Travel with The Met

February 23–March 2, 2020

Lebanon: Past & Present
with Kim Benzel, Curator in Charge,
Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art
Dear Members and Friends of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

The sophisticated Mediterranean city of Beirut is a vibrant crossroads of East and West, old and new, Christianity and Islam. Beautiful and diminutive, Lebanon tells its expansive and rich history through Phoenician tombs, Roman ruins, Byzantine churches, Crusader castles, and Ottoman palaces, to name a few. As a scholar of the ancient Middle East, I am thrilled to invite you to spend a week in this captivating and welcoming country, visiting ancient sites that have been witnesses to millennia of history and discovering the vibrancy of Lebanon today through its incredibly active contemporary art scene.

We begin with visits to two archaeological museums—the National Museum of Beirut and St. George’s Crypt Museum—joined by their director and founder respectively. A short drive south takes us to the country’s first capital, picturesque Deir El-Qamar; and Beit ed-Dine, where, following lunch at the elegant Mir Amin Palace, we visit the 19th-century Beit ed-Dine Palace. After admiring this masterpiece of Lebanese architecture, we will continue to the Chouf District to walk amongst the famed ancient cedars of Lebanon.

At the Aishti Foundation, we will explore Beirut’s new center for contemporary culture with its founder. We then head up the coast to Byblos, one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, to discover a Phoenician royal necropolis, 3rd-century Roman amphitheater, and Crusader castle. Works by modern, contemporary, and emerging artists are the focus of our next day in Beirut on visits to art centers, galleries, and museums. On an excursion to ancient Baalbek, once known as Heliopolis, marvel at colossal and well-preserved Roman temples. Continue to scenic Château Kefraya in the Bekaa Valley for a relaxed lunch and a tasting of its superb wines.

Our last day will begin with a curator-led tour of the new Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut’s largest art museum. After a seaside lunch and stroll along the Corniche El Manara, we will view the private collections at Dar Al-Nemr and conclude with a farewell dinner at Beirut’s finest restaurant, Em Sherif.

Please join me to discover the “jewel” of the Middle East, where Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Ottomans, French, and Palestinians have left their marks in this small but proud country.

Sincerely,
Kim Benzel
Curator in Charge, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Traveling with You
Kim Benzel

Kim Benzel is the Curator in Charge of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at The Met. Since coming to The Met in 1990, she has worked on numerous exhibitions and related publications including The Royal City of Susa, Assyrian Origins, Art and Empire, Beyond Babylon, Hidden Treasures from Afghanistan, Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age, Jewelry: The Body Transformed, and the upcoming Alien Property. She has also published numerous articles and essays on the jewelry arts of the Ancient Near East. Benzel has participated in several archaeological excavations, primarily at sites in Syria and holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York.

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Trip Highlights

— Be amongst the first to visit the country’s largest new art museum, the Dalloul Art Foundation
— Explore Beirut’s dynamic contemporary art scene with visits to the city’s top galleries
— Travel to Baalbek and Byblos to experience the rich history and culture of ancient Lebanon
— Meet the director of Beirut’s National Museum and the archaeologist who created the St. George Crypt Museum, built under the oldest cathedral in the city
— See royal palaces in the City of Emirs and walk among the famed ancient cedars of Lebanon
— Tour the extensive collections of the new Aishti Foundation with its founder
— Dine at one of Beirut’s finest restaurants in the company of celebrated contemporary artists
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**Departure**

**Sunday, February 23**
Depart for Beirut on an overnight flight.

**Beirut, Lebanon**

**Monday, February 24**
Travel to Beirut’s historic city center for lunch and a casual walking tour before checking in to our home for the week, the Relais & Châteaux Hotel Albergo. The remainder of the day and dinner are at leisure.

**Beirut**

**Tuesday, February 25**
After breakfast and an introductory lecture at the hotel, visit the National Museum of Beirut. As the country’s principal museum of archaeology, it played an important role in preserving cultural heritage during the Lebanese Civil War. Meet with the museum’s director, Anne Marie Afeiche. Then, at the beautifully designed MIM Mineral Museum, see one of the world’s foremost private collections of minerals. After lunch, visit St. George’s Greek Orthodox Cathedral, originally founded in the 5th century. At the adjoining Crypt Museum, meet archaeologist Leila Badre, who created a museum dedicated to the many layers of history discovered under the cathedral. A late afternoon city walk reveals notable landmarks, including the ruins of a Roman bath, and remarkable stories of the city’s long history. Gather this evening for a festive welcome dinner hosted by a local patron of the arts.

**Beirut / Beit ed-Dine / Beirut**

**Wednesday, February 26**
Drive south to picturesque Deir El-Qamar, the first capital of Lebanon, known as the “City of the Emirs.” Continue to Beit ed-Dine for lunch at the 19th-century Mir Amin Palace, a former royal residence with sweeping mountain views. At the Beit ed-Dine Palace, built at the beginning of the 19th century during the rule of Emir Bechir Chehab II, admire architectural details such as tiled mosaic floors and inlaid marble doors. Visit the mountainous Chouf District and walk amongst the famed ancient cedars of Lebanon in the Cedar Nature Reserve. Return to Beirut for a cocktail reception at a gallery or private home.

**Beirut / Byblos / Kfour**

**Thursday, February 27**
At the Aishti Foundation, Beirut’s new hot spot for contemporary culture, explore 2,000 works of art with the foundation’s founder, Tony Salamé (pending availability). In ancient Byblos, one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, begin at the Crusader castle, built in the 12th and 13th centuries. We will also see the Phoenician royal necropolis and the 3rd-century Roman amphitheater on a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean before lunch. Head east to the mountains of Kfour for a lecture over cocktails followed by dinner at Hotel Beit-Trad, a delightful mountain resort converted from an 18th-century villa.

**Beirut**

**Friday, February 28**
After breakfast, friends of the Beirut Art Center will give us a special tour of its contemporary works. Visit the art school of Ashkal Alwan and learn about its Home Workspace Program, a free annual study program for emerging artists. Lunch at leisure is followed by visits to Sfeir-Semler and Joumana Asseily’s Marfa Project, two galleries showcasing works by emerging artists. Continue to the Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum, a modern and contemporary international art museum housed in an Italianate villa. The day ends with a reception and dinner with local artists.

**More Travels with The Met**

**Bermuda: Exclusive Collections & Historic Homes**  December 5–10, 2019

**A Journey into Antiquity: Egypt & the Nile**  Dec 29, 2019–Jan 9, 2020

**Temple Arts of South India**  Jan 23–Feb 7, 2020

**Crossroads of Cultures: Canary Islands, Morocco & Iberia Aboard Sea Spirit**  April 17–30, 2020

For details and more trip information, please go to metmuseum.org/travel
Beirut / Baalbek / Beirut
Saturday, February 29
This morning, explore ancient Baalbek, once known as Heliopolis. Marvel at some of the world’s largest and best-preserved Roman temples, including one built for Bacchus, the Roman god of agriculture, wine and fertility. It is well known that the Romans appreciated wine, but before them, the Phoenicians were among the first peoples known for viticulture. Relax over lunch and a wine tasting at Château Kefraya, in the heart of Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley. This immense and scenic vineyard boasts some of the region’s best wines and views of the foothills of Mount Lebanon.

Beirut
Sunday, March 1
On a curator-led tour of the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Art Foundation, see highlights of the largest art museum in the city, which is scheduled to open to the public in 2020. Drive along the coastal road, stopping for lunch at the Corniche El Manara. Stroll along the corniche and the campus of the American University of Beirut. Visit the Saleh Barakat Art Gallery and view the private collection at Dar El-Nimer, housed in a 1940s villa. Tonight gather for a celebratory farewell dinner at one of Beirut’s finest restaurants, Em Sherif, known for its authentic Lebanese cuisine.

Return
Monday, March 2
Transfer to the airport for flights home.

This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Arrangements Abroad. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms.

Accommodations
Albergo Hotel, Beirut
Tucked away in a quiet neighborhood in east Beirut, the Albergo Hotel is a sanctuary of luxury and the only Relais & Châteaux property in the country. Each suite is individually designed in a Lebanese-style and furnished with unique antiques. This urban oasis includes lush gardens, landscaped terraces, and a rooftop swimming pool overlooking the city. In the culinary tradition of a Relais & Châteaux property, the Albergo offers guests a wide selection of restaurants and bars.

Program Rate
$6,899 per person, double rate
$8,199 single rate

Rate Includes
— Seven nights accommodations as per itinerary
— Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner); bottled water and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine at included lunches and dinners
— Enrichment program of lectures and talks
— Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
— Airport/hotel/airport group transfers for all participants on suggested flights
— Gratuities to local guides and drivers
— Taxes, service, and porterage charges

Not included in rate
International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than as noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; airport transfers other than for those on suggested flights; baggage in excess of one suitcase; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

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Reservation Form
To secure your reservation, please call Arrangements Abroad at 844-TRVLMET (844-878-5638); or complete this form and return it with your deposit of $1,000 per person (of which $500 is non-refundable for administrative fees), to be paid by debit card, credit card, wire transfer, or check payable to Arrangements Abroad. Mail to Arrangements Abroad, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10018-3721. Review the U.S. State Department’s Travel Advisory for Lebanon at travel.state.gov.

Names in full as on passports. Please print.

Accommodations
Hotel room preference
☐ One bed ☐ Two beds ☐ Single
I wish to share a room with

Form of payment
☐ Enclosed is my check (payable to Arrangements Abroad) ☐ Debit card ☐ Credit card

Name on debit/credit card

Debit/credit card number

3- or 4-digit security code ☐ Expiration date

Each participant must sign below. /I/We have read, understand and agree to the Terms & Conditions at www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms and detailed in program documents. /I/We agree to full payment 120 days prior to departure.

Signature (required)
Date

Signature (required)
Date

For additional information, please call 844-TRVLMET (844-878-5638) or to opt out from receiving mail, email travelwiththemet@metmuseum.org
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1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028

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