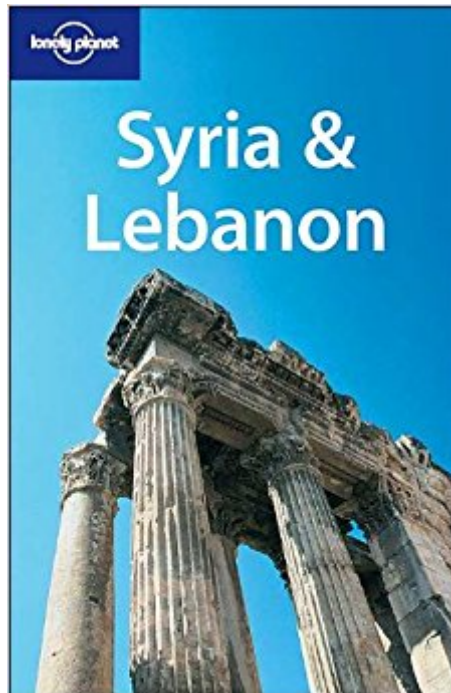




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Lonely Planet Syria & Lebanon (Multi Country Guide)



Synopsis

Sunlight on the ancient stones of Palmyra and Baalbek, the bustle of the Aleppo souq, the buzz of Beirut's nightlife, the decorative wonders of Damascene houses and picturesque villages beneath Mt Lebanon - our definitive guide is your essential companion in every corner of this diverse and hospitable region. Tempt Your Tastebuds with our dedicated Food & Drink chapter covering the region's mouth-watering cuisine written by expert authors and chefs Connect With Culture through our comprehensive exploration of Syrian and Lebanese society and daily life Unravel The Past with our in-depth coverage of the region's lengthy history and myriad historic sites Find Your Way using our 68 detailed maps, including customized itineraries, maps and a full-color regional map Talk The Talk with the help of our Arabic language chapter

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lonely Planet guides are a must-pack --Toronto Star, February 2006

Good book

LP, like all guidebooks, varies in quality depending on the author. While this guide on Syria/Lebanon isn't the worst, it could be much better. The main problem is that it is extremely limited in its scope. Both Syria and Lebanon, but Syria in particular, have literally hundreds of sites to see, but you wouldn't know it with this LP. It only gives you the most popular sites and then a few it claims are

"off-the-beaten-track" but really aren't. It misses some of Syria's best out of the way castles and ruins. Great stuff that if you only relied on LP, which promotes the beaten backpacker track, you would never find. I would give it a 1-star, but it is saved by the hotel recommendations. Syria is a place where knowing what hotels to hit up can be hard, and LP does a good job giving you affordable ones that are tourist-tested. Still, though, the guide lacks any real historical or cultural insight and really only gives the illusion of leading you down the "road-less traveled." I lived in Syria for a year and tried to take in as much as possible and thus found myself sifting through numerous guides. The one I found to be the best was Footprints, but they haven't published an updated version since 2001. The new Bradt is quite promising, but if you really want to know what Syria has to offer, you need "Monuments of Syria" by Ross Burns. It doesn't have many glossy pictures, but it does have every single cultural and archaeological site worth seeing in this great country.

The new July 2008 edition has just reached me. It's a great advance over previous editions (see other reviews on this site). Many text-boxes and references to more specialist guides have been added. Everything has been updated and substandard accommodation deleted. It's very compact, light and easy-to-use - except for the street maps. These seem more difficult to read than ever! Extra plans showing the layout of ruins and of some museums are great. However, the prices given for flights and accommodation are already well out-of-date. Judging by the introductory sections, the guide was completed in about February 2008. Lonely Planet needs to speed-up its printing schedule, although I'm sure the Chinese printers were not to blame for any delay. This is an excellent, compact guide to wonderful countries of great antiquity whose friendly inhabitants are so warm to visitors, putting to shame Western notions of hospitality. While not nearly as comprehensive as the outstanding 1991 Footprint Syria & Lebanon Handbook, it is a quarter of the weight and a very handy introduction to people planning to visit. I won't go without it!

I can't say I won't recommend this book but I would suggest looking at other travel guides if possible. The Lebanon aspect of the book was much better than the Syria section. The food section for Beirut is knowledgeable and accurate. I was living in Lebanon at the time so I can't speak for the hotel selections accuracy. The book does do a good job on describing the more cultural aspects of Lebanon and what to visit and what is worth a miss. I spent a bit of time traveling in Syria and I can not give this guide a positive review. This is a complete guess and biased of me but I would think the couple that wrote the book are Lebanese and didn't properly investigate or travel enough to Syria to see the best it has to offer. As with the Lebanon chapter the food section was good, it gives

a pretty good description of the eating varieties. The hotel guide was useful in it gave names and phone numbers of hotels in Syria. As for the reviews, well I didn't find them to be accurate or useful in any sense. Some reviews were close and some were completely off base. I do agree with another reviewer that the book misses some really great cultural aspects of the trip that I would have missed if I didn't have friends living in Syria who recommended them.

I was so excited to travel through the Middle East as it's not something that happens regularly in the region if you're American. I was wowed by the overall accuracy of the book and while I wasn't taking pictures or shooting video, I was reading my LP guide :). Aside from a few wrong numbers and a little exaggeration on how "friendly" people are, it was a gold mine of information. The info on Lebanon was great and useful. I only wish I could spend more time there instead of 3 days. For the most part, it really helped in Syria and I stand by the hotel and restaurant recommendations.

I used this guide for travels in Lebanon this past summer, fortunately, before the war. I explored Beirut and Tripoli, and this book provided excellent information on both cities. I found everything from hotel descriptions to guides on inter-country travel via bus and taxi to be accurate and helpful. Whatever information you could require for travelling through Lebanon and Syria is found here. Overall, a solid and reliable guide to an amazing region.

This book is excellent it gives very good tips for travelling in these countries. In fact I always buy Lonely Planet travel guides because it's a guarantee that it will be a good book

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