

Stella

EMILY (*very*) BLUNT

The star who says it like it is

2012 in hot tickets
Our brilliant guide to all that's unmissable in the coming year

Super-stylists, behind closet doors
Introducing the people who dress the A-list

How to put on your party face
Top tips from the make-up supremo Gucci Westman

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FOOD

It's all round to the Conrans in part two of our festive special



Girl's guide to... Beirut

As a new city rises optimistically from the war-torn ruins of the old, Lebanon's ancient capital – once the party city of the Levant – pulses again with a youthful glamour, hedonism and zest for life



STAY

- Le Gray, the city's only proper boutique hotel, is ideally situated on Martyrs' Square, between the sparkling Mediterranean and the spectacular blue-domed al-Amin mosque. Make the most of the sumptuous bedrooms, glass-sided roof-top pool and bougainvillea-strewn breakfast terrace. From £220 (legray.com)
- Albergó is a charming 28-room hotel in the leafy Achrafieh area. Original art deco features mingle eccentrically with oriental beaded lamps, Egyptian artefacts and 1960s wallpaper. From £195 (albergobeirut.com)

EAT

- Order a spread of traditional mezze at al-Balad and enjoy a riot of Lebanese colours and flavours. Salads, herbs and vegetables sharpened with lemon and sumac vie for supremacy with breads and grilled meats (1145 rue Ahdab)
- The chic new restaurant Momo at the Souks serves an intriguing blend of French and North African cuisine. Try chicken livers with walnuts, hummus and persillade (momorestó.com)

- Tawlet ('table' in Arabic) is the go-to place for artists and foodies in search of Lebanese grandmother-style home cooking. Help yourself from the daily-changing buffet and sit at the communal table to enjoy a plate of grains, braises and wild greens (tawlet.com)

DRINK

- A converted cinema is home to Music Hall, the city's liveliest night spot. Beirutis of all ages dance on the tables and in the aisles to live music performed by a daring and hilarious mix of Eastern and Western acts. The atmosphere is contagiously good fun (Starco Building, rue Omar Daouk)

SHOP

- Beloved of red-carpet stars and Middle Eastern royalty, the fluid creations of the Lebanese fashion designer Elie Saab should not be

missed. Visit his headquarters and atelier off rue Omar Daouk (eliesaab.com)

- Starch showcases fashion, jewellery, accessories and interiors by a changing roster of young designers (starchfoundation.org)

- Snack on fresh white mulberries as you stroll around Souk el Tayeb (farmers' market) then

take home dried tomatoes and figs, date-stuffed pastries and multicoloured jars of bottled vegetables and cheeses (Saturday mornings, rue George Haddad)

DO

- Absorb Beirut's kaleidoscopic history – Ottoman, Byzantine, Roman, Hellenistic, Egyptian and Phoenician – at the splendidly rebuilt National Museum (beirutnationalmuseum.com)
- Take a road trip inland to the Bekaa Valley and visit the astonishing classical temple complex at Baalbek (formerly Heliopolis), starring the Romans' largest ever temple ●

Clockwise from far left: the Temple of Bacchus at Baalbek; a roof terrace at Le Gray; a stall at the farmers' market; an Elie Saab creation; the al-Amin mosque



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