

Contents

<u>The Authors</u>	11	<u>Cap Bon</u>	100
		Hammamet	101
<u>Getting Started</u>	13	Nabeul	109
		Around Nabeul	114
<u>Itineraries</u>	17	Kélibia	114
		Kerkouane	117
<u>Snapshot</u>	23	El-Haouaria	119
		Soliman	120
<u>History</u>	24	Korbous	121
		<u>Northern Tunisia</u>	122
<u>The Culture</u>	36	Bizerte	123
		East Of Bizerte	130
<u>Arts & Architecture</u>	44	From Bizerte to Tabarka	132
		Tabarka	135
<u>Environment</u>	54	Ain Draham	139
		Around Ain Draham	142
<u>Food & Drink</u>	58	Béja	143
		Jendouba	143
<u>Tunis</u>	66	Bulla Regia	145
History	67	Chemtou	147
Orientation	67	Ghardimao	149
Information	68	<u>Central West & the Tell</u>	150
Dangers & Annoyances	70	South Of Tunis	151
Sights & Activities	71	Dougga	156
Walking Tour	77	Teboursouk	159
Courses	79	Le Kef	160
Tunis for Children	79	Around Le Kef	164
Tours	80	Makthar (Mactaris)	165
Festivals & Events	80	Haidra (Ammædara)	167
Sleeping	80	Jugurtha's Table	177
Eating	81	Kasserine	177
Drinking	84	Sbeitla (Sufetula)	180
Entertainment	84	<u>The Central Coast & Kairouan</u>	184
Shopping	85	Sousse	185
Getting There & Away	86	Around Sousse	195
Getting Around	87	Monastir	196
AROUND TUNIS	89	Kairouan	199
La Goulette	89	Around Kairouan	207
Carthage	90	El-jem	207
Sidi Bou Saïd	96	Mahdia	209
La Marsa	98	Sfax	213
Gammarth	99	Kerkennah Islands	220
Hammam Lif	99		

Gabès, Matmata & the Ksour **222**

Gabès	223
Matmata	227
Around Matmata	229
Tataouine	230
Around Tataouine	234
Medenine	238
Around Medenine	239

The Sahara **241**

Douz	243
Around Douz	249
South into the Sahara	250
Ksar Ghilane	251
Around Ksar Ghilane	252
Grand Sud	253

Tozeur & the Jerid **254**

Tozeur	255
Around Tozeur	261
Nefta	263
Gafsa	265
Around Gafsa	267

Jerba **269**

Houmt Souq	272
Erriadh (Hara Seghira)	277
Guellala	278
Guellala to Zone Touristique	279
Zone Touristique	280
Southeastern Coast	282

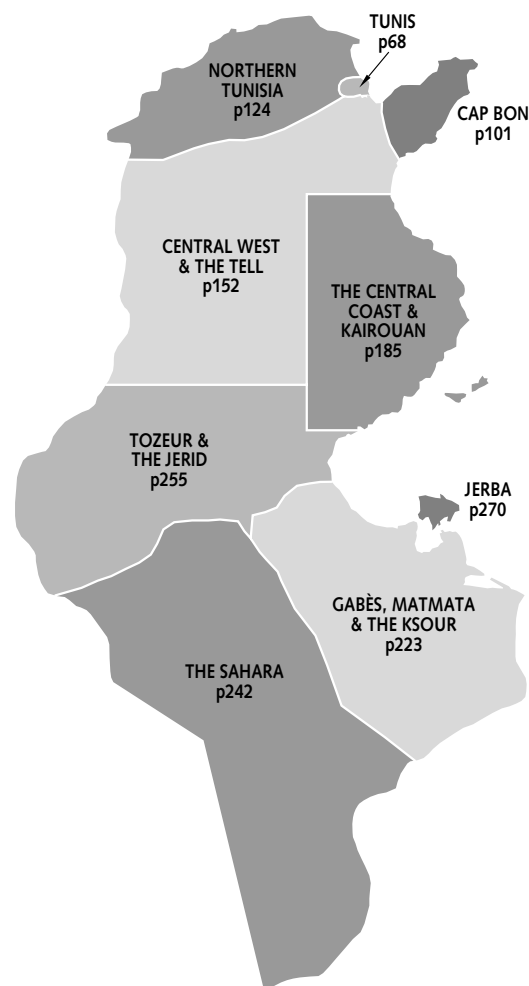
Directory **283**

Accommodation	283
Activities	285
Business Hours	287
Children	287
Climate Charts	288
Courses	288
Customs	288
Dangers & Annoyances	289
Discount Cards	290
Embassies & Consulates	290
Festivals & Events	291
Food & Drink	292

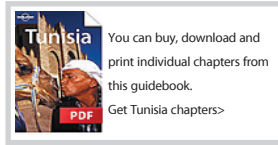
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	292
Holidays	292
Insurance	293
Internet Access	293
Legal Matters	293
Maps	294
Men Travellers	294
Money	294
Photography	295
Post	296
Shopping	296
Solo Travellers	298
Telephone & Fax	298
Time	299
Toilets	299
Tourist Information	299
Travellers with Disabilities	300
Visas	300
Women Travellers	300

Transport **302****Health** **314****Language** **319****Glossary** **331****Behind the Scenes** **334****Index** **337****World Time Zones** **342****Map Legend** **344**

Regional Map Contents



Getting Started



Tunisia is an easily accessible country to visit – bureaucratic obstacles are few – so your preparations will mostly involve deciding where to go and what to pack. This book's itineraries (p17) give some pointers about routes, and the top 10 lists in this chapter suggest some highlights. Reading – online or in old-fashioned book format – before your visit or while you're there always adds to a trip, so give the travel literature and websites suggested in this chapter a try, and look out for the other book and online recommendations in the History, Culture, Food & Drink and Arts & Architecture chapters.

WHEN TO GO

The best times to travel in northern and central Tunisia are from April to June, and from September to October. At these times, you're almost guaranteed sunny, but not too hot, days, the sea is warm enough to swim (though perhaps not in April and October), and high season prices and crowds have not yet arrived. The countryside is at its prettiest after the winter rains in early spring.

However, if your holidays are in July and August, you are assured brilliantly sunny days, and coastal towns are at their liveliest. The Tunisian tourist authorities also run a number of superb festivals at old Roman sites; see p291 for more details. The downside is that you'll be sharing the beaches with about two million northern European holidaymakers, prices will be higher and accommodation chock-a-block.

For desert trips, temperature is an essential consideration. The best times to travel are from late September to November and March to early May. November is just after the date harvest; prices are cheaper. Douz and Tozeur have desert festivals (see p292). In July and August, the soaring temperatures mean that exploring the Sahara is really only possible overnight. Not only is it baking hot, but you'll have to cope with the sandy sirocco – desert wind. The search for air-con and iced-lollies will be all-consuming.

See Climate Charts (p288) for more information.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

Try to leave some room in your luggage for souvenirs, but there are some essential (and not-so-essential) items that you could consider:

- a Swiss Army knife with a bottle opener and corkscrew in case you buy alcohol from a supermarket
- a hat, sunglasses and sun lotion – essential on the beach and in the Sahara; extra-force sunscreen if travelling with kids (it's expensive here!)
- a small sewing kit – useful for emergency repairs
- a small cool pack – good for carrying drinks, essential if you're travelling with a baby and need to keep milk and/or food chilled
- for women travelling outside the main resorts, an extra beach cover-up, such as shorts and a T-shirt to wear in the water
- a small football – a great way to meet local kids (and their families)

Tampons are usually only found in resort supermarkets, but most other toiletries are widely available. Condoms are cheap and readily available at pharmacies.

In winter, Tunisia is surprisingly cold, and you should pack lots of warm clothes – many places don't have good heating. If you're looking for winter sun in February, it's not guaranteed; it might rain and it'll definitely be too cold for lying on the beach. However, there'll be few other travellers around and prices will be rock bottom.

For a detailed summary of the low, mid and high season periods in Tunisia, see p283.

COSTS & MONEY

Tunisia is an inexpensive country for Western visitors, particularly compared with Europe.

Scrimpers could get by on TD20 to TD25 a day, staying in hostels, eating at cheap local restaurants and travelling only every few days.

For a more comfortable stay, midrange travellers will need to spend a minimum of TD50 to TD60 daily, enough to get a comfortable room, travel around and eat and drink well. Allow some more cash on top so you can buy souvenirs.

At the upper end of the scale, if you're staying in top-end hotels, eating at the best restaurants, buying crafts, and taking safaris or having some spa treatments, TD200 to TD300 per day will keep you in comfort.

If you've already paid for a package at a resort, you'll only have to pay for things like meals outside the resort, excursions, souvenirs and the occasional taxi.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

There's little travel writing on Tunisia in English, but what there is often captures a particular epoch, provides fascinating cultural insights, and is hugely entertaining.

Ibn Khaldun was a prolific 15th-century traveller, whose North African travels – and long Tunisian visit – informed his remarkably accessible *The Muqaddimah*, peppered with sharp and sympathetic observations.

Daniel Bruun lived with the Berber people in Matmata during 1898, and his *The Cave Dwellers of Southern Tunisia: Recollections of a Sojourn with the Khalifa of Matmata* is a window on a forgotten world with its idiosyncratic portrait of Berber Tunisia before the tourists arrived.

Norman Douglas' *Fountains in the Sand* is a stiff-upper-lip, colonial account of a 1912 journey through southwestern Tunisia, entertaining enough despite his intolerance of all things Tunisian.

OK, so it's set in Morocco, but *The Sheltering Sky*, a gothic fiction about travels in the North African desert, is an evocative book to take on your travels. It describes North Africa pre-WWII, when its protagonists lose themselves in a sinister, alien, terrifyingly foreign world – it will certainly help to put any holiday blues you have into perspective.

Jolly-hockey-sticks, easy reading is *Among the Faithful*, by Dahriss Martin, offering a unique portrait of Kairouan by a young American woman who lived there in the 1920s.

Barnaby Rogerson's *A Traveller's History of North Africa* includes some good essays on Tunisian history, placed within the wider North African context.

Paul Theroux's *The Pillars of Hercules* contains a frustratingly brief chapter on Tunisia; he amusingly describes an encounter with a carpet tout, as well as visits to Sfax and the Kerkennah Islands.

Less grumpy than Theroux, Michael Palin's more entertaining than in-depth *Sahara* covers Jerba, Matmata, El-Jem, Sousse and Sidi Bou Saïd, and revisits some *Monty Python's Life of Brian* movie sets.

HOW MUCH?

Hamam from TD1.5
(basic scrub)

International newspapers
TD2-6

Bottle of Tunisian wine
from TD4 (supermarkets);
from TD9 (restaurants)

Entry ticket to ancient
sites TD3-6

TOP TENS

Architectural Treasures

- **Punic city of Kerkouane** (p117) – the best-preserved Punic site in the world
- **Roman Colosseum at El-Jem** (p208) – an astonishing monument to pleasure, rising from the plains
- **Roman city of Dougga** (p156) – perched on a hilltop, fascinating like no other Roman city
- **Ribat at Monastir** (p197) – film-directors' favourite and the best of Tunisia's fortresses
- **Great Mosque of Kairouan** (p202) – austere Aghlabid exterior and extravagant prayer hall
- **Village of Chenini** (p236) – crumbling hilltop Berber village built into the mountain
- **Ksar Ouled Soltane** (p237) – fantastical fortified Berber granary stores
- **Troglodyte houses, Matmata** (p228) – underground Berber houses in real-life *Star Wars* set
- **Medina at Sfax** (p215) – the medina least touched by tourism
- **Tunis' Ville Nouvelle** (p77) – elegant French-Tunisian fusion with neoclassical façades

Amazing Experiences

- **Saharan adventure** (p252) – trekking over a great sand sea
- **Beach Babylon** (p285) – catching some rays and splashing about in the Mediterranean
- **Scrub a dub dub** (p286) – getting squeaky clean in an ancient, atmospheric *hammam* (public bathhouse)
- **The call to prayer from Byrsa** (p90) – timing your visit so you can hear the plaintive wail of the muezzin while exploring the ruins at Carthage
- **Tunis' medina** (p71) – from the rich central souqs to the narrow whitewashed outskirts, it's another world
- **Sunset at Dougga** (p156) – watching the sunset from Tunisia's most spectacular Roman city
- **Jugurtha's Table** (p177) – walking up the hacked stone steps to this remote, plateau fortress
- **Midès Gorge** (p262) – trekking the amazing gorge between Midès and Tamerza
- **Chott el-Jerid** (p261) – taking the causeway across this sparkling, pancake-flat salt lake
- **Dancing in Tabarka** (p138) – making it to a music festival in this laid-back seaside town

Kids' Stuff

- **Tamerza's waterfalls** (p262) – swimming in the pools at this desert oasis
- **Camel rides!** (p286) – riding across desert dunes on camel-back
- **Star Wars sets** (p22) – finding the *Star Wars* locations and sets in the desert
- **Underground adventure** (p228) – exploring troglodyte houses and staying at one of Matmata's underground hotels in *Star Wars* country
- **Hot springs** (p251) – unforgettable paddling in Ksar Ghilane's desert springs
- **Beach bonanza** (p285) – some of the Mediterranean's best beaches
- **Seaside fun** (p286) – every kind of watery sport, from bouncy banana-boating to parasailing
- **El-Jem Colosseum** (p208) – the gory history and splendour of this mighty Roman stadium will fire young imaginations
- **Crocodiles!** (p281) – they pack the pond at Parc Djerba Explore
- **Chak Wak Park** (p256) – Tozeur's open-air museum, with crazy outdoor dioramas of dinosaurs and Noah's Ark

Desert Divers, by Sven Linqvist, is a recent book describing the author's Saharan travels and examining the stereotypes and prejudices of past literary tourists such as André Gide and Antoine de St-Exupery.

Robert D Kaplan's *Mediterranean Winter* is the tale of an off-season Mediterranean journey beginning in Tunisia, bringing alive historical characters and revisiting Kaplan's youth.

INTERNET RESOURCES

The internet is a great place to discover more about Tunisia, though information is closely monitored by the Tunisian government.

Access Tunisia (www.access-tunisia.com) Handy portal with excellent links.

Adventures of Tunisia (www.lexicorient.com/tunisia/) Comprehensive site with chatty information and photos for 140 Tunisian destinations.

Film Scouts (www.filmscouts.com/scripts/matinee.cfm?Film=eng-pat&File=locatns) Good summary of sites used in filming *The English Patient*, including those in Tunisia.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Succinct summaries, postcards from other travellers and the Thorn Tree forum.

Travel & Tourism Guide to Tunisia (www.tourismtunisia.com) Helpful Tunisian National Tourist Office website; includes festival dates, hotel details and destination summaries.

Tunis Post (www.tunispost.com) Portal to international news sites with uncensored Tunisia stories.

Tunisia Guide (www.tunisiaguide.com) US Tunisia Tourist Office website; includes cultural and travel information, and a list of tour operators.

Tunisia Online (www.tunisiaonline.com) Government-run site with good sections on the environment, women, history and tourism, and Tunisian news in English, French and Arabic.

Tunisia.com (www.tunisia.com) Useful guide with information on flights, tours, hotels, business, culture, shopping and property rental, and an online community.

- [Dealer of Death \(Dirty Harry, Book 12\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [Reflexology for Fertility: A Practitioners Guide to Natural and Assisted Conception online](#)
- [click Earth User's Guide to Teaching Permaculture \(Revised & Updated Edition\)](#)
- [read Freedom, \(Daemon, Book 2\)](#)
- [Chinese Literature: An Anthology from the Earliest Times to the Present Day pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)

- <http://flog.co.id/library/Another-Europe--Conceptions-and-practices-of-democracy-in-the-European-Social-Forums--Routledge-ECPR-Studies-in>
- <http://cambridgebrass.com/?freebooks/Reflexology-for-Fertility--A-Practitioners-Guide-to-Natural-and-Assisted-Conception.pdf>
- <http://www.experienceolvera.co.uk/library/Paternalism--Theory-and-Practice.pdf>
- <http://test.markblaustein.com/library/Anaesthesia--A-Very-Short-Introduction--Very-Short-Introductions-.pdf>
- <http://econtact.webschaefer.com/?books/Chinese-Literature--An-Anthology-from-the-Earliest-Times-to-the-Present-Day.pdf>