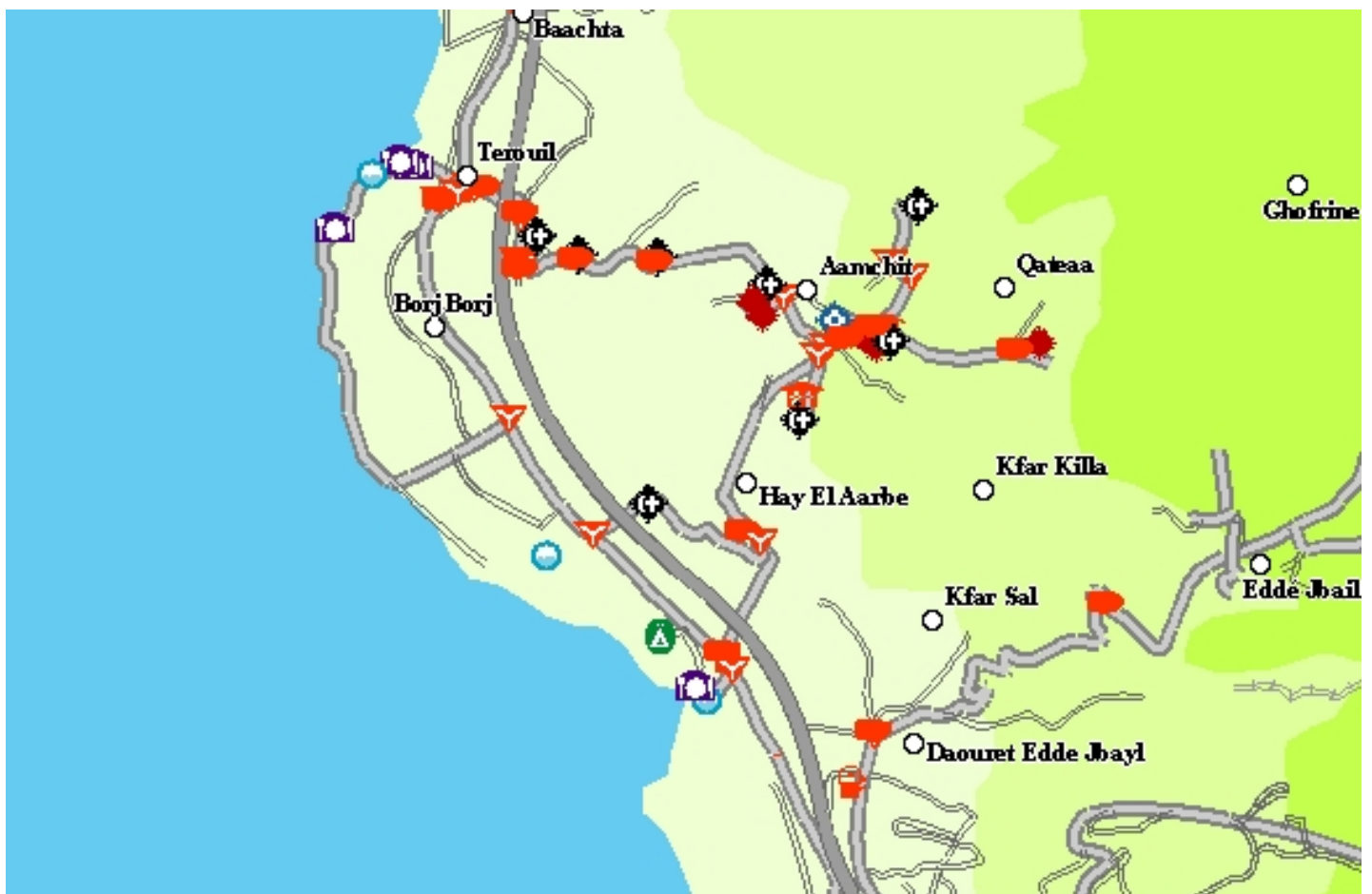


itinerary 7-B :: Aamchit

Originating from Syriac, Aamchit's name means "residents of the hill of sand." This coastal town is known for its balmy seaside climate and its traditional houses built by wealthy silk merchants in the 19th century. There are over 80 protected historical houses in the Aamchit, and many have been restored. Although most of the homes are privately owned, many of the owners are happy to receive visitors. Aamchit is also known for the craft of weaving palm leaves into baskets, mats, and other objects, and you can purchase unique woven items here. Although Aamchit's coastline is very rocky, there are two public beaches where swimming is possible. There are also many nice seaside restaurants.

Jbail (Byblos) to Aamchit: 1.8km

- From Jbail town center, drive 0.2km north, and you will reach an intersection. Turn right here, between some shops (you are still in Jbail at this point).
- After 100m, you will see the signs for the citadel on the left. Keep going straight.
- Around 1.2km later you will go over a bridge. As you drive, you can enjoy the views of the sea and of agricultural lands with pomegranate, sugar cane, palm trees, and dates.
- After 0.4km, you will pass by Medco Gas Station on the right side of the road. Keep driving straight here.
- After 34m, you will see an Arabic sign for Aamchit on the right side of the road.





CHURCH OF ST. GEORGES (MAR GERGES) AND CHAPEL OF ST. SOPHIA (MAR SOPHIA)

The Church of St. Georges was built using the stones of a Roman temple, and it was built over the ruins of an ancient Phoenician tomb, which was converted into a chapel dedicated to St. Sophia (Mar Sophia) and her daughters. Although it is reportedly quite old, the exact date of construction of this small church is not known. Reportedly, a sarcophagus with Greek and Arabic inscriptions serves as an altar in the chapel.



Driving Directions

After the Aamchit sign, drive for 1.9km. Turn right on the exit road with a 2nd sign for Aamchit. After 250m, you will go under the bridge on another right exit. Drive another 250m, then take a right. After 200m, you will see a road on the left with a French/Arabic sign for Grotte St. Sophie and Eglise St. Georges. Turn left here, following the sign. Drive 300m, you will see a grotto on the right with few ruins near it. Inside the grotto, there is a sanctuary for St. Sophia. Near the grotto, there is a staircase leading to St. Georges Church.



SAYDET NAYA

This a charming old church from the Crusader era has an old door, a beautiful garden with oak trees, and, in the middle of the garden, a statue of St. Mary. Despite its age, this small church is still used for worship.



Driving Directions

From the Church of St. Georges, return to the main road and continue driving in the same direction as before. After 200m, you will see on the left an English/Arabic sign for Saydet Naya. Turn left here to enter the church.



ALL SAINTS CHURCH (EGLISE TOUSSAINT)

This small church is surrounded with trees and a cemetery in the churchyard, distinguished by a pretty entrance made of arches and white stone. The precise age of the All Saints Church is unknown, but the church is used up to this day.



Driving Directions

From Saydet Naya Church, return to the main road and continue driving in the same direction as before. Drive 150m, and on the left side of the road you will see a French/Arabic sign indicating that you have reached Eglise Toussaint.



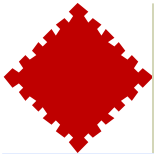
ST. ELYSEE CHURCH

A large building that still attracts worshippers, St. Elysée Church has a beautiful yard, oak trees, and stairs, and a remarkable dome.



Driving Directions

From All Saints Church (Eglise Toussaint), continue driving straight ahead on the main road. Drive 0.5km, and you will reach St. Elysée Church on the right side of the road.



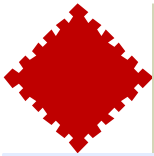
ZAKHIA TOUBIA RESIDENCE

One of the most famous homes in Lebanon, Zakhia Toubia's house was inhabited by the French writer Ernest Renan during his visit to Lebanon in 1860-1861. The tomb of his sister, Henriette Renan, is located in the Zakhia family vault at a nearby church. It is an old house with remarkable architecture and furniture. On the entrance of the house there is a plaque indicating that Renan lived in that house during his visit to Lebanon. In the house there are several pictures and letters of Renan and the Toubia family. The house has beautiful balconies and a nice garden as well. Although it is a private residence, tourists can arrange to visit by calling Tel: +961-(0)9-621995.



Driving Directions

From St. Elysée Church, continue driving straight ahead on the main road. After 74m, you will reach a Lebanese Army checkpoint. If you were to turn left here, you would reach the municipality. Instead, turn right and drive 100m to reach the Zakhia Toubia Residence.



MARCEL TOUBIA RESIDENCE

The house has beautiful balconies and remarkable paintings on the walls and ceiling. Although it is a private residence, tourists can arrange to visit by calling Tel: +961-(0)9-621995.



Driving Directions

Near the Zakhia Toubia Residence (approximately 100m to the right) you will find an old house belonging to Marcel Toubia.



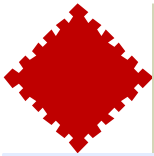
OUR LADY CHURCH (NOTRE DAME CHURCH)

In the yard of this old, but undated, church built of white stones and marked by a wooden door, you can see the grave of Ernest Renan's sister, Henriette, located in the Zakhia family vault.



Driving Directions

From the Marcel Toubia Residence, return to the main road and turn right. Drive 200m, and turn left between some houses. About 100m later, on the right side of the road, there is a French sign for Notre Dame (Our Lady Church); 100m later you reach the church.



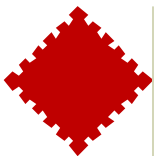
MIKHAEL LAHOUD RESIDENCE

Built over a crypt dating to the 3rd century A.D., Mikhael Lahoud's former residence is now a private home, so it can be viewed only from the outside.



Driving Directions

After the French sign on the right side for Notre Dame (Our Lady Church), drive 100m and on the right you will see the Mikhael Lahoud Residence (directly across from Notre Dame Church).



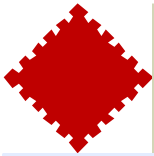
RETIRED NAVY GENERAL FARES LAHOUD LAHOUD RESIDENCE

The first floor of the retired Navy General's house has beautiful arched balconies, as well as a room with an old arsenal and oriental furniture. The second floor contains the bedrooms, and the third floor is the terrace. The house has a beautiful garden with the remains of a mill and mosaics. Throughout the house are remarkable paintings. It is currently a private residence, but visitors are permitted; call Tel: +961-(0)9-620387 to arrange a visit.



Driving Directions

From the Mikhael Lahoud Residence, continue driving straight ahead for 30m, and then turn right. You will see the Retired Navy General Fares Lahoud Lahoud Residence on the right.



RETIRED GENERAL FARES LAHOUD LAHOUD RESIDENCE

This Byzantine-style house was built high up on a rock in 1882. At the entrance are beautiful trees and a remarkable stairway. The house has beautiful old architecture and furniture. Two of the rooms have eight arches each. There is also a small church and a beautiful garden. Although a private residence, the house can be toured by calling Tel: +961-(0)9-620321.



Driving Directions

From the Retired Navy General Fares Lahoud Lahoud Residence, turn back and drive for 100m, and then turn right. After 100m, turn right and drive for 500m, on the left you will see a French/Arabic sign for the General Fares Lahoud Lahoud Residence; the house is approximately 100m from this sign.



SAINT BARBARA CHURCH

Built in 1910, the Saint Barbara Church has a beautiful dome. Follow the stone staircase, which leads to the roof. From the roof you can see the sea and a few monuments. Nearby are an old well and old oak trees.



Driving Directions

Go back to the sign for General Fares Lahoud Lahoud Residence. At the sign, turn left. Drive 500m and turn right. When you see a Byblos Bank nearby and an Arabic sign for Saint Barbara Church, go down the narrow road. After 200m, turn left. After 100m, turn right. Follow the sign to the left and after 100m you will reach the church.



AAMCHIT CRAFTS WORKSHOP

Aamchit is known for the craft of weaving date palm leaves into baskets, mats, and other objects, and you can purchase unique woven items here and see artisans at work. Prices range from \$10 to as much as \$500 for furniture. The artisans have been organized by the efforts of a local architect, Mona Yazbek, to preserve their craft. Mrs. Yazbek organizes this in her house with the help of village women. The house has a beautiful garden and palm furniture.



Driving Directions

From St. Barbara Church, drive back in the direction you came from for 600m (you will pass between some old houses and a sign for Eglise St. Barbara), and turn right. After 100m, turn right. Drive straight ahead for 50m, and then turn right. About 100m later, you will see the crafts workshop on the left.



ST. MICHAEL CHURCH AND MONASTERY

The church is old with a beautiful dome. The monastery has a beautiful indoor yard and old arches. It is more than 80 years old. There is a hospital and an emergency room in the monastery.



Driving Directions

From the Crafts Workshop, return to the main road and turn right. After 130m, turn left and drive for 190m, and you will see a school on the right and St. Michael Church and Monastery on the left.



CHURCH OF ST. ZAKIA (MAR ZAKHIA)

This church was built in the 6th century AD. Like other churches in Aamchit, it is distinguished by a beautiful dome.



Driving Directions

Return to the school mentioned in the directions for the St. Michael Monastery (above), and turn left. Drive straight ahead on the main road for 0.8km. You will see an Arabic/French sign pointing right to Eglise St. Zakhia. Turn right here and drive 300m, and you will reach the church on the left side of the road.



AAMCHIT BEACHES AND SEASIDE RESTAURANTS

Although Aamchit's coastline is very rocky, there are many beaches where swimming is possible. Some beaches charge a fee to enter; others are open to the public free of charge. There are also many nice seaside restaurants.



Driving Directions

From St. Zakhia Church, drive straight ahead for 100m, and then go under a small tunnel. After 200m, turn left onto the coastal road. Drive 1.2km and take a right, across from the Medco Gas Station, onto a narrow road. After 100m, you will see St. Antoine Beach on the left and the beautiful sea view. On the right is Al Bihar Restaurant.

Drive another 200m, and turn right. About 100m later, you will again view the sea. After 0.4km, turn left and you will see the coast with fishermen on the rocks. Chez Zakhia Restaurant is on the left. After another 300m, you will see a harbor for the fishermen and, about 100m later, Le Cap Restaurant and Bash Bash Restaurant on the right.

Where to EAT

Al-Bihar Restaurant

Seafood, located in Aamchit. See directions for Beaches and Seaside Restaurants, above. Tel: not available.

Bash Bash Restaurant

Located in Aamchit. See directions for Beaches and Seaside Restaurants, above. Tel: not available.

Chez Zakhia Restaurant

Seafood, located in Aamchit. See directions for Beaches and Seaside Restaurants, above. Tel: +961-(0)9-621717.

Le Cap Restaurant

Traditional Lebanese food and seafood, located in Aamchit. See directions for Beaches and Seaside Restaurants, above. Tel: +961-(0)09-623377.

Where to STAY

Camping Les Colombes

Campsite with tents, overlooking the coast near Aamchit. Prices: \$10 per person / \$3 per person with his own tent. Tel: +961-(0) 9-622401 / 622402 or +961-(0)3-342312. Email: Francis13000@yahoo.fr.

Where to SHOP

Aamchit Crafts Workshop

You can purchase unique woven items made from date palm leaves and see artisans at work. Prices range from \$10 to as much as \$500 for furniture. See driving directions above for the Crafts Workshop. Contact: Mona Yazbek. Tel: +961-(0)3-481345 or +961-(0)9-621580. Email: monayazbeck@yahoo.com.

“Ibrik” textile Products

Can be purchased in Aamchit. Tel: +961-(0)3-481345.