



ACS Beirut New Employee Handbook 2016-2017



Dear New employees,

To our newest ACS Teachers,

Welcome to ACS! You are an outstanding group of newcomers. We are thrilled to have you join our school and I hope that you are getting excited about your new life in Beirut. I am only sorry that I will not be here to greet you as Ceci and I will be headed back to the States in June. Greg MacGilpin and his wife Melissa will be here and they will do a terrific job of welcoming you and helping you to get started.

You can look forward to a lot of information and support from ACS as you make this transition. You will have the opportunity to explore the dynamic city of Beirut and all of Lebanon, and to deepen your understanding of this important and fascinating region of the world. You will enjoy being in such close proximity to the Mediterranean, the nearly omnipresent sunshine, interesting and capable colleagues, as well as our able and motivated students.

As experienced professionals I know you will be eager to challenge and nurture the young people whom you will interact with in your classes and to give your utmost to helping your students fulfill their potential and live our school mission which reads, "ACS empowers students to solve problems with creativity and integrity, to lead well-balanced lives, and to serve Lebanon and the world community with understanding and compassion."

Beirut and ACS will be a terrific experience and an opportunity for personal and professional growth for all of you. The entire school community looks forward to welcoming each of you in August and you may count on lots of help as you make your transition to life in Beirut.

L. Hamilton Clark, Jr.

Former Head of School

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ACS New Faculty Information Handbook

Welcome to the American Community School at Beirut! You have accepted a position at an educational institution that was established in 1905 and that is located in one of the most vibrant countries of the world: Lebanon.

We hope you will be an active participant in our pursuit of academic excellence and that you will find ACS a fruitful place to pursue your professional career.

Our Community Members wish you a great year and hope that you find life in Lebanon to be a stimulating and enjoyable experience.

This handbook is designed to make your transition to life at ACS and in Lebanon as smooth and trouble-free as possible. You will find detailed information and helpful tips on travel, documentation, communication, campus facilities, housing, and schooling, as well as a list of suggested books, and on daily life and travel in Lebanon.

It is impossible to anticipate every question or concern that might arise. If necessary, your Principal and I can answer any additional questions.

Jocelyne Diab Bitar, Human Resources Manager

jdiabbitar@acs.edu.lb

An electronic version of this publication may be reviewed and saved from the ACS Website, Human resources page.

www.acs.edu.lb

Chapter One: Pre-Departure

1-1 LOCATION.

Ras Beirut, frequently mentioned in the following pages, is the neighborhood in which the School is located. It is a mixed residential and commercial area, and can easily be covered on foot.

1-2 COMMUNICATION ON CAMPUS.

Language

English is the official language of instruction at ACS. Although Arabic is the official language of the country, many Lebanese are fluent in English and French as well. You may find it useful to have an Arabic phrase book such as Colloquial Arabic by Raja Nasr.

1-3 CLIMATE

Lebanon enjoys a temperate Mediterranean climate. In fact, the weather is so mild it is often difficult to distinguish among the seasons. Flowers bloom all year and the spring blossoms on campus frequently appear early in December. Many people enjoy swimming on a warm January day, and it is sometimes possible to ski as early as the middle of November and as late as the middle of April.

Consider weather in Lebanon in terms of geography, as well as in terms of seasons. The coastal plains are warmest, followed by the Bekaa Valley and the mountains. When people are swimming on the coast, temperatures in the mountain regions can fall well below freezing and motorists have been caught in snowdrifts in the high mountain passes in the winter months.

1-4 CLOTHING

Fall: (October 1 through the end of November): Rainfall is scarce and unpredictable and temperatures range from hot and sultry (August/September) to moderate and dry (October). In November there is more likelihood of rain, but this month is frequently also moderate in temperature--60s-70s Fahrenheit--and dries with the occasional chance of Indian summer heat and winter chill.

Summer clothes can usually be worn throughout this period, with a light jacket ready for the occasional crisp day.

Winter: (December through the end of March) Temperatures in Beirut and on the coast rarely fall below 44F in winter, but they seldom fall even that low. The average temperature in January, perhaps the coldest month, is 55F. Traditionally, the heavy rains usually begin only a few days after Christmas. Rainfall during these months is frequently plentiful and severe, accompanied by spectacular thunder and lightning. But the term "rainy season" is deceptive: sunshine is abundant in winter, and many people enjoy sunbathing and swimming year-around. Conventional weather slogans in Lebanon declare that it is possible to ski and swim on the same day and that a rainless picnic can be planned any day after April 1.

Sweaters and light jackets are usual winter casual wear. Sturdy, waterproof walking shoes (or boots) are almost a necessity during the rainy period. A raincoat is useful, although most people make do with umbrellas. Winter coats are not needed, though a warm jacket or parka is recommended for the mountains.

Spring: In the spring (April through the end of May) the temperatures may be in the 60s and 70s, sometimes even higher. But occasionally a surprise shower and chill set in. It is difficult to specify the onset of spring in a land where the ski slopes are still open in mid-April.

Light clothing with a sweater or jacket handy is sufficient for the spring months, which all too soon, and unpredictably, blends into the heat of summer.

Summer: Summer (June through the end of September) temperatures can rise to highs in the 80s and 90s, rarely falling below the mid 70s, even at night. The hottest months are usually July, August, and September. Consequently, much of the local population moves to the cool of the mountains as soon as schools let out.

Light summer clothing is a must in the hot and humid summer months, with a sweater ready for mountain evenings.

Full laundry services, including pick-up and delivery may be found at many commercial dry cleaning establishments in the city.

1-5 DAILY LIVING

Shopping: Two or three supermarkets (e.g., TSC (Verdun/Hamra) and Idriss) are located close to campus and offer a wide selection of imported and local goods. Although most of these stores are within walking distance, some offer delivery service. Within driving distance are several even larger supermarkets (Goodies in the Verdun area, and Spinney's in Ashrafieh Jinah and Antelias) offering an enormous variety of goods, services, delicatessens, coffee and sandwich shops, and take-away foods, both Lebanese and Western. A dazzling display of local and imported fresh fruits and vegetables can be purchased from many small shops or from street carts in the vicinity of the school. Many of the larger supermarkets also have fresh produce departments.

Note: All fresh produce should be carefully washed. It is wise to make the final rinse a solution of drinking water and a small amount of a disinfectant such as Presept.

Domestic Services: Maids and cooks may be easily hired at reasonable rates in Beirut (for full-time maids, salaries normally range from \$200-300 per month). Try word-of-mouth, or look into commercial agencies.

Transportation: City buses, private buses, private taxis, and *service* taxis ply the streets of the city and the suburbs. *Service* taxis follow fixed routes for a set price (usually LL2,000) and will stop on demand. Taxis customarily charge LL10,000, depending on the length of the journey, and buses are usually LL1,000. When using taxis or *service* taxis, always choose cars with a red license plate. Buses and taxis are also available at reasonable rates for travel to other cities in Lebanon (Tripoli, Sidon, Tyr).

1-6 TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

To facilitate your transition, kindly advise your departure city (home city) and specify the airport name to the HR Department in order for them to reserve and book your flight to Beirut.

Reservation guidelines:

- Arrival date at Beirut should be around August 16 - 17, 2016. Keep in mind that orientation begins August 18, 2016.
- The HR Manager will send your flight information and will arrange for a member of our welcoming committee to meet you at the airport.
- If you will be traveling with a spouse/dependent, the HR will need a copy of their passport.
- If you are traveling with a pet, inform the HR department ASAP so they can choose an airline that is pet friendly.

What if you have a serious delay of your flight? A missed connection? A sudden change of plans?

If you experience a flight delay or missed connection in another city, or if you cannot find an ACS representative after passing through customs in Beirut Airport, you can call **03- 309563 (Karim Abu - Haydar) or 03-459154 (Jocelyne).**

Arrival Guidelines:

- During your flight, you will receive an arrival card to be filled out before arrival in Lebanon. One of the questions on this card requires your address in Beirut. Use the following address: **ACS Beirut, 67 Nigeria Street, Jal el-Bahr, Beirut, 01-374370.**
- Arriving ACS employees do not need and should not accept a tourist visa upon arrival at the airport. Instead, present a copy of your work visa, which you will receive from the ACS human resources office before departure. Members of the family not employed by ACS will be given tourist visas.

Shipping:

We recommend that you bring your belongings with you on the airplane as extra luggage. Please check with the airline in regards to luggage allowance before departure. However, if you must ship your belongings, we recommend the following shipping companies:

- A. CIEL, please contact Mr. Fadi Marchi at Tel: 00961- 4- 522149 Mobile: 00961-3-687450**
fadi.marchi@ciel.me
- B. COMPASS LOGISTICS, please contact Mr. Mario Nassif at Mobile: 00961-3-355152** mario@compasslog.com
- C. CARGO MASTER LINE, please contact Mr. Jack Abou Zeid at Tel : 00961-1-561000** jacques@groupage.com
- D. NATIONAL SHIPPING CO., please contact Ms. Mirielle Sfeir at Tel: 00961-1-560986 Ext: 314** m.sfeir@radec-lb.com
- E. LEVANTINE, please contact Mr. Wael Daher at Tel: 00961 -1 368170.** info@levantine.com
- F. Beirut Cargo Center (BCC), please contact Mr. Jad Daccache at Tel: 00961- 1 48 22 11 Ext. 118;** Jad.Daccache@bcclogistics.com.
- G. Beirut International Movers (BIM), please contact Ms. Georgette Bejjani, at Tel: 00961-1 49 55 00 Ext. 107;** info@beirutmovers.com.
- H. General Transportation Services SAL – GTS, please contact Mr. Nabil Ghantous at Tel: +961 1 585 777 (10 lines) Ext. 208** nabilghantous@gts.com.lb

Whether you ship with the suggested companies or any other shipping agencies, We urge you to insist on a written quotation or sign a clear itemized contract describing clearly the services and related charges you are getting before releasing your belongings, this is the best way to avoid surprises later.

Do not include in your shipment CDs / DVDs / Video tapes, prescription or over the counter drugs. Include such items in your travel luggage. Please note that a door-to-door service does not include Lebanese custom duties charges if any.

Clearing a shipment through Lebanese Customs could take up to three weeks from the time it arrives to Beirut. You have to be present in Beirut for the shipment to clear; the shipping/clearing agent will need your passport to do the job. We recommend you ship your belongings three weeks before your departure if you are shipping by air, eight weeks before departure if you are shipping by sea, so it may arrive to Beirut around the same time you do. In any case, consult with your shipping agent on when to ship and ask him questions about custom duties (based on your packing list he should be able to tell you what is subject to custom duties and what is not and give you an approximate figure of your custom bill and your total bill for shipping and clearing charges. (From past experience, custom duties on personal effects were not significant, but it all depends on what you are bringing in).

1-7 PRE-WORK VISA/WORK PERMIT/RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR WORKING STAFF.

- A Clear colored copy of a passport valid for 16 months from arrival to Lebanon showing passport number, picture and name, with at least one blank visa page available for visa stamp(s).

-Colored copy of the highest degree

-Mothers name and fathers name

-In order to apply for the Yearly residency, each foreigner has to go in person to the security/emigration office with the School assistance; the trip takes approximately 2 hours.

-Medical tests; (will be scheduled and communicated after your arrival to Beirut).

-Photos (will be scheduled and communicated after your arrival to Beirut)

-Other legal documents (will be completed and provided by the School).

Please note: Passports showing Israeli visas or stamps may be confiscated at the airport, and you will not be allowed to enter the country.

For the teachers hired in the spring with a work visa ready at the airport, The General Security/ emigration office is affording an official period of 90 days starting the date of entry to Lebanon. During that time the process of providing a working foreigner his/her work permit and residency should be accomplished. So, in order to complete the work permit and the residency for a working new foreigner, the legal / official time provided by the authorities is 90 days. We are doing our best to have both work and residency ready 15 days before the official period ends. During this time you cannot make any travel plan because in order to leave the country you need to have your work permit and your residency with you.

Visa/residency requirements for accompanying dependents and nonworking wife.

- A Clear copy of a passport valid for 16 months from arrival to Lebanon showing passport number, picture and name, with at least one blank visa page available for visa stamp(s).

-Original marriage certificate.

-Original Birth Certificate for accompanying Children.

-A free of charge tourist visa is offered upon arrival at Beirut Airport to the following nationalities: Americans, British, Canadian, and Europeans and some others. The tourist visa is valid for one month and can be renewed for another two months. (This is applicable for dependents holding one of the nationalities mentioned previously).

-As accompanying person nonworking wife and dependents / you will apply for the yearly residency upon granting the residency to your guarantor husband/father.

- In order to apply for the Yearly residency, each foreigner has to go in person to the security/emigration office with the School assistance; the trip takes approximately 2 hours.

For more info please contact: naoun@acs.edu.lb (Nada Aoun, Expat/Ministry Affairs/Personnel Coordinator at ACS)

1-8 EDUCATION FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Be sure you bring full documentation, including school transcripts and enrollment certificates for each of your children. A transcript for the last 3 years needs to be certified by the Lebanese embassy or consulate nearest to your place of residency.

Application, medical, and recommendation forms may be obtained by writing directly to the American Community School, P.O. Box 8129, Beirut, Lebanon (Tel. 01-374370) or by downloading from the ACS's website: <http://www.acs.edu.lb/page.cfm?p=439>

Dependent children of ACS employees:

Within the context of the educational benefits program, the following requirements for dependency must be met:

- 1- The student must be a natural, adopted, or step child of the employee.
- 2- Student must be listed as a child dependent on the employee's form 1040 U.S. individual Income Tax Return for the calendar year most applicable to the academic term for which the employee is joining the school.
- 3- Waiver of tuition fee and Capital Development fee does not imply acceptance of a son or daughter into ACS, but it's offered with the understanding that the child must be accepted through the normal admission process, taking note that the standards for admission to ACS-Beirut have become increasingly competitive.

General Terms and Conditions:

Tuition fees issued by ACS are subject to review, adjustment, or cancellation for any of the following reasons:

- 1- Change of student status
- 2- Academic withdrawal or discontinuation from ACS
- 3- Change in employment status

Dependent child may attend any other school in Lebanon.

Educational Benefit covers tuition fees and Capital Development fee only. All other expenses/ fees are the responsibility of the employee.

1-9 SALARIES, BANKING, AND TAXES

Salaries

Salaries are paid in local currency, Lira (LBP), on the last working day of each month (September through August). Salaries are credited to individual or family accounts at the HSBC, BLOM, AUDI, or BankMed banks.

For all those who are enrolled in US FICA, you can select to have a portion of your monthly pay transferred to your US bank account. This transfer is done state side only through ACH, from ACS US bank account to your US account. You can choose a minimum of \$250 up to \$1,500 to be transferred monthly (September through June). The amount you designate will be fixed for that period and cannot be changed. *Therefore, we ask you to plan your finances carefully so you may not be short on cash.* The amount will be taken from your Net To Pay after all taxes have been calculated and at the exchange rate of LL 1,507.5/\$1. That is if you choose to have \$1,000 transferred, a monthly deduction against your pay slip in the amount of LL 1,507,500 will be posted. The school will not transfer any funds anywhere in the world or in any other currency except for USD or LL.

-Pay slip: All elements on your pay slip will be clearly stated under Earnings or Deductions. Every element will be preceded by the letter E (earning) or D (deduction) to help you identify the element as an earning or deduction. Certain elements such as (Overtime, Absence, Substitute pay, Stipend, Miscellaneous Refund, Miscellaneous Deduct) will have a footnote to explain how the figure was derived (i.e. how many minutes of substitution was done and on which days) [Attached is a sample Pay slip and list of the elements]

Please be informed: *The first salary will be paid at the end of the first month of employment (September); therefore, be sure to bring with you sufficient funds to tide you over until the first payment. During orientation week, you will receive your shipping allowance as per your contract. A salary advance is available upon request from the business office if you need funds before the end of September.*

Banks

Foreign and national banks abound in Beirut. ACS has accounts with the following banks in the vicinity of the campus.

- HSBC (Abdel Aziz street and all branches)
- Banque Audi (Bliss Street and all branches)
- BLOM Bank (Bliss Street and all branches)
- BankMed (Clemenceau Street and all branches)

Current and savings accounts can be opened easily in either Lebanese pounds or any other currency. Banking hours are 8:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. or 5 pm depending on the bank, Monday through Friday and 8:30 a.m. until 12 noon on Saturdays.

Bank representatives will be present during orientation to give you more details about their services.

A note about using your North American credit card or ATM card in Lebanon: *Many US or Canadian banks require that you sign a document if you plan on using your US debit or credit card in Lebanon. A visit to your bank may be helpful to avoid any surprises when you get here. Also, if you are planning on making wire transfers back to the States please get complete routing information from your bank before you leave (ABA #, Swift Code, Account #, and Bank Name including address). Make sure that you that you ask the bank for international wire details, as many banks have different codes for local wire transfers and international transfers.*

Currency

The national currency of Lebanon, the Lebanese pound, also called the lira, is freely convertible and transferable. The commonly applied exchange rate at present is LL 1,500 to the 1 U.S. dollar. Common notes are LL 1,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000, and 100,000. Coins are in amounts of LL 100, 250, and 500. U.S. dollars notes are readily accepted in Lebanon, but U.S. coins are not used.

Lebanese Tax

-Income Tax: Lebanese and non-Lebanese personnel are subject to Lebanese income tax. You will find that tax rates are much lower than in the US or other countries. Please refer to attached appendix for tax bracket info and examples of tax calculation. If you need more details, you can contact the ACS Business Office.

All earning received/earned (cash or non-cash) is taxable as per Lebanese tax laws. The following benefits (Housing, Housing Common Expense, Electricity, Airfare, Shipping, Insurance), whether for Foreign Hire or Local Hire, are taxed on a semiannual basis (June and December) instead of a quarterly basis. If any of the above benefit is due to you in cash (i.e. Housing stipend, Electricity, Housing common expenses, Airfare, shipping allowance) during any month other than June and December, the cash benefit will be disbursed to you in full with NO tax deduction during that month. Taxes on those benefits will be taken in June and December with a tax refund where applicable (please refer to your contract if you qualify for a tax refund). N.B: Tax refund is given on all the above listed benefits, except for the following 2 benefits: Shipping allowance and Airfare, as they are paid in cash. However taxes on Airfare are refunded if ACS buys the tickets for you. ACS will NOT handle any business dealing with any shipping agent on your behalf, this is your responsibility to take care of and the allowance is paid directly to you. Any earnings that you receive other than the benefits above, will be taxed in the month they are received with no tax refund in the month of June and December.

Every employee will receive LL8, 000 (\$5.33) for every day he/she attends work. However, Foreign Hire will receive the monthly transportation allowance as a bulk amount twice a year (December and June). The amount will be added tax free to your pay slip. The goal is to offset any taxes levied on you in the months of December and June. As a result your Net Pay will not be drastically reduced. By shifting the tax deduction on benefits and the transportation allowance to a semiannual basis your monthly Net Pay should be relatively the same, month after month, except if you receive substitute pay, stipend, overtime, extra load pay, coaching

-National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Tax: Lebanese and non-Lebanese personnel are subject to NSSF medical tax up to LL 50,000 (\$33.33) on their monthly pay.

U.S. FICA Tax

U.S. citizens must enroll in FICA tax. The full tax rate will be borne by ACS. A W-4 needs to be completed and submitted by no later than September 15. A W-2 will be issued in January following the end of the calendar year.

Chapter Two: Settling – in

2-1 ACCOMMODATION

Faculty Apartments

All ACS foreign-hire teachers are provided with apartments within easy walking distance of the school (one-half hour or less.) Apartments vary in size according to family size and the design of various apartment buildings. After your first year at ACS you will be given a choice of continuing to live in the same apartment, bidding on another vacant apartment or being paid a cash stipend to find your own accommodations.

Furniture

All apartments are furnished with a basic set of furniture. The furniture allotment includes sofas, armchairs, coffee and end tables, bookcases, desks and beds. All apartments have a refrigerator and a stove, and access to a washer and dryer. Kitchen appliances and electrical goods are readily available in Beirut. New residents will receive brand new kitchenware (utensils, dishes, cookware, etc...), bedding and bath sets (sheets, pillows, towels, etc...)

Water

A small initial supply of bottled drinking water is provided upon your arrival. After that, there are several companies in Beirut who will deliver drinking water to your apartment. Information about these companies will be supplied in the welcoming packet which will be in your apartment when you arrive. Tap water in Beirut is considered safe for all purposes other than drinking.

Utilities

Electricity on the ACS campus and in all campus buildings is 220V, 60Hz. All ACS apartments are supplied with 220-240V. Transformers and voltage stabilizers are readily available in Beirut. Power cuts of 3 hours or more are a daily feature of life in Beirut. During these power cuts, the ACS campus and all ACS apartment buildings are equipped with generators. Generator power in your apartment will NOT be as strong as government power. Restoring generator power to your apartment after an overload will probably require intervention by your building superintendent. Therefore, it is essential that you run a very minimal set of electrical appliances during a power cut. An i-Phone and Android app (Beirut Electricity Cut Off) is available to keep track of the scheduled power cuts and warn you when one is approaching. However, unscheduled power cuts can occur. Desktop computers must be connected to a UPS in order to avoid damage while switching to and from generator power. Stoves operate from gas bottles. The first canister is free, and you will be responsible for replacing the gas bottle after that. The canisters last approximately 3 months, and refilled canisters cost \$15.

Electricity is included as part of your housing benefits, up to \$1,000 per year for singles and \$1,500 for couples. Each apartment comes with its own private telephone line. Monthly phone bills are charged to the resident as a payroll deduction.

Maintenance/Pets

Prior to your arrival, the apartment receives thorough cleaning and painting. All new residents will receive an inventory list to be filled out, signed, and returned to ACS Facilities & Operations Department. Please be aware that the apartments are leased and the landlord needs to approve any significant changes in the apartment.

Cleaning and maintaining the apartment and its contents are the occupant's responsibility. The Facilities & Operations department will respond to emergency calls pertaining to plumbing or electrical problems. However, residents are expected to attend to routine repairs and upkeep, such as replacing light bulbs and unclogging drains.

Some property owners prohibit keeping pets in their buildings. Please notify ACS as early as possible of your intention to bring a household pet. It may or may not be possible to find accommodation in a pet-friendly building. Aside from the regular wear & tear, residents are liable for damages caused by their pets to drapery, upholstery and other household furniture items.

Keys

It is the occupant’s responsibility to safeguard the keys or give a copy to non ACS individuals. A fee will be applied for replacing lost keys and locks whenever deemed necessary.

Internet

Each ACS apartment is supplied with at least (2 MB) ADSL internet connection from a local internet service provider, including a wireless router. You can upgrade or downgrade to 2MB (minimum plan) your plan during your stay but this depends on the line feasibility. Wireless coverage in your apartment will vary, based on the configuration of concrete walls and the shape of the apartment. You will not be charged for your first month of internet service. After that, you may refill the account by purchasing refill prepaid cards widely available at local stores, or set up automatic withdrawals from your credit card or bank account. The ACS business office will help you with filling out the bank forms in Arabic. Generally speaking, you will find the quality of internet in Beirut is slower, less reliable, and more expensive than in other countries. Also, accounts are limited in terms of the amount of online traffic used per month. Information about rates and service levels will be sent separately.

Plans Available

Plan	Download	CAP	Monthly Fees*
2M - 10GB	2 Mbps	10 GB	\$ 12
2M - 40GB	2 Mbps	40 GB	\$ 16
2M - 45GB	2 Mbps	45 GB	\$ 19
2M - 50GB	2 Mbps	50 GB	\$ 25
4M - 15GB	4 Mbps	15 GB	\$ 19
4M - 25GB	4 Mbps	25 GB	\$ 25
4M - 50GB	4 Mbps	50 GB	\$ 33
6M - 60GB	6 Mbps	60 GB	\$ 43
8M - 100GB	8 Mbps	100 GB	\$ 67
1M - Unlimited	1 Mbps	Unlimited	\$ 27
2M - Unlimited	2 Mbps	Unlimited	\$ 50
4M - Unlimited	4 Mbps	Unlimited	\$ 75

Unlimited night service:

\$3 for 2Mbps & 4Mbps plans

\$6 for 6Mbps & 8Mbps plans

Extra Traffic:

\$3 for 2GBytes

Notes:

- Above indicated bandwidths are "Up To" based on your location and the quality of your copper phone line.

* All prices are subject to 10% VAT

2-2 SECURITY

Foremost in everyone's mind, even many years after the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, is the question of security. Your family and friends most probably raised eyebrows in dismay when you announced your plan to teach in Beirut. But the outside image belies the reality. Many Beirutis claim, with justice, that Beirut is far safer than other major cities of the world such as Paris, London, New York, and Philadelphia. Of course, the occasional crime (purse-snatching and domestic violence) does occur as it does in major cities everywhere in the world, but the crime rate in Beirut is significantly lower than elsewhere.

Many newcomers may be alarmed at first by the numbers of military personnel in evidence on neighborhood patrol, at traffic intersections, and along the highways. But you will soon realize that despite this military presence, life in Beirut and in almost all of Lebanon is peaceful and secure. During the war years, a young female student of journalism, apprenticed to a Philadelphia newspaper, declared she felt far safer in war-ravaged Beirut than on the streets of the city of brotherly love. And today, Beirut and all of Lebanon are far safer.

Nevertheless, it is always prudent to proceed with caution and to respect the laws and customs of the host country whenever travelling abroad. While moving around Beirut and the rest of the country, always be prepared to show your identification papers on request. A photocopy of your passport and/or residence permit is sufficient.

Occasionally, uniformed police or army officers stop traffic for security reasons. When approaching a security check by car, slow down, remove sunglasses, and open the window; in the evening turn on the interior light. Most security personnel will wave you through, but make sure you fully understand one another before you move on.

ACS Gates

Entry to the ACS Campus is through one of several gates (depending on the time of day), each of which is guarded by ACS security guards. An ACS ID or a visitor badge is needed for entry. Before you receive your ACS ID make sure you carry a photo ID with you, which may be exchanged for a visitor badge at the gate.

2-3 HEALTH AND BENEFITS

ACS provides and pays for Class B health insurance coverage for Full time employees as specified in the contract.

ACS also provides and pays for Class B health insurance coverage for foreign hire employees' families as specified in the contract.

All qualifying employees may opt to *upgrade* their coverage from Class B to class A and/or enroll immediate family members (spouse and children) at their own expense.

Upgrading from Class B as offered by ACS, to class A does not affect or limit services at the hospital, nor does it affect covered outpatient services. The main difference between Class A and B is that if you belong to class B you may be admitted into a shared room at the hospital, where as with class A you are admitted into a private room.

Any upgrades from class B to class A or enrollment of a family member, will be based on a \$ amount per month multiplied by 10 months, (payroll deductions will start from Sep. 2016 – Jun. 2017)

Employees and their dependents must all belong to the same level plan.

Insurance coverage for NSSF is mandatory for employees and their dependents who are registered by ACS with the National Social Security Fund.

ACS medical coverage mainly includes:

In Hospital At 100%: Including Hospital Confinement, Surgical & Endoscopic procedures, emergency Cases as well as Maternity.

Ambulatory Outpatient at 100%:

Includes Diagnostic tests, treatments as well as technical interpretation Doctor fees.

Prescription Medicine at 100%:

Medication authorized by the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

Doctor's Visit at 100%:

Up to a Maximum of 60 US\$/visit and up to 15 visits /insured / year.

Doctor's Visit includes Clinical visits, diagnostic tests, minor surgeries and operations, as well as vaccination administration.

2-4 IT

1. An e-mail account is created for you as soon as you sign a contract with ACS. You can access it by going to <https://webmail.acs.edu.lb> and using your username@acs.edu.lb and password provided by the school.
2. You can use this account to access ACS-WIFI after you arrive at the school by following the below steps:
 - a. Connect to the ACS-WIFI network.
 - b. When the computer prompts for a username and password do the following:
 - i. Username: username (First Initial, Last Name)
 - ii. Password: the same password you use for the mail.
 - c. In case you have a mobile and you need to set up your ACS email, follow the steps below:

Android	iOS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Menu 2. Settings 3. Accounts 4. Add Account 5. Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync 6. username@acs.edu.lb 7. Password: "Your Own Password" 8. Manual Setup 9. Domain\username: username@acs.edu.lb 10. Exchange server: webmail.acs.edu.lb 11. Next 12. Ok 13. Choose your options (we don't recommend to sync contacts) 14. Next 15. Activate device administrator? Click on Activate (If you already have a device administrator you won't get this message) 16. Give this account a name (Optional): "ACS Mail" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Settings 2. Mail, Contacts, Calendars 3. Add Account... 4. Microsoft Exchange 5. Email: username@acs.edu.lb 6. Password: "Your Own Password" 7. Description: "ACS Mail" 8. Next 9. Server: webmail.acs.edu.lb 10. Domain: 11. Username: username@acs.edu.lb 12. Next 13. Choose what do you want to sync (we don't recommend to sync contacts) 14. Save

In case you need assistance, please send an e-mail to ithelpdesk@acs.edu.lb, an IT ticket will be created automatically for you and one of the IT guys will contact you to assist.

2-5 ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

Books: There are many bookshops in the vicinity of the School selling a wide range of books in several different languages.

Newspapers: A wide variety of foreign newspapers and magazines can be purchased in Beirut. Such newspapers, with the exception of The International Herald Tribune, are usually a day old. Sunday newspapers usually arrive at mid-week. The Guardian Weekly is available in shops close to campus.

Many local Arabic language dailies are also available. The English language daily, The Daily Star, and the French daily, L'Orient/Le Jour, are published Monday through Saturday.

Television and Radio: CNN, BBC, ITN, and other international television programs can be seen in Lebanon. Cable and satellite link-ups are also available. In addition, there are many local TV and radio stations broadcasting in Arabic, English, and French.

Movie Theaters: There are many good movie theaters in Beirut and the suburbs. Films are shown in their original languages with Arabic, French, or English subtitles.

Cultural Activities: Cultural events (concerts, plays, lectures, films, etc.) abound in Beirut. The School and foreign cultural centers located in Ras Beirut (such as the British Council, the Goethe Institute, the Italian Cultural Center, and the Cervantes Institute), and elsewhere (the Russian Cultural Center in Verdun and the French Cultural Center

near the National Museum) frequently sponsor programs. The Beirut Forum brings artists of international caliber such as Julio Iglesias and Tom Jones to Beirut.

Several theaters in and around Beirut offer drama productions in Arabic, English, French, and Armenian. The most renowned are the Theatre de Beirut in Ain el Mreisse and the Theatre al Medina in Hamra Street in Ras Beirut, and the Theatre Ivoire in Sin el Fil in the eastern part of the city.

The Al-Bustan Hotel in the town of Beit-Mary, located in the hills east of Beirut, presents an annual Festival of the Performing Arts offering a rich variety of concerts and plays performed by international artists during February and March.

Restaurants: Many excellent restaurants are located near campus. Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Mexican, French, Italian and western "theme" restaurants flourish, in addition to traditional Arabic restaurants. Fast food restaurants are also situated close to the School. Available free mobile phone apps include: Beirut.com, Beirut City Guide, TripAdvisor, and several others.

Food on campus may be found in the Student Cafeteria located in the Upper School building.

Sports: A variety of sports facilities are available on campus: basketball courts (both indoor and outdoor), a playing field, and an exercise room. Commercial centers close to campus offer exercise rooms, with weight-lifting and other equipment, squash courts, saunas, and swimming pools.

Lebanon boasts several outstanding ski areas offering beginner through expert runs (Faraya, the Cedars, Laqlouq, all within a one to two-hour drive from Beirut). Additionally, numerous facilities for swimming and sailing (usually private clubs) exist on the coast.

Travelling in Lebanon: The beaches, valleys, mountains, and historical sites of Lebanon are easily accessible to the visitor. Do not limit yourself to the well-known classical attractions of Beirut, Byblos, Baalbeck, and Tyre. Crusader castles, small Roman temples, and dramatic churches carved in sheer rock faces can be discovered off the more traditional tourist routes. Booklets (North Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, and South Lebanon) and attractive brochures on many cities and sites are available at the Ministry of Tourism located on Hamra Street opposite the Central Bank.

2-6 NEWCOMER READING AND VIEWING RECOMMENDATIONS

Blogs

<http://qifanabki.com/>

Qifa Nabki is a blog about Lebanese politics, history, and culture, written by Elias Muhanna, an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Brown University. In addition to his academic scholarship, Muhanna is a frequent contributor to such publications as *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The Guardian*, where he writes on political and cultural issues in the contemporary Middle East.

<http://timandmidge.blogspot.com>

Published by teachers, new to Lebanon. They arrived in the fall of 2013 with their two girls. It records their impressions and adventures while teaching at ACS.

<http://thisisbeirut.wordpress.com/>

When I walk the streets of Beirut, it's a calm and cool journey and my hope is to bring you along for the ride towards a different perspective.

Websites – News and Travel

<http://m.naharnet.com/>

A Portal for Lebanese and Arabs Everywhere. Stay up to date with the news.

<https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en>

Up-to-the-minute news coverage, as well as daily and weekly press round-ups from the Lebanese and international press.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/>

Lebanon's English language newspaper online.

<http://www.mot.gov.lb/>

Welcome to the Official Website for the Ministry of Tourism, Lebanon!

<http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/mot/photobase/>

Created by the *Digital Documentation Center* at *AUB* in collaboration with *Next Vision, Beirut* and *The Ministry of Tourism, Lebanon*.

<http://www.lebtivity.com/>

Lebtivity is your social calendar for events in Lebanon

<http://www.timeoutbeirut.com/>

Your ultimate guide to Beirut, Restaurants and bars, films and theatre, art, gigs, clubs, shops and more...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsg4l8HldhU>

Live Love Lebanon is a twitter feed where Lebanese post pictures and videos on the Lebanon they love. #LiveLoveLebanon.

<http://www.nogarlicnoonions.com/category/street-food/>

Lebanese Street Food

Twitter Feeds

[@BeirutSpring – Runs Beirut Spring blog](#)

[@LHamiltonClark – The Boss](#)

[@Sarah_Birke – ME & NA correspondent for the Economist](#)

[@HMATomFletcher – British Ambassador to Lebanon](#)

[@Nadimhoury – HRW Deputy Director for MENA](#)

[@RamiKhouri – AUB/Princeton scholar, syndicated columnist](#)

[@Joyce_Karam – Washington Bureau Chief, Al-Hayat](#)

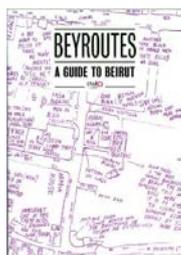
[@DavidKenner – ME Editor, Foreign Policy Magazine](#)

[@patrickgaley – ME Journalist](#)

[@DailyStarLeb – Daily Star, Lebanon's Leading English-language paper](#)

[@AUB_Lebanon – AUB account has news on campus events](#)

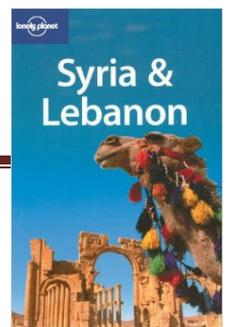
Books-Travel



Beyroutes: A Guide to Beirut (January 1, 2010)

Beyroutes presents an exploded view of a city which lives so many double lives and figures in so many truths, myths and historical falsifications. Visiting the city with this intimate book as your guide makes you feel disoriented, appreciative and perhaps eventually reconciliatory. This guide is an initiative by Studio Beirut and contains many photos in color and illustrations.

Lonely Planet Syria & Lebanon by Lara Dunston and Terry Carter (July 15, 2008)



Three authors, 140 days of on-the-road research, one international conflict, countless invitations to tea and also: Ask the archaeologist: all your questions on Syria's stunning ruins answered by a specialist, Get the local lowdown: special color chapter featuring travel tips from Syrians and Lebanese. This one still seems to be the latest.

BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW THIS ABOUT BEIRUT!

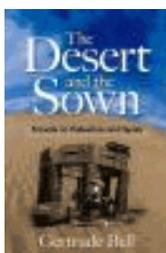


Bet You Didn't Know This About Beirut by Warren Singh-Bartlett

Experience Beirut's dug up facts and artifacts – from Phoenician to Roman to plain old bizarre and ridiculous – courtesy of Warren's fun gems that tell of this "phoenix city forever rising from its ashes" and a people that have made this endurance possible. Crammed with a wealth of knowledge, this book dares to challenge even the most dedicated Lebanon connoisseur! Bet You Didn't Know This About Beirut! is a compendium of fascinating and quirky facts about the capital and wider Lebanese landscape.....

Book Zawarib Beirut and Beyond

The book contains thousands of new landmarks (total 12.000 entries), hundreds of useful phone numbers, tens of new areas including Jounieh, Broummana, Aley, Tabarja, Choueifat and Khaldeh. We've also packed it with lots of delights such as a wonderful and innovative Beirut bus-map, traffic directions, 'Hakawat' el Zawarib.



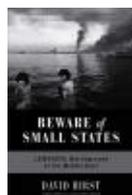
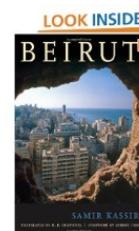
The Desert and the Sown: Travels in Palestine and Syria by Gertrude Bell

Current events in the Middle East have revived interest in the extraordinary life and accomplishments of Gertrude Bell, "the female Lawrence of Arabia." A skilled archeologist, historian, and linguist, Bell wrote captivating, perceptive accounts of her Eastern travels. This intriguing narrative — accompanied by 160 photos — traces her 1905 sojourn in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine.

Nonfiction

Beirut by Samir Kassir

Samir Kassir's Beirut is a passionate tour de force, a love letter to that sparkling capital that takes us on a careening ride through its history. It's a tale that reads like a novel, peopled by missionaries and city-builders, warlords and intellectuals, diplomats and clan leaders. And all along, we know how it ends: in Beirut's implosion into the senseless violence and civil war. Epic in scope, Kassir's masterwork shows us Beirut in all its richness.



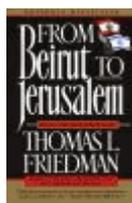
Beware of Small States by David Hirst

Best general history of Lebanon since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. By the end of the book, it evolves into a history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East by Robin Wright

"Very rarely is our world so faithfully captured. The Middle East in recent decades has only become more complex. Wright's insights and analyses are critical for any sensible understanding of what is happening. Her greatest contribution is to grasp the deep currents of hope, humanity, and dignity that anchor the often turbulent societies of the region. This book is essential reading."

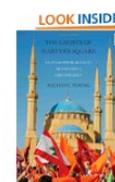
—Rami G. Khouri, syndicated columnist, Beirut's Daily Star



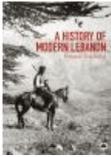
From Beirut to Jerusalem by Thomas L. Friedman

There have been any number of books that have worked hard at interpreting the mélange called the Middle East. This one, however, makes a difference because it's so well written and captures the psychological mannerisms of the people of Lebanon and Israel--the first step to understanding some of the mysterious "why" that seems to elude the American public and government, a number-one bestseller and winner of the 1989 National Book Award.

Ghosts of Martyrs Square by Michael Young



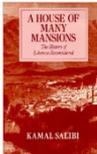
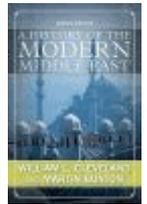
This is the best book I've read about current politics in Lebanon. Young does a great job shedding light on an infinitely complicated political situation.



History of Modern Lebanon by Fawwaz Traboulsi

A stunning history of Lebanon over five centuries --"Skillfully weaving together social, political, cultural and economic history, this deeply informed and penetrating study provides a rich understanding of the vibrant, tragic, but ever hopeful Leban.

A History of the Modern Middle East by William Cleveland and Martin Bunton This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in a remarkably well-crafted introduction to the history, politics, and international relations of the Middle East.

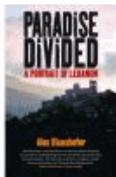
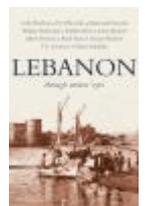


A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered By Kamal Salibi

Salibi offers a major reinterpretation of Lebanese history and provides remarkable insights into the dynamic of Lebanon's recent conflict. In so doing, he illuminates important facets of his country's present and future.

Lebanon: Through Writers' Eyes: Ted Gorton and Andree Feghali Gorton (Editors)

This is a record of the people who visited Lebanon from 1800 BC to the present; and of the Lebanese themselves, writing about their homeland, their religions, their joys, their wars, and their sorrows. The potential visitor to Lebanon will discover a country that is infinitely richer, more diverse, and perennial than the headlines of the last few decades might suggest. The reader will delight in familiar, and discover some less familiar, treasures of description, analysis, and literature.

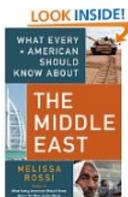


Paradise Divided by Alex Klaushofer

Alex Klaushofer takes us off the beaten path and into mosques, churches, refugee camps, and destroyed landscapes of this multi-faceted and complex country and an even-handed report on Hezbollah and the 2006 Lebanon War with Israel.

Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon by Robert Fisk

Fisk, a highly honored British journalist who wrote for The Times (London) for 11 years and who still lives in Lebanon, conveys those appalling events of 1976-85 with the passionate intensity of someone outraged at the actions that have turned a country and people inside out. Fisk graphically portrays the Lebanese tragedy through interviews, anecdotal information, and thoughtful, incisive analyses.



What Every American Should Know About the Middle East by Melissa Rossi

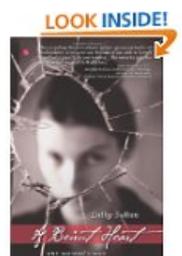
"If there is a livelier, less ponderous, more agenda-free, better researched, more relevant publication that provides such a wealth of historic and incidental information alongside all the 'need to know' stuff on this complex part of the world, I would like to find it."

—Pat Lancaster, editor of *Middle East Magazine*

Memoirs

A Beirut Heart by Cathy Sultan

A Beirut Heart is the unforgettable story of an American woman who lived amidst the Lebanese Civil War for eight years and through it all attempted to sustain a life with her Lebanese husband and two small children. Written by Cathy Sultan, the memoir offers a unique illustration of the unsung heroes of war – the women who assume the awesome task of keeping the family united



during war time.

Beirut, I Love You: A memoir by Zena El Khalil

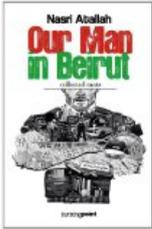
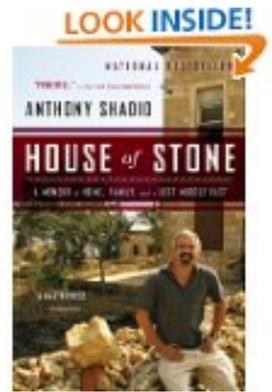
Written with an honest, profound simplicity, Zena is intoxicated by the country's contradictions—"Lebanon was, and always will be, schizophrenic"—and attempts to come to terms with her role among

her friends, family, and city.

House of Stone: A Memoir of Home, Family, and a Lost Middle East by Anthony Shadid

In the summer of 2006, racing through Lebanon to report on the Israeli invasion, Anthony Shadid found himself in his family's ancestral hometown of Marjayoun. There, he discovered his great-grandfather's once magnificent estate in near ruins, devastated by war. One year later, Shadid returned to Marjayoun, not to chronicle the violence, but to rebuild in its wake.

Note: On February 16, 2012, Anthony Shadid died at the age of 43 in Syria, while reporting for the New York Times, before the publication of his memoir.

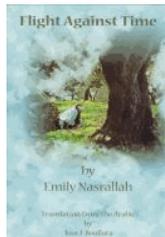
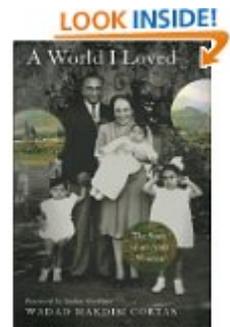


Our Man in Beirut by Nasri Atallah

Our Man in Beirut brings together a selection of posts from Nasri Atallah's wildly successful blog offset with the author's thoughts and photos from his returning ex-pat's perspective. It is a memorable and funny read -- a truly authentic voice that's larger than life.

A World I Loved: the Story of an Arab Woman by Wadad al-Maqqisi Qirtas or Wadad Makdisi Cortas

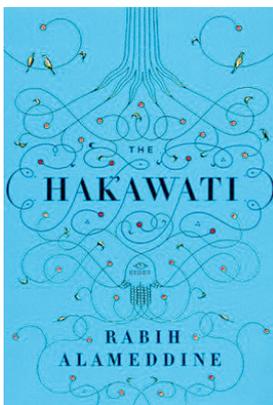
"This is my story, the story of an Arab woman. It is the story of a lost world." So opens this haunting memoir by Wadad Makdisi Cortas, who eloquently describes her personal experience of the events that have fractured the Middle East over the past century. Through Cortas' eyes we experience life in Lebanon under the oppressive French mandate, and her desire to forge an Arab identity based on religious tolerance. And in final, heartbreaking detail, we watch as her world becomes rent by the "Palestine question," Western interference, and civil war.



Flight Against Time by Emily Nasrallah A touching and accurate portrayal of the feelings of an old Lebanese couple emigrating to the new world during the civil war. Seeing the New World through their eyes, will allow newcomers to better understand Lebanese society.

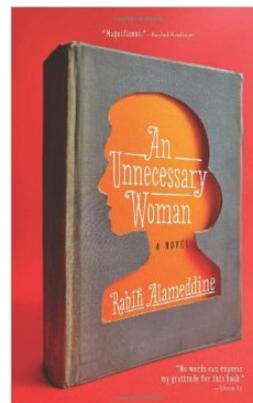
Literature

Two by Rabih Alameddine



The Hakawati

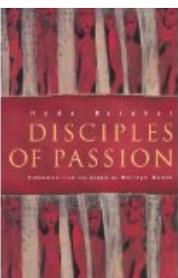
In 2003, Osama al-Kharrat returns to Beirut after many years in America to stand vigil at his father's deathbed. Osama's grandfather was a **hakawati**, or storyteller, and his bewitching tales are interwoven with classic stories of the Middle East.



An Unnecessary Woman

An Unnecessary Woman is a story of innumerable things. It is a tale of blue hair and the war of attrition that comes with age, of loneliness and grief, most of all of resilience, of the

courage it takes to survive, stay sane and continue to see beauty.

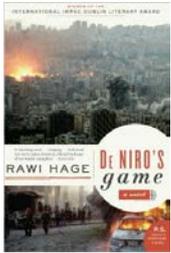
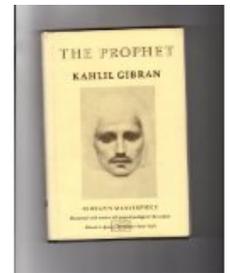


Disciples of Passion by Hoda Barakat

A novel by a writer hailed by the critics as "the most important woman novelist in Lebanon and in the Middle East," interweaving an account of the Lebanese civil war with a story of an illicit interfaith relationship.

The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran (Lebanon's most well known author)

Kahlil Gibran was among the most important Arabic language authors of the early twentieth century. Born in 1883 in Lebanon, he spent the last twenty years of his life (to 1931) in the United States. He is the author of numerous volumes, the most famous of which is THE PROHPET, translated into over twenty languages.

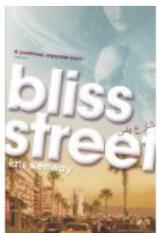
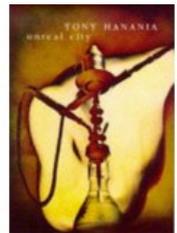


De Niro's Game -by Rawi Hage

Bassam dreams of leaving Beirut and escaping to Rome, where even the pigeons "look happy and well fed." To fund his escape, he enters into a scheme with his best friend, George, to skim funds from a poker arcade. Their days of riding the streets of West Beirut gives way to betrayal and violence more ferocious than either self-styled thug had bargained for.

Unreal City by Tony Hanania

Born into one of the feudal families of the Lebanon mountains and educated in the West, a connoisseur of high art and low life in all its forms, the anonymous narrator returns to ruins haunted by memories of his country's fractured past to search for the mistress who betrayed him in his youth.

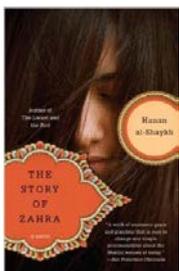
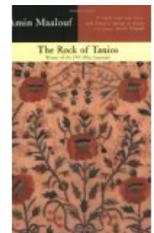


Bliss Street by Kristin Kenway

Kris Kenway achieves something quite rare -- he really gets under the skin of Beirut, a place with which he clearly has a deep love-hate relationship, and conveys all its quirks with genuine tenderness, making this a novel that is much more than just its plot. 'A warm, bittersweet novel, with a haunting, disturbing picture inside.

Rock of Tanios by Amin Maalouf (or anything by Maalouf)

Journalist and novelist Maalouf won the 1993 Goncourt Prize for his depiction of social and political turmoil in Lebanon during the 1880s, which is based on a true story. Using a refreshing, nearly folkloric style that turns his protagonist, Tanios, into a classic hero, Maalouf details the shifting alliances and international power struggles that follow the murder of a patriarch. As a result, the reader is propelled into the world of myth yet gains a very real sympathy for the vivid characters. Like any good storyteller, Maalouf gives you the facts but also the paradoxes, leaving you with a sense of mystery.

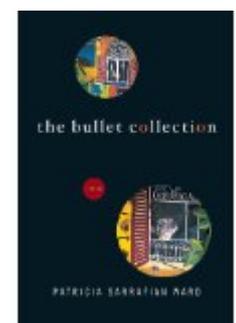


The Story of Zahra by Hanan Al-Shaykh

This rich tale mesmerizes with its frank sexuality and scenes of war-torn Beirut. Zahra is a misfit mistreated by her mother and by her father, a harsh disciplinarian. She leaves her parents to stay with an uncle who has fled to Africa. When his affection for her grows sexual, Zahra agrees to an unsuccessful marriage with his friend Majed. Eventually, she returns to Beirut and begins meeting secretly to have sex with a man who may or may not be a rooftop sniper.

The Bullet Collection by Patricia Sarafian Ward

War and the tumult of adolescence leave their scars on the hearts of two Beirut-born sisters in this sharply drawn, moving debut about a family in exile. Marianna narrates the story, weaving episodes from their lives in Beirut-ordinary adolescent milestones mingled with the horrors of war-with scenes of their present-day struggles in the U.S. Ward paints a vivid tableau that will be familiar to exiles everywhere: the father, a historian in Beirut, applying for a manager's job at the local supermarket; the parents gamely trying to rally their children's spirits while liable themselves to burst into tears or sink unexpectedly into grim silence.



Films



Globe Trekker: Beirut & Lebanon, Director: Ian Cross

Globe Trekker Megan McCormick explores the neighborhoods of Basta, Solidere, Gemayze and the Hezbollah District and finds a city in the midst of regeneration. She gets a glimpse at Beirut's future when meeting up with a group of young Arabic hip hop artists, who are eager to live in peace and put the country's political troubles in the past. On a day trip out of the city she visits the ancient fishing village of Byblos and heads to the hills to unearth fish fossils. Before returning to Beirut, Megan visits Jeita Grotto, a beautiful series of underground caves and lakes. Bonus Program Planet Food Lebanon The producers of Globe Trekker and presenter Merilees Parker take you on a culinary tour of Lebanon.

Under the Bombs, Director: Philippe Aractingi

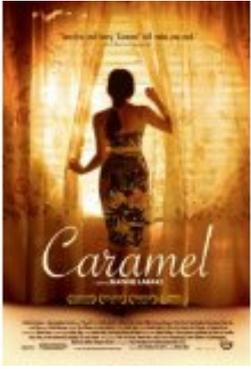
During a cease-fire in the Lebanon-Israel conflict of 2006, a Christian taxi driver brings an untraditional Shiite woman from Beirut to the heart of the conflict in the country's south. While they scour the rubble of local towns for her son, who was sent to live with her traditional family while she was staying with her husband in Dubai, they discover that despite their very different backgrounds they have much in common. And during their trip through the desolate countryside, the two travelers develop a deep bond as a response to the death striking all around them. The film was shot entirely on location during the summer of 2006, in the middle of the ruins of war-torn Lebanon. Aractingi only hired two professional actors, the rest are real refugees, journalists, soldiers, etc..., playing themselves.



West Beirut, Director: Ziad Doueiri

The Lebanese director Ziad Doueiri left his native Beirut at the age of twenty, came to America, wound up as a cameraman on Quentin Tarantino pictures, and has now returned to his home town to make his first feature. Tarek is a rebellious class clown and aspiring filmmaker, a restless Lebanese teenager who rails against European colonialism with little acts of defiance at the French High School of Beirut. It's 1975. Fighter jets ominously scream overhead, soldier convoys rumble through the streets, and the tensions that grip the city explode when a violent terrorist attack sinks Beirut into civil war.

Two by Nadine Labaki



Caramel

The film shows us a Lebanon we rarely see. The setting is a Beirut beauty salon La Belle owned by Layale with whom the handsome Youssef, a police officer, is infatuated. Also working in the shop is Rima whose same sex interest in a beautiful patron is subtly explored, and regulars in the salon include an aging wannabe actress, Jamale, a non virgin bride to be, Nisrine, and an older seamstress, Rose, who has elected to relinquish her hopes for love in favor of continuing to care for her humorously senile mother Lili.

Where Do We Go Now?

Christians and Muslims lived peacefully together for years in this small Lebanese village, but animosities begin to build among the men as a result of slights and misunderstandings. The women of the village conspire to avert sectarian strife through a series of harebrained plans, none of which succeeds in slowing down the escalating spiral of violence. When tragedy strikes, the women find themselves driven to make a deeply personal sacrifice for the sake of peace.

