

TUNISIA ROMAN SAHARA



Trip code: AYT

Country: Tunisia

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HIGHLIGHTS

- **Sidi Bou Said.** With its extensive use of white and blue colours all around the town.
- **Cathage.** Once the second most important city of the Roman Empire.
- **Bardo Museum.** An amazing building filled with Roman mosaics, Greek bronze statues and Islamic artefacts.
- **Dougga.** The Roman site that was given UNESCO World Heritage status towards the end of the 1990s.
- **Great Mosque of Kairoun.** Dating back to the 9th century, this small mosque is famous for its 3 doors and rich inscriptions above the doors.
- **Red Lizard Train.** The old wooden train that takes you on a journey through the spectacular scenery of the Selja river canyons.
- **Chott El Djerid.** See the largest salt pan of the Sahara with a surface area of over 7,000 km².
- **Camel trek.** Experience the rather bumpy life on the back of a camel.

SUMMARY

Tunisia is a gentle introduction to North Africa, with its friendly Berber people and temperate climate. We traverse this diverse country from the Mediterranean to the Sahara, visiting spectacular Roman sites, mountainous fortified kasbahs and the shady forests of the north. We visit Kairouan, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the area around Matmata, which is home to a number of troglodyte dwellings, (a dramatic landscape often used by Hollywood!) Heading south, the Chott el Djerid salt lake appears mirage-like against the sand and we enjoy the unforgettable experience of a camel trek into the Sahara to sleep amongst the silent dunes.

To view pictures of this trip, please visit

<http://www.exodus.co.uk/picpages/AYT.html>

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment.

Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything

from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company. Exodus trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

Please note the group flight from London is a daytime flight departing on Day 1 of the itinerary.

The entries in **bold** at the end of each day indicates the type of accommodation normally used (see accommodation section overleaf for key to codes) and meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner).

Day 1 Start Tunis. **SH (B)**

Day 2. We visit the Phoenician trading port of Carthage, once the second most important city of the Roman Empire. A little further north of Carthage is Sidi Bou Said. The village originated around the tomb of a 13th century holy man. We wander through quiet back streets past traditional white houses. Returning to Tunis we visit the medina. In the afternoon we visit the Bardo museum, which is housed in a former royal palace. The building itself is beautiful and surrounded by gardens. The museum contains a huge collection of Roman mosaics, Greek bronze statuary and Islamic artefacts. **SH (B,L,D)**

Day 3. We drive to the Andalucian city of Testour, founded by Andalucian Muslims evicted from Spain in the 1600's. The square is very Spanish in style and the Great Mosque dominates the old town. We continue to the Roman site at Dougga, which was given UNESCO World Heritage status in 1997. It is the largest in Tunis and considered the most magnificent. We spend the night at the mountain town of Le Kef, which clings to the side of the cliff. **BH(B,D)**

Day 4. In the morning we visit the Roman site at Makthar; framed by its mountaintop setting. This is followed by a visit to Kairouan. The whole city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Islam's fourth most holy centre. The Great Mosque is one of the most important in Tunis. From here we continue to Kairouan, where we spend the night. **SH (B,D)**

Day 5. We visit the Roman site of Sufetula near to Sbeitla before continuing to Tozeur on the edge of the Sahara. Tozeur has earned a reputation for the lush beauty of its oasis in which 200,000 date palms thrive and is now a popular tourist town. **SH (B,D)**

Day 6. We depart to Metlaoui for the Red Lizard train excursion (tickets included) through spectacular scenery. It is an old wooden train given by the French protectorate to the Bey of Tunis (former king of Tunisia). The

Red Lizard train runs through the spectacular Selja river canyons. After lunch we visit the palm filled oases surrounding the town, plus the oases at Nefta – an old town and oasis in a valley filled with *thousands* of palms. We then transfer to Tozeur to overnight. **SH (B,D)**

Day 7 We drive across the 2,000 square miles of the Chott El Djerid (salt lake), which appears mirage-like against the sand. Continuing onto Douz, the gateway town to the Sahara we visit the town centre and Sahara Desert museum before meeting with the camel drivers for a trek into the Sahara. You will see the cooks and camel drivers cook the traditional food, and bake bread in the sand. We are then entertained after dinner by the camel drivers playing traditional music around the campfire. We have dinner and overnight in a Bedouin camp. **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 8 Leaving our camels we continue our journey across the rocky desert to Matmata home to the troglodytes, people who live underground. Matmata has become famous in more recent years for featuring in the series of the Star Wars films. We visit what remains of the original film set and nearby troglodyte homes. We return to Tunis (a long drive), through Gabès and Sfax. En-route we will stop to visit the immense El Jem Amphitheatre, considered by many to be finer than Rome's Colosseum. **SH (B)**

Day 9 End Tunis. **(B)**

The group return flight to London is a daytime flight arriving home on day 9.

NB: The information in these trip notes was correct at the time of issue. The most recent version is always sent with confirmation of all bookings. If it becomes necessary to update the information, a new version will be issued and sent to all clients with a confirmed reservation in accordance with the Exodus booking conditions.

WEATHER

In the summer months the daytime temperatures are around 30°C. In the winter months the daytime temperatures are around 14 to 21°C with night temperatures falling to 6 to 11°C. The days should be clear and sunny. The temperatures in the south are generally a couple of degrees higher. There is a chance of rain from October to April and especially on **the desert nights the temperature may fall below freezing.**

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

Please be aware of the following points before confirming your place on the trip:

The roads in Tunisia are reasonably good and driving conditions are easy for most of the trip. Some of the driving days are reasonably long (4-5 hours is the norm for journeys described in the itinerary). This tour is generally not demanding but you should bear in mind that it may get cold at night and early morning December to March so please pack appropriate clothing.

This trip has been graded as a leisurely/moderate trip, meaning that this trip is suitable for all people who are in good health and fitness. Please also note that we visit some more remote areas and the camp used on the camel trek has basic facilities. This should be taken into consideration before booking on this trip.

Please Note: *The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between these Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes are the correct version and supersede the brochure. Abnormal conditions or other events beyond our control can prevail at any time, particularly in remote or off the beaten track destinations, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.*

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit.

No visa is required for British, most (but not all) EU, and Canadian passport holders. Australians do need a visa, which can be obtained on arrival. New Zealanders must obtain a visa in advance. All other nationalities should check with their nearest embassy.

Visa regulations can and do change without notice and if you are not a British passport holder please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Vaccinations and Health

It is wise to be up to date with tetanus and polio. There are no compulsory vaccinations. Please consult your doctor or vaccination centre for up to date information.

Insurance

It is a condition of joining this trip that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks.

Local Time is GMT + 1

Group, Staff and Support

The trip is led by a local leader.

Minimum group size is 8, maximum 16.

The minimum age of clients on this trip is 16 years. Please note that children aged 16 or 17 years of age must be accompanied by (and share accommodation with) a parent or legal guardian.

[For more information or to book](#)

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