

### SIDON







## Sidon (Saida)

Sidon is one of the most ancient cities on the Lebanese coast. During the Crusader and the following Mamluk and Ottoman periods – the city was shadowed by the province of Acre (Akka) in Palestine.

The importance of the city of Sidon comes from its port and its agricultural hinterland. This city has one foot in the sea and another

one in the land and agriculture. Its hinterland and its ancient roads include many bridges and monuments are a "must see" in the Umayyad itinerary.

Sidon thrived in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The well-known Hellenistic sarcophagus known as the Alexander Sarcophagus comes from the area of this city, it is now in the

archaeological museum in Istanbul. Other important archaeological finds are in the National museum in Beirut.

Sidon is known for its active fishing harbor, citrus groves and beautiful mountainous surroundings.



Sidon is very rich in vestiges linked to Muslim culture; it is a charming town on southern coast. Sidon's historic center is a living museum where the Crusader, Mamluk and Ottoman architectures are combined. One of the monuments of Sidon is the Omari mosque, a Mamluk structure over a Crusaders refectory, with later restorations and additions in the Ottoman period. The mosque was damaged several times in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was restored in 1986 with a grant from the Agha Khan program. It has elements that pertain to all the periods in which it was constructed and restored, including Crusader, Mamluk and Ottoman. It has an open courtyard, perhaps once with a fountain in the middle, and porticos on its southern and eastern sides. The eastern portico is roofed with cross vaults and the southern one has three domed bays. A rectangular prayer hall extends after the southern portico. The porticos features pointed arches. The mosque is constructed with sandstones.



#### The Sea Citadel

Constructed on an island off the shore of the city, the citadel has been there since the city existed. However, its architecture pertains to the Crusaders and Mamluk periods. It consists of heavy masonry, pointed arches, cross vaults. It is connected with the city with a passageway. The crusaders phase was constructed in 1228, and the Mamluk phase dates from the 13th and 14th centuries.



Khan el Frenj

Another major attraction in the city of Sidon is Khan el Frenj (or the European guesthouse), built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Emir Fakheddine II. It is located close to the shore. It is a lodging commercial structure of two stories of rooms around an enormous courtyard. The rooms on the lower floor were used to store merchandise and conduct wholesale transactions, whereas the upper level served as lodging rooms for the merchants, who were mostly Europeans, sailing from Europe to the port of Sidon. It has a picture sque interior and it is constructed with stone and features pointed arches for its openings and arcades. It was recently renovated and it functions as a center for various cultural activities.

In the old city, formed of markets, narrow streets and residences, many other small attractions are worth visiting such as: Fakhreddine Palace (17<sup>th</sup> century), Khan al-Ruz (17<sup>th</sup> century), Qalaat al-Muiz (originally in the 10th century), Riad al-Solh Palace (late 19<sup>th</sup> century), al-Kikhiya Mosque (17<sup>th</sup> century), and Kittaneh villa (19<sup>th</sup> century) among others.



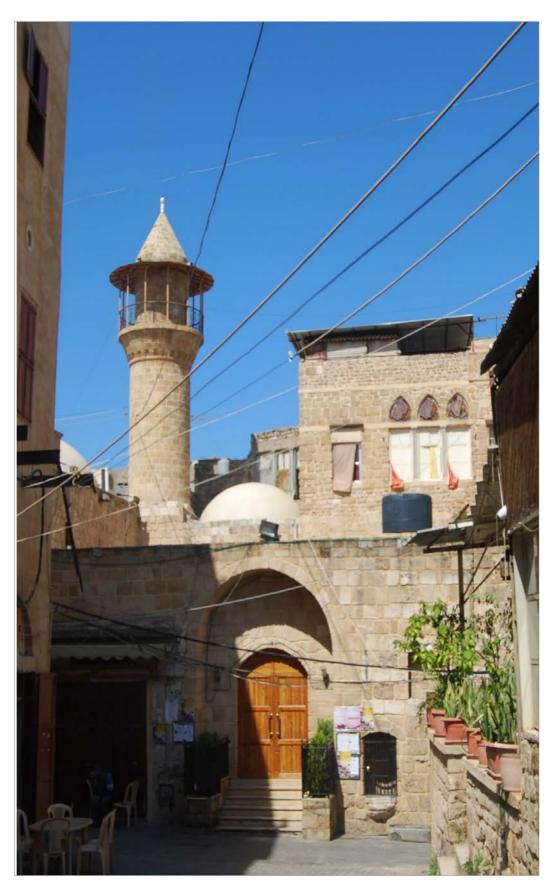
**Khan El-Ruz:** built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this is smaller than the Khan El-Franj's with the same commercial trading and lodging functions.



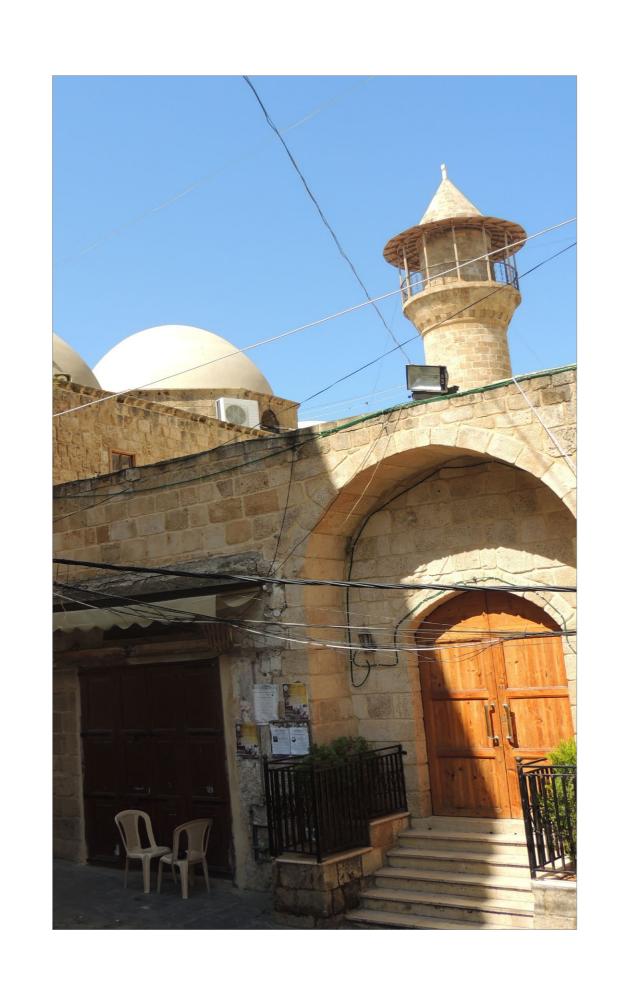
Riad El Solh Palace



Emir Fakhredine Palace



El kikhia mosque



El Omari Great Mosque















# SIDON

Surroundings









## Surroundings

Sidon is open to the east with wonderful natural attractions. To the east of the city lays the town of **Maghdoucheh**. It is a town known for its agriculture specially the bitter oranges, grapes and other seasonal fruits.

At approximately 5 Km from Sidon, lays what was once a temple dedicated to Echmoun, the Phoenician god of healing, built in the 7th century BC by the King of Sidon, Echmunazar II. It was used for 1400 years, between the 7th century BC and the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD before it was abandoned. It is one of the best-preserved Phoenician remains in the country.

Finally the Beaufort Castle, 40 km away from Sidon, rises almost 1,000 meters above the valley. The Crusader castle was built as a defensive and strategic post in 1139 AD.

Chhim, at around 17 kilometers northeast from Sidon, is a charming site that presents mainly Roman ruins. Tombs containing oil lamps of the Umayyad era (the seventh and eighth centuries) found in the church and its vicinity are a testimony of the sporadic occupation of the site.

Jezzine, a mountainous town very famous for its abundant waters and for being a path of trade

roads of the city of Sidon since antiquity until today. Its souk is a destination to be visited. Rashaya is located 85 kilometers from Sidon, on the south-western slope of Mount Hermon. This city of the Beqaa is known for being a rather traditional city due to handicrafts and agricultural products. Visitors can wander through the souks and buy its local products like olives, fruits, honey and wild herbs.



Rachaya Old Souk



Jezzine

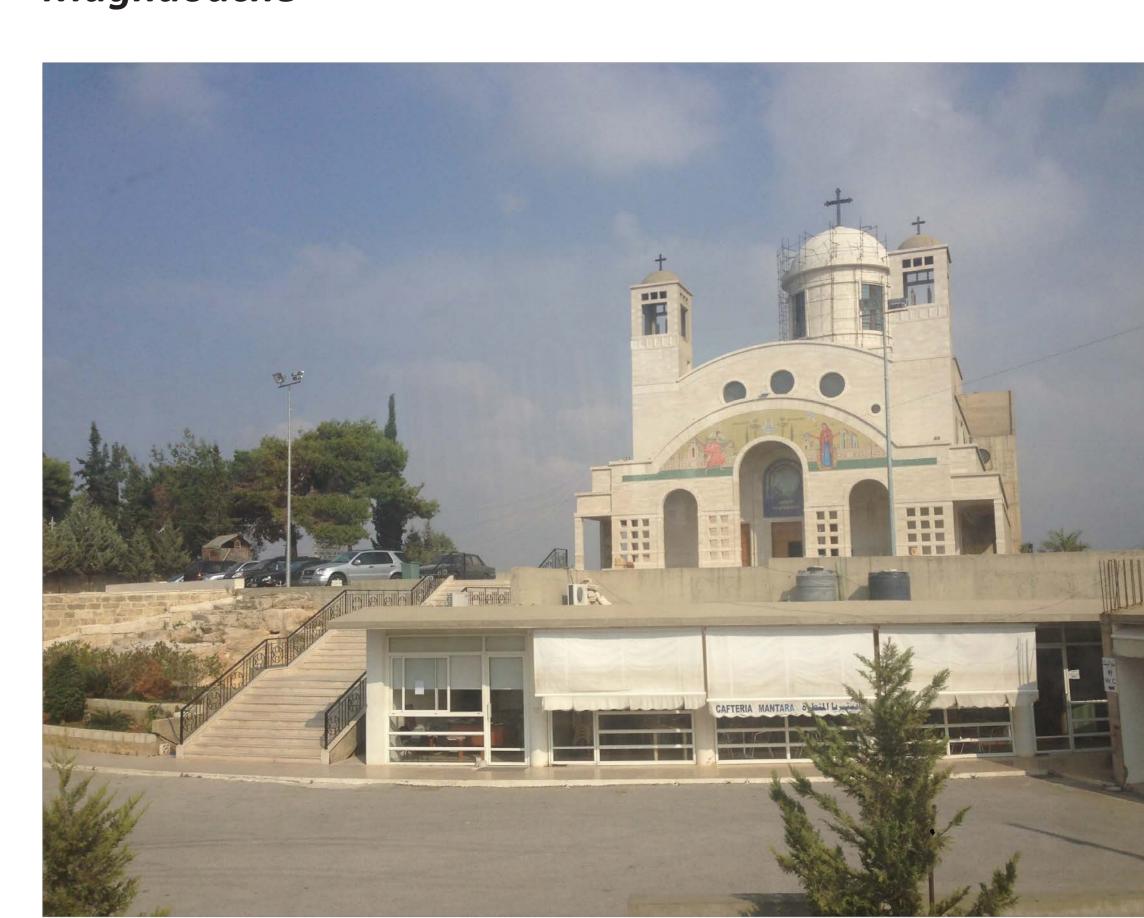


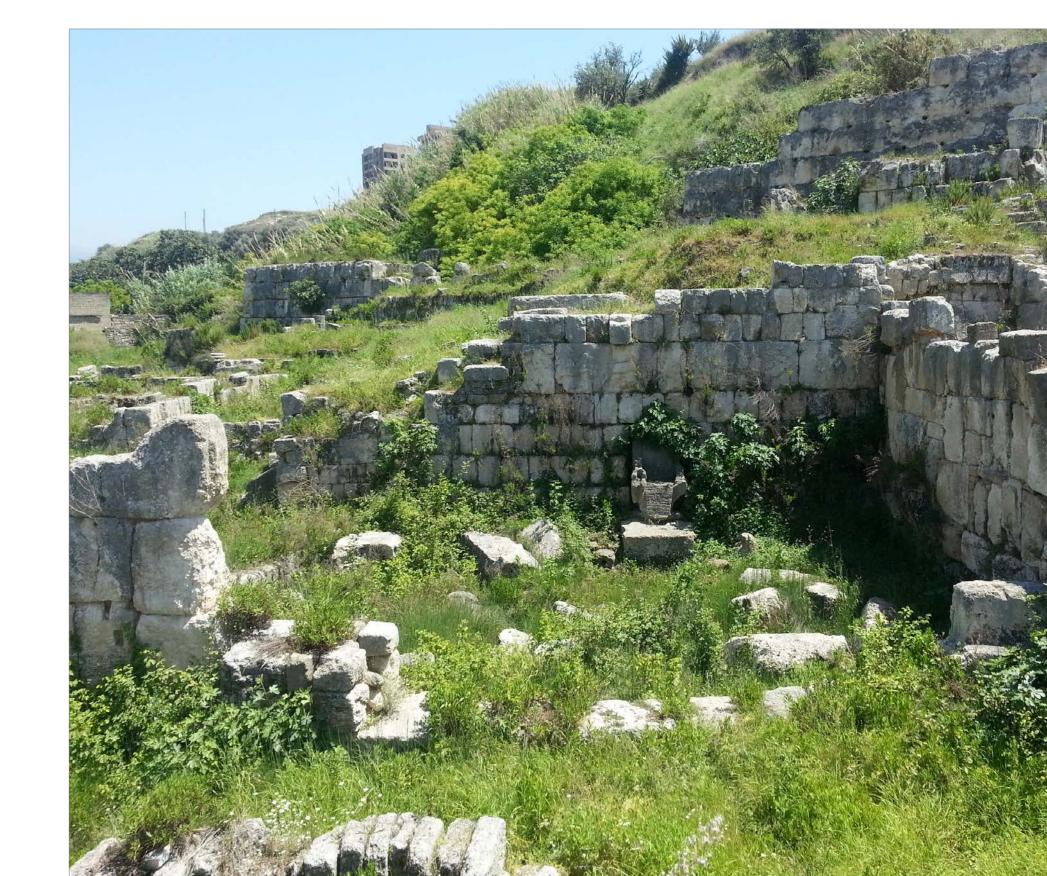
Maghdouche

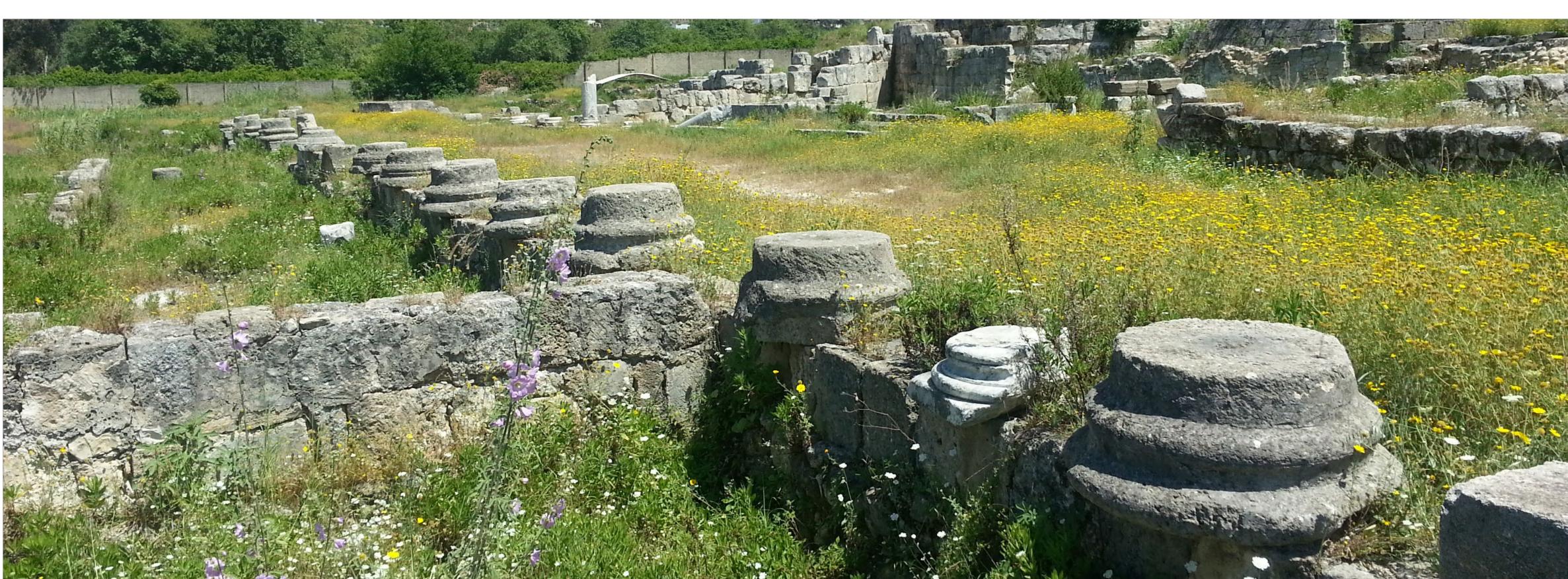


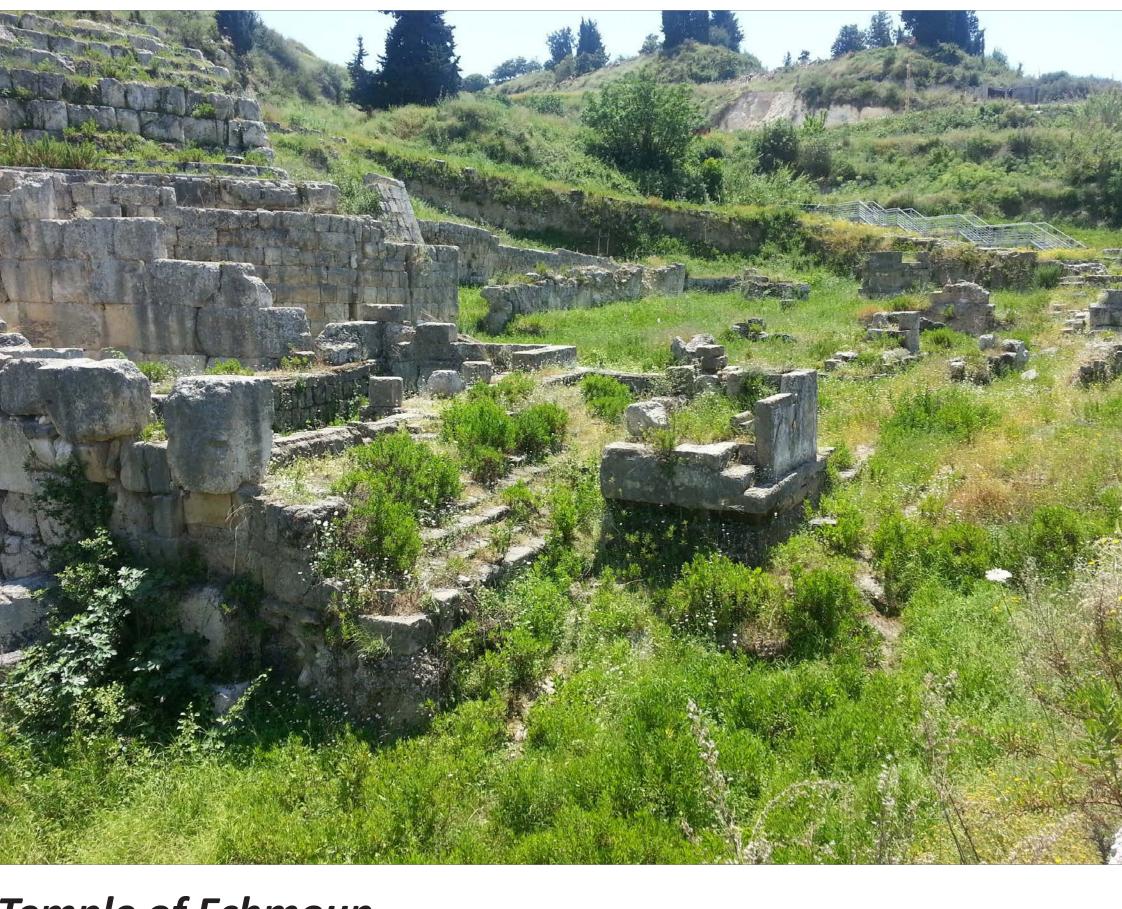
Maghdouche











Temple of Echmoun

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