



NORTH AFRICA MAURITANIA, TUNISIA, AND ALGERIA

October 04 - October 30, 2024

Led by Lecturer, Guide and Historian, Mohamed Halouani

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.

*Few countries on earth match the historical, cultural, and natural splendor of **Tunisia**. Begin in the capital city of Tunis with its excellent museums, wondrous medina (ancient city), and fascinating souqs (markets). Explore ancient Carthage, one of the most important cities in the ancient Roman Empire and Dougga, the most well-preserved archaeological site in Tunisia. Other important historical sites include Sousse, Oudna, Kerkouane, and the sacred Islamic site of Kairouan.*

***Algeria** is a vast country of breathtaking scenery, well-preserved Roman ruins, pre-historic cave paintings, impressive museums, and a strong Berber culture. This segment of the journey will take you from the sweeping shores of the Mediterranean to the majestic green mountains, through the vast Sahara Desert, and into the palm-fringed oases. Explore the Roman ruins of Timgad, the former Roman port of Caesarea, the oasis town of Bou Saada, the Kasbah of Algiers, and the unique fortified town of Ghardaia and its Mozabite villages. No tour of Algeria would be complete without a visit to the dramatic city of Constantine, the "city of gorges and bridges."*

So come and join us on this amazing journey spanning three countries or select the segments that are most appealing to you. For those who would like to expand their visit of Algeria or are only doing the Algeria segment of the trip, consider adding the extension to Tlemcen, Timimoun, and Béni Abbès, and explore oasis, ksours, palaces, ancient cities, sand dunes, and much more in the far west and the desert of Algeria.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Friday, October 04

Arrive Nouakchott (MAURITANIA)



Upon arrival in **Nouakchott**, meet the local representative, and transfer to *Sun Set Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight.

Saturday, October 05

Nouakchott



After breakfast, begin a guided tour of **Nouakchott**, once a large, fortified fishing village but today a central hub for the Mauritanian economy. A visit to the **National Museum** will reveal notable archaeological and ethnographical collections, including arrowheads, ancient pottery fragments, and traditional costumes of Mauritania. At **Port de Peche**, we can watch the hundreds of colorful pirogues (small dugout boats) that line the beach and the fishermen that sell their catch to the **market**, followed by a tasty lunch at a trendy restaurant known for their "catch of the day." We'll pass by the **Saudi Mosque**, the largest in Nouakchott, and admire its architecture and the **Mosque Ould Abas**, a bit more basic but still worth a visit. Also, visit the **Marche Capitale Market**, a great place to bargain for local souvenirs. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, October 06

Nouakchott - Atar



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Atar**, the capital of the Adrar region, discovering **Nomadic Camps** along the way. Though there is little to see in Atar, it is an

excellent place to break up the long drive. The small **market** is worth exploring, and there is a historic 17th-century **mosque** and a **museum** with a small collection of well-preserved artifacts and paintings. Transfer to *Etoile du Nord Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, October 07

Atar - Chinguetti



Begin the day with a drive to **Chinguetti**, the 7th holy city of Islam and UNESCO World Heritage Site, founded in the 13th century. This medieval Berber town was the center of several trans-Saharan trade routes and is considered by some to be the "jewel of Mauritania." Admire its Berber Saharan architecture and the town's interesting **Minaret**, considered the second oldest in continuous use worldwide. The **Friday Mosque** is an ancient center of worship built by the founders of Chinguetti in the 13th century. Several ancient libraries contain a fascinating collection of important Islamic manuscripts, including Ould Habott, the largest in Mauritania. Transfer to *Caravannes Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 08

Chinguetti (Ouadane)



Begin the day with a drive to **Guelb Errichat (Africa's "Eye")**, an impressive crater that looks like a blue eye from the sky. It was initially thought that an asteroid created this amazing geological wonder, but it was later argued 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 **Ouadane**, 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* in Chinguetti for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 09

Chinguetti - Atar



Begin the day with spectacular canyon views and mountain range from the **Amogjar Pass**. It is where the famous French movie, "Fort Saganne," starring Gerard Depardieu, was filmed. After lunch, explore **caves** containing ancient **Neolithic rock paintings** depicting lush grassland with giraffes and antelope. Return to Atar and transfer to *Etoile du Norde Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, October 10

Atar (Terjit & Azougui)



Begin the day by driving across the **White Valley** area to **Terjit**, the most beautiful oasis in Mauritania, with thermal springs and great pools. This green oasis is nestled in a valley gorge, which visitors greatly appreciate for its beauty, fresh air, and the opportunity to "swim in the desert." Explore the remains of **Azougui**, the ancient capital of the Almoravids, 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 **necropolis of Imam Hadrami**, an 11th-century warrior. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, October 11

Atar - Nouakchott - Tunis (TUNISIA)



After breakfast, drive back to **Nouakchott** and transfer to *Sun Set Hotel or similar* for check-in, rest, freshen up, then transfer to the airport for our late evening overnight flight to **Tunis**. **(B,L,D)**

For those arriving from the US, meet and transfer to Carlton Hotel or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight.

Saturday, October 12

Tunis



After breakfast, head out to explore Tunis' **medina** and admire the architecture of **Islamic monuments, madrassas, and mosques**, including the beautiful Ottoman-Turkish style **Youssef Dey Mosque**, built by the Hanafi (Sunni School of Islam) in the 17th century.

Explore the **Hammamas** (baths) and **palaces** of the medina and have a chance to meet an **architect** and a **journalist**, who will explain to us the Tunisian society and arts development. Transfer to *Carlton Hotel or similar* for check-in, free afternoon at leisure, and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, October 13

Tunis (Carthage & Sidi Bou Said)



Begin the day by visiting the **Bardo National Museum**, one of the best archaeological museums in the Mediterranean region and the second most important museum in Africa after the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This museum, housed in an old 18th-century palace, traces the history of Tunisia and its civilization over many millennia. It is primarily known for its beautiful collection of Roman-Byzantine mosaics. Continue the drive to **Carthage**, once a major city during the Roman Empire, to explore some excellent Roman ruins. The well-preserved **Roman Theater** will help us imagine what life was like during ancient Roman times. The **Punic Harbor** contains two basins where the mightiest fleets in the Mediterranean once docked. See some **villas** and the famous **Antonine Roman baths**, believed to be the third largest in the Roman Empire. Continue to **Byrsa Hill** and enjoy spectacular views overlooking the coast and city. Spend time wandering the charming streets of **Sidi Bou Said**, an incredibly picturesque town at the top of a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Admire its white and blue painted streets and scan the town's outdoor marketplace, then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, October 14

Dougga - Kairouan



Begin the day with a drive to the west to **Dougga**, an ancient Numidian-Roman city considered Tunisia's most well-preserved archaeological site. This former Berber and Roman settlement has been protected from modern urbanization, making it one of the best destinations for exploring Roman ruins. Discover the 2nd century **theater**, one of the best-preserved sites in Roman Africa. See the **city forum** ruins and the striking 2nd century **Capitol Temple** dedicated to Jupiter. Other sites include the **Baths of Caracalla** and the **market square**. After lunch, drive to the ancient city of **Kairouan**, an important holy place for Muslims worldwide. It was also the film location for the hit movie, 'Raiders of Lost Ark.' Transfer to *La Kasbah or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 15

Kairouan - El Jem - Sousse



Spend the morning exploring the monuments of Kairouan, including the 7th-century **Grand Mosque**, one of the oldest places of worship in the Islamic world. Also, visit the 17th-century **Mausoleum of the Barber**, a zaouia (Islamic school or monastery) and burial place of Abu Zama El Belaoui, a companion to the Prophet Mohammed. Spend some time wandering around the town's **medina**, then drive to **El Jem** and marvel at the unique 3rd-century **Roman Amphitheater**, one of the best-preserved ancient amphitheaters in the world. We will also see a fascinating collection of mosaics depicting the life and times of Roman North Africa at the **El Jem Museum**. Continue the drive to **Sousse** and, upon arrival, transfer to *Iberostar Diar Al Andalous or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 16

Sousse (Monastir)



After breakfast, head to visit the second most famous archaeological museum in Tunisia - the **Sousse Museum**, housed in the 11th-century **Kasbah**. This impressive museum contains an extensive collection of Roman mosaics and artifacts from the 2nd century B.C. Walk through the **old town** and its **medina** and lose ourselves in its **souqs**. Enjoy lunch, then continue the drive to **Monastir**, once a Punic commercial harbor and one of the earliest Islamic towns in Tunisia. Explore the **Ribat**, an 8th-century fortress built by the Arabs housing the **National Museum for Islamic Art**. Also, visit the **Mausoleum of former President Habib Bourguiba** before returning to the *Hotel* in Sousse for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, October 17

Sousse - Oudna - Zaghuan - Tunis



After breakfast, drive north of Sousse to **Oudna (Uthina)**, a recently excavated ancient city with a fine **amphitheater** and **multi-story temple**. Continue the drive to the rosy-hued former Punic town of **Thuburbo Majus** once Augustus set up a settlement for military veterans around 27 BC. See the 2nd-century **forum**, the **palestra**, and **peristyle houses** with well-preserved mosaics. Head to visit **Zaghuan**, a city famous for its roses and a 60-mile-long ancient **aqueduct** that once supplied water to Carthage. Transfer to *Tunisia Palace Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, October 18

Tunis (Cape Bon & Kerkouane)



After breakfast, begin the drive and follow the path of the earliest Phoenician seafarers who established the first trading center in Tunisia around the 8th century B.C. Travel along the **Cape Bon** area, through the mountains and valleys, until we reach **Al Haouaria**. Early Carthaginians quarried the sandstone from this authentic small town to build their homes and have the chance to visit some of its largest **quarries**. Continue the drive to **Kerkouane**, considered the only historical city with the world's Punic and Carthaginian architectural heritage. The ruins here including **houses, baths, temples streets**, and the **Necropolis of Kerkouane**, which sits on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, October 19

Tunis - Algiers (ALGERIA)



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our flight to **Algiers**. Upon arrival, meet and transfer to *El Aurassi Hotel or similar* for check-in. Algiers is located on the Mediterranean Sea's shores, Algeria's capital, and largest city. The rest of the day is free at leisure, stroll through the town or along the coast—dinner and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Note: For those arriving from the US, meet and transfer to El Aurassi Hotel or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. (D)

Sunday, October 20

Algiers - Annaba - Tiddis - Constantine



Transfer in the morning to the airport for our flight to **Annaba**, and upon arrival, head to visit the site of **Hippo Regius**, an ancient city that was the home of the philosopher Augustine of Hippo. The **museum** here displays many relics found at the site, including a sculpture of Emperor Vespasian. Visit the 19th-century Roman Catholic **Basilica of St. Augustine**, then continue to **Tiddis**, an old Roman outpost, to admire its **arches, Temple of Mithras, baths, forum, and cisterns**. Continue the drive to **Constantine** and, upon arrival, transfer to *Marriott Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

NOTE: The visit to Tiddis may require a lot of climbing over uneven terrain.

Monday, October 21

Constantine



Spend the day exploring **Constantine**, commonly known as "The City of Bridges." It is a picturesque city of precipitous cliffs, deep gorges, and a lofty setting for one

of Algeria's most labyrinthine **Kasbahs**. Visit the **Cirta Museum**, known in particular for its stunning Roman mosaics, Punic artifacts, and fine sculptures. Visit the impressive **Ahmad Bey Palace** and **Gardens**, the former home of the Ottoman ruler. Also, visit the **Monument of Sidi M'Cid** (commemorating the victims of WWI) and the **Mosque of Emir Abdelkader**, the second-largest mosque in Algeria. It is named after the founder of the modern Algerian and the leader of the popular resistance against the French invasion of the country. Also, visit the beautiful **Opera House**. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 22

Constantine (Medracen & Lambaesis)



Begin the day with a visit to the 3rd-century **Royal Tomb of Medracen**, a massive round stone structure that once housed the remains of Numidian royalty. Continue the drive to the well-preserved Roman town of **Timgad**, considered the "Pompeii of Africa", Founded by Emperor Trajan around 100 A.D., this city was the most significant Roman settlement ever built in North Africa. It was later abandoned and taken over by the sand, preserving many of its ruins. Explore the **colonnaded streets, temples, public buildings, villas**, and a **museum**. See **Trajan's Arch**, one of the city's most impressive structures, and the **theater**, which was cut into the hillside. In the afternoon, visit the nearby city of **Lambaesis**, a Roman garrison town with an **amphitheater**, a **set of baths**, the **Arch of Severus**, and the **praetorium** (Roman camp) of the Third Augustan Legion. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 23

Constantine - Djemila - Bou Saada



After breakfast, head to **Djemila**, one of North Africa's most monumental sites. The wheel-rutted streets of ancient Cuicul, founded by Emperor Nerva Trajan in the first century A.D. to house his veterans, are lined with **colonnades** and a clutch of elaborate **houses**, Byzantine **churches**, and ancient **temples**. Djemila's stunning **museum** is equally as impressive, where every square inch of its immense walls is plastered with striking mosaics. In the afternoon, drive to **Bou Saada**, an important trading post for nomads nicknamed "the happy city." Nomads come here to sell jewelry, metalwork, carpets, and bousaidi knives. Transfer to *Kerdada or Le Caid Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, October 24

Bou Saada



Begin the day with a visit to the famous **Museum of Dinet**, a French artist (1861-1929) who established himself in Bou Saada and is buried here. Marvel over his original collection of paintings and then visit his tomb. Then head downtown to see the **handicraft center** and explore the **old medina** or "ksar" within the city walls. After lunch, make the short drive to **El Hamel**, a small town built during the 11th century at the foot of Mt. Omrane. and explore the enormous religious **Complex of El Hamel**, founded in the 19th century by an Islamic scholar Sidi Mohammed Ben Belgacem, and see the **mausoleum, mosque**, and **madrassa**. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, October 25

Bou Saada - Ghardaia



Begin the drive across the **M'zab region** via the historical city of **Laghouat** (halfway between Bou Saada and Ghardaia and visit the **Ethnographical Museum** to learn more about the local culture. In the afternoon, continue the drive to **Ghardaia**, founded about 1,000 years ago by the Mozabites, a Berber ethnic group of Southern Algeria. At the center of this fortified town is the historical **Mozabite area**, where white, pink, and red houses of sand, clay, and gypsum are built around a pyramid-shaped mosque. The people of this charming town have managed to maintain the original medieval architecture, allowing us to feel as if we have taken a step back in time. Transfer to *M'Zab Guesthouse or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, October 26

Ghardaia (Mozabite Villages)



After breakfast, begin the day exploring Ghardaia and marvel at the art and architecture of the Mozabites, who live in a unique valley amid the desert and along the River M'zab. Explore its fascinating **old town**, including the bustling **market** and austere **mosques**. Then visit **El-Ateuf**, the oldest city in the region, to see its simple, white-washed **mosque** and **tomb**. After lunch, continue the drive to the tight-knit community of **Beni Izguen** and stroll through this attractive 10th-century town. Admire the unique architecture known as "vernacular" in this medieval city and World Heritage Site and may spot the women covered in white veils. Return to the *Guesthouse* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

NOTE: While visiting some of the villages in the Ghardaia area, photos are strictly prohibited, and getting caught taking pictures may cause them to be deleted or possibly even confiscate your camera.

Sunday, October 27

Ghardaia - Algiers



Early morning transfer to the airport for our flight back to **Algiers**, where we will spend the rest of the day exploring the city. Begin with a stroll through the **Kasbah**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and excellent architectural masterpiece. This Kasbah remains one of the world's most mythical labyrinths while its brilliant, white-washed houses appear to tumble down the hillside and spill out into the sea. Stop at **Place des Martyrs**, a large monument commemorating the Algerian War for Independence. Visit the **Emir Abdelkader Squar**, where a statue of the founder of the Algerian nation sits in the center of the square. Transfer to *El Aurassi Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, October 28

Algiers



After breakfast, Stop to admire the unique features of **the opera house** and the neo-Moorish **Grande Poste** before moving on to the impressive **Bardo Museum**, which is housed in a Moorish-style villa. Also, visit the **Antiquities Museum** to see a fine collection of **mosaics** from various archaeological sites throughout Algeria. If time permits, stop at the 19th century **Cathedral of Notre Dame d'Afrique**, which overlooks the **Bay of Algiers**. Return to the Hotel, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 29

Algiers (Cherchell & Tipasa)



Begin the day with an excursion to the Roman town of Cherchell, stopping en route to see the **Tombeau de la Chrétienne (Mausoleum of Mauritania)**, one of North Africa's most enigmatic archaeological wonders. This 3rd century B.C. tomb was the original resting place of Queen Cleopatra and Mark Antony's only daughter, Princess Cleopatra Selene II, and the King of Mauritania, Juba II. Upon arrival in **Cherchell**, visit the **Archaeology Museum**, which contains an impressive collection of statues, mosaics, and coffins from the Roman era. Visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of **Tipasa**, an ancient Punic trading post built near the sea during the 5th century B.C. It was later conquered and colonized by the Romans in the 2nd century A.D. After being defeated by the Vandals in the early 5th century, the city was abandoned and fell into ruins. Take a stroll among the **amphitheater**, **basilica**, and **forum**, and visit an interesting **museum** while enjoying spectacular views of the Mediterranean and the rugged coastline. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 30

Algiers - USA OR continue to Tlemcen



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 Trip Remarks:

We recommend packing light for this tour as porters October not be available at some of the guesthouses and you October be required to carry your own luggage from the vehicle to the hotel. Tourist facilities are very limited in the remote regions of the desert and small villages that you will be visiting. In Mauritania and the desert of Algeria, 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. Domestic flights and flights between countries October change last minute, forcing us to make necessary adjustments to the itinerary and the sequence of visits. We have the full right to substitute or replace hotels and sites or activities previously described in the itinerary without notice due to possible circumstances beyond our control. It is highly advisable to purchase travel protection insurance for this tour.

Notes: *M'Zab Guesthouse is more basic, but we will be delighted in its traditional charm and beauty. The rooms have private ensuite toilet and showers.*



Tour Cost (Land Only):

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Mauritania: \$2,995.00

Single Supplement: \$250.00

Tunisia: \$2,995.00

Single Supplement: \$395.00

Algeria: \$5,995.00

Single Supplement: \$995.00

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

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

He now resides in Paris and leads only certain select small groups to the countries in North Africa that boast the highest concentration of Roman Ruins (notably Tunisia and Algeria).

Tour Includes:

- Airport/Hotel airport transfers.
- Accommodations in Superior (4*) (except some 2-3* hotels in parts of Mauritania & Algeria).
- Transportation by air-conditioned car/van and 4-wheel drive vehicles.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Bottled mineral water on vehicles during touring.
- All tours as per itinerary including entrance fees.
- Local taxes and service charges on included items.
- Escort of 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 very long rides. A few times you may be delayed by the security personnel at some checkpoints necessitating a tolerant and patient attitude.

Lodging Level:

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

★★★★ Luxury: Regular style- usually large- hotels, typical western standard with ample venues, and full amenities. (4 or 5 stars).

Some hotels will be basic, especially in Mauritania and the desert of Algeria, but all will have private toilet/shower facilities.

Your tour lecturer, Mr. Mohamed Halouani... is a Tunisian native who transformed his profound passion for travel and history into a creative and diversified educational career, designing, and carrying out multiple archaeological and cultural trips for institutions such as The Detroit Institute of Art, the Textile Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, Cross Cultural Adventurers and many more organizations. After having received his degrees in English and Spanish, Mr. Halouani completed his European Master's in linguistics and Hispanic studies at the Sorbonne University in Paris. He has extensive knowledge on Islamic architecture and Eastern decorative elements, as well as Roman archaeology and history. A skilled multilingual interpreter, Mohamed has served as the head tour guide in Tunisia.



Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA- Nouakchott and Algiers-USA and any flights between countries.
- Visa fees: Free on arrival - subject to change.
Your passport must not include any Israeli stamp.
- Mauritania (obtainable on arrival for \$65).
- Tunisian is currently gratis for US citizens.
- Meals not listed or beverages with meals.
- 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.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Gratuity to your tour manager (optional).
- Travel protection insurance (Highly recommended).

