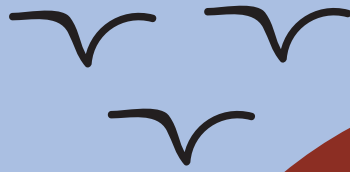
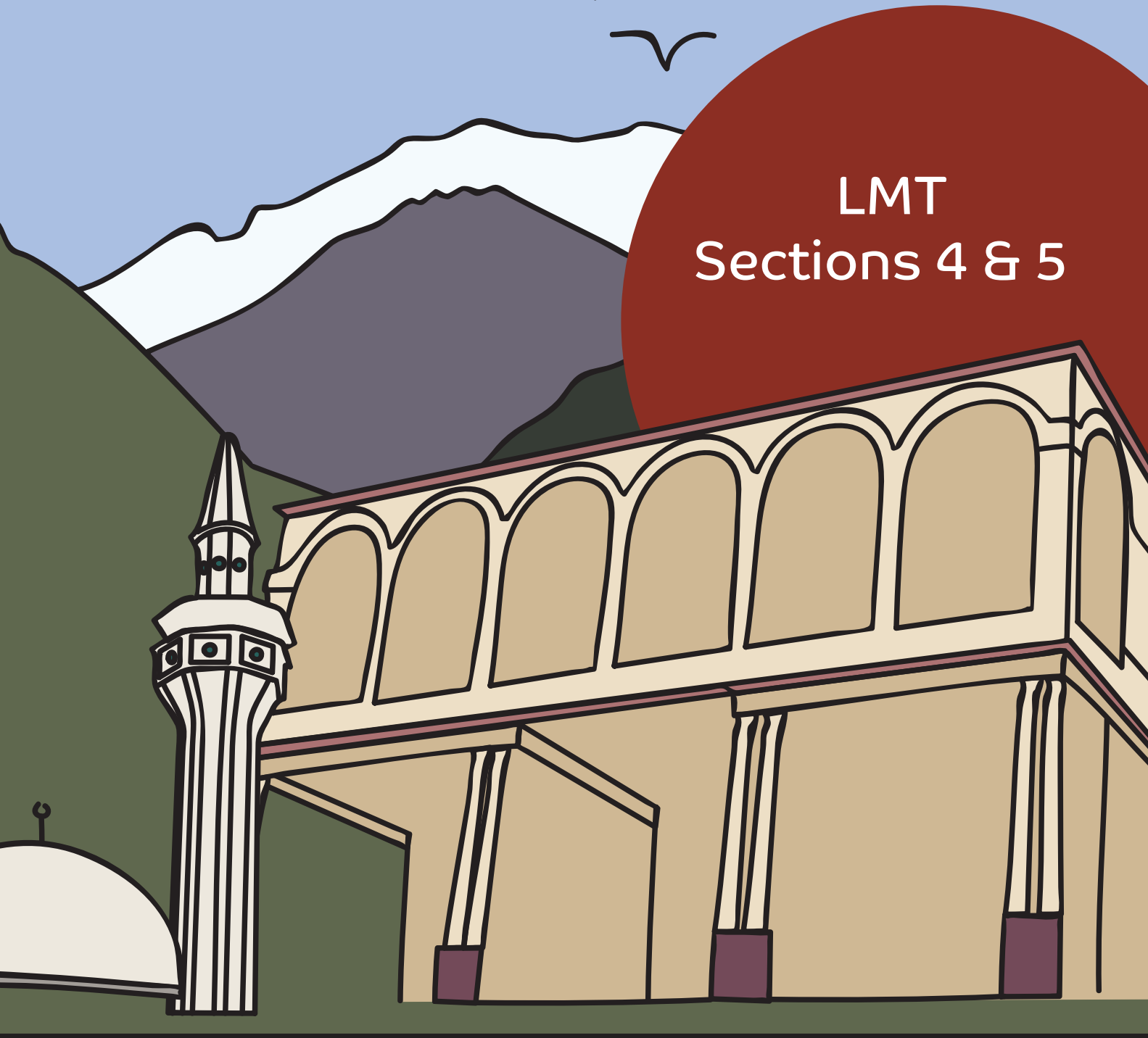


BQAA
SAFRINE



LMT
Sections 4 & 5



CULTURAL TRAIL LOOP IN THE OLD QUARTER OF BQAA SAFRINE

The Old Quarter of the village can be reached within the first kilometer when hiking on Section 4 of the LMT. A paved road leads from the departure point to that street.

- 1 **The Old Village Quarter** is beautiful, and has a harmonious feel with ground-level houses built with **the local yellow limestone**, sometimes topped with a first floor built in concrete.



Many houses have beautiful **simple iron window designs** and very few have **single arcades** on top of the entrance. This points to the social level of the village in relation mostly with agriculture and limited trading, as witnessed by the existence of a single street in the Old Souk market.



The Old Village Quarter

In addition, Bqaa Sifrine is a summer destination for the wealthy families of Tripoli, such as the Karamah family. This influence can be seen in the modern architecture buildings found on the top of panoramic hills and the ridge of the northern cliff overlooking the valley of Sir and the eastern mountains of el-Arbaeen and el-Makmel chain.



- 5 **The Old Mosque** is located on the street previously known as the
- 1 **Old Souk market**, and overlooks the valley from the northern side of the village. **Many other landmarks are found on this same street including the kiosk of the old telephone and post office**, as well as many other buildings of cultural interest such as the French 'Serail', which was the residence of the French Mission in Donniyeh in the 1920's.



One of the inhabitants in the old part of the village continues a **horticulture activity** in memory of her sister who passed away in 2019, and who was a fan of flowers and roof gardens. The result is a beautiful **roof garden** with a diversity of flowers and plants that creates a special natural atmosphere in the heart of the constructed area.

POINTS OF INTEREST

NATURAL HERITAGE HIGHLIGHTS:

1 Gornet es-Saouda Summit (القرينة السوداء)

Gornet es-Saouda Summit (3,083m above sea level) is the highest peak in Lebanon and its neighboring countries, and is shared between the Bcharre and Donniyeh districts in North Lebanon. Similar to every high summit, it witnesses differences in temperature between day and night and summer and winter, ranging from -20 to + 25°C.

With the mountain range of Jabal el-Makmel and the Jord areas of Lebanon, it serves as the water reservoir of the whole region, and requires emergency protection and conservation.



2 Jabal el-Arbaeen (جبل الأربعين)

Located at an altitude of 2,250 m above sea level in the heights of Donniyeh with **astounding panoramic views**, it represents the last stronghold of rural life that preceded the deployment of electricity and technology to Lebanon.

The original name of the mountain is Jabal el-Arbaeen Shaheed (the Forty Martyrs), in reference to a battle that took place in the 13th c. (1269 AD) between the Crusaders and Salaheddine el-Ayyoubi, and resulted in the death of 40 of the best warriors of the Sultan. In 1290, the Mamluks took revenge and chased out the populations in the mountains of Donniyeh who supported the crusaders, to replace them with Turkmen and Kurdish origin groups who remain in the region today.



3 Nabaa es-Soukhar Spring (نبع السكّار)

Located on Section 4 of the LMT at an altitude of 1,700m, it is considered the highest water spring in Donniyeh, and one of the main water sources used for irrigation and drinking. Its water stems from the heart of Jabal el-Arbaeen and flows down the villages of Donniyeh to the Lake of Ayoun el-Samak and the Nahr el-Bared River, north of Tripoli.



CULTURAL HERITAGE HIGHLIGHTS:

1 The Old Souk Market of the Village (السوق القديم في القرية)

People from around the region of Donniyeh used to visit the Old Souk market street in Bqaa Safrine to exchange all kinds of goods and products: agricultural products and seasonal crops, agriculture tools, house stencils, cloths, and even domestic animals.



2 Sheikh Muhammad Mausoleum (مقام الشيخ محمد)

A mausoleum under an old tree where believers pray on the tomb of a 'Waliy' man who spent an important part of his modest life in meditation.

3 Darayya Water Source and Archeological Site (عين دوريا والموقع الأثري)

The archeological site of Ain Darayya reveals the presence of an ancient site. Its most significant feature is an ancient structure, possibly dating back to the Phoenician, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. Around the site, you can visit many roofless stone vernacular houses, in addition to a group of imposing old Oak Trees.



4 Culinary Curiosity (المؤن الغذائية)

The shepherds in Jord en-Njas perpetuate the production of the traditional goat cheese called '**Ambarees**'. You can also find traditional **mounch** products, such as kishik, pickled eggplant, pomegranate molasses, jam, blossom & rose water.



4 Jord en-Njas or Ouadi en-Njas (جرد النجاص)

The valley of pears is located in the heart of Jabal el-Makmel at an altitude of 1,500 - 1,900 m. It is a summer residence hamlet, where typical summer houses built from stone with local thorny shrubs, known as the 'shepherd's house', are maintained by farmers from Bqaa Safrine during their summer pastoral activity. The valley (Ouadi) is characterized by water springs and cedar, fir and juniper trees forming a small oasis in this high mountainous and dry area.



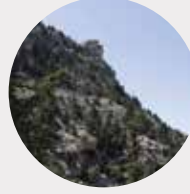
5 Donniyeh Cedar and Juniper Forest (غابة أرز ولزاب الضنية)

Section 4 of the LMT crosses the Donniyeh forest, one of the largest cedar forests in Lebanon that contains more than 12,000 cedars. The forest is a refuge for the partridge bird, considered of pure Lebanese variety.



6 Chir es-Sefreyeh Cliff (شير السفراية)

This site showcases the limestone geology of Mount Lebanon; it is a rocky cliff located on Section 4 of the LMT, at an average altitude of 1,650m above sea level. It is considered one of the most important rock-climbing areas in the country.



7 Zod Cave (مغارة زود)

The Zod Cave, located at only 2 km West of Bqaa Safrine, is known only by a restricted group of speleologists. It was first explored during April 1997 by the Speleo Club du Liban. Groundwater in the area and within the cave is mainly derived from snowmelt which covers the highlands much of the year. The cave development is estimated to 1,000 meters.





ABOUT THE VILLAGE

LOCATION: Donniyeh district in Northern Lebanon (56 km from Tripoli and 115 km from Beirut)

ALTITUDE: 1,100m above sea level

POPULATION: Approx. 8,000 inhabitants in the winter with approx. 2,000 additional families in the summer.

MUNICIPALITY: Established in 1952; 15 board members.



LMT: The trail crosses Bqaa Safrine with 14.1 km on Section 4 from Bqaa Safrine to Kfarbnine (South to North) and 19.8 km on Section 5 from Bqaa Safrine to Horsh Ehden (North to South).

ETYMOLOGY: According to the local people, the town's name has Syriac origins and is composed of two words: "Bqaa" meaning the fertile plain and "Safrine" meaning bird, as in the **plain of birds**.

It is also worth it to explore the term Zefrine, in Arabic (زفرين), which is the name of a common tree species in Lebanon called "Buckthorn", ("*Rhamnus libanotica*" in Latin) that can be found in Jord en-Njass (جرد النجاص).

Bqaa Safrine is located 1,100m above sea level, **surrounded by many natural attractions, with vast green spaces and abundant fresh water sources.** It is a distinguished town with a beautiful location **overlooking the villages and towns of Donniyeh** to the North, and the **Syrian Akkar coast** to the North-West. The town is embraced by Jabal el-Makmer chain to the East, with Jabal el-Arbaeen (2,250m), and

- 2 East, with Jabal el-Arbaeen (2,250m), and
- 1 Gornet es-Saouda (3,088m), the highest peak in Lebanon.

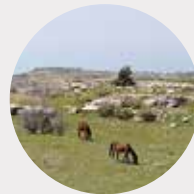
Bqaa Safrine is one of the Lebanese towns that possess the largest land surface in the country. It has in its municipal orbit many other villages, hamlets, or farms such as: Beit Dadoun (600 m a.s.l.), Beshtayil, Beit Zod, Beit Kanj, Harf Beit Hassaneh, Dahr Bou-Fakhr, and Jord en-Njass (1,900 m a.s.l.).

Assisting the famous neighboring town of Sir, it has been a major summer holiday destination for the wealthy families of Tripoli, such as the Karameh family, and attracts thousands of tourists and vacationers annually, including visitors from Arab countries, Lebanese citizens, and Lebanese expatriates.

The main sources of income are varied in the **Donniyeh region:** agriculture, grazing, tourism (seasonal houses rental), trade, construction labor and seasonal employment in restaurants of Tripoli and Beirut.

VEGETATION LEVELS: Bqaa Safrine has a luxuriant and diverse vegetation (plants, flowers, and forests) that changes according to altitude, geology, and climate: **from snow summits, to lower water-luxuriant valleys.**

Summits, covered with snow for 6 months of the year, absorb its melting waters through the potholes, **forming underground caves** (Zod Cave), and due to the limestone and karstic geology of Mount Lebanon, **give way to water sources** (Nabaa es-Soukkar) in the lower slopes and valleys.



FORESTS TYPES AND FLORA: Forests in the **middle slopes** (approx. 1,100m to 1,400m) **have a Mediterranean essence**, with oak trees, wild plum trees, wild almond trees, pines, in addition to different types of Spanish broom bushes, thyme and sage plants; while the upper levels (approx. 1,300m to 2,000m) are characterized by forests of cedars and fir trees, mixed with wild apple and wild cherry trees.

Only the slow-growing juniper tree resides at the highest levels of the mountains (approx. 1,400m to 2,600m) called 'Jord', above the limitation of the forest line (2,100m above sea level), along with specific types of plants and shrubs that survive the harsh environment of the high summits by adapting to conditions of temperatures, winds, snow, and severe sun. Among these plants, we find the low, flat-shaped wild cherry bush (*Prunus prostrata*), the spiny berberis bush (*Berberis libanotica*), the prickly thrift (*Acantholimon libanoticum*), and the thorny sainfoin (*Onobrichys cornuta*).

FAUNA: While walking on the trail you can discover traces of (or perhaps encounter) animals that adapted to the environment and formed a solid **eco-system** such as: foxes, jackals, wild boars, porcupines, tortoises, hares, and fresh water crabs. **The area is also considered a corridor for a large number of migratory birds**, such as pelicans, bee-eaters, quails, and partridges amongst others.



TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM



Research your destination to learn about local customs, traditions, and social conditions. It is a great way to build an understanding of the local community and excitement for your adventure ahead.



Experience and respect all that makes a destination different and unique, from its **history, architecture, religion, dress, and communication codes, to its music, art, and cuisine.**

Pause and reflect before criticizing local living conditions or customs.

Treat with courtesy and respect staff and service providers at all tourism facilities.

Reduce your environmental impact by being a **guardian of natural resources, especially forests and wetlands, and respecting wildlife and their natural habitats.**



Sleep green and go rural as the countryside has so much to offer.

Leave a minimum footprint and a good impression behind.

Buy locally made handicrafts and products. Respect the livelihoods of local artisans by paying a fair price. Hire local guides, spend locally, and find out about tipping practices.



Support businesses embracing diversity and equality.

Slow down and spend more time in less visited areas.

Take health and safety precautions and consult your national authorities in case of doubts.

Practice social distancing during a pandemic, even outdoor while hiking. Avoid crowds and pack all your essentials.

Protect local communities: Wear your mask during a pandemic when engaging with people, keep a safe distance, use sanitizers.

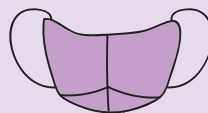
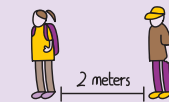
Choose tour operators who **respect environmental policies and engage in community projects.**

Observe national laws and regulations.



Follow the rules at religious sites and respect private spaces and lands.

Think twice before posting selfies and pictures of other people. They may disapprove and wish not to be in your photos.



Make tourism the force for good and set a good example for other travelers.



#RESPONSIBLEHIKER



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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT



Republic of Lebanon
Ministry of Social Affairs

The LMT Dannieh Trails and Eco-Tourism project, part of the Local Development Programme for Urban Areas in North Lebanon (UDP_NL), supports the improvement of economic opportunities among rural communities living near the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT).

UDP_NL is co-funded by the European Union and Germany. It is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in partnership with the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA), the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Union of Dannieh Municipalities. The Programme targets mainly youth and women in the North Lebanon Governorate through generating income opportunities, improving employability, rehabilitating and constructing public infrastructure and strengthening community exchange to contribute to social stability.

Implemented by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH


درب الجبل اللبناني
Lebanon Mountain Trail



INFO ABOUT THE LMT

The Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA) was established on 31 October 2007 as a non-profit organization to ensure the sustainability of the first long distance hiking trail in Lebanon, by maintaining, developing and promoting the trail, and by protecting the trailside cultural heritage and upholding the guiding principles of responsible tourism.

Our mission is to develop, preserve and promote the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) and its side trail heritage, create educate and engage the local communities to become the trail stewards.

The Lebanon Mountain Trail is divided into 27 sections. It extends from Andqet in the north of Lebanon to Marjaayoun in the south, a 470-km (292 miles) path that transects more than 76 towns and villages at altitude ranging from 570 meters to 2,073 meters (about 1,840-6,800 feet) above sea level.

The trail crosses Bqaa Safrine with 14.1 km on Section 4 from Bqaa Safrine to Kfarbnine (South to North), and 19.8 km on Section 5 from Bqaa Safrine to Horsh Ehden (North to South).



Section 4

| Trail Direction | Total Length | Total Ascent | Total Descent | Duration | Difficulty Level |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|----------|------------------|
| Kfarbnine to Bqaa Safrine | 14.1 km | 855m | 845m | 5h30 | Very Difficult |
| Type of Terrain | The trail consists of dirt and paved roads, footpath, goat trails, and water canals. | | | | |

How to get there?

From Tripoli (طرابلس) take the Sir ed-Donniyeh (سير الضنية) road, continuing beyond Sir ed-Donniyeh and Sfire to Kfarbnine (كفرنين). All roads are paved and public transport is available. The LMT is accessible from all these villages.

Points of interest on Section 4

- 1 Sheikh Muhammad Mausoleum
- 2 Nabaa es-Sukkar Spring
- 3 Chir es-Sefreyeh Cliff



Section 5

| Trail Direction | Total Length | Total Ascent | Total Descent | Duration | Difficulty Level |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|----------|------------------|
| Bqaa Safrine to Horsh Ehden | 19.8 km | 1,212 m | 1,004 m | 7h30 | Very Difficult |
| Type of Terrain | The trail consists of dirt and paved roads, footpath, and goat trails. | | | | |

How to get there?

From Tripoli (طرابلس), take the road directly to Sir ed-Donniyeh (سير الضنية) and on to Bqaa Safrine (بعاق صفرين). The trail starts near the info panel above the village of Bqaa Safrine. The road to Ehden (هدن) leaves Tripoli via Zghorta (زغرتا). If you are coming from Beirut, take the coastal highway to Chekka (شكا), then go right to Amioun (أميون) and Tourza (طورزا). When the road divides just before Tourza, take the exit on the left, and continue directly to Ehden. You can find the trail head at the Jouit entrance of Ehden Nature Reserve.

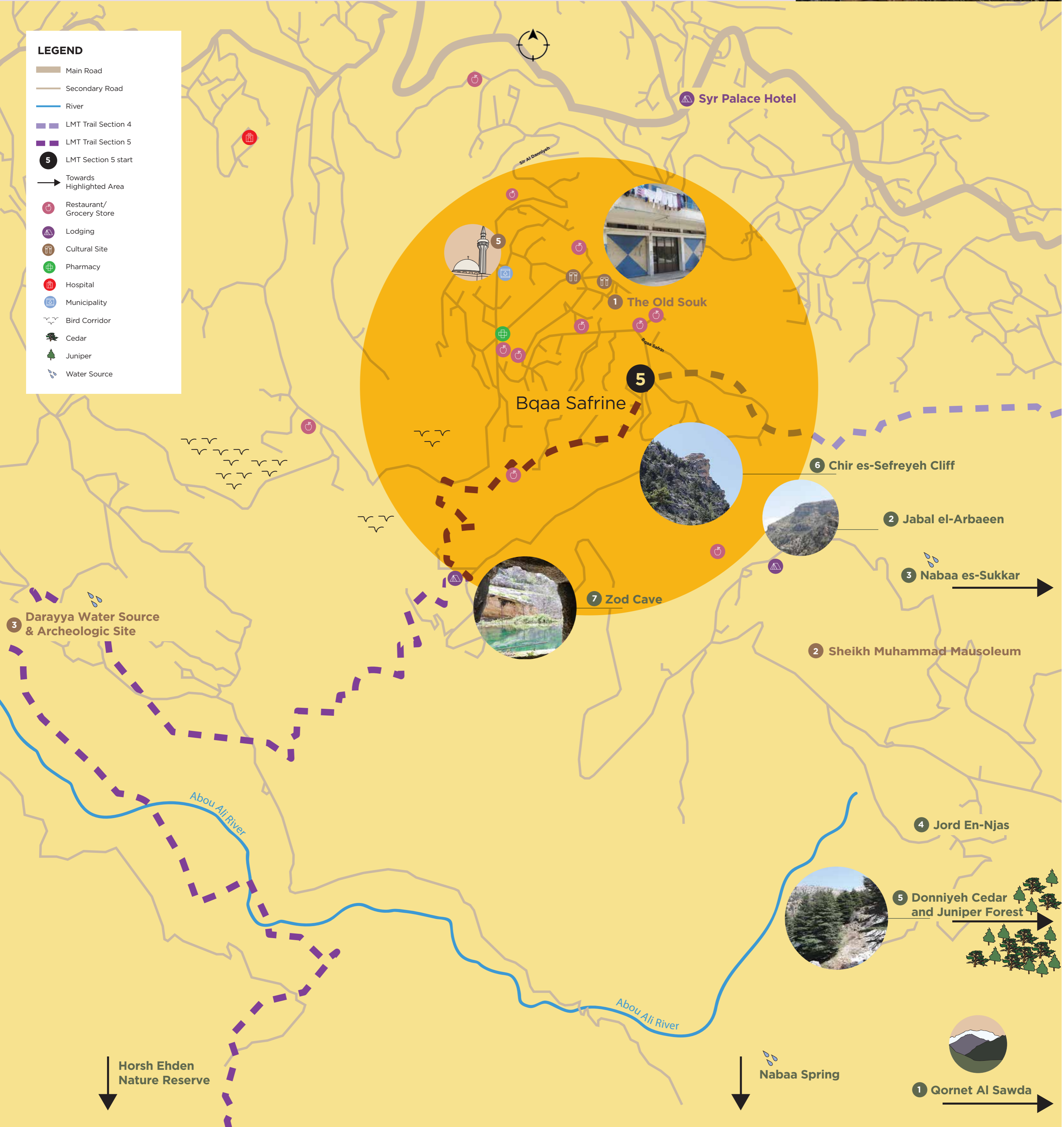
Points of interest on Section 5

- 1 Zod Cave
- 2 El Cheikh Abdallah Shrine
- 3 Darayya Water Source and Archeological Site
- 4 Ain el-Jorn Water Source
- 5 Nabaa el-Haoua Cave & Spring
- 6 Ain el-Naa'sa Spring
- 7 Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve



LEGEND

- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- River
- LMT Trail Section 4
- LMT Trail Section 5
- LMT Section 5 start
- Towards Highlighted Area
- Restaurant/Grocery Store
- Lodging
- Cultural Site
- Pharmacy
- Hospital
- Municipality
- Bird Corridor
- Cedar
- Juniper
- Water Source



3 Darayya Water Source & Archeologic Site

Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve

Nabaa Spring

1 Qornet Al Sawda



1 The Old Souk



7 Zod Cave



6 Chir es-Sefreyeh Cliff



2 Jabal el-Arbaeen

3 Nabaa es-Sukkar

2 Sheikh Muhammad Mausoleum

4 Jord En-Njas



5 Donniyeh Cedar and Juniper Forest

