

14 to 27 Sep 2010 14-days Syria & Lebanon of the Middle East**Rm6600 (per pax for group of 10 pax - chartered bus)****Rm6400 (per pax for group of 11-13 pax - chartered bus)****Rm6000 (per pax for group of 14 or more pax - chartered bus)**

Update 5 Apr 2010 - Cost above based on higher flights Emirates at Rm2380+taxes Rm200, which also includes travel to more expensive Lebanon. We have some 10 pax very interested and will collect deposits soon. For this trip, please contact 9-times Yonger Yazmi at yazmee@gmail.com and 012 8071700.

Update 27 Mar 2010 - We had full group of 16 pax in Feb 2010. Expect some changes to the itinerary to include Lebanon. The Emirates fare for Feb2010 was Rm2100 plus taxes Rm200.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is meant to be a "free and easy" adventure trip. Participants should be relatively fit, with a good sense of humour, and above all, have the right attitude for close travel with others through possibly some trying times. Most definitely, this is not a trip for prudes, whiners, fuss-pots, and other similiarly assorted types! We had a couple of those before and it was not pleasant for us or them. Although every effort will be made to stick to the given itinerary, ground conditions may change and cause some disruption and/or deviation from the norm. Otherwise, have fun.



Palmyra's Roman City / Beehive Houses

I have been to Syria two times on a personal trip and once in 2006 with a Yongo Group of 11 pax. I would rate it as one of the friendliest countries that I have visited. Breathtaking scenery, magnificent historical monuments and some the friendliest people in the world await the traveller, just as they have for centuries. Between explorations of majestic Roman archaeological ruins, such as Palmyra and Bosra, you wander the atmospheric alleyways and labyrinthine souqs or market of Damascus and Aleppo. You will be amazed by the great mix of both Muslim and Christian culture and sites.

We stay in budget hotels on twin-share basis with private bath. Its quite important participants be able to manage their own luggage and backpacks would be the preferred type of bag. As usual, you pay for your own meals, entrance fees and other activities. We hire a private bus to take us from Airport to Airport. There is good shopping in Syria with good and meals much lower than in Malaysia.

Day 0 Mon 13 Sep 2010 KLIA: Assemble at KLIA 11PM (no need to take annual leave)

Day 1 Tue 14 Sep 2010 Damascus: Fly Emirates Airlines EK409 to Dubai at 2AM arriving 450AM (7hr). From Dubai, we fly EK912 to Damascus at 715PM arriving 930AM (3hr). Transfer to Hotel and we have a full day to visit the Old Town, a UNESCO site. Found in the old city is the Umayyad Mosque, which is found the mausoleum of Saladin, the greatest Muslim conquerer as well as the shrine of John the Baptist aka the Dragon Slayer, said to contain the biblical character's head. ON Damascus. Overnight (ON) Damascus.

Day 2 Bosra Roman Theatre: Its 4hours return trip to Bosra to visit one of the best preserved Roman theatre encompassed by an Arab fortress. ON Damascus. This is a UNESCO listed site and was the last stop for Muslims on their way to Mecca.

Day 3 Palmyra: We bus to Palmyra 3hr, Syria's prime tourist attraction and one of the most well preserved ancient Roman city in the world (UNESCO). The town grew around the ruins which is just over 500m from the town centre. We will spend the whole day visiting the extensive site. ON Palmyra.

Day 4 Dier Ez Zur: Visit to 8th century Qasr Al-Heir Ash-Sharqi (aka East Wall Palace) We finish in Dier Ez Zur 2hr, a busy little market town by the Euphrates River. The streets are filled with colourfully dressed peasants from the surrounding countryside, in town to buy and sell in the small but thriving local market. ON Dier Ez Zur.

Day 5 Rasafa Walled City & Aleppo: We bus 2hr to the abandoned town of Rasafa, which was a thriving site for Christian pilgrims. We proceed on to Aleppo 2.5hr for ON stay.

Day 6 Aleppo's Old Market: Unesco listed Aleppo vies with Damascus for the title of the world's oldest continually inhabited city. Today we spend the whole wandering and getting "lost" in the huge Old City souk, sharing the narrow lanes with donkeys and little Suzuki vans. ON Aleppo.

Day 7 St Simeon Basilica Aleppo: Locally known as Qala'at Samaan, this was a place of pilgrimage for Byzantine Christians. The Church today it is remarkably well preserved with Romanesque facade. ON Aleppo.

Day 8 Sergila Dead City & Hama: We visit Sergila, one of hundreds of Dead Cities, which were former Christian settlements producing wine before Muslim took over. We then move to Apamea, a Roman City before going to Hama to see the 20m giant water

wheels called Norias. ON Hama.



Krak des Chevaliers / Bosra Roman Amphitheatre

[Day 9 Qala'at Salah ad-Din Castle & Lattakia](#): We bus to Lattakia 3.5hr, a busy port even since Roman times and one of the least conservative cities in the country. On the way there, we visit Qala'at Salah ad-Din Castle (Saladdin Castle), an ancient Crusader's Castle, second fiddle to Krak des Chevaliers but is perched on top of a heavily wooded ridge with near-precipitous sides dropping away to surrounding ravines. Built by the Crusaders, control exchanged hands a couple of times before it was finally abandoned. Lattakia is a modern Christian ON Lattakia.

[Day 10 Ugarit Alphabets](#): From here its a small hop 16km to Ugarit, the origin of the world's earliest alphabets. The Ugaritic tablets found her is a greatly simplified system of 30 symbols, each of which represents one sound. We move on to Kraks des Chevaliers 3hr (UNESCO). The whole afternoon will be spent visiting this still intact Crusader's Castle. Described by TE Lawrence (of Arabia fame) as 'the finest Crusader's castle in the world', the Krak is one of Syria's premier attraction and a must-see.ON Kracs des Chevaliers.

[Day 11 Baalbeck & Beirut](#): We cross the Syrian/Lebanese border some 10km away, and proceed to Baalbeck 4hr, Lebanon's premier tourist site (UNESCO). We move on to Beirut, so called the Paris of the Middle East for its modern buildings. One sees numerous American influences in its fast food chains and the American University. ON Beirut.

[Day 12 Byblos & Bcharre Valley](#): We begin the day visiting UNESCO listed Byblos, then proceed on to the beautiful Bcharre Valley to visit the Cedar Trees and Grottos of Qadisha. Bcharre Valley and Cedar Forests are also UNESCO listed. We return to Beirut for overnight stay.

[Day 13 Beirut](#): We have a full day visiting Beirut aka the Paris of the Middle East and other areas of Beirut. We transfer to the Airport at 5PM for flight EK954 departing 845PM arriving Dubai 1AM.

[Day 14 Home 27 Sep Mon Arrive Home](#): From Dubai EK 346 departs at 315AM arriving KLIA at 215PM.



Souk in Aleppo / Destinations from Aleppo Bus Station

[TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

1. Cost cover group airfares, accomodation and travelling to sites mentioned above.
2. Accomodation will be in budget to mid-range hotels with private baths.
3. Not covered are airport taxes & fuel surcharges (currently Rm200), entrance fees (Rm200) and meals, say Rm50 per day x 13 days (Rm650).
4. Cost is subject to change depending on fluctuations in exchange rates and/or airfares.
5. A deposit of Rm1090 will be payable to confirm your place.

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