



# Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet Year in Beirut

*Salma Abdelnour*

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As Beirut exploded with the bombs and violence of a ruthless civil war in the '80s, a nine-year-old Salma Abdelnour and her family fled Lebanon to start a new life in the States. Ever since then— even as she built a thriving career as a food and travel writer in New York City—Salma has had a hunch that Beirut was still her home. She kept dreaming of moving back—and finally decided to do it.

But could she resume her life in Beirut, so many years after her family moved away? Could she, or anyone for that matter, ever really go home again?

*Jasmine and Fire* is Salma's poignant and humorous journey of try-ing to resettle in Beirut and fumbling through the new realities of life in one of the world's most complex, legendary, ever-vibrant, ever- troubled cities. What's more, in a year of roiling changes around the Middle East and the rise of the Arab Spring, Salma found herself in the midst of the turmoil, experiencing it all up close.

As she comes to grips with all the changes in her life—a love left behind in New York and new relationships blossoming in Beirut—Salma takes comfort in some of Lebanon's enduring traditions, particularly its extraordinary food culture. Through the sights, sounds, and flavors of a city full of beauty, tragedy, despair, and hope, Salma slowly begins to reconnect with the place she's longed for her entire life.



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