

# WANDER to WONDER

#### by MARTINA NICOLLS



The world will never starve for wonder, but only for want of wonder. G.K. Chesterson

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## editor's note

# Welcome to the 30th edition of WANDER to WONDER

This edition of Wander to Wonder focuses on Beirut, Lebanon, and its coastline.

Until next edition, with another theme,

Martina

MARTINA NICOLLS





## map - region





### map – lebanon



## map – beirut



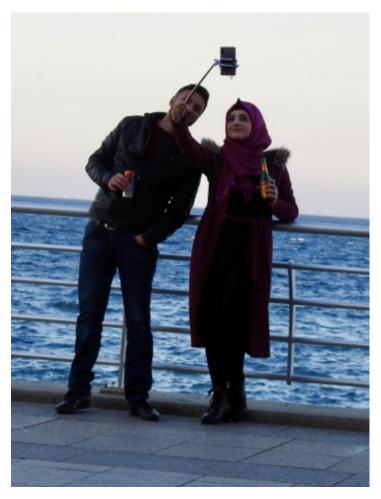
#### lebanon

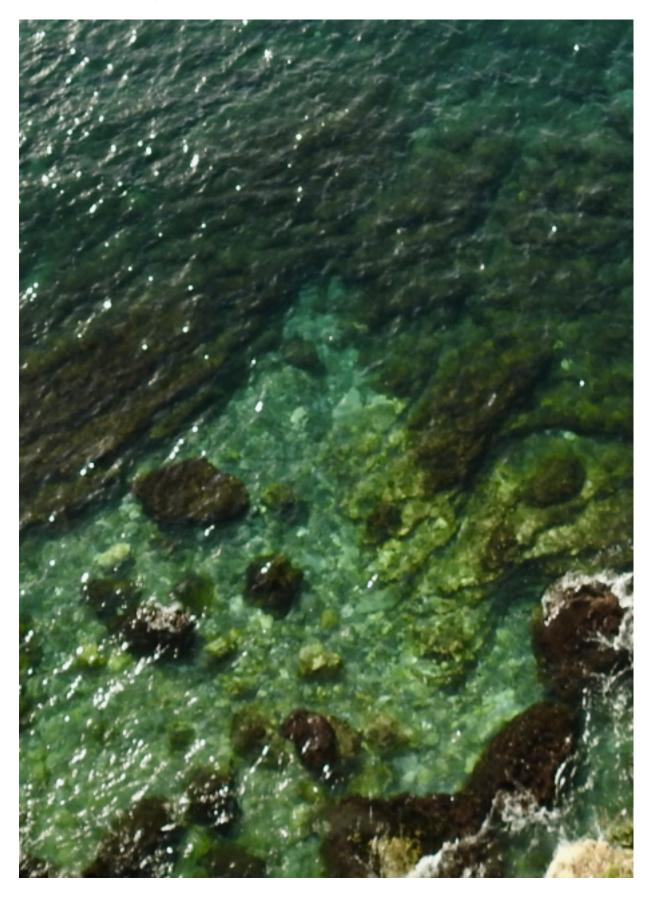
The Lebanese Republic – Lebanon – is a country situated on the Mediterranean Basin and the Arabian hinterland. To its north and east is Syria, and to its south is Israel. The island of Cyprus lies to the west of Lebanon.

Lebanon has three geographic areas: the coastal plane, the mountain ranges, and the Beqaa valley. Lebanon's coastline is 225 kilometres (140 miles) long, while its limestone and sandstone mountains run for most of the country's length. The Lebanon cedar tree, native to its mountains, is the country's national emblem. The Beqaa valley is part of Africa's Great Rift Valley system.

The country has about six million residents, and around two million tourists per year. Lebanon has 16 rivers and six ski resorts as well as caves and coastline, attracting sporting and adventure enthusiasts. The three most popular origin countries of foreign tourists are Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Japan.









#### beirut

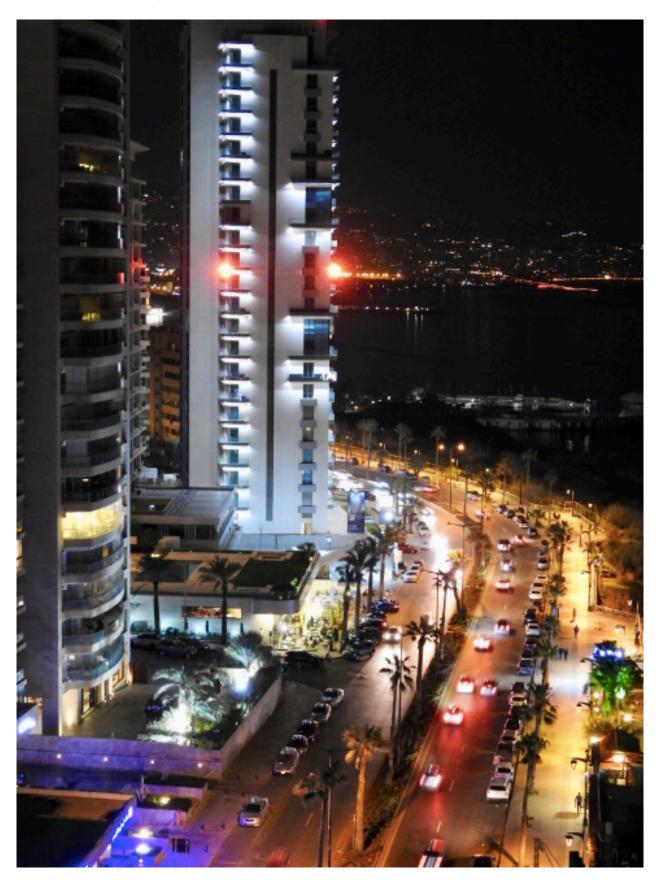
Beirut is the capital of Lebanon, with a population of about two million. It is located on a peninsula on the Mediterranean coast. It is one of the oldest cities in the world and has architecture of French, Venetian Gothic, Arabesque and Ottoman origins, as well as Roman ruins. Lebanon became independent from France in 1945, and its main languages include Arabic, French, and English.

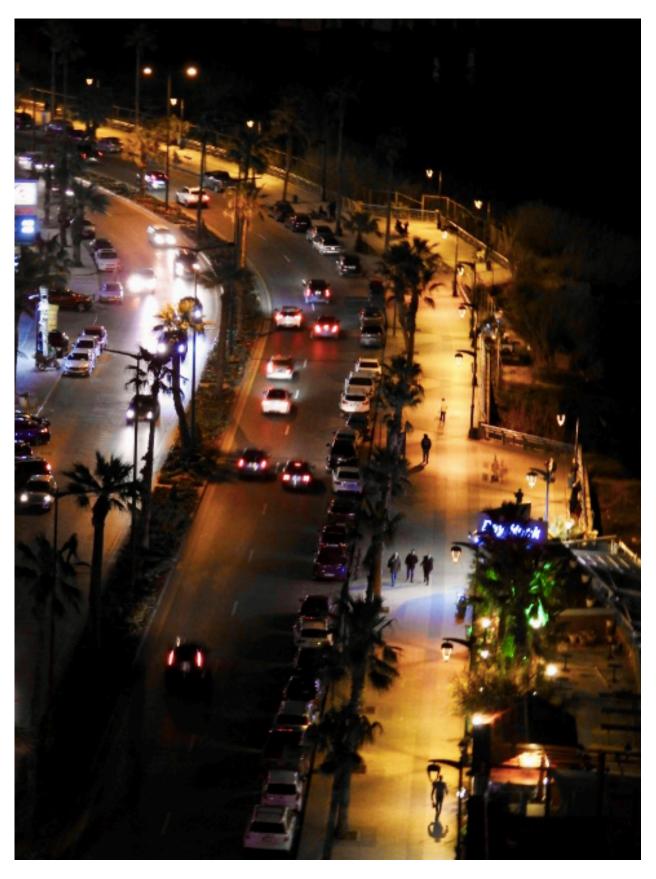
It has a popular seafront promenade, called Corniche Beirut, for 4.8 kilometres (3 miles) from Saint George Bay to Avenue de Paris and Avenue General de Gaulle, with many cafes, restaurants, and lookout areas — especially with views of Pigeon Rocks in the Raouché area.

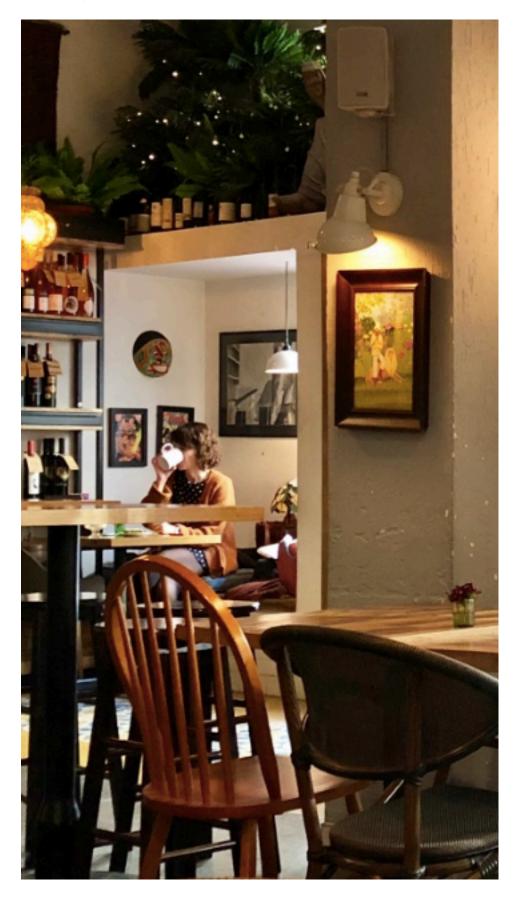
In 2009, *The New York Times* ranked Beirut the No. 1 travel destination worldwide due to its nightlife and hospitality. In 2012, Condé Nast Traveler chose Beirut as the best city in the Middle East.







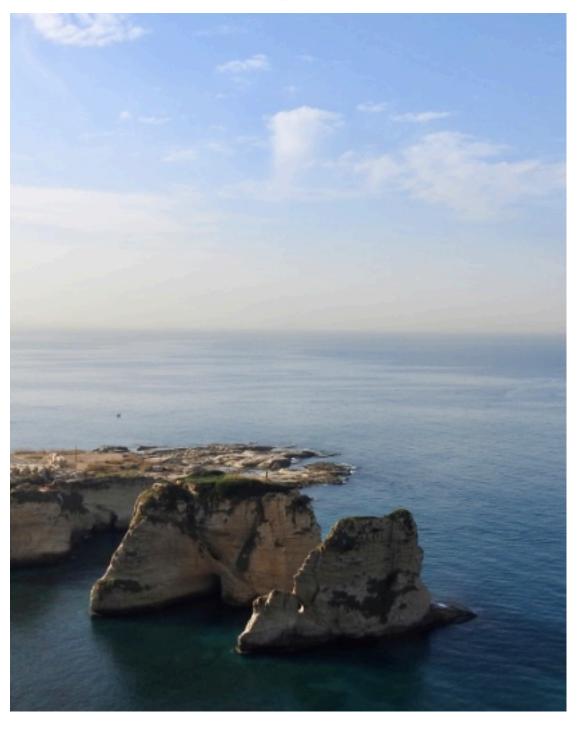


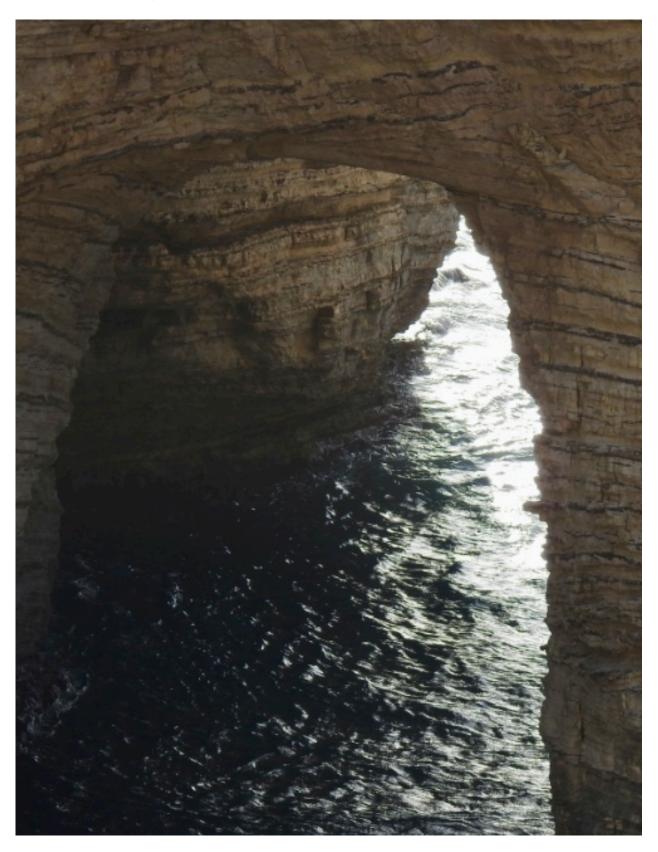


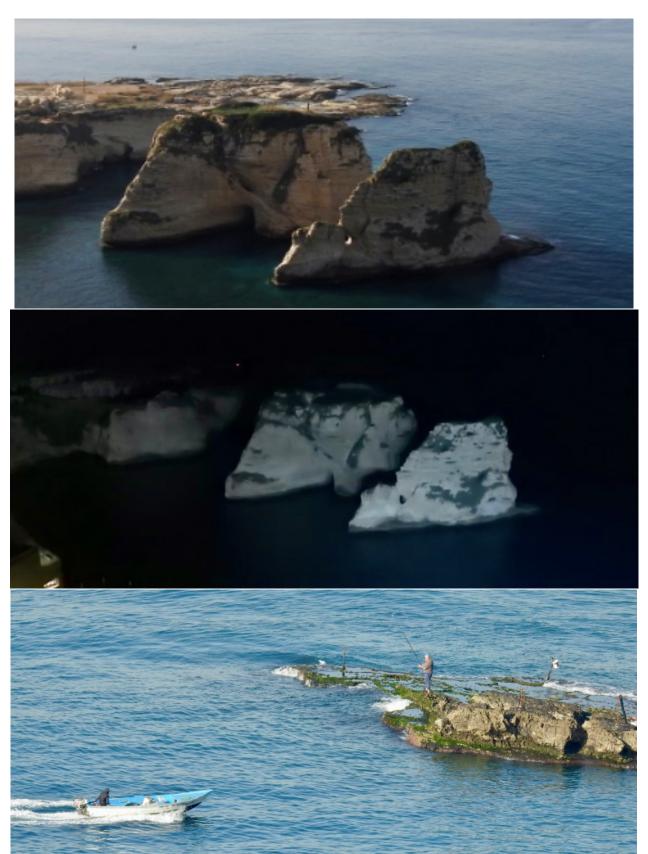
## pigeon rocks

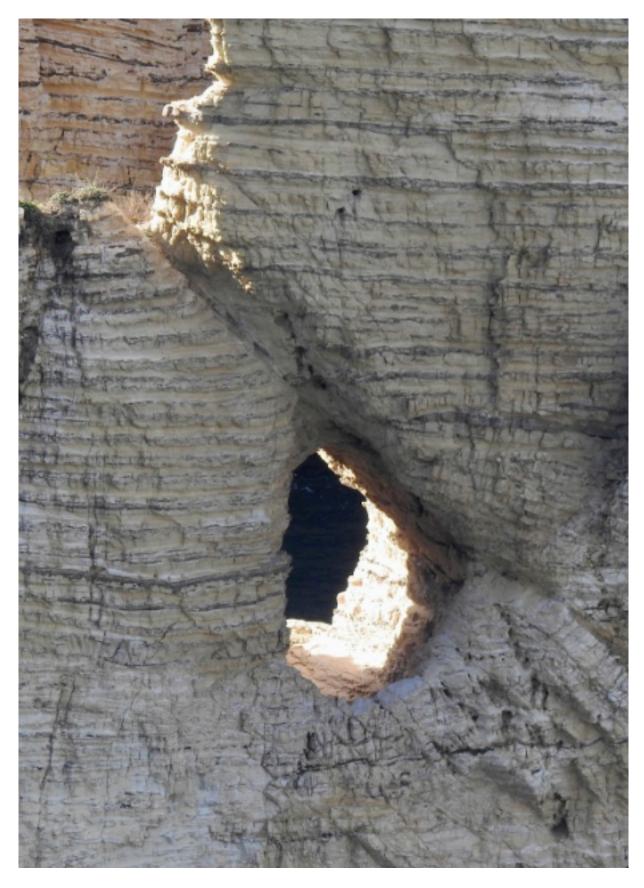
Pigeon Rocks in the Raouché suburb is located at Beirut's western-most tip. The two large limestone formations are about 60 metres high.

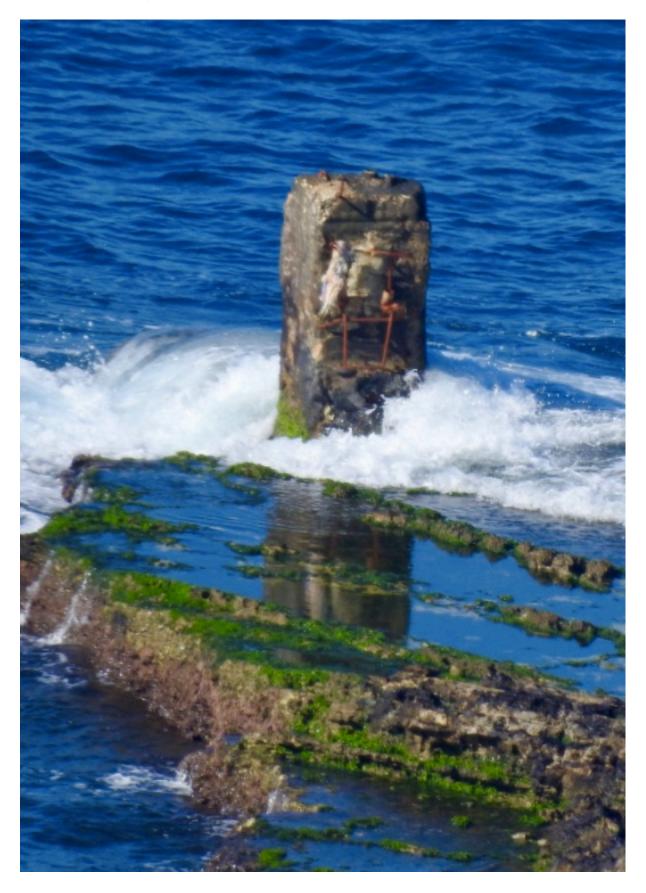






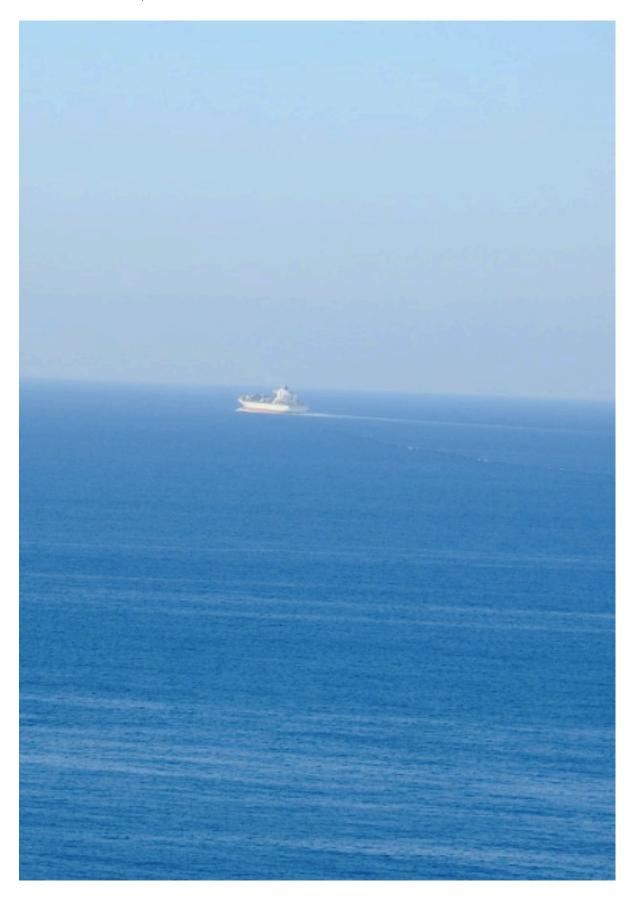




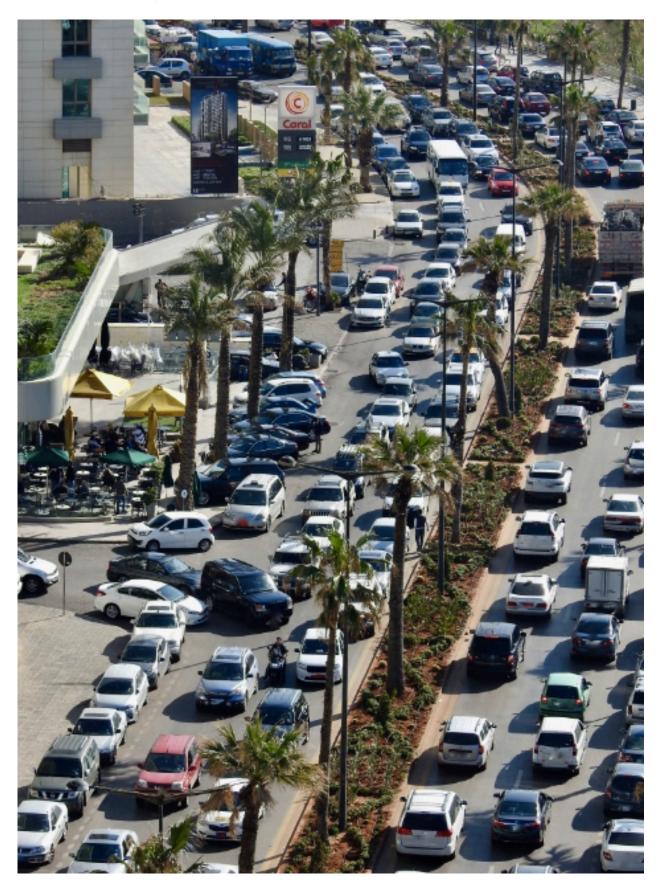












## jeita grotto

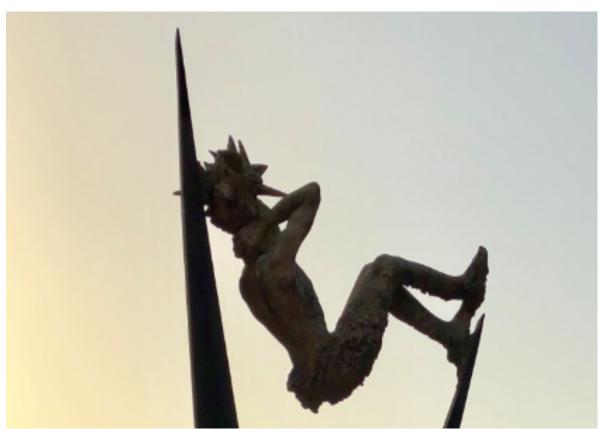
The Jeita Grotto, 18 kilometres (11 miles) north of Beirut, is two interconnected limestone caves – an upper cave and a lower cave. The upper cave is 60 metres above the lower cave.

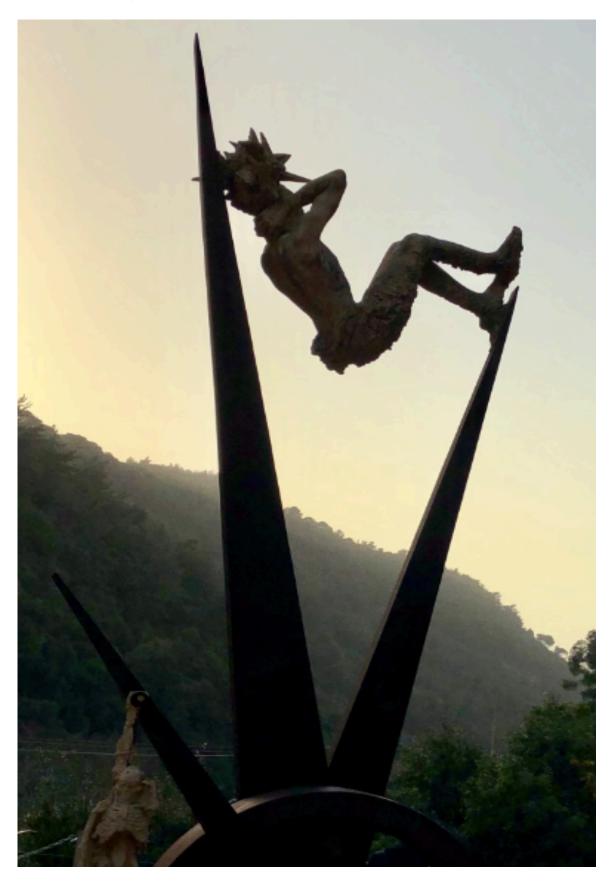
The upper cave was discovered in 1958 and is 2.1 kilometres long. Open to visitors is a section of almost one kilometre. It has the world's largest known stalactite as well as stalagmites, columns, mushroom formations, ponds, and other crystallized structures.

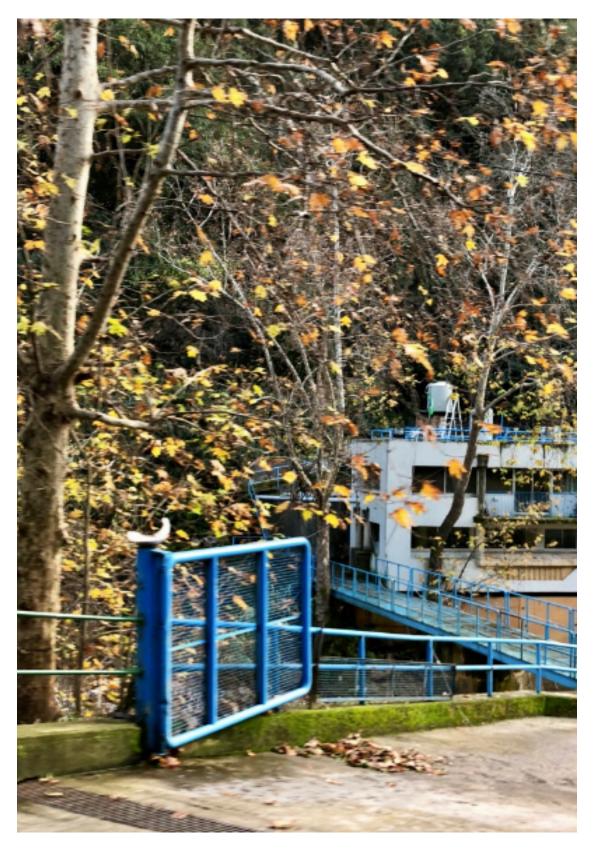
The lower cave was discovered in 1836 and is 6.2 kilometres long. The lower cave was closed due to high water.

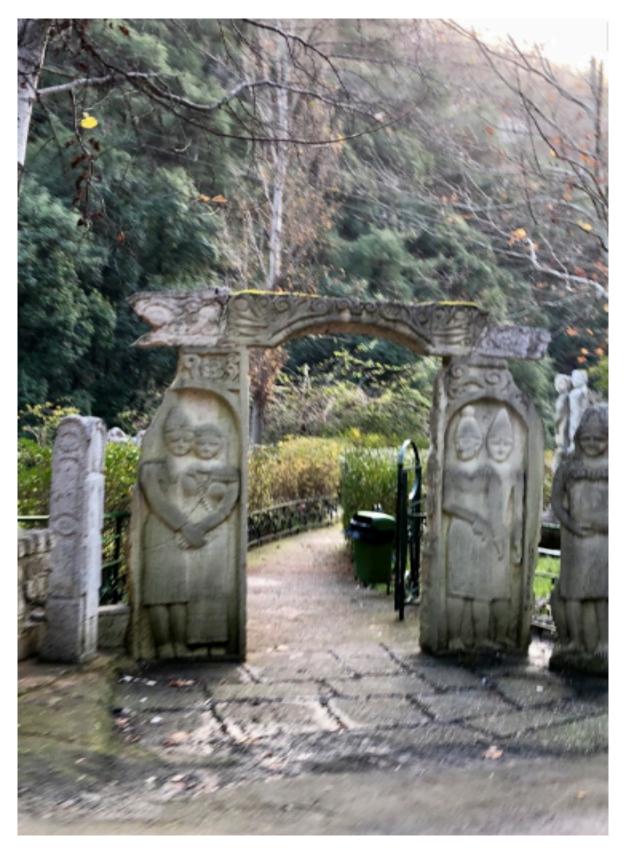
Photographs are not permitted inside the cave.



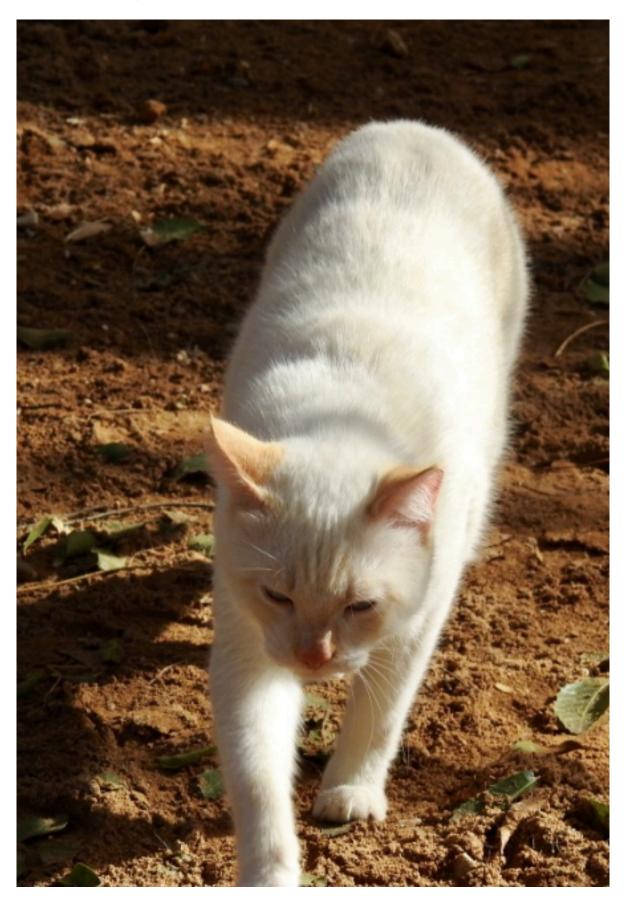


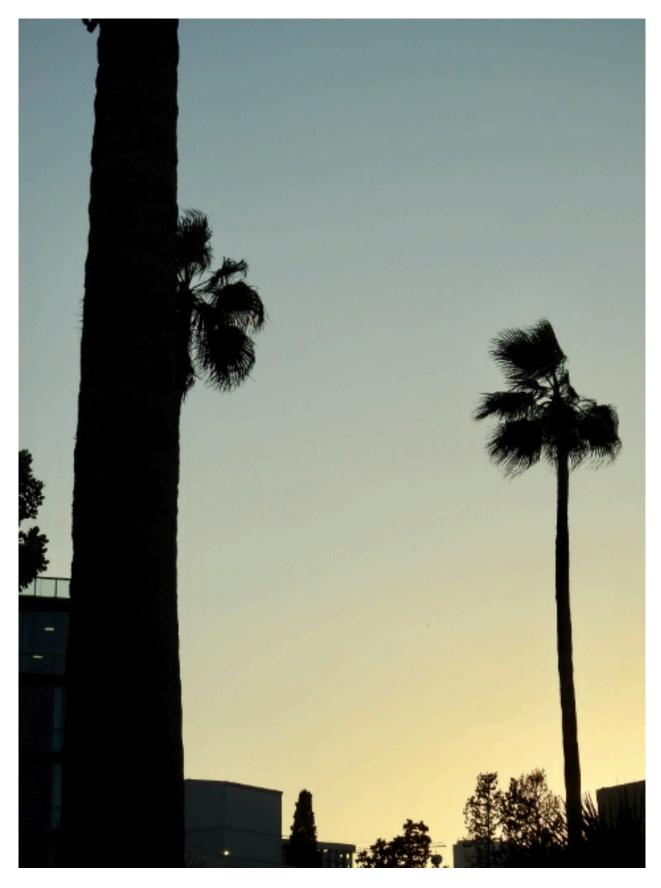




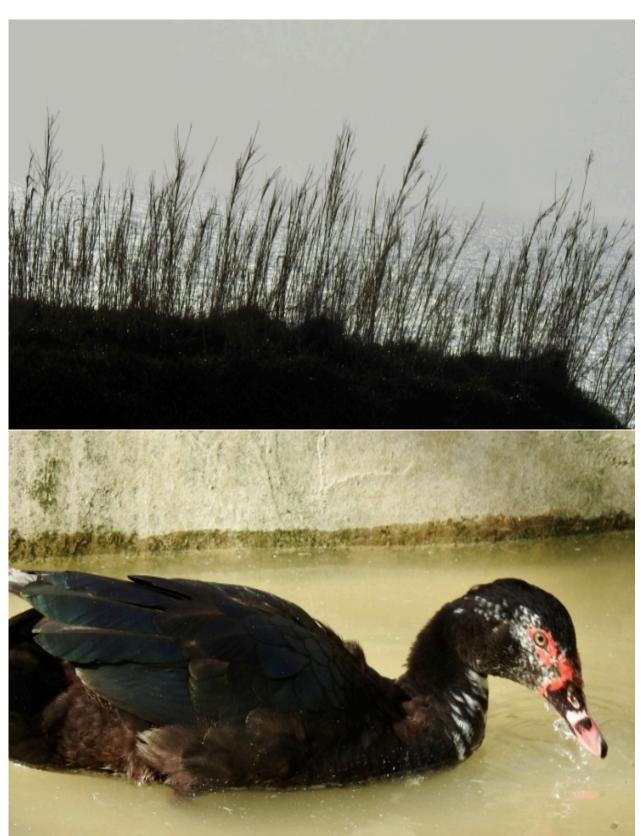


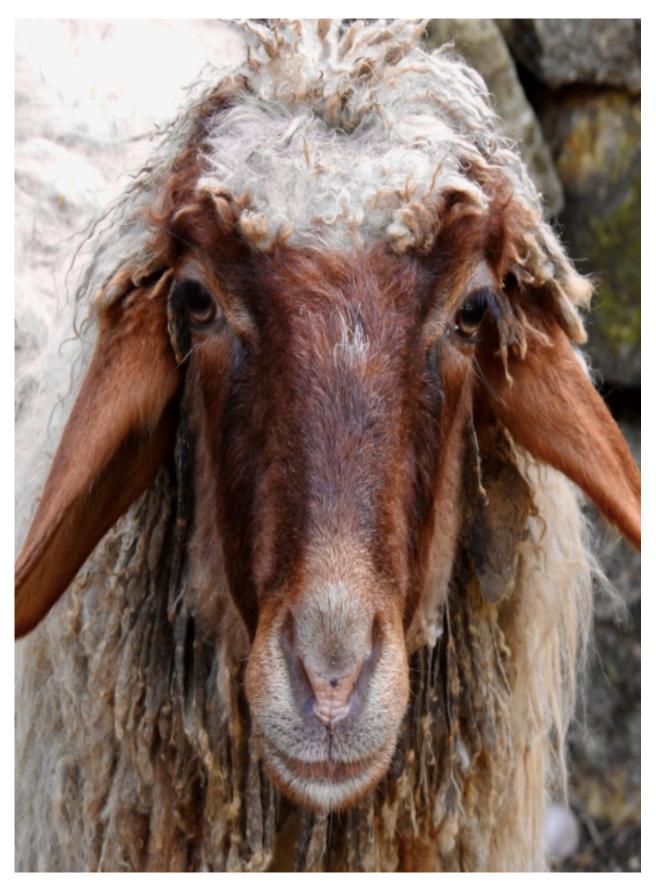












#### the author: Martina Nicolls

I am an author and humanitarian aid consultant with over 30 years' experience in the management, implementation, and evaluation of international aid development projects, particularly in post-conflict environments and countries with transitional governments, such as Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Darfur, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Pakistan, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Georgia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka, and also Mauritius, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia – and others. I provide technical advice on areas such as peace-building and conflict mitigation, education, poverty reduction, human rights, child labour, data quality and financing models.

But mostly I am a wanderer. Wherever I am and wherever I go, I take photographs and I write. My books include:

Similar but Different in the Animal Kingdom (2017) A Mongolian Lament (2015) The Komodo Verses (2012) Liberia's Deadest Ends (2012) Bardot's Comet (2011) Kashmir on a Knife-Edge (2010) The Sudan Curse (2009)

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