Tour Notes

Algeria - Desert and History

Tour Duration – 12 Days

Tour Rating

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

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

✓ Discover Algiers and its famous Casbah.
✓ Visit the desert oasis of Taghit and uncover a way of life that has changed little in centuries.
✓ Explore Oran with its Andalusian and Ottoman heritage.
✓ Marvel at the well preserved Roman ruins, many of which are in fabulous locations.
✓ Admire Constantine with its impressive bridges spanning the Rhumel Gorge.
Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 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
End Point: Algiers
Transport: Minivan, Internal flights
Countries: Algeria
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 – Algiers
Arrive in Algiers and transfer to your hotel. An afternoon city tour includes the Martyrs Memorial and the Basilica de Notre Dame d’Afrique. Overnight at ST Hotel 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 - Tipasa (Approximate driving time: two hours)
Today, visit Tipasa, home to a wealth of archaeological remains. On the way 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. Arriving at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Tipasa, we tour a remarkable collection of Roman ruins, including villas and an ancient amphitheatre, that overlooks the Mediterranean. Overnight at ST Hotel or similar, Algiers. (BL)

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 3rd or 4th 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.
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.

Day 3 – Algiers - Constantine (One-hour flight)
Delving deeper into Algiers, we visit the world-class Bardo Museum, housed in an 18th century neo-Moorish villa, and known for its pre-historic and ethnographic collections. We wander the city’s unique casbah, another UNESCO site, an outstanding example Maghrebi architecture, and one of the most enigmatic places in Algiers. After visiting a casbah mosque we take lunch at a local house before transferring to the airport for a flight to Constantine. Overnight at Ibis Hotel or similar. (BL)

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 4 – Constantine - Tiddis (Approximate driving time: one-and-a-half-hours)
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. Later, we travel north to the compact Roman site of Tiddis, before returning to Constantine to 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 5 – Timgad - Batna (Approximate driving time: four 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 an 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 Hazem Hotel or similar. (BL)

Timgad
The Roman town of Timgad was founded in the 1st century AD and prospered until the 7th 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 6 – Batna - Djemila - Algiers (Approximate driving time: six 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 Berber-Roman remains. Forum, temples, basilicas, triumphal arches are all present, but laid out to suit the terrain of a mountain town. Later, we return to Algiers. Overnight at ST Hotel or similar. (BL)

Djemila
The well preserved Roman ruins of Djemila, meaning “beautiful”, are the remains of the city of Cuicul which was built in the 1st century BC as a garrison, and grew to become an important trading market. After the fall of
the Roman Empire in the 5th and 6th 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.

Day 7 - Algiers - Bechar (two-and-a-quarter-hours flight) Bechar - Taghit (Approximate driving time: one-and-a-half-hours)
Flying south-west to Bechar, we continue by road to the oasis town of Taghit, one of the most beautiful in the Algerian Sahara. Depending upon our time of arrival we may have time to explore. Overnight at Saoura Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Day 8 – Taghit
Today, we walk through mud-brick houses and along the winding streets of the old town, all dominated by the dunes of the Grand Erg Occidental towering above. We investigate a fortified ksar and discover the origins of pre-historic rock art at ‘the end of the road’. Those searching for a memorable desert viewpoint can climb the dunes in time to catch the setting sun. Overnight at Saoura Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Day 9 – Taghit – Bechar (Approximate driving time: one-and-a-half-hours) Bechar – Oran (two-hour flight)
After breakfast, transfer to Bechar for a flight to Oran, Algeria’s second city. On arrival there’s time to visit the expansive 18th century palace built by Muhammed Bey the Great, and the nearby Grand Mosque of Hassan Pasha. Overnight at Ibis Hotel or similar. (BL)

Oran
Founded in the 10th century by the Moors of Andalucía, Oran has had a varied past which has seen it being ruled by Spain, the Ottoman Empire and France – today remnants of that Spanish heritage still linger giving it rather a different feel to its larger cousin Algiers. The city is a mixture of different styles of architecture and is renowned as being one of the more liberal places in Algeria. Some of its key sights include the Grand Mosque, the delightful area of Santa Cruz and the Cathedral de Sacre Coeur. Within Algeria, Oran is renowned as being the birthplace of rai music, a quite distinctive genre with its roots in the poor and dispossessed community. Oran is a great place to spend time wandering along the seafront and stopping for a drink in the numerous cafes, to enjoy a spot of people watching.

Day 10 – Oran- Algiers (Approximate driving time: four-and-a-half hours)
Today we complete our exploration of Oran, including the colonial era theatre and the mountain-top fort of Santa Cruz, for great views over the city. Later, we return to Algiers. Overnight at ST Hotel or similar. (BL)

Day 11 – Fine Arts Museum of Algiers- Botanical Gardens
Algiers’ Fine Arts Museum was inaugurated in 1930 and today houses over 8,000 paintings and sculptures, including several European masterpieces from Renoir, Delacroix, Picasso and Rodin. Opposite the museum, the Botanical Gardens’ 30 hectares invite leisurely strolls among beautiful French style borders and an impressive collection of palms and trees. The park served as location for sequences in the original 1932 Tarzan movie. The evening sees a farewell dinner at an excellent local restaurant. Overnight at ST Hotel or similar. (BD)

Day 12 – Departure
There’s time to relax and take stock of a remarkable trip before transfers to the international airport. (B)

Please read the information under “Security” in the Notes section.
Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:
- Arrival and departure transfers
- Transport throughout including internal 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
- Visas
- Drinks

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings
Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) - [https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](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 British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). 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 mid-range 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.

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.

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 a 12 day 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. 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 and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information
Most nationals including UK, EU and US visitors require a visa for entry to Algeria. These must be obtained in advance, and we recommend that you check with your nearest embassy for the most up to date details. The Algerian Embassy in London will require a Letter of Invitation to support your visa application and this will be provided by Undiscovered Destinations. Once your visa application has been submitted to the embassy it will be referred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Algiers for approval. When authorisation has been given the embassy in London will be notified and will then issue the visa.

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 the UK.
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.

**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 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**

The first 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.

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 on 22/03/2019 LM.