

REGIONS

Mount Lebanon

Dlebta

5 comment

Biodiversity conservationist Elsa Sattout takes us on a trip to her local green getaway, Dlebta, a village where natural landscapes meet history



Amid a busy life, reconnecting with nature and places that have preserved their identity, traditions and landscapes can be a source of replenishment. To break the pace of our everyday life, we crave nearby green spaces in which to escape. In Lebanon, you don't have to journey far from the city to reach the countryside. A green escape can be just around the corner, only a few steps away from towns and cities around the country. Looking out from the window of my office in Jounieh in February, craving a space to enjoy some peace of mind away from urban areas, I rushed out for a drive up the slopes of the mountains of Kesrouan. The ride to the village Dlebta, passing by Chnaniir takes only 10 minutes from the Maameltein highway, just 26km from Beirut. Dlebta stretches over 3.23km² and is located at the heart of a water-rich valley with

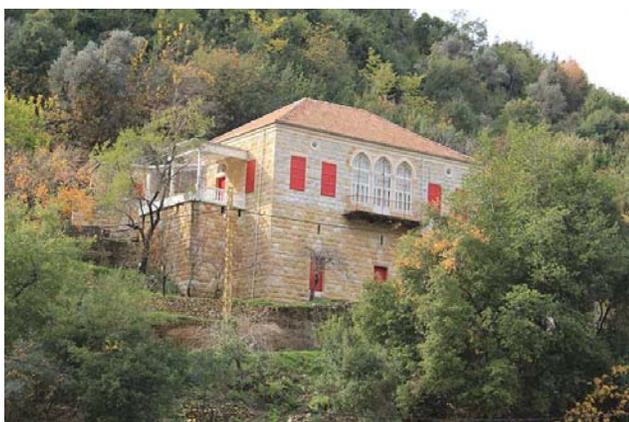
an elevation ranging from 400-800m above sea level.



From the entrance of the valley, the beauty of the area is apparent. Lebanese traditional houses with red-tiled roofs are surrounded by a wilderness of dilb (Oriental plane trees) lining up in pockets, alongside pine, Syrian maple, strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), laurel, Judas tree, pistachio and clematis. Dlebta's name itself refers to the plane tree and the village was known throughout history for the affluence of its community, which is still reflected in the square gardens and terraces of its residents, unexpectedly blending with natural green spaces.



The village, which has four ports of entry from Ghazir, Aramoun, Mearab and Chnaniir, was once active in silk and arak production. The Roman stairs that cross the valley were once used to reach nearby villages such as Achkout and more distant places such as Baalbeck. In Dlebta's Albayada's Street, a stairway of 350 steps, followed by a narrow road, leads to the convent Saydet El Haqlet (Our Lady of the Fields) that dates back to 1670 and holds traces of the Crusaders from 1099. Halfway up the stairway, at 200 steps, there is the church Saydet El Najat (Our Lady of Relief), dating back to 1894, which offers a picturesque view of a colorful tapestry of trees such as cedar, cypress, prickly pear, almond, walnut, olive, and plum in home gardens and orchards. Among the many mulberry, loquat and orange trees growing in the local gardens, chestnut is uncommon, though a lonely tree can be spotted standing in the middle of the landscape.



The village hosts many old churches and convents such as St. James church from 1893, St. Anthony of Padua from 1902, along with St. Peter Antonine and St. Benoit Maronite convents. Before leaving, stop by the village square, where a public library lies close to the cliff edge, and glimpse back at what you have left behind; the blue horizon where lines of sea and sky meet at Jounieh bay.

Where to eat

For a quick local snack eat at Layali Dlebta (03 609159) or for a full Lebanese mezze spend an afternoon at Al Afess or Kaser El Sanawbar (09 920329, 03 346089, kaserelsanawbar.com.)

What to see

Tour the village's religious sites, taking in the historical convent Saydet El Haqlet (Our Lady of the Field), Deir El Moukhales (St. Saviour 1799) and the churches of Saydet El Najat (Our Lady of Relief 1892-1900) and Mar Ya'coub El Muqata' (St. James Church 1733-1893.) Pause at the top of the steep stairway to take in the view, before touring the village, taking in old houses dating back to the 18th Century with traditional architecture.

DATE 04 APR 2016

COMMENTS

JOHNC968

27 JAN 2017 11:24 PM

I appreciate, cause I discovered just what I used to be looking for. You have ended my four day long hunt! God Bless you man. Have a nice day. Bye aaeckdeckebg

JOHNE975

27 JAN 2017 11:24 PM

Hey very nice website!! Man .. Beautiful .. Amazing .. I'll bookmark your website and take the feeds also! I'm happy to find numerous useful information here in the post, we need work out more techniques in this regard, thanks for sharing. kgdbekdcede

JOHNA406

01 JAN 2017 04:21 PM

I am in agreement with pretty much everything that you mentioned entirely! Excellent website document! fdfedgecdk

JOHND194

01 JAN 2017 04:21 PM

An interesting dialogue is worth comment. I feel that you must write more on this topic, it won't be a taboo subject but typically people are not sufficient to speak on such topics. To the next. Cheers cfkagekgkefg

ALAA

23 OCT 2016 05:35 PM

Thank you so much for your recommendation. I went today after reading about it here, and it truly is a beautiful village!

ENTER YOUR COMMENT



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