

# Overseas Adventure Travel<sup>®</sup>

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide<sup>®</sup>



New! Tunisia: From the Mediterranean to  
the Sahara

2026

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

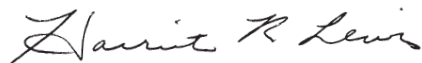
When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis

Chair

Overseas Adventure Travel

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Berber granary cellars, Tataouine

## Tunisia: From the Mediterranean to the Sahara

### Small Group Adventure

**Tunisia:** Tunis, Tataouine, Sahara Desert Camp, Tozeur Oasis, Kairouan, Sidi Bou Said

Small groups of no more than 16 travelers, guaranteed

**16 days starting from \$4,195**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/tns2026pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/tns2026pricing)

Journey to North Africa and discover the mystery and allure of Tunisia. Explore the scattered ruins of ancient Carthage, and spend 1 night in a tented camp in the Sahara, where past rulers of desert empires built magnificent mosques, and Americans forged a special connection during World War II. Today, Tunisian artisans ply their crafts in exotic *souks* and *medinas*, where narrow lanes snake between white-domed buildings that gleam in the sun.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 14 nights accommodations, including 1 night at our private tented camp in the Sahara Desert
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- All land transportation and 1 internal flight
- 33 meals—14 breakfasts, 9 lunches, and 10 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 20 small group activities
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, camp staff, and luggage porters
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next adventure
- All land transportation

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*

**Tunisia: From the Mediterranean to the Sahara**



## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderate

**Pacing:** 6 locations in 15 days

**Physical requirements:** Travel over cobbled streets and sandy, uneven, and bumpy terrain in the Sahara that can be challenging for travelers with leg or back issues; agility is also required to participate in camel ride and to access some vehicles by ladder.

**Flight time:** Travel time will be 18-28 hours and will most likely have two connections

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/tns](http://www.oattravel.com/tns)

## TUNISIA: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Visit the oldest Muslim place of worship in Africa, Kairouan's Great Mosque, and interact with locals in the surrounding *medina*. Plus, experience **A Day in the Life** with a local family in northern Tunisia, where you'll participate in daily activities and share lunch together in their home. And sit down for a home-cooked meal and intimate conversation with a local family for a **Home-Hosted Dinner** in Kairouan.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** Visit a small brick factory, where you'll learn how bricks for local homes are handmade in traditional kilns. Also, discuss **Controversial Topics** with local experts on issues like Tunisian women's rights.

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to Tunis, Tunisia
2-5	Tunis
6-7	Fly to Djerba • Tataouine
8	Sahara Desert camp
9-10	Tozeur
11-13	Kairouan
14-15	Sidi Bou Said & Carthage
16	Return to U.S.

## PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Untouched Algeria: Algiers & Constantine

**PRE-TRIP:** 6 nights from **\$1,995**

Timeless Morocco: From the Souks of Marrakesh to Seaside Casablanca

**POST-TRIP:** 5 nights from **\$1,495**

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Algiers** before your Algeria pre-trip extension from **\$180** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Tunis** before your main adventure from **\$210** per room, per night



# Tunisia: From the Mediterranean to the Sahara

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

### BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

#### 6 nights in *Untouched Algeria: Algiers & Constantine*

**Day 1** Fly to Algiers, Algeria

**Day 2** Arrive in Algiers

**Day 3** Explore Algiers

**Day 4** Explore Algiers

**Day 5** Algiers • Djemila • Constantine

**Day 6** Explore Constantine

**Day 7** Constantine • Visit Tiddis

**Day 8** Transfer to Tunis, Tunisia •  
Begin main trip

### **Day 1** Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Tunis.

### **Day 2** Arrive in Tunis, Tunisia

- Destination: Tunis
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Belvedere Fourati or similar

**Afternoon:** We'll be met at the Tunis airport by an O.A.T. representative today and transferred to our hotel, where we'll meet our Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers, including those who took our pre-trip extension to *Untouched Algeria: Algiers & Constantine*. Then, we will take an orientation walk to get familiar with our surroundings.

**Dinner:** We'll gather at our hotel's restaurant for our first dinner together.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. Or, perhaps you'll return to your room to relax before our first day of discoveries.

### **Day 3** Explore Tunis

- Destination: Tunis
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Belvedere Fourati or similar

**Activity Note:** Today we will walk for a total of 3 to 4 miles over uneven terrain, cobblestones, steeply sloped surfaces, and stairs without railings (not suitable for the use of walking sticks). There will not be any benches available for resting during this walk.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning we'll explore Tunisia's bustling capital. Tunis was one of the greatest cities in the world during the reign of the Almohad and Hafsid dynasties from the

twelfth to the 16th centuries. Today, it boasts a diversity of distinct cultures and a rich, complex history shaped by ages of colonization. We'll experience this diversity when we venture to the city's *medina*—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—to witness the hundreds of palaces, mosques, and fountains situated here. We'll also meet some of the vendors who sell their handicrafts at various *souks* (markets), and learn about local traditions like the *chachia*, a flexible hat worn by men that originated in Tunisia and Libya. The *chachia* is typically made from wool that has been crushed with hot water and soap, then dyed, and shaped. We're sure to see some men donning this typical headpiece as we walk through the *medina*.

**Lunch:** On your own in the *medina* of Tunis—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, you'll have some free time to relax or explore independently. Perhaps you'll wander to Tunis' Central Market, where an array of local produce and spices await you, as well as opportunities to connect with locals as they go about their daily business.

**Dinner:** We'll enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant this evening.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

#### **Day 4 Visit ancient Dougga • Visit Testour**

- Destination: Tunis
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Belvedere Fourati or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we'll embark on a morning tour of ancient Dougga, the best-preserved ancient Roman city in North Africa and a

UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here stand the remains of a complete town that once had 5,000 residents, including villas, temples, baths, a paved street, and a forum, making it easy to imagine life here in the second century AD. The temple known as "the Capitol" and the Caracalla Baths are particularly well-preserved, and the site's theater—which was designed to seat 3,500 spectators—is still used for performances of classic works today.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll drive for to Testour, a sleepy town that is home to Tunisia's finest examples of Andalusian architecture. We'll observe the local ways of life here and admire the adobe-tiled roofs before continuing on to Tunis, where you will have the remainder of the day free to relax or explore on your own. Your Trip Experience Leader is happy to make suggestions.

**Dinner:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

#### **Day 5 Tunis • A Day in the Life of a Tunisian family**

- Destination: Tunis
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Belvedere Fourati or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we'll experience our **NEW A Day in the Life** of a local Tunisian family.

Upon arrival, you'll witness firsthand their unique way of life. This opportunity offers a glimpse into the traditions, customs, and hospitality that are deeply rooted in Tunisian

society. Throughout the day, you may accompany members of the family as they go about their various activities, such as doing chores or helping to prepare a traditional dish. The family members are eager to share their daily routines, culinary delights, stories, and authentic insight into Tunisian culture.

**Lunch:** We'll sit down with the family to enjoy the lunch we helped to prepare.

**Afternoon:** We'll thank our hosts and drive back to Tunis, arriving back at our hotel by the mid-afternoon. Then, you'll have the remainder of the day free to pursue individual interests.

**Dinner:** On your own. You can ask your Trip Experience Leader for some local dining options.

**Evening:** Free to do as you'd like, whether that's retiring early to your room or joining your fellow travelers for an evening stroll.

## **Day 6 Tunis • Fly to Djerba • Overland to Tataouine**

- Destination: Tataouine
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ksar Ouled Debbab or similar

**Activity Note:** Today will include an early morning wake-up call due to a 7:15am flight to Djerba.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll depart our hotel early this morning for a short drive to the Tunis airport, where we'll catch our flight to Djerba. After landing, we'll begin our overland transfer to Tataouine, making a couple of stops along the way. Linked to mainland Tunisia by a causeway built on a Roman-era foundation, the beautiful island of Djerba is thought to be the legendary

home of the lotus eaters in Homer's *Odyssey*. First, we'll take a drive to visit Erryadh, where we'll interact with the locals and explore the village. Then, we'll drive to Houmt Souk—Djerba's capital—a historic city of white-washed mosques and groves of olive and citrus trees.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Houmt Souk.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our overland transfer to Tataouine. After checking in to our hotel, we'll enjoy some free time to relax and settle in.

**Dinner:** At the hotel restaurant.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend your evening as you wish—take advantage of the hotel's amenities, or begin getting acquainted with Tataouine on your own.

## **Day 7 Berber villages**

- Destination: Tataouine
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ksar Ouled Debbab or similar

**Activity Note:** Today we will walk for a total of 2 miles over uneven, slippery terrain, steeply sloped surfaces, and stairs without railings (not suitable for the use of walking sticks). There will not be any benches available for resting during this walk.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll drive to the picturesque Berber village of Chenini. Established in the late 19th century, this troglodytic settlement was built into the dramatic, rocky hills as a means of protection from Ghazzia (Arab tribes). But its clever construction did more than just shelter from harm's way: the rock produces a naturally isothermal environment, shielding the homes from wind and extreme temperatures ranging



from 37 to 113 degrees Fahrenheit. The houses are built by digging deep into the horizontal layers of sandstone, a sedimentary rock malleable enough to carve with simple hand tools, that are trapped within layers of harder rock. The harder rock serves as the floors and ceilings of these houses. Individual cave dwellings are then dug out around the edges of the pit, forming subterranean rooms and the main pit serves as a communal courtyard.

We'll spend about 1.5 hours hiking around Chenini, the village that served as a shooting location of Episode IV of Star Wars, and perhaps interact with some of the 600 or so farmers and artisans who make their home here.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll drive back to our hotel in Tataouine, where you'll have some time to make your own discoveries. You may wish to visit Ksar Ouled Soltane, a fortified storehouse featuring multi-story vaulted cellars.

**Dinner:** At the hotel restaurant.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

## **Day 8 Tataouine • Visit a troglodyte house • Sahara Desert camp**

- Destination: Sahara Desert
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ghilane Desert Camp or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we begin our journey into the Sahara Desert for our overnight stay in a private tented camp. Along the way, we'll make a stop at the Berber town of Matmata to discover its

fascinating troglodyte houses—man-made caves dug out of large pits in the ground. We'll stop to visit one of them, and we'll be welcomed into the home by the family who lives there.

**Lunch:** At a troglodyte house in Matmata.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our journey through the rocky desert and into the Sahara until we reach Douz, a town where all roads end at the edge of the Great Eastern Erg. Beyond Douz, this immense expanse of the Sahara extends hundreds of miles to the south. Then, we'll board 4x4 vehicles to reach our private, O.A.T. tented camp, positioned in a remote stretch of the golden-hued Grand Erg. Camp amenities are basic but comfortable, featuring a common area where meals will be served. Electricity is available at the camp during the day, between 6am and 11pm, and is turned off overnight.

**Dinner:** At the camp.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll relax in the camp's common area or stargaze with fellow travelers.

## **Day 9 The Sahara Desert • Camel ride in dunes • Overland to Tozeur**

- Destination: Tozeur
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Diar Abou Habibi or similar

**Early morning:** Today, we absorb the feeling of the desert environment. If you wish, your Trip Experience Leader will wake you up early to sit in the camp and watch the sun rise over the Sahara Desert, casting light across the sprawling sand dunes. During the summer, the sun rises around 5am, but in the winter, it rises closer to 6am. Coffee will be awaiting those who choose to rise early.

**Breakfast:** At the camp.

**Morning:** After breakfast, we'll board 4x4 vehicles and drive through the desert's expanse to begin our camel ride experience. When we arrive, we'll saddle up for a camel ride amidst the desert dunes. During our trek, we may cross paths with nomadic people as they make their way across the sprawling sea of sand.

**Lunch:** Enjoy lunch with a nomadic family.

**Afternoon:** We'll begin our drive to Tozeur, with a stop along the way at Chott El Jerid, the largest salt lake in the Sahara Desert, for a photo opportunity. We'll reach our hotel in Tozeur in the late afternoon, and we'll have a little time to relax and freshen up before dinner.

**Dinner:** At our hotel's restaurant.

**Evening:** You're free to retire to your room, enjoy a drink at the lounge, or begin exploring on your own.

## **Day 10 Explore Tozeur oasis by horse-drawn carriage • Visit local brick factory**

- Destination: Tozeur
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Diar Abou Habibi or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** In the company of a local guide, we'll embark a horse-drawn carriage to explore the Tozeur oasis. For two thousand years, this city has thrived in a lush oasis on the edge of the largest salt flat in northern Africa, and was a remote and fiercely independent enclave for much of that time. In its old section, elaborate designs in yellow brickwork decorate the walls lining narrow alleys and passageways with the same traditional patterns that are found in the local Berber handcrafts. We'll feel the true oasis atmosphere here as we explore byways where

spring-fed canals water date palms, flowers, and crops of plums, grapes, pomegranates, and bananas.

When our discoveries here wrap up, we'll drive to visit a small brick factory to learn how bricks for local homes are handmade in traditional kilns. Afterwards, we'll drive to the historic *medina* of Tozeur.

**Lunch:** On your own in Tozeur's *medina*. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend some local dining options.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll visit the Sidi Ben Aissa Archaeological Mausoleum and enjoy a discussion with the mausoleum's curator. The rest of your afternoon is free to do as you'd like. Perhaps you'll take advantage of your freedom to explore and visit the Eden Palm Museum, which focuses on the role of the date palm in Tunisian society.

**Dinner:** At the hotel restaurant.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

## **Day 11 Tozeur • Roman ruins at Sbeitla • Kairouan**

- Destination: Kairouan
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: La Kasbah Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll depart our hotel in Tozeur and begin our overland transfer to Kairouan, a city with a spiritual feel whose ornate seventh-century Great Mosque is the fourth-holiest site in Islam. It was here that Ibn Khaldun, a great Muslim historian of the 14th century, lived and worked at the height of Islam's classical period. Along the way, we'll make a couple of stops. First, we'll enjoy

a coffee break in the city of Gafsa. A few hours later, we'll stop in the small town of Sbeitla, home to some remarkable Roman ruins which we'll explore after our lunch.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Sbeitla.

**Afternoon:** We'll explore the Roman ruins of Sbeitla, which include three temples dedicated to Minerva, Jupiter, and Juno, the gods who protected Rome. Then we'll continue our drive to Kairouan, where we'll check in to our hotel.

Kairouan is Tunisia's leading center of carpet-making, and after an orientation walk we may visit a carpet workshop to learn about its history and witness a demonstration of this craft. Afterwards, you may enjoy some free time on your own to explore or relax.

**Dinner:** At the hotel restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own. You might like to explore Kairouan's Old Kasbah, or simply relax in your room.

## **Day 12 Explore Kairouan • Dinner in the home of a local family**

- Destination: Kairouan
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: La Kasbah Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll begin with a visit to the Abou Zamaa al-Balawi mausoleum, one of the most venerated sites in Kairouan. It contains the remains of one of the Prophet's companions, Abou Zamaa al-Balawi, who was killed in battle with the Berbers. Next, we'll visit the Great Mosque, the oldest Muslim place of worship in Africa. Founded in 670, Kairouan's Great Mosque displays influences of pre-Islamic, Roman, and Byzantine architecture.

Later, we'll venture on foot to the city *medina*, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and thriving center of Tunisian culture. Your Trip Experience Leader will seek out opportunities for the group to interact with local residents.

**Lunch:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, you'll have some free time to explore on your own. Consult with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions. This evening, our group will come back together to experience one of the highlights of our Tunisia adventure: a **Home-Hosted Dinner** with a local family. We'll break up into smaller groups and walk to one of the homes, where we'll get to know local residents and learn about life in the region. Come hungry for your home-cooked meal, and bring plenty of questions for your generous hosts.

**Dinner:** We'll gather in the home of a local family to experience life in Tunisia and watch as our hosts prepare an authentic dinner. Each family has a different background—some of them may be teachers, bank tellers, or shop owners, for example. Our meal this evening may consist of local dishes like *mechouia* salad (grilled vegetables, tomatoes, peppers, onions and garlic), *brik* (Berber pastry filled with various ingredients and commonly deep fried), *couscous*, and *makroud* (semolina and date cookies). This will be a great opportunity to ask them about life in Kairouan, any customs they practice, and more.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.



### Day 13 Kairouan • Optional *El Djem* tour

- Destination: Kairouan
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: La Kasbah Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** You're free to discover more of Kairouan on your own today. Or, join our optional tour to uncover Tunisian antiquity with a visit to El Djem, home to the third-largest ancient Roman amphitheater in the world. This tour also includes a visit to a handcrafts center to learn about mosaics.

**Lunch:** On your own for those who choose not to take the optional tour. At a local restaurant for those on the optional tour.

**Afternoon:** Free to do as you'd like. Travelers who chose to take the optional tour will return to the hotel later in the afternoon.

**Dinner:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish, whether that's gathering with fellow travelers to compare notes on the day, or setting out for an evening stroll.

### Day 14 Kairouan • Explore Hammamet • Sidi Bou Said • **Controversial Topic:** Women's rights in Tunisia

- Destination: Sidi Bou Said
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Dar Said or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll say goodbye to Kairouan and journey north to Sidi Bou Said. Along the way, we'll stop in Hammamet, a town of white-washed houses and some of Tunisia's

finest beaches. We'll have some time to stretch our legs and explore the coastal *medina* before resuming our journey to Sidi Bou Said.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant in Sidi Bou Said.

**Afternoon:** We'll drive to our hotel in Sidi Bou Said. After checking in to our rooms, we'll have a brief orientation tour of our surroundings. Then, we'll learn about the **Controversial Topic** of women's rights in Tunisia, including inheritance laws, a subject of great consequence to the progress of women's rights in the Arab world.

Tunisia enforces some of the most progressive laws on women's rights in Muslim majority countries. In fact, it is currently ranked 124th on the Global Gender Gap Index of 2020 according to the World Economic Forum—thereby making it one of the highest ranking Arab countries. Yet despite Tunisia's forward progress, patriarchal values still dominate the land. Perhaps one of the most contentious issues at the forefront of national conversation is inheritance. As it is written in the Quran, a surviving son is entitled to twice the share of a surviving daughter. This is stated in unequivocal terms: "Allah enjoins you concerning your children: the male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; and if they are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what the deceased has left, and if there is one, she shall have the half."

Shari'a law, a conduit for Islamic tradition, strongly advocates for this literal interpretation and galvanizes support from the general population by deeming it sacrilege to do otherwise. But over the decades, the inheritance law has slowly made its way to the fore of Tunisian politics. In an attempt to attract progressive political allies, President Beji Caïd Essebsi drafted a law in 2018 that would establish equality between women and men in matters of inheritance. This "radical" move

garnered much attention in Arab states and beyond. It was presented to the parliament in February 2019, where it was met with vehement opposition by conservative forces like the Islamist Ennahda party. Unfortunately, President Essebsi died in the summer of 2019, leaving behind an uncertain future for this highly controversial bill. Our conversation this morning will examine the history, significance, and ramifications of this issue, and we'll have ample opportunities to ask our speaker any questions.

**Dinner:** On your own—your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to offer dining suggestions for you.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend your evening as you wish.

### **Day 15 Explore Sidi Bou Said • Ancient Carthage • Visit North Africa American Cemetery**

- Destination: Sidi Bou Said
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Dar Said or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll begin the day with a discovery walk in Sidi Bou Said village. Then, we'll set off to explore the site of ancient Carthage, which evokes the romance and tragedy of the legendary era of Queen Dido and Aeneas chronicled in Virgil's Aeneid. Scattered ruins help us envision where the mighty city of antiquity once stood, sending its fleets for trade and warfare across the Mediterranean, including Hannibal's famous but doomed campaign against Rome in the Second Punic War. After Carthage was conquered, the Romans destroyed the old city but established a new one of their own on its site, which lasted

for almost another 500 years. The remaining ruins have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We'll then pay our respects to the American soldiers who liberated Tunisia during World War II with a visit to the North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial. This 27-acre memorial is the final resting place of 2,841 American military members who died during the war, and also honors 3,700 soldiers whose remains were never found.

**Lunch:** At a local sandwich shop in the nearby coastal town of La Marsa.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to our hotel, where you'll have free time until we gather together for dinner.

**Dinner:** We'll enjoy a Farewell Dinner together in a local restaurant to celebrate our Tunisian discoveries.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

### **Day 16 Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Early morning:** After an early breakfast this morning, transfer to the Tunis airport to board your flight home to the U.S. Or, continue on to your *Timeless Morocco: From the Souks of Marrakesh to Seaside Casablanca* post-trip extension.

## END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

### **5 nights in *Timeless Morocco: From the Souks of Marrakesh to Seaside Casablanca***

**Day 1** Fly to Casablanca, Morocco •  
Overland to Marrakesh

**Day 2** Explore Marrakesh • *Caleche* ride •  
Visit Djemaa el Fna Square

**Day 3** Explore the Ourika Valley •  
**Home-Hosted Lunch**

**Day 4** Overland to Casablanca

**Day 5** Explore Casablanca &  
Hassan II Mosque

**Day 6** Casablanca • Return to U.S.



## OPTIONAL TOURS

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During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

***Please note:*** Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.

### El Djem

(Day 13 \$90 per person)

This optional tour takes us to El Djem, home to the third-largest ancient Roman amphitheater in the world, which soars impressively above the low-rise buildings of the town's *medina*. Built in the third century AD, this impressive stadium could seat 30,000 spectators. After an included lunch at a local restaurant, we visit a handcrafts center to learn about mosaics. We'll return back to our hotel by about 4pm.

## PRE-TRIP

### Untouched Algeria: Algiers & Constantine

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » 6 nights accommodation
- » 13 meals—6 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 4 dinners
- » 5 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

#### PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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Visit Africa's largest country and marvel at ancient Roman ruins that will instantly transport you back in time. Begin in Algiers, the country's capital and most-populous city. Delve into the culture of a country that gained its independence from France only in 1962 as you get to know its people, like during a Home-Hosted Lunch with a local family. Continue on to Constantine, where you'll visit one of the world's largest mosques and the ancient Roman ruins of Tiddis. It's all here in Algeria, waiting to be explored.

##### Day 1 Fly to Algiers, Algeria

- Destination: Depart U.S.

**Afternoon/Evening:** Depart the U.S. today for your overnight flight to Algiers, Algeria.

##### Day 2 Arrive in Algiers

- Destination: Algiers
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel El-Djazair or similar

**Afternoon:** Arrive in Algiers, the capital of Algeria, this afternoon, where an O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and assist with the transfer to our hotel. After check in, your Trip Experience Leader will guide you on a walking tour around the neighborhood of the hotel.

**Dinner:** We'll enjoy dinner at a local restaurant tonight, featuring regional specialties.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll begin exploring Algiers on your own, or settle in to rest for our day tomorrow.

##### Day 3 Explore Algiers

- Destination: Algiers
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel El-Djazair or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll set out on a city tour of Algiers this morning. Our tour will take us past many grand French colonial whitewashed buildings, including the Grande Poste d'Alger (the Algiers central post office), which is a striking example of French-designed, early 20th-century Moorish architecture. After our overview of the architectural highlights of Algiers, you'll have a couple of hours of free time to do as you wish.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will gladly point out local dining suggestions.

**Afternoon:** We'll ride a cable car to the Martyrs' Memorial, which honors the lives lost in the Algerian war for independence. The memorial opened in 1982, twenty years after the country gained independence from France. Then, you'll have some time for independent exploring for the remainder of the afternoon.

**Dinner:** We'll enjoy dinner at a local restaurant tonight.

**Evening:** You have the remainder of the evening to continue exploring Algiers.

#### **Day 4 Explore Algiers**

- Destination: Algiers
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel El-Djazair or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we set out for the Kasbah of Algiers. This UNESCO World Heritage Site played a critical role during Algeria's struggle for independence from France in 1954-1962. During our 3-hour tour, we'll visit the outside of Ketchaoua Mosque—a place of worship that has undergone transitions of two different faiths (Muslim and Roman Catholic during French rule) since 1612. We'll also pay a visit to the Museum of Popular Arts & Traditions.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll drive to Algiers' Roman Catholic basilica, Notre-Dame d'Afrique (Our Lady of Africa). After 14 years of construction, the basilica opened in 1872, sporting neo-Byzantine architecture. Afterwards, we'll drive back to the hotel, where the balance of the afternoon is free to make your own discoveries.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for some local dining options.

**Evening:** Free to continue exploring Algiers on your own.

#### **Day 5 Algiers • Djemila • Constantine**

- Destination: Constantine
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Protea Hotel Constantine or similar

**Activity Note:** Today's overland transfer to Djemila will take about 4 hours, with stops along the way.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we set out on a four-hour drive to Djemila—the site of some of the best preserved Roman ruins in North Africa.

**Lunch:** We'll enjoy lunch in a local restaurant upon arrival in Djemila.

**Afternoon:** We'll explore the Roman ruins of Djemila. Majestic arches, temples, basilicas, and other examples of classic Roman architecture fill this small mountain village. Then, we'll continue on to Constantine. This "City of Bridges," nicknamed for its grand bridges that connect hills and valleys, was also named the Arab Capital of Culture in 2015. Afterwards, we'll check into our hotel and you'll have some free time to rest after a day of discovery.

**Dinner:** At the hotel restaurant.

**Evening:** You're free to settle in for the night, or venture out for a nightcap in town.



## Day 6 Explore Constantine

- Destination: Constantine
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Protea Hotel Constantine or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Our explorations today take us through Constantine, Algeria's third-largest city. We'll start by discovering Constantine's Kasbah, and we'll witness the small—but at one time mighty—Rhumel River, which carved out a circular gorge that resembles a natural fortress. Then, we'll visit the Palace of Ahmed Bey, an Ottoman-era building built for Ahmed Bey ben Mohamed Chérif, ruler of Constantine from 1826–1848. This ornate palace decorated with Tunisian and French tiles took nearly ten years to build, yet Ahmed Bey only enjoyed it for two years before the French turned it into their headquarters during their takeover. Following our visit, we'll cross the Mellah Slimane Bridge on foot, which is more than 300 feet above the river, nearly 400 feet long, and only eight feet wide.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** Following lunch, we'll cross another one of Constantine's iconic monuments on foot, the Sidi M'Cid Bridge which offers sprawling views of the town and the gorge. We wrap up the day's tour of the city with a visit to the Mosque of Emir Abdelkader. The mosque's twin minarets and its sheer size in general make the building stand out. Its prayer hall can hold 10,000 people, making it one of the world's largest mosques. You'll have the remainder of the afternoon free.

**Dinner:** On your own. You may choose to enjoy a meal at one of the many restaurants near the hotel.

**Evening:** You are free for you to make your own discoveries. Perhaps you'll witness even more of the city's famous bridges.

## Day 7 Constantine • Visit Tiddis

- Destination: Constantine
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Protea Hotel Constantine or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning, we'll drive to the archaeological site of Tiddis. This ancient ruined Roman town was built on a hillside overlooking Constantine in the third century and used as a lookout to protect the city from invaders. It followed classic Roman town planning, with just two main streets that crossed in the center. Because Tiddis had no main water source, we'll see abandoned water tanks and channels, which were used as a means for collecting rainwater. We'll also see various circular tombs, a Roman arch, and sanctuaries to Roman gods Mithra, Vesta, and Ceres.

**Lunch:** On your own. Perhaps you'll sample *chakhchoukha*, a local Algerian specialty stew that consists of lamb, chickpeas, *rougag* (round, thin flatbread), tomatoes, peppers, and onions.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to our hotel by the mid-afternoon, and you'll have the rest of the afternoon to relax at the hotel or continue exploring the city.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** You'll have the evening to yourself to make any final discoveries in Constantine.

## **Day 8** Transfer to Tunis, Tunisia •

### **Begin main trip**

- Destination: Tunis
- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll transfer to the airport in Constantine for our morning flight to Algiers. This afternoon, fly to Tunis, Tunisia to meet your fellow travelers and begin our main adventure.

## POST-TRIP

### *Timeless Morocco: From the Souks of Marrakesh to Seaside Casablanca*

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » Air transportation from Tunis to Casablanca
- » 5 nights accommodation
- » 10 meals—5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 3 dinners
- » 5 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » All transfers

#### POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Extend your North African discoveries in Marrakesh and Casablanca, where you can feel the pulse of Moroccan culture as we tour colorful souks, a historic medina, magnificent palaces and gardens, lively Djemaa el-Fna Square, and Africa's largest mosque: Casablanca's Hassan II.*

##### **Day 1 Fly to Casablanca, Morocco • Overland to Marrakesh**

- Destination: Marrakesh
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Riad Dar Sara or similar

**Activity Note:** Traditional *riads* do not have elevators so you should expect to use the stairs to access your room.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll transfer to the Tunis airport to catch our flight to Casablanca, Morocco.

**Lunch:** On your own—you may grab lunch at the airport.

**Afternoon:** Our Trip Experience Leader will meet us at the airport and assist us with the 3-hour drive to Marrakesh, where we'll check into our *riad*—a Moroccan home that has been refurbished into a hotel. With just around

20 rooms, our small group size lends itself perfectly to the intimacy and authenticity of a *riad* stay, and we'll get a true sense of local life as we share this traditional living space.

**Dinner:** At our *riad*.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

##### **Day 2 Explore Marrakesh • Caleche ride • Visit Djemaa el Fna Square**

- Destination: Marrakesh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Riad Dar Sara or similar

**Breakfast:** At the *riad*.

**Morning:** Today we explore the city of Marrakesh by foot, stopping by the Koutoubia minaret, Bahia Palace, and Le Jardin Secret.

We'll also explore the famous *medina* of Marrakesh, one of the ancient crossroads of North Africa and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Lunch:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Afternoon:** We'll have a few hours this afternoon to explore independently. You may take this time to continue getting settled in at the *riad*. Or, perhaps you'll choose to venture back out into the *medina* and visit some of the local *souks* (markets).

Later, we'll regroup for a memorable *caleche* (horse-drawn carriage) ride through Marrakesh. From this unique mode of transportation, we'll take in the sights of the city, including a ride through the upscale Gueliz and Hivernage neighborhoods, and a closer look at the city's red brick walls.

We'll disembark at Djemaa El Fna, the main square, where we'll set off on a walking tour. Translating to “assembly of the dead”—in commemoration of public executions that occurred there in 1050 AD—Djemaa El Fna has taken on somewhat of a paradoxical nature, having blossomed into an area that is as full of life as the Sahara is full of sand. A cacophony of sounds fills the streets as musicians tune their instruments; snake charmers dazzle with their fascinating mix of danger and exotic ritual; food stalls line the streets; and a combination of horse-drawn carriages, motorbikes, and cars are relegated to the outskirts of the square as nightly pedestrian traffic takes center stage.

**Dinner:** We'll enjoy dinner in a local restaurant, featuring regional specialties.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—your Trip Experience Leader can offer interesting options for you.

### Day 3 Explore the Ourika Valley • Home-Hosted Lunch

- Destination: Marrakesh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Riad Dar Sara or similar

**Breakfast:** At the *riad*.

**Morning:** Today we set out to explore the Ourika Valley, nestled at the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. Along the way, we'll stop at the Anima Garden, brought to life by artist André Heller. This whimsical, 2-acre botanical garden features over 250 plant species, ranging from bamboo to lofty palm trees and cacti. We'll enjoy about an hour here exploring with your Trip Experience Leader before boarding our bus to continue our drive.

When we arrive in the Ourika Valley, we'll be met by a local guide who will lead our trek along one of the valley's hiking trails. This trail connects villages in the area, so we may be able to strike up conversations with locals as they go about their daily activities. As we walk, you may also take in scenic views of olive groves and terraced hillsides. Following our discoveries, we'll walk to the home of a local family, where we'll get to know local Berber residents and learn about life in the region over a **Home-Hosted Lunch**.

**Lunch:** We'll gather in the home of a local family to experience life in Morocco and enjoy a traditional Berber lunch. This will be a great opportunity to ask our hosts about life in the Ourika Valley, the Berber customs they practice, and more.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll drive back to Marrakesh, where the remainder of the afternoon is free for your own discoveries. Your Trip Experience Leader will be able to offer you plenty of suggestions about where to go. If you



wish, you can further explore the high-energy street performers in the legendary Djemaa El Fna square.

**Dinner:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

**Evening:** Free to enjoy Marrakesh on your own.

#### Day 4 Overland to Casablanca

- Destination: Casablanca
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Barcelo Anfa Casablanca or similar

**Breakfast:** At the *riad*.

**Morning:** Your morning is free to make any last-minute discoveries in Marrakesh. You might choose to spend more time in the city's *souk*, enjoying a closer look at Marrakesh's unique artistic traditions.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we begin our 3-hour drive to Casablanca, checking in to our hotel upon arrival. After some time to relax and settle in, we'll gather with our Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk of the area, including Marché Central, the bustling outdoor market in the heart of the city's Art Deco district.

**Dinner:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—your Trip Experience Leader can offer suggestions on where to explore in Casablanca.

#### Day 5 Explore Casablanca & Hassan II Mosque

- Destination: Casablanca
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Barcelo Anfa Casablanca or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we begin with a visit to one of the city's highlights: the Hassan II Mosque. This mosque is the second largest in Morocco with the tallest minaret in the world. We'll have about two hours at the mosque to admire its marble columns, intricately designed dome, and mosaic tiles. While here, you may even hear the call to prayer emanating from the towering minaret.

Following our visit to the mosque, we'll stop at Casablanca's Jewish Museum. Originally founded as an orphanage in 1948, it is now considered by many to be the Arab world's only museum dedicated entirely to Judaism. Here, we'll get a sense of the cultural diversity throughout Morocco's history. We'll end our tour in Casablanca's Quartier Habous (also known as the New Medina), a colorful area of the city constructed by the French in the 1930s in the style of a traditional *medina*, whose narrow winding streets are lined with market stalls and interesting shops.

**Lunch:** On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

**Afternoon:** Free for your own discoveries in Casablanca. You can seek out some galleries or museums on your own or ask your Trip Experience Leader to suggest some interesting activities.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

## **Day 6 Casablanca • Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll board a bus and transfer to the Casablanca airport for the return flight home.

# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** If you are taking only the main trip, you will need 2 blank pages
- **Pre-trip extension in Algeria:** You will need an additional page, for a total of 3 pages.
- **Post-trip extension in Morocco:** You will need an additional page, for a total of 3 pages.
- **Both a pre- and post-trip extension:** You will need a total of 4 pages.
- **Stopover in Amsterdam, Munich, or Rome:** You will need to add 2 additional pages to the applicable total listed above.
- **Stopover in Istanbul, London, Madrid, Paris, Cairo, or U.A.E.:** You will need to add an additional page to the applicable total listed above.

## Visas Required

**We’ll be sending you a detailed Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Tunisia:** No visa required.

- **Algeria (optional pre-trip extension): Visa required.** This visa must be obtained in advance..
- **Morocco (optional post-trip extension):** No visa required.
- **Egypt (optional stopover only): Visa required.** U.S. citizens will require a visa to enter Egypt; detailed instructions and information will be included in your Visa Packet, as noted above.
- **U.A.E (optional stopover only): Visa required.** Currently, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) allows U.S. citizens to get a tourist visa free of charge on arrival in Dubai.
- **Turkey (optional stopovers only):** No visas required. A visa is not required for U.S. citizens for stays of up to 90 days.
- **Europe Stopover (The Netherlands, England, Spain, Germany, and France):** U.S. citizens will require an online visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no set timeline for when this requirement will start – we will contact all impacted travelers before their departure once the start date is confirmed.

### Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **[www.pvsinternational.org](http://www.pvsinternational.org)**.

### Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

### Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.



## Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

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### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

#### PACING

- 6 locations in 15 days

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids
- You must be able to walk 3-4 miles unassisted; expect 2-4 hours of physical activities on some days
- You will need to access vehicles by ladder without aid, and navigate multi-story accommodations which may have narrow staircases and no elevators
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

#### CLIMATE

- May through September are the Sahara's hottest months; mid-day temperatures can reach 100+ degrees in Tozeur
- In the Sahara, nights and mornings are quite cold between November and March; it could drop as low as 40°F at night

#### TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- We'll travel over city streets, stairways at ancient ruins, desert sands, uneven and rough ground, as well as unpaved, dusty roads
- We travel via air-conditioned motorcoach (no toilet onboard), 4x4 vehicles, and camel

#### FLIGHT INFORMATION

- Travel time will be 18-28 hours and will most likely have one or two connections of 2-3 hours each

## ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- We spend 1 night in the Sahara in comfortable but basic canvas tents without heat or electricity, with a chemical toilet outside of your tent. The main camp is a 3-minute walk away
- Hotels feature a variety of Western-style amenities and personal services
- All hotels feature private baths

## Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## No Vaccines Required

### Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

## Medication Suggestions

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- Pain medication in the unlikely event of an injury in a remote location
- Something to combat dehydration or heat stroke, such as salt tablets or powered sports drink/electrolytes

## Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

## Staying Healthy on Your Trip

### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

### Water

- Tap water is not safe to drink in Tunisia and Morocco, but should be fine in Algiers.
- **Safe water is readily available at mealtimes or on the bus.** We recommend you bring a reusable bottle from home to take advantage of any complimentary water refills.
- You can also buy bottled water from local shops. Inspect each bottle before you buy it to make sure the cap is sealed properly.
- Bottled drinks (like soda, pop, or juice) are safe to drink, as are hot drinks that have been boiled.
- We suggest that you use hand sanitizer after washing your hands in tap water.



## Food

- We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals. Your Trip Experience Leader can suggest restaurants for the meal you take on your own.
- Carry a handkerchief to dry any wet utensils or plates.
- Be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked fruit and other foods.
- Fruit at included meals that you peel yourself is usually safe—avoid lettuce and other unpeeled produce when eating on your own.

## Electricity Supply for Medical Devices

**A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays.** Travelers dependent on electricity supply for health reasons (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) may want to consider a different O.A.T. adventure.

# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card. Traveler's checks are not accepted in these countries.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip**; you will need local currency instead.
- **Break large bills when you can.** Smaller bills make it easier to bargain or pay in cash-only situations, like taxis.

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**Euro Countries:** European Euro (€)

**Tunisia:** Tunisian Dinar (TND)

**Algeria:** Algerian Dinar (DZD)

**Morocco:** Moroccan Dirham (DH)

## How to Exchange Money

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip. In fact, your bank may not be able to change dollars into Tunisian dinar or Moroccan dirham because of the strict trade laws on currency.

The easiest way to obtain local currency is to withdraw funds from an ATM once you arrive on the trip. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars. You can also change money when you arrive at the airport, or at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices.

Leftover Tunisian and Moroccan currency cannot be easily exchanged after you have returned to the U.S., so the rule of thumb is spend it or change it back before you leave.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

**Tunisia:** ATMs are typically available in larger cities and towns, but may not be available in more rural areas.

**Algeria:** ATMs are typically available in larger cities and towns, but may not be available in more rural areas. Some ATMs may not be able to interface with US banks.

## Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

**Tunisia:** Credit cards are accepted in some stores and restaurants, particularly in larger cities. We suggest that you bring alternative options (such as cash) for establishments that do not accept credit cards.

**Algeria:** Credit cards are accepted in some stores and restaurants, particularly in larger cities, but we strongly recommend that you bring alternative options (such as cash) for establishments that do not accept credit cards.

**Morocco:** Credit cards are accepted at many locations in tourist cities and for major purchases, but may incur a surcharge (usually about 5%). Most locations, especially smaller “Mom & Pop” shops or restaurants, are cash only.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don’t assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don’t work outside of the U.S.!

## Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Housekeeping staff at hotels:** \$1 per night
- **Attendants in public restrooms:** In this part of the world, most public restrooms are manned by a staff that clean and supply toilet paper/paper towels. It is customary to leave a small tip for the staff equal to about \$0.30 – \$ 0.50 per person.

*Please Note:* Your tour price includes gratuities on the main trip and optional extensions for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters that may assist you during the scheduled activities on your adventure. All tips are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars. Please do not use personal or traveler’s checks for tips.



## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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### Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Customization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Customization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our customization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Customization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

### Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

## Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

## What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).

## Communicating with Home from Abroad

### Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

## Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

## Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

## Internet

Wi-Fi may not always be available throughout your trip or may have a weak signal at times. This may impact your ability to use calling apps (as noted above) in certain locations.

## How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**Tunisia:** +216

**Morocco:** +212

**Algeria:** +213

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is up to <b>50 lbs for checked luggage</b> and <b>15 lbs for carry-ons</b> .
Size Restrictions	Standard airline size: Checked luggage should not exceed 62 linear inches (length+width+depth) and carry-on should not exceed 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	Duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Please do not bring a hard-sided (clam shell) suitcase.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Same as main trip.	
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
<p><b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p> <p><b>Small additional bag:</b> You may want to consider bringing a smaller bag to pack in your suitcase (or re-purpose your carry-on) for your stay at the tented camp because your main luggage will be stored on the bus for these nights.</p>	

#### Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

## Checked luggage

One duffel bag or suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy-duty lockable zipper. Please do not bring a rigid (plastic shell) suitcase.

*TIP: When traveling with a companion we recommend “cross-packing,” i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion’s luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

## Carry-on bag

You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during driving excursions and walking trips. Consider a backpack or waistpack that keeps both hands free and distributes the pack’s weight onto your back or hips.

## Small additional bag

You may want to consider bringing a smaller bag to pack in your suitcase (or re-purpose your carry-on) for your stay at the tented camp because your main luggage will be stored on the bus for these nights.

## Locks

For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Dress in layers:** As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, our list suggests several layers of clothing. Plan to dress in layers to keep warm at night, and adjust to changing conditions during the day. A few of our hotels are not heated, so indoor temperatures are about the same. For several nights in the Sahara, it will be much colder, averaging in the low 40s at night.
- **Quick-dry fabrics:** If you like to hand-wash your clothes, look for fabrics that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel, with features like wrinkle-resistant fabric or built-in sun protection.
- **Footwear:** You’ll be on your feet and walking a lot, so choose your footwear carefully. You can find especially supportive shoes designed for walking.

## Style Hints and Dress Codes

Tunisia is a majority Muslim nation, therefore your dress should be modest and conservative, in respect of Tunisia’s traditional Islamic culture. This means:

- **Covered shoulders and no low-cut necklines.** Local men tend to wear collared shirts or polo shirts rather than T-shirts. For women consider a loose, billowy top that covers you from the sun. Or bring a large scarf or shawl that you can drape over your bare shoulders when needed.
- **Shorts or skirts to the knee or below.** You should usually not wear shorts, and never when visiting a mosque. Women will get a better reception if they wear a mid-length travel skirt or mid-calf or capri pants are a popular choice.
- **Context matters.** Generally in places of worship or in someone's home it is better to cover up your shoulders and legs. When touring in large cities or enjoying outdoors activities, you can relax the rules a bit.
- **Women don't need to cover their hair,** except *perhaps* in a mosque, where it is considered a sign of respect. Each mosque has different rules, so if one requires it, your Trip Experience Leader will warn you beforehand. Mosques that require headscarves will have extras to lend or rent, so you don't need to bring one with you.
- **Morocco isn't as conservative as others in the region.** Many of the locals—especially the young—look to Europe for fashion trends. As a result, you will see some people in shorts, sleeveless tops, etc. And it is O.K. for you to wear them too, as long as you don't mind that you might get occasional stares. But you'll get a better response if you dress modestly.

And lastly, dress on our trip is functional and casual; there are no formal evenings.

## Recommended Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don't forget a reusable water bottle—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

## Year-Round Clothing Checklist

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts in a breathable or wicking fabric. Polo or collared shirts are more versatile than T-shirts. Billowy or loose tops will help you deal with the heat while staying covered from the sun.
- ☐ Trousers and/or jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best. We recommend that you bring at least one lighter pair for the day, and one a bit heavier for warmth at night in the desert. Mid-length or capri pants are a popular choice for women travelers.
- ☐ Walking shorts: Cut long for modesty



- ☐ Shoes and socks: Shoes should be comfortable walking or running shoes.
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor for sun protection
- ☐ Light cotton or wool sweater (motor coach air conditioning can be cold)
- ☐ Underwear and sleepwear
- ☐ Optional: Swimsuit, in case a hotel has a whirlpool or pool
- ☐ Optional: Travel skirt(s)
- ☐ Optional: Large scarf. Can be used as a head covering, shawl, or fashion accessory

## Seasonal Clothing Recommendations

### For fall and winter (October through March):

- ☐ Medium- or expedition-weight long thermal underwear top.
- ☐ Long thermal underwear bottoms
- ☐ Light wool or fleece sweater
- ☐ Polartec fleece jacket, or a medium-weight insulated parka.
- ☐ Warm hat and light gloves

## Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc. Our hotels will provide the basics like soap and shampoo, but most hotels do not provide a washcloth.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lens
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ☐ Insect repellent with DEET (30%-35% strength). Flies can be a serious nuisance in the Sahara.
- ☐ Light folding umbrella
- ☐ Moisturizer and sun-blocking chapstick

- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Hand sanitizer or anti-bacterial moist towelettes (not individual packets)
- ☐ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- ☐ Electrical transformer & plug adapters
- ☐ Camera gear with extra batteries or battery charger.

**TIP:** We suggest bringing more than one battery for your camera so you can use one battery while the other is charging.

### Medicines & First Aid Gear

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Travel first aid kit: Band-Aids, headache and pain relief, laxatives and anti-diarrhea tablets, something for upset stomach. Maybe a cold remedy, moleskin foot pads, antibiotic cream, or allergy medication.
- ☐ An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- ☐ Something to combat dehydration or heat stroke, such as salt tablets or powered sports drink/electrolytes
- ☐ Optional: A strong pain medication for rare emergency purposes

### Home-Hosted Visits

Many of our adventures feature a visit with a local family, often as part of the *A Day in the Life* experience. It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim communities because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all O.A.T. adventures include a Home-Hosted Visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

### Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

## Voltage

Electricity in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smart phones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

## Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because there are multiple plug types in this region, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

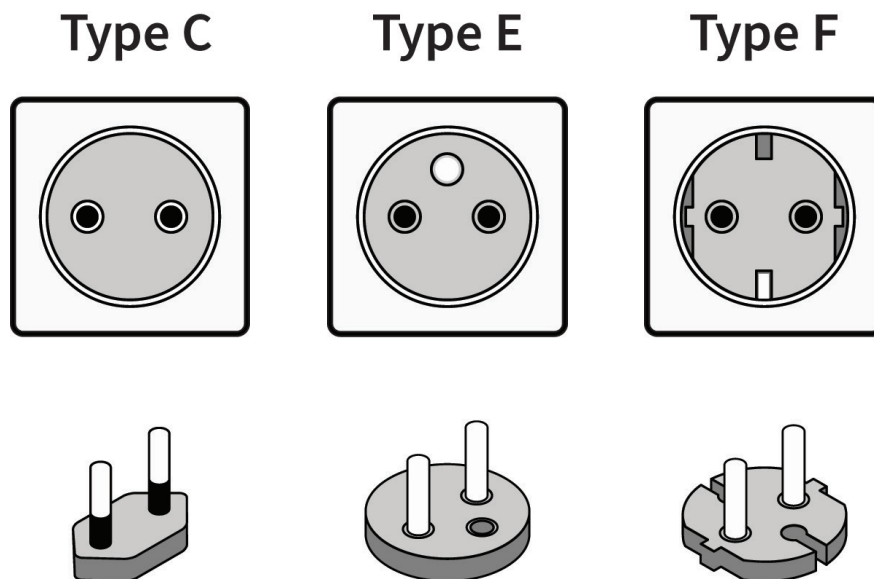
Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

*Note that Type C plugs can also fit into E and F sockets.*

**Tunisia:** C and E

**Algeria:** C and F

**Morocco:** C or E



### Availability

You will have electricity in your tent at the Sahara Desert Camp. However—just like in many parts of Tunisia—the electricity is supplied by a generator and/or solar panels and limited. As a result, the lighting in the tents or in some of your hotels may not be as bright as you are used to. Also we do not recommend using items like electric shavers or hairdryers as these tend to overload the system. Charging camera batteries or phones is fine, but may take longer than back at home.

Please be aware, the electricity at the Sahara Desert Camp is set on a timer and there will be no electricity in the Camp from **11:00pm to 6:00am**.

Lastly, Tunisia is prone to occasional power outages. **A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays.** Travelers dependent on electricity supply for health reasons (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) may want to consider a different O.A.T. adventure.

## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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**Tunisia:** Tunisia consists of two climatic belts, with Mediterranean influences in the north and Saharan in the south. Temperatures are moderate along the coast, with an average annual reading of 64°. In the Mediterranean north the summer season (from May through September) is hot and dry; the winter, (from October to April) is mild and characterized by frequent rains. In the Sahara and the south, the summer can get very hot and the winter surprisingly cold. Temperatures at Tunis range from an average minimum of 43° and maximum of 57° in January, to an average minimum of 70° and maximum of 91° in August. Precipitation in the northern region reaches a high of 59 inches annually, while rainfall in the extreme south averages less than 8 inches a year.

**Algeria:** Northern Algeria is in the temperate zone, and has a mild climate similar to other Mediterranean countries. Along the coast, temperatures average between 75° and 79° in the summer, and between 50° and 54° in the winter. Farther inland, the summers are a few degrees warmer, and the winters are about 10 degrees cooler, with frost and occasional snow. In the Sahara region, there are extreme highs and lows, with daily variations of more than 80°, very little rainfall, and frequent intense winds.

**NOTE:** If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- [www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)
- [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)
- [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	TUNIS, TUNISIA			TATAOUINE, TUNISIA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	60 to 46	86 to 68	2.4	59 to 41	--	0.9
<b>FEB</b>	61 to 46	87 to 65	2.1	63 to 45	--	0.6
<b>MAR</b>	64 to 48	87 to 63	1.8	68 to 48	--	1.0
<b>APR</b>	68 to 51	84 to 59	1.5	77 to 55	--	0.4
<b>MAY</b>	76 to 57	82 to 55	0.9	84 to 61	--	0.3
<b>JUN</b>	84 to 64	76 to 48	0.4	91 to 68	--	--
<b>JUL</b>	90 to 69	75 to 45	0.1	99 to 70	--	--
<b>AUG</b>	90 to 71	79 to 49	0.3	97 to 72	--	0.1
<b>SEP</b>	85 to 67	85 to 56	1.3	93 to 70	--	0.3
<b>OCT</b>	78 to 61	87 to 62	2.2	82 to 61	--	0.6
<b>NOV</b>	68 to 53	86 to 67	2.1	72 to 52	--	0.7
<b>DEC</b>	62 to 48	86 to 68	2.5	61 to 45	--	0.6

MONTH	ALGIERS, ALGERIA			MARRAKESH, MOROCCO		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	62 to 42	86 to 64	4.6	64 to 43	80 to 44	1.1
<b>FEB</b>	62 to 44	87 to 65	3.0	67 to 47	82 to 45	1.2
<b>MAR</b>	67 to 46	88 to 63	2.2	72 to 50	80 to 40	1.4
<b>APR</b>	70 to 49	87 to 62	2.6	74 to 53	80 to 40	1.3
<b>MAY</b>	76 to 55	88 to 62	1.4	80 to 57	79 to 38	0.7
<b>JUN</b>	83 to 61	85 to 56	0.6	87 to 62	78 to 35	0.3
<b>JUL</b>	89 to 67	83 to 53	0.1	97 to 69	69 to 28	0.1
<b>AUG</b>	90 to 68	84 to 54	0.2	97 to 69	69 to 28	0.1
<b>SEP</b>	86 to 64	85 to 57	1.1	90 to 66	71 to 32	0.3
<b>OCT</b>	79 to 58	84 to 60	3.3	80 to 59	76 to 39	0.8
<b>NOV</b>	70 to 50	85 to 63	3.7	72 to 52	77 to 42	1.5
<b>DEC</b>	64 to 45	85 to 66	4.6	66 to 45	79 to 45	1.1



## ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

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### O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

### Tunisian Culture

While it may be a slim wedge of northern Africa's expansive coastline, Tunisia is a country layered with thousands of years' worth of history and culture. Dotted with the ruins of ancient civilizations—from the ancient city of Carthage to Al-Zaytuna Mosque—Tunisia has long been a prize for ambitious empires: the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Ottoman Turks, Italians, and more recently the French. The Arab conquest of the 7th century CE introduced Islam and a more advanced culture. Further invasions by Arab tribesman, the Almoravids, and Almohads transformed the region even further, introducing new cities, sparkling mosques, and near-total Arabization. Tunisia has been predominantly Arabic-speaking and Muslim since then, even though dynasties have come and gone.

This Arab-Muslim country has a rich mixture of native and foreign influences that make up their national identity. Tunisia was deeply imbued with French culture during the 75 years of the protectorate—ending in 1956. Tunisians consider themselves to be more liberal and tolerant than their neighbors given equality laws instituted in the Tunisian constitution by the country's first president Habib Bourguiba. Women have the right to work, ask for divorce, run their own business, and have access to birth control and abortion. Additionally, women are free to choose to wear a headscarf. In fact, most urban women dress in Western clothes and do not veil themselves. Outside of urban areas, local life is much more traditional.

### Religion & Ramadan Festival

The main religion in Tunisia is Islam—about 99% of the population identify as Muslim—so an understanding of the religion will assist your discoveries. Practicing Muslims are expected to pray five times daily: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day. The call to prayer, called the ezan, is sung or broadcast from minaret towers to remind the faithful that it is time to pray. Friday is the Muslim Sabbath day, so some businesses will be closed or have limited hours.

When visiting a mosque, it is polite to be modestly dressed (no bare shoulders, no short skirts or shorts). You will be asked to remove your shoes before entering. In most mosques, women visitors are not required to cover their hair, but in others you may be asked to do so. Typically a mosque that requires special dress for female visitors will have pieces to lend or rent.

The biggest religious holiday is Ramadan, a month-long celebration that is meant to teach the values of restraint and charity. To participate, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. The fast is strict and includes no eating, drinking alcohol, cigarette-smoking, or gum-chewing during daylight hours. But as the sun starts to set, everyone rushes home so they can celebrate iftar—the joyous breaking of the fast. Suddenly the evening comes alive with music, eating, and shopping. The festivities often continue well into the night. The mosques and some streets are decorated with lanterns, special meals are prepared, and nighttime social events and festivals are planned.

If you'll be visiting Tunisia during Ramadan, what does this mean for you? Visitors are not required to fast, but out of respect you shouldn't eat, drink, or smoke openly. (It is OK to eat indoors, but you wouldn't sit outside with food.) Expect that some restaurants will be closed and others may not serve alcohol, but your Trip Experience Leader will be on hand to advise you of places to eat. Also, it is important to keep in mind that many of the people you meet will be participating in the fast, so they might not be their usual selves. It helps to have a bit of patience.

## **Meals**

Our meals will be based on the local cuisine. Breakfast will be continental, but otherwise we will experience the foods of Tunisia—many of them containing ingredients and spices that are new and different to us (although the food is not necessarily spicy). Traveler with dietary restrictions should inform their Trip Experience Leader; he or she will try to assist with changes to the menu wherever possible (but not all menus can be modified). Your Trip Experience Leader can also suggest restaurants for meals that are not included on your adventure.

## **Photography of Official Buildings**

Please note that it is not permitted to take photos of government buildings or secure facilities in Tunisia.

## **Taking Photographs**

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Please obey any signs regarding photos at museum or sites; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

## **Safety & Security**

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

## Tunisian Cuisine

Tunisian cuisine is within the Northern African tradition: *couscous* and *marqa* stews forming the backbone of most meals. Local cuisine is distinguished by the fiery *harissa* chili sauce, and the heavy use of the locally abundant tiny olives. Lamb forms the basis of most meat dishes, as does fish—particularly along the coast where local seafood is plentiful. Popular dishes include:

- **Chakchouka:** Assorted veggies (usually peppers and chickpeas, sometimes onions) are pan fried in a tomato sauce and served with a poached egg on top.
- **Tajine:** Unlike the Moroccan-style *tajine*, the Tunisian variety is a dish of beaten eggs, grated cheese, meat and various vegetable fillings—like a quiche, but without the crust.
- **Tunisian Salad:** A mixture of diced cucumber, peppers, tomatoes, and onions seasoned with olive oil. Sometimes this comes with a protein too, like tuna or hard boiled eggs.
- **Merguez:** Small sausages made with lamb, beef, or a mixture of both. Redolent of cumin, harissa, sumac, fennel, and garlic they smell divine and have a spicy heat.
- **Guenaoia:** A slow-cooked lamb or beef stew with okra, chillies, and spices.
- **Possion Complete:** A whole fish, grilled or fried to perfection and served with potato chips and a spicy pepper-based sauce.
- **Bread:** In Tunisia, it's not a meal if you don't have bread—French-style baguettes are served with *everything*.
- **Makroudh:** They may look like Fig Newtons, but they taste so much better. These small cakes are made with semolina flour wrapped around a filling of dates or almonds flavored with cinnamon and orange peel.

## Algerian Cuisine

Algerian cuisine is a diverse blend of Arab, Berber, Turkish, Spanish, Roman, and French cultures. If you like spicy food, you will find much to appreciate. Common ingredients include lamb, chicken, fish, grains, vegetables, and dried fruits. The most popular drink in Algeria is tea served with fresh mint. As in many Muslim countries, alcohol is not widely sold or consumed by the locals. Dishes to try include:

- **Couscous:** Tiny steamed balls of semolina flour, often served with stew on top
- **Jwaz:** A dish of braised vegetables in a spiced tomato sauce with potatoes and chickpeas
- **Mechoui:** A dish consisting of roasted whole sheep or lamb, seasoned and marinated overnight, then roasted on a spit to give it a crispy outside, and stuffed inside with onions, garlic, coriander, and tomatoes
- **Bagita:** A type of homemade bread, essentially Algeria's version of a French baguette
- **Dolma:** A dish of grape leaves or cabbage leaves stuffed with meat or seafood, often with a lemon sauce

## Moroccan Cuisine

Moroccan cooking blends Berber, Arabic, African, Spanish, and French traditions to create a culinary canon that is at once complex and delicate. Sweet and sour dishes were introduced by the Arabs, who borrowed them from Persia. Many breads were introduced by sub-Saharan African cultures. And there is a strong tradition of preserving and pickling fruits and vegetables, a contribution of Morocco's Jewish communities. Some dishes you might find while exploring Morocco include:

- **B'ssara:** A rich soup of dried broad beans swirled with olive oil, sprinkled with cumin, and enjoyed with warm bread.
- **Briouats:** A vegetarian option, **briouats** are crunchy, triangular pockets of **warqa** (phyllo dough) filled with meat, cheese, or vegetables. (There are also sweet varieties.)
- **Bstilla:** A sweet dinner consisting of a flaky casserole of phyllo pastry layered with pigeon or chicken; and flavored with almonds scented with orange flower water, saffron, and cinnamon and dusted with confectioners' sugar.
- **Kefta:** A dish of spiced beef or lamb meatballs simmered with tomatoes and poached eggs.
- **Chermoula:** A popular street food, **chermoula** is a sauce stuffed into grilled sardines and vegetables. The sauce contains a mix of spices, olive oil, fresh coriander, and lemon juice.
- **Babbouche:** A soup of snails in the shell swimming in a garlicky broth.
- **Kaab el ghazal:** Or Gazelle's ankles, a dessert of thin, sugary crescents filled with almonds and orange blossom water.
- **Roze bil heleeb:** A dessert of creamy rice custard topped with shredded coconut and almonds or pistachios, flavored with cinnamon and orange blossom.

## Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

### Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

## Crafts & Souvenirs

### Tunisia

Many travelers are surprised by the variety of goods for which Tunisia is known. Copper ware is formed into trays and engraved and olive wood is sculpted into carvings. You'll find leather wallets and handbags, clothing that varies from the colorful to the simple, intricate ceramics, cherubic dolls in local dress, decorative embroidery, and finely polished silverware and jewelry. But the most valuable commodity you'll find here are Tunisian carpets, either woven (non-pile) or knotted (pile). The National Handicrafts Office oversees the quality of Tunisia's carpets, so imitations are rare.

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price. You must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked.

### Bargaining

Tunisians enjoy negotiating over prices, and they expect it of their customers. When looking at large items, you'll often be invited to sit down and drink a cup of tea with the merchants. If this is your first experience at bargaining, don't worry—you'll quickly find your own style. Your opening offer should be well under the asking price. The only rule is that, if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. And remember, whatever price you pay is okay, as long as the item is worth that price to you.

### Algeria

Algeria is famous for its handicrafts, such as leatherware, copper, brassware, rugs, jewelry and dresses. Berber carpets and pottery are also of note. They are also famous for their local dresses, which you can often try on in the market and walk around in before deciding whether to buy. Like in Tunisia, bargaining is expected, and is an integral part of the cultural experience of shopping.

### Morocco

Morocco offers many fine craft items at good prices. Traditional souvenirs include gold and silver jewelry, wood carvings, cotton goods, tapestries, carpets, leather goods, pottery, copperware, brassware, basketry, fine inlaid woodwork, and spices.

**Bargaining:** Some shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change. Moroccans enjoy negotiating over prices, and they expect it of their customers.

*Many shops in Morocco are closed on Fridays. If they are open, they may close from mid-day prayer until early afternoon.*

## U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **www.cbp.gov** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

### Tunisia Customs:

The import of foreign currency is free. If the amount of foreign currency is equal to or greater than the equivalent of **25,000 Tunisian dinars** you are required to declare it to Customs at the entrance. If you are a non-resident and intend to re-export a balance of foreign currencies equal to or greater than the equivalent of **5,000 Tunisian dinars**, you are required to declare it to Customs. The currency declaration must be made on the “Foreign Currency Import Declaration” form before leaving the zone under Customs.



## DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

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### Tunisia

#### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 63,170 square miles
- **Capital:** Tunis
- **Languages:** Arabic (official); French and Berber are also spoken.
- **Location:** Tunisia is located in northern Africa, bordered by Algeria to the west, Libya to the southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and northeast.
- **Geography:** The Tunisian coast is rather jagged and irregular, which makes for many fine bays, coves, and harbors. It's most notable ports are Bizerte, Qabis, Safaqis, and Susah. The Atlas Mountains run through the north, though the Tunisian peaks are mostly below 4,000 feet tall. To the south, the Chott Djerid, a massive salt lake, acts as an eerie prelude to the Sahara Desert, which stretches to the Algerian and Libyan borders.
- **Population:** 11,516,189 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 99%, Other 1%
- **Time zone:** Tunisia is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 5am in Washington D.C., it is 10am in Tunis. Tunisia does not observe Daylight Savings, therefore Tunisia is only 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time when Daylight Savings is in effect.

#### National Holidays: Tunisia

In addition to the holidays listed below, Tunisia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/14 Revolution and Youth Day

03/20 Independence Day

04/09 Martyrs' Day

05/01 Labour Day

07/25 Republic Day

10/15 Evacuation Day

#### Tunisia: A Brief History

Tunisia's history is long and complex, which makes it one of the most fascinating countries in the world to visit. Over three millennia, it has been coveted, conquered, and re-conquered by tribes and countries seeking its fertile northern lands, a rare commodity in the Sahara region. Others

sought its valuable position as a strategic power center. With Sicily so close to its north, the maritime passage and trade between the two countries and into the eastern Mediterranean could be controlled.

Phoenicians from today's Lebanon were the first on record to settle on the coast—3,000 years ago in the tenth century, B.C. Four hundred years later, their city of Carthage grew into a major metropolis, second in size only to Alexandria, Egypt, and dominated the western Mediterranean. As Rome looked to expand their empire, Carthage became an obstacle. And over a period of 120 years (264 to 146 B.C.), the three Punic Wars, during which Hannibal's army made its now famous Alps crossing on elephants, revealed Rome as the victor. Carthage was relegated as a granary for the empire.

In the fifth century, the East Germanic Vandal tribe took over Tunisia from the west. Byzantine rule followed in the sixth century, and Arab in the seventh. During Arab rule, many Berbers were converted to Islam. Those who resisted conversion grew into a frequent source of rebellion against subsequent dynasties. Other takeovers followed: the Aghlabids and Zurids in the ninth and tenth centuries; Fatimid caliphs in the tenth and eleventh centuries, who went on to found the city of Cairo; and Sicilian Normans and Moroccan Almohad caliphs in the twelfth century. This was followed by a long rule (1230–1574) by the Berber Hafsid, during which Tunisia prospered. As the Hafsids' power weakened, Spain exerted control over some of Tunisia's coastal cities, until the Ottoman Turks claimed the region for Islam in 1574. The Turkish beys, or governors, declared independence for Tunisia. This was around the time that pirates roamed the north African coast, pillaging unfortunate ships and earning these waters the name of "Barbary Coast," a reference that some attribute to the barbarism of their actions and others to Berber tribes. Turkish rule lasted until 1957.

But Turkish Tunisia was not financially stable, and the bey turned to France for support. By the mid 1800s, the French had cause for concern as debts increased with no sign of repayment. They wrested control of the African nation's finances, with support from the British and Italians, in 1869. France eventually called Tunisia their own with the treaties of Bardo and Mersa in the 1880s, which put France in charge under a protectorate arrangement with a French general. Tunisian nationalists emerged and in 1920 the Destour, or Constitutional, party was formed with an eye toward liberation from France. Meanwhile, Habib Bourguiba formed the Neo-Destour party, a more extreme group that claimed to be more in touch with the desires of the majority.

France fell to the Germans in June 1940, and Tunisia fell under Vichy rule. Tunisians couldn't know that their country would become a stage for the most dramatic conflict of the North Africa campaign against the Nazis. This was the site of the Allies' first major operation in the war.

Post-war nationalist fervor grew, with Bourguiba driving for independence at the helm. But the still-ruling French resisted major reforms and talks of independence fizzled. In 1952, Bourguiba was imprisoned, leading to a wave of unrest. But three years later, Tunisia was granted complete self-government, followed by full independence in 1956. Habib Bourguiba was made Prime Minister. The newly placed assembly deposed the bey, Sidi Lamine, and a republic was declared in 1957. Bourguiba's focus was on modernization and economic growth for his largely agricultural country.

In 1987, General Zine El Abidine Ben Ali became president. Ben Ali's regime repaired Libyan relations and opened trade with Algeria, Mauritania, and Morocco. Socially, Ben Ali at first took a liberal stance, but reneged after Islamic activists dominated the 1989 elections—and in fact he took strong measures against their rise. In the 1994 elections, Ben Ali forbade the Islamic party Al Nahda from taking part, even arresting some of its dissidents. The result was 100% support by all legal opposition parties—and 100% of the vote.

Over the next decade, Ben Ali continued to maintain his position as president. And while his economic reforms strengthened Tunisia's economy, the ever-increasing discontent over high unemployment, police and political corruption, and a lack of freedom of speech outweighed the economic gains. In December 2010 a widespread series of protests and strikes inspired by these issues and other political concerns forced Ben Ali to resign and his party (the RCD) to dissolve.

With Ben Ali's departure to Saudi Arabia, a state of emergency was declared and a caretaker government put into place to give the country enough time to organize elections. But as many of the ministers had strong ties to the now-defunct RCD, there continued to be a reshuffling in top positions. Eventually Beji Caid Essebsi took over as Prime Minister and announced that elections to a Constitutional Assembly would be held on June 24, 2011; Mohamed Moncef Marzouki was sworn in as the 5th President of Tunisia in December 2011.

In January 2021, Kais Saied, the 8th President of Tunisia, was faced with national protests against police brutality, the economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In response, Saied dismissed the Prime Minister, Hichem Mechichi, and dissolved the Parliament. Saied's actions were protested by human rights organizations as a self-coup. Amidst the backlash, Saied announced he would rule by decree and instated Najla Bouden as Prime Minister, the first woman to have such a position in the Arab world.

Saied implemented a constitutional referendum vote in July 2022, after having suspended the Supreme Judicial Council. Saied won the referendum with a majority 90% of voters voting for Saied (of a 30.5% turnout).

## Algeria

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 919,600 square miles
- **Capital:** Algiers
- **Languages:** Arabic, Amazigh (both official); French and Berber are also spoken.
- **Location:** Algeria is located in northern Africa, bordered by Morocco to the west, Tunisia to the northeast, Libya to the east, Mauritania and Mali to the southwest, and Niger to the southeast.

- **Geography:** Algeria once had many forests, which were greatly reduced by forest fires and by agricultural use, especially during the colonial period. More recently, the government undertook a reforestation program, which created a “green barrier” from Morocco to the Tunisian frontier, to prevent further encroachment of the Sahara.
- **Population:** 43,851,044 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 99%, Other 1%
- **Time zone:** Algeria is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 5am in Washington D.C., it is 11am in Algiers. Algeria does not observe Daylight Savings, therefore Algeria is only 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time when Daylight Savings is in effect.

### National Holidays: Algeria

In addition to the holidays listed below, Tunisia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day  
01/12 Yennayer (Berber New Year)  
05/01 Labour Day  
07/05 Independence Day  
11/01 Anniversary of the Revolution

### Algeria: A Brief History

Algeria is a predominantly Muslim country, and a key part of the Arab Maghreb world of Northwest Africa, but it also has a significant Berber population. These influences, along with those of the Ottomans and French who separately ruled over the country, coalesced into a uniquely Algerian culture. From the 8th century through the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Algeria was ruled by a series of Arab-Amazigh dynasties. Following this era, it became part of the Ottoman Empire. Algeria enjoyed a brief period of independence between the decline of the Ottoman Empire and when it was conquered by France in 1830.

During French rule, the Muslim population in the rural areas was separated economically from the European community. In 1865, Napoleon III allowed Algerians to apply for full French citizenship. Since this would have meant renouncing their ability to be governed by sharia law in their personal lives, few Muslims took advantage of this opportunity. However, there was much evolution during this period in terms of health, infrastructure, and the overall economy, along with the formation of new social classes. During this time, there was also exposure to new ideas about political liberty and equality, which would help lead to the independence movement.

Around World War I, several groups formed which opposed French rule, including the National Liberation Front and the National Algerian Movement. This led to the War of Independence (1954-1962), which ended with most Europeans leaving the country. In the years since independence, Algeria has strived to reassert its Arab and Islamic culture, although there remains

a strong French influence on its language and culture. More recently, the development of natural resources such as oil and natural gas has increased the country's wealth and improved the standard of living. Today, Algeria has one of the largest economies in Africa.

## Morocco

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 172,414 square miles
- **Capital:** Rabat
- **Languages:** Arabic and Berber are the official languages; French and Spanish are also spoken.
- **Location:** Morocco is bordered by Algeria in the east, Mauritania in the south, the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and Spain in the north.
- **Geography:** Morocco's landscape varies from coastal lands near the Atlantic Ocean to mountainous regions to the Sahara Desert.
- **Population:** 37,984,655 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 99%, Other 1%
- **Time zone:** Morocco is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 5am in Washington D.C., it is 11am in Rabat. Morocco does not observe Daylight Savings, therefore Morocco is only 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time when Daylight Savings is in effect.

## National Holidays: Morocco

In addition to the holidays listed below, Morocco celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/11 Anniversary of the Independence Manifesto

05/01 Labour Day/May Day

07/30 Feast of the Throne

08/14 Anniversary of the Recovery  
Oued Ed-Dahab

08/20 Anniversary of the Revolution of the  
King and the People

08/21 Youth Day

11/06 Anniversary of the Green March

11/18 Independence Day

## Morocco: A Brief History

Morocco is unique for having been occupied by one group of people for all of its recorded history—people who have rarely been subjugated by outside forces. The Berbers or Imazighen (men of the land) have endured for millennia. They are not a homogenous group, but comprise various tribes who share some ethnic lineage. Nor were all Berbers nomads despite the stereotype. Most Berbers were farmers, but connected to fellow Berber traders and horsemen who developed semi-permanent encampments as they forged trade routes.

The Berbers often frustrated Roman attempts to govern them, though their rebellion was not always violent but often based on shrewd alliances and gamesmanship. Most Berbers continued to practice their traditional, animist religions. They also borrowed from other African and Egyptian religions, and as the millennium turned, many Berbers were Christian or Jewish.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Ummayyad Arabs conquered the Middle East in less than a decade, but needed 70 years to subdue Morocco's Berbers. They brought the Arab language, architecture, civil codes, and mostly, the new religion of Islam. Its ideals resonated with traditional Berber values and its adoption was widespread, rapid, and willing. But the Arabs were never able to unify the region politically. Though they enlisted Berber vassals to lead their conquest of Iberia, the sprawling caliphate proved difficult to manage, paving the way for Arab-Berber dynasties such as the Almoravids, Almohads, and Nasrids, who presided over Moorish Iberia, called al-Andalus. These dynasties have ruled Morocco continuously from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

When the Moors were expelled from al-Andalus in 1492, Muslim and Jewish refugees brought their cultures back to Morocco, enriching the Imperial Cities of Fez, Marrakesh, Rabat, and Meknes. Rulers rose and fell for 140 years and in the 1630s, the Alaouite family overthrew the Saadis, establishing a line that rules to this day. In the late 1800s, Morocco's strategic location and natural resources attracted France, which took control by 1912. Spain hung onto a small protectorate on the coast, Tangier was made an international zone, and Rabat became the capital. When Berbers rebelled in 1926, it took 25,000 Spanish-French troops to subdue them.



During WWII, Morocco was ruled by Vichy France, which was a Nazi puppet. But independent-minded Casablanca provided crucial support for the Allied North African campaign. *After the war in 1944*, Morocco demanded freedom, and France was eventually pressured to grant it. Mohammed V returned from exile in 1955; Morocco won its independence in 1956; Mohammed V crowned himself king in 1957; and handed power to his son, Hassan II, in 1961. Hassan II earned the people's affection in 1975 when he led the Green March into the Western Sahara to force Spain to hand over the province. More than 350,000 volunteers marched that day, but the dispute between Morocco and the western separatist Polisario Front still simmers.

Mohammed VI took the throne in 1999, and advanced many liberal policies including women's rights. In 2002, he married Salma Bennani, a computer science engineer, and many believed it symbolized the acceptance of modern roles. In 2004, the government imposed changes to family law geared toward lifting the gender inequality and protecting children. During the Arab Spring of 2011, Mohammed VI reacted with a deftness that eluded other leaders, announcing constitutional reforms, ceding more power to parliament, and making Berber an official state language. But Mohammed VI has increasingly been criticized for repressing freedom of speech, and the nation still struggles with poverty, unemployment, and corruption in the justice system.

## **Events that Shaped the 20th Century:**

### **Morocco's Battle Against Colonialism**

Situated at the entrance of the Mediterranean, with the Atlantic to the west and the Strait of Gibraltar to the north, Morocco has historically been a strategic location to control.

France had always shown an interest in fully conquering Morocco for centuries, interested in the land for its access to the Atlantic and Mediterranean, as well as its border with French-controlled Algeria. While France had slowly been taking over Morocco from the Algerian border and had their increasing military influence recognized by most world powers following the signing of the Treaty of Algeiras, France wanted more. And, on March 19, 1907, the assassination of Émile Mauchamp, a French doctor, in Marrakesh by an anti-French occupation mob, was just the reason they needed.

After snapping up more towns along the Algerian border, including Bechar and Oujda, France began their assault in earnest. The Moroccan people, incensed by the encroachment of the French and the disregard for their own sovereignty, responded by killing nine European laborers. Surprising the French, the Moroccans then managed to take back Casablanca. On August 5th, 1907, France retaliated and bombed Casablanca, destroying the city and killing thousands of Moroccans. France pushed into the region of Chaouia, a campaign that lasted 7 years, ending in France's control over the region. France also encroached from the east, using their Algerian border to facilitate their invasion.

The tribes of Morocco, instead of banding together against France, split their allegiance, with the sultan of Morocco, Abd al-Aziz bin Hassan, doing little to oppose France. The people of Fez however, called for war and instead supported the sultan's older brother, Abd al-Hafid. This devolved into a brief civil war, with Sultan al-Aziz gathering an army before marching to

Marrakesh to confront his older brother's forces. The Sultan's army was ambushed in the Battle of Marrakesh, and Sultan al-Aziz was forced to flee back behind French lines in Casablanca, where he later announced his abdication.

Sultan al-Hafid took power and nothing changed. The French were still encroaching on Moroccan sovereignty, with their campaign in the region of Chaouia. By 1911, a rebellion broke out against Sultan al-Hafid and he was besieged at his palace in Fez, forcing him to call upon the French to protect him. The French forces used this opportunity to take Fez.

Following the rebellion, Sultan al-Hafid, under duress, signed the Treaty of Fez, recognizing French control of certain areas of Morocco and giving the French Resident-General absolute power over both internal and external affairs. In the aftermath of the failed rebellion in Fez, France had managed to maneuver themselves into the position of power they had wanted from the start.

The Moroccan people reacted violently in a series of riots that became known later as the Bloody Days of Fez. During the riots, many Moroccan soldiers, under French commanders, joined the riots, attacking their commanders before moving to the European and Jewish quarters of Fez. Believing the Jewish populace to be helping the rioters, the French commander ordered the Jewish quarter be shelled. According to the Moroccan historian, Mohammed Kenbib, 66 Europeans, 42 Moroccan Jews and some 600 Moroccan Muslims were killed over the course of the two days of rioting.

After signing the treaty and retreating to Rabat, Sultan al-Hafid abdicated in favor of his youngest brother, Yusef.

The French Colonial Administrator, Hubert Lyautey, worked to maintain Morocco's independent culture, focusing instead on colonial education and urbanization, rather than the traditional assimilation route taken by France in Algeria and Tunisia. He worked closely with the Sultan, allowing the sovereign to retain cultural, practical, and religious power in Morocco.

When World War I and World War II swept through Europe, France recruited from the Moroccan infantry, with thousands of Moroccans making up the Moroccan Brigade, fighting for the French with little to no recognition.

Following World War II, Sultan Mohammed V, who succeeded his father, Sultan Yusef, in 1927, called for Moroccan Independence. Becoming the face of Morocco's independence movement, Sultan Mohammed V aligned himself with a series of nationalist movements and call for Morocco to join the Arab League. Demonstrating in front of huge crowds, he appealed for independence in several momentous speeches, including the Tangier Speech.

On August 20th, 1953, Sultan Mohammed V was forced out of Morocco by French authorities, exiled to Corsica, and later Madagascar, with his immediate family. In his place, France installed Mohammed Ben Aarafa, Sultan Mohammed V's first cousin once removed. The "French Sultan" was not recognized by the Moroccan people, and, in response, the nationalist movement bombed the central market in Casablanca on Christmas Eve 1953.

Supported by Libya, the National Liberation Front in Algeria, and Egypt, the nationalist movement managed to put pressure on the French and forced them to renegotiate Sultan Mohammed V's exile in 1955. Upon the Sultan's return, he managed to negotiate Morocco's independence and French Morocco became the Kingdom of Morocco with Mohammed V established as King on August 14th, 1957.

## RESOURCES

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### Suggested Reading

#### General North Africa

***Sahara Unveiled: A Journey Across the Desert*** by William Langewiesche (1996, Travel Narrative). An unusually rich and insightful travel memoir about across the Sahara.

***The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*** by Ross Dunn (1986, Memoir). Born in Tangier, Ibn Battuta was known as the “Traveler of Islam.” In thirty years of travel, Battuta visited the lands of every Muslim ruler, covering 750,000 miles and traveling to the Maghreb, Arabia, India, China, Indonesia, and even Russia.

***The Sheltering Sky*** by Paul Bowles (1949, Literature). Bowles’ most famous work, the tale of three American travelers whose lives unravel in the desert of North Africa. Another interesting work by the same author is *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*, a collection of eight travel essays, mostly on North Africa, but also India, Sri Lanka, and South America.

#### Tunisia

***Tunisian Mosaics, Treasures from Roman Africa*** by Aicha Ben Abed (2006, Art) Aicha Ben Abed introduces the history of Roman Africa and the rise of Mediterranean mosaics, the art of private citizens rather than the imperial Roman court. Lots of glorious illustrations, plus updates on current methods of preservation.

***A History of Modern Tunisia*** by Kenneth Perkins (2004, History) A more in-depth look at Tunisian history than the Traveller’s History listed above. Perkins explores the history of Tunisia from the mid-19th century to the present, with an examination of French colonial rule from 1881 to 1956, when the Tunisians achieved independence, and the subsequent process of state-building.

***Behind Closed Doors: Women’s Oral Narratives in Tunis*** by Monia Hejaiej (1996, Fiction) This book presents 47 tales told by three Beldi women—members of a historic society—in Tunis. The Arabic language and customs of Islam are firmly rooted in this community. Tale-telling is important to all Beldi women, and these three women tell stories which echo their life experience and have deep meanings for them. Their tales reflect accepted moral codes, and yet many depict attitudes, relationships, and practices that contradict established norms. These contradictory visions offer a kaleidoscopic view of the position of women in the rich life of a historic North African city.

***Hannibal and Scipio*** by Ross Leckie (1995, Historical Fiction) The first two books of the Punic War Trilogy by a classicist who draws on historical sources and presents the stories as personal memoirs, first of Hannibal and then of his rival Scipio Africanus. A third book entitled *Carthage* was also released in 2010.

***The Pillar of Salt*** by Albert Memmi (1955, History) This semi-autobiographical novel follows a young boy growing up in French-colonized Tunisia. In order to gain access to the privileges of French society, he must assimilate and reject many aspects of his identity—his religion, culture, and family. On the brink of World War II, he confronts anti-Semitism in Tunis and the Nazi occupation of Tunisia.

## Algeria

***A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962*** by Alistair Home (2006, History). A historical breakdown of the Algerian War for liberation from France.

***Children of the New World*** by Assia Djebar, translated by Marjolijn De Jager (2005, Historical Fiction). Based off of Djebar's experiences with the Algerian resistance during French colonial rule, *Children of the New World* depicts the struggles of women in Algeria as they join the fight for independence, outlining the reasons for violent insurrection and the tragic ramifications.

***The Lovers of Algeria*** by Anouar Benmalek, translated by Joanna Kilmartin (2004, Fiction). Nine-year-old Jallal, a homeless boy in Algeria, is found and taken in by Anna, an elderly Swiss woman, who wants Jallal to work as a translator for her. As they travel through the mountains of Algeria, Anna, having suffered numerous tragedies after living through the Algerian War of Independence, simply wants to find her lost love, an Arab man named Nasreddine, and pray at the graves of her murdered children before she passes.

***Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*** by Assia Djebar, translated by Dorothy S. Blair (1996, Historical Fiction). Follow the life of a young girl through the history of Algeria, starting with the French conquest in 1830, to the War of Liberation in the 1950s.

## Morocco

***In the Country of Others*** by Leïla Slimani (2020, Historical Fiction). Set in French-colonized Morocco following World War II, Mathilde settles into life in Morocco with her husband, Amine. Mathilde, a proud Frenchwoman, struggles with the unfamiliar sociality expectations as her husband, a soldier turned farmer, faces opposition as a Moroccan man married to a French woman. This award-winning novel views an interracial love story through the lenses of Morocco's fight for independence from French colonialism.

***The Last Storytellers*** by Richard Hamilton (2011, Anthology) Wander through Marrakech's legendary Jmaa el Fna square, and among the snake charmers, musicians, jugglers and hawkers, you may occasionally notice a storyteller holding court. As the tradition of publicly recounting folktales or fables slowly dies, Hamilton has here collected the best of these engaging stories.

***Horses of God*** by Mahi Binebine (2010, Literary Fiction). On May 16th, 2003, Casablanca suffered the deadliest attack in Morocco's history with fourteen suicide bombers killing forty-three people and over a hundred people were injured in the attacks. *Horses of God* views the attacks,

perpetuated by young adults from the shantytowns of Sidi Moumen, from one of the suicide bombers looking back on his life after death. Starting from childhood, Binebine raises four young boys through poverty and violence to a desperate bid for purpose in religious extremism.

***The Caliph's House, A Year in Casablanca*** by Tahir Shah (2006, Memoir). An entertaining account of the transformation of a ruined palace in Casablanca. Shah is a marvelous storyteller, interweaving Moroccan customs, history, black humor, and portraits of neighbors into one work.

***Dreams of Trespass, Tales of a Harem Girlhood*** by Fatima Mernissi (1994, Memoir). This memoir captures the true story of Mernissi's life growing up in a Fez harem during World War II. The harem was not an exotic seraglio of concubines but rather a part of the house where all the women of a family are secluded.) A coming of age story with vivid and often hilarious detail.

## Suggested Films & Videos

### Tunisia

***Gladiator*** (2000, Action) Although this historical drama of a Roman general forced to become a gladiator to survive is largely centered around Rome, the scenes set in Roman North Africa could easily be in Classical-era Tunisia.

***Star Wars*** (1977–2019, Science Fiction) This popular science fiction saga entered the cinematic stage in 1977 to tell the story of a rebel alliance fighting against the tyranny of an evil empire. Four movies in the saga (Episodes I–IV) feature scenes filmed in Tunisia, including that of the desert planet Tatooine. *Episode IV: A New Hope* introduces the hero of the original trilogy on his home planet with stunning views of the sandy vistas.

***Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel*** (1951, Drama) Desert Fox portrays the life of German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel at the end of WWII. It tracks Rommel's career beginning with a failed campaign in North Africa and ending with his eventual decision to join in a conspiracy against Hitler.

### Algeria

***Chronicle of the Years of Fire*** (1975, Historical Drama) This film spans the period from the beginnings of World War II to the start of the Algerian Revolution, and explores the effect of colonialism on everyday people, through the eyes of a farmer. It won the Palme d'Or at the 1975 Cannes Film Festival.

***The Battle of Algiers*** (1966, War) Nominated for three Oscars, this Italian–Algerian joint venture uses documentary-style techniques to recreate events from the Algerian War of 1954–1962, focusing on events between 1954 and 1957 when rebels waged guerilla warfare against the French government in the city of Algiers.

## Morocco

***Changing Times*** (2004, Comedy/Drama) A French engineer (Gérard Depardieu) contrives a job in Tangier in order to reconnect with a lost lover of thirty years (Catherine Deneuve.) Various other characters and subplots cast an interesting light on modern urban Moroccan life.

***Le Grand Voyage*** (2004, Drama). Driving his dad to Mecca for the Islamic pilgrimage is not what Reda, a French-Moroccan teenager, had planned. But plans change in this emotional road trip that explores the generational and cultural divide experienced by the many Moroccan immigrants. In French and Arabic with subtitles.

***Ali Zaoua: Prince of the Streets*** (2000, Crime Drama). Four homeless young boys in Casablanca dream of a better life. When their leader is killed by a rival gang, the three remaining boys are determined to give him a proper funeral, but are faced with the rival gang and their own uncertainties as they try to gather the resources needed.

***Hideous Kinky*** (1999, Drama) Kate Winslet plays a free-spirited, single British mother who decamps with her daughters to Morocco to find herself. Optimistic despite financial and personal setbacks, she remains dangerously oblivious to the needs of her children. A thoughtful look at Morocco's 1970s hippie mystique, and its reality.

***The Sheltering Sky*** (1990, Adventure/Drama) An unhappy American couple ventures deep into the North African desert in the hopes of rekindling their relationship. The farther they go, the more the chasm between them widens. Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, starring Debra Winger and John Malkovich, and featuring Paul Bowles, who wrote the book.



## Useful Websites

### **Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions**

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### **International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### **Electricity & Plugs**

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/  
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### **Foreign Exchange Rates**

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### **ATM Locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### **World Weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### **Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)**

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### **Packing Tips**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### **U.S. Customs & Border Protection**

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### **Transportation Security**

#### **Administration (TSA)**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **National Passport Information Center**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Holidays Worldwide**

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps or Maps.me**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber or Bolt or Grab**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App or Skype or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo or FLuentU or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

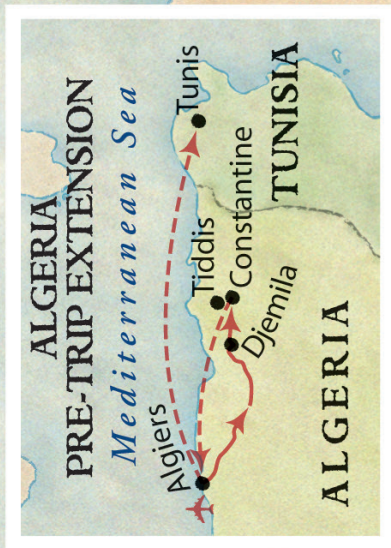
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

### **GeoSure**

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

### **Chirpey**

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more





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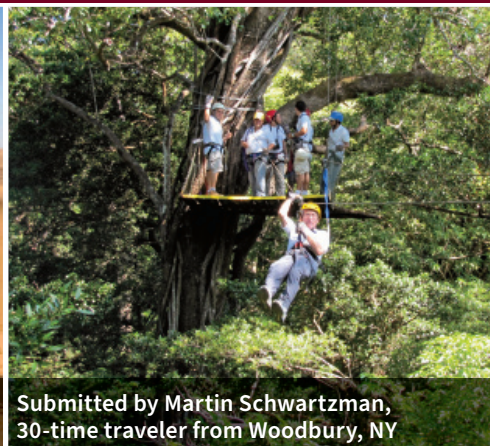
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Submitted by David Fong, 16-time traveler  
from Foster City, CA



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