



# A WALK THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN

JABAL MOUSSA UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE  
ECOTOURISM GUIDE



## ABOUT US

The Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa (APJM) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established in 2007 for the conservation of biodiversity and preservation of the cultural heritage in Jabal Moussa mountain and surrounding villages. Our aim is to achieve sustainable development with the participation of local communities.

### Objectives

- Protect and conserve the rich biodiversity of Jabal Moussa
- Revive and preserve the cultural and archaeological heritage of Jabal Moussa
- Support local socio-economic activities for sustainable rural development
- Promote environmental awareness and education
- Build the capacities of local people to engage in ecotourism and sustainably manage natural resources

## ABOUT JABAL MOUSSA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve is located in the Kesrouan District, 45 kilometers from the capital Beirut. It covers an area of 6500 hectares at an altitude ranging between 350 meters in the West and 1700 meters in the East. The main villages are Qehmez, Nahr Ed-Dahab, Yahchouch, Ghbaleh, Ain el Delbeh, Al libre, and Chouwan.

Jabal Moussa and surrounding villages became part of the UNESCO Network of Biosphere Reserves under the Man And Biosphere (MAB) program in May 2009, becoming the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biosphere Reserve in Lebanon and the 24<sup>th</sup> in the Arab world. In 2012, Jabal Moussa received the designation of a “Protected Natural Site” under the protection of the Ministry of Environment.

The Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve presents a rich diversity of flora and fauna. At least 727 flora species are found in the reserve, out of which 114 medicinal plants, 26 species are endemic to Lebanon, and 6 flowers are endemic to Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve, including: *Cyclamen libanoticum*, *Rosularia Kesrouanensis*, *Alkanna leiocarpa*, *Pentapera sicula libanotica*, *Vicia narbonensis libani*, *Salvia peyronii*.

The Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve is a Global Important Bird Area (IBA) as per BirdLife International criteria, and presents a variety of migratory and soaring birds which appear depending on the seasons, as well as numerous breeding species and winter visitors. Given the difficulty of access to humans, Jabal Moussa constitutes a peaceful home to more than 24 mammal species including Squirrels, Wolves, Hyenas, Hyraxes and many other animals of local and global conservation value.

# SOME HERITAGE SITES INFORMATION



## OLD HOUSES

(EL-BYUT)

Secluded on the mountain summit, at a one-hour hike from the nearest village, three traditional Lebanese houses were built more than 200 years ago. Since water at the mountain summits is scarce, a vaulted cistern was built with stones to store rainwater.



## THE ROMAN STAIRS

This section in Jabal Moussa is the longest continuous stretch of Roman stairs in Lebanon: it spans over 1,800 m of length and has an impressive width of 2 to 3 meters. It was designated a Historic site by the Ministry of Culture in 2012 and was rehabilitated by APJM in 2021.



## QORNET EL DEIR

Excavations done at this site, at the top of a hill, attested the site's occupation during Medieval and Roman eras, but also during the Middle Bronze Age when it was a true settlement for a significant period, and was well interconnected with the Bekaa Valley and the coast!



## HADRIAN'S INSCRIPTIONS

(IMP HAD AUG - AG IV CP)

These rock inscriptions date back to the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian Augustus (117 - 138 AD.). They are considered one of the oldest formal forest conservation stances, and are only found in Mount Lebanon. Their aim was to protect 4 species of trees, most probably the cedar, fir, juniper and oak.



## THE CROSS SITE

(ES-SALIB)

The Cross was erected by the "Cross Youth Group" of Yahchouch village in 2000. Since then, local communities visit the site to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14.

# SOME FAUNA & FLORA INFORMATION



## ROCK HYRAX

Rock Hyraxes are small mammals that live in groups of up to 70 individuals headed by an adult male. They are spread from South Africa in the South, to Lebanon, their northernmost limit. The rock formations on the slopes of Jabal Moussa offer a shelter to significant populations of hyraxes.



## WOLF

The wolf is a species that chooses primarily remote areas as its habitats. These include forests and scrubland like in Jabal Moussa where it can hunt and scavenge during the night. This predator has an important ecological role for the balance of species within the ecosystem. In Lebanon it is highly endangered.



## THREE-LOBED APPLE

This apple species is called the Three-lobed Apple because of the shape of its leaves. It occurs typically in higher altitudes, but is occasionally found in Jabal Moussa. This wild apple species is regionally endemic, and is severely endangered, hence the increased importance of conserving it in the reserve of Jabal Moussa.



## KESROUAN PEONY

The family is named after Paeon, the Greek physician reputed for being the first to use plants as medicine. *Paeonia Kesrouanensis* is endemic to Lebanon, Syria and Turkey, and is widespread in Kesrouan as indicated by its name.



## LEBANON CYCLAMEN

Described as “semi-legendary” by the botanist “Mouterde”, the Lebanese cyclamen is endemic to Jabal Moussa and its surroundings. It can be distinguished from its relative, the widespread *Cyclamen Persicum*, by the dark pink spot at the base of its petals in the form of an inverted anchor, as well as its heart-shaped leaves.

# DO'S AND DON'TS

Maintaining nature's balance and a healthy forest requires responsible behavior from visitors and respect of the following guidelines

## YES



STAY ON THE TRAIL



STAY NEAR THE GUIDE



OBSERVE BIRDS



ENJOY THE SCENERY



KEEP NATURE CLEAN



KEEP RELATIVELY QUIET



RESPECT INSTRUCTIONS

## NO



HUNTING



SMOKING OR FIRE LIGHTING



CAMPING



PETS



FLOWER AND PLANTS PICKING

With the support of



**USAID**  
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من الشعب الياباني  
From the People of Japan

**drosos (...)**

For some exciting hikes filled with beauty and serenity, come visit Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve. Walk, along with our dedicated guides, on several wondrous trails. Plant a tree, purchase “Jabal Moussa” food and handicraft products, enjoy a traditional lunch at our guesthouses and stay overnight at our Bed & Breakfasts.

*Kindly inform us in advance if you have a health condition or if a visitor is less than 12 years old.*

Call us on: **09-643464** or **71-944405** or E-mail us at: [info@jabalmoussa.org](mailto:info@jabalmoussa.org)

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