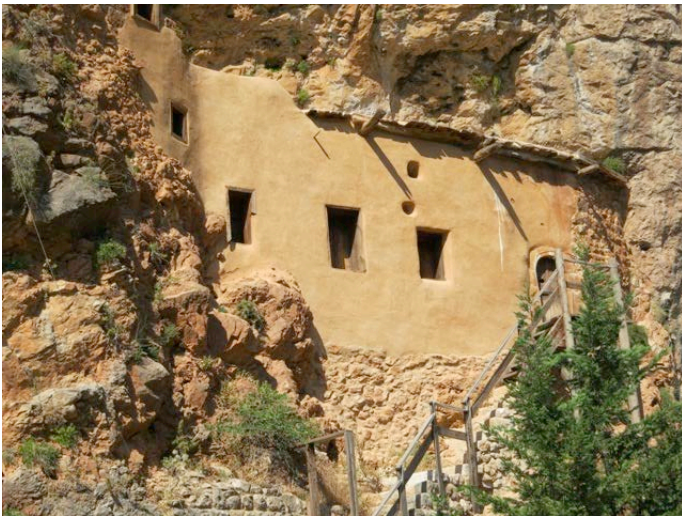


HIKING

Qadicha Valley (Mar Antonios Qozhaya)

”وادي قوزحيا”

Friday , October 26



The Monastery was classified by the UNESCO as worldwide cultural heritage.

Where

The Qadisha Valley is a deep gorge carved by the Qadisha River, also known as the Nahr Abu Ali when it reaches Tripoli. Qadisha means "Holy" in Aramaic, and the valley, called the "Holy Valley", has sheltered Christian monastic communities for many centuries.

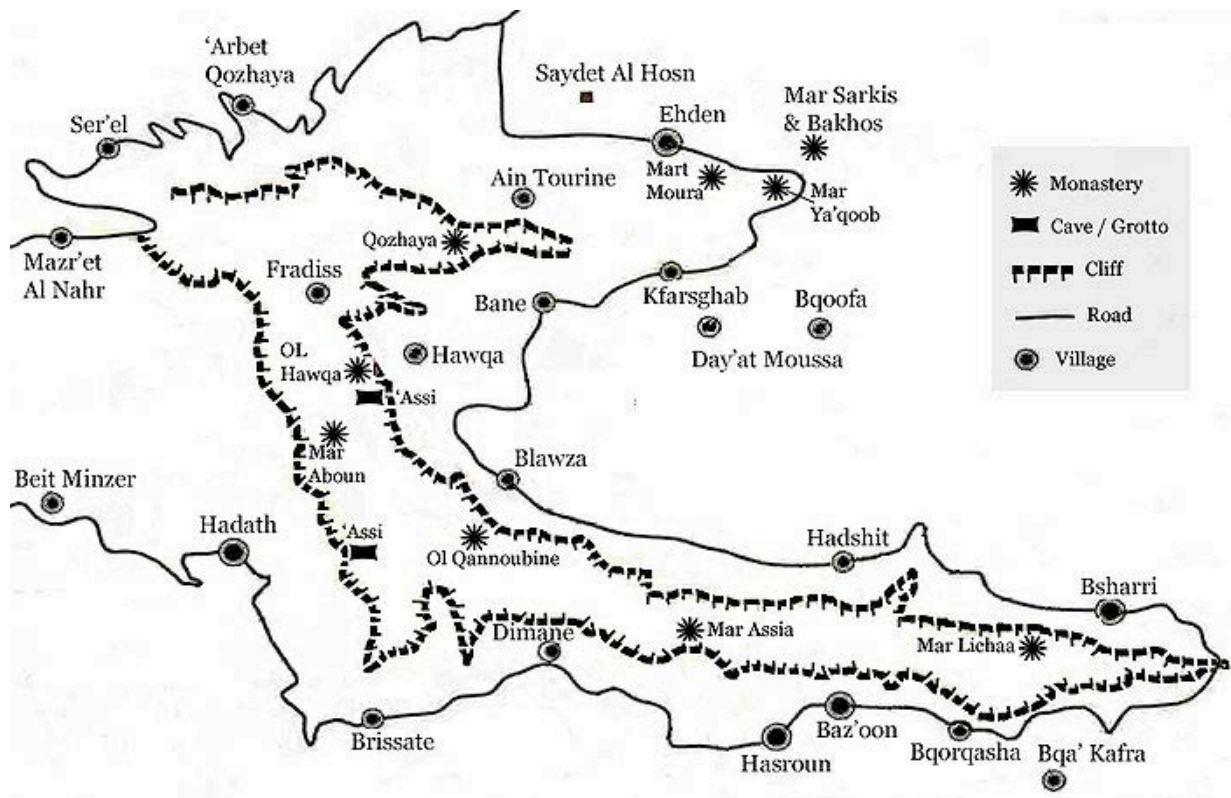
History

Qnnoubine's history dates back to the 7th century. It has monasteries and sanctuaries spread all over the gorge, in the form of caves or churches. Since the early centuries of Christianity the "Holy Valley" has served as a refuge for those in search of solitude. Historians believe that the Qadisha Valley has had monastic communities continuously since the earliest years of Christianity. It was also at times a destination for Muslim mystics, or Sufis, who also visited it for meditation and solitude.

Geography

The long, deep Qadisha Valley is located at the foot of Mount al-Makmal in northern Lebanon. Through it, Nahr Qadisha, runs for 35km from its source in a cave (grotto) a little way below the Forest of the Cedars of God. The sides of the valley are steep cliffs that contain many caves, often at more than 1000m and all difficult of access. The most scenic section of the valley stretches for approximately twenty kilometers between Bsharri (بشري), the hometown of Kahlil Gibran, and Tourza (طورزا).

The view you get to see from the valley is beyond imagination. Once there, you get the feeling of peace and tranquility. The spiritual atmosphere reigns over the entire valley. A Colombian hermit lives in this holy valley.



Discovery

Mummies were found in the 'Asi-al Hadath cave located in the Qadisha Valley, on July 13, 1990 by a group of speleologists. The find was the result of two years of excavation. Initially, the discovery consisted of a single four month old infant mummy. The infant was named Yasmine by her discoverers. The infant was clothed and fully interred only 40 cm below ground. Multiple other remains were found following the discovering; include seven bodies (four infants and three adults) as well as skeletal remains of several others.

Description

Qadisha, one of the deepest and most beautiful valleys in Lebanon, is indeed a world apart. "Qozhaya" is from Syriac origin and means "the treasure of Life".

The Monastery of **Qozhaya** (Deir Mar Antonios Qozhaya - دير مارانطونيوس قزحيا) sits on the opposite flank of the Qadisha from Qannubin Monastery; it was first built at the beginning of the fourth century. It was several times looted, set on fire and razed to the ground, but there still remain vestiges dating back to the seventh century.

The Monastery is a **pilgrimage place**.

It must be mentioned here that the Monastery of Qozhaya houses a library containing archives, scholarly compendia and Syriac manuscripts. The **first printing press in the Middle East** (1584) was placed in this Monastery which still has the Scepter of St Louis, the King of France (1226-1270).

All the above mentioned wealth, whether natural or cultural, pushed the UNESCO to register Monastery of St. Anthony Qozhaya on the **list of International Patrimony** under the number 850.

HIKING LEVEL. 1 to 3 for easy, 4 to 6 for intermediate, 7 to 9 for strenuous.

LEVEL 4 (6 km) will start from the Monastery of Qozhaya. After the visit, you will meet with level 6 and take an uphill trail for about 200 m. From there, we will continue the second part of our path of 4 km downhill the valley, crossing waterfalls and many ruins of old houses and hermitages till we arrive to Fraydis village.

LEVEL 6-7 (10 km) have a long uphill hike for about 500 meters. The hike will start from Mazraet el Nahr. The track cuts through a bushy forest, all uphill until you reach the monastery of Mar Antonios Qozhaya, where you meet with level 4 and continue together. The trail goes a bit further uphill, then it becomes downhill all the way to Fraydis, seeing the water dam, some old shacks and wonderful views.

From there we will take the bus to visit the historical "**St. Michael's Church**". There shrine the mortal remains of the parish priest Yousef Abi Maroun Maatouq (1847-1929), a Godly priest whose remains are still whole, knowing no decay until now.

On our way back to Beirut, we may stop in **Batroun** to drink fresh Lemonade.

WHERE THE HIKE : Qadicha Valley – Wadi Qozhaya/ Mazraet el Nahr /Becharre and Zgharta Districts, in the north, between 600 and 1100 meters above sea level, 18 km from Tripoli.

WHEN: Friday, October 26, 2012

ENCOUNTER PLACE: Mar Maroun Church Parking, Dora @ 7:30 AM

OUR PRICE: 28,000 LL per person including transport, insurance and guides.

WHAT TO GET: Get some light snacks that will boost up your energy such as dried fruits. Pack your backpacks with lunch, water, cap, sunglasses and sunscreen. Don't forget to get a jacket. Wear comfortable walking shoes, preferably hiking shoes (Professional brand is recommended).

There will be a breakfast stop along the way.

FOR RESERVATION: Please Call **CMA Croisieres & Voyages**

Note: Ecotourism Rules should be followed like Safety regulations. Otherwise all accidents will not be recognized by the insurance. And occasionally, due to reasons beyond our control, slight modifications to the event may occur.