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# Tour Notes

Algeria - Desert and History

Tour Duration – 15 Days



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○○ | Culture ●●●●● | History ●●●●● | Wildlife ●○○○○

## Tour Pace

Busy

## Tour Highlights

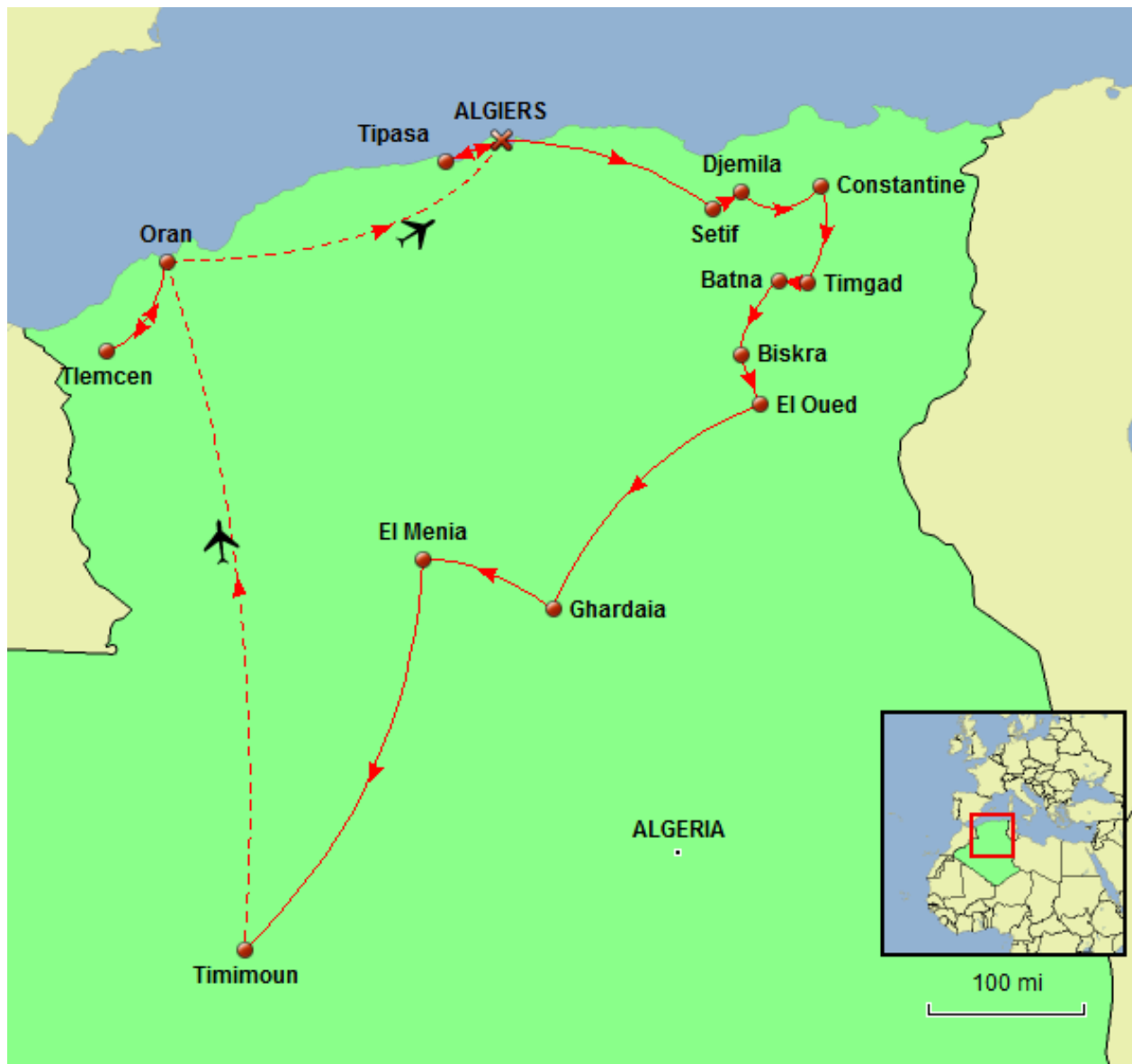
- ✓ Discover Algiers and its famous Casbah
- ✓ Spend time at the edge of the Sahara Desert
- ✓ Marvel at the well preserved Roman ruins, many of which are in fabulous locations
- ✓ Admire Constantine with its impressive bridges spanning the Rhumel Gorge





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## Tour Map - Algeria - Desert and History



### Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Simple but comfortable hotels (see under "Important Information")  
**Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary  
**Group Size:** Maximum 12  
**Start Point:** Algiers – you can arrive any time on day 1  
**End Point:** Algiers – you can depart any time on day 15  
**Transport:** Minivan, Internal flights  
**Country Visited:** Algeria





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### Algeria - Desert and History

*Algeria's rich past, as part of the Roman province of Africa Proconsularis, lies beneath layers of Christian and Islamic conquest, and more recent Ottoman and French colonisation. A remarkable mix of Arab, Berber, and French cultural influences, Algeria's political evolution is ongoing. To visit now offers not only a chance to explore ancient history, but also to experience history being made.*

### Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

### Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

## Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrival in Algiers

Arrive in Algiers and transfer to the hotel. Depending on when you arrive there may be time to explore the city. No meals or guiding arrangements are included today. Overnight at Hotel Suisse or similar.

### Algiers

Perched on the edge of the Mediterranean, opposite southern France, Algiers has long been an important city for trade between Europe and Africa. Over the years it has been home to numerous different civilisations, from the Phoenicians to the Romans and the Ottomans, but was captured by France in 1862 in one of its first forays into Africa. The legacy of French occupation is still evident with whitewashed colonial architecture making this a most striking and unusual African capital. Algiers has many sites to explore – perhaps the most interesting being the old Casbah quarter of the city, an incredibly atmospheric district filled with traditional buildings, although still not somewhere to venture without a guide. Within the Casbah are several Zaouias (religious schools) and tombs as well as good examples of old Ottoman buildings.

### Day 2: Algiers

Delving deeper into Algiers, we visit the Museum of Antiquities, and Bastion 23, also known as Palais des Rais, notable for its architecture and being the last surviving quarter of the lower Casbah. We wander the city's unique casbah, another UNESCO site, an outstanding example of Maghreb architecture, and one of the most enigmatic places in Algiers. Overnight at Hotel Suisse or similar. (BD)

### Day 3: Algiers – Beni Hammad - Setif (Approximate driving time: 5.5 hours)

Travel east towards Setif stopping en route at the UNESCO site of Beni Hammad, and visit the National Museum of Setif, home to exhibits from several eras. Overnight at Hotel Best Western or similar. (BD)



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#### **Day 4: Setif – Djemila - Constantine** (Approximate driving time: 3 hours)

Today there's a lot of ground to be covered. However, exploring the UNESCO sites of Djemila and its ancient garrison of Cuicul reveals some of North Africa's best-preserved Berbero-Roman remains. Forum, temples, basilicas, triumphal arches are all present, but laid out to suit the terrain of a mountain town. From here we continue to Constantine. Overnight at Ibis Hotel or similar. (BD)

#### **Djemila**

The well-preserved Roman ruins of Djemila, meaning "beautiful", are the remains of the city of Cuicul which was built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC as a garrison, and grew to become an important trading market. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries the city was abandoned, and although it was never reoccupied, it was renamed Djemila by the Muslim inhabitants of the region. Recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1981, in respect of its unusual mountain setting, the public baths, fountain, forum, arch of Caracalla, basilica and theatre are among the structures that can still be seen.

#### **Constantine**

Located on a steep ravine, high above the Rhumel Gorge, Constantine is the third largest city in Algeria and a well-known centre of learning. Originally a Numidian settlement it was destroyed in 311 BC, before being rebuilt in 313 BC on the orders of Emperor Constantine, and named after him. The city came under Ottoman rule in 1529 from when it thrived and grew before falling to the French in 1837. Today the bridges are the main attraction, spanning the gorge and offering spectacular views, and they alone are reason enough to visit Constantine

#### **Day 5: Constantine**

After breakfast we explore Constantine itself, considered the capital of eastern Algeria, and named after Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great. Visits include the archaeological museum and the Palace of Ahmed Bey, the city's last Ottoman governor. We will view the city's famous bridges spanning the dramatic Rhumel Gorge, including the Sidi M'Cid suspension bridge. Overnight at Ibis Hotel or similar. (BLD)

#### **Day 6: Constantine - Timgad - Batna** (Approximate driving time: 2 hours)

Taking the road south, our first stop is Medracen, the Tomb of the Numidian Kings, before continuing to the Aurès Mountains and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Roman Timgad. Dating from 100AD, this is remarkable example of ancient town planning, and includes a huge library, colonnaded streets, temples, amphitheatre, the arch of Trajan, and a basilica. Nearby, we visit the Roman ruins of Lambaesis before continuing to the attractive city of Batna, capital of the Aurès region. Overnight at Trajan Hotel or similar. (BLD)

#### **Timgad**

The Roman town of Timgad was founded in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and prospered until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when it was overrun by the Byzantines, before being destroyed by Arab invaders. Among the remains that can still be seen are an amphitheatre, Roman baths, temples, a Byzantine fortress and the Arch of Trajan; Timgad was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1982.

#### **Day 7: Batna – Biskra - El Oued** (Approximate driving time: 5.5 hours)

Drive to Biskra stopping on the way in the area of the gorges of Tighanimine, site of the first shots of the Algerian rebellion, and the breathtaking canyon of Rhouffi. Continue to El Oued circled by the sands of the Grand Erg Oriental. Overnight at Hotel Souf or similar. (BLD)

#### **Days 8 & 9: El Oued - Ghardaia** (Approximate driving time: 5.5 hours)

Drive to the M'Zab Valley and its largest city Ghardaia which has a distinctive culture unlike the rest of Algeria. It has survived over the centuries as a result of the efforts of the local Mozabite people.





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It is a charming place and we spend two days observing the day to day routines and visiting the surrounding area. Overnight at M'zab Hotel or similar. (BLD)

### **Mzab Valley**

The Mzab is one of Algeria's true highlights, a collection of towns situated at the edge of the desert surviving against all the odds of the seemingly hostile conditions against them. Named after and inhabited by the Mozabite Berbers, the five walled towns of the Mzab are one of the most enigmatic places in the country. Each town is built around a fortified mosque with a minaret that doubles up as a watchtower, used to look out for raiders from the deep desert. Made up of the towns of El Atteuf, Bou Noura, Malika, Ghardaia and Beni Isguen, the Mzab offers a snapshot of how much of Algeria must have been centuries ago with livestock outnumbering cars within the centres of the towns and old men sitting in alleyways discussing the problems of the day. Some of the towns adhere to distinctive principles of town planning, with the streets of Ghardaia being constructed in concentric circles emanating from the mosque. The Mzab is also the best place to pick up any souvenirs during your stay in Algeria.

### **Day 10: Ghardaia - El Menia – Timimoun** (Approximate driving time: 7 hours)

Drive first to El Menia and its ruined ksar and continue to the picturesque oasis of Timimoun with its distinctive red buildings. Overnight at Gourara Hotel or similar. (BLD)

### **Timimoun**

The oasis of Timimoun is one of the prettiest in the Sahara, with ochre red buildings and Tuareg style architecture making it quite a distinctive sight. Developed by the French during their conquest of the Sahara in the late 19th / early 20th centuries, it was once the largest slave market in the country and today you can see the legacy of that in the features of its inhabitants, many of whom look more 'African' than Algerian.

### **Day 11: Timimoun**

Spend the day exploring this lovely oasis, with a picnic lunch out among the dunes. Overnight at Gourara Hotel or similar. (BLD)

### **Day 12: Timimoun – Oran - Tlemcen** (Approximate driving time: 2 hours)

Fly to Oran (*two-and-a-half-hours*) and drive from there to Tlemcen, once an important town, which contains a superb collection of historic buildings and has a distinct French flavour. Overnight at Ibis Hotel or similar. (BLD)

### **Tlemcen**

Surrounded by hills, the town of Tlemcen has an illustrious past and in its heyday was one of the most important cities of North Africa. Today a university city, it was first settled by Romans in the 4th century but rose to prominence in the 11th century under the Almoravid dynasty who held sway over much of the region including Morocco. As with many coastal towns it provided an important conduit for trade between Africa and Europe, with slaves, gold and other goods from south of the Sahara being traded here. It was also home to a large Jewish population, although none now remain. The city contains an imposing fortress known as the Mechouar as well as a collection of ancient mosques and tombs and is a fairly relaxed place to walk around and explore.

### **Day 13: Tlemcen - Oran** (Approximate driving time: 2 hours)

Today we visit the important sites of Tlemcen including the Grand Mosque, one of the most important Islamic buildings in North Africa, the ruins of the 13th century Mansourah and the tomb of Sidi Boumedienne. In the afternoon drive to Oran and spend time exploring the city including the Bey's Palace and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Grand Mosque. Overnight at Hotel Pacha or similar. (BD)



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**Day 14: Oran - Algiers** (Domestic flight) - **Tipasa – Algiers** (Approximate driving time: 1.5 hours in each direction)

This morning for a flight to Algiers and on arrival drive to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Tipasa, home to a wealth of archaeological remains. We tour a remarkable collection of Roman ruins, including villas and an ancient amphitheatre, that overlooks the Mediterranean. On the way back to Algiers we call in at the 'Tomb of the Christian', a Numidian site that despite its name is believed to date from the 3rd century BC. Overnight at Hotel Suisse or similar. (BD)

### Tipasa

Seventy kilometres west of Algiers lies Tipasa, a pleasant enough town in its own right, but better known for its collection of ancient ruins. The Roman ruins at Tipasa are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and include many different structures – there are three ancient churches, the remains of an old port, an amphitheatre and villas, some of which still contain original mosaics.

### The Tomb of the Christian

Near Sidi Rachid lies the 'Tomb of the Christian' or Qabr er Rumia, thought to be a tomb for Numidian Berber kings dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is also rumoured that the daughter of Cleopatra and Mark Antony is buried here. Built on a hill overlooking the plains below, it consists of a circular building topped with a pyramid, and is one of the most interesting sites in Algeria.

### Day 15: Algiers - Departure from Algeria

There's time to relax and take stock of a remarkable trip before your transfer to the international airport for your flight back home. (B)

## Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

### Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers in Algiers  
Overland transport throughout with professional driver  
Domestic flights as shown in the itinerary  
All accommodation  
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

### Excluded:

International flights  
Any airport taxes  
Travel Insurance  
Visa – To be obtained in advance  
Drinks  
Items of personal nature  
Tips (Discretionary)  
Covid-19 testing, as required





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# Important Information

## Foreign Office Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the FCDO. In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to the parts of Algeria that we visit on this tour. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

## Security

The Algerian authorities take the safety and security of tourists very seriously and a Police/Army escort is often provided for road journeys.

## Accommodation and Meals

### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

### Accommodation Rating

At Undiscovered Destinations we aim for simple but comfortable hotel accommodation, but in Algeria at the moment many of the state-controlled hotels which share the ideal central locations are closed for a major programme of refurbishment, and some of the alternative hotels lack consistency in both standards and service. You can expect rooms to be en-suite with private bathroom, and in general you will find your hotel has a restaurant or facilities close by. In some places like Ghardaia, the accommodation used can be very simple, by no means comparable to Western accommodation in terms of standards.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.





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### Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash. Alcohol is not served in many hotels and restaurants.

### Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £4- £8.00 / Dinner £10.00- £15.00

### Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect drinks purchased in a supermarket or local restaurant to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket restaurant may be more expensive.

Water £0.80 / Coffee £0.50 / Beer £2.50

### Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is commonly recognised as a way of rewarding guides and drivers for good service. A reasonable amount would be around £5 per day for the guide and £3 per day for the driver, between the group – this works out at just under £100 for the main tour, split between however many group members there are.

### Foreign Exchange for Algeria

**ATM Availability:** ATM machines are available in major towns and cities only.

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** You will have limited opportunities to use credit cards and so should not rely on these

**Local Currency:** Algerian Dinar (DA)

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Euro

**Where to Exchange:** A newly re-introduced regulation requires that a Currency Declaration Form is completed which allows money up to 1000 Euros per person to be exchanged at banks. This can be obtained at the airport, either at Immigration or Customs.

### Joining your Tour

#### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### Joining Your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure, included in the tour price.





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In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses (including cover for Covid-19 conditions) and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

### Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals require a visa for a tourist visit to Algeria. For further details please visit the applicable website shown below.

British Nationals - [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - [www.smartraveller.gov.au/](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/)

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destination's nearest embassy or consulate.

Should you require any documentation to support a visa application, such as a letter of invitation, upon request this will be provided by Undiscovered Destinations after receipt of your balance payment.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance.

**You must ensure that you have no Israeli stamps in your passport.**

### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

### Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Africa, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less



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than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. The use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

## Preparing for your tour

### Climate

The best times to visit Algeria are in the spring and autumn. In the summer all parts, but especially the desert, can be extremely hot, and in the winter the coastal region is wet and cold.

### Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy. Please note that it can get very cold in the desert in the high winter with temperatures sometimes reaching freezing. Please ensure that you bring sufficient warm clothes for this.

You should bear in mind that Algeria, in common with most Muslim countries, has conservative attitudes towards dress. Women, and also to a certain extent men, will find that the way they dress will often determine the degree of respect they receive from both men and women. Women should take a scarf for visiting mosques.

### Equipment

One thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. You will not be able to purchase this while on tour so please make sure you have a sufficient supply.

**\*\*\*Please note that binoculars are classed as war equipment in Algeria and will not be allowed into the country\*\*\***

### Footwear

Footwear is a consideration on this tour. Comfortable and sturdy walking shoes/boots are recommended for visiting sites and monuments, while lighter shoes are fine for the rest of the time.

### Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack and one small rucksack as hand luggage are acceptable.

### Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V/50 Hz and plugs have two round pins, similar to many European countries.





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### **Tour Itinerary Versions**

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These notes were updated 31 October 2022.

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