

# Lebanon

## Information for applicants

### Lebanon

Lebanon is a Middle Eastern country on the Mediterranean. It borders Syria in the north and east, and Israel in the south. Its western border is the Mediterranean Sea.

Lebanon has always been a melting pot of oriental and European cultures. Lebanese culture is both religious and yet liberal, conservative and yet modern. The gateway to the Middle East, Lebanon acts as a hub for the entire region through its diverse educational opportunities and cultural programmes.

Since the 1970s, Lebanon has repeatedly experienced economic, religious and political conflict. The political turmoil restricts the government's ability to act, and explains why the country is only making slow headway in some respects. There are not enough jobs, and solid waste disposal and other public services do not work or are not provided. Since the war broke out in the neighbouring country of Syria, Lebanon has also taken in more than a million refugees within a short period of time. This constitutes a major challenge for this nation of 4.8 million people. The official language is Arabic but French and English are widely spoken.

### Climate and sights

The climate is predominantly Mediterranean, although the mountains are capped with snow in winter. Depending on altitude and other regional factors, temperatures can vary considerably within the country. The capital of Beirut was long regarded as the 'Paris of the Middle East'. Today still, it remains awash with art and culture. Moreover, to the north of Beirut, the port

city of Byblos is one of the oldest in the world. Nature-lovers also find much to enjoy in hiking through the many protected areas. The Lebanese proudly point out that their country is the only one in which it is possible to go skiing in the morning and swim in the Mediterranean in the afternoon.

### Medical care

Medical care in Beirut is very good. There are well trained medical specialists and hospitals equipped to Western standards. Health care is sound in other parts the country, too. Medical care in Lebanon may be very expensive, but Lebanese pharmacies at least stock all vital medicines. However, it is important to make sure they are not fake and/or that the sell-by date has not expired.

### Accommodation and quality of life

Beirut is an expensive city and its housing market is slightly strained. However, with the help of colleagues, brokers and expat forums, finding a nice place to live should not be a problem. It is advisable to take a trustworthy local along with you when property hunting and/or signing an agreement. Some landlords demand a full year's rent in advance. In this case, GIZ can support you with a loan. Also, please only look for accommodation within Beirut's municipal boundaries.

### Shopping and services

There are good supplies of food and all daily commodities in Lebanon. There are several malls throughout Beirut, with small eateries selling regional specialties on every corner. The supermarkets generally have a wide selection of goods, including European products.

Cash supply is not a problem in Beirut and the other larger cities. There are plenty of ATMs which accept both EC cards and standard credit cards. Certain banks might charge a fee however. Most Lebanese banks are open between 9 am and 2 pm. Only very few banks are open to customers up to 4 pm.

## Accompanying partners and children

The process of applying for a visa is the same for all family members accompanying GIZ staff (spouse, partner and children). On average, it takes about 4 to 6 weeks.

**Schools:** Beirut has many good international schools and, German is also spoken and taught in some schools and universities. The Deutsche Internationale Schule (German International School) in Beirut has a focus on German teaching: from kindergarten to primary school (both in Beirut) through to higher classes in Doha (south of Beirut). However, it is not possible to sit the German *Abitur* in Lebanon.

**Childcare:** Lebanon has good international pre-schools.

## Find out more

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussepolitik/laenderinformationen/libanon-node>

<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/370.html>

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