

Lebanon



Lebanon is a small Middle Eastern country whose entire western border is the Mediterranean Sea. Israel lies to the south, and the country is bordered on the north and east by Syria.

Unlike most of its Middle Eastern neighbors, Lebanon is not a desert-like nation. A lush, fertile valley that lies between mountains makes the growing of many different crops possible. Lebanon's mountains make the country even more unique. It is said that people can go swimming along its Mediterranean coast in the morning and then drive to mountains and go

skiing in the afternoon. Because of its geography, Lebanon has often been called the "playground of the Middle East."

For many years Lebanon was the only nation in the region where the majority of people were Christians. This began to change, however, after the 1948 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Many Muslims from Palestine were displaced, and enough migrated to Lebanon to tip the balance in favor of Islam. Today, about 70 percent of the population is Muslim, while 30 percent are Christian.

In ancient times, Lebanon was the site of a highly-developed civilization. This was the civilization of the Phoenicians, who were a trading and seafaring people. The Phoenicians were noted for two things: a beautiful purple dye made from shellfish, and majestic cedar trees that were used to build ships so they could sail as far away as western Europe. Cloth made from the purple dye was in demand throughout the Mediterranean world. So was wood from their cedar trees. Unfortunately, most of Lebanon's cedar trees were cut down as the centuries went by. Those that remain are protected in orchards and national parks.



Project #1

Make a simple purple dye. (This dye can be used at Easter to dye eggs, or it can be used to dye cloth, provided the material is not washed.)

Materials

- grape juice (purple)
- white vinegar
- water



Directions

1. Mix the above materials well. The amount of each you will need depends on how much dye you choose to make. Start off with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (118 ml) of grape juice, a few drops of white vinegar, and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (354 ml) of water. You can always make more if needed.
2. If you are dyeing boiled eggs, let the eggs cool first. Then submerge them in your dye for about 30 minutes.