

itinerary 9-E :: Bzoummar

According to the local folktales, Bzoummar's name is derived from the Arabic word "mizmar," meaning "flute," because a shepherd used to play the flute while his sheep grazed in the village. Bzoummar is notable for being the patriarchal seat for the Armenian Catholic Church in Lebanon.

Raachine to Bzoummar: 2.4km

- From Raachine (the second Church of St. George), continue driving straight ahead on the main road. After a couple of hundred meters, you will reach a fork in the road (on the left is a gas station).
- Drive straight ahead for approximately 1.6km, and you will see an Arabic/English sign indicating that you have reached Jouar el Bouwachek.
- Drive 0.6km after you see the sign for Jouar el Bouwachek, and you will reach a fork. Go straight ahead through the intersection. On your right you will see the green hills and the sea.





CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF BZOUMMAR

The Convent of Our Lady of Bzoummar was built in 1749, and it is the patriarchal seat for the Armenian Catholic Church in Lebanon.

As you approach the Convent of Our Lady of Bzoummar, you will pass under a stone arch gateway. In the front yard, the souvenir shop is to the right, and next to it is a yellow statue in remembrance of Armenian martyrs. Nearby is a bronze statue of the Armenian Archbishop Maloyan (who was born in 1869, served as head of the archbishops of the Armenian Catholics, and was killed by the Turks in 1915).

Directly in front of the statue is the door of the magnificent convent, which dates to 1749, as indicated by the plate over the door. The stone work of the interior, which also has arched stone ceilings, is awe inspiring. The convent includes an interior church with beautiful stone work and colorful mosaic shrines. It also includes a museum that holds valuable Egyptian, Phoenician, and Armenian artifacts. The collection also includes ancient clothes and headdresses of priests.

Across the yard from the convent is a church dating to 1940. It includes a beautiful altar of colorful mosaics, in the middle of which is a famous painting of Our Lady of Sorrows (Notre Dame des Douleurs). Although the painting's origin is uncertain, it is sometimes attributed to the Italian Renaissance painter Rafael Sanzio (1483-1521). The church has a painted dome and tinted glass windows.

The convent also includes a large, multilanguage library composed of more than 45,000 books and manuscripts, considered the largest Armenian library in the Middle East. One remarkable manuscript is the first letter written by St. Peter the Apostle in Greek on papyrus paper. Additionally, there is a wine cellar producing wine, arak, and grape molasses.



Driving Directions

After driving straight ahead from the intersection mentioned above, drive for approximately 1.5km, and you will reach a fork in the road with an Arabic sign for the Convent of Our Lady of Bzoummar. Take the right fork. After a few meters you will see a gas station on the right. Keep going straight for 0.7km, when you will reach a fork in the road with an Arabic/French sign for the Convent of Our Lady of Bzoummar. Take the left fork. After a few meters you will reach the Convent.