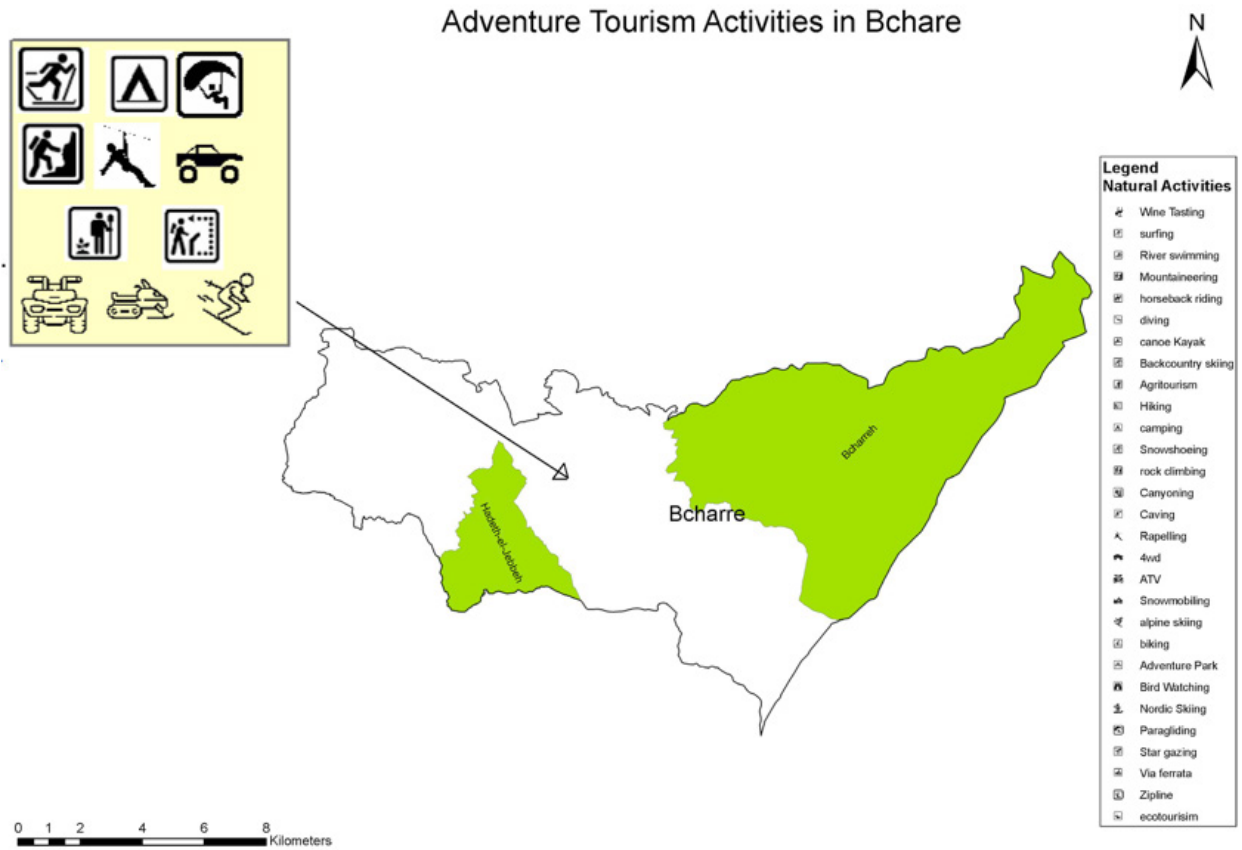
We are listing the attractions that are surrounding the pilot areas and can be part of tourism packages.

Cultural Attractions in BCHARE DISTRICT				
North Lebanon – Bchare District – Bchare				
Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Jibran Khalil Jibran museum	4	1	4
Museum dedicated to the famous Lebanese writer and poet				
North Lebanon – Bchare District				
 	The Qadicha Valley	4	4	3
Assi el Hadath grotto and several monasteries				
	Cedars of God Forest	4	2	3
Notes: Oldest Cedar trees in Lebanon				



# ADVENTURE ATTRACTION

## MAP WITH ADVENTURE ATTRACTIONS



## 2.2.4 Batroun

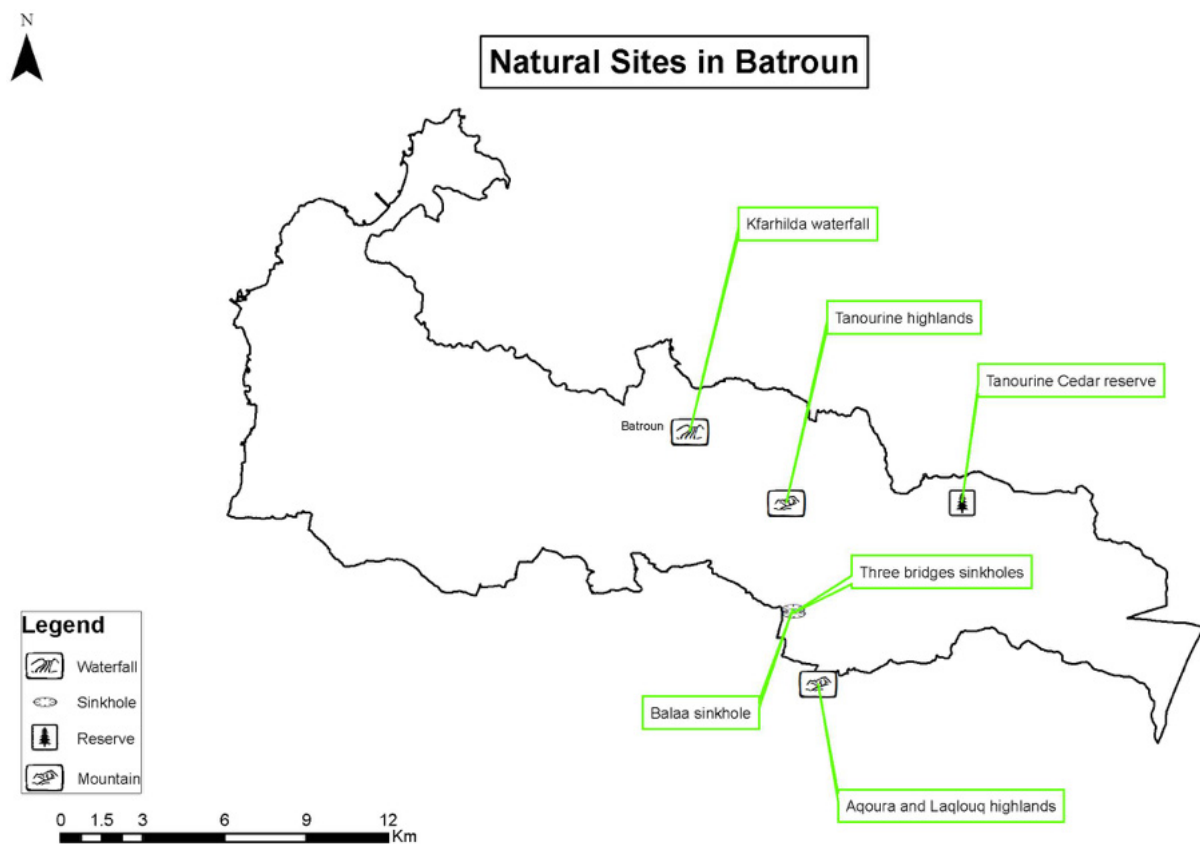
A rich area combining nature, culture and adventure. From Lebanese architecture houses and old souk of Douma village, to Baatara sinkhole with its 250m depth and unique geological formations. Tanourine village located in upper Batroun is the hometown of the nature Cedar reserve and the biggest rock climbing sector in the Middle East. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses the upper Batroune area through sections # 9, 10 and Douma side trails,

along with other hiking trails in Bechaaleh, Douma, and the new proposed hiking trails project from Msailha to Kfarhelda.



The Batroun coastal area is also an attraction for the sea lovers enjoying wind, kitesurf and scuba diving. Batroun town is also known and visited to its Phoenician wall, old souk, and the mouthwatering lemonade juice.

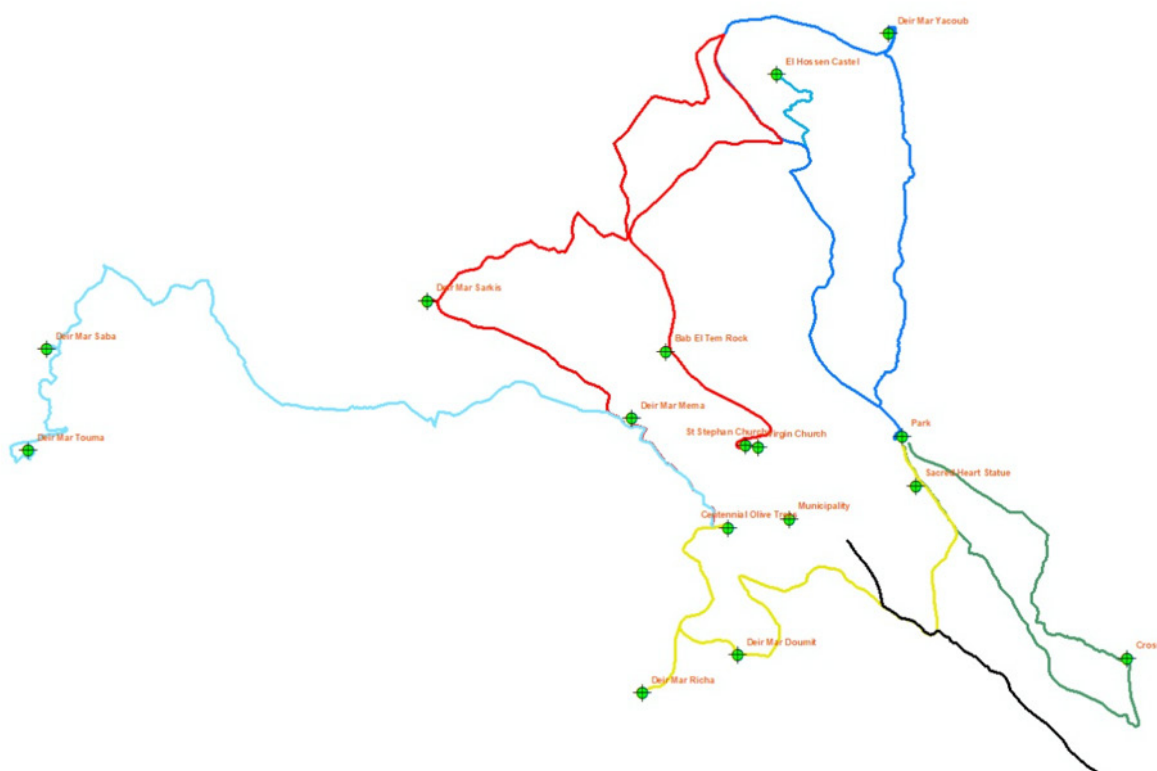
## NATURAL RESOURCES

### MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



## Natural sites in BATROUN DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Tanourine Cedar Forest	3	3	4
Notes: the biggest natural Cedar forest. Trails inside the reserve are marked with wooden signs.				
	Kfarhelda waterfall	3	3	3
Notes: Remarkable waterfall during snow melt season				
	3 bridges sinkhole and waterfall	4	4	4
	Bechaaleh Trails	3	3	3

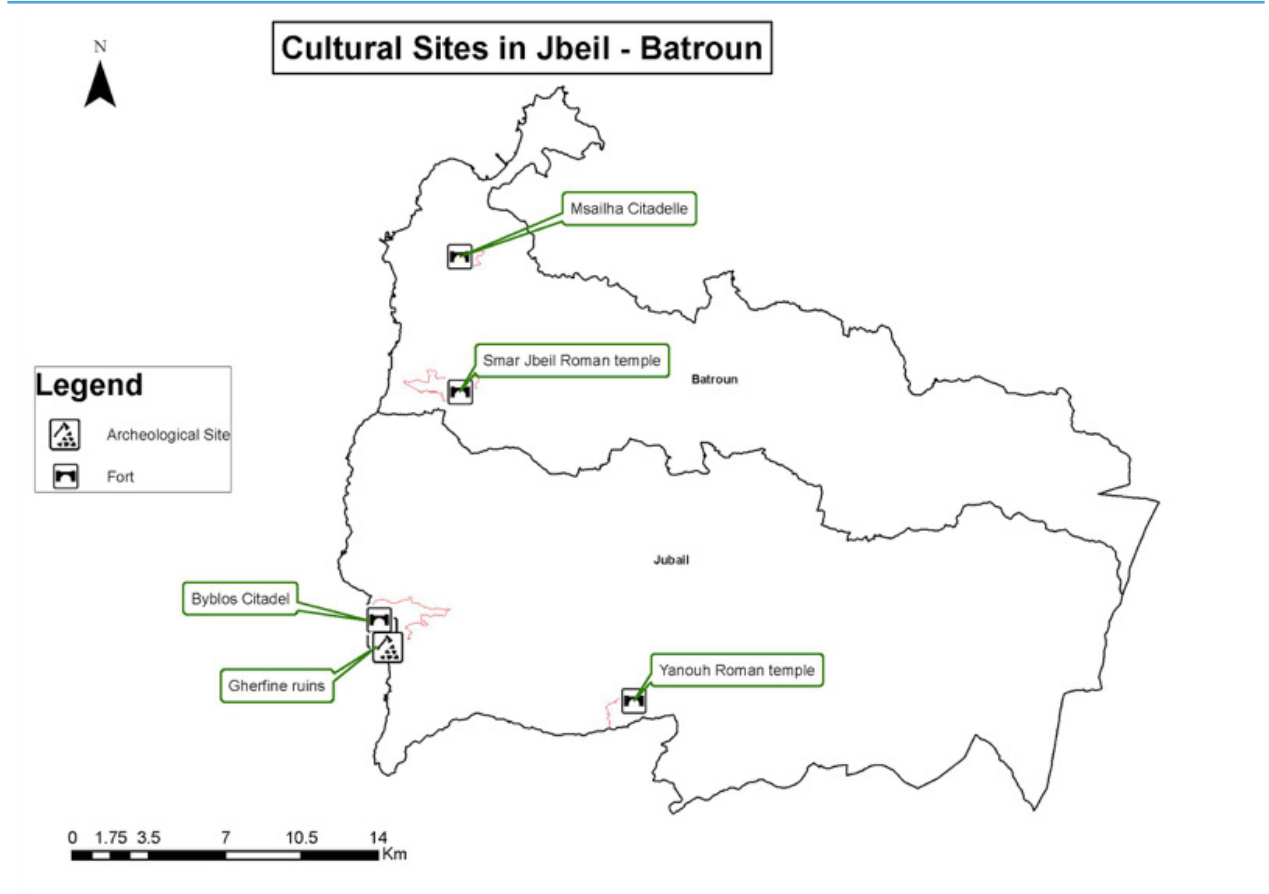


	Msaylha Trail	4	2	2
	Three Bridges sinkhole	4	2	3

Notes: Known as Balou Baatara, an interesting and unique geological formation. A well-known visited 250 m sinkhole. Requires serious protection and to remove soft infrastructure existing on site

# CULTURAL RESOURCES




## MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



We are listing the attractions that are surrounding the pilot areas and can be part of tourism packages.

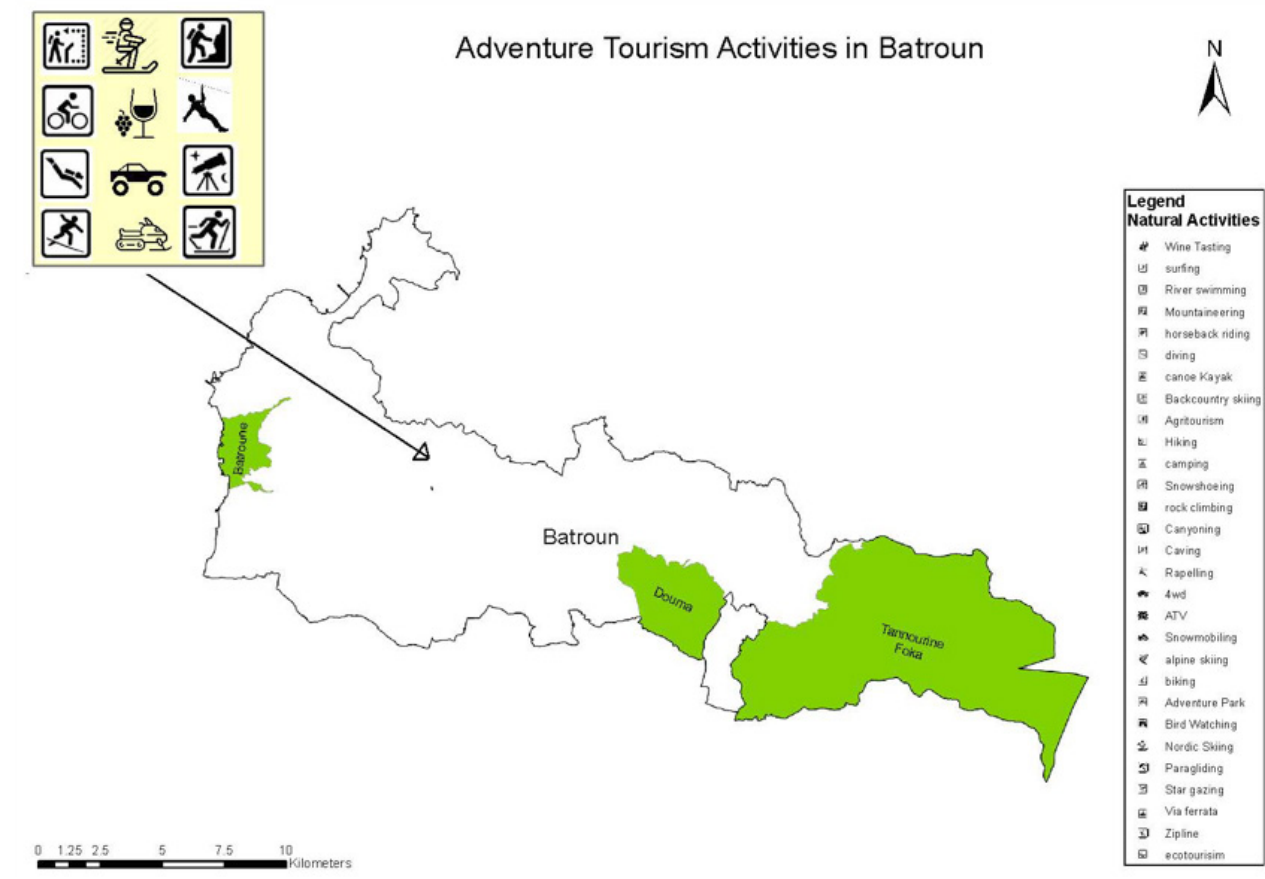
# Cultural Attractions in BATROUN DISTRICT

North Lebanon – Bchare District – Bchare

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Msailha fortress	4	2	2
Notes: Crusader fortress / newly rehabilitated hiking trail				
	Batroun Souk	4	1	2
	Batroun Phoenician wall	4	2	2
	Douma town and Souk	3	1	3
Notes: a typical Lebanese village with red roof houses, old souk, old cinema				

## ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

### MAP WITH ADVENTURE ATTRACTIONS



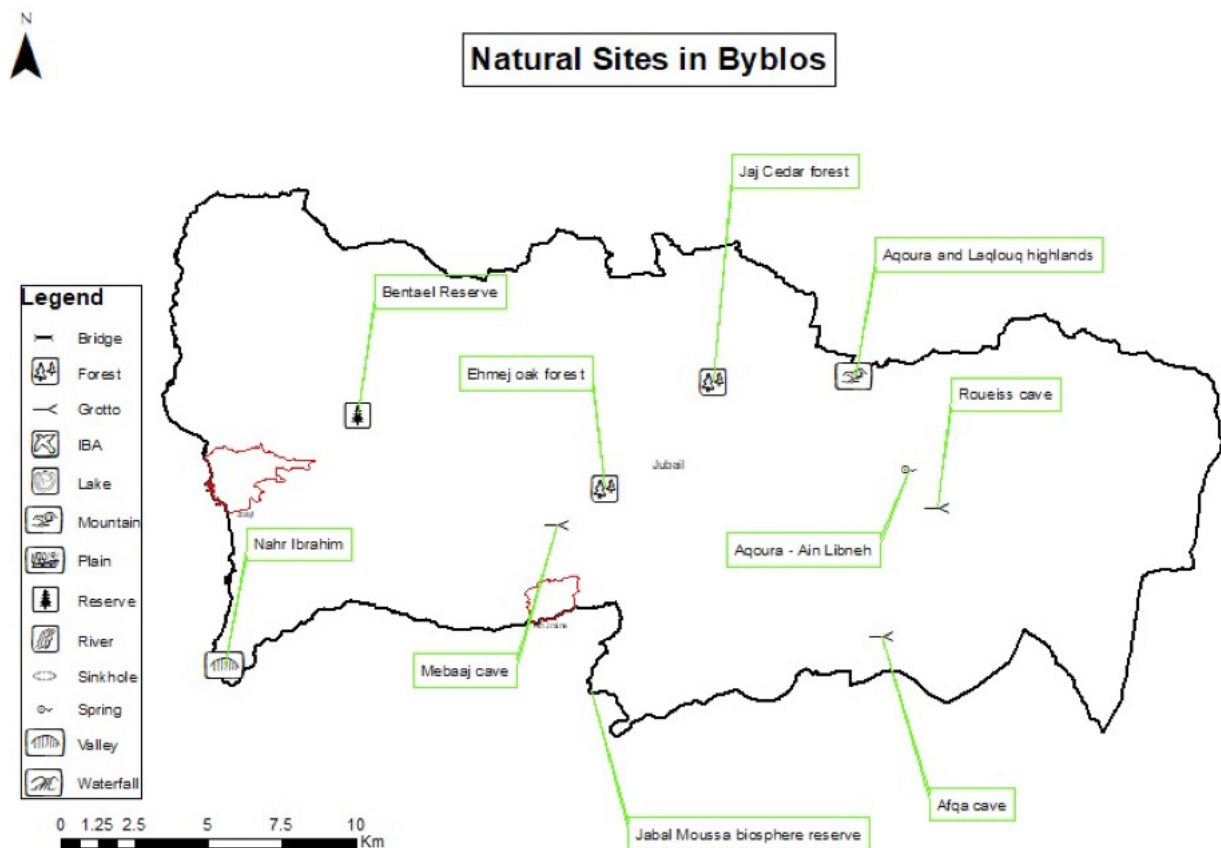
## 2.2.5 Byblos

A multifaceted area offering cultural, religious and natural attractions. The Coastal area is known by Byblos fortress, and old Souk; Bentaël nature reserve for ecotourism addicts offering hiking trails and adventure park. Anaya is attracted by pilgrims to visit Saint Charbel monastery, whereas the highland such as Ehmej, Aqoura, Almat, and Afqa offers a destination for nature lovers. Ehmej is known for its iron oak forest, rock climbing site and camping areas, Jaj for its Cedar


forest, Afqa for its cave, waterfall and Juniper trees, and Aqoura for its Roueiss cave and highland. The mentioned area offers a network of hiking trails, along with the LMT sections 10, 11, 12 and Ehmej side trails, rock climbing sites, agri-tourism experience, ski station, 2 caving sites, and facilities for atv and snowmobile renting. Its proximity to Beirut attracts a wide range of visitors along with several accommodation possibilities available in the area.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



## Natural sites in BYBLOS DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Bentael pine reserve	3	3	3

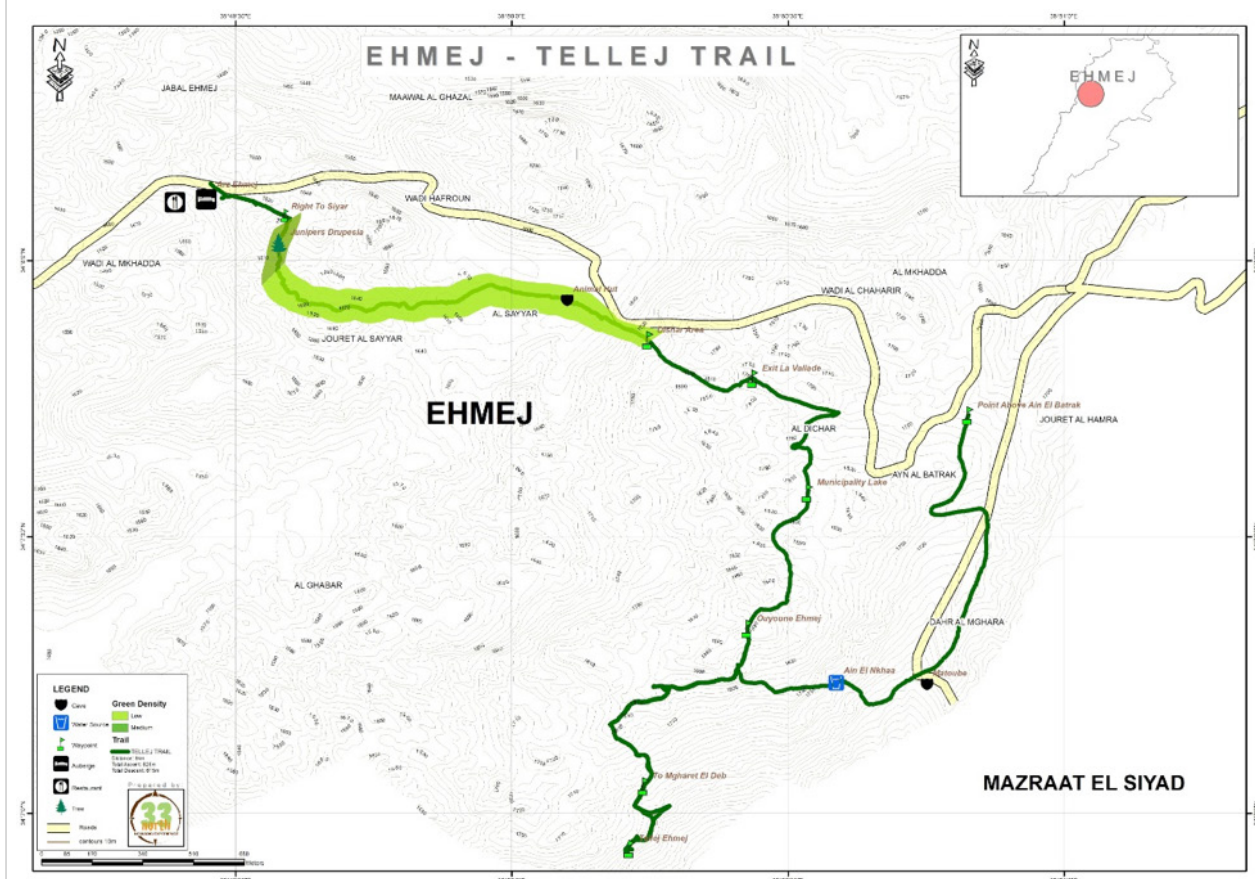
Notes: The only pine and oak reserve in Lebanon with 10 km of hiking trails and equipped with rope course activities. Trails inside the reserve are marked with wooden signs.

	Jaj Cedar forest	3	4	4
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Notes: A Cedar forest with hiking trails linked to the surrounding villages

	Ehmej iron oak forest & hiking trails	3	4	4
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Notes: Ehmej offers 17 hiking trails for a distance of 196 km and 2 of them crosses this iron oak forest. This forest is the only iron oak forest in Mount Lebanon.



	Laqlouq Mountains and ski station	3	3	3
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Notes: Family run ski resort located in the upper district.

	Mebaaj cave	3	2	3
---	-------------	---	---	---

Notes: Open for cave visit

	Afqa cave / waterfall and temple	4	3	3
---	----------------------------------	---	---	---

Notes: one of Lebanon's deepest cave with a distance of 5.5 km located next to the Afqa temple and waterfall

	Roueiss cave	3	3	3
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Notes: the second deepest cave in Lebanon with a distance of 6 km. recreational caving destination.

	Afqa Juniper trees forest	2	3	3
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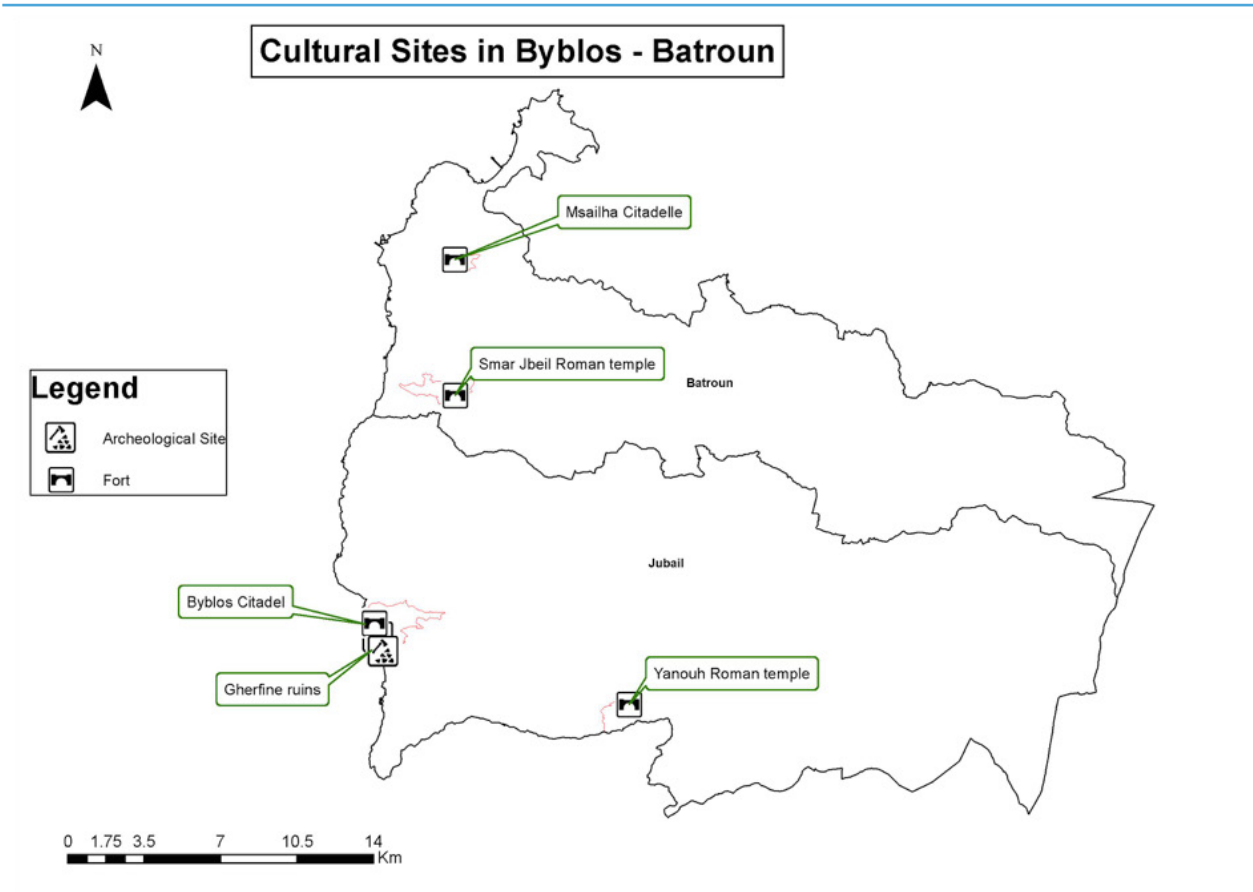
Notes: we suggest the delineation of hiking trails

	Ain lebneh	1	3	3
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Notes: A cave under rehabilitation to be opened for public visits

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



We are listing the attractions that are surrounding the pilot areas and can be part of tourism packages.



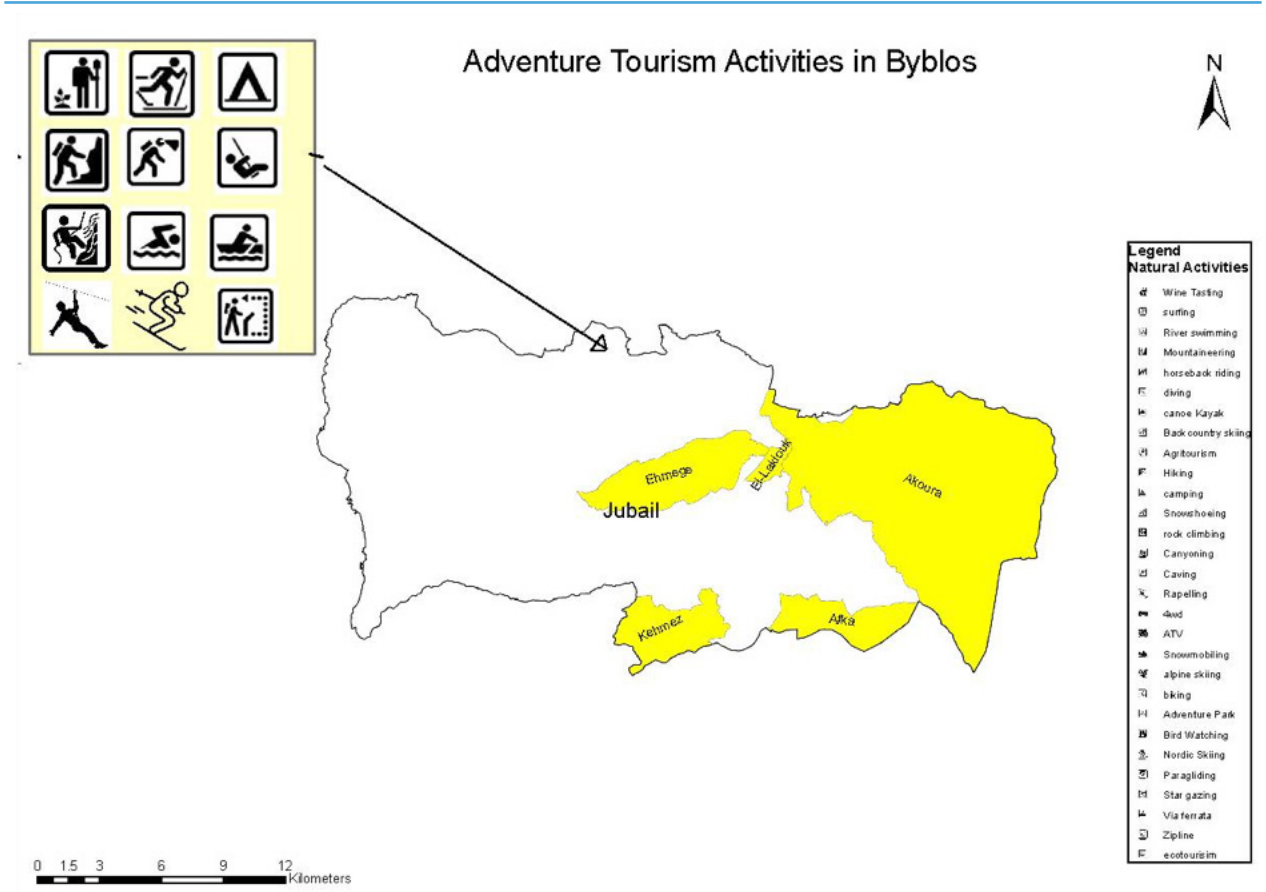
# Cultural Attractions in BATROUN DISTRICT

## Mount Lebanon – Byblos

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Byblos citadel and Souk	4	3	4
A well visited site in almost all tourism tours				
	Afqa temple	3	3	2
Located in the mountains of Byblos, next to the cave and waterfall.				
	Saint Charbel	4	2	3
Notes: the most known and visited Christian Maronite shrine in Lebanon				
	Aqoura Churches	3	2	2
Notes: A village known for its old churches and the most important Saint Peter and Paul that used to be a Roman tomb.				

## ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

### MAP WITH ADVENTURE ATTRACTIONS



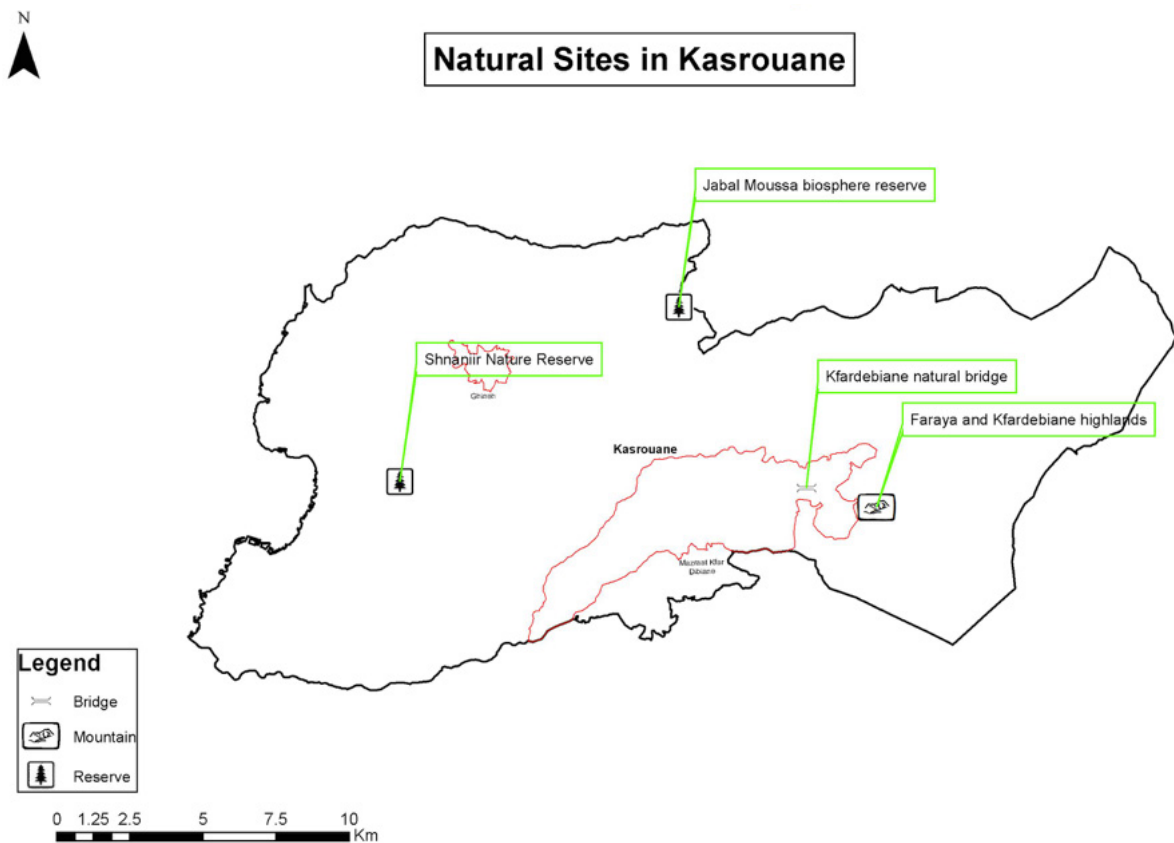
## 2.2.6 Kasrouane

A highly developed district offering a wide range of attractions and tourism trends. With many tourism attractions from the most developed ski resort in the Middle East, to a wide network of approximately 160 km of hiking trails, along with the LMT sections 12, 13&14. To Roman temples and many other cultural attractions that are preserved and highlighted on the tourism


map. Kasrouane district is considered an all year destination with a variety of accommodations and tourism offers. The area covers a wide range of activities from winter to summer: ski, snowmobile, quad and 4wd, snowshoeing and backcountry skiing, paragliding, hiking, trekking, agri-tourism, diving.

## NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

### MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



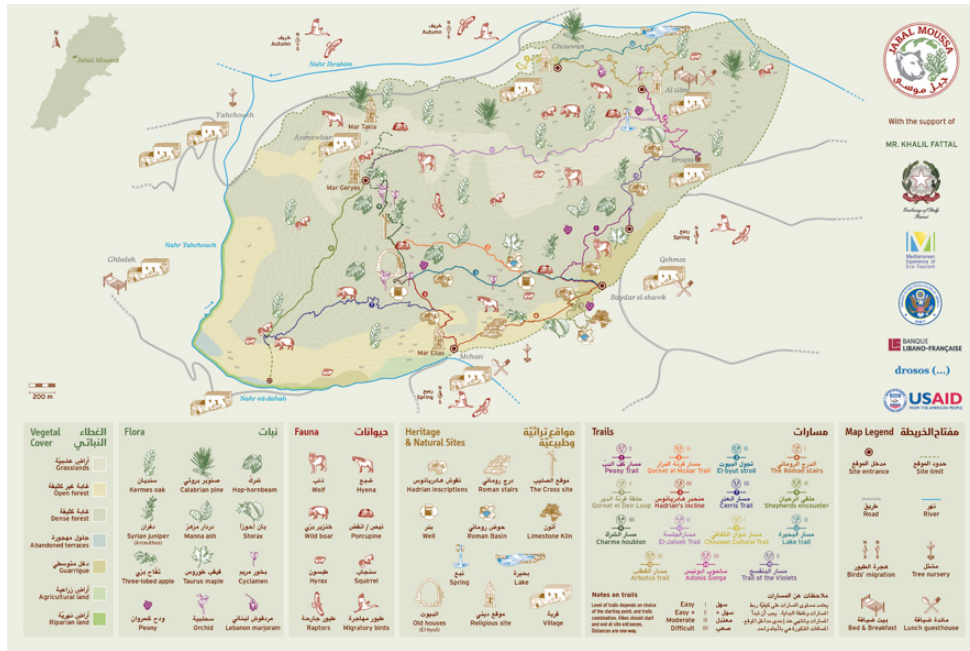
# Natural sites in BYBLOS DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Nahr Ibrahim river	4	4	3

Notes: A summer destination for fresh water lovers

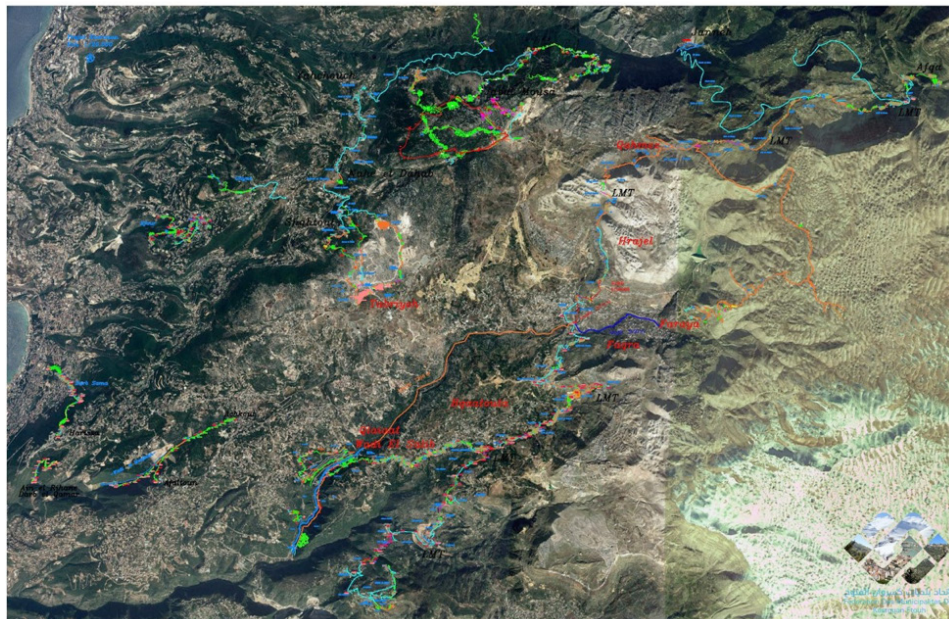
	Jabal Moussa biosphere reserve	3	4	4
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Notes: UNESCO Biosphere reserve. We suggest to link the reserve with the sections of the Lebanon Mountain Trail. Trails inside the reserve are marked with wooden signs and blazing in red and white.

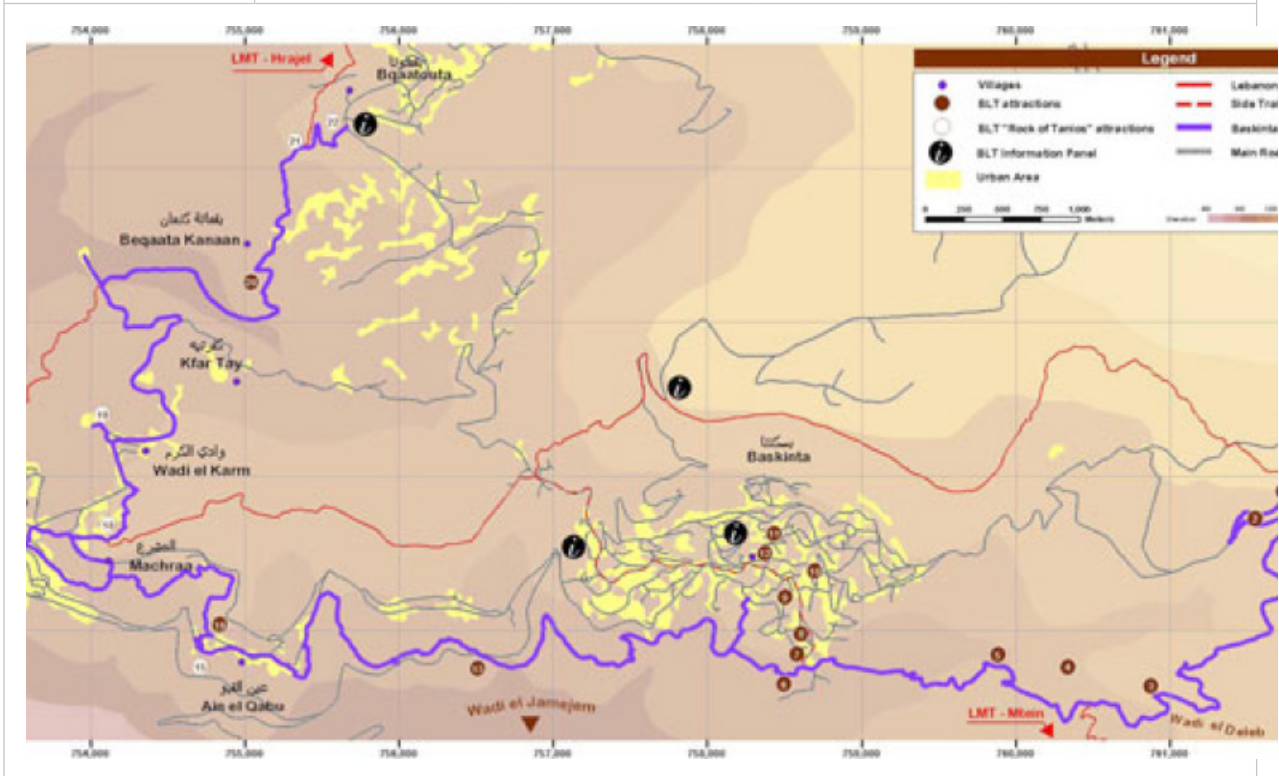


	Kasrouane Hiking Trails	3	4	3
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Notes: a network of hiking trails, some of them needs maintenance.

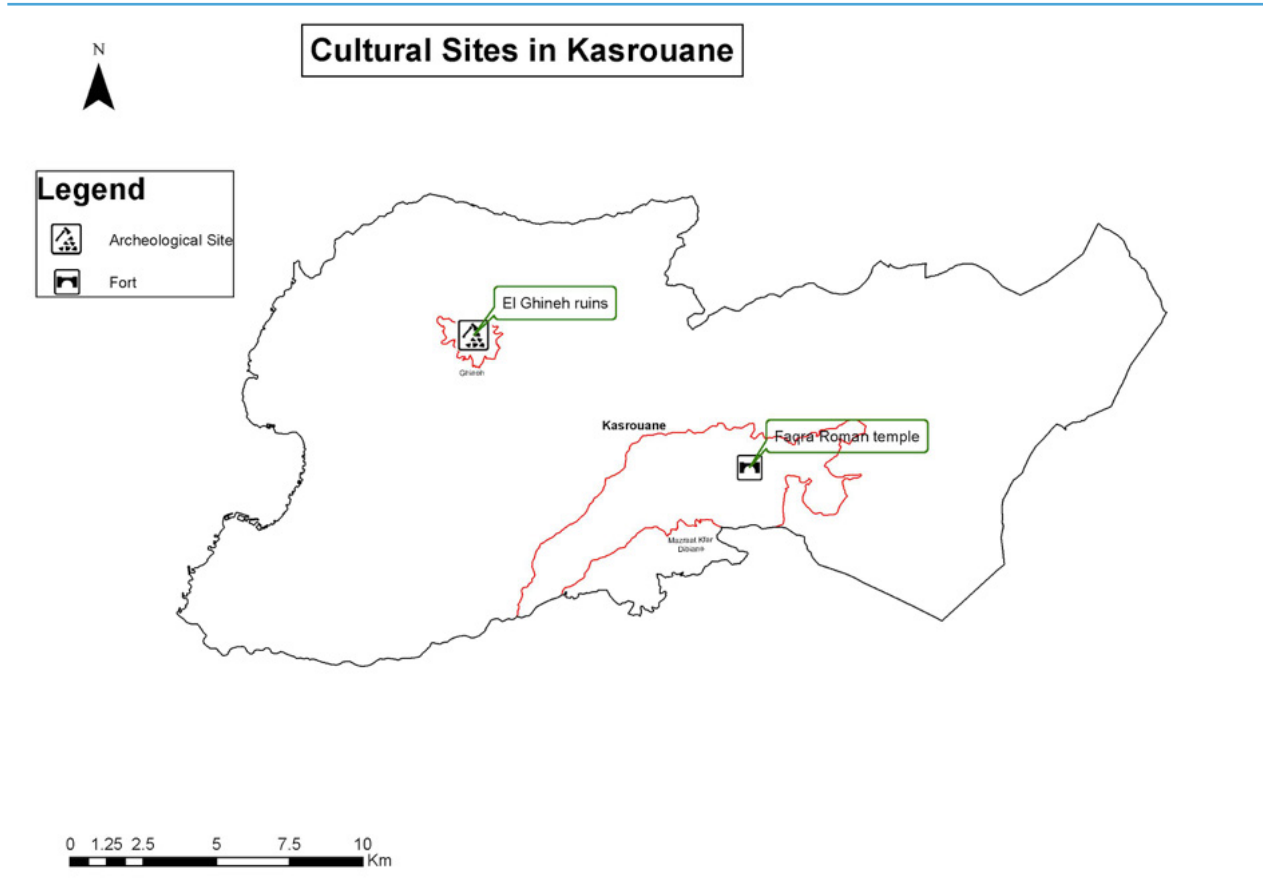


Notes: The biggest ski domain in the Middle East with a multitude of adventure activities around and services				
	Kfardebiane natural bridge	3	4	3
Notes: A unique bridge and geological formation. A destination for rock climbers.				
	Wadi el Salib old houses and trails	4	3	3
Notes: A destination for hikers and picnic lovers				
	Jeïita Cave	4	3	4
Notes: The deepest cave with 9 km distance. Only 900 m is open for visitors.				
 	Chahtoul camping and trails	3	3	3
Notes: a network of hiking trails connecting the villages of Chahtoul and Hiyata. Trails are blazed.				
<b>Matn District</b>				
	The Baskinta Literary Trail Being part of the Lebanese Mountain Trail, the Baskinta Literary Trail offers a 24 kilometers hike through different landmarks related to poets and novelists.			





# CULTURAL RESOURCES

## MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



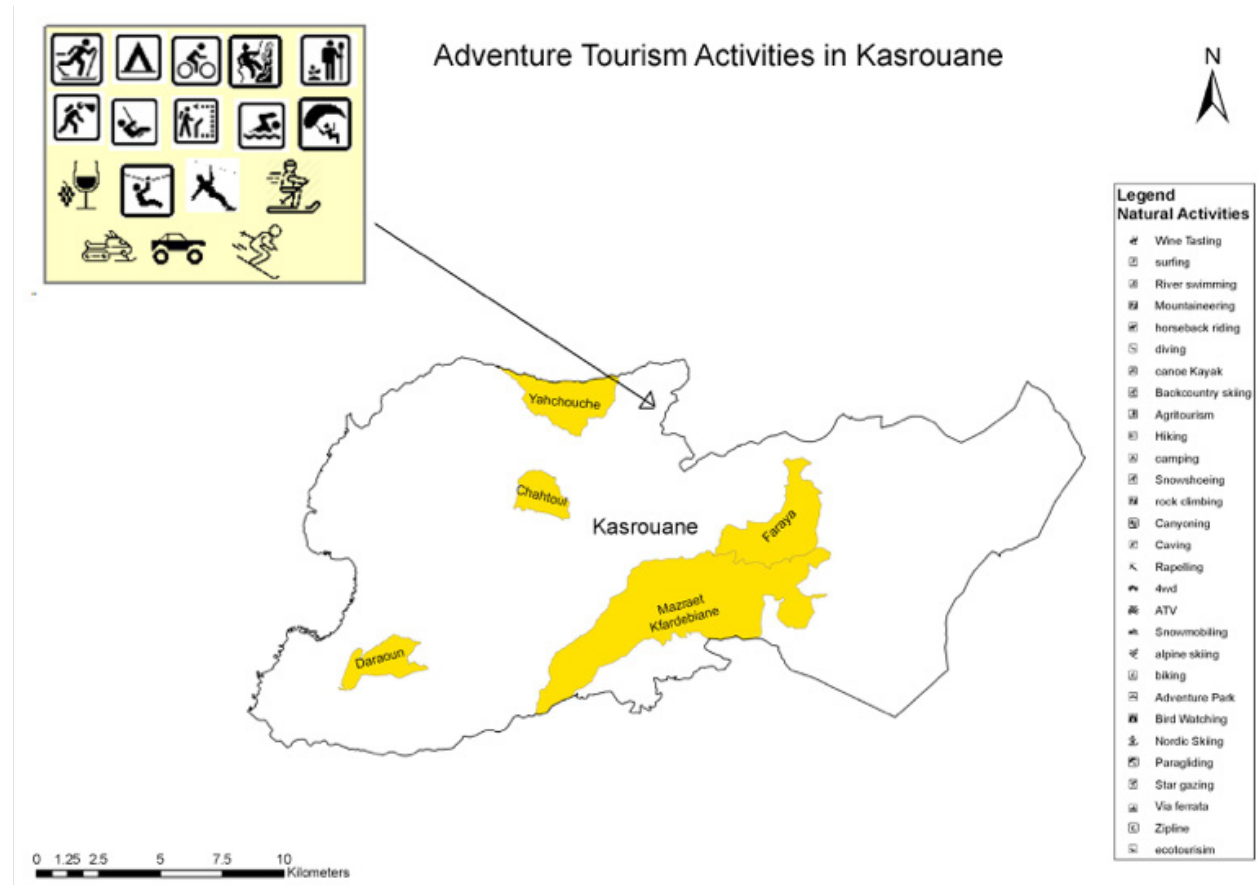
We are listing the attractions that are surrounding the pilot areas and can be part of tourism packages.

Cultural Attractions in BATROUN DISTRICT				
Kasrouane				
Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Al Mashnaqa	2	3	2
Roman temple and Altar				
	Yanouh	2	3	2
Yanouh Roman temple				

	Ghineh	2	3	2
Byzantine Basilica, Roman temple				
	Jabal Moussa	4	4	4
Old houses in the mountain, El Deir ruins, Roman stairs				
<b>Kasrouane District – Faraya</b>				
	Saint Charbel Statue	3	3	2
A dominant statue for Saint Charbel located on the top of a Mount in Faraya Village				
<b>Kasrouane District – Kfardebiane</b>				
	Faqra temple	4	2	2
Roman temple				
	Beit ed Dine Castle	4	2	2
19th century palace complex				
	The town of Deir el Qamar	4	2	2
The village has some of the most beautiful Lebanese houses. The village is rich in cultural attractions to visit.				
	Kasr Moussa	4	2	2
It is the life work of Lebanese visionary that took 60 years to finish the work				
	Assfaf brothers	3	2	4
Three brother that took the passion and profession from their father , and created this sculpture workshop				
	Nawl Baadarane	3	2	4
Inherited this passion from his grandfather, Nazih is receiving visitors to share this experience				
	Baadarane serial	2	2	1
An 18th century architecture building				

# ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

## MAP WITH ADVENTURE ATTRACTIONS



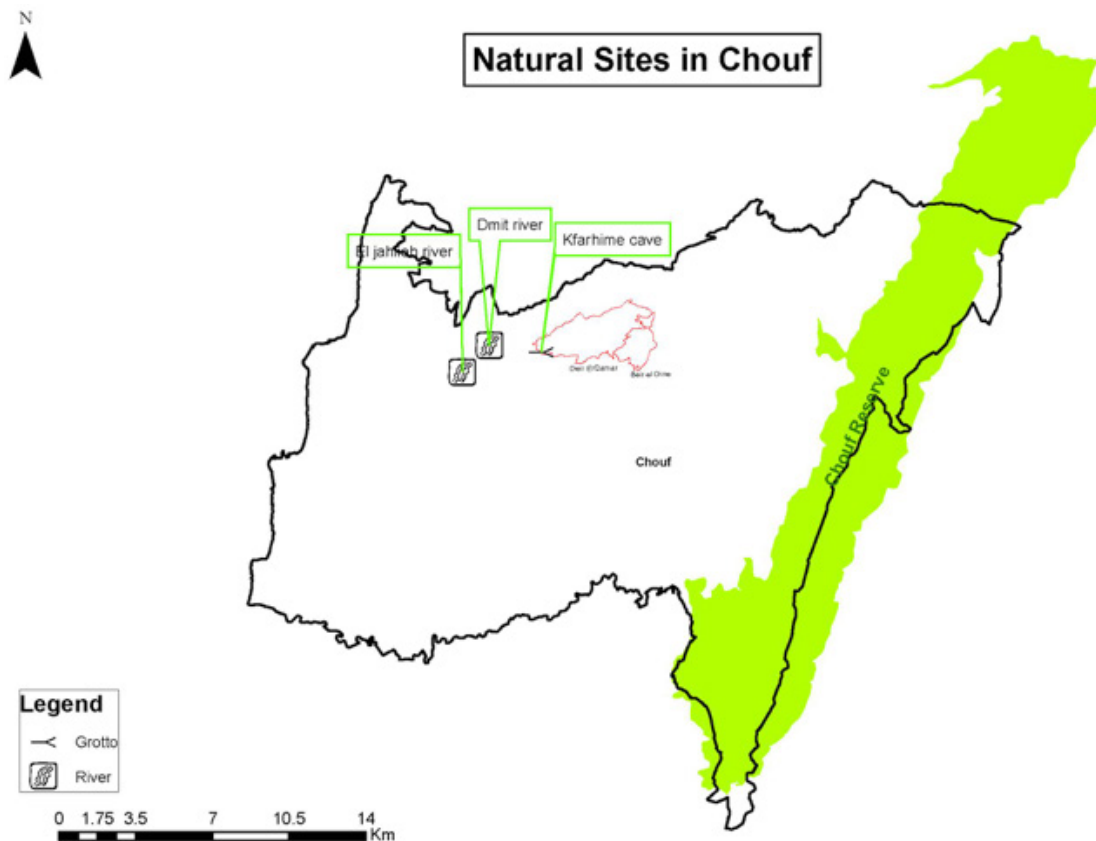
## 2.2.7 Chouf

The Chouf area is well known for its history and culture. It is the hometown of the three connected Biosphere reserve. The Chouf holds also other dominant cultural aspects such as Beit ed Dine, Deir el Qamar, and Qasr Moussa. Attractions in the Chouf district are well highlighted and preserved. The Chouf area is the best positioned in terms for ecotourism. The

Reserve was able to position rural and ecotourism as main vector of tourism in particular in the highland villages. Today we see new initiatives that are taking place and building on the network of the biosphere reserve.


## NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

### MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS





## Natural sites in BYBLOS DISTRICT

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Chouf biosphere reserve	5	4	5

[www.shoufcedar.org](http://www.shoufcedar.org) UNESCO Biosphere Reserve considered the most structured reserve in Lebanon, covering 4 entrances. Trails in the Chouf area covers a distance of 400 km. trails inside the reserve are marked with wooden signs.



	Niha reserve – Fakher ed dine fortress	4	3	4
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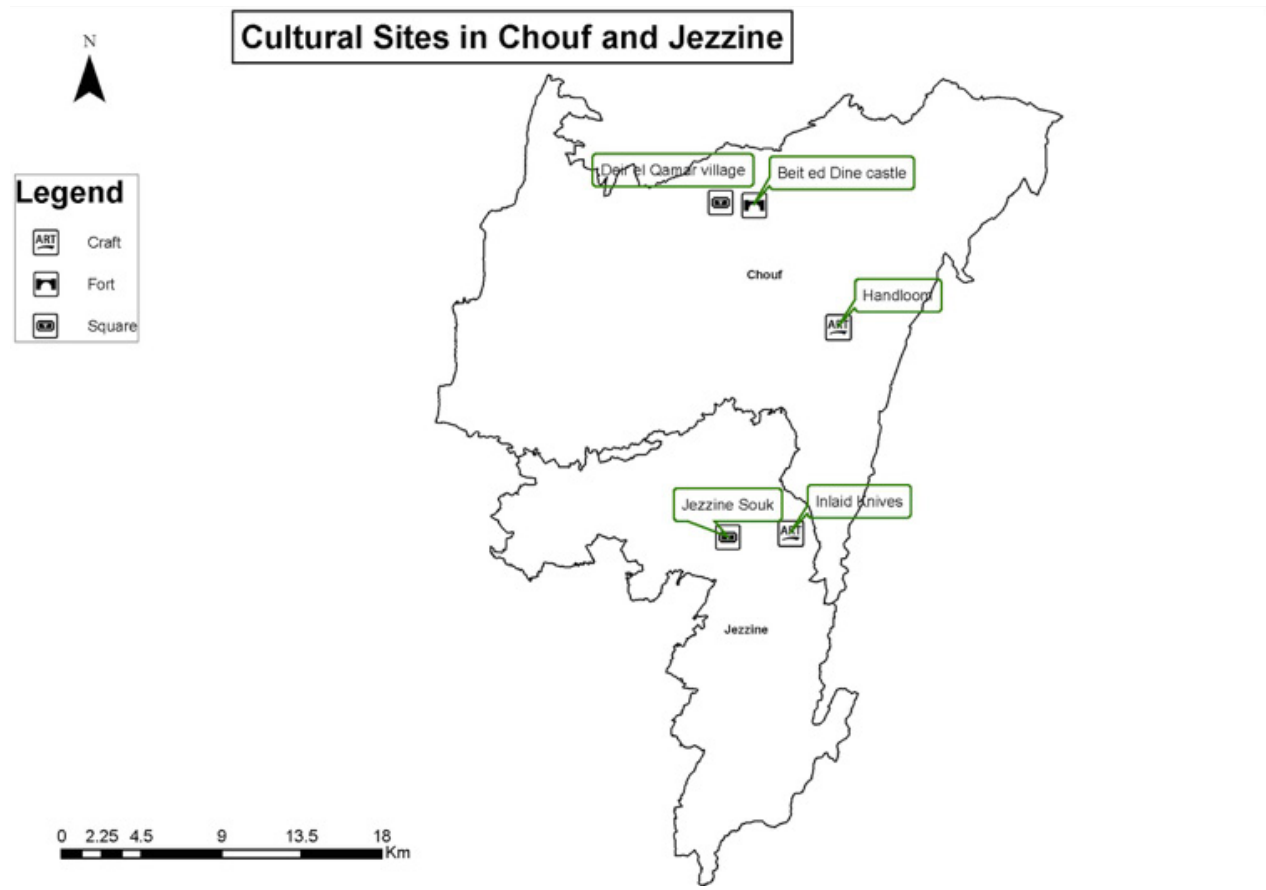
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve. It is one of the 4 entrances to the Chouf Biosphere reserve.

	Chhim cave	4	2	3
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Notes: Open for public visits

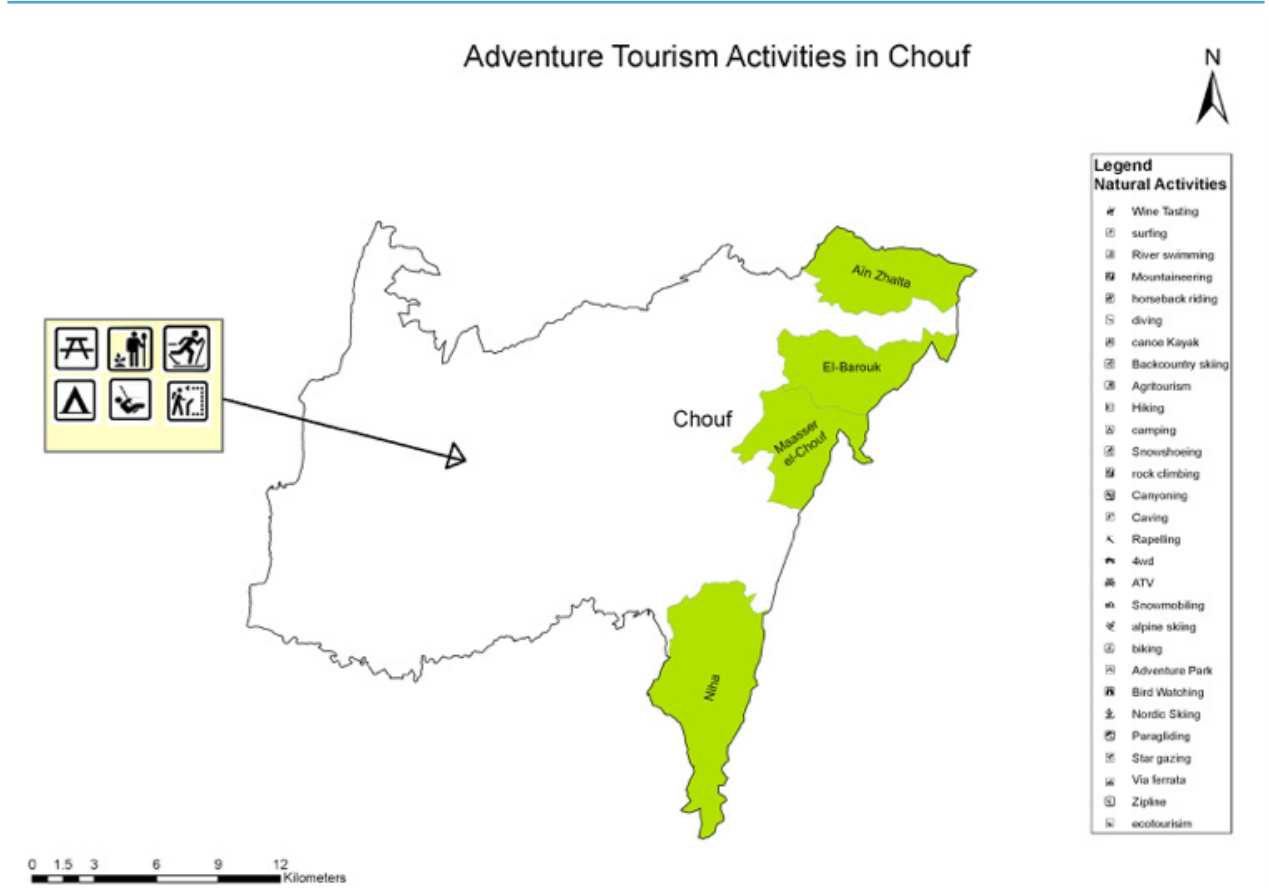
# CULTURAL RESOURCES

## MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



# ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

## MAP WITH ADVENTURE ATTRACTIONS

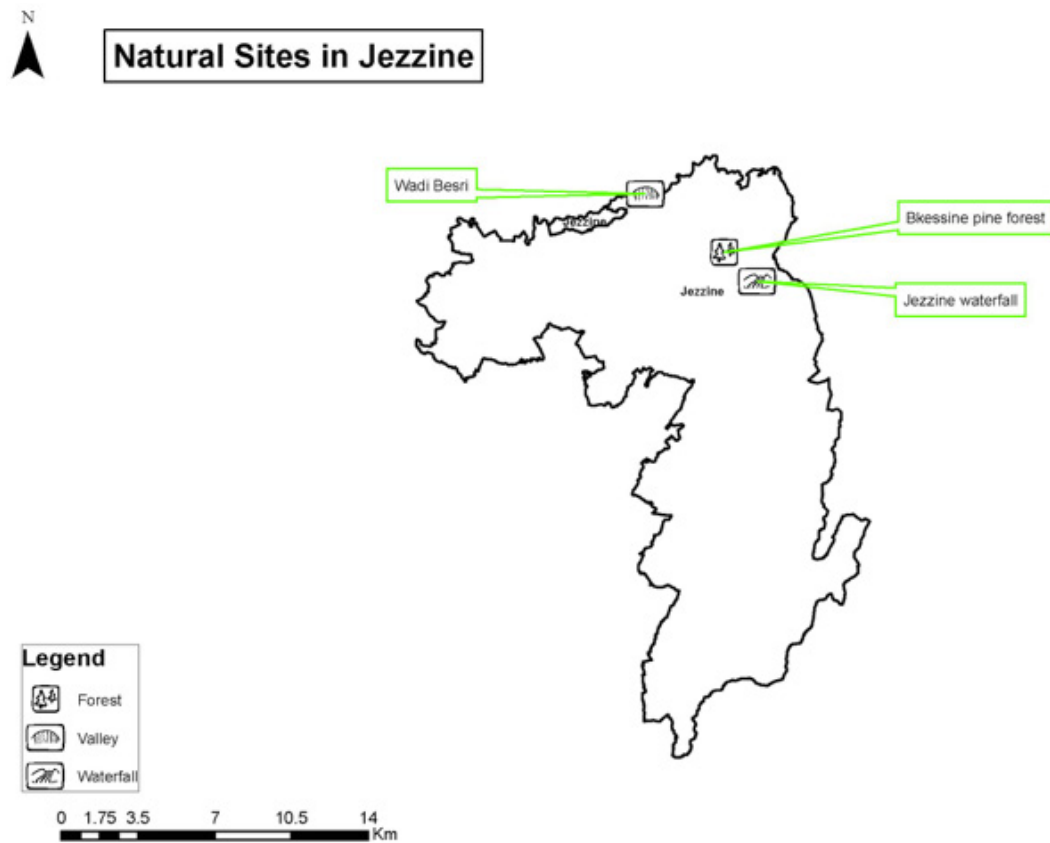


## 2.2.8 Jezzine

Jezzine area offers a multitude of attractions for adventure tourism.

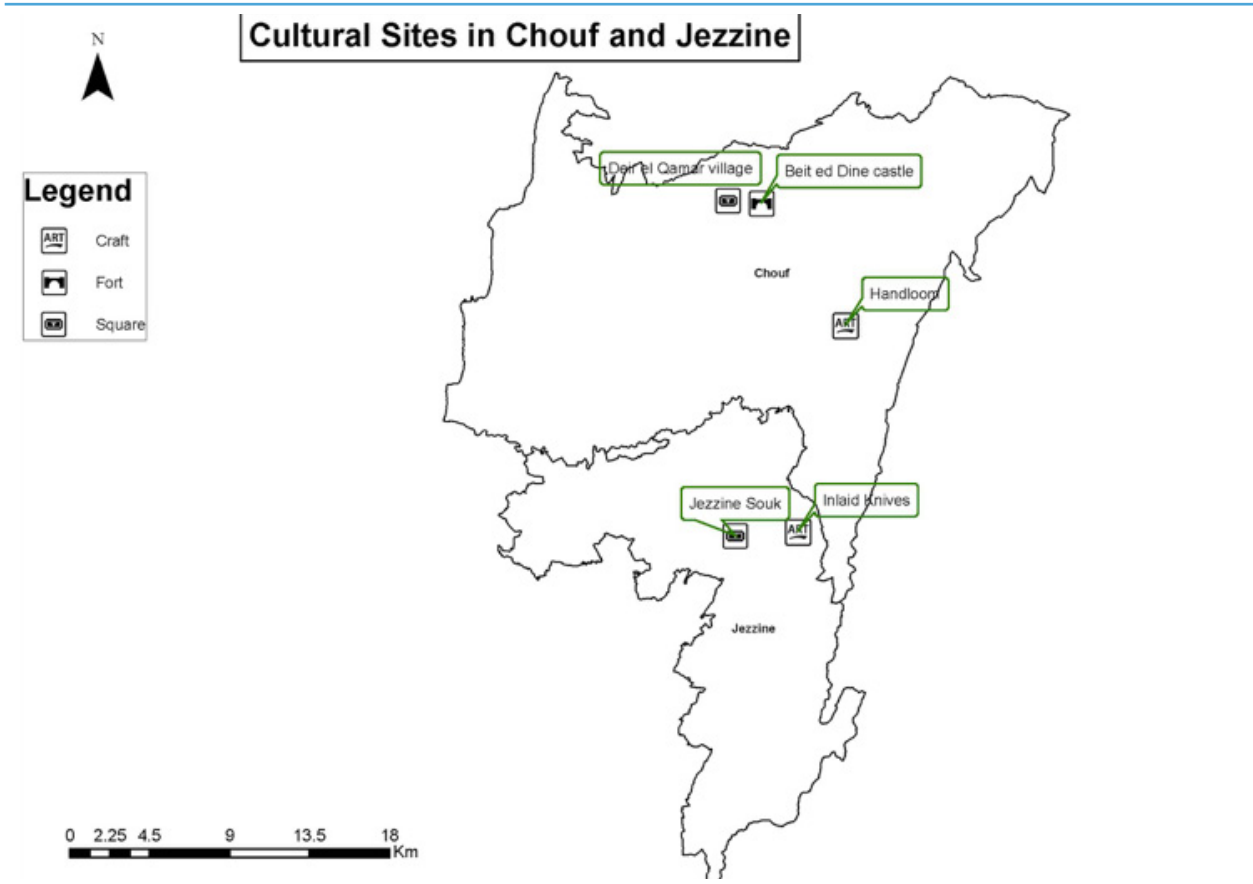
### NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

#### MAP WITH NATURAL RESOURCES ATTRACTIONS



# CULTURAL RESOURCES

## MAP WITH CULTURAL RESOURCES



### Cultural Attractions in JEZZINE DISTRICT

#### South Lebanon - Jezzine District

Icons	Location	Level of use	Potential for AT	Current touristic area
	Jezzine Souk	4	2	2
A historical souk				
	Jezzine cutlery	4	2	3
Several handmade family business that have positioned Jezzine on the map due to its cutleries				
	Farid Serhal castle	2	2	2
An unfinished palace built by a famous doctor from Jezzine. Is a must visit. This monumental palace consisting of an oriental architecture with several huge rooms was built since 1967.				

# ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

## MAP WITH ADVENTURE ATTRACTIONS





### **3. ADVENTURE TOURISM ECOSYSTEM**

## 3.1. Infrastructure and mobility

Adventure travelers are less sensitive to deficiencies in hard tourism infrastructure. But perhaps more sensitive when it comes to soft tourism infrastructure. Tourism infrastructure includes:

Hard infrastructure: roads, airports, lodging facilities, trails.

Soft Infrastructure: trail maps, accessible information on heritage and culture, and operators<sup>7</sup>.

Training, certificates there is no certified national body in Lebanon to regulate or grant mountain and trail guiding certificates. Several guiding training sessions took Place during the past 20 years on the national level. These training were conducted by a pool of experts (33 North/Gilbert Moukheiber, the author of this present study is one of the pioneers and main trainers in mountain and local guiding in Lebanon).

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7. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53109b11e4b05040160f0a8f/t/548dc41de4b0d3ebe89312c4/1418576925557/atdi\\_2011\\_report.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53109b11e4b05040160f0a8f/t/548dc41de4b0d3ebe89312c4/1418576925557/atdi_2011_report.pdf)



## AKKAR

Akkar is located Northern Lebanon on the Syrian borders. It is the hometown of many natural and cultural attractions. Akkar is accessible via the Northern road leading to Syria. Akkar also bordered the Hermel and Donniyeh districts. It is also accessible from these two districts. Akkar main and internal roads are in bad conditions. Road lightings are poor and pavement is not appropriate.

Travelling within the Akkar district takes place mainly by car. Public transportation is available from Beirut to Tripoli and then from Tripoli but does not reach all the mountain areas. Going from one village to another should be arranged by a private taxi. Some areas that are working for tourism such as Menjiz, Qobayat, Meshmesh and are able to arrange buses to reach their areas.

As for the case of Akkar, several national initiatives took place for guides training giving birth to a number of local guides through their districts. There are no certified adventure guides in Akkar, the activities are managed by local enthusiasts willing to promote the natural capital of their area. When it comes to trails, Akkar has a potential of 300 km of trails, a big part of them is accessible and being blazed whereas other parts of trails need rehabilitation and marking. Trail maps are available on a mobile application [www.wikiloc.com](http://www.wikiloc.com) that covers a big sections of these trails. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses Akkar and maps and info regarding trails and services are available on the LMTA webpage [www.lebanontrail.org](http://www.lebanontrail.org). Other info regarding lodging facilities, guides, and restaurants contact details can all be found online.



Figure 6 Route from Beirut to Akkar – Source: google maps

## ZGHARTA EHDEN

Ehden was placed as an adventure tourism destination due to many factors that supported its development. Ehden has a good network of roads connecting it with the Northern coastal areas as well as with other tourism destinations of the North. Ehden is reachable by bus from Beirut and Tripoli, whereas internal transfers should take place by private transportations or taxis. Transfer within Ehden can be arranged by local tour operators when booked with them. All attractions in Ehden and surrounding villages are linked by a network of roads. Ehden covers a wide range of lodging facilities ranging from hotels, to guesthouses, to lodges, chalets and camping. Ehden has also a wide variety of restaurants, bars, fast food snacks that offer Lebanese and international cuisine. Ehden has a wide network of hiking trails from the reserve, the highland, and Kozhaya Valley. Trails within Ehden are

well maintained and blazed. A map for the trails within the reserve is available in the reserve information center. As for other trails the Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses Ehden and information's are available on the association website and wikiloc application. We can find online all the needed information to plan a visit to Ehden, covering details of the tourism local actors.

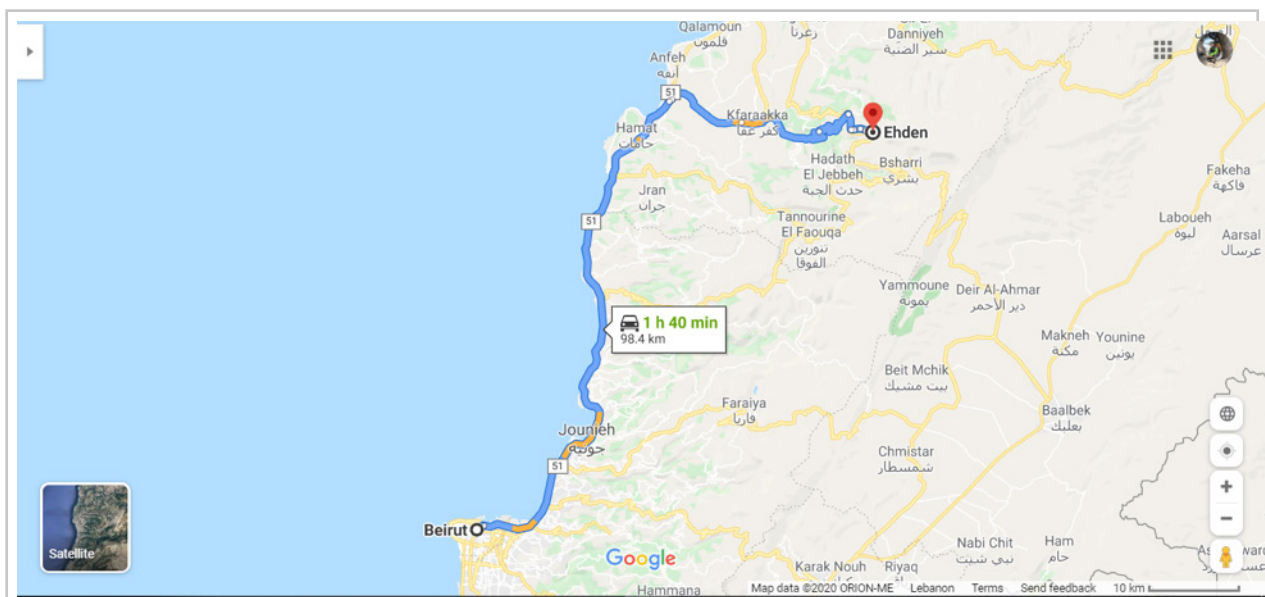


Figure 7 Route from Beirut to Ehden - Source: google maps

## BECHARE

Bchare the town of the Cedars of God, the Qadicha Valley and the famous poet and writer Jibran Khalil Jibran. An all year destination, Bchare is accessible via the North, Batroune and the Bekaa road districts. Bchare is reachable by bus from Beirut. All attractions within Bechare are connected and accessible. Internal transfer within Bechare can take place by public transportation, private cars and taxis. Bechare offers a wide range of lodging facilities ranging from guesthouses, lodges, hotels, chalets and bars. Bechare offers also a diversity of restaurants and snacks offering Lebanese and international cuisine. The district has a wide range of hiking trails covering several villages. The Lebanon Mountain Trail crosses Bchare and information's are available online as well. Trails in Bchare covers the Qadicha Valley, Hadath El Jebbeh Forest, Hasroune, Dimane, Bkaa

Kafra, Bshari, Hadshit Mountains and the highest plateau of Daher el Kadib and summit in Lebanon. All these trails are accessible maintained and blazed. Online information's are also available and accessible to the public covering all the tourism stakeholders.

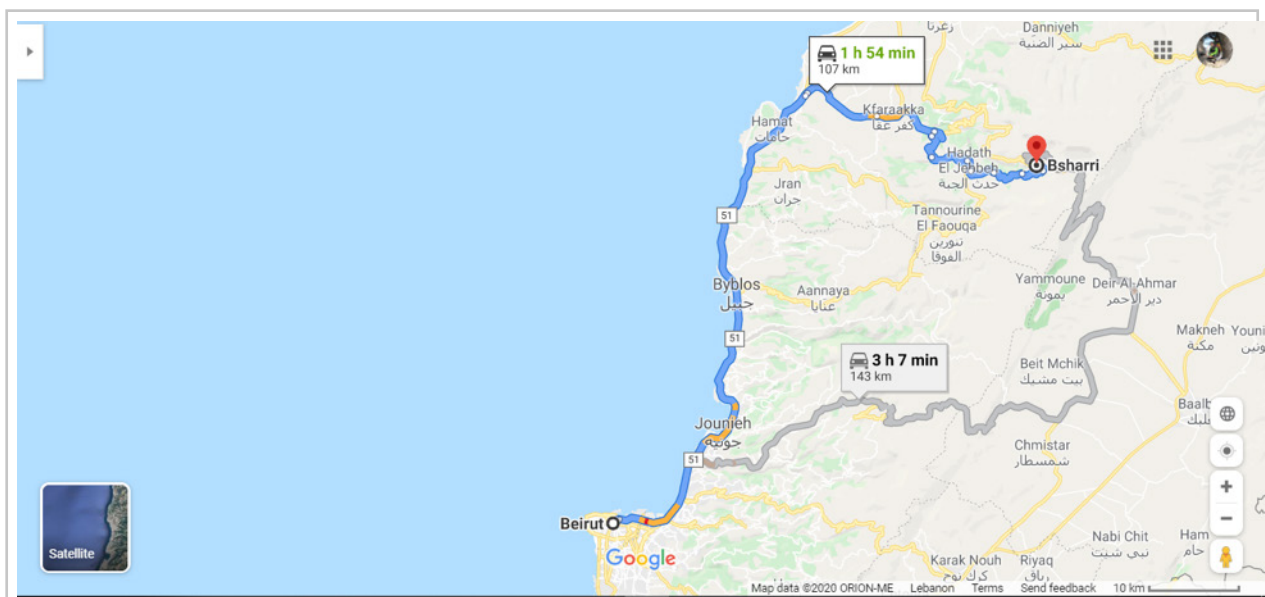


Figure 8 Route from Beirut to Bsharri - Source: google maps

## BATROUNE

Geographically linked to Byblos and Becharé, the Batroune district is easily reachable. Attractions within the district are all accessible. Internal roads and transfers are considered easy in private cars otherwise need some organisation from private taxi to go through the villages. Upper Batroune accommodations are located in Douma and Tanourine; ranging from guesthouses, maison de charme, lodge, hotels and campsite. As for restaurants they are available and offering Lebanese, fast food and international cuisine. Hiking trails are spread across the district covering natural landmarks. Trails within the Tanourine Cedar Reserve are marked and blazed and a map is available at the information center at the reserve entrance. Other trails connecting Tanourine with its surroundings are also blazed and maintained. Douma a side trail on the LMT linking the village with

Tanourine and the 3 bridges known as Balouu Baatara. Bechaaleh a nearby village offering a network of hiking trails that are also maintained. Information regarding the local actors is available online, other information's regarding the landmarks can also be accessible.

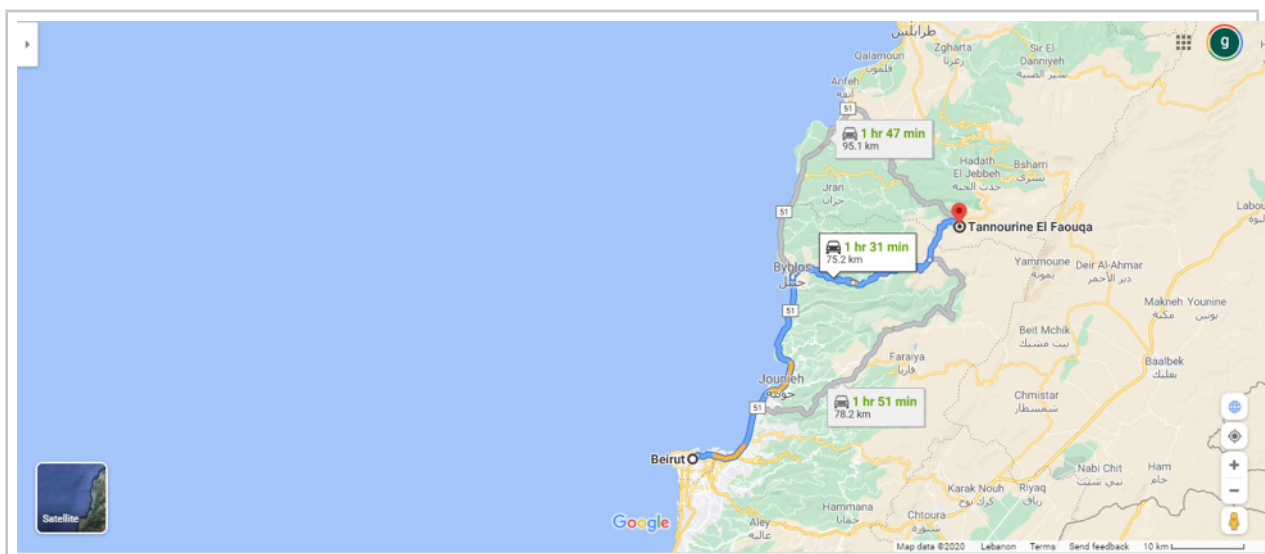


Figure 9 Route from Beirut to Tanourine – Source: google maps

## BYBLOS

A well-known destination, Byblos coastal roads are well maintained till the Ehmej village. From that point crossing to Aqoura, Afqa and Lessa the road become bumpy and badly maintained. The attractions within the district are accessible, no internal public transfer within the district, so a private transfer is a must to access the sites. The areas offers a wide network of hiking trails. Ehmej has around 16 trails, 3 of them are marked whereas the others need reopening, rehabilitation and blazing. Ehmej is also connected with other areas such as Jaj, the later has a Cedar reserve with hiking trails inside of it. Aqoura another important destination for adventure tourism with hiking trails across the highland. The LMT crosses Byblos district through Ehmej as a side trail, Aqoura as a main section connecting with Tanourine from the North and from Afqa and Lessa from the South. Byblos has

a wide network of lodging and restaurant facilities: a guesthouse in Jaj, Arz Ehmej Lodge and wooden Chalet located in Ehmej, Changrilla Hotel in Laqlouq, and a monastery in Aqoura serving as a lodge and dormitory, a Charming guesthouse at Guitas' guesthouse in Majdel el Aqoura, and Chalets at La Foret de Chene Afqa. As for the restaurants and bars they are more diverse on the coast and we find more fast food places in the villages, to mention that all guesthouses serves food as well. As for the access to information it is available online covering local guides, accommodations and restaurants and descriptive information regarding the attractions.

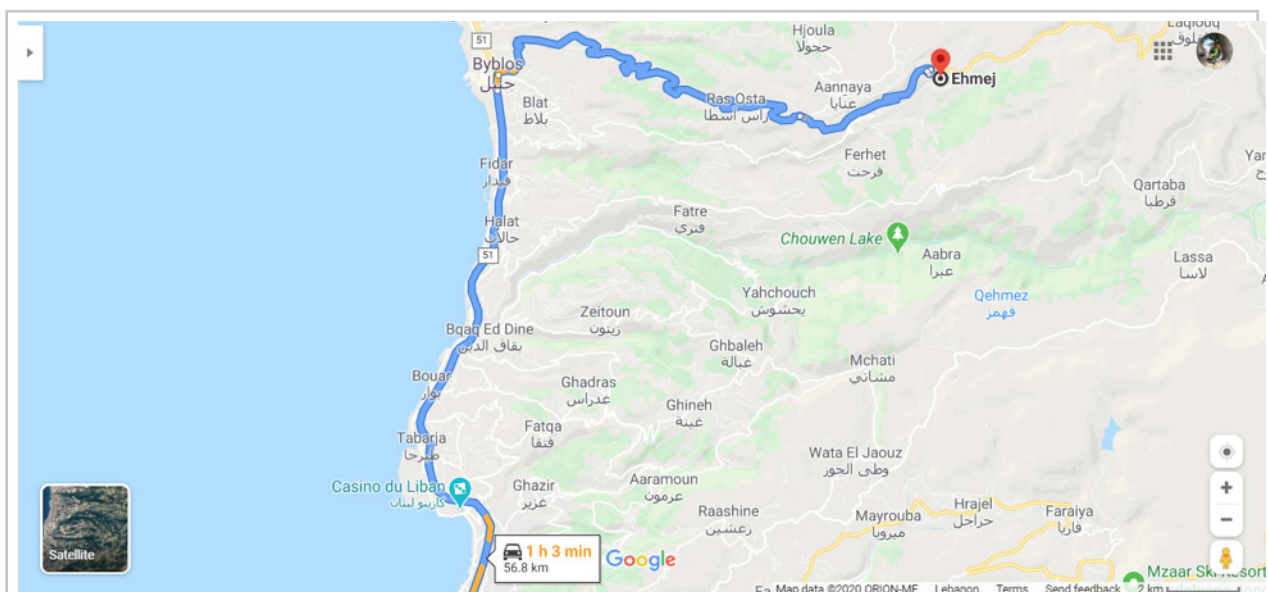


Figure 10 Route from Beirut to Ehmej – Source: google maps

## KESERWANE

An all season destination, Keserwane is accessible all year long even in winter times roads are open to access the ski area in Kfardebiane. Keserwane has 160 km of hiking Trails covering several destinations, the most known are: Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve, the Lebanon Mountain Trail, Wadi el Salib, Faraya and Kfardebiane highland, Chahtoul, Hiyata, Darb el Qamar and Darb el Sama. Most of these trails are maintained and blazed. Information regarding trails are available on wikiloc and the LMTA website. As for the

accommodations there is a wide range and diversity of accommodations from hotels, lodges, campsites, guesthouses and monasteries. Restaurants and bars are widely present and serve Lebanese and international cuisine. Most of these services are located on the coast and around the ski area.

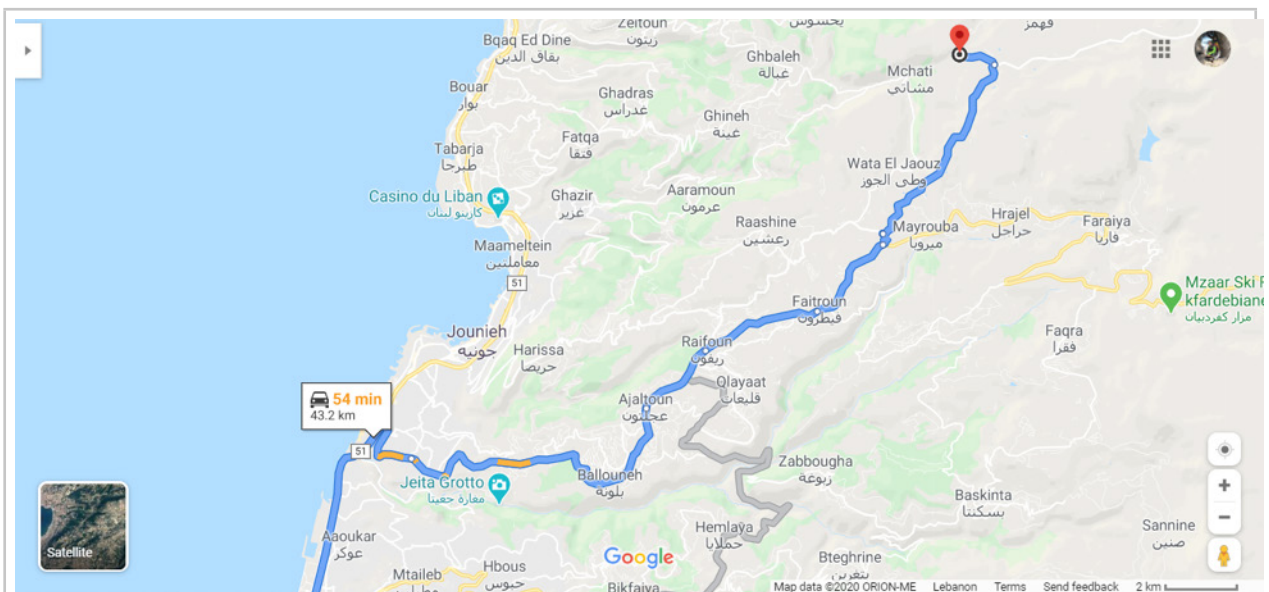


Figure 11 Route from Beirut to Jabal Moussa Qehmez entrance - Source: google maps

## KESERWANE

An all season destination, Keserwane is accessible all year long even in winter times roads are open to access the ski area in Kfardebiane. Keserwane has 160 km of hiking Trails covering several destinations, the most known are: Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve, the Lebanon Mountain Trail, Wadi el Salib, Faraya and Kfardebiane highland, Chahtoul, Hiyata, Darb el Qamar and Darb el Sama. Most of these trails are maintained and blazed. Information regarding trails are available on wikiloc and the LMTA website. As for the

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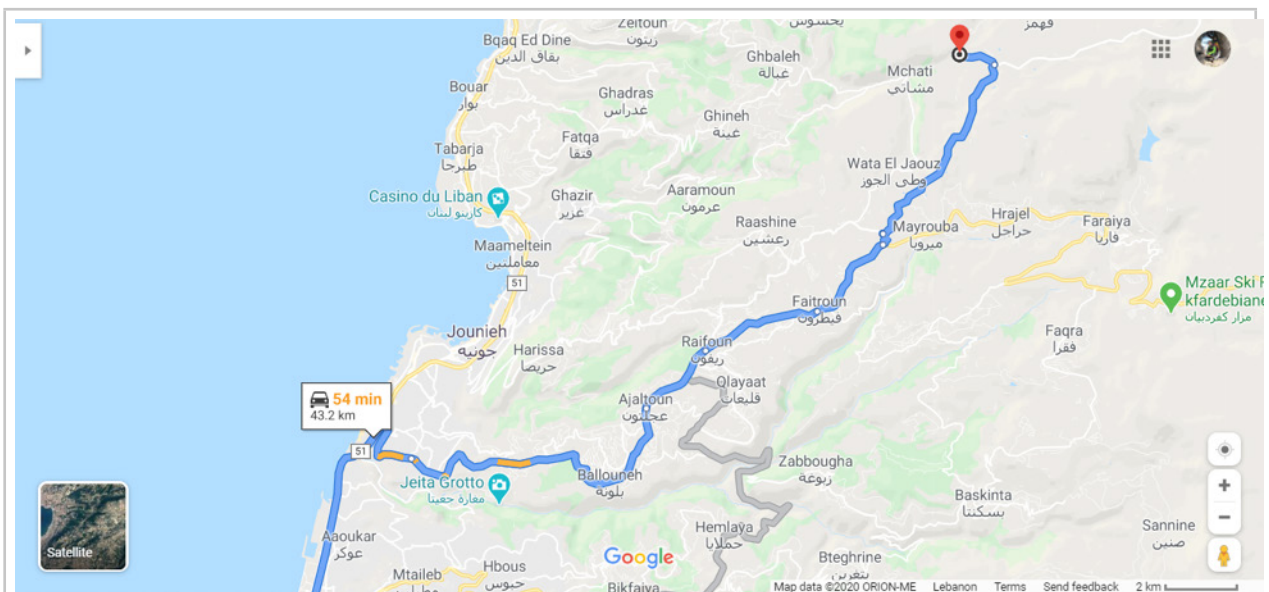


Figure 11 Route from Beirut to Jabal Moussa Qehmez entrance - Source: google maps

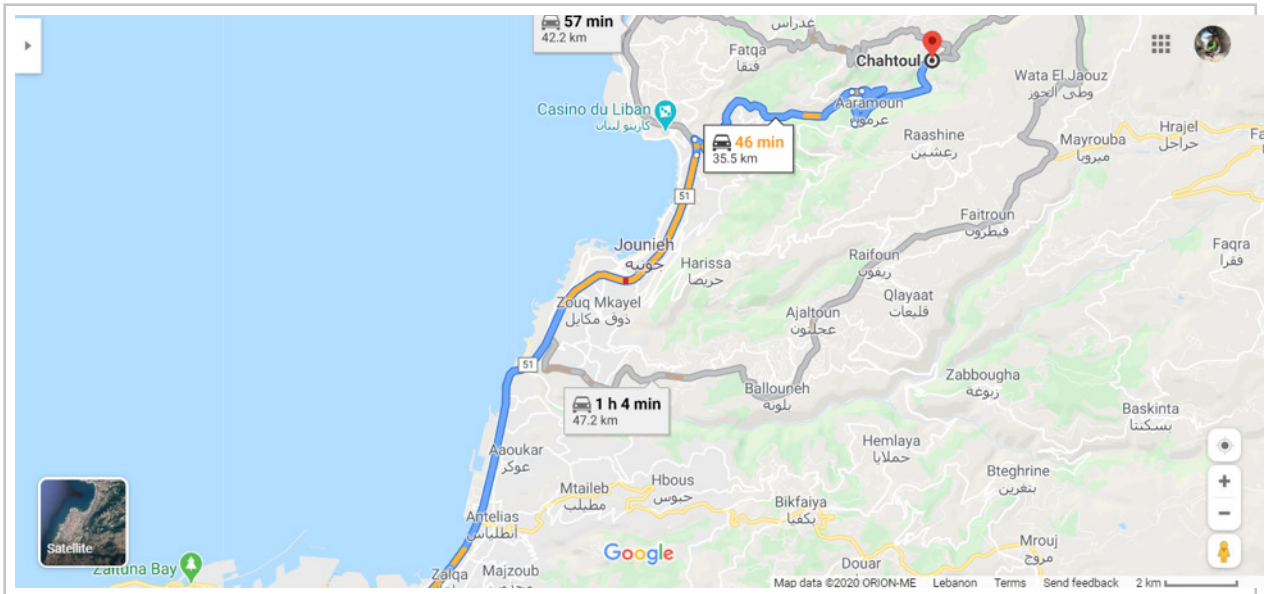


Figure 12 Route from Beirut to Chahtoul – Source: google maps

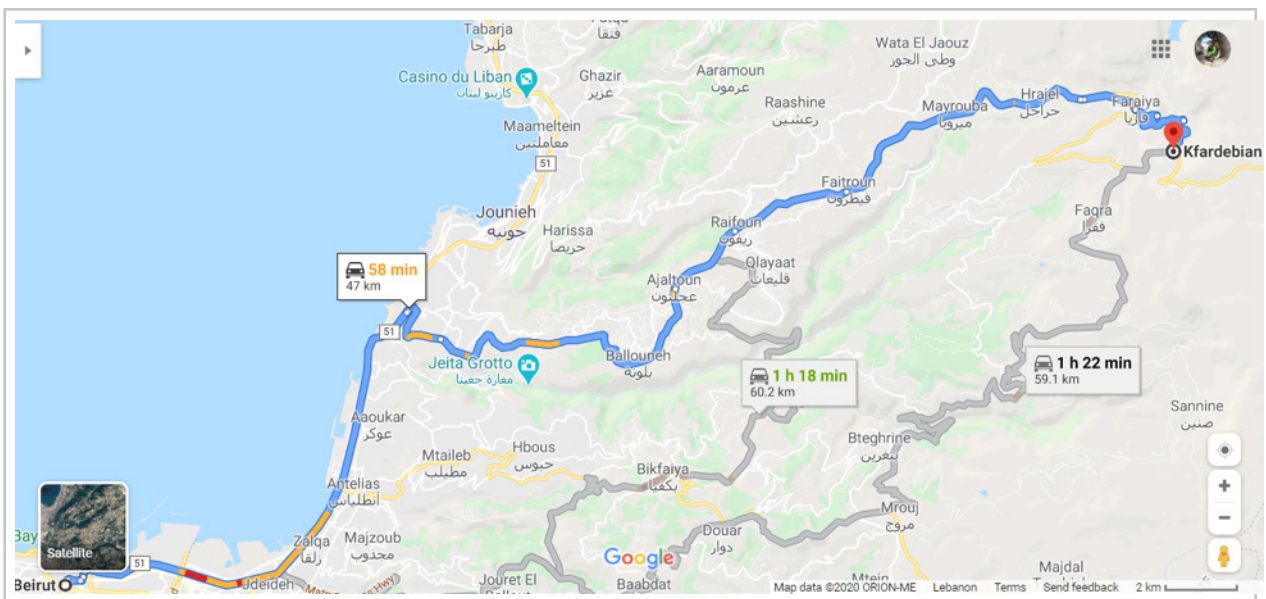


Figure 13 Route from Beirut to Kfardebian – Source: google maps



## CHOUF

Being located in the center of the country, the Shouf area is reachable from different locations. It is accessible from Beirut, the Maten, the Bekaa and the South. Accessing the nature reserve by car is possible for the Barouk reserve where you can drive for five km inside the reserve area. The Shouf area has developed a wide network of hiking trails covering the three nature reserves and the surrounding villages. Trails inside the reserves are being marked with wooden poles versus blazing outside the reserve area. The area offers a wide range of lodging services and experiences with a food services as well. Information's regarding hiking trails exist and the reserve has produced hiking trails maps. For the lodging facilities, the area covers a wide

network of accommodations varying from guesthouses, to maison de charme, hotels, and camping grounds. Information's regarding the accommodations are available online as most of the facilities have their own social media platform. As for other tourism services they are available through the reserve ecotourism and reservation unit ([www.shoufcedar.org](http://www.shoufcedar.org)). The culinary aspect is widely present and well represented from homemade food served in guesthouses, to Lebanese and international cuisine and to vegan food cuisine.

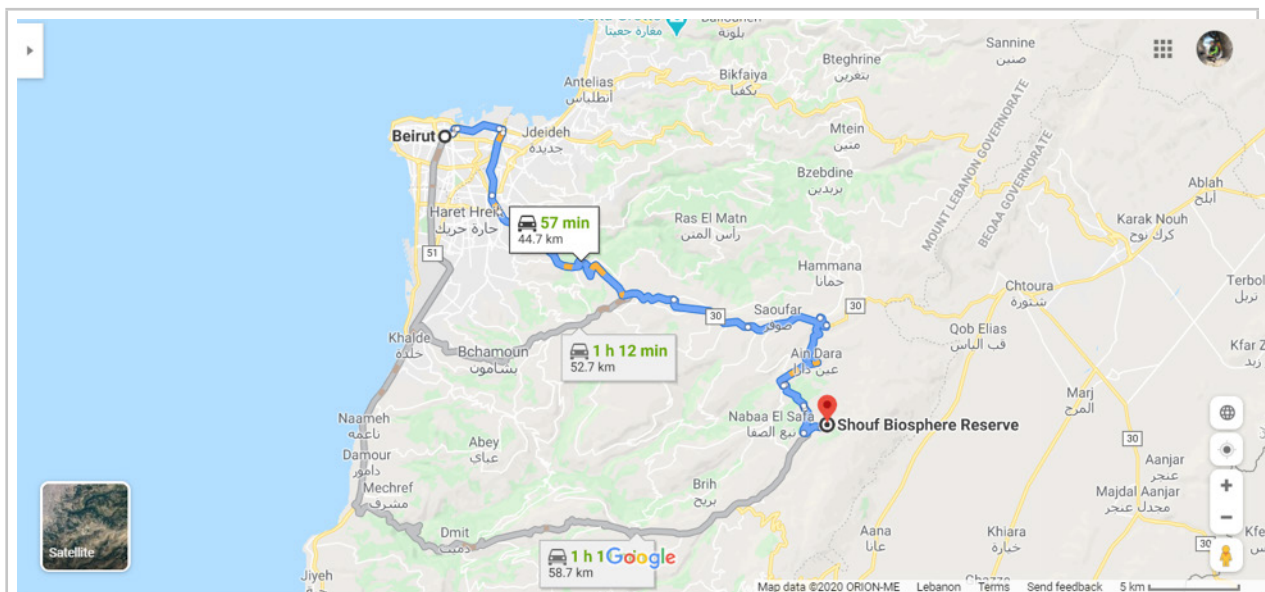


Figure 14 Route from Beirut to Ain Zhalta – Source: google maps

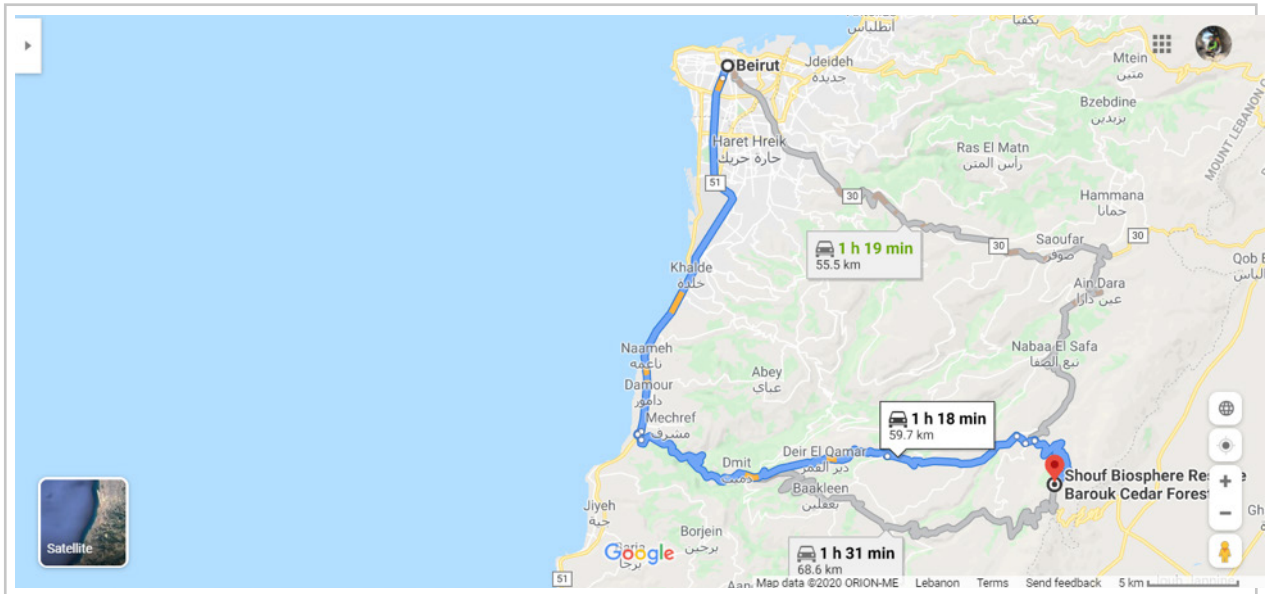


Figure 15 Route from Beirut to Barouk - Source: google maps

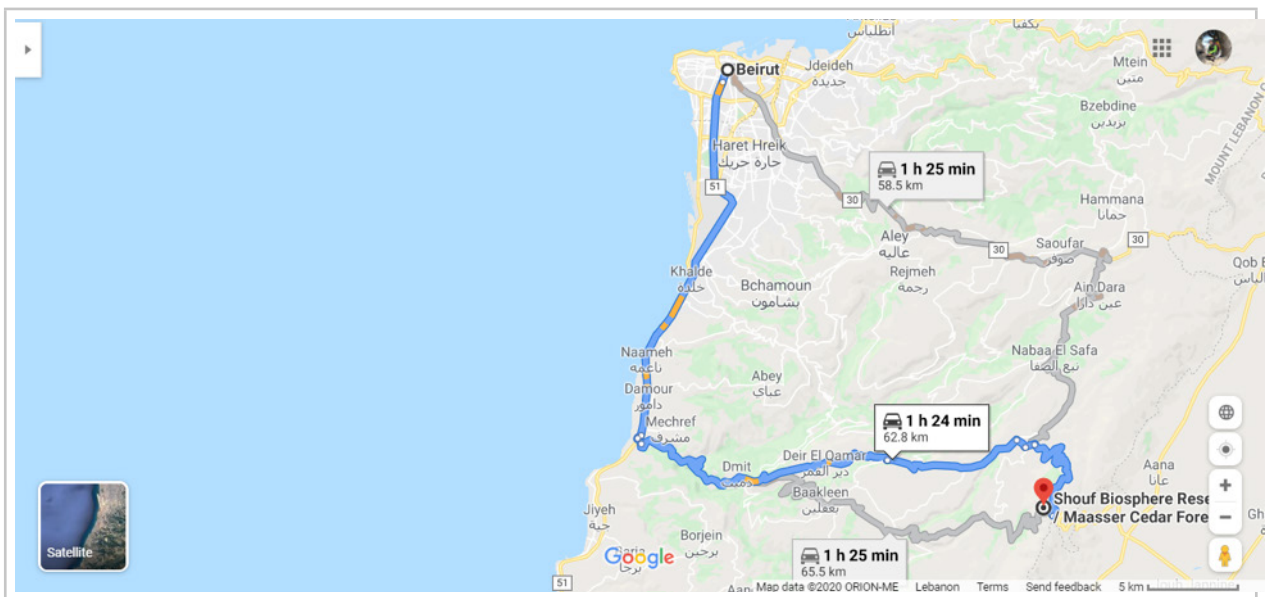


Figure 16 Route from Beirut to Maasser es Shouf - Source: google maps

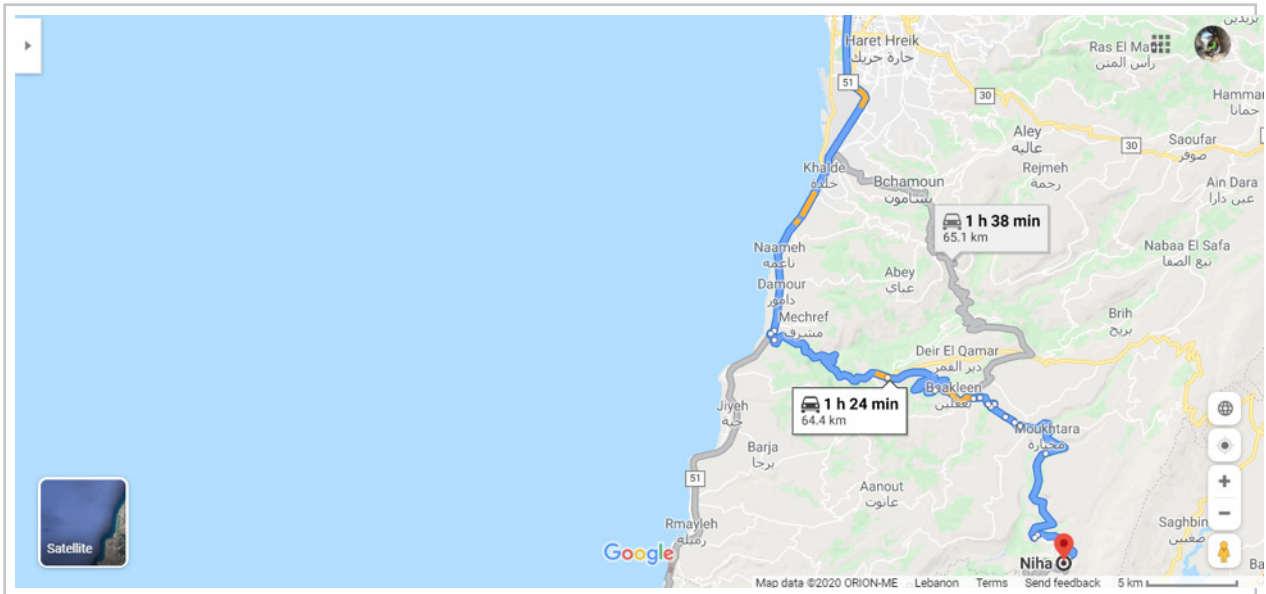


Figure 17 Route from Beirut to Niha Shouf – Source: google maps

## JEZZINE

Easily accessible from different corners. Jezzine is connected with the mountain and the coast. Jezzine is accessible from the Shouf area; from the coast via Sidon, from the South and the Bekaa. Roads to Jezzine are considerably in a good conditions. Travelling internally is easy

for those coming in their private cars. Attractions are located next to each other's. Jezzine has different types of accommodations: hotels, lodges, chalets, camping and guesthouses.

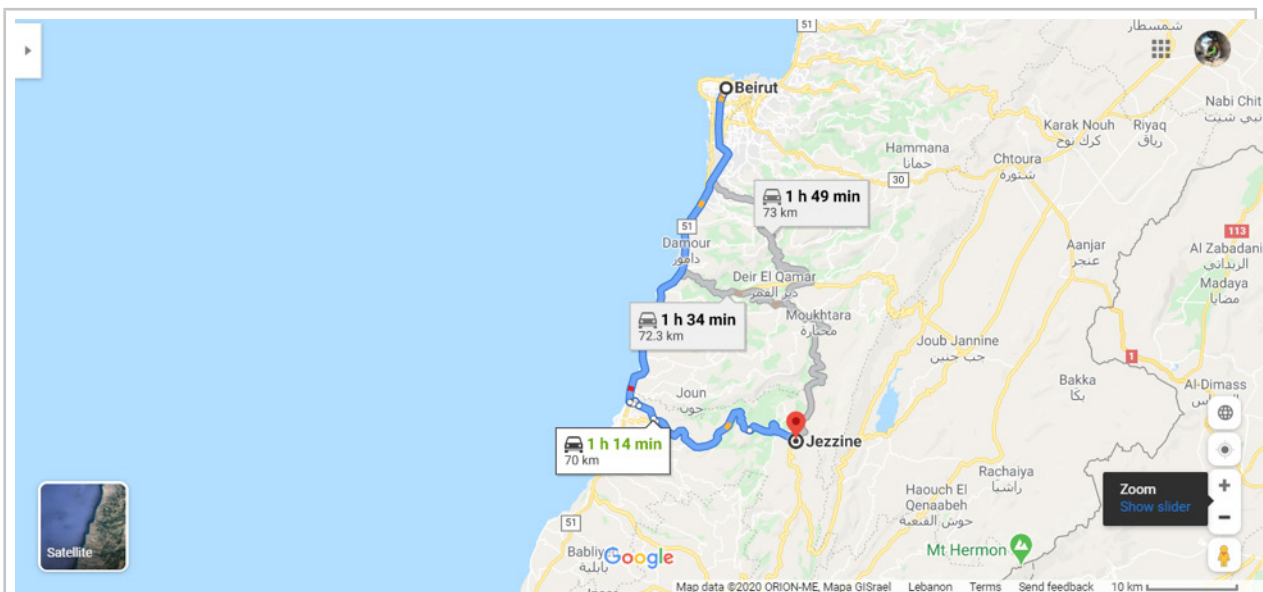


Figure 18 Route from Beirut to Jezzine – Source: google maps

## 3.2 Service offered to visitors

### Akkar

Tourism services in Akkar are mainly located in the towns that are promoting tourism. Menjiz has two guesthouses and table d'hôte, Andqet has the AFDC (Association for forest Development and Conservation) center that is equipped and open to receive visitors, Kobayat has Les Demeures rooms, Jabalna Chalets, Granero Verde chalets, Abou Marwan guesthouse in Tachee, Wooden Chalets in the Qamouaa plain that are open and receive visitors. All guesthouses offer breakfast and dinner with the accommodation. Most of the guesthouses are managed by their owners. Beside accommodation there is snowshoes and Nordic ski renting located Kobayat and Meshmesh. As for the food it can be ordered within the guesthouses for breakfast and dinner or bought in restaurants. As for restaurants are mainly located in the Qobayat region, and the Qamouaa plain. Qamouaa restaurants serve mainly Lebanese food; as for Qobayat restaurants they serve Lebanese and international fast food.

Offered services: mainly day guiding trips with a high focus on hiking, camping, snowshoeing and Nordic skiing. These areas are also part of tourism programs of a one week duration that are promoted by national eco tour operators, they offer a nature tourism experience based on hiking.

### Zgharta Ehden

Ehden has a variety of tourism attractions to visit. From restaurants along the famous Midane square to a wide variety of accommodations. Ehden can offer services from budget people to high end clientele. When it comes to accommodation we name Ehden Hotel, La Mairie, Myst Hotel, Ehden country club, Bayt el Ward, La Reserve, and Bayt Mirna guesthouse. Ehden has also two campsites. As for the culinary experience, Ehden is known for its "Kebbeh" that you can order in all Lebanese cuisine restaurants in Ehden as well as you can enjoy prepared at home and cooked in a traditional bakery. Along with Lebanese cuisine, Ehden has also restaurants that serve international cuisine and fast food. Pastries are also a specialty of Ehden the famous Bklawah and sahlab. As for the tourism activities and offered services located in Ehden. Not to forget that Ehden is also a destination for religious tourism with the existence of the oldest Maronite church and the Valley of Qozhaya home of the Saint Antonio's monastery and part of the Qadicha Valley. Ehden has also a plan for the development of a ski resort within its highland territories but this plan never saw the light. Ehden has also a Lebanese Red Cross sector that is trained on rope and snow rescue and capable of intervening in adventure sports accidents.

Offered services: mainly day guiding trips with a high focus on nature activities to Kornet es Sawda, Ehden Reserve, Kozhaya Valley, the Lebanon Mountain trail. These areas are also part of tourism

programs of a one week duration that are promoted by national eco tour operators, they offer a nature tourism experience based on hiking. Ehden has also its own festivals known as Ehdeniyet a yearly event promoting tourism in the area. Local guides as well as tour operators are available to guide visitors though their area.

## Bsharri

Most of the accommodations in the district were developed around the ski area known as the Cedars area of Bsharri. With time tourism activity switched from being based only on winter alpine skiing to involving other types of tourism including nature and adventure. Today the region is seeing a development in tourism build around nature, culture and religious. Facilities are located in the area of the Cedars, Bsharri town, the Qadicha Valley boundaries, Hasroune, Bazouun and Hadath el Jebbeh. Bsharri region covers today a wide range of accommodations: hotels, guesthouses, lodges, campsites, and chalets. Restaurants, snacks, coffee shops, bakeries, bars, homemade cooking are also present serving Lebanese and international cuisine. Local guides are available in the region. Some of them are part of the Lebanon Mountain Trail leading visitors on hiking journeys.

Offered services: mainly day guiding trips with a high focus on hiking to Kornet es Sawda and the Qadicha Valley, skiing, camping, snowshoeing, paragliding, 4wd trips, snowmobiles, atvs' to Kornet es Sawda (3088m the highest summit in Lebanon), rope courses, rappelling, and rock climbing and biking. These areas are also part of tourism programs of a one week duration that are promoted

by national eco tour operators, they offer a nature tourism experience based on hiking. Bsharri has also its own festival known as Cedar International festival a yearly summer musical event promoting tourism in the area. Alpine and Nordic skis competitions are annual events promoted by local actors with international presence. Local guides as well as tour operators are available to guide visitors though their area.

## Batroun

For the case of Batroun, our study area covers the upperpart where most of the adventure tourism activities are taking place. Tanourine, Douma, Bechaaleh and Chatine. Accommodations available in these areas cover hotel, lodges, guesthouses and camping areas. Restaurants, snacks, bakeries are also available serving in majority Lebanese cuisine and few international food.

Offered services: mainly day guiding trips in Tanourine reserve, Bechaaleh Trails, Douma side trails and the Lebanon Mountain trail; camping, snowshoeing, rappelling, and rock climbing and biking. Worth mentioning that Tanourine has the biggest rock climbing sector in Lebanon and the Middle East. These areas are also part of tourism programs of a one week duration that are promoted by national eco tour operators, they offer a nature tourism experience based on hiking. Local guides are available to guide visitors though their area.

## Byblos

Our study covers the upper part of Byblos: Jaj, Ehmej, Laqlouq, Aqoura, Afqa, Lessa along with Bentaël nature reserve located on the coast of Byblos. The accommodations in the area are mainly located on the coast due to the attraction that Byblos the city being a UNESCO World Heritage Site involves. The upper area mentioned above offers also a variety of accommodations ranging from guesthouses, lodges, chalets, hotels, campsites and monasteries. Byblos the city has one tourism office managed by the ministry of tourism.

Offered services: mainly day guiding trips, hiking in Jaj reserve, hiking on Ehmej local trails and the side trail on the Lebanon Mountain Trail; camping, snowshoeing, rappelling, and rock climbing in Afqa, hiking, caving and agritourism in Aqoura. Ehmej has also a farm that offers agritourism activities for kids and families. Aqoura is known and visited during the apple and cherry picking season where you can pick and buy your own fruits.

## Keserwane

Our study area in Keserwane covers Jabal Moussa Biosphere reserve and Kfardebiane. Keserwane is one of the most developed regions of Lebanon. Kfardebiane located in upper Keserwane holds the biggest ski resort in Lebanon and the Middle East. Hotels, lodges and monasteries took this area as a basis for their activities. Restaurants, bars, snacks are also available in this area offering Lebanese and international cuisines. Local guides are available within this region.

Offered services by national tour operators and local guides: mainly day guiding trips,

hiking in Wadi el Salib, on the Lebanon Mountain Trail crossing from Faraya to Kfardebiane, hiking to Mzar summit; cultural visits to Afqa temple, religious visit to Saint Charbel Status. In winter time the area offers snow lovers the opportunity to explore snow by undertaking alpine skiing, snowshoeing and Back County skiing to Mzar and Sannine, and snowmobile trips. As for the region of Jabal Moussa it covers 3 main entrances to the biosphere reserves where guides are available to provide the needed information's. Jabal Moussa area has 5 guesthouses and 3 campsites. Local guides are available and trained by experts and they lead visitors on trails inside the mountain.

## Chouf

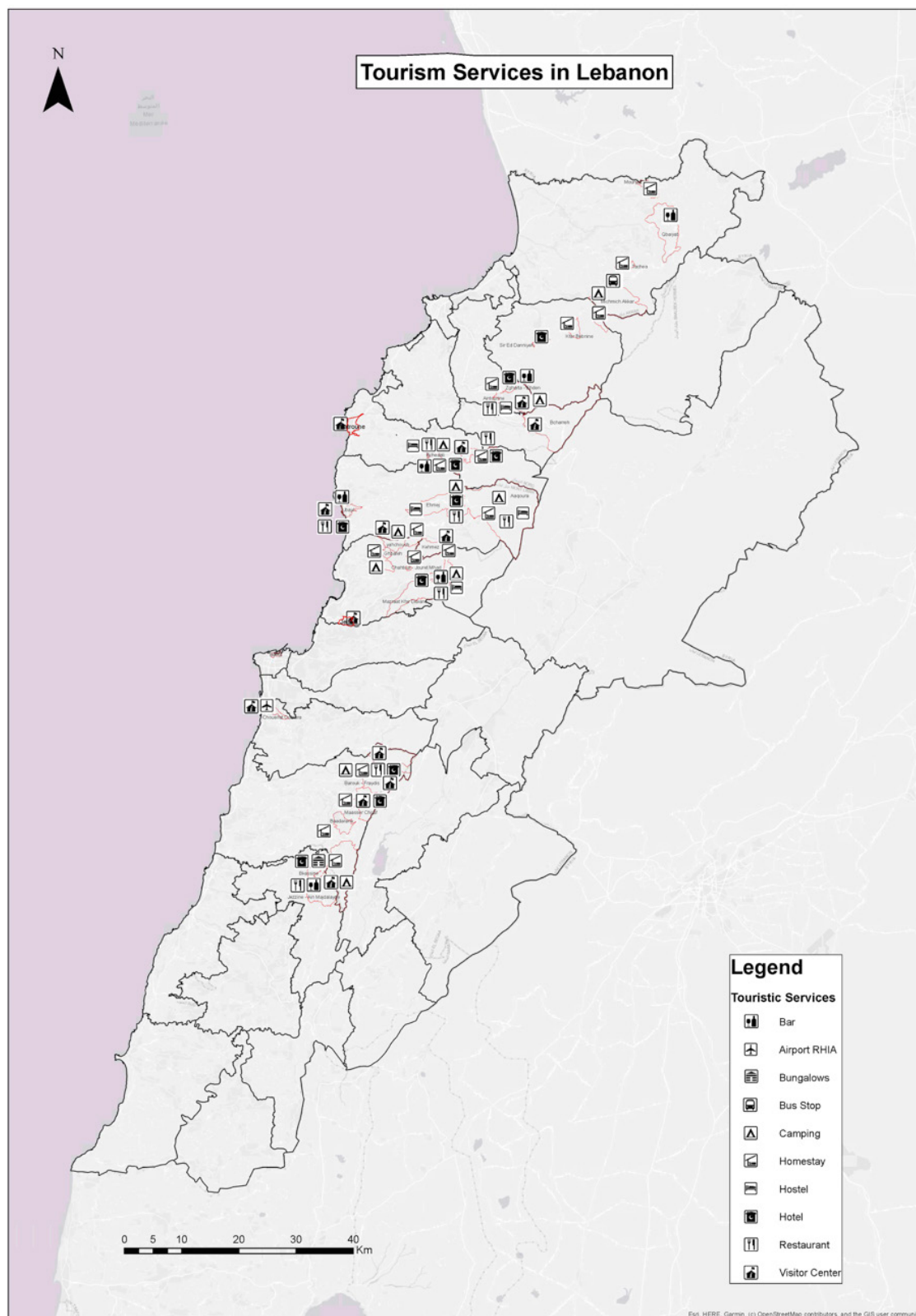
The Chouf area is considered the most developed ecotourism destination in Lebanon. It is well structured offering several and wide range of services. The available accommodations covers hotel, camping, guesthouses, and chalets. Restaurants, snacks, home cooking is also available. Culinary experience is among the attractions and promoted program by the biosphere reserve. The Shouf is part of Darb el Karem where you can go pick your vegetables and learn how to cook them. The park house located in Maaser es shouf is playing the role of a tourism office along with its reservation unit. The reserve has wide range of offered services, it covers: hiking inside the reserves and in the biosphere area with trained local guides, horseback riding activities, culinary sessions, handcrafts visits and sessions.

## Jezzine

Jezzine has placed itself as a Southern destination covering a wide variety of natural activities. Jezzine is well known for its waterfall, old souk, and cutlery making. Jezzine accommodations covers hotel, guesthouses, camping and forest chalets. Restaurants, snacks, home cooking, and bars are available in Jezzine town. Local guides and a tour operator are available in Jezzine. Offered services: hiking in Jezzine and on the Lebanon mountain Trail, camping, canyoning in Azibe, Biking and rope courses at La Maison de la foret. Jezzine offers a culinary experience by savouring a Lebanese Mankousheh baked in a wood oven.



## MAP WITH TOURISM SERVICES



### 3.2.1. Support facilities to adventure tourism and discovery

#### Akkar

There is no tourism offices located in Akkar, although the region presents a high potential to be developed. An initiative by Mada association to create a tourism office 8 years ago did not see the light. Worth mentioning that Mada Association was working to launch the first national park in Lebanon covering the upper Akkar territory. Qobayat has a butterfly museum and recently Menjiz opened a museum dedicated to the Megalithic era and a two hours trail going through Megalithic tombs and constructions. As for food production, we find a tannour (terracotta oven) in Andqet, Kobayat and Meshmesh that sells bread pita and the famous mankousheh; many other places produce food provision known as mouneh and it is sold directly in the market or to end consumers.

#### Ehden

The nature reserve is Ehden plays a big role in bringing and providing supports to visitors. The reserve has established a visitor center at one of the reserve entrances, the center is equipped with toilets and provide a brief description to hikers willing to explore Ehden reserve and mountains. Ehden has also a biking pass open for self-biking and guided tours. One can also ask for Ehden cultural tour going through the Midane, Al Koubra, Saydet el Hosn, Saint Georges, and Sainte Mema. The Kozhaya Valley is also part of Ehden,

where visitors can explore the monastery, the old church and the museum. The monastery has equipped the facility with a souvenir shop, visitors' toilets, a coffee shop, and a lodge.

#### Bsharri

Hometown of the famous poet Jibran Khalil Jibran; the town has a museum under his name. At the entrance of Bsharri there is an information center. Located next to the Cedar of God, local have their souvenir shops selling items made from the cedar wood.

In the Qadicha Valley there are three toilets stops at the level of Saint Hawqa, Abou Joseph restaurant and at the Lady of Qanoubine Monastery. Hiking trails along the Qadicha Valley have also interpretive signs covering landmarks.

#### Batroun

Visitors of the Batroun area can bike along the Batroun coastal area. Visitors can also enjoy the wine route covering several wine makers in Batroun area. As for the highland our study area; Tanourine reserve has a visitor center to support and provide a visitor quality experience.

#### Byblos

The city of Byblos offers a wide range of support, from the information center, the old souk to souvenir shops and to fossils museum, Byblos has it all. As for the

mountains areas, Jaj is building a new center visitor at the entrance of the reserve. Ehmej the municipality is providing support in developing and promoting the town and receive visitors. There is a product that should be development the Via Appia which refers to the Roman path going from the coast to the Bekaa crossing through the mountains of Aqoura.

## Keserwan

The area is developing to offer supports for adventure tourism. For Jabal Moussa they are working on developing a Phoenician route connecting several attractions in the area. They also organize visits to local associations and to their premises and nurseries where you can discover their activities. Union Federation of Keserwane is also working on thematic routes and itineraries in different parts of the districts.

## Chouf

The Chouf area developed a wide network of tourism services and support. The park house located in Maaser es Shouf is the operation room working on developing and promoting tourism. They were able to attract many actors to be involved in tourism. They have worked on creating several hiking and trail maps, tourism guidebooks, and packages.

## Jezzine

The Jezzine are working hard to position themselves on the tourism map. They are working on creating support and experiences for their visitors. The Union of federation is highly present supporting and promoting the tourism sector in Jezzine. The area has a cooperative for the sale of all the rural and agro food product, they have an information center and working on the launching of a DMO, and they are working on a geo-park with the Shouf area.

### 3.3 DMO and promotion entities

Till this date we have no actual DMOs in Lebanon, local actors such as individuals, ngos and associations are playing the role of developing and promoting the rural and adventure tourism sector in Lebanon. Destinations such as Ehden, Keserwane, the Shouf area and Jezzine are in the process of creating DMOs and DMCs to promote their areas thus placing them on the tourism map. These institutions are playing the role of rural development engines and tourism actors.

On the national level most of the promotion of the destinations and tourism products in Lebanon is through social media with a high visibility on Facebook and Instagram. Every local actor has his own social media platform and followers that are regularly informed and updated with all the news.

As for the ministry of tourism, the past couple of years has launched the visit Lebanon ([www.visit-lebanon.org](http://www.visit-lebanon.org)) initiative inviting international tour operators to meet with national tour operators to promote their products. This initiative missed the adventure and ecotourism sector as national eco tour operators were not invited to be part of this initiative. It only covered cultural and mass tourism agencies. The ministry of tourism has ten tourism centers distributed on the Lebanese ground: Beirut airport, ministry of tourism, Tripoli, Batroun, Byblos, Jeita, Niha (Shouf), Saida, Zahle, Baalbeck. These centers aim at providing visitors with the needed information.

Other institutions are playing the role to promote tourism on the national level. Live love Lebanon ([www.livelovelebanon.com](http://www.livelovelebanon.com)), live love Beirut ([www.livelovebeirut.com](http://www.livelovebeirut.com)) campaign that are active on social media through posting photos and experiences from different regions of Lebanon with a high focus on the rural side.

LMTA ([www.Lebanontrail.org](http://www.Lebanontrail.org)) the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association created with a mandate to develop and promote the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) as a responsible hiking destination. The mandate of the association is to develop, protect and promote the trail. The association today is playing the role of promoting activities on the trail through a partnership with tour operators' member of USEIL Union of Sustainable Ecotourism Institutions of Lebanon.

LRI Lebanese Reforestation Initiative, the association works in replanting the rural and highlands of Lebanon. Through fire protection, the association aims at developing hiking trails while preventing and creating free fire zones. Recently the association has started managing Arz Ehmej Lodge and is promoting the services of the area. The association is also promoting activities in the Anjar town park located in the Bekaa Valley and finalizing a project for the promotion of tourism packages developed by 33 North in the Bekaa area.

**AFDC** Association for Forest Development and Conservation, the association started twenty years ago with the promotion of outdoor activities in the Shouf region. Today the association is promoting several outdoor activities and tree nursing and planting in different part of the country.

**SPNL** Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon worked for the creation of Himas a kind of protected area in Lebanon. Along with himas, SPNL has also promoted bird watching in different parts of Lebanon, and shepherds transhumance.

## Akkar

For the case of Akkar; Menjiz municipality is playing a tremendous role in promoting and positioning the area on the tourism map and creating the links between national tour operators and local service providers. As for other destinations in Akkar (Anqdet, Kobayat, Qamouaa, Fnaidiq, Meshmesh) these areas are being promoted as a nature tourism destination by local actors: the Council of the Environment, Akkar Trail and Discover Akkar and other national tour operators such 33 North providing adventure journeys within the district.

## Ehden

The tourism sector in Ehden has thus far grown organically in the absence of a management structure. Several attempts (2011 onwards) to bring coherence, anticipate and mitigate potential hazards due to the excessive pressure on the natural and cultural resources of Ehden and its surroundings,

the Zgharta-Ehden municipal council, has decided to create a DMMC (destination marketing and management committee) to be voted and launched officially before end of March 2020. It will take the form of a public-private (PP) joint committee (municipality of Zgharta-Ehden council members + tourism stakeholders). As an interim structure, the committee will put in place a sustainable tourism strategy for an all season, inclusive practice with accent on transitioning from the current short-lived seasonal activity to a year-round experiential practice by December 2020. It will also have transformed into an independent DMO operating on the Zgharta Caza level (sub regional).

## Bsharri

Bharri district has no unified tourism body handling the development and the promotion of the sector within the district boundary. Two towns took the initiatives and launched their own tourism offices to promote their existing tourism activities.

Bsharri, couple of years ago Bsharri town has launched a tourism information center located at the entrance of the town. The center aims at providing visitors with information's (places to hike, to eat, to sleep...) related to their visit and stay in Bcharre. Private actors in Bsharri tried to create a DMC through launching a development tourism company called Ferdayso, but this initiative was blocked by the public sector and never saw the light. The Union of Federation of Municipalities along with active political parties are playing a major role in supporting the promotion of tourism in Bsharri district. Recently they have been

working to promote the Qadicha Valley a UNESCO World Heritage site as a Christian Maronite religious tourism destination. As for the Qadicha Valley, it is managed by the COSAQ committee that handles the preservation of the cultural and religious sites more than the promotional aspect.

## Hadath el Jebbeh

In 2015 Hadath el Jebbeh was granted a project from USAID providing technical support for the development of a tourism plan along with delineation of hiking trails and guides capacity building. The project also supported the town with the creation of an information tourism center promoting the village activities. Unfortunately this center did not last too much similar to many information center in other areas due to lack of planning, management and funding.

## Batroun

Has no unified or centralised tourism body. The town has an information center located in the city managed by the Ministry of Tourism. As for the upper Batroun area, every town is handling the development and promotion of tourism within its own boundaries. Bechaaleh has developed hiking trails and is doing the promotion of its activities supported by the municipality. For the case of Jaj, the committee in charge of the reserve is handling the development and promotion of tourism. Douma is on the tourism map and several local actors are promoting tourism. In Tanourine the reserve is playing the role of promoting activities and programs within the reserve area and recently developed new hiking trails around Tanourine.

## Byblos

Has no unified body to develop and promote tourism. Several initiatives are taking place on the level of the region. The municipality of Byblos plays a major role in promoting the city and its attractions classified as UNESCO World Heritage site and tourism events in the city: such as launching yearly the biggest Christmas tree and Byblos summer musical festivals. This promotion stayed on the city level and did not cover other tourism services within the area such as Saint Charbel Mausoleum present on the Lebanese religious tourism. As for other destinations within Byblos; Ehmej became a nature tourism destination, people visit the town for its hiking trails and lodge. Ehmej municipality and Ehmej Development Association played a major role in attracting international funds for the development and promotion of tourism within the town. Other villages in Byblos are developing their tourism activities such as Jaj with the existence of the Cedar reserve and Aqoura village where private local initiatives are promoting outdoor events, hiking, agro-tourism, and adventure tourism.

## Keserwane

The union federation of municipalities in Keserwane along with the development office has prepared a plan to launch a tourism center located in Rayfoun.

The mission of the center will be to:

Offer an information space on tourist potential in the mid-mountain area of the territory of the Federation of Municipalities

of Kesrouan Ftouh, to highlight activities related to nature, small heritage and artisanal know-how, and in particular the specific offer of tourist services in the Wadi-el-Salib valley.

To offer activities (exhibitions, conferences, etc.) relating to the tourist potential of the mid-mountain area of the territory of the Federation;

To offer services to private or public tourism actors located within the perimeter of the medium mountain area of the territory of the Federation, in order to support them in the promotion of their offer of tourist products.

## Chouf area

There is no actual Destination Management Organisation (DMO) in the Shouf area. The DMO is supposed to be a governmental organisation linked to the ministry of tourism. The situation, demand and supply pushed Arz es Shouf society to play this role as it is helping in developing, attracting and promoting the tourism sector in the biosphere surrounding villages in a sustainable tourism manner. For the past 10 years, they created a reservation unit and activities distribution, with local guides training and community capacity building. Arz es Shouf today is working as DMC rather than a DMO; the difference is that the DMO is not supposed

to promote activities but more a region without getting benefits and getting into details; whereas as DMC is more company promoting and selling existing packages and activities. Arz es Shouf is playing both role promoting the area and arranging packages. The actual plan which is an undergoing project is to have Arz es Shouf to work as a DMO with a local tour operator to play a role of DMC.

## Jezzine DMO

Jezzine has went the extra mile and today is launching a proposition for a Terms of Reference (TOR) for setting up a Destination Management organization (DMO) in Jezzine as a pilot program through a public private partnership. Union of Jezzine Municipalities and the Ministry of Tourism of Lebanon (waiting for the approval of the ministry). This initiative to create a DMO will be a public private partnership with the Union Federation of Jezzine called JEDMO and set up under the United Nation World Tourism Organisation UNWTO guidelines.

The proposed JEDMO mission will be as follow:

1. Strategic tourism leadership in area of operation in cooperation and under supervision of Ministry of Tourism
2. Effective execution of local strategies, tactics and programs
3. Efficient governance through full transparency and cooperation with stakeholders and Ministry of Tourism

The proposed function and responsibilities:

1. Strategic tourism planning
2. Formulation and implantation of tourism policy
3. Market Intelligence
4. Tourism product and business development
5. Digitization and innovation
6. Monitoring
7. Crisis management
8. Training and capacity building
9. Promotion, Marketing and branding
10. Funding and fostering investments.



### 3.4 Stakeholders and agents involved in adventure tourism

There is no doubt that the main actor and the chief orchestra for developing and setting standards for tourism is the Ministry of Tourism. In the case of Lebanon the public sector is absent from developing, regulating and promoting the adventure tourism sector; and the initiatives that are taking place are too small comparing to the size of the work that needs to be done. The sector started to be developed back in 1996 with the creation of the first eco tour operators. Today the adventure tourism sector in Lebanon is not regulated. The majority of eco-tour operators are not professional (they work only during the weekends) and illegal, local trail guides are not certified. USEIL Union of Sustainable Ecotourism Institutions is a newly established association / syndicate in Lebanon, an initiative by 5 eco-tour operators aiming at regulating and standardizing the responsible and adventure sector. Other local actors and initiatives are happening but what we miss is a central body to unify all these national efforts. Many associations are working on developing regions through tourism (hiking trails, equipping climbing routes, guides training...) these interventions are supported and financed by international donors such USAID, EU, AFP, AIDA...

Despite the illegal framework and aspect of most stakeholders, the main facet of adventure tourism in Lebanon are eco-tour operators and local guides. In our study we are referring to eco-tour operators to those who organises adventure tourism

activities. We are suggesting three levels of operators: the local, the national and the international.

The local level, operates within a specific region or town, they know their region; the national level operates all over the country leading clients from Beirut to visit the rural and backcountry and in some cases they operate with local eco-tour operator and local guides. The international level lead international visitors all over Lebanon offering tours combining nature and culture. The international level uses the services of local guides and local tour operators whenever they are available.

**Nature reserves** played a big role in helping the development of adventure tourism within their territory. They are considered the main stakeholder for development through the preservation of the territory, they gained the trust of international donors and associations to support and invest in local tourism projects. These initiatives led to more job creations through guiding, guesthouses, and food production.

**Municipalities and union of federation of municipalities** such Menjiz in Akkar, Doniyeh, Ehden, Becharreh, Hadath el Jebbeh, Ehmej, Aitanit, Keserwane, Jezzine played a tremendous role on their territory. They supported rural and adventure tourism development and some went further by protecting the trails and mountains of their area. For the case of Ehden, Keserwane and Jezzine they are

working on the creation of a DMMO and DMO.

**The Lebanon Mountain Trail Association**  
LMTA is working for the protection of the national trail of 470 km extending from North to South and on the promoting as a responsible tourism destination. The LTMA along with partner tour operators has attended several international tourism shows. The LMTA also helped in the capacity building of local guides and guesthouses that are located on the Lebanon Mountain Trail.

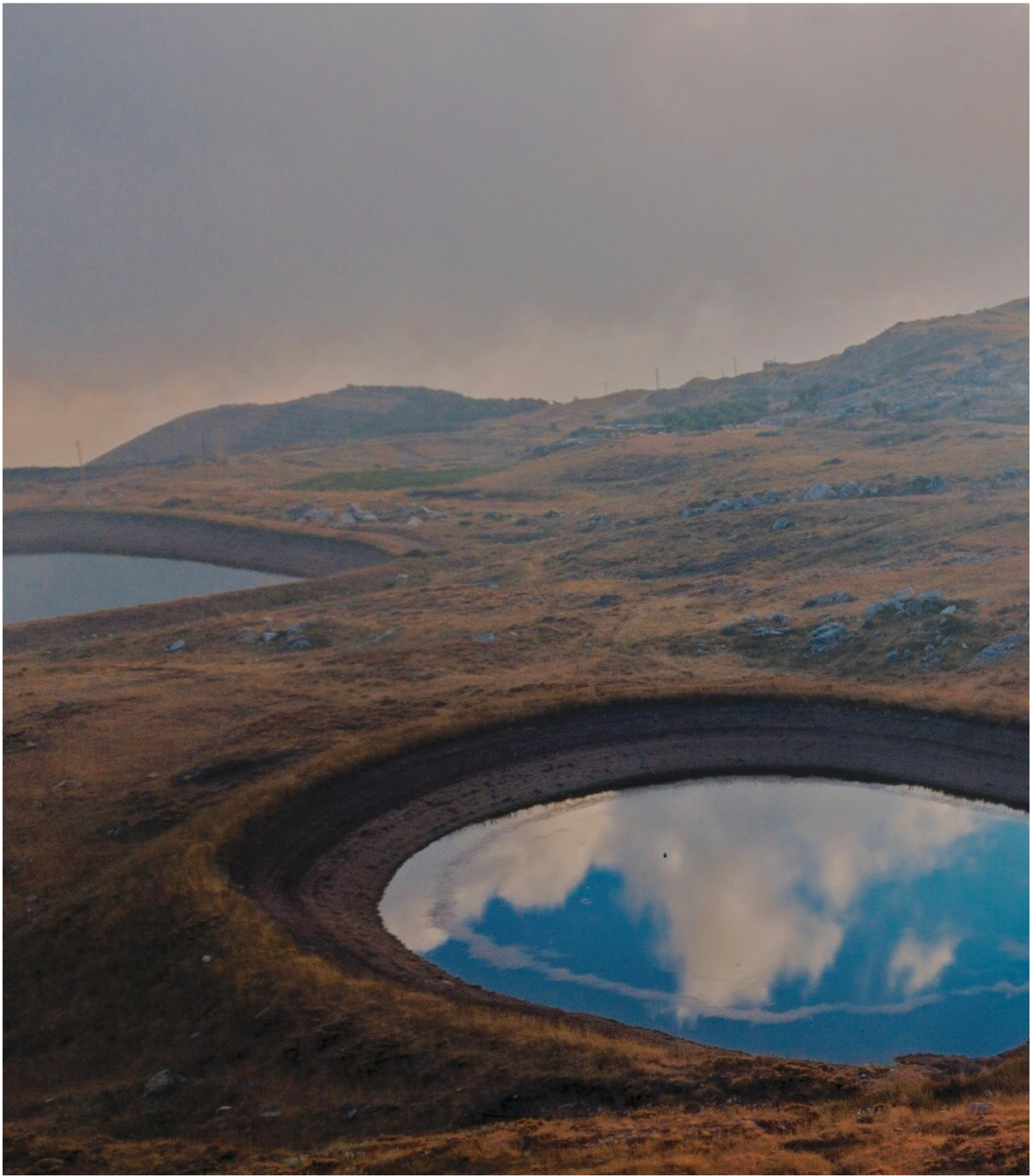
**Boukaat Loubnan Trails** a project conception and implementation by 33 North, consisting of delineating a long distance hiking trail covering the mountains of the Bekaa Valley. The Trail cover areas of the beaten tracks and is divided into three main areas:

The North Bekaa trail, The Anti Lebanon Trail, and the Tour du Mont Hermon.

**Poly Liban** Association, played a major role in promoting cycling and polyathlon. They organise a yearly event for cycling around the country. During the recent years they started promoting backcountry skiing as well.

**Rock Climbing Lebanon**, the association behind the promotion of rock climbing in Lebanon. They helped in equipping several climbing sites in Lebanon. They have also organised and supported rock climbing training events.

**Caving groups** are considered to be the first rope disciplines in Lebanon. These clubs are behind all the underground explorations across Lebanon.



## 4. CONCLUSION



Lebanon has too much to offer for adventure tourism. It is a diverse country rich in culture, nature, religious and culinary aspects. Since late 90s' the Lebanese territories developed infrastructures and activities for the promotion of rural and adventure tourism.

Lebanon has no laws to regulate new tourism trends and there is a big gap between the sub-sector and the public sector. Knowing that Lebanon has signed all the international conventions about biodiversity, environment and sustainable development, one think that the chain is coherent, but the reality is different. The development of the adventure and rural tourism sector relies on the support brought by local actors, NGOs', and international donors. Several initiatives are taking place to regulate and promote this sector. Recently a group of eco tour operators and consultants created USEIL Union of Sustainable Ecotourism Institutions in Lebanon aiming at regulating the tourism sector with special focus on responsible and adventure tourism. The public sector has an initial role to play, to be the umbrella supervising and monitoring all initiatives. There's so much to be done from

Local (hiking and adventure) guides and eco tour operators' regulation; promoting Lebanon as an adventure tourism destination on the international level; regulating the alternative modes of accommodations; and a label system for the different hiking trails. To lobby on the level of the government to adopt a tourism strategy recognizing responsible and adventure tourism as main livelihood sectors.

## INTERNAL FACTORS

<b>DETRIMENTAL TO ACHIEVING THE GOAL</b>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural capital including mountainous landscapes</li> <li>• Cultural heritage, 8000 years old civilisations</li> <li>• High culinary aspect</li> <li>• Diversity In tourism: religious, cultural, natural</li> <li>• Tourism infrastructure in place</li> <li>• Wide terrain for adventure tourism covering a multitude of activities</li> <li>• A diversity of accommodations serving all levels</li> <li>• A diverse tourism offers</li> <li>• 4 seasons packages</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of the public sector vision regarding the adventure tourism sector</li> <li>• Absence of statistics</li> <li>• The absence of a common umbrella for tourism activities</li> <li>• The unstable political situation</li> <li>• Lack of promotion on the international level</li> <li>• Lack of regulations for eco and adventure tourism</li> <li>• The lack of tourist amenities (tourist center, signs, brochures, etc.)</li> <li>• Weak public transport network to reach all rural areas</li> <li>• Mountains are being destroyed by quarries</li> </ul>

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

<b>DETRIMENTAL TO ACHIEVING THE GOAL</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lebanon has four seasons tourism</li> <li>• You can travel from the sea to the mountains in one hour</li> <li>• The presence of snow in the mountains till early summer</li> <li>• Future growth for nature based and agro tourism activities</li> <li>• High potential to promote religious tourism</li> <li>• High potential terrain to develop am multitude of adventure tourism activities</li> <li>• The growth of domestic tourism</li> <li>• Use adventure tourism to promote a culture of peace</li> </ul>	<b>THREATS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The risks of conflicts and insecurity in the area</li> <li>• Global warming affecting the 4 seasons</li> <li>• Urban sprawl and reduction of pristine areas</li> <li>• Mass tourism taking over responsible tourism</li> </ul>

# ANNEX

## Tourism recovery measurements due to COVID 19 in Lebanon

### Introduction

The first part of the year 2020 has been very difficult to Lebanon. In addition to the COVID 19 pandemic Lebanon is witnessing a severe - never seen in its modern history - economic crisis that started to point out in 2016 and exploded by the end of 2019. It has been manifested in people's uprising against the corrupted government on the 17th of October, pushing it to demission on the 29th of October 2020 with the resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

In 2018 the US dollar parity to the Lebanese Pound was 1 USD to 1515 LBP; while in October 2019 it raised to 1800 LBP.

Besides the economic crisis it is worth it to note that the Lebanese population has been psychologically hit by an unbelievable wave of fires that have prevailed nationwide for more than a week on the 12th of October 2019 with a malfunctioning and non-efficient administration. It is believed that the origin of these fires is man made with the intention to cause damage to Lebanon's green areas.

On the 19th of December 2019, after 64 days of continuous street violent protests, and 51 days of government collapse, a new Prime Minister has been designated (Mr. Hassan Diab). He didn't bring any solutions, even when he formed his cabinet on the 21st of January; so the protests continued, and the year 2019

ended with a dramatic raise in dollar parity with 1 USD to 2200 USD. This caused panic among the population, in addition to monetary paralyzed banks, and a form of capital control, where one is allowed to withdraw a sum of only 200USD in cash per week, then it became per month, until no dollar currency is available anymore.

All schools, universities, commerce, banks and administrations were closed for long periods paralyzing the economic sector of the country. And for the first time in its history, all foreign countries expressed that they do not intend to collaborate with Lebanon supporting the re-construction of its economy unless serious reforms are planned and implemented; something that is not envisaged by the Lebanese government to date.

### Chronology of COVID 19 in Lebanon:

COVID 19 reached Lebanon on the 21st of February by a woman coming back from religious pilgrimage in Iran. The dollar parity reached 2500 LBP by end of February.

The first death case caused by COVID19 has been registered on the 10th of March, and the minister of health announced a soft lockdown, then on the 11th, the airport was closed and on the 15th of March the complete lockdown has been announced by the government, which aggravated the economic situation.

By end of March 2020: 479 cases ;

End of April 2020: 729 cases;

End of May 2020: 1200 cases

End June 2020: 1800 cases;

The international airport of Beirut re-opened on the 1st of July and the numbers started to raise dramatically with 2859 case and 40 deaths registered on the 19th of July 2020, caused by the incoming Lebanese travellers from different parts of the world. An average of 2300 incoming traveller is reaching Beirut every day which makes a total of 40,000 people since the 1st of July.

In result we can admit that Lebanon did a positive job in containing COVID19 due to joint efforts between the ministry of health, the government, the private sector (private hospitals) and the civil society.

#### Tourism sector within COVID19:

The tourism sector has been the first to be affected with the economic crisis, the uprising which caused a feeling of non-security, and the monetary blockage.

But with COVID19 the tourism sector was completely paralyzed with more than 35% of tourism companies closing and many licensed jobs. And similar to the rest of the world, domestic and proximity tourism was the new rule, so it was urgent to find solutions.

A group of 5 Lebanese Eco-Tour Operators have joint efforts to form the "Union of Sustainable and Ecotourism Institutions in Lebanon" (USEIL). The objectives are to install responsible tourism in Lebanon with a Charter for responsible tourism, modernization of tourism laws, and support to the rural areas reaching a balanced local economy through responsible tourism practices.

USEIL have designed its "Solidarity Tourism

Initiative Lebanon" (STIL) approach back in November 2019, when the economic crisis started to hit. During COVID 19 it was halted due to the severe lockdown of the country. The STIL initiative consists on installing an agreement between all stakeholders of the tourism value chain (Eco-Tour Operators – Tour Operators – Local Guides – Local Guesthouses – Transport companies – other service providers in rural areas – municipalities – associations) to produce and implement STIL packages with reduced prices and control over quality and safety, in addition to adoption of responsible tourism standards. All this was planned to face the economic crisis and to safeguard the environment and the cultural heritage from an expected wave of domestic revenge tourism.

USEIL believed that by joining efforts to design controlled prices and quality packages with minimal support from donors (USAID or EU existing projects), many jobs could be saved until reaching the other side of the river.

In parallel many meetings and conferences and press conferences have been organized by different tourism syndicates asking the government tax reduction and payments facility etc... but nobody proposed any solution to the economic situation but USEIL, who followed the UNWTO in its planning.

From its side, the government has formed with some considerable delay, in April 2020, a steering committee, in which one member of USEIL is represented. But this steering committee didn't produce any plan or didn't bring any solution. USEIL

have presented two studies for tourism recovery after COVID19 in Lebanon, based on the recommendation of the UNWTO. But it has never been adopted by the ministry of tourism.

Surprisingly USEIL has been mentioned as a main partner for the government in its tourism recovery plan, which is part of the Economic emergency plan for Lebanon that the government announced on the 30th of April. But not surprisingly this has never seen the light.

Many other initiatives have been launched in Lebanon on social media and on TV, through short films or clips or pictures but neither contained any solution to the economic situation. And to date Lebanon is floating without any tourism plan at the horizon.

USEIL's initiative has been halted during COVID19, but as soon as it vanishes USEIL is planning to organize a national workshop to re-build together the rural and ecotourism sector by building bridges with all stakeholders especially municipalities, associations such the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA) and the Nature Reserves. In the meantime many meetings are organized with project managers to find the right support.