

DISCOVER THE WONDERS

SPIEKERMANN

TRAVEL  SERVICE



MAURITANIA

February 23 - March 02, 2025
Led by Local Guide

Can be combined with Morocco and Western Sahara tour (February 09 - February 23, 2025)

Mauritania, once the seat of the Almoravid movement that spread Islam throughout North Africa, boasts many natural wonders and ancient cities. Highlights include bustling markets, fascinating "ksours" (fortified villages), isolated nomadic camps, medieval Berber trading centers, the mystical Guelb Errichat (Africa's "Eye"), beautiful green oases, and impressive Neolithic rock cave paintings. Mauritania is a picturesque country that is famous for blue-robed men roaming the parched lands, a vast Sahara with small villages and palm groves and canyons and an abundant group of lost cities in a mystical land and some of Africa's most hospitable nomadic people.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Sunday, February 23

Dakhla - Nouadhibou (MAURITANIA) (4-5 hrs.) 

Begin the drive to the **Mauritanian border** at **Guerguerat**; after border formalities, meet your local guide and continue the drive to Nouadhibou. Have lunch at a local restaurant and then transfer to *El Medina Hotel or similar* for check-in, free afternoon at leisure, dinner, & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, February 24

Nouadhibou - Arguin Park - Iwik Village (4 hrs.) 

After breakfast, head to visit the Nouadhibou's spectacular "**Golf du levrier**" **Market** and purchase some local currency before heading out on a Saharan adventure. Begin the drive south towards **Iwik Village**, located in **Banc d'Arguin National Park**, a nature reserve home to many migratory and breeding birds, including flamingos, terns, herons, and pelicans. The waters here are some of the best fishing spots in western Africa, attracting millions of birds. In addition, the intertidal flats contain the most pristine seagrass beds in the world, where motorboats are not allowed, and only a local indigenous Imraguen tribe that lives here can fish using primitive methods. The waters here are home to endangered mammals such as monk seals, dolphins, and whales. Transfer to a *fixed camp* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: The basic fixed camp has wooden chalets equipped with beds, toilet & wash facilities.

Tuesday, February 25

Cap Tifarit - Benichab - Akjoujt - Atar (7 hrs.) 

Begin venturing deep into the Sahara on a long drive towards **Atar**, through the heart of the **Inchiri region**. Stop at the small towns of **Benichab** and **Akjoujt**, the capital of the Inchiri region. Akjoujt is known for its gold and copper mining industry, with archaeological mining finds dating back to as early as 1,000 BC! Continue the drive to **Atar**, the capital of the **Adrar region**, and discover **nomadic camps** along the way. In Atar, the friendly faces of the locals and the markets worth exploring will warmly welcome us. There is a historic

mosque here as well. Transfer to *Etoile du Nord Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, February 26

Atar - Agrou - Chinguetti (2 hrs.) 

Begin the day with a drive through the scenic landscape of the **Adrar Massif**. Cross the **Amogjar Pass** and see some **caves** containing unique ancient **Neolithic rock paintings**, discovered by the French naturalist Theodore Monod, depicting lush grassland with giraffes and antelope. This region is also where the famous French movie "Fort Saganne," starring Gerard Depardieu, was filmed. Arrive in **Chinguetti**, the seventh holy city of Islam and UNESCO World Heritage Site. This medieval Berber town, founded in the 13th century, was the center of several trans-Saharan trade routes. The city is threatened by encroaching desert, and some homes have even been abandoned in the sands. Transfer to *Caravannes Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, February 27

Chinguetti (Oudane) (2 hrs.) 

Begin the day with a drive to **Guelb Errichat's "Africa's Eye,"** an impressive crater from the sky that looks like a blue eye. There are many theories about how this amazing geological wonder was formed. Originally thought to have been created by an asteroid, and later, there were some arguments that a volcanic eruption created it. Now, it is said that it may have been caused by uplifted rock sculpted by years of erosion. Continue the drive to the ancient city of **Oudane** **once** a stop along the trans-Saharan trade route for caravans transporting salt from the mines of Idjil. This small town and UNESCO World Heritage Site contains many well-preserved, fascinating ruins. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, February 28

Chinguetti - Atar (2 hrs.) 

Begin the day by walking around Chinguetti, an **old stone village**, and admire its Berber-Saharan architecture. The town's interesting **Minaret**, considered the second oldest in continuous use worldwide, is topped by symbolic

ostrich eggs. Visit the **Friday Mosque**, an ancient center of worship built by the founders of Chinguetti in the 13th century. Several old **libraries** contain a fascinating collection of important Islamic manuscripts, including Ould Habott, the largest in Mauritania. Continue the drive to **Atar** and, upon arrival, transfer to *Etoile du Nord Hotel* or *similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, March 01

Atar (Terjit & Azougui)



Begin the day with a drive across the **White Valley** area to **Terjit**, the most beautiful oasis in Mauritania with thermal springs and marvelous pools. This green oasis is nestled in a valley gorge, greatly appreciated for its beauty, fresh air, and the opportunity to "swim in the desert." Explore the remains of **Azougui**, the ancient capital of the Almoravids, the Muslim warriors who conquered Morocco, Spain, and sub-Saharan Africa during the 11th century A.D. A fortress was built here, and the city wall still stands today. Through the maze of rocks, we can find the rest of the ruins, including the **graveyard of Imam Hadrami**, an 11th-century warrior. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, March 02

Atar - Nouakchott - USA (5 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the drive back to **Nouakchott** and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant known for its fresh seafood while watching the local fisherman as they come and go in their colorful pirogues - long, narrow canoes dug out from trees and painted in bright colors. Head to visit the **National Museum**, with its notable archaeological & ethnographical collections, including arrowheads, ancient pottery fragments, and traditional costumes of Mauritania. Stroll through the traditional **gold** and **handcraft market**, then transfer to *Sun Set Hotel* or *similar* for check-in, rest, and head for a light dinner, then transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B,L,D)**

"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:

Tourist facilities are very limited in the remote regions of the desert and small villages that you will be visiting. There are few first-class hotels. Hotel A/C do not cool a room to American standards of comfort.

Participants should understand that this trip involves long drives in hot weather sometimes in 4x4 vehicles. The physical shape you are in will be an important factor in your enjoyment of the trip. There are dangers inherent in any expedition traveling to remote regions such as sickness and lack of modern medical facilities. Knowing the nature of traveling to remote areas, all travelers on this tour will require a high level of flexibility, tolerance, and willingness to go with the flow if things change.

By signing up for this tour, you are acknowledging a full understanding and acceptance of all terms and conditions and are admitting that you are in good physical and mental health and are equipped with an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a tolerant and patient spirit to cope with the tour. It is highly advisable to purchase travel protection insurance for this tour.



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$3,495.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$295.00

Price based on group size minimum of 3 participants and maximum of 6 participants

Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: **.***



Tour Includes:

- Arrival and departure transfers (including Dakhla to Nouadhibou).
- A/C transportation throughout the tour.
- Accommodation in double room as mentioned in the program in standard 4 * hotels, and basic desert hotels.
- English-speaking local guide throughout the tour.
- Meals at local restaurants or hotels, or picnic lunches as specified in the itinerary, as well as water with all meals.
- All activities described in the tour and entrance fees to all sites mentioned unless listed as optional.
- Bottled water while on drives.
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Trip Grade:

III Challenging: Parts of the trip are physically challenging, involve hiking on rough terrain or in sand or at high altitudes. There may be very long drives on rough roads, weather conditions with high heat or humidity, and the presence of insects. You may have simple picnic lunches, primitive bathroom facilities along the road and remoteness from modern towns or cities.

Lodging Level:

**** Basic:** Comfortable yet on the Spartan side, usually small but generally with private facilities. Some such lodges and motel-style are in need of repairs, added cleaning, and improvements but they are suitable for one-night stays even if they lack western style amenities. (2 or 3 stars).

***** Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars).



Tour does not include:

- International air USA - Nouakchott - USA.
- Mauritania Visa (Obtainable on arrival - approx. \$70.00, subject to change).
- Beverages with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Gratuities to guides, drivers, and porters.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance. (Highly Recommended).

