

A TOUR IN OLD SAIDA



The old city offers a tapestry of colourful squares and streets from the Sea Citadel to the Land Citadel. The authentic lifestyle of its people is yet another story to tell!

A Sight of a Beautiful City Port

The long sidewalk on Saida's waterfront faces the Saida Sea Citadel, a medieval castle standing in the sea, at an accessible distance from shore. Mosque minarets and church steeples break through its sky as they rise high. Different access points lead through a labyrinth of alleyways reaching deep into its neighbourhoods and squares. Vaulted alleyways lead to a large delightful square, Bab El Saray square, where centuries of Ottoman history have left their traces on its walls, decorating its cafés and corners with beautiful architectural ornaments.

Home for History's Treasures

Further south of the old city stands its second medieval citadel, the Saint Louis Castle, erected at the highest point of the old city and overlooking its urban fabric and waterfront as well as the greater city of Saida and its mountainous territory. In this quieter region of the old city lies the Emir Fakhreddine Palace.

The Beauty of Religious Diversity

The old city is home to a wide variety of religious denominations. The diversity of religious practices can be sensed in the different places of worship punctuating the old city's streets. Quran recitations can be heard on Fridays and on special Muslim occasions, let aside the Islamic Azan (call for prayer) raised five times a day, Muslims will be seen rushing to the mosques to participate in *salat al-jama'ah* (prayer in congregation), held at every call. On Sundays and other special Christian occasions, church bells will ring in times of prayers, and the local Christian community will be seen participating in church services and prayers. A Jewish population also lived here; standing witness is the inaccessible synagogue of Old Saida, dating back to the ninth century.

Living Heritage

Preserving the old city as a living heritage is a priority for the locals, who believe heritage is the sustained memory of future generations. Inhabitants' staying and working in their original neighbourhoods perpetuate the authentic character of such an old city as Saida. A tour through the old city resembles a never-ending series of episodes, some featuring residential neighbourhoods with kids playing together or running after cart vendors to check what goodies they have got, others featuring specialized markets (*souks*) where carpenters, shoemakers, goldsmiths, and other craftsmen, contribute to the scenery, noise, and scent of long corridors. At the eastern periphery, outside the old city, runs the Moutran Street (commonly known as El Shakrieh), Saida's busiest souk.

Next to mosques, public *hammams* were earlier established for locals to cleanse before prayers or visit for bathing and recreation. Nowadays, two of the five public *hammams* are fully functional, inviting the wider community to visit and practise the trending leisure activity.

In the Alleyways: Surprises at Every Turn

The network of alleyways seems endless. The ground floor is tranquil; bakeries, butcher shops, grocery stores, and barbershops are all part of the old city social and commercial life. A fast glimpse through any open door helps realise how houses, lying on upper floors, are reachable by narrow staircases, worn out by centuries of people striding their steps. Streets' edges are chamfered at some intersections to prevent passers-by from stumbling into each other. While most alleyways are vaulted and often topped with first-floor houses, some are left open for daylight to cast on rare architectural features.

03 ECHMOUN TEMPLE



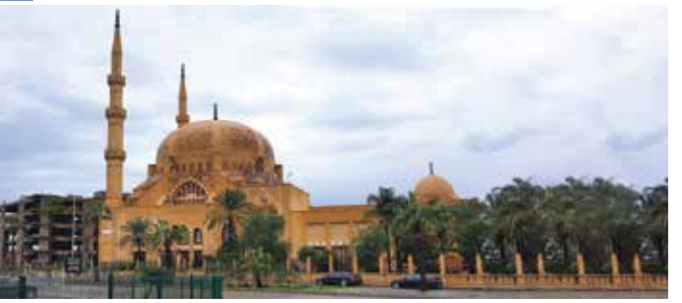
The Temple complex is dedicated to the healing god Echmoun, identified with the Greek god Asclepius, and was constructed near a water spring which was used in purification and healing rituals. The site holds a particular archaeological importance since it is the best-preserved Phoenician site in Lebanon. The archaeological site presents features reflecting its continuous occupation from the Phoenician times until the Byzantine period. The site is renowned particularly for its exquisite mosaics reflecting the talent of skilled craftsmen. Some of these mosaics were restored through grants from the Getty Foundation and the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP). Many statues and archaeological artifacts discovered in Echmoun are displayed in the National Museum of Beirut.

04 SAIDA INTERNATIONAL STADIUM | RAFIC HARIRI SPORTS CITY



Established just at the verge of the 3rd millennium, this stadium was built for the 2000 AFC Asian Cup and purposed for further national and international football tournaments with a capacity of 22,600 viewers. Ever since, the multipurpose stadium complex has hosted international and local music festivals, carnivals, and conferences and has held different interventions for localised use. On a daily basis, the complex welcomes sports enthusiasts who visit for jogging or bicycling by the sea all year round.

05 HAJJ BAHAA AL DEEN HARIRI MOSQUE COMPLEX



Late prime minister Rafic Hariri dedicated this complex to his father, Hajj Bahaa Al Deen Hariri, buried within its premises. Open for prayer and services since 2006, the mosque is one of the largest nationwide, welcoming up to 3,000 worshippers at a time. The complex also features a courtyard, a library, and different ceremony and multipurpose halls. Lying at the northern side of the city's coast, the mosque is a welcoming piece of mixed Ottoman, Mamluk, and Fatimid art revived in a modern monument that punctures the city skyline with a huge dome and two pencil minarets.

06 MARONITE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF SAIDA



The Episcopal Chair of the Maronite Diocese of Saida is located on Riad El Solh Street, southeast of the old city. This edifice was built in the mid-twentieth century after Maronite citizens had demanded that the bishop's residence moves from Beiteddine to Saida. The See is considered the residence of the bishop (the diocese pastor), who manages its spiritual, pastoral, social and cultural affairs and communicates with the city's civil and religious families.

07 GREEK CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOPRIC OF SAIDA



Transferred outside the old city, the Greek Catholic Archbishopric was built in the 19th century. It is famous for its grand style and for the largest piece of Mosaic in the Middle East, dating back to the 6th century, currently on display. The upper floor features the bedroom and property of the Venerable Father Bechara Abou Mrad. The nearby Bishop's Palace has painted ceilings depicting episodes from the Old and the New Testaments.

08 SAIDA TRADE SOUKS



The Saida Trade Souks is the trade centre and central business district of the city. For over a century, families and companies have established their businesses in this public cutting into the horizon to the North, and comprises of three parts: the big, the circular and the small rocks. The *Jazireh* (island), otherwise referred to as El Zireh, leaves its seekers and locals of the greater Saida region. Directly accessible to the old city, this zone turns into a festive market during annual occasions, where trade and recreation are combined into a beautiful tableau of authenticity merged with modernity.

10 EL ZIREH | SAIDA'S ISLAND



El Zireh Island is Saida's marine archaeological monument, just a few hundred metres away from shore. El Zireh, the last remnant of the old City of Sidon, stretches 540 metres, cutting into the horizon to the North, and comprises of three parts: the big, the circular and the small rocks. The *Jazireh* (island), otherwise referred to as El Zireh, leaves its visitors intrigued by its shores and ancient remains. Archaeologists, through underwater stone findings, believe that the island, served as an external port in ancient times, dating back to over 2200 B.C. An affordable few-minute trip to and from the island resembles a short excursion for a long-lasting memory for sea passionate swimmers and divers.

15 MOHAMMED AL SAUDI PUBLIC PARK



The Engineer Mohammed Al Saudi Public Park is a municipal venue established at the site of the region's former waste dump. It was established by the Municipality of Saida in 2016. Today, the park offers a public area of 35,000 sqm for sports activities as well as family recreation. It is special for its natural view to the sea and its green corridors, home to thousands of green plants and 150-year old olive trees. The park also features an amphitheatre designated for festivities and public events.

16 SHEIKH ZAYED PUBLIC PARK



The Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Public Park is municipal venue at the southwestern corner of Old Saida. It was established by the Municipality of Saida through a fund from the Emirati government in 2016. Facing the trade port and accessible from the seaside, today this park welcomes visitors as a safe space for family recreation on the waterfront. It is usually busy on weekends and occasions, as festivities and public events are held here.



SAIDA MAP

- MAIN ROADS
- SECONDARY ROADS
- OLD CITY
- SHORELINE
- RIVERS

LEGEND

- 01- SAIDA SEA CITADEL
- 02- SAIDA LAND CITADEL | SAINT LOUIS CASTLE
- 03- ECHMOUN TEMPLE
- 04- SAIDA INTERNATIONAL STADIUM | RAFIC HARIRI SPORTS CITY
- 05- HAJJ BAHAA AL DEEN HARIRI MOSQUE COMPLEX
- 06- MARONITE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF SAIDA
- 07- GREEK CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOPRIC OF SAIDA
- 08- SAIDA TRADE SOUKS
- 09- PUBLIC BEACH
- 10- EL ZIREH | SAIDA'S ISLAND
- 11- SIDON UNDERWATER PARK
- 12- BOAT TOURS
- 13- FISHERMEN PORT
- 14- COMMERCIAL PORT
- 15- MOHAMMED AL SAUDI PUBLIC PARK
- 16- SHEIKH ZAYED PUBLIC PARK
- 17- SAIDA MUNICIPAL PARK
- 18- KENAYET RIVERSIDE PUBLIC PARK



SCAN TO VISITSAIDA.COM



خارطة صيدا

- الطرق الرئيسية
- الطرق الفرعية
- المدينة القديمة
- الخط البحري
- الأنهار

المعالم

- ١- قلعة صيدا البحرية
- ٢- قلعة صيدا البرية | قلعة سان لويس
- ٣- معبد أشمون
- ٤- ملعب صيدا الدولي | مدينة ريفيق الحريري الرياضية
- ٥- مجمع جامع الحاج بهاء الدين الحريري
- ٦- مطرانية صيدا المارونية
- ٧- مطرانية صيدا للروم الكاثوليك
- ٨- أسواق صيدا التجارية
- ٩- المسبح الشعبي
- ١٠- البرية | جزيرة صيدا
- ١١- حديقة صيدون المائية
- ١٢- جولت القوارب
- ١٣- مرقا الصيادين
- ١٤- المرفأ التجاري
- ١٥- حديقة المهندس محمد السعودي العامة
- ١٦- حديقة الشيخ زايد بن سلطان آل نهيان
- ١٧- منتزه صيدا البلدي
- ١٨- منتزه الكتابات