



Libya

EXPLORE THE HIDDEN GEMS

April 08 - April 18, 2025

Led by Tour Lecturer, Ian Shearer

Libya is a country of stark contrasts, offering visitors an opportunity to see some of the world's greatest Roman and Greek cities and the spectacular Libyan Desert. On Libya's western Mediterranean coast, explore the charming Old Town in the country's capital city of Tripoli and admire the breathtaking ancient Roman city of Leptis Magna. Travel to the heartland of the Berber people in the Nafusa Mountains to see one of the world's greatest treasures, the Granary of Qasr al-Haj. Explore the unique whitewashed houses designed to keep the homes cool during the hot days and warm during the cold nights. Get a fascinating glimpse into the Berber culture and see how they live in traditional troglodyte caves. At the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Sabratha, you will discover Roman Ruins that date back to the second century AD. With Libya now allowing US Citizens to enter the country, now is the time to visit this stunning treasure.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Tuesday, April 08

Arrive in Tripoli (LIBYA)



Upon arrival at the airport in **Tripoli**, a city founded in the 7th century BC by the Phoenicians, meet and transfer to *Victoria Hotel or similar* for check-in. After a short rest, meet your guide for a tour briefing, enjoy dinner and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(D)**

Wednesday, April 09

Tripoli



Enjoy breakfast, and then begin the day with a visit to the **Red Castel** of Tripoli, located at the entrance of the Old Town. Excavation sites have found remains dating back to Roman times. It was built for King William the Lion in the late 12th century to repel Viking invasions to Lunan Bay. Spend time wandering the old town's narrow, whitewashed streets and ancient souks and admire its attractive architecture. Visit **Al-Naqah Mosque** "Camel Mosque" (if open), the oldest mosque in Tripoli and one of the oldest mosques. It was built before the construction of the Great Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo; the colorful Turkish tilework of the historic 18th century **Karamanli House** built in the second half of the 18th century, during the reign of Ali Pasha Al-Qaramanli, and was used by Yousuf Pasha until his death. The house was restored in the early 1990s and became the Tripoli Historical Exhibition. Also, visit the **British Consulate** and the famous **Othman Clock Tower** in the heart of Tripoli in the Tal area founded by the Phoenicians, then known as Oea by the Romans. See the **Arch of Marcus Aurelius**, Tripoli's most impressive ancient monument. Explore Tripoli's **Italian neighborhoods** and admire its 20th-century Italian architectural heritage. Visit an old **Christian Church** and Tripoli's **WWII Cemetery**, the burial site of Allied soldiers. Enjoy dinner at a local

restaurant and then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, April 10

Tripoli (Leptis Magna & Villa Sileen)



Begin the day exploring the spectacular ruins at **Leptis Magna**, one of the greatest ancient sites in the world. Originally a Phoenician trading port during the seventh century BC, it prospered for nearly 1,000 years before Vandal invasions and sandstorms led to its downfall. This vast city remained buried for some 1,300 years until the 1920's, when a significant excavation by Italian and Libyan archaeologists revealed the limestone and marble wonders that we will explore today. On the way back to Tripoli, stop at **Villa Sileen** (closed), which dates back to the Byzantine period and belongs to a wealthy Roman family. The villa, with its well-preserved wall frescos and intricate mosaic tiled floors, is a perfect example of what an ancient luxury seaside home would have looked like during this period. After dinner at a local restaurant, return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, April 11

Tripoli - Jebel Nafusa - Ghadames (6 hrs. 45 min.)



Enjoy a long but rewarding driving day as we make our way south into the heart of Berber country to **Jebel Nafusa**, a mountain that rises abruptly from the desert plain of Jefara. The lush, fertile plains on the high plateau are full of olive, fig, fruit trees, as well as vineyards. You will visit the magnificent 12th-century fortified **Granary of Qasr al-Haj**, one of the World's 80 Greatest Treasures. This intriguing structure stores the harvests of the semi-nomadic people just as it has been for many centuries. Continue to **Ghadames**, the "Pearl of the Desert," a great example of a traditional settlement, and

transfer to *Dar Ghadames Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, April 12

Ghadames



Spend the day visiting **Ghadames**, an ancient caravan center situated at the edge of the Sahara near the borders of Algeria and Tunisia. This Berber town of unique architecture, palm groves, and gardens is an oasis that forms part of the sub-region of **Gharian**. It offers the traveler the warm hospitality of the Berber people and a unique perspective of day-to-day life that has not changed for centuries. We will discover unique homes built of mud, lime, and palm tree trunks in the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This unique design keeps the houses cool during hot days and warm during cold nights. In addition, the rooftops are all connected to allow the women to get around without being seen by men. Enjoy lunch at a traditionally decorated house, then head to the dunes by 4x4 vehicles for a beautiful view of the **Sahara** surrounding Ghadames and watch the spectacular sunset. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, April 13

Ghadames - Gharyan - Tripoli (7 hrs. 45 min.)



Enjoy another long driving day back to Tripoli, stopping en route in **Gharyan**, a large village in the **Nafusa Mountains**, which is an excellent place to experience authentic Berber culture. You will discover spectacular **troglodyte caves** built by the Berbers to keep them cool during the hot summer months. Upon arrival in **Tripoli**, transfer to *Victoria Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, October 14

Tripoli (Sabratha)



Begin the day with a drive west of Tripoli (45 miles) to **Sabratha**, a fantastic historical city from 500 BC. The Phoenicians used this UNESCO World Heritage Site as a port and trading post. Explore the **Theatre**, probably the most popular site in Sabratha, the **Baths**, **Temples**, and the spectacular **theater**, which housed up to 10,000 spectators. Return to the *Hotel* to freshen up and relax, spend more time in the **old town** with the guide to shop for souvenirs, or wander the maze of streets and alleyways in the **Medina**. Enjoy dinner at a

local restaurant, then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, April 15

Tripoli - Albayda



Morning transfer to the airport for our flight to **Albayda**, the capital city of the Green Mountain district, and upon arrival at **Al Braq Airport**, meet and transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in, then head to **Soussa**, a town and seaside resort and stands by the ruins of Apollonia, Cyrenaic (Apolonia), which was founded by Greek colonists in the 7th Century BC and was the harbor for Cyrene. After Alexander the Great conquered the Persians (331), Apollonia and Cyrene were part of the Ptolemaic Empire, founded by one of Alexander's generals, Ptolemy I Soter. The cities retained much of their autonomy because they were on the periphery.

Continue the drive to **Ras Al Hilal**, which means "the head of the crescent." It was the second port of Cyrene, known for its green shore, blue sea, and waterfall in the mountains. Return to the *Hotel* in Al Bayda for dinner and overnight.

(B,L,D)

Wednesday, April 16

Albayda (Ptolemais & Qasr Libya)



Begin the day with a morning drive along the coastal road to Ptolemais, the former capital of Pentapolis. Named after Ptolemy III and originally a Hellenistic mercantile city, **Ptolemais** was founded during the 3rd century B.C. where its importance eventually increased following the acquisition of Cyrenaica by the Romans in 96 A.D. Ptolemais enjoyed the prosperity that characterized this era of the Roman Empire and as a result extensive public works programs were put into place for the upscale citizenry of this flourishing city. During the 3rd century A.D., following the decline of nearby Cyrene, Ptolemais became the region's capital city. Like Cyrene, it suffered the earthquake of 365 A.D., followed by a reconstruction period. In the 6th century A.D., Apollonia became the capital of Upper Libya when the water supply system of Ptolemais failed. Ptolemais' death knell tolled at the Arab conquest of Cyrenaica in the 7th century A.D. Continue through the pleasant Green Mountains to **Qasr Libya**, and visit a charming **museum** that houses more than 50 pieces of mosaic artifact fragments dating back to the 6th century A.D.

The collection of mosaics is considered one of the world's finest and, intriguingly, depicts pagan subjects and human and animal figures. One panel depicts the Pharaoh Lighthouse, one of the World's Seven Wonders. Enjoy lunch, then return to the *Hotel* for free afternoon at leisure, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, April 17

Cyrene - Tripoli



The spectacular ruins of Cyrene are only partially excavated, and as we walk, we may discover a mosaic or statue appearing from beneath the sand. Starting from the top of the hills, we will visit the **Agora quarter** with the **gymnasium, forum, Roman basilica**, the **Temple of Demetra**, and **Batthus Tomb**. Following a narrow path, descend to the **Temple of Apollo**, the principal building of Cyrene. The temple was built as early as the 7th century B.C. and rebuilt three centuries later. Nearby lies the **Fountain of Apollo**, whose water was used for healing properties. The **Great Baths** are in exceptional condition, and inside the Grand Hall, the pipes carrying water from the Fountain of Apollo are still visible. The **Amphitheatre** is Roman, but its foundations and style are Greek. End the day with a visit to **Cyrene Museum**, which houses a beautiful collection of sculptures and statues, including statues of gods and goddesses, like Isis, Athena, Zeus, Apollo, Hermes, Demeter, Dionysus, and Cupid, portraits of Roman emperors and a bust of Alexander the Great, the marble group of the Three Graces, and the giant Sphinx as well as Libyan sculptures which differ in style and execution. After the visit, transfer to the airport for our flight to **Tripoli** and, upon arrival, meet and transfer to *Victoria Hotel* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, April 18

Tripoli - USA- or next adventure



Transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".

Special tour remarks:

This tour requires a flexible spirit, and a sense of adventure Libya is notorious for closing its borders to American Citizens without notice, so it is imperative you have an alternative plan should they suddenly stop giving visas. Should this occur, we will transfer the costs paid toward the Libya trip to another destination of equal value. Spiekermann Travel is not responsible for additional costs for hotels, flights, or other unforeseen reasons. We HIGHLY recommend travel insurance that will cover for these incidents. By signing up for this tour, you are accepting this possibility may arise and agree to be tolerant, flexible, and patient.



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$5,595.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$395.00

Price based on group size maximum of 6 participants and maximum of 12 participants

Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: *-******

and Ireland in 2008. Iain has led lecture tours across the Maghreb, the Arab Middle East, Iran, and Central Asia, and was the author for Lonely Planet guides to Saudi Arabia and Hajj (2009) and to Western and Northeastern Iran (2012) Trips. His knowledge of Phoenician and Greco-Roman history and archaeology will immensely enrich your journey through Libya.

About your Tour Lecturer... Ian Shearer, he has worked as an archaeologist in the UK, Afghanistan, Caucasus, North Africa, the Balkans, Central Asia, China, Pakistan, India, and the Arab Middle East over the last 25 years. Educated and trained at the Institute of Archaeology University College London, he is the former Sackler Scholar for Afghanistan and Iran at The British Museum and made a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain



Tour Includes:

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- All accommodation at mentioned *Hotels* or similar.
- Travel by modern & air-conditioned motor coach.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Domestic Inter-Libya flights.
- Entrance fees to all mentioned sites and museums.
- English-speaking local guide throughout the tour.
- Bottled water on bus during touring days.
- Escort of tour lecturer (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Trip Grade:

II Active – Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides and extensive drives.

Lodging Level:

*****-**** Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (Best available to 4 stars).

Tour does not include:

- International air USA- Libya-USA.
- **Libyan visa** (Obtainable in Washington DC - \$150 - subject to change).
You must not have an Israeli stamp in your passport).
- Activities and sites not described in the itinerary.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Gratuity to your tour manager (optional).
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance (**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**).

