



Tunisia: From Carthage to the Sahara

20 OCT – 6 NOV 2020

Code: 22045

Tour Leaders **Dr Christopher A. Tuttle**

Physical Ratings 

Explore Tunisia's fascinating layered history visiting Berber oasis villages with troglodyte houses, UNESCO heritage-listed Roman & Phoenician cities, fine antique mosaics & Islamic buildings.



Overview

Travel with noted archaeologist, [Dr Christopher Tuttle](#), visiting:

- Magnificent Roman ruined cities of Dougga, Thurburbo Majus, Uthina and Sbeitla, with fine examples of antique architecture.
- El Djem, containing the most impressive and well-preserved Roman amphitheatre after the Colosseum.
- Kerkouane, the world's best-preserved example of a Phoenicio-Punic city.
- Tunisia's unmatched Roman mosaics in the Bardo, El Djem and Sousse museums.
- The Islamic world's most significant architecture from all periods and dynasties since the 7th century, including the very early Kairouan mosque and the Sousse mosque, reputed to have the earliest extant minaret. The medinas of both Kairouan and Sousse are both UNESCO World-heritage sites.
- The extraordinary, dramatic Oued Seldja Gorge, which we travel on the restored Ottoman *Lezard Rouge* (Red Lizard) train.
- The fortified coastal *ribat* town of Monastir and extraordinary port town of Mahdia.
- Port of Bizerte, located on the north coast; featuring a picturesque old harbour, medina and kasbah.
- Berber desert and mountain villages, with troglodyte houses and distinctive granaries, set in narrow mountain valleys and palm oases on the edge of the Sahara.
- Dinosaur footprints, fossils, cave paintings and a dig site for fossilized dinosaur bones - by special arrangement with the Association des Amis de la Mémoire de la Terre de Tataouine.
- The Sahara's edge, where we witness the sun setting over the dunes, an inimitable experience.

18-day Cultural Tour of Tunisia

Overnight Tunis (4 nights) • Sousse (2 nights) • Tataouine (2 nights) • Ksar Ghilane (1 night) • Tozeur (2 nights) • Kairouan (3 nights) • Sidi Bou Said (4 nights)

Overview

This tour, led by Dr Christopher Tuttle, will explore Tunisia's fascinating layered history by visiting Berber oasis villages with distinctive troglodyte houses, Roman cities with fine imperial monuments like el Djem's huge amphitheatre, museums with magnificent antique mosaics, and beautiful Islamic buildings constructed over 1500 years. Just one of these is Kairouan's magnificent early mosque, which played a key role in the Islamisation of North Africa. We also chart the development of Muslim Tunis on the ruins of its ancient predecessors, Phoenician and Roman Carthage; the city's bustling *souq* owes much to Iberian émigrés who developed Tunisia's wool trade after their expulsion from Spain. This city is also graced with fine mosques, tombs and madrasas in the style of North Africa's Ottoman conquerors, the Turks. You will also encounter the fascinating *ribats* of Sousse and Monastir, built to defend Islamic Ifriqiyya from European incursions, and the extraordinary port city of Mahdia, constructed to launch the Shi'a Fatimids' 10th century invasion of Egypt. Travelling south from the Mediterranean littoral, we leave behind the great northern wheat fields which made this Rome's 'bread bin', to the edge of the Sahara. Here we encounter Roman frontier fortresses designed to control the movements of the desert peoples, where fascinating Berber villages have mud brick granaries, designed to protect the precious harvest from Arab raiders. Here, on the edge of the Sahara, you will explore remote oases approached by four-wheel drive and by camel, and watch the crimson sunrise over the desert.

The Historical Context of the Tour

Tunisia lies between the great Sahara and the southern coast of the Sicilian channel. The desert emerged

around 2,000 BC when the region, once temperate, became hotter and drier. Continuous human habitation, however, has been documented in Tunisia's southern regions since at least 10,000 BC. The indigenous African tribes of the Sahara and the Mediterranean littoral - and the mountains that separate them - were called many names by different invaders. The desert peoples have variously been known as Garamantes, Gaetules and Louata. Those further to the North were known by the Greeks as Libyans, by the Romans variously as Africans, Numidians and Moors, and by the Arabs as Berbers; indigenes, to the contrary, would have known themselves by their tribal names, or often called themselves names like Imazighen - 'free men' - to distinguish themselves from city dwellers in the thrall of governments. These oasis dwellers and desert wanderers are the forebears of what foreigners now call Berbers and the desert Tuareg, who have interacted over millennia with the various hegemonies that have threatened their territories and their freedom.

To the north, the narrow Sicilian Channel, meanwhile, connects the western and eastern basins of the Mediterranean, and Tunisia therefore lies at the heart of the most travelled sea in history. Whilst various dynasties have both traded with and fought the indigenous peoples of the interior, the proximity of Europe and Africa at this point, and the necessity for all trans-Mediterranean trade to pass through the constricted channel, have consistently shaped Tunisia's history. Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Habsburgs and Ottomans have all struggled to assert control over the African shores of the Sicilian channel. Many of these different civilisations and empires have left their mark upon the rich and diverse architectural heritage of Tunisia. Each is unique, nonetheless all are characterised by eclecticism and an ability to synthesise the diverse cultural influences they have experienced. At the same time, their extensive and imposing coastal fortifications bear witness to the violence of the historic struggle for control of the Sicilian channel.

Little is known of the prehistoric history of Tunisia. By 1000 BC the Phoenicians had begun to draw the region into their trading network that extended from the Levant to Spain and beyond. Carthage became the most famous Phoenician city in the western Mediterranean, and after the destruction of the Phoenician Levantine homeland, the centre of the Punic seaborne trade empire (Thalassocracy). The Romans challenged the Phoenicians for supremacy in the Mediterranean during the Punic Wars (264-146 BC). Carthage finally capitulated in 146 BC thus ending the third Punic War, inaugurating the creation of Roman Africa. What is now Tunisia thereafter supplied the empire with wheat and animals; the mosaics of rich town houses in Tunisia show scenes of the hunt, African animals, and public games. Garish yellow and pink Tunisian Chemtou marble became the most sought after marble in Rome. Influence travelled in both directions. Whilst Africa became the bread bin of the Empire, the Romans introduced the olive to North Africa. Some scholars even believe that it was the Romans who brought the Middle Eastern Camel to the westerly parts of North Africa. The wealth experienced by the region under the Romans manifested itself in a number of magnificent North African cities, like Dougga, Sbeitla and El Djem, whose monuments stand in fine condition today, partly because many remained empty after antiquity and therefore were never built over by later city layers.

In the 5th century the Vandals swept through North Africa from Spain, and took up residence in the rich Roman province of Numidia, modern Tunisia. The Vandals for a time interrupted trade and communication in the southern Mediterranean. With the 6th century Byzantine reconquest of North Africa, however, the region was brought once more into a Mediterranean empire, this time an eastern Christian empire whose political control was weak but whose cultural influence was great. Africa, which had produced one of Early Christianity's greatest thinkers, St Augustine, continued to influence European Christianity at this time. Although Byzantine control was limited to the coasts of the Western Mediterranean, the Byzantine mosaics that we shall see in Tunisia offer lasting testimony to Byzantine African culture

After a century, Byzantium lost control of North Africa to the newly converted Arabian followers of the

Prophet who at first fought pitched battles with, but later gradually Islamised, North Africa's Berber tribes. In the early 9th century Arabo-Berber Aghlabid dynasty's (800 – 909) naval forces captured Malta and Sicily and for two centuries the North African Muslims remained masters of the Mediterranean and a thriving trading empire linking Tunis to Islamic Spain, Sicily and the ports of Egypt and the Levant. At the same time, trans-Saharan trade expanded, connecting Ifriqiyya, the Arab name for Tunisia, to a huge Islamic Afro-Asian trading network.

Despite thriving trade links, Tunisia was soon to come into religio-political conflict with the rest of the Arab world when the Shi'a Fatimid Dynasty seized power (909-973). The Fatimids built the port of Mahdia on Tunisia's east coast from which their navy conquered Egypt, leaving Tunisia to the Zirid Dynasty (973 – 1160). This momentous invasion led to the (Fatimid) founding of the modern city of Cairo, and war with the Sunni Seljuk Turks of Iran and Syria.

In the 11th century Europe began to reassert her presence in the Mediterranean, starting with the capture of Sicily from the Muslims. The Normans who conquered southern Italy and Sicily between the 1060s and 1090s moved into Ifriqiyya. The Berber Almohads (Ar. al-Muwahhidun) from Morocco (1160-1227), however, soon drove them out, but they remained masters of Sicily and Malta, whose Arabic-speaking and Muslim populations continued to trade with Muslim Tunisia.

The Norman capture of Sicily was, however, a symptom of the southward and eastward movement of Europeans, which produced the Crusades (the Sunni Seljuks and Shi'a Fatimids were so preoccupied fighting each other that they did not see the Crusaders coming), the Spanish 'Reconquista', and the gradual usurpation of Mediterranean trade by Barcelona, Marseille and the Italian city states. In coastal cities like Sousse and Monastir, we shall encounter *ribats*, religio-military fortresses built to defend Tunisia's shores against Christian incursions. The Hafsid State now emerged in this region (1227 – 1574).

From the time of the Fatimids to the rise of the Hafsids Tunis, the Muslim city that had replaced the older Phoenician, Roman and Byzantine metropoli, grew to be the great capital of Ifriqiyya and the largest and most prosperous city in North Africa, a prosperity largely based, despite constant political and military contest with the Europeans, on her Mediterranean trade connections. The Sicilian Channel nevertheless henceforth became divided into a Christian north and a Muslim south, and its historic unity ruptured, although coastal peoples to the north and south maintained contact through smuggling, corsairing and piracy.

In the 16th century the two great Mediterranean powers, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, both tried to reverse this situation and secure both sides of the Sicilian channel for themselves. The Habsburgs initially held the upper hand: Charles V, who had inherited Sicily and Malta along with Spain, captured Tunis in 1535. In the same year he persuaded the Knights of St. John, expelled by the Ottomans from Rhodes in 1522, to garrison Tripoli in what is now Libya, in return for possession of Malta. The Ottoman vanguard of Turkish corsairs, however, soon expelled the Knights from Tripoli and then repulsed a Habsburg attack on the Tunisian island of Jerba, and besieged Malta (1565). The siege of Malta failed and in 1571 the Habsburgs, assisted by Venice, defeated the Ottomans at the naval Battle of Lepanto. The Ottomans nevertheless rebuilt their fleet and in 1574 defeated and expelled the Habsburgs from Tunis. After a century of fighting Habsburgs and Ottomans finally accepted that the north of the channel would remain Christian and the south Muslim. The Ottoman rulers of Tunis, the beys, were surrounded by a coterie of renegades, Christian converts to Islam, who added their touch to the great Turco-Tunisian palace of the era, the Bardo, and also to many of Tunis' palatial residences.

Legitimate trade and corsairing tied Tunis to Sicily and the Italian mainland until the late 19th century, and numerous Sicilians and Maltese settled on the Tunisian coast as exporters of olive oil to Europe. When Sicily

became part of a unified Italian state in 1860, the strength of her connection with Tunisia made the latter the first target of Italian colonialism. When Tunisia became a French protectorate in 1883, the vast majority of non-Tunisian nationals in the country were Sicilians and Maltese. Following independence Tunisia has self-consciously asserted its own identity, rediscovering its Arab and Berber heritage.

Leaders



Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

Archaeologist, specialising in Petra and the Nabataeans, and a former Associate Director of ACOR in Amman (2006-2014). Chris holds a BA in Classical and Medieval Studies and an archaeology PhD from Brown University. He leads ASA's tours to Jordan, Southern Turkey & Tunisia in 2020.

Christopher A. Tuttle is an archaeologist whose research focuses on the Hellenistic and Roman periods in the Middle East. His specialisation is the ancient kingdom of the Nabataeans and their capital city of Petra, where his fieldwork has been centred for nearly 20 years. He holds a BA in Classical and Medieval Studies from the University of Massachusetts, Boston and a PhD from the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World at Brown University. Chris lived and worked full time in the Middle East for nearly 15 years, first in Jerusalem and then in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Initially interested in ancient mystery cults from the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods and heretical movements in Medieval Europe, Christopher shifted his area of research to the Middle East to explore the period of transition between the end of the independent Hellenistic kingdoms and the rise of Roman hegemony in Syria and the Levantine region.

His doctoral work focused on the Nabataeans at Petra, who were the last independent kingdom in the area to be absorbed by the Romans. Christopher has travelled extensively in the Middle East to explore important archaeological sites from all periods of the region's long history and has worked on a number of excavations and surveys, including in Israel/Palestine, Qumran, Ramat Hanadiv, Khirbet Jiljil, Jerusalem, Tzuba, Sepphoris, Mizpe Ramon, Mampsis, and Sobeita.

In Jordan, he worked briefly with the French at Khirbet es-Samra before focusing on Petra and its hinterlands; his excavation, survey, and conservation projects there include work on some of the major monuments, including the 'Great Temple', Petra Church, 'Upper Market', 'Garden and Pool Complex', the 'Monumental Platform', and the 'Temple of the Winged Lions', where he envisioned and launched the Temple of the Winged Lions Cultural Resource Management Initiative (TWLCRM), an award-winning and innovative grassroots project that pioneered a new model for the involvement and training of local people in the preservation and management of cultural heritage resources that affect their lives. He also co-directed the Brown University Petra Archaeological Project, which conducted the most extensive landscape survey to date in the northern Petra hinterlands, including the area of Beida (also known as 'Little Petra'), with its important remains from earliest prehistory through to the modern day. He has also assisted and advised on many other archaeological and cultural resource management projects throughout the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, as well as in Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, as well as in Egypt and other North African countries.

He is currently the field director for the groundwork team surveying around Hegra (Mada'in Saleh), an archaeological site located in the Al Madinah Region of Saudi Arabia, whose remains mainly date from the Nabataean kingdom.

He was the Associate Director of the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan, from 2006-2014, during which time he directed field projects in Petra and assisted numerous other archaeological missions in the region. During his time based in Amman, he frequently guided archaeology tours of sites in Jordan including ASA's tour to Jordan in 2009 and 2010. He then served for three years as the Executive Director of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) based in Washington, D.C.

Chris will be returning to ASA in 2020 to lead our tours to Jordan, Southern Turkey and Tunisia.

Combine this tour with

Roman Algeria, the Sahara & the M'Zab Valley 2020

27 SEP – 17 OCT 2020

Great Libraries and Stately Homes of England 2020

5 OCT – 20 OCT 2020

Art and Culture in Spain 2020

25 SEP – 16 OCT 2020



Itinerary

The detailed itinerary provides an outline of the proposed daily program. Participants should note that the daily activities described in this itinerary may be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate changes in opening hours, road conditions, flight schedules etc. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents. Meals included in the tour price are indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B =breakfast, L=light lunch and D=dinner. Bottled water will also be provided daily during site excursions.

Tunis - 4 nights

Day 1: Tuesday 20 October, Arrive Tunis

- Airport transfer for participants travelling on the ASA 'designated' flight
- Welcome Meeting
- Light Dinner at the hotel

Participants taking the ASA 'designated' flight are scheduled to arrive in Tunis with Qatar Airways on flight QR1399 at 1215hrs. You will be met at the airport and transfer by private coach to your hotel in central Tunis. Participants not arriving on this flight should make their own way to the [El Mouradi Africa Hotel](#). After check-in there will be some time at leisure to rest after your flight.

Modern Tunis is located on the southwestern side of Lac Tunis, a salt lake that separates the city from the sea. It stands on the site of Phoenician Thunes, the sister city to Carthage, located on the northern side of the lake. Although Carthage and Thunes were often rivals, they joined forces against the Romans during the Punic wars and suffered the same fate after their defeat; the Romans, who then rebuilt Carthage in their image, razed both towns. After periods of Vandal and Byzantine rule, Arabo-Muslim armies from Egypt captured Carthage and Tunis in the late 7th century. Tunis became an important Muslim port but Carthage, again destroyed by her conquerors, never recovered. In addition to being a naval base for the conquest of the Mediterranean, Tunis also became a centre of religious learning. The great mosque of Tunis, the Zaytuna, soon came to rival the great mosque of Kairouan as the Arab province of Ifriqiyya's foremost

teaching mosque. As different Muslim regimes came to power, Tunis alternated as capital with Qayrawan (engl. Kairouan) and Mahdia. In the 11th century Tunis, along with other coastal areas, fell to the Normans who exploited the collapse of central power in Ifriqiyya, which had been exacerbated by the arrival of Arab nomads from the east. The Normans were expelled by an Almohad naval force from Morocco. The Almohads appointed a lineage of governors, the Hafsids, who were to become the founders of the first state corresponding to modern Tunisia. The old town of Tunis owes its shape to the Hafsids who made it their capital, a status it never henceforth lost. In the 16th century, Tunis suffered grievously from the Habsburg-Ottoman struggle. The Spanish wrecked the city, defiled its mosques, and left us with little more than the street plan as evidence of the Hafsid era. The Ottomans and the Turco-Tunisian *beys* rebuilt the city and many of the monuments we will see date to the era of the Husainid *beys* (1705-1957), who gave Tunis a new profile. Exuberantly painted octagonal minarets; dramatic black and white marble arches; detailed stuccowork and strange Baroque touches bear witness to the vivacity of Turco-Tunisian culture.

We begin our program with a welcome meeting followed by a light dinner at the hotel. (Overnight Tunis) D

Day 2: Wednesday 21 October, Tunis

- Walking tour of the old Tunis medina, including: Bab Bhar, Zaytuna Mosque, Grand Souq des Chéchias, Souq el Bey & Souq el Berka, Tourbat el-Bey, Dar Othman, Dar Ben Abdullah Museum (UNESCO World-Heritage Site)
- Welcome Dinner

Today we explore the Tunis medina, visiting a number of important monuments. We walk from Bab Bhar up through the old town of Tunis to the great mosque. Bab Bhar, the Sea Gate, originally provided access to the harbour via marshy wasteland. European consuls and merchants resided nearby, and also the poor of the city who could not afford to move further from the miasmas of the nearby marshland. We will make our way up the hill through one of the main market streets of the old town towards the Zaytuna, the great mosque of Tunis founded in the early 8th century, but rebuilt by the Aghlabid dynasty in the 9th century. The Zaytuna nestles in the upper, prestigious part of the medina with the old citadel behind and the quarters of the rich stretching away on both sides. Originally its presence would have been concealed by shops, which lined its outer walls, but the *beys* cleared one side and commissioned an Italian renegade to build the portico that now marks the approach to the mosque. Inside stand the starkly simple courtyard and prayer hall. Roman columns gathered from Tunisia's antique sites support the arches of the courtyard's arcade, and an ancient Arabic inscription graces the lintel of the doors into the prayer hall. The minaret, a 19th century creation, was modelled on the earlier square Almohad minaret dating to the 12th century.

From the peace of the Zaytuna we will move into the bustling old town to explore the upper town whose rich stone-carved doorways testify to the wealth of its former inhabitants. Among the sights we will see are the Sulaymaniyya Madrasa, one of many Turco-Tunisian madrasas where the religious sciences were taught. We will visit the Grand Souq des Chéchias, named after the woollen caps (*chéechias*) whose manufacture was brought to this souq in the 17th century from Andalusia. Passing the Hammouda Pasha Mosque (c.1665) with its fine Syrian – style minaret, and the Mosque of Youssef Dey (1616), we will enter the Souq el Bey, named from the 19th century palace of the Bey of Tunis in its midst, and the Souq el Berka. If time permits, we shall visit the district of the Mosque of the Dyers (Mosquée des Teinturiers).

Opposite this mosque is the Dar Othman, the palace built by Othman Bey in 1600, with a lovely inner courtyard. We may then visit the Madrasa attached to the Dyers Mosque before continuing to the Dar Ben Abdullah Museum. This 18th century palatial residence houses an interesting collection of Turco-Tunisian domestic articles. Close by is the Tourbet el-Bey (1758), the Mausoleum of the Husseinite Dynasty (1705-1957), which is graced by a huge dome. It has ornate marble inlay, reminiscent of Hagia Sophia, and

thoroughly North African stuccowork. We pass the Masjid of Ibn Khaldun, a tiny Hafsid mosque where the great North African historian, Ibn Khaldun, is said to have lectured.

We will have lunch at Dar El Jeld, a restaurant within a beautifully restored traditional house within the Medina. The walls are covered in vibrant tiles and the ceilings are richly carved and painted. Throughout the house are antique furniture and ornaments; here diners can easily imagine the lifestyle enjoyed by a wealthy Tunisian merchant family.

This evening we enjoy a welcome dinner at a local fish restaurant housed in a 19th-century villa. (Overnight Tunis) BLD

Day 3: Thursday 22 October, Tunis – Carthage – Tunis

- Carthage: Byrsa Hill, harbour, trophet & amphitheatre (UNESCO World-Heritage Site)
- Bardo Museum

This morning we visit the site of ancient Carthage located on the north side of Lac Tunis. We first stop at the Byrsa Hill, the site of the earliest Phoenician settlement in the area, where we may view the old Phoenician harbour, the Gulf of Tunis and the modern city located on the south side of the lake. We will also visit the Tophet, a sanctuary where Carthaginian child sacrifice may have taken place.

Next, we visit the Roman city of Carthage. The Romans completely destroyed the Punic city of Carthage in 149 BC, but built a Roman city on the site, which by the 1st century AD had become the second largest city of the western half of the Roman Empire. Its development was driven in part by Tunisia's crucial importance as a granary for the Empire. Carthage became an important centre of Christianity, and a number of early Church Councils occurred here; in the 4th and 5th centuries the Church was riven by controversy with the Donatists, who would not tolerate those who had compromised with the Empire during the period of persecution of Christians. Carthage was taken by the Vandals in the 5th century, but became an Exarchate of the Byzantine Empire in the 6th century. It fell to the Arabs in the late 7th century. Formidable ruins of the Roman city remain, despite its changing fortunes in late antiquity. We shall explore such monuments as the ruins of the Roman amphitheatre and the thermal Antonine Baths, which were the largest baths in the Empire.

Following lunch at a local restaurant we visit one of the country's great treasures, the Bardo Museum. The Bardo Museum, a medieval palace rebuilt by the Muradid and then Husaynid beys between the 17th and 19th centuries, houses many of the mosaics from Tunisia's most famous Roman sites. The Bardo also contains a small Islamic section, but its most interesting feature is the eclectic combination of Islamic and Italianate elements, evident in the designs on the painted coffered wood ceilings; the juxtaposition of European-style halls and Arab-Islamic domed chambers; and the incongruous addition of chandeliers, a common feature in 18th and 19th century Turco-Tunisian decor. (Overnight Tunis) BL

Day 4: Friday 23 October, Tunis – Testour – Dougga – Tunis

- Great Mosque of Testour (exterior only)
- Dougga: UNESCO World-Heritage Site

Today we drive west for a full day excursion to the UNESCO World-Heritage listed site of Dougga. Along the way we make a brief stop to collect some ingredients for our picnic lunch at Testour, which was rebuilt by Andalusian refugees in the 17th century. We also view the exterior of the Great Mosque of Testour distinguished by its octagonal minaret that features Andalusian-style inscriptions.

We next visit Dougga, the most spectacular Roman site in Tunisia. Dougga is located on a steep hillside overlooking the fertile fields of the Tell and its temples still rise up, dominating the surrounding land. Dougga was a Lybico-Punic city before its incorporation into the Roman Empire and therefore has a rambling street plan which follows the contours of the hillside rather than the typical gridded Roman schema. The architecture of Dougga, like its street plan, has a character all of its own: the temple of Juno Caelestis, the Romanised version of the Punic goddess Tanit, is ringed by an unusual semi-circular colonnade; a chart of the twelve winds is carved upon the flagstones of the forum floor; and down the hillside stands a Lybico-Punic funerary tower, one of the oldest constructions in North Africa. Dougga also has an excellently preserved theatre, capitol, and bath complex. In the late afternoon we return to Tunis. (Overnight Tunis) BLD

Sousse - 2 nights

Day 5: Saturday 24 October, Tunis – Monastir – Sousse

- Ribat & Great Mosque of Monastir
- Mausoleum of Bourguiba, Monastir

This morning we depart Tunis and follow the coast south to Monastir, a fortified *ribat* (fortress) town of the Sahel that possesses the largest *ribat* in Tunisia. The urban profile of Monastir was dramatically altered in the 1960s by President Habib Bourguiba, who destroyed most of the old town and created a processional approach from the *ribat* to the mausoleums he erected for himself and his parents in Monastir's graveyard. The *ribat*, although shorn of its urban surroundings, still stands next to the great mosque overlooking the harbour. The *ribat* is a complex multi-layered building with a warren of passages and chambers to explore. It shares, however, its general plan with the *ribat* of Sousse, a monumental entrance on the east side; a central courtyard surrounded by several storeys of cells; a first floor prayer hall on the entrance wall; and a watchtower in the southeast corner. We will visit the *ribat*, pass the walls of the Great Mosque that was built in the 9th century and enlarged in the 11th century, and visit the Mausoleum of Bourguiba. From Monastir we continue to Sousse where we shall be based for the next 2 nights. (Overnight Sousse) BL

Day 6: Sunday 25 October, Sousse

- Archaeological Museum
- Medina of Sousse: UNESCO World-Heritage Site
- Fatimid Qubba (Kalaout el-Koubba)
- Great Mosque of Sousse
- Dar Essid House Museum
- Ribat
- Time at leisure

Sousse is an old Islamic port on the Tunisian coast that had formerly been the second most important Roman city in what is now Tunisia, after Carthage. Little of the Roman city remains, except for an excellent collection of mosaics in its museum. This morning we visit the *qasba*, or citadel, built around an 8th-century watchtower, and now an archaeological museum containing mosaics from the Sousse region. After exploring the *qasba* and its mosaic collection we take a walk through Sousse's UNESCO World-Heritage listed medina.

As we thread our way through the streets of the old medina we will pass several fascinating mosque façades from the Fatimid, Almohad and Ottoman periods, including a Fatimid *qubba* (Kalaout el-Koubba), or dome chamber. Its façade is a rare example of North African Fatimid decoration, and the dome itself, decorated

with a raised zig-zag pattern, is the only dome of its type outside Cairo, which was captured by the Fatimids in 969.

Within the medina lies Sousse's great mosque and *ribat* that, although now a little way inland, originally overlooked its harbour. The great mosque was built in 851 and was based upon the Sidi Oqba Mosque at Kairouan. Its walls have battlements and its defensive towers, to which domes were later added, originally defended the harbour. The nearby *ribat* is a simple but powerful building. A soaring main entrance leads into a central courtyard surrounded by two storeys of cells. On the first floor a prayer hall stretches the length of the building. A watchtower rises from the ramparts. A *ribat* housed warriors of the faith, and the role of Sousse's *ribat* was to defend the port from (Christian) European incursions.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we visit a house museum, the Dar Essid. The small palace will give you a vivid view of life in Tunisia in the 19th century. Today's program has been timed to conclude around mid-afternoon. You may wish to continue exploring the medina or return to the hotel (which is approximately 600m from the city centre) for some leisure time by the pool or on its private beach. (Overnight Sousse) BL

Tataouine - 2 nights

Day 7: Monday 26 October, Sousse – Mahares – Matmata – Tataouine

- Matmata Troglodyte Village
- Berber village of Toujane (time-permitting)

We depart early this morning, and drive 340km south, past the Gulf of Gabes, to Matmata, famous for its troglodyte houses. En route we stop briefly at the coastal town of Mahares. Those who remember the early scenes of the first Star Wars film will remember the troglodyte family home of the young Luke Skywalker; these early scenes were filmed in Matmata. Centuries ago the inhabitants of this desert region, like those of many extremely hot places from Iran to Southern Spain, decided to build their houses underground. Matmata's are some of the most sophisticated of this type. They consist of a deep, quarried courtyard approached from ground level by a tunnel. Off the courtyard were dug living rooms. We shall see a number of these houses, of which Matmata boast some forty.

From Matmata our journey continues a further 130km south to the city of Tataouine. The underground 'cave dwellings' of the native Berber population were designed for coolness and protection. En route we make a brief stop to view the Berber mountain village of Toujane. (Overnight Tataouine) BLD

Day 8: Tuesday 27 October, Tataouine – Chenini – Douiret – Tataouine

- 4WD "Memory of the Earth Tour" arranged by the Association des Amis de la Mémoire de la Terre de Tataouine: Dinosaur prints, fossils, cave paintings & excavation site.
- Berber villages of Chenini & Douiret

Tataouine is located on a rocky outcrop which dates from the Jurassic period (144-208 million years ago) when the area was submerged. Fossils from this area are primarily of sea animals. However, in The Dahar Mountain Range to the west of Tataouine, lies the Chenini geological formation made of rocks dating from the Cretaceous period (68-144 million years ago). During the Early Cretaceous period the Chenini Formation was a marsh-like habitat with swamps and plenty of water. Remains of dinosaurs and other vertebrates (sharks, bony fish, coelacanths, turtles, crocodilians, pterosaurs) have been discovered here. The most famous dinosaur discoveries include the remains of the carnivorous Spinosaurus. Mediterranean dinosaur remains, particularly northern African specimens, are important for understanding some of the

most extreme Cretaceous ecosystems.

Today we take a 'Memory of the Earth Tour' of the area visiting sites where fossils have been found, local cave paintings, and a dig site for fossilized dinosaur bones. Our program has kindly been arranged with the assistance of the Director of the Association des Amis de la Mémoire de la Terre de Tataouine.

Tatouine lies at the centre of some of the most spectacular Berber villages and granaries in North Africa. These villages have traditionally depended upon agriculture. The construction of *jessour* (agricultural terraces) and cisterns have enabled the desert cultivation of trees such as olive and fig. During our 4WD tour we shall visit the Berber village of Chenini, whose historic 12th-century core sits on a ridge below which houses spread down the terraced hillsides. Here we may view Tunisia's distinctive *ghorfas* (Berber: 'vaulted room'). *Ghorfas*, used as settings in a number of George Lucas' *Star Wars* series, are vaulted rooms used for storing grain that are built one above the other to form multi-story structures. The grandest of these, at Ksar Soltane, which we visit tomorrow, are four stories high. Traditionally, *ghorfas* were grouped together to form a *ksar*, a fortified Berber village where a community's grain was protected from raids. We also visit the Berber village of Douiret containing a small museum of traditional life housed in a former troglodyte family home and the white Nakhla Mosque whose inner prayer hall, built into the rock, dates back to the 13th century. (Overnight Tataouine) BLD

Ksar Ghilane - 1 night

Day 9: Wednesday 28 October, Tataouine – Ksour – Ksar Ghilane

- Ksar Ouled Soltane
- Ksar Hadada
- Tisivar Roman Fort

This morning we depart Tataouine by 4WD to visit two of Tunisia's most striking *ksars* with their distinctive *ghorfas*. Our first visit is to Ksar Ouled Soutane, which lies 20 kms south of Tataouine. This well-preserved fortified *ksar* is built completely of dry mud. Originally built in the 15th century, the *ksar* is spread over two courtyards connected by a passage made of palm wood. The *ghorfas*, which are four stories high, were used by nomadic tribes to store grain and olives. Nearby Ksar Hadada, which we also visit, also has fine examples of multi-storeyed *ghorfas*. Both Ksar Ouled Soltane and Ksar Hadada were film locations for the Mos Espa's Slave Quarters in *Star Wars* Episode I: *The Phantom Menace*.

From Ksar Hadada we continue our journey by 4WD to Ksar Ghilane, a green oasis located on the eastern limit of the Grand Erg Oriental, and one of the gateways to the Tunisian Sahara. For those who wish, we drive out to the edge of the desert. Here are the remains of Tisivar Roman Fortress, one of the fortifications built by the Romans to control the movements of the local tribes. Our major objective is not, however, to visit the fortress but to experience the magnificent sunset over the Sahara, an inimitable, very memorable visual experience. (Overnight Ksar Ghilane) BLD

Tozeur - 2 nights

Day 10: Thursday 29 October, Ksar Ghilane – Douz – Tozeur

- Thursday Market at Douz
- Medina of Tozeur (Ouled El Hadeff)
- Time at leisure

Early this morning we depart Ksar Ghilane and head northwest to the oasis town of Douz on the edge of the

Sahara proper. One reason for visiting Douz is to explore its huge Thursday animal market, which rivals the famous animal market in Kashgar in Central Asia. You will see locals tending, buying and selling sheep, goats, donkeys, and purveying herbs, spices and other foodstuffs. Weekly markets provide much more than an opportunity to buy and sell animals. They enable country people from surrounding districts the opportunity to meet friends, visit the barber or the doctor, and even perhaps enlist the services of a letter writer.

The people of Douz and its hinterland are all from the Nefzaoua tribe and believe themselves to be descended from two holy men, Ahmed el-Gouth and Amar Mahjoub. Holy men and their shrines (*Marabouts*) are extremely important in North Africa, for claiming descent from them is the foundation of tribal identity and ensures tribal cohesion. Many members of a tribe may not be genetically descended from such figures, but rather have adhered to them and their cult as a result of clientage, which the famous North African 15th-century thinker Ibn Khaldun described as crucial to building large tribes and tribal confederations. The *marabouts* of both holy men are centres of contemporary religious life in Douz.

After thoroughly exploring Douz, we cross the Chott el Jerid, the largest salt pan of the Sahara, and continue to the town of Tozeur, a gateway to the Grand Sud. On arrival we take a walking tour of Tozeur's medina, known as Ouled El Hadeif. Its narrow alleyways are lined with traditional mud brick desert houses whose façades are decorated with geometric brick designs similar to motifs found on many Berber carpets.

Our day is planned to arrive at the Anantara Resort in time to enjoy the facilities of this brand-new hotel complex. (Overnight Tozeur) BL

Day 11: Friday 30 October, Tozeur – Metlaoui – Nefta – Tozeur

- Lezard Rouge train through the Oued Seldja Gorge (subject to reopening by 2020)
- The Corbeille, Nefta
- Ouled Ech Cherif & Dar Houidi, Nefta
- El Bayada & Zaouia of Sidi Brahim, Nefta

We begin today with a spectacular heritage train ride on the Léopard Rouge (Red Lizard) that follows a tortuous path on tracks laid for mining through gorges carved by the Oued Seldja. The rock formations you will see are extraordinary, and the rolling stock in which you will ride was once used by the Bey to travel from Tunis to his summer residence at Hammam Lif, a coastal town with thermal springs some 20 kilometres east of Tunis. The government restored these carriages in the 1990s.

After alighting from our train journey we transfer to Metlaoui for a light lunch before continuing south to Nefta (Naftah). Known to the Romans as Aggarsel Nepte, this oasis town is considered the heartland of Sufi mysticism in Tunisia. Within the El Bayada district are more than 24 small mosques and over 100 *marabouts*; *marabout* describes either a Muslim religious leader and teacher or the tomb of venerated saint. The *marabouts* still attract pilgrims from all over southern Tunisia and from parts of Algeria. From the northwestern edge of the Corbeille, a crater-like depression densely planted with palm trees, we may walk through the old quarter of Ouled Ech Cherif. Similar to the Ouled El Hadeif in Tozeur, this district features winding, vaulted alleyways and some striking examples of traditional brick designs. Our path leads us to the quarter's principal mosque, the Mosque of Sidi M'Khareg, and the Dar Houidi, a 17th-century traditional residence that has been carefully restored. In the neighbouring district of El Bayada lies the Zaouia of Sidi Brahim. This complex of tombs, courtyards and teaching rooms belongs to the Qadria, the most important of the Sufi orders represented here. (Overnight Tozeur) BLD

Kairouan - 3 nights

Day 12: Saturday 31 October, Tozeur – Sbeitla – Kairouan

- Roman ruins of Sufetula, Sbeitla

This morning we drive north to the site of Sbeitla, Roman Sufetula, which contains the best preserved forum temples in Tunisia. This region was inhabited by nomadic tribes until the Legio III Augusta established a camp at Ammaedara. After the Berber leader Tacfarinas surrendered to the Romans, the province was pacified and populated under the Emperor Vespasian and his sons (67 – 69 AD). The city, like many in North Africa, grew rich in the 2nd century AD, prospering through the cultivation and export of olives; olive presses have been found in its remains. Such wealth allowed for the construction of a splendid forum and other important buildings. The city began to decline during the Late Empire, during which it was occupied by the Vandals, a fact attested by the existence of temples dedicated to barbarian gods. The arrival of the Byzantines inaugurated a new period of splendour. The Prefect Gregory moved his capital there from Carthage in the 7th century, and declared independence from Byzantium. However, only a year later, Sbeitla was sacked by the first Arab invaders, and Gregory was killed. The Arabs abandoned the city and the region and returned to their nomadic lifestyle. We shall visit the Triumphal Arch of the Tetrarchy at the entrance to the city, Sbeitla's public baths and the Gate of Antoninus (138 – 161) that leads to one of the best-preserved Roman *fora* in the world. Here we shall see the famous three temples. Instead of constructing only one temple dedicated to the three most important Roman gods (Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva) Sbeitla's inhabitants built a separate shrine for each. Other important buildings to be visited are the theatre and public fountains. Built into the Roman ruins are a number of Byzantine churches (the Church of Bellator; the Church of Vitalis, the Chapel of Jucundus, the Church of Servus and the Church of St Gervase, Protase, and Tryphon). After visiting the impressive ruins we continue north to Kairouan located in the heart of the central Tunisian plain. (Overnight Kariouan) BLD

Day 13: Sunday 1 November, Kairouan – El Djem – Mahdia – Kairouan

- Amphitheatre of El Djem: UNESCO World-Heritage Site
- El Djem Mosaic Museum
- Skifa al-Kahla, Mahdia
- Fatimid Great Mosque, Mahdia

We depart early this morning, and journey to El Djem, site of the most impressive, well-preserved Roman amphitheatre after the Colosseum. The amphitheatre, capable of seating 35,000 citizens, was built in the 3rd century AD, when the city, named Thysdus, rivalled Hadrumetum (Sousse) in importance; at this time it was a major exporter of olive oil. We shall explore the amphitheatre before visiting El Djem's excellent museum that has a mosaic collection to rival those of Sousse and Tunis. Of particular importance is a mosaic floor depicting gladiators from the amphitheatre; these men obviously enjoyed celebrity status!

Mahdia, located to the south of Monastir, was the port from which the of the Shi'a Fatimids set out to conquer Egypt. It began as a royal complex built on a small peninsula to house the Fatimid leaders, their navy and their stores. The royal complex could only be entered through the Skifa al-Kahla, the 'Black Passage', a huge gateway built in the walls sealing the peninsula off on the landward side. Apart from the Skifa al-Kahla, little remains today of Fatimid Mahdia. The old town is now dominated by the Burj al-Kabir, the Great Tower, built by the Spanish when they held the town for a short time; out was restored by the Turks. A typical square 17th-century Ottoman fortress, the *burj* has one unusual feature, high on its approach wall a tiger carved in relief stares balefully at all comers, its provenance unknown. Below lies the ruined Fatimid harbour, a deep blue niche enclosed by fragments of the Fatimid ramparts, where colourful fishing boats now float in place of the Fatimid navy. At the end of the day we will return to Kairouan. (Overnight Kairouan) BLD

Day 14: Monday 2 November, Kairouan

- Kariouan: UNESCO World-Heritage Site
- Mosque of 'Uqba ibn Nafi'
- Zaouia of Abu Zamaa al-Balawi (Tomb of Sidi Sahab – Mosque of the Barber)
- Aghlabid Basins
- Medina: Bir Barouta, Zaouia of Sidi Ghariani & Mosque of the Three Doors (exterior only)

This morning we commence our tour of Kairouan, the first great city of Islamic North Africa. It is believed to have been founded in the 7th century by Uqba bin Nafi, the semi-mythical conqueror of the west. From the 7th to 13th century, Kairouan was the capital of Ifriqiyya, although it temporarily lost this status to Tunis and Mahdia. Its antiquity and its role in the conquest of North Africa for Islam made Kairouan a sacred city, with special connections to Mecca. A well in the city, the Bir Barruta, is said to flow with the same water as the Zamzam well in Mecca. One of Kairouan's most loved shrines, moreover, is the mausoleum of Sidi al-Balawi, one of Prophet Muhammad's companions. Kairouan is today a sleepy provincial town, but it is still deeply religious and has an air of quiet and dignified piety.

Our program commences with a visit to the great mosque of 'Uqba ibn Nafi', the oldest mosque in North Africa and the model for the Zaytuna in Tunis and slightly later mosques such as the Qarawiyyin in Fes and the Great Mosque of Córdoba. The mosque consists of a huge hypostyle prayer hall and courtyard surrounded by an arcade. Roughly at the centre of the wall opposite the prayer hall stands the minaret, a unique composition of three square storeys, each one smaller than the last. This imposing, fortress-like crenellated structure reflects the fact that the threat of attack by the local Berber population was ever present. Like so many other buildings we will see, the great mosque of Kairouan is an amalgam of different materials and styles. The columns are Roman and Latin inscriptions in the walls indicate that masonry was also gathered from antique sites. At the same time the minaret evokes the ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia, already conquered by Muslim armies.

To the west of the Great Mosque, outside the walls of the old city, stands the tomb of Abu Zamaa al-Balawi. Considered one of the most venerated places in Kairouan, it contains the remains of one of the Prophet's companions (or *sahab*), Abu Zamaa al-Balawi, who came to Ifriqiya in 654 AD. The tomb, called a *zaouia* or *zawiya*, is sometimes referred to as the Mosque of the Barber because Abu Zamaa Al Balawi was believed to always carry three hairs from the beard of the Prophet Muhammad. While the original mausoleum dates from the 7th century AD, most of what stands today was added at the end of the 17th century. The complex includes the mausoleum, a madrasa and a guesthouse linked by several consecutive courtyards and passages, all decorated with tile work of blue, green and yellow floral panels.

We also visit the Aghlabid Basins, located to the north of the *qasba*. Two pools survive of a number that stored water for the palace of the Aghlabid dynasty, which occupied the site of the nearby cemetery. At the centre of one of these is the base of a pavilion in which, in keeping with an Islamic tradition of palace arrangement (seen, for example, in the Topkapi Palace, Istanbul) the ruler would relax.

In the afternoon we continue our walk through the the medina. We visit the Bir Barruta, where a camel still works the water-wheel which raises the sacred water and nearby, the *zaouia* of Sidi Ghariani, a 14th century shrine renovated by the Turks. The shrine complex is decorated with the tile panels beloved of the Turks, but its most noteworthy feature is the coffered and gilded wood ceiling of the tomb chamber. As we pass through the narrow streets of the old town we will also see the façade of the Mosque of the Three Doors, with its 9th century stone inscriptions and floral decoration. (Overnight Kairouan) BLD

Sidi Bou Said - 4 nights

Day 15: Tuesday 3 Novmeber, Kairouan – Thurburbo Majus – Zaghouan – Oudhna – Sidi Bou Said

- Roman city of Thurburbo Majus
- Zaghouan-Carthage Aqueduct
- Roman city of Uthina, Oudhna

Early this morning we depart Kairouan and head northwest to Thuburbo Majus, originally a Berber settlement ruled by the Phoenicians, located on the major road that linked ancient Carthage to the Sahara desert. Augustus transformed it into a Roman *colonia* for military veterans (27 BC); it eventually took the name *Colonia Julia Aurelia Commoda*. Most of the town was built around 150 – 200 AD and restored in the 4th century after a 3rd century crisis. It received a *Capitolium* in 168 AD. The town produced grain, olives, and fruit. Under Hadrian it became a *municipium* and Commodus made it a *colonia*. The site today is extensive. Of particular note is the tetrastyle temple that was adorned with statues of Apollo, Venus, Silvanus, Bacchus, the Dioscuri and a satyr. We shall visit its forum, amphitheatre, temples, baths and some houses.

From Thuburbo Majus we continue north, passing the Roman aqueduct which carried fresh water from the nearby mountains, the Jabal Zaghouan, to Carthage. Stretching for some 132 kms, this is one of the longest aqueducts of the Roman Empire. Hannibal's Carthage lost a hard-fought, bitter war to the Roman Republic early in the 2nd century BC that ended with the city being completely destroyed. It was not long, however, before Rome realised the advantages of re-establishing Carthage as a Roman city and upon doing so, its population swelled to an estimated 500,000. Building the Zahouan-Carthage aqueduct was essential to provide the colonists with water for domestic and agricultural use.

Located on the cultivated slopes of Mt Mekrima are the ruins of the ancient city of Uthina, one of the Roman Empire's oldest cities in Africa. A famous 2nd-century mosaic, now in the Bardo Museum in Tunis, shows a typical private domain in the valley of the Miliana at Uthina with wheatfields, which were the source of its wealth, olive trees, pastures for sheep, goat, cattle and horses, and scrub supporting partridge and wild boar. The city had one of North Africa's largest Roman amphitheatres which could hold over 10,000 spectators; in its basement we may view the underground vaulted cells where criminals and wild animals were held. At the top of the hill stands the grand *capitolium*. Below are the enormous arched cisterns; large public and small private baths including the Fishing Angels Baths with mosaics depicting cherubs casting poles and nets into a fish-laden stream, and a sumptuous 3-room villa with mosaics illustrating the legend of wine invention and hunting scenes.

Following our exploration of Uthina we continue north to Sidi Bou Said where we shall be based for four nights. (Overnight Sidi Bou Said) BLD

Day 16: Wednesday 4 November, Sidi Bou Said – Cap Bon – Kélibia – Sidi Bou Said

- Phoenicio-Punic city of Kerkouane, Cap Bon: UNESCO World-Heritage Site
- Kélibia Fort

This morning we visit the UNESCO-listed Punic settlement of Kerkouane, located at the tip of Cap Bon on a cliff that dominates the sea. This is the world's best-preserved example of a Phoenicio-Punic city. Abandoned during the First Punic War, the town was never reoccupied by the invading Romans. Consequently, its chequer-board network of streets, houses and workshops remains as it was around 250 BC.

On the northeastern side of Cap Bon is the Kélibia Fort (*Clupea*), a citadel built on top of a 150m high rocky

promontory overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. This is the site where, in 698, the Byzantine army made its last stand in northwestern Africa before finally taking flight to the Island of Pantelleria located midway between the northern tip of Cap Bon and the westernmost part of Sicily. Although it dates from the Roman period, most of its current buildings were erected in the 16th-century. The fort provides spectacular views of the busy fishing port below. (Overnight Sidi Bou Said) BLD

Day 17: Thursday 5 November, Sidi Bou Said – Bizerte – Sidi Bou Said

- Dar Ennejma Ezzahra: The Centre for Arab and Mediterranean Music (CAMM)
- Bizerte: Old Harbour, Medina & Kasbah
- Farewell Dinner

The village of Sidi Bou Said grew up around the tomb and *zaouia* of the Sufi teacher Abu Said el Baji who established his order here in the early 13th century. When members of the Husainid dynasty moved here in the 18th century, they brought with them many leading musicians and writers. This laid the foundations for Sidi Bou Said's reputation as an artists' village. Today this picturesque village features whitewashed buildings with wrought-iron window dressings and sky-blue wooden doors. One of the grandest of these houses, which we shall visit, is the Dar Ennejma Ezzahra. Beautifully restored, the palace was once home to French painter and musicologist Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger, who produced a multi-volume work on the history of Arab music. Today it hosts the Centre of Arab and Mediterranean Music. Beside the gardens and architecture, a mixture of 'pure' Tunisian and Romantic Orientalism, the main attraction is its collection of fine musical instruments.

Next, we drive north from Sidi Bou Said to visit the naval port of Bizerte, which was important between the 16th and 18th centuries because it dominated naval traffic through the Sicilian Channel. Bizerte guards one of the great natural harbours of the Mediterranean, the huge Lac de Bizerte. There is also a small and heavily defended port which dates in main from the 16th century. After the expulsion of the Muslims from Spain Bizerte became a major corsair base. Bizerte's *medina*, which we shall visit, wraps around the picturesque old harbour area. Within its labyrinth of narrow alleyways and covered *souqs* are the workshops of metalworkers and carpenters, and the stores of butchers and grocers. Just north of the old harbour lies the *kasbah*, whose walls offer fine views. Nearby is the 17th-century Rebaa Mosque with a distinctive octagonal minaret. On the south side of the harbour is the golden-stoned fort of Sidi el Hani. Like the *kasbah*, it is an Ottoman construction and dates from the 17th century.

After exploring Bizerte we return to Sidi Bou Said. In the evening, we partake of a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (Overnight Sidi Bou Said) BLD

Day 18: Friday 6 November, Tour Ends

- Morning at leisure
- Afternoon transfer to Tunis Airport for participants departing on the ASA 'designated' flight

The morning is at leisure. Participants returning to Australia on the group flights will be transferred to Tunis Airport in the early afternoon. You are scheduled to depart with Qatar Airways on flight QR1400 departing at 1600hrs. B

Accommodation

18-day Cultural Tour of Tunisia

Single rooms may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the Single Supplement. Further information on accommodation will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

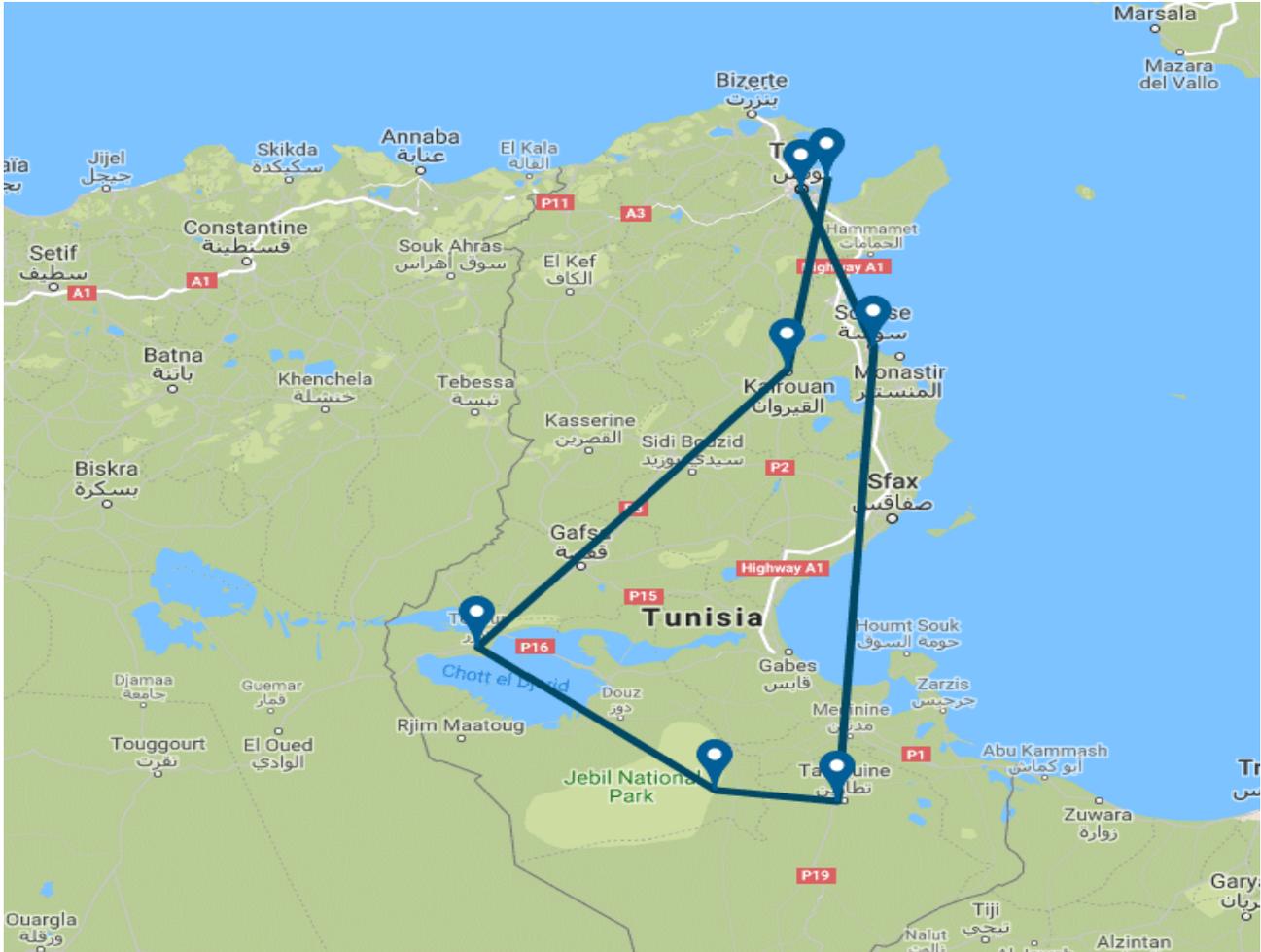
- Tunis (4 nights): 5-star El Mouradi Africa Hotel – a modern hotel located on the famous Avenue Habib Bourguiba. hotelafrica.tn
- Sousse (2 nights): 5-star Palace Hotel & Spa – renovated in 2016, this modern hotel offers direct access to a private beach and is located 600m from Sousse's UNESCO world-heritage listed medina. www.soussepalace.website
- Tataouine (2 nights): 3-star Hotel Sangho Privilege – located in a valley surrounded by mountains, the bungalows have been built in the style of the local Berber troglodyte villages. sanghoprivilegetataouine
- Ksar Ghilane (1 night): 3-star Campement Yadis Ksar Ghilane – nestled in its own oasis, this desert camp offers accommodation in air-conditioned linen tents equipped with a private bathroom. www.yadis.com
- Tozeur (2 nights): 5-star Anantara Tozeur Resort – scheduled to open early 2019, this luxury resort is a contemporary retreat of lush palm trees and meandering swimming pools. www.anantara.com
- Kairouan (3 nights): 5-star Hotel La Kasbah – a modern hotel located in the traditional quarter of the holy city. www.goldenyasmin.com/fr/la-kasbah
- Sidi Bou Said (4 nights): 4-star Dar Said – overlooking the Gulf of Tunis, this charming hotel is housed in a former 19th-century bourgeois home. www.darsaid.com.tn

Note: *hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation is for single occupancy throughout the tour. People wishing to take this supplement are advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$6980.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2019

AUD \$7180.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$980.00 Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares and/or group airfares please contact ASA for further information.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in 3 to 5-star hotels; 1 night in the Yadis Camp at Ksar Ghilane oasis.
- Meals as indicated in the tour itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner
- Bottled water 2 x 500ml per day for excursions
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals do not include beverages.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach; some excursions made by 4WD
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (also available at airports if travelling on the ASA designated flight)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Services of Tunisian National Guide
- Entrance fees to all sites visited on program (excluding sites listed as optional)
- Tips for the coach driver, National Guide and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Tunis, Tunis-Australia
- Evening meals & lunches not indicated in the tour itinerary
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Tunisian Visa (not applicable for Australian passport holders)



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, seven to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless, all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 18-day Cultural Tour of Tunisia involves:

- A moderate amount of walking where many of the sites are large and unsheltered.
- Visiting sites where you will encounter steps, cobbled streets, rocky and uneven ground, slopes and steep walks.
- Extensive travel by air-conditioned coach; and a number of excursions by 4WD.
- Accommodation in 3 to 5-star hotels; 1 night in the Yadis Camp at Ksar Ghilane oasis. There are six accommodation changes
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portage includes 1 piece of luggage per person.

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note: it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to

their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the ASA Reservation Application Form.

Practical Information

Prior to departure, tour members will receive practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers: www.smartraveller.gov.au

Booking Conditions

Make a Reservation

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$500.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.

Passport Details

All participants must provide no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the program a photocopy of the front page of their current passport.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation is for single occupancy throughout the tour. People wishing to take this supplement are advised to book well in advance.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr Mrs Ms Miss Dr Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth / / _____ GENDER Male Female

Passport Number _____ Expiry date / / _____ Nationality _____

Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed I'm renewing my passport ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Travel Plans

I wish ASA to book my airfare, please contact me to discuss my options. Business Class Economy Class

I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date / / _____

I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Frequent Flyer _____ Name of Airline _____ Airline Seat preference _____
Membership # _____ (please note request only)

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: a twin-bedded room a double-bedded room a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: on my own with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish poultry red meat dairy products

eggs pork nuts

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence Postal Mail Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____

Address _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Do you have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen? YES NO

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine? YES NO

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic? YES NO

Are you insulin dependent? YES NO

4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? YES NO
 Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.



Declaration, Liability and Booking Conditions

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept that there are inherent dangers and risks that may occur during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services provided for the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of travelling to, on and from any tour.

I understand and acknowledge that this Release and Indemnity applies with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally.
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of my continued participation on a tour for whatever reason (refund conditions in ASA's Booking Conditions excepted).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products or services. If a service provider does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (eg. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any such service provider however caused (contingencies). You must take out adequate travel insurance against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour will be limited to the refund of amounts received from you less all non-refundable costs and charges and the costs of any substituted event or alternate services provided. The terms and conditions of the relevant service provider from time to time comprise the sole agreement between you and that service provider.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A deposit of \$500.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you decide to cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: \$500*
75-46 days prior 25% of total amount due
45-31 days prior 50% of total amount due
30-15 days prior 75% of total amount due
14-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

This amount may be **credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.*

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. If an ASA tour is forced to cancel you will get a full refund of all tour monies paid. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to daily itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

I accept the conditions on this booking form I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- Intention to Travel Tour Deposit
 Balance of Payment Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
 Travel Insurance Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard & Visa 2%
 American Express 2%

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

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