



Roman Algeria, the Sahara & the M'Zab Valley 2024

14 APR – 4 MAY 2024

Code: 22406

Tour Leaders **Tony O'Connor**

Physical Ratings 

Explore Ottoman kasbahs, Roman Constantine, Timgad & Djemila, mud-brick trading towns of the Sahara, Moorish Tlemcen, & the secret world of the Berber M'Zab Valley.



Overview

Join archaeologist [Tony O'Connor](#) on this fascinating tour which explores Roman Algeria, the Sahara & the M'Zab Valley.

- Explore the twisting streets, stairs, and alleys of the Ottoman Kasbah of Algiers and enjoy magnificent views across the city from the French colonial Cathedral of Notre-Dame d'Afrique.
- Wander perfectly preserved streets at the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Roman Djémila and Timgad, empty of visitors and complete with stunning mosaics, full-size temples, triumphal arches, market places, and theatres. At Sétif gaze upon one of the most exquisite mosaics in all of the Roman world – *The Triumph of Dionysus*.
- Engage with Numidian Kings at the extraordinary tombs of Medracen and the 'Tomb of the Christian' along with the ambitions of Cleopatra and Mark Antony at their daughter's former capital of Caesarea/Cherchell.
- Explore the Roman 'City of Bridges', Constantine, encircled by the dramatic gorge of Wadi Rummel.
- Wander the atmospheric ruins of the Roman towns of Tipaza and Tiddis: Tipaza overlooks the Mediterranean, while Tiddis perches on a hillside, overlooking the fertile lands of Constantine.
- Walk the Algerian 'Grand Canyon' at El Ghoufi: a centre of Aures Berber culture, Algerian resistance to French colonial rule, inscriptions left behind by the engineers of Emperor Hadrian himself, and photogenic mud-brick villages clustering along vertiginous rocky ledges.
- Journey to the relaxed and easy-going 'closed valley' of the M'Zab: a sanctuary for the Moazabite community who live in 5 fortified towns, where skylines are dominated by minarets, and townhouses cluster the steep hillsides.
- Relax amidst the glorious landscapes of the Sahara at the two ancient desert trading-towns of Taghit and Timimoun, where traditional mud-brick architecture is surrounded by verdant *palmeraies* and giant, golden dunes.
- Spend two days in Tlemcen which boasts Moorish buildings to rival those in Morocco or Andalusia.
- Experience the incredible hospitality of Berber-Arab Algerians, delighted to share their country with rare and welcomed English-speaking guests.

Testimonial

Travelling into the desert and seeing the small, sometimes closed communities we visited, surviving in such a harsh landscape, was quite remarkable. It was one of the most unusual and enjoyable trips I have ever taken. Pauline, VIC.

Overnight Algiers (3 nights) • Sétif (1 night) • Timgad (3 nights) • Constantine (3 nights) • Ghardaia (3 nights) • Taghit (2 nights) • Timimoun (2 nights) • Tlemcen (2 nights) • Algiers (1 night)

Overview

Algeria dazzles with glorious panoramas set against a backdrop of the azure Mediterranean and a mountainous, rugged hinterland of Berber villages that eventually transforms into an African desert-world. A necklace of extraordinarily well-preserved Roman 'urbs', similar to Pompeii, punctuate the country, while medieval oasis-towns, glorious Ottoman and French belle époque cities entrance and inspire. We explore 'Alger la Blanche' and her labyrinthine Ottoman Kasbah; we wander Tipasa, one of five World Heritage sites that inspired Albert Camus. Tipasa, with its ruins of a Phoenician trading post, Roman port and Byzantine churches, is set on a wooded and herb-rich headland overlooking the sea. The Roman 'City of Bridges', Constantine, is encircled by the dramatic gorge of Wadi Rummel and proffers a dramatic history set in an

equally dramatic landscape. The perfectly preserved Roman cities of Timgad and Djémila provide insight into sophisticated urban living in the wealthiest of imperial Roman provinces. We head into the desert, beyond the limits of Roman control, to the 'closed' valley of the M'Zab, where a traditional way of life survives, little changed since medieval times when this was a remote refuge from war and religious persecution. The desert Sahara opens up the ancient trading towns of Taghit, Benni Abbes and Timimoun – surrounded by verdant *palmeraies* and enveloped by giant rolling dunes. Fortified mud-brick castles perch on pinnacles of desert rock overlooking ancient trans-Saharan trade routes, and the very faces of local people bear witness to the once-thriving salt, gold, and slave trade with West Africa. These trade routes terminated in Moorish Tlemcen which today boasts one of the finest examples of Islamic architecture in all of North Africa. This land of incredible hospitality, extraordinary history, and aromatic coffee is almost unvisited by English speakers and is a connoisseur's choice for the discerning traveller.

Leaders



Tony O'Connor

Archaeologist, museum professional and highly experienced tour lecturer. Tony leads tours throughout the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa including programs to Lebanon, Sicily, Algeria, Tunisia & Croatia.

Tony O'Connor, an archaeologist, museum professional and highly experienced tour lecturer, has led tours throughout the Middle East, Italy and North Africa, in particular, Algeria and Tunisia. With an honours degree in Ancient History and Archaeology (Manchester), he has worked extensively as a field archaeologist on major North African sites, including the city of Ptolomais in Libya and many Roman villas, small towns and military sites. His knowledge of the region is both profound and extensive, aided in part by the fact that he has made landscape surveys in Libya sponsored by UNESCO.

Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and past committee member of the Society of Libyan Studies, Tony is a polymath, combining archaeological research with important roles in museums. He is a past committee member of the Society of Museum Archaeologists, Chairman of Museums of East Anglia, Chairman of the West Essex Archaeological Group and a trustee of Museums Essex. He has been Deputy Keeper at the Verulamium Museum, St Albans, Keeper of Antiquities at the Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, and Museum Heritage and Culture Manager, Epping Forest District Museum.

Tony's passion, however, is for designing, running and teaching on cultural tours. Along with his Algerian, Tunisian and Lebanese tours, his extraordinary experience in this field includes developing and leading tours to Syria, Northern Egypt and the Western Desert, Jordan, Libya, Calabria, Pompeii and the Bay of Naples, Northern Italy and Provence. ASA welcomes such a passionate and experienced tour leader and lecturer to our team. In 2021 Tony was named a finalist in the 'Best Specialist Guide' category at the 2021 Wanderlust World Guide Awards!



Itinerary

This itinerary provides an outline of the proposed daily program. Participants should note that the daily activities may be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate changes in museum opening hours, flight schedules & road conditions. Meals will be taken in hotels and in restaurants; at times picnic lunches will be provided. All meals are included in the tour price and are indicated in the itinerary where: **B**=breakfast, **L**=lunch and **D**=dinner.

Algiers - 3 nights

Day 1: Sunday 14 April, Arrive Algiers

- Arrival Transfer for participants arriving on the ASA 'designated' flight
- Welcome Meeting

Participants taking ASA's 'designated' flight are scheduled to arrive in Algiers around midday. After transferring to the [Hotel El Djazir](#), located near the National Museum of Antiquities, there will be a period of rest followed by a welcome meeting and an evening meal at the hotel. (Overnight Algiers) D

Day 2: Monday 15 April, Algiers

- National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts
- Bardo National Museum of Prehistory and Ethnography
- City Orientation Tour including the Kasbah of Algiers
- Colonial Cathedral of Notre-Dame d'Afrique
- Welcome Dinner

We begin our journey in the Algerian capital with a visit to the famed National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts. Founded in 1897 by the French Colonial government, this museum holds a spectacular collection of artefacts from sites across northern Algeria. The museum is split between two late-19th century

French pavilions, built to resemble the earlier Ottoman palaces of the region. The pavilion on the left holds the Islamic collection and a superbly complete numismatic collection, with coins representing every dynasty from the Numidians and Mauretanian kings of the 1st millennium BC, to the first currency of the newly independent Algeria in 1962. A flight of stairs leads to the second story, which holds the gallery dedicated to Islamic material. The collection includes ceramics from medieval Iran, Egypt, Syria and Turkey, imported by the Zayyanid Algerian elite. A superb array of ethnographic material includes 18th-century Ottoman childrens' clothing in silk; a spectacular selection of tribal jewellery and traditional dress for men and women; an extraordinary pair of hamam-slippers made from mother-of-pearl, and beautiful fragments of silk illuminated with elegant calligraphy from Yemen, Egypt and the Maghreb dating back to the 9th and 10th centuries AD.

The antiquities pavilion to the right, stands in a small garden filled with tombstones and mortuary inscriptions in Latin, Punic, and Tifinagh (the original Berber script.) The pavilion was designed by the French to resemble a Roman villa of the sort that once littered the coast of the richest Roman province of the 1st – 5th centuries AD. The portico of the pavilion contains a small selection of mosaics, but the galleries running around the central courtyard hold the real treasures. The first room to the left of the entrance is dedicated to Roman metalwork and contains some stunning and rare examples of classical bronzes, including a beautiful statute of a nymph, or goddess, bending to readjust her sandal-strap. The galleries leading off the 'Bronze Room' contain an array of material from sites across Algeria, including a few examples of the famous 'Albertini Tablets'. These objects are an extraordinary and nearly unique snapshot of provincial Roman life at the end of the 5th century, when the provinces of Roman North Africa were ruled by Vandal kings from their capital at Carthage. 34 wooden tablets dating between 493 – 496 AD were discovered hidden in a stone wall in 1928 near Tebessa, close to the modern Tunisian border. This cache of documents surprised scholars once they had been translated and published in 1952, revealing a previously unrecognised level of literacy and continuity of Roman life in Vandal North Africa. The letters are legal documents relating to land ownership, wills and dowries of the inhabitants of a small, agricultural village. The cache was presumably hidden at the very end of the 5th century during a time of civil unrest and the letters were never retrieved by their original owners for reasons unknown. In the next chamber of the museum are a splendid array of mosaics including examples of the *Triumph of Dionysus*, the *Rape of Europa*, and the *Triumph of Venus* from Roman towns across Algeria. The final gallery contains examples of Roman marble sculpture, including fragments of enormous cult statues, busts of provincial worthies, Roman emperors, their wives and heirs, and *objet d'art* that once beautified the villas and town houses of the Roman provincial elite.

We also visit the Bardo Museum housed in a beautifully restored Ottoman palace. Some of the ethnographic collections reconstruct domestic or public spaces relating to the Ottoman era. The cultures of people in the country's interior are also represented. Rural ethnographic rooms display a variety of regional objects: Kabylie chests, oasis basketry, tapestry from Ghardaïa, and pottery and jewellery from all of the country's traditional production centres. Saharan ethnography is exhibited on the upper floor through recreated scenes of Tuareg life.

Following lunch at a local restaurant we take a tour of the city. The country's largest urban centre, modern Algiers, is a bustling Mediterranean port that can trace her origins back to Carthaginian traders of the 4th century BC. Dominated by the imposing walls of its great citadel, the kasbah is a wonderful collection of meandering alleyways, palaces and mosques that now fall under the protection of UNESCO, whilst, away from the old town, the city's French colonial heritage embraces a collection of grand buildings and wide boulevards that sweep around the coastline.

The famed Kasbah of Algiers was built primarily during the early 16th century as an Ottoman fortress and palace of the local rulers, the Beys of Algiers, including the famed pirate 'Redbeard'. It constitutes a unique

form of *medina* or Islamic city, located in one of the finest coastal sites anywhere on the Mediterranean. Divided into an upper, cramped, traditional 'High Kasbah' and a more open 'Lower Kasbah' rebuilt by the French colonial regime, this area remains the heart of historic Algiers. In amongst higgledy-piggledy buildings stand the remains of Redbeard's citadel, mosques, *zaouia* (Algerian Sufi shrines and madrasas) and Ottoman palaces, as well as vernacular urban architecture inhabited by the same families for generations. The Algiers Kasbah was the site of some of the most infamous fighting during the Algerian War of Independence and the civil war of the 1990s. Pontecorvo's 1967 thrice Oscar-nominated movie *The Battle of Algiers* was shot here on location, and many of the 'actors' were in fact local people of the Kasbah who had been involved in the events depicted in the film. We include visits to 'Dar Hassan Pacha', an 18th-century Ottoman palace; 'La Maison du Millénaire', an 'Ottoman' palace built using traditional materials, techniques and styles by a French *colonnaire* during the 1930s; the *zaouia* of Sidi Aberrahmane, patron saint of Algiers – all on foot, walking through the atmospheric, narrow, switchback streets of the old city.

Later in the afternoon we explore the 19th-century French colonial Cathedral of Notre-Dame d'Afrique, perched high on a cliff-top overlooking the sea and the neighbourhood of Bab El Oued. Notre-Dame d'Afrique combines Victorian-era classical Roman architecture with Byzantine motifs, conveying a uniquely 'African' feel to this ecclesiastical space. We watch the sun begin to set over the sparkling Mediterranean and 'Alger la Blanche'. (Overnight Algiers) BLD

Day 3: Tuesday 16 April, Algiers – Cherchell – Tipaza – Algiers

- Tomb of the Christian
- Seaport town of Cherchell and its Archaeological Museum
- Roman city of Tipasa

This morning we depart Algiers and drive for some 70 minutes to the picturesque Roman city of Tipasa, set on the shores of the Mediterranean. En route we make a stop near the village of Sidi Rachid to view the striking 'Mauritanian Tomb'. This so-called 'Tomb of the Christian' is a pyramid-like structure, which actually dates to the 3rd or 4th century BC and is believed to have been a Numidian royal tomb, possibly later used to house the bodies of Juba II of Numidia and his wife Queen Selene Cleopatra, daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra Ptolemy.

We then drive to Cherchell, the former Roman port of Caesarea, with its world-class archaeological museum, containing some of the most beautiful Roman mosaics found anywhere in North Africa.

Following a splendid fish lunch at a local restaurant overlooking Tipaza's harbour, we explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Tipaza. Tipaza (in Roman times, 'Tipasa') was an ancient Punic trading post conquered by Rome and turned into a strategic base for its client kingdoms of Numidia and Mauretania. The site comprises a unique group of Phoenician, Numidian, Roman, Early Christian and Byzantine ruins, alongside indigenous monuments such as the Kbor er Roumia, The Great Royal Mausoleum of Mauretania, all set on a glorious wooded hillside overlooking the sea. We'll have plenty of opportunity to wander the site at will before returning to Algiers for our overnight stay. (Overnight Algiers) BLD

Sétif - 1 night

Day 4: Wednesday 17 April, Algiers – Sétif

- The Archaeological Museum of Sétif incl. 3rd-century AD mosaic *Triumph of Dionysus*

We depart early this morning and drive 300 kilometres east to Sétif. The city, at an altitude of 1096m, is

located in the *Hautes Plaines* (High Plains), in the Atlas Mountains south of Kabylia. Sétif was originally a Numidian town, named after its local Berber word for 'black' in recognition of the incredibly fertile soil. It was refounded as 'Colonia Nerviana Augusta Martialis Veteranorum Stifensium' in 97 AD by the Emperor Nerva, who initiated development of a huge city and the capital of the province of Mauretania Setifensis. Sadly, much of the imperial Roman city was destroyed by a massive earthquake in 419 AD and then further ravaged by the Vandals in 520 AD. Sétif was, with the Berbers of the Aurès, one of the two locales which began the Algerian War of Independence on 8 May 1945, resulting in gruesome massacres of 45,000 Algerians and the beginning of the end for the French colonial regime in Algeria.

Our hotel, the new Novotel, is opposite the Sétif Museum, allowing us plenty of opportunity to enjoy the extraordinary collection of mosaics and artefacts excavated from the Roman city. A highlight is the intricate and richly coloured *Triumph of Dionysus*, one of the most beautifully executed mosaics excavated anywhere in the Roman world, depicting the transport of wild animals from Africa. (Overnight Sétif) BLD

Timgad - 3 nights

Day 5: Thursday 18 April, Sétif – Djémila – Timgad

- Roman city of Djémila
- Djémila site museum

We depart Sétif early this morning. Our journey of approximately 60 kilometres takes us through a fertile landscape that once made Sétif one of the wealthiest cities in all Roman North Africa, to the site of Djémila: 'beautiful' in Arabic.

Roman Cuicul is considered one of the most outstanding of all the Roman urban centres in the entire Maghreb: a spectacularly preserved example of Imperial Roman town planning, specifically adapted to an unusual triangular hillside setting. Situated at 900m above sea level, Djémila contains an impressive array of full-height forum temples, basilicas, triumphal arches and houses, a Byzantine baptistery, Roman theatre and bathhouses. We also explore the spectacular range of mosaics in the small site museum.

In the late afternoon we journey south for approximately 2.5 hours to Batna, capital of the Aurès Massif, the Algerian continuation of the Moroccan Atlas Mountains. (Overnight Timgad) BLD

Day 6: Friday 19 April, Timgad – Balcons de Ghoufi – Biskra – Sidi Oqba – El Kantara – Timgad

- Gorge of Tighanimine and Les Balcons de Ghoufi (Canyon de Ghoufi)
- Mosque of Sidi Oqba
- El Kantera Gorge

Today we explore the hinterland of Batna, including the glorious Aurès Mountains. In the morning we drive south to the beautiful gorge of Tighanimine and the Balcons de Ghoufi. This stunning mountainous region is known for its plunging gorges, twisting canyons and the lush date palm plantations which sit on the valley floor. From a scenic lookout point we may view the villages of traditional houses, constructed in local stone, which cling to the surrounding hillsides.

En route we stop at a commemoration carved into the living rock by Hadrian's Roman engineers in the 2nd century AD, before driving on to a monument commemorating the Berbers of the Aurès Mountains who fired the first shots for Algerian liberation in the War of Independence in 1954.

We then drive out of the Aurès towards the ancient trading city of Biskra, once the interface between the sophisticated Roman urban world of Numidia and Mauretania and 'barbarian' desert tribes. Biskra is surrounded by huge *palmeraies* and sits astride a broad, almost permanently dry riverbed – a river that floods dramatically in spring and whose waters are stored and utilised to irrigate the famous local date palm plantations.

Following a light lunch at a local restaurant in Biskra we make a short visit to the Mosque of Sidi Oqba. This building is arguably the oldest Islamic structure in the Maghreb, contemporary to the related Great Mosque of Kairouan in modern Tunisia. This mosque commemorates the greatest commander of the Islamic province of Ifriqiya, Oqba ibn Nafi, who steamrolled the Christian Byzantines and Berber petty-kings of North Africa in the mid-to-late 7th century, thoroughly incorporating the Maghreb into the Islamic world. Sidi Oqba famously rode his armies to the shore of the Atlantic in 682 AD, declaring: "Allah! If this sea had not prevented me, I would travel west forever, a new Alexander the Great, upholding your faith and destroying the infidel!" Returning to his newly-founded capital of Kairouan in 683, Sidi Oqba was ambushed and murdered by the troops of a Berber king while out hunting near Biskra. He was buried at the spot of his murder in the same year and the mosque developed around Sidi Oqba's mausoleum. Sidi Oqba's descendants ruled the Umayyad Muslim province of Ifriqiya as one of the earliest Islamic elites, taking the name 'Fihrids', many of whom were instrumental in the first Berber-Arab Islamic invasion of Spain in 711 AD.

The mosque itself is very simple and reflects the earliest traditions of mosque construction, resembling the private houses of the 7th-century Arabian peninsula. Inside the whitewashed interior stand a series of simple columns defining the area in front of the qibla for the prayer-carpet of the faithful. Some of the earliest pillars are simple palm-tree trunks protected by a lime wash against insect damage and covered in stucco. The mihrab is decorated with finely-carved stucco of simple geometric patterns and arabesques, crowned with a half-dome containing fluting that radiates out from the prayer-niche. The column capitals are also fluted, mirroring the decoration of the mihrab, and further emphasising the original palm-tree pillars. Two domes crown the body of the mosque, including one directly above the tomb of Sidi Oqba himself. A stunning 9th-century two-leafed door of carved cedar decorates the entrance to the shrine. Outside the mosque is a small *fogger* – or underground cistern – which almost certainly predates the mosque complex. Beyond the mosque stand the remains of ruined mud-brick houses deliberately blown-up by the Colonial French at the end of the 1950s in reprisal for local Algerians protesting for independence. The houses have been left as a very tangible reminder of Algeria's troubled recent history.

From Sidi Oqba our journey takes us north past Biskra. Just beyond the city stands a great salt mountain, exploited from Roman times and still producing delicious Saharan crystal salt, sold from stalls besides the road. As we follow the route of the old Roman military road into the foothills of the Aurès, we cross through the stunning El Kantera Gorge at sunset; a gorge traversed by a Roman bridge dating back nearly 2000 years and restored by the French Emperor Napoleon III in 1844. We continue onto Batna, where we enjoy dinner at our hotel. (Overnight Timgad) BLD

Day 7: Saturday 20 April, Timgad

- Timgad: Roman city of Thamugadi, Museum & Byzantine Fortress

Timgad, or 'Colonia Marciana Ulpia Traiana Thamugadi' was constructed by order of Emperor Trajan in the first century AD to house veterans of the III Augusta Legion, based at Lambaesis. Here, we explore the splendidly preserved buildings that were built to commemorate the emperor's Trajan's late mother and beautify an otherwise ordinary, small provincial Roman city. Timgad's *pièce de résistance* is the breathtaking Arch of Trajan, but the site is equally notable for examples of almost every edifice included in

a traditional Roman urban centre. Thoughtfully excavated, the full-size ruins are extraordinarily atmospheric and entirely deserted.

We explore the Imperial Roman city together, before heading out to the splendidly preserved Byzantine fortress constructed as part of Justinian's reconquest of Roman North Africa in the 6th century AD. Plenty of time will be allowed to explore the site at leisure and special access to the spectacular (and normally closed) archaeological site museum will hopefully be arranged. This museum features an extraordinary array of mosaics including The Triumph of Venus, surrounded by a grand decorative border, and the mosaic of *Filadelfis Vita*, in which the god Jupiter chases Antiope. (Overnight Timgad) BLD

Constantine - 3 nights

Day 8: Sunday 21 April, Timgad – Lambaesis – Medracen – Constantine

- Roman City of Lambaesis
- Lambaesis Mosaic Museum
- Mausoleum of Medracen

This morning we visit the nearby sprawling site of Lambaesis, once the primary Roman military camp defending the rich cities of North Africa from Saharan raiders. Founded in the 1st century AD, the city was built on the orders of Marcus Aurelius and later became the capital of the Roman province of Numidia. Although badly damaged by the French colonial regime, the site still contains an impressive array of ruins. Spread over a large area, surviving monuments include the remarkably well-preserved Camp of Hadrian, the Arch of Commodus and a number of Roman temples, including an *asclepion* (healing temple sacred to the god Asclepius, the Grecian God of Medicine). We then explore the wonderful mosaics in the small museum of Lambaesis.

A short journey north of Batna through flat farmland, takes us to the mysterious and atmospheric 'Medracen' – a vast tumulus mausoleum that dominates the valley into Batna and was probably the resting place of Numidian kings in the 3rd century BC. From here we continue a further 100 kilometres north to the great city of Constantine, where we enjoy dinner at our hotel. (Overnight Constantine) BLD

Day 9: Monday 22 April, Constantine

- City of Constantine: 6 Bridges (incl. Roman Kantara Bridge), Ruins of the Antonian Roman Aqueduct, Grand Mosque & Kasbah
- 19th-century Ottoman Palace of Ahmed Bey
- Time at leisure

The city of Constantine was originally a foundation of Phoenician traders, eager to exploit the rich agricultural hinterland for the growing city of Carthage. The Phoenicians named their trading colony 'Sewa', meaning 'Royal City'. The city was captured by the Numidian king Syphax, who made it the capital of his Numidian Kingdom, renaming it 'Cirta' following the defeat of Carthage by Rome in the Third Punic War. In 112 BC the Numidian King Jugurtha defeated his half-brother Adherbal in a battle for the throne and slaughtered a colony of Roman merchants while occupying Cirta. In reprisal, the Roman generals Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus and Gaius Marius captured Cirta in their war against Jugurtha. When King Juba I was deposed and the remaining supporters of Pompey in Africa in 46 BC vanquished, Julius Caesar awarded special rights to the citizens of Cirta, which became known as 'Colonia Sittlanorum.' During the civil war between emperor Maxentius and usurper Domitius Alexander (a former governor of the Roman Province of Africa) Cirta was destroyed. The city was subsequently rebuilt and renamed after the Emperor

Constantine the Great in 311 AD, who had defeated Maxentius. Captured by the Vandals in 432 AD, Constantine was in turn liberated by the generals of Justinian and became an integral city of the Byzantine Exarchate of Africa from 534-697 AD. Constantine was conquered by the Arabs in the 7th century AD and renamed 'Qusantina'.

Constantine has remained the most important urban centre in northern Algeria for over 2000 years and its rich history is still visible in the architecture of the modern city, with buildings from the Roman imperial era, Ottoman rule and French colonial governance combining in a beautiful and dramatic cityscape.

This morning we visit the six bridges suspended over the spectacular Rhummel Gorge, including the remains of the 2nd century AD Roman 'Kantara Bridge' (a former aqueduct); the exterior of the spectacular Great Mosque of Constantine; and we meander through the narrow lanes of the medieval and Ottoman Kasbah.

Following lunch at a local restaurant we continue with a visit to the 19th century Ottoman Palace of Ahmed Bey which is considered one of the finest Ottoman-era buildings in the country. The palace contains a series of courtyards filled with olive and orange trees, surrounded by arcades decorated with Tunisian and French tiles.

Following this visit, the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. (Overnight Constantine) BLD

Day 10: Tuesday 23 April, Constantine – Tiddis – Constantine

- Tiddis – Roman 'Castellum Tidianorum
- Time at leisure

We drive for around one hour in the morning to the small hillside Roman site of Tiddis – 'Castellum Tidianorum.' Originally a fortified settlement constructed to protect Roman Cirta, Tiddis is an excellent example of the small urban centres which made North Africa the wealthiest provinces of the Roman 1st, 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Colonnades, a triumphal arch and the *cardo* are among the surviving remains of this imperial centre of Roman culture. Here we may find elements of a lost, cosmopolitan Roman provincial world, with a surviving Mithraeum dated to 330 AD and a tangible connection to the UK.

Tiddis was the home of Quintus Lollius Urbicus, born to a Numidian landowning father and Roman citizen. Quintus fought with the 2nd and 22nd Legions in Germany before first being appointed Consul and then Governor of the Roman Province of Britannia under Antinous Pious. During his rule as Governor, Quintus Lollius Urbicus constructed the Antonine Wall across lowland Scotland, demarcating Rome's northern-most direct rule in continental Europe. Quintus died in 144 AD and dedicated a number of structures in Tiddis to the memory of his Numidian/Roman family.

Following a picnic lunch at Tiddis, we return to Constantine where the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to further explore the city centre. (Overnight Constantine) BLD

Ghardaia - 3 nights

Day 11: Wednesday 24 April, Constantine – Ghardaia

- Bardo District
- National Museum Cirta
- Massinissa Tomb, Soumaa El' Kheoub

- Fly Constantine to Ghardaia (AH6350 2030-2135)

Due to our late arrival into Ghardaia we have planned a leisurely morning. We depart the hotel around 11am for a visit to Constantine's Bardo District which is famous for its brassware.

After lunch at a local restaurant we visit Constantine's excellent National Museum Cirta. The collection includes archaeological remains from Tiddis, a seated terracotta figure from a 2nd-century BC tomb, and an exquisite marble bust of a woman known as the 'beauty of Djemila'.

In the late afternoon we drive to the small, austere limestone mausoleum of Massinissa, one of the most significant historical figures of late second-millennium North Africa.

Massinissa was the first Amazigh (Berber) king of a united Numidian kingdom, fighting in the Second Punic War (218-201 BC) – first with his Punic-speaking Carthaginian kinsmen and then switching sides to join Rome. For his loyal support Massinissa was provided assistance to pacify his Roman-client Kingdom of Numidia, and in turn proved his loyalty at the decisive Battle of Zama in 202 BC, his famed Numidian cavalry defeating the forces of Hannibal. After the battle had been won, Massinissa, who was in love with Sophonisba – a renowned beauty, Carthaginian noblewoman, and former wife of the western Numidian enemy, King Syphax – attempted to persuade the victorious Roman commander, Scipio Africanus, to free Sophonisba into Massinissa's custody. Africanus famously refused, demanding instead that Sophonisba be taken to Rome in chains and paraded through the streets in formal triumph, as glorious evidence of the final submission of Carthage. In a moment captured in literature and painting, Massinissa famously entered Sophonisba's tent and persuaded her to drink poison rather than submit to this final Roman humiliation. Following Massinissa's death in 148 BC, his kingdom was split into smaller client-kingdoms and his descendants include the famed Numidian and Mauretanian kings Juba I and Juba II: whose capital we visit at ancient Caesarea/Cherchell and mausoleum we explore at the so-called 'Tomb of the Christian.'

In the evening we fly from Constantine to Ghardaia, capital of the M'Zab valley. On arrival we transfer to our hotel surrounded by the M'Zab desert landscape. (Overnight Ghardaia) BLD

Day 12 & Day 13: Thursday 25 April & Friday 26 April, Ghardaia

- The UNESCO World Heritage setting of the M'Zab Valley

Ghardaia, as the M'Zab valley is usually called, after its largest city, is unlike anywhere else in Algeria. Separated by both distance and culture from the Mediterranean north, or even the Algerian Sahara of Tamanrasset, the M'Zab is a distinctive environment that has preserved and fostered an equally distinctive society. The rocky landscape is irrigated by ingenious indigenous techniques, creating huge palm groves, harvested by the local Mozabite people. These hardy folk follow the Ibadi sect of Islam and have constructed five fortified cities in the valley, to keep out 'heretic' overlords, bandits and slavers alike.

The Mozabites were Berber people who retreated to the M'Zab valley in the 12th century following the collapse of the Rustamid state centred on Tiaret. The Mozabites built concentric fortified cities, surrounding central, fortress-like mosques whose minarets were used as watchtowers. Dwellings, storerooms and other structures ring the main mosque in expanding clustered circles, emphasising family privacy and communal egalitarianism and some of the towns are still protected by high walls. The Mozabites were isolated from the rest of the Maghreb for many years and are proudly Berber, rather than Arab. The Ibadi sect emphasises the aspect of peace in Islam and the community is very welcoming to outsiders who respect their religious and cultural traditions.

We spend two days exploring the small cities of El Atteuf, Melika, Ghardaia and the 'Holy City' of Beni Isguen. Women in M'Zab traditionally would turn to face the wall when passing a stranger and while today, cultural norms are more relaxed, photography of the local population is strictly forbidden without their express permission.

The market of Ghardaia provides an opportunity to explore a traditional working Maghreb souq, with all the colour and variety of the larger Moroccan counterparts and with none of the hassle or touts – an experience unlike anywhere else in North Africa: haggling for example is not only unwelcome but considered impolite, and prices are both low and fair.

We also visit ancient mosques and wander the stone-lined streets of these extraordinary desert towns, soaking up the atmosphere of a unique culture and built urban environment. (Overnight Ghardaia) BLD

Taghit - 2 nights

Day 14: Saturday 27 April, Ghardaia – Bechar – Taghit

- Fly Ghardaia to Bechar via Algiers (AH6201 0815-0945, AH6132 1320-1535)
- Drive to Taghit

We leave behind the Moazabite people of the M'Zab and fly over the barren wastes of the central Algerian Sahara, westwards to the desert town of Bechar. From Bechar we drive south for about 60 miles to the stunning oasis village of Taghit, where enormous golden dunes are poised like waves over the eastern end of the village, tranquil date palms rustle in the desert breeze and an ancient mud-brick fortified citadel dominates the oasis skyline. Our 4-star hotel offers the perfect environment in which to relax and soak up the atmosphere and enjoy the stunning Saharan night sky. (Overnight Taghit) BLD

Day 15: Sunday 28 April, Taghit

- Fortified citadel (*Ksar*)
- Oasis tour on foot: Taghit's red mud-brick village
- Optional climb of dunes at sunset

This morning we drive to the base of the pinnacle on which a tiny, and atmospherically photogenic, mud-brick fortified citadel ('ksar') and ancient mosque dominates the oasis. These small citadels still litter the rocky high points of the Algerian Sahara and are a tangible reminder of the great wealth that once flowed north and south across the desert. Camel caravans laden with the gold of west Africa, slaves, and salt once traversed this most hostile of landscapes, while bandits and raiders preyed upon this now-forgotten ancient highway.

We then enjoy a leisurely exploration of Taghit, a small, desert town, constructed from traditional red mud-brick architecture – perfectly designed to counter the extreme summer heat.

In the late afternoon we have the option of relaxing at the hotel, or for the more energetically inclined, scrambling to the top of the giant dunes that threaten to engulf the oasis of Taghit and view the roiling Sahara of popular imagination. (Overnight Taghit) BLD

Timimoun - 2 nights

Day 16: Monday 29 April, Taghit – Béni Abbès – Timimoun

- Walk through *palmeraies* & white village, Béni Abbès
- Sahara Museum, Béni Abbès
- 'La Fraternité' – the small hermitage of Père de Foucauld, Béni Abbès

We leave behind sleepy Taghit and drive across the Sahara for around two and half hours before arriving at the oasis town of Béni Abbès. Known as the 'Pearl of the Sahara', Béni Abbès is constructed from traditional mud-brick architecture, but unlike most of the nearby oasis settlements, Béni Abbès' buildings gleam white under the Saharan sun and her inhabitants are Arab, rather than Berber, or African.

We wander the sleepy town and explore the museum of the Sahara, gaining an insight into a time when this landscape was once green and filled with giraffe, hippos and lions – the 'Green Sahara' recorded forever on beautiful rock-paintings.

We also visit a small hermitage dedicated to Charles de Foucauld. This extraordinary man has been called by Douglas Porch "a modern-day Augustine" and by Ali Merad "a Christian marabout". De Foucauld was a graduate of France's prestigious military academy (1876) and the French cavalry school at Saumur (1878). As a young officer, Foucauld initially led a decadent and dissipated life, but the people and cultures of the Maghreb left a positive, lasting impression while he served with the French occupation forces. He left the Army to explore Morocco and the western Sahara disguised as a servant of a Moroccan rabbi. This journey resulted in his book *Reconnaissance au Maroc, 1883-84* (1888). Foucauld developed a deep appreciation of Islam, asceticism, spirituality, and the shared commonalities of the Abrahamic faiths. He travelled to the Holy Land on pilgrimage and entered a Cistercian Trappist monastery. Although asked to leave by the Trappists, as temperamentally unsuited to life in the Order, he was ordained in France in 1901 and the same year moved back the Sahara. Initially, Foucauld set up a hermitage at Béni Abbès to work with the local Arabs and Berbers. He quickly came up against stiff resistance from the French colonial authorities, who were deeply disturbed by Foucauld's insistence on educating Algerians, irrelevant of their religious background. In 1905, de Foucauld moved south to his famous retreat at Assekrem, constructed high on a peak in the desolate and awesome Ahaggar (Hoggar) Mountains near Tamanrasset, in the Sahara. This humble ascetic attempted the gentle conversion of the local desert tribes through exemplifying the concept of a charitable "universal brother". Foucauld gained the trust of the Tuareg people, learning their language – *Tamahaq* – resulting in the first written dictionary of Tuareg Berber, still the standard work on the subject and published posthumously in 4 volumes after his tragic murder in 1916, aged 58. The community Foucauld founded at Béni Abbès and Assekrem was formally recognised as a religious order by the Catholic authorities in 1933 as the 'Little Brothers of Jesus' – despite heavy opposition from both the French Algerian colonial and church authorities, deeply disturbed by the Order's insistence on their mission to continue educating Algerian Arabs and Berbers. De Foucauld was beatified in 2005, is listed as a martyr in the Catholic liturgy, and in 2013, a small community of Australian consecrated brothers – inspired by de Foucauld's teachings and life of humility – formed the 'Little Eucharistic Brothers of Divine Will' in Perth.

After an early lunch we then head east across the Sahara to the largest of the western oases – to the ancient 'red' town of Timimoun. (Overnight Timimoun) BLD

Day 17: Tuesday 30 April, Timimoun – Ighzer – Timimoun

- 4WD excursion to the *Ksar* of Ighzer
- Sundan Gate, Market & Covered Souk

Timimoun is surrounded by lush *palmeraies*, magnificent towering sand dunes, and flanked by an ivory-grained salt lake. This morning we take 4x4s out into the 'Grand Erg Occidental' – a Saharan landscape of towering dunes, snaking *wadis*, and lonely, forgotten *ksour*. We shall explore the finest example of these

desert fortresses at Ighzer, recently excavated by an Italian team of archaeologists.

All desert towns are reliant on their permanent water supplies and Timimoun is no different. The ancient and still-functioning 'foggara' system is a local adaptation of a technology that was first developed 3000 years ago in northern Afghanistan and transmitted west to the desert peoples of the Maghreb in the 1st millennium AD by Arab-Islamic conquerors. Underground channels carry water from distant aquifers and redistribute for local use by private houses and to irrigate the palm plantations. Hundreds of these foggara are still in use in western Algeria and we will examine this extraordinary life-giving technology during our morning excursion.

Our 4x4s then take us back to the tranquil surroundings of the Timimoun oasis, crossing the salt lake en route. Before reaching Timimoun we break for lunch at the house of a local village sheik where we are served a bedouin lunch made from vegetables and fruit sourced from his home garden.

Once the site of the largest slave market in west Africa that was only abolished by the French in 1912, this heart-rending trade has left a tangible reminder of past sorrows in the physiognomy of many of Timimoun's friendly inhabitants. Despite being the largest of the oasis towns, it is still relatively small and divided into an old town and 'new' town.

The old town – the *ksour* – is constructed from red mud-brick homes which compete both for space and the desert breeze, virtually stacked on top of one another. The narrow streets are protected in true desert fashion, shaded by large cloth awnings to relieve the inhabitants from the blazing Saharan sun. Here, we explore the covered souk and the town's market filled with local women traders dressed in glorious fabrics and resembling galleons in full-sail. 'New' Timimoun was constructed by the Colonial French and still carries a dusty air of Beau Geste; we shall visit the 'Sudan Gate' or 'Southern Gate' which once linked French colonial Algeria with French colonial Mali and Niger. (Overnight Timimoun) BLD

Tlemcen - 2 nights

Day 18: Wednesday 1 May, Timimoun – Oran – Tlemcen

- CAPTERRE (Algerian Center for Cultural Heritage Built in Earth)
- Fly Timimoun to Oran (AH6379 1400-1610)

This morning we visit the headquarters for the Algerian Center for Cultural Heritage Built in Earth (CAPTERRE) which is dedicated to preserving the region's earthen architecture. The centre, built between 1912 to 1917, is made of adobe brick and represents a fine example of neo-Sudanese architecture. It is decorated with sculpted Zeneta Berber geometric patterns typical of the Gourara region and was declared a national monument in 2015.

Following an early lunch, we fly north from the Saharan trading *entrepôt* of Timimoun, to the great Mediterranean sea-port city of Oran. Algeria's second city of over 1.5 million inhabitants, is like the capital, orientated towards the sea. Unlike the cities of eastern Algeria, Oran has no real Berber or Roman past and developed in the 10th century as a port connecting Islamic Andalusia with the cities of the Maghreb. This close relationship with *Al-Andalus* is reflected in the cultural and architectural traditions of the city, which were further enhanced after the Berber Almoravid, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, moved his capital to Tlemcen in 1080 and used Oran as his dynasty's primary port, knitting together Almoravid Morocco, western Algeria, and southern Spain. The city was ruled by the Spanish from 1509-1792, only to be lost to the Ottomans. A massive earthquake had flattened much of early Oran in 1790 and when the French conquered Algeria in the 19th century, they reconstructed much of the city in the glorious, if shabby, Belle Époque style.

Oran is still very different in character and atmosphere from other Algerian cities, with a lively reputation as a party town, a strong tradition of investigative journalism, and birthplace of the youth music Rai. From Oran's airport we drive south west to the city of Tlemcen where we will spend two nights. (Overnight Tlemcen) BLD

Day 19: Thursday 2 May, Tlemcen

- Great Mosque of Tlemcen
- Mosque of Sidi Abi Hasan
- Citadel of El-Mechouar: Zianides Royal Residence & Royal Mosque
- 13th-century ruins of ancient Mansourah

Today we explore the great Islamic city of Tlemcen – a contrast with Romanised eastern Algeria. Tlemcen surprisingly shares her culture and architecture with the Islamic cities of Morocco. Tlemcen was founded as the Roman military-town of Pomaria ('The Orchards') in the 2nd century AD, and Vandal and Byzantine Pomaria remained a largely Christian city for centuries following the conquest by the 'Umayyad Arabs in 708 AD. Late 8th and early 9th-century Tlemcen grew into a city-state kingdom of the Banu Ifran, who fortified numerous small Saharan oases, linking them into a trans-Saharan caravan route terminating at Tlemcen. In 1082 AD, Almoravid Yusuf ibn Tashfin founded the city of Tagrart ('encampment' in Berber) outside the city walls – an encampment that merged with the besieged city of Agadir which, following Almoravid capture, was renamed Tlemcen. Tlemcen passed from Almoravid to Almohad control during the mid-12th century. In the early 13th century, Ibn Ghaniya attempted to restore Almoravid control of the Maghreb. The region around Tlemcen was devastated by retreating Almoravid forces, before their final defeat by the Almohads at the Battle of Jebel Nafusa in 1210 AD. Despite the destruction of Tlemcen's already feeble agricultural base, Tlemcen again rose to prominence as a major trading and administrative centre under the the Almohad dynasty.

With the collapse of Almohad rule in the 1230s, Tlemcen became the capital of the Zayyanid kingdom of Tlemcen (1236-1556 AD). During the later Middle Ages, Tlemcen served as a trading city connecting the Maghreb with trans-Saharan caravan routes, housing a European trading centre (*funduk*) that directly connected West African kingdoms with European merchants. Tlemcen was one of the key points through which African gold (arriving from south of the Sahara via Sijilmasa or Taghaza) entered Europe. Tlemcen was integrated into the European financial system where Genoese bills of exchange freely circulated amongst merchants not subject to (or deterred by) religious prohibitions. At the peak of her power, in the first half of the 14th century, Tlemcen was a city of 40,000 inhabitants, housing several famous madrasas, and the principal intellectual centre of the Maghreb. In the souq around the Great Mosque, merchants sold carpets from the East, slaves and gold from across the Sahara, and Mediterranean maritime booty "redirected" to Tlemcen by corsairs – alongside European imports available at the *funduk*. Later in the 14th century, the city twice fell under the rule of the Marinid sultan, Abu al-Hasan Ali (1337-48 AD) and his son Abu 'Inan, but they were unable to hold the region against local resistance.

When the Spanish captured Oran in 1509, pressure from Berbers prompted the Spanish to attempt a counterattack against Tlemcen in 1543, which the Papacy named a Crusade. The Spanish failed to take the city in their first assault but the strategic vulnerability of Tlemcen shifted the locus of the Islamic kingdom towards the more heavily fortified corsair base at Algiers. In 1554, the kingdom of Tlemcen came under Ottoman rule, who ruthlessly deposed the Zayyanid dynasty. The Spanish were evicted from Oran in 1792, but thirty years later replaced by the French. A French fleet bombarded Algiers in 1830, with the Dey capitulating to the French, while a broad coalition of Algerians continued to resist, coordinated loosely from Tlemcen. French colon developed Tlemcen as a holiday retreat, as the climate is far more temperate than Oran or Algiers. This French city was cosmopolitan, with a unique combination of Moorish, Moroccan,

African, and European art, culture, and architecture, and blossomed until the bloody independence movements of the mid-twentieth century.

Our day begins with a visit to the great Jami, or Congregational, Mosque of Tlemcen – one of the finest Islamic buildings in all of North Africa. The original layout was commissioned by Yusuf Ibn Tashfin in 1136 AD and just like the Great Mosque of Algiers, an internal ascetic sobriety powerfully contrasts with the decorated central aisle and mihrab. In front of the mihrab is a superb dome, ornamented with interlacing fillets, that diffuse bright sunshine with a translucent beauty.

Nearby, at one of the central squares, is the 13th-century Mosque of Sidi Abi Hasan. This mosque was built in 1296 AD and named in honor of Abu El Hassan Ben Yekhlef Ettenessi, a celebrated Islamic jurist and scholar. Under French rule, the building was appropriated by colonial authorities and served as storage for animal feed, a school, and a museum. During the last decade, the museum has been transferred and the mosque restored. Inside, the prayer room features beautiful onyx columns.

We then visit the Citadel of El-Mechouar, built over the remains of the early settlement of Agadir by Almoravid Yusuf ibn Tashfin in 1145 AD. Inside the citadel we tour the royal residence of Yaghmurasen Ibn Zyan, founder of the Zayyanid dynasty. Built in 1248 AD, the palace consists of four wings surrounding a patio, garden and ornamental lake. The palace was fully restored to commemorate Tlemcen, as Capital of Islamic Culture in 2011. We also view the royal mosque, built by the Zayyanid prince Abu Hammou Moussa in 1317 AD. While the interior of the mosque was modified during the Ottoman period, the minaret still retains exquisite detailing from the Zayyanid period.

Following lunch in town we drive west out of Tlemcen and beyond the gate of Bab El Khamis. We explore the ruins of the city/military camp of Mansourah, founded in 1299 AD by the Marinid Sultan Abou Yacoub, who was besieging the Zayyanid capital of Tlemcen. Yacoub encircled the western part of Tlemcen with a huge wall, 4000 metres long, 12 metres high and surmounted by 80 towers. The Marinid siege was broken and their encampment eventually merged with Tlemcen as a new city suburb. Mosques, villas, hamams, and internal rabat walls were constructed within Mansourah, but an unreliable water supply meant the suburb was slowly abandoned from 1336. A 40-metre-high minaret still impresses at two-thirds its original height, while the backdrop of the ruined town provides an atmospheric frame.

In the late afternoon we return to Tlemcen for dinner. (Overnight Tlemcen) BLD

Algiers - 1 night

Day 20: Friday 3 May, Tlemcen – Algiers

- El-'Ubbad: mosque, madrasa and tomb of Sidi Boumediène
- Cascades d'el Ourit
- Farewell Lunch
- Fly Tlemcen to Algiers (AH66119 1720-1850)

This morning we visit the beautiful complex of Sidi Boumediène. Abu Maydyan, or Sidi Boumediène was born near Seville in 1115 AD, studied my Sufi mystics in Almoravid Morocco, and developed his own brotherhood. He was a poet, mystic, and known as 'Sheik of Sheiks' as so many North African Sufis were trained by him, or his followers. His beautiful tomb was constructed in 1197 when he died in Tlemcen en route to Marrakech. Nearby stands a lovely mosque built in 1339 AD and a madrasa constructed in 1347, where the famed Ibn Khaldun lectured to students in the 1360s.

From Sidi Boumediène we journey through the Tlemcen National Park, home to 141 animal specials including 100 different species of birds of which 38 are protected. Here we visit the picturesque waterfall – Cascades d’el Ourit.

Returning to Tlemcen, we enjoy a farewell lunch before taking an early evening flight to Algiers. Due to our late arrival, our final group evening meal will be served at the hotel. (Overnight Algiers) BLD

Day 21: Saturday 4 May, Depart Algiers

- Time at leisure
- Mid-Morning Airport transfer for participants travelling on the ASA ‘designated’ flight

We enjoy free time to explore Belle Époque Algiers (near our hotel), before joining the coach transfer to Algiers International Airport for the ASA ‘designated’ flight back home to Australia. Alternatively, you may wish to extend your stay in Algeria. Please contact ASA if you require further assistance. B

Accommodation

Hotels are rated by ASA as 3- to 5-star and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms have shower or bath and WC. Double rooms for single occupancy may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the applicable supplement. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

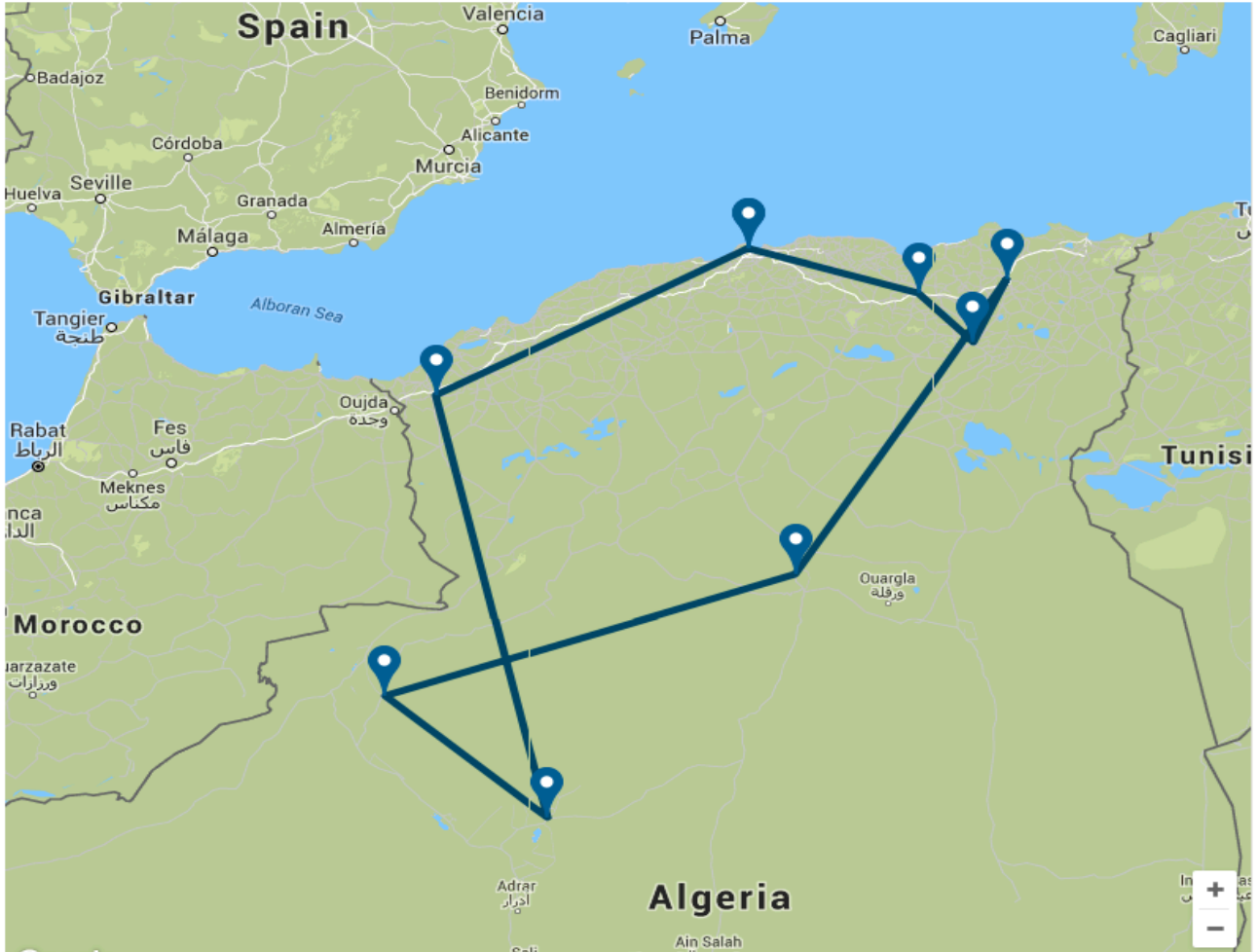
- Algiers (3 nights): 4-star Hotel El Djazair – the former Hotel George, site of Allied HQ during World War II and host to meetings between Churchill and Eisenhower. Located near the National Museum of Antiquities and downtown belle époque Algiers, this charming hotel, with beautifully restored gardens, offers rooms all with contemporary facilities including satellite TV and free WiFi. www.chaineeldjazair.com
- Sétif (1 night): 4-star Best Western Hotel Setif Plus – the hotel is located in the city centre; its terrace offers fine views of the city. It offers air-conditioned rooms equipped with en-suite bathroom, satellite TV, minibar and free WiFi. <https://setifhotel.com>
- Timgad (3 nights): 4-star Trajan Hotel – a new hotel located 80 metres from the Roman archaeological site of Timgad. The hotel offers air-conditioned rooms equipped with en-suite bathroom, flat-screen TV and free WiFi. www.trajan-hotel.com
- Constantine (3 nights): 5-star Constantine Marriott Hotel – opened in 2015, the hotel is located in the city centre overlooking the Oued Rhumel River. It offers air-conditioned rooms equipped with en-suite bathroom, LED screen TV, tea/coffee-making facilities and free WiFi. Facilities include a restaurant and outdoor swimming pool. www.marriott.com
- Ghardaia (3 nights): Hotel Belvedere – The hotel offers air-conditioned rooms equipped with en-suite bathroom. Facilities include a restaurant.
- Taghit (2 nights): 4-star Hotel Saoura – located in the town centre, this hotel underwent extensive renovations and reopened in 2014. It offers contemporary-style rooms with en-suite bathroom, satellite TV and minibar. www.facebook.com
- Timimoun (2 nights): 4-star Hotel Gourara – located on the edge of town overlooking the lush Gourara oasis, this hotel underwent extensive renovations and reopened in 2015. It offers contemporary-style rooms with en-suite bathroom, satellite TV and minibar.
- Tlemcen (2 nights): 5-star Renaissance Tlemcen Hotel – set on the Lalla Setti Plateau overlooking the city. It offers air-conditioned rooms equipped with en-suite bathroom, LCD screen TV, tea/coffee-making facilities and free WiFi. Facilities include 3 restaurants and outdoor swimming pool. www.marriott.com
- Algiers (1 night): 4-star Lamaraz Arts Hôtel – located 12km from the airport. It offers contemporary air-conditioned rooms with en-suite bathroom and flat-screen TV with satellite channels. Facilities include: free WiFi, a spa centre and restaurant. www.facebook.com/LamarazArtsHotel

Note: Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single use is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$14,280.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 14 April 2023

AUD \$14,480.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$2490.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 3- to 5-star hotels
- All meals as indicated in the tour itinerary where: **B**=breakfast, **L**=lunch & **D**=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals include tea/coffee, bottled water and soft drinks only.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach; some sections of the tour are completed by 4x4 vehicles
- Air Algeria flights: Constantine-Ghardaia, Ghardaia-Algiers-Bechar, Timimoun-Oran, Tlemcen-Algiers
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (and at airports for flights during the tour)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Local guide in Algeria
- Entrance fees
- Bottled water provided during day excursions
- Tour Handbook
- Tips for the coach driver, Algerian guide and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Algiers, Algiers-Australia
- Beverages with meals
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visa for Algeria



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 21-day cultural tour of Algeria 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; some sections of the tour are completed by 4x4 vehicles.

Other considerations:

- 3- to 5-star hotels with eight accommodation changes.
- Air Algeria flights: Constantine-Ghardaia, Ghardaia-Algiers-Bechar, Timimoun-Oran, Tlemcen-Algiers
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portorage includes 1 piece of luggage per person.
- A moderate risk of gastric ailments (you should consult your doctor about medication before departure).

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.

Booking Conditions

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 \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME Roman Algeria, the Sahara & the M'Zab Valley
TOUR DATES 14 April – 4 May 2024

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

Covid Certificate A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

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.

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

Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

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. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** 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. You do NOT 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?
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen?

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs?
- 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?

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?

Are you insulin dependent?

4. Do you suffer from travel sickness?
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

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 the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or 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 only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with 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 booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, 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 preparing for, 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; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

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, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

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

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 120 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.**

120-46 days prior 30% of total amount due

45-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**\$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) 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 or services 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. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to 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 120 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 120 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 & 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 _____