

# **Lebanon cave takes on Amazon for spot in new seven wonders**

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Lebanon's Jeita Grotto on Tuesday was selected as one of 28 finalists for the seven natural wonders of the world, facing the Amazon, Mount Vesuvius and others for a spot on the prestigious list.

"This is a moment every Lebanese should be proud of," said Nabil Haddad, who heads Jeita's national support committee.

"The Jeita Grotto is a medal of honour for Lebanon and has placed Lebanon on the global tourism map again."

Jeita, in a river valley near the capital Beirut, comprises two limestone caves, upper galleries and a lower cave through which an underground river runs.

A cement bridge allows tourists to walk through the palatial structure and view the glistening stalactites and stalagmites formed over millennia by drops of water creating new pathways around rock too hard to dissolve.

The cave is 10,000 metres (close to 33,000 feet) long and features one of the biggest stalactites in the world, hanging 8.2 metres (27 feet) from the ceiling.

The Swiss-based non-profit organisation New7Wonders Foundation is to announce the new wonders of nature in 2011.

A panel of experts nominated the initial batch of candidates, online voters selected finalists and an estimated one billion online voters are to select the final seven on the site [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com)

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