



ACADEMY
TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

ALGERIA & TUNISIA

TREASURES BETWEEN
THE DESERT & THE SEA

Timgad

OVERVIEW

This tour combines two of northern Africa's historical jewels, Algeria and Tunisia. Two fascinating countries that share a common border and intertwined history.

Successively colonised by the Numidians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, Spaniards, Ottomans and the French, this region is a palimpsest of human experience.

Touring Tunisia and Algeria is a cultural odyssey, a perfect tangle of adventure, complex cultures, and grand ruins. Offering spectacular coastlines, bustling ports, snow-capped mountains, rolling sand dunes and perfectly-preserved archaeological sites, these countries are the perfect destination for the curious traveller seeking a destination that is truly unique.

On this 20-day expedition we wander the labyrinthine streets of exotic Casbahs, marvel at the mighty Roman monuments and mosaics, and lose ourselves in the tragic legend of Queen Dido and Aeneas. From blue seas to jagged hilltops, we explore the roads less travelled while enjoying the incredible hospitality in an area that remains off the mass-tourism radar.



TOUR LEADER

Dr Eireann Marshall is an Honorary Research Associate and Associate Lecturer with the Open University. She has published a number of articles on Ancient North Africa and has led many tours across this region.

TOUR DATES

February 3-22, 2025 | 20 Days

TOUR PRICE

\$13,860 per person, twin share
\$2,390 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

ITINERARY

Algiers (3 nights), Constantine (3 nights), Setif (2 nights), Batna (2 nights), Tunis (4 nights), Teboursouk (1 night), Sousse (4 nights)

INCLUSIONS

19 nights' accommodation in centrally located 4 and 5-star hotels. All breakfasts, 13 lunches and 10 dinners. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. Internal economy flights as indicated, all ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 6.00pm on Monday 3 February, at the bar of the Hotel Ferdi Lilly, Algiers.

The tour ends at 11.30am on Saturday 22 February, on arrival to Tunis-Carthage International Airport, for departing flights home.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

Monday 3 February

Arrive Algiers

Passengers will arrive into the historic city of Algiers at various times. Academy Travel will organise individual or group transfers from the airport to the hotel. The afternoon is at leisure before meeting your tour leader at the hotel bar for a pre-dinner drink and introductions. After time to meet your fellow travellers, we make our way to a local restaurant for our welcome dinner. Overnight Algiers [D]

Tuesday 4 February

Atmospheric Algiers

We start our adventure this morning by wandering down the narrow, labyrinthine streets in the centuries-old Casbah of Algiers. This striking 10th-century citadel was built on the ruins of old Icosium, a Phoenician commercial outpost. The iconic Casbah houses a wonderful collection of old mosques, Ottoman-style palaces and gardens. During our wanderings, we explore the enchanting buildings and gardens of the Musée National du Bardo, home to an extensive collection of ancient artefacts. You have the afternoon and evening at leisure to stroll along the beautiful boulevards, testimony to Algiers' French colonial legacy, and have the opportunity to visit the various merchants and shops offering unique local products. Overnight Algiers [B]

Wednesday 5 February

Between the mountains and the sea

Today we explore the rich and varied landscapes and monuments in the land between the mountains and the sea. We start by visiting the ancient Royal Mausoleum of Mauretania. Built in 3 BCE, the striking funerary monument is the tomb where the Berber King Juba II and Queen Cleopatra Selene II (daughter of the famous Queen Cleopatra and Mark Antony) were allegedly buried. Afterwards, we enjoy lunch at beautiful Tipasa, an ancient city overlooking the sea, which is home to impressive remains from the Roman Empire and the early Christian period. We continue along the coast to Cherchell, once the illustrious city of 'Caesarea'. Here we



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

The City of Bridges

Marvel at the floating city of Constantine. Encircled by the gorge of Wadi Rummel, this unforgettable City of Bridges contains a dramatic history set in an equally dramatic landscape.

Legendary Carthage

Immerse yourself in the legend. Home to the fabled Queen Dido and Trojan hero Aeneas, the city of Carthage on the North African coast is a must see for any lover of the Classics.

Gladiatorial Splendour

Discover the impressive ruins of the largest colosseum in North Africa, found in the small village of El Jem. This huge 3rd-century amphitheatre illustrates the grandeur and extent of Imperial Rome.

Exotic Algiers

Wander the exotic streets of Algiers, where the colourful Casbah is counterbalanced by the wonderfully engaging mix of Ottoman grandeur, French colonial architecture and traditional culture.

The stunning mosaics of Setif

Appreciate the exquisitely detailed Roman mosaics in Setif, some of the finest you will see anywhere in the world. Found under the city's Byzantine citadel, they are now held in Setif Archaeological Museum.



travel back in time to the height of the Roman Empire and appreciate the wealth of treasures and human experiences this lively Mediterranean port holds. Overnight Algiers (B, L)

Thursday 6 February **Hippo Regius to Constantine**

We depart Algiers this morning and board a short flight to Annaba, built on the ruins of ancient Hippo Regius. The strategically placed city was an important settlement for the Phoenicians, Berbers, Romans and Vandals, and played a significant role in the foundations of Western Christianity as the home of St. Augustine of Hippo and the early Christian councils. After exploring Hippo Regius, we enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before continuing to the picturesque plateau city of Constantine, our base for three nights. Overnight Constantine (B, L, D)

Friday 7 February **'A fantastic city, something like Gulliver's flying island'**

Settled by the Neolithic Berbers and developed by the Romans, the ruins of Tiddas hover on a barren mountain slope, some 30 km from Constantine, and are perhaps the most impressively situated of all of Algeria's Roman sites. We start our day here before stopping for lunch in a traditional Algerian restaurant. This afternoon we return to 'The City of Bridges', the extraordinary Constantine, a town that the French writer Alexandre Dumas called, 'a fantastic city, something like Gulliver's flying island'. Situated on an outcrop of rock in a deep gorge carved out by the Oued Rhumel, the city has been a natural fortress since Neolithic times. The Numidians made it their capital and, after Julius Caesar defeated their army, it remained the capital of Roman Numidia. After a rebellion in 311 CE, the city was destroyed, and remained so until the Emperor Constantine gave orders for it to be rebuilt – and renamed, using his name. In this dramatic city we explore the archaeological museum and Byzantine Fort before dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Constantine (B, L, D)



Saturday 8 February **At leisure in Constantine**

Today we stop to take a breath, sleep-in if desired and enjoy a day at leisure in magical Constantine. You might like to stroll across the Pont Sidi M'Cid, one of the city's many suspension bridges, visit the Great Mosque and grand Ottoman Palace, or wander through the Casbah and enjoy its unique architectural heritage. Overnight Constantine (B)

Sunday 9 February **Setif & Roman Mosaics**

Departing Constantine this morning, we continue to Setif where we have the opportunity to marvel at the exquisitely detailed Roman mosaics, including the 'Triumph of Dionysus' and the 'Birth of Venus' at the Archaeological Museum. Uncovered beneath Setif's Byzantine citadel, the huge and



Djémila



Timgad

ornate Roman mosaics are some of the finest you will see anywhere in the world. After a leisurely lunch, we stroll through the ancient town and take in the vestiges of Roman ruins before enjoying dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Setif (B, L, D)

Monday 10 February

Djémila - Roman Power & African Beauty

We journey west this morning to the site of Djémila, which means 'Beautiful' in Arabic. Situated on a narrow plateau, 900m above sea level, this city was once described as 'one of the most perfect expressions of the meeting of Roman power and African beauty'. Despite the mountainous terrain, its builders futilely tried to conform to Roman grid planning standards, resulting in an interesting and unusual layout. This, along with the city's great state of preservation, was one of the reasons the site was granted UNESCO World Heritage status. After exploring the picturesque ruins, we enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before returning to Setif for an afternoon and evening at leisure. Overnight Setif (B, L)

Tuesday 11 February

The Oasis of Batna & Lambessa Roman Ruins

Our expedition continues to the oasis town of Batna, situated on a well-watered plain that is bounded by the Aurès Massif, the Batna Mountains and the cedar-forested Mount Tougor. The town originated in 1844 as a French military outpost, established to protect the El-Kantara Pass between the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara. After some refreshments, we visit the Roman town of Lambessa nearby. Established during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the town boasts two triumphal arches, temples, an aqueduct, amphitheatre, baths and many private houses. The evening is at leisure after we arrive at our hotel. Overnight Batna (B, L)

Wednesday 12 February

Trajan's Timgad

Timgad, also known as Thamagadi, features the most thoroughly excavated and best-preserved Roman remains in North Africa. Founded by the Emperor Trajan in 100 CE, the town proved to be of great defensive importance and enjoyed long prosperity due to the fertility of the surrounding area. This morning we explore the remains of Timgad's forum, which includes a 4th-century library, a theatre capable of holding 4,000 people and an extraordinarily large number of public baths! Afterwards, we return to our hotel for an afternoon of leisure before enjoying some regional cuisine in a local restaurant. Overnight Batna (B, L, D)

Thursday 13 February

Onwards, to Tunisia

Today is a transit day, as we depart Algeria for Tunisia and make a short flight to the sprawling capital, Tunis. We transfer to our hotel on arrival, situated along the Mediterranean coastline overlooking the Gulf of Tunis. This resort style hotel



Carthage



Aqueduct

will serve as a relaxing base for the next three days if travel. Once settled, there is time to unwind by the hotel's pool or explore the extensive grounds. Dinner tonight is in a local restaurant before our adventures begin again in the morning. Overnight Tunis (B, D)

Friday 14 February

Tragic Carthage - the fabled city of Dido

Carthage was founded by the strong and courageous Princess Alyssa, who in ancient texts is known as Dido 'The Wanderer'. Sister of Pygmalion, the king of Tyre, she left Phoenicia with a handful of companions in 814 BCE and founded a 'new city' or Qart Haddasht, in the Phoenician language. With the decline of the Phoenician cities of the East, Carthage became the centre of power and Dido made it into one of the richest empires of its time. Her story tragically entwines with the Trojan hero, Aeneas, and their ill-fated love affair became immortalised in Virgil's Aeneid, Book IV. Aeneas went on to found Rome and ironically it was the Romans who later invaded Carthage and set it alight in 146 BCE. A century later, Carthage would be reborn from its ashes and rebuilt in Rome's image - equal in splendour due to the size and opulence of its monuments. This morning we explore this famed city, starting at its founding place, the hilltop of Byrsa. The hilltop is crowned by an enormous esplanade, where the forum and principal official buildings were located and was home to the Punic area, known as District Hannibal. Afterwards we stroll between the stelae in the enigmatic Tophet, the Punic sanctuary dedicated to the deities Tanit and Baal Hammon, and then admire the ancient artefacts housed in the Museum. After lunch we visit the Baths of Antoninus, some of the most remarkable of the Roman world due to their opulence and grand size. Overnight Tunis (B, L)

Saturday 15 February

Oudna - Tunisia's Hidden Gem

Today we travel south, stopping en route to examine a section of the longest aqueducts built in the Roman Empire. Built around 120 CE, this extraordinary feat of engineering was undertaken at Emperor Hadrian's command. The aqueduct carried 32 million litres of water per day from its source at Mount Zaghuan to Carthage! Afterwards, a short drive takes us to Oudna and the site of ancient Uthina, a colony established by Emperor Augustus for retired soldiers of the Third Legion. The remains of the capitol, amphitheatre, baths, and wealthy houses with mosaics provide material evidence for this high-status settlement. We stop here for lunch before returning to Tunis in the afternoon. Overnight Tunis (B, L)

Sunday 16 February

Beautiful Kerkouane

This morning we travel along the beautiful coastline of the Cap Bon peninsula to Kerkouane, considered to be the best-preserved Punic town in Africa. Discovered in 1952, extensive excavations have revealed a semi-circular layout, enclosed



Dougga



El Jem

by a low rampart. Burned and deserted in the 3rd-century BCE, the ruins reveal intact evidence relating to the Carthaginians' way of life. Here we see a very early form of the mosaic, known as the opus signinum featuring the 'Sign of Tanit', a powerful talisman protecting the early inhabitants of the Punic house. We then make our way through the gentle hilly landscape to the artisanal town of Nabeaul, where we enjoy lunch together before visiting the Nabeul Museum and archaeological site. Returning to Tunis, we enjoy dinner together this evening in a local restaurant. Overnight Tunis (B, L, D)

Monday 17 February Stunning Dougga

We make our way to Teboursouk today, stopping at Majaz al Bab, home to the Commonwealth War Memorial, commemorating the almost 2,000 men of the British First Army who died during operations in Algeria and Tunisia. After lunch in Teboursouk, we visit the magnificent site of Dougga, perched high on the hill above fertile olive groves. Dougga is one of the oldest towns in Tunisia and began life as a Numidian walled citadel, which was later built over by the Romans. Its native ancestry and hillside location resulted in a winding street plan rather than the typical Roman grid, providing Dougga with a unique character. Dinner tonight is in the hotel. Overnight Teboursouk (B, L, D)

Tuesday 18 February Notorious Bulla Regia

This morning we visit Bulla Regia, a rare site that contains complete, superbly preserved, subterranean Roman houses. Most of the mosaics remain in situ, so we can view them in their original context. In antiquity, the city developed a scandalous reputation and in the 4th-century, St. Augustine preached a famous sermon here, berating the citizens for their loose and immoral ways! After lunch in a local cafe, we continue our journey to the coastal town of Sousse, with time to freshen up before we meet again for dinner. Overnight Sousse (B, L, D)

Wednesday 19 February Charming Sousse

Once an early Phoenician trading-post en route from Tyre to the West, the port at Sousse was used by Hannibal in his campaign against Scipio at the end of the Second Punic War, and also by Caesar in 47 BCE. The Medina of Sousse is now home to a vast citadel Casbah, dominating the whole town. This morning we visit the Museum and wander through the souks and narrow streets, while admiring the distinctive blue and white houses of this charming old town. The afternoon is at leisure, to rest, swim or explore as desired. Overnight Sousse (B)

HOTELS

Hotels have been selected principally for their central location and proximity to sites visited. All hotels are excellent four or five-star standard.

Algiers, Hotel Ferdi Lilly

(3 nights)

Constantine, Protea by Marriott

(3 nights)

Setif, Park Mall Hotel

(2 nights)

Batna, Hotel CH Chaker

(2 nights)

Tunis, The Residence

(4 nights)

Teboursouk, Hôtel Thugga

(1 night)

Sousse, Hasdrubal Thalassa

& Spa Port El Kantaoui Hotel

(4 nights)

WEATHER

The weather in Tunisia and Algeria during February is packed with sunshine and daily temperatures between 13°C - 18°C. The evenings can be cooler, with lows of 8°C, and there is always a chance of rainy days, so bring along a jacket.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Three

This tour is among our most physically demanding. You should be able to:

- comfortably participate in up to five to seven hours of physical activity per day
- walk at an easy to regular pace, sometimes on uneven terrain, with only short breaks
- negotiate challenging historic and archaeological sites, which are often uneven and unstable

For all fitness requirements, please visit our website.

Thursday 20 February

Gladiatorial Battles - The Amphitheatre of El Jem

The highlight of today is a visit to the magnificent Amphitheatre of El Djem. Starring in the Hollywood epic 'Gladiator', the grand structure was built in 238 CE, and is said to have been modelled after the Colosseum in Rome. Featuring three tiers of seats, reaching 36m in height, the massive Amphitheatre of El Djem could once accommodate up to 35,000 roaring spectators. After lunch in a local restaurant, we wander through the impressive archaeological site and visit the museum, which houses a rich tapestry of Roman era art. Overnight Sousse (B, L)

Friday 21 February

The Centre of Learning - Kairouan

Today we set forth on a pilgrimage to Kairouan, the fourth holiest city of Islam. Founded in 670, Kairouan became the Aghlabid capital and centre of learning. Over the centuries it has never lost its ancient esteem and it is still a place of holy pilgrimage. This morning we visit the Aghlabid pools, reservoirs built on the outskirts of the city in the 9th century, which at one time were considered to be a great wonder and often mentioned by Arab geographers for their grandeur. We also stop to admire the Great Mosque, one of the major monuments of Islam and an architectural masterpiece, constructed using hundreds of Roman and Byzantine pillars, including many from Carthage. In the afternoon we explore the Kairouan Souk, with its network of winding streets, shops and courtyard houses before enjoying a farewell dinner at a fine local restaurant. Overnight Sousse (B, D)

Saturday 22 February

Depart Tunis

This morning we head to Tunis, where we say our goodbyes and depart on individual flights in the afternoon. (B)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Jamal Fairbrother** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

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