Tour Code
AG1

ADVENTURESABROAD

ALGERIA

Roman Ruins, Kasbahs & UNESCO Villages

9 days

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Day 1 Arrival in Algiers

Today we arrive in Algiers - welcome to Algeria!

Algiers, originally called Al-Jaza'ir, is built into the Sahel hills and runs for ten miles along the Bay of Algiers, located on the Mediterranean coast. This coastal location made it perfect for the Barbary pirate stronghold it would become in 1529, when the pirate "Redbeard" expelled the Spanish from the island of Penon, gaining control of the city for the Ottoman Empire. The country's turbulent history is writ large in the city's richly textured architecture: wide French-built boulevards and elegant apartments and villas, Socialist-era monuments and public buildings, and an enduring Islamic heart secreted in the steep, hillside Casbah.

Overnight in Algiers.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Best of Algiers City Tour

Located on the Mediterranean coast, Algiers is a city of contrasts, with a blend of modern and traditional architecture, as well as stunning natural beauty. Tourists to Algiers can explore its rich cultural heritage, including its Ottoman and French colonial influences, or take in the breathtaking views of the Bay of Algiers. Algiers is a city full of culture and history, and a great destination to explore.

Today we'll tour Algiers including the historic Kasbaha built in the 16th century, a maze of pretty small alleys and whitewashed houses. There are also quite a few nice boulevards dating back from the days of the French who come in Algiers in 1830 and stayed for 130 years.

Overnight in Algiers.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Algiers - Djemila - Constantine

This morning leave the city and travel through attractive hilly farming countryside to Djemila (a World Heritage Site), Arabic for 'pretty town', considered to be the most outstanding Roman site in Algeria. Situated 900m (2,950 ft) above sea level, Djemila, with its forum, temples, basilicas, triumphal arches and houses, is an interesting example of Roman town planning adapted to a mountain location. While the site itself is not one of the largest in North Africa, Djemila stands out as one of the best-preserved Roman ruins of North Africa and the adjoining museum is packed with the most amazing Roman mosaics.

We end our day in Constantine after a full day of travel and sightseeing.

Overnight in Constantine.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Constantine: Timgad & Lambaesis

We start the day with a 2-hour drive to Timgad, Roman Thamugadi (a World Heritage Site), located on the northern slopes of the Aures Atlas Mountains. It was founded as a military colony by the Emperor Trajan in AD 100. Originally designed for a population of around 15,000, the city quickly outgrew its original specifications and spilled beyond the grid in a more loosely-organized fashion, an excellent example of Roman town planning. Although only partly excavated, Timgad is spectacular in both its scale and its setting.

We continue to the remains of the Roman town of Lambaesis (Lambessa), which includes two triumphal arches, temples, an aqueduct, an amphitheatre, baths, and many private houses. The camp of the third legion, charged with defending North Africa, was moved to Lambessa between 123 and 129 ce. The modern settlement was founded in 1848 by French agriculturalists attracted by the fertile soil. A large convict prison for French political deportees was established there in 1852.

We return to Constantine.

Overnight in Constantine.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Tiddis & Constantine City Tour - Travel to Algiers

This morning we visit Tiddis, hovering on a barren mountain slope, some 30km from Constantine. The ruined Roman town is perhaps the most impressively situated of all Algeria's Roman sites. The Romans arrived during the age of Augustus, but built much of what can now be seen in the 3rd century AD, adapting their fundamental rule of town planning – two straight central streets that cross at the heart of the community – to the curves of the site. Tiddis had no water sources, so one of the most interesting features of the houses here are the channels and cisterns.

We return to Constantine for a city tour and visit the museum of Cirta. We spend the afternoon enjoying this breathtaking city; Constantine is set astride a spectacular gorge that splits the city in two. We'll explore the suspension bridges, the Constantine Museum, Kasbah, and Palace of Ahmed Bey.

After our visit we travel by road back to Algiers.

Overnight in Algiers.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Algiers: Cherchell, Tipaza & Tomb of the Christians - Fly to Ghardaia

Today we travel west to the ruins of Tipaza (also Tipasa), originally a Phoenician trading post but a Roman colony in the 2nd century AD onwards. Later it became one of the most important Christian settlements in Northern Africa. With the coming of the Vandals and their Arian Christianity in 430, most of the inhabitants fled to Spain. According to legend, the inhabitants had their tongues cut out, but by a miracle they could still speak! One the most interesting sites at Tipaza is the mausoleum built in the 5th century where there are 14 places for sarcophagi. The museum is small but full of valuable mosaics taken from the Basilica dating back to 1st century AD.

After a break for lunch in Tipaza (known for its excellent seafood), we continue to Cherchell and the ruins of the former Roman port of Caesarea. Today Cherchell is the seat of Cherchell District in Tipaza Province; under the names Iol and Caesarea, it was formerly a Phoenician, Carthaginian, and Roman colony and the capital of the kingdoms of Numidia and Mauretania.

On our way back to Algiers we'll stop at the pyramid-like structure of the Tomb of the Christians, set on a hill with wonderful views over the surrounding countryside. The tomb pre-dates the Christian era and probably belongs to the pre- Roman era of the Numidian rulers.

Late afternoon flight Algiers to Ghardaia. Located in the UNESCO World Heritage region of the M'Zab valley. We'll transfer to our hotel and, time-permitting, explore the markets and architecture unique to this region.

The valley, on the edge of the Sahara, is actually a cluster of five towns: Ghardaia, Melika, Beni Isguen, Bou Noura, and El-Atteuf. Often referred to collectively as Ghardaia, the once distinct villages are gradually sprawling together, but retain separate identities.

Overnight in Ghardaia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 M'Zab Valley: El Attefu, Bon Nouria & Ghardaia

The M'Zab is home to a conservative Muslim sect known as the Ibadites, who broke from mainstream Islam some 900 years ago. This is, some say, a country unto itself, with ancient, unchanging social codes. The traditional white haik (a head-to-toe wool wrap) is worn by most women, who cover their entire face, exposing only one eye. Men sport extravagantly pleated baggy trousers called saroual loubia. While locals here can be reserved, it's a friendly and surprisingly laid-back place.

Today step back in time as we enjoy the local customs and culture while visiting the historic cities and sites in the M'Zab valley. We spend a full day visiting traditional market places, enjoying the lively atmosphere and lively colours and unique architecture. We wander narrow streets, visit important religious monuments and mosques, and enjoy the natural beauty.

Overnight in Ghardaia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Ghardaia - Fly to Algiers

Today we fly back to the capital.

Overnight in Algiers.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Departure

Departure from Algiers.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast