

# FIT 'N STYLE

MAGAZINE

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Energy

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to beat  
the **heat**

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Soothers

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Happy **4th** Anniversary!



# Discover Lebanon *in* "A Million Steps"

By | **Kristine Boujaoude**



Interview with  
Author  
**Hana El Hibri**

NO ONE WILL DEBATE THE FACT THAT LEBANON IS TRULY A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. THE CLASSIC DEPICTION IS EXPRESSED AS A COUNTRY WHERE YOU CAN BE UP IN THE MOUNTAINS SKIING AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE, AND DOWN AT THE BEACH, BATHING IN THE SUN IN THE SAME AFTERNOON. PERSONALLY, I AM TIRED OF THIS SAME OLD PORTRAYAL... THERE IS A SIDE TO LEBANON THAT WILL TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY; A SIDE THAT HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION SO VIVIDLY, THANKS TO A TREKKER WHO IS WILLING TO TELL HER STORY, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

Hana El Hibri's new book titled, "A Million Steps," takes us on a journey along the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT). From Qobaiyat in the north of Lebanon to Marjayoun in the south of Lebanon, this 440 km hiking trail will take you on a stunning journey that cannot be forgotten. Hana, along with her team, discovered the shocking potential and utter magnificence of this country we call home.

- A Million Steps is a diary of 29 days of walking the newly established Lebanon Mountain Trail.
- The beautiful photos were taken by Norbert Schiller.
- Hana and her trekking team hiked for 29 days following one continuous route 440 kms long.
- They passed through 75 towns and 3 nature reserves.
- Hana, being the daughter of a Diplomat and living most of her life abroad, was in utter awe at the beauty of Lebanon.
- They witnessed torrential rivers and thunderous storms.
- The month long journey began April 1st, 2009.
- Hana and 5 other hikers set out as a team, and were the first group to do the entire route.
- She kept a diary along the way, describing the highs, the lows, the villagers, and the gorgeous scenery in vibrant detail.

**This tremendous hiking adventure that you took on... was it your first hiking expedition ever?**

No, my first trekking trip was to the Rockies in the United States with my husband Bassem. I thought to myself, "How do I know that hiking is not for me until I try it?" My husband is so passionate about mountaineering and I figured that I owed it to him and the relationship to try, even if I didn't like it.

**Why did you want to go on this exciting and demanding adventure stretching from Northern Lebanon to Southern Lebanon?**

I really wanted to take on the endeavor because as a Lebanese woman, it brought so many important aspects together for me. It brought together my country's precious and unique mix of natural beauty and cultural heritage, an eco-system that is threatened by rampant quarries, and the need for extensive conservation efforts.

**How would you describe the exhilaration of hiking?**

On my first trip ever, the first week was miserable for me. But after you get past being out of your comfort zone, you see a whole side to life and the experience – you recognize a whole different perspective of being a human being.

**Describe to us what you witnessed along your journey on the LMT.**

You absolutely see a side to Lebanon that has really not been promoted or explored. It is breathtaking along the way; I have never seen so many types of flowers in my life! There are so many little towns, with villagers that were so dearly hospitable and warm. The glorious landscaping truly is glorious and it is a shame that many people have not witnessed it...yet hopefully.

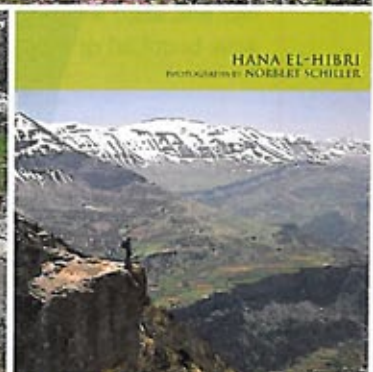
**What made you decide to write this book A Million Steps?**

I truly felt that there was a story to be told. I went to the LMTA (Lebanese Mountain Trail Association) and expressed my desire to write this book. They completely supported

not only for the sake of the trail, but for the issues it also represents such as the tourism sector.

**I like the quote from your book, "Being an Arab and a mother of 3, I recognize that my unconventional pursuits do arouse interest and attention." I think that you will be an inspiration for people to step out of their box and comfort zone, and do something different.**

It's funny that you say that because I have heard that same comment by others. We really need to get out of our usual routines



**A MILLION STEPS**  
DISCOVERING THE LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL

me, and a portion of the proceeds will go to them actually. They are always looking for any form of support which can be monetary or physical. It takes a great deal of work to maintain this trail that is threatened on a daily basis.

I thought about what this trail represents and how it can be a unifying force; a way to unify the country. We need to preserve, conserve, and promote awareness to save and maintain our country. This trail is being encroached upon daily. It is our duty to our kids and future generations to preserve it,

in life sometimes. There is so much out there to discover and enjoy in our country... things that people never knew existed.

**How has this trip changed you and your image of Lebanon?**

Lebanon is really striking and diverse. This trail can help our country in respect to tourism, and could generate income for all these little towns and villages. They really do need financial support. I hope everyone goes out and discovers the LMT.

Visit: [www.lebanontrail.org](http://www.lebanontrail.org)