



Travel Tunisia

March 30 – April 7, 2019

Optional Extension to the Sahara region and Djerba Island (Sunday, April 7 – Thursday, April 11)



Tunisia has always occupied a special place in my heart. Due to my father's work, I had the opportunity to spend my high school years there and I attended the French lycée for three years. My classmates were either Tunisian or from other countries. There was only one other American on our campus. I gained a new perspective and focused my graduate work on North Africa and over the years I returned many times and kept friendships. Tunisia's transition from an authoritarian regime to a nascent democracy was of special interest to me. As you will see, it is a fascinating study of change and transformation. While what is commonly referred to as the "Arab Spring" started in Tunisia, what actually took place, because of the country's unique character, is strikingly different than what occurred in other countries. While there is much work to be done, the "Jasmine Revolution" is considered a success.

Jerry Sorkin, the president of Iconic Journeys Worldwide, is a close friend and is also Tunisia's Honorary Consul for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Jerry and I have collaborated on other trips. This tour combines Tunisia's rich history with unique opportunities to meet many of the players who are now contributing to the country's evolution. I look forward to showing you my "other" home, as few Americans would ever see.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials "J.S." with a flourish.

Land Itinerary

Day 1: March 30 Sat: Arrival in Tunis

Travel: Arrival in Tunis, transfer to hotels.

Activities: Upon arrival in Tunis, you will be met at the Tunis–Carthage International Airport and transferred to your deluxe hotel in the Gammarth area of Tunis, a wonderful setting less than ten minutes from Carthage and the picturesque Andalusian village of Sidi Bou Said.

This evening you will meet your fellow travelers and enjoy dinner overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

Overnight: Mövenpick Hotel Gammarth Tunis

Meals: D

Day 2: March 31 Sun: Tunis

Travel: Depart by bus to Carthage.

Activities: Today's touring centers around the Tunis environ. We begin with a visit to Carthage, the most famous, but by no means the most expansive of Tunisia's many archaeological sites. Carthage was built by the Phoenicians in 814 BC and is located on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Its strategic location served as a base to a powerful trading empire spanning the Mediterranean and was once home to half a million people.

We will visit the US War Cemetery in Carthage, the only US war cemetery in North Africa and have an opportunity to learn about the North African campaign of World War II.

We will also visit the Bardo Museum, the largest museum in Tunis. The Bardo Museum is a former Ottoman palace housing one of the finest collections of Roman and Carthaginian mosaics in the world. This visit sets the stage in learning about Tunisia's history during Roman times and the visitor can discover a rich collection of Punic jewels as well as a gallery of Roman sarcophaguses, Christian baptisteries and Jewish remains of a synagogue that was from the Roman period in Tunisia.



Overnight: Mövenpick Hotel Gammarth Tunis

Meals: B,L,D

Day 3: Apr 01 Mon: Tunis

Travel: Tunis area and northern region.

Activities: This morning we begin with a discussion about your program and hear from an individual who was in a unique position to follow the January 2011 revolution. The discussion will review the

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many changes that have taken place as Tunisia undergoes a transition from an authoritarian regime to a democracy.

Then we travel to nearby Sidi Bou Said to visit Ennejma Ezzahra, also known as the Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger mansion, a French painter and musicologist specializing in Arabic music. After the Baron's death in 1932, the mansion which he named, was left to his son and daughter-in-law. Arrangements were made to sell the mansion to the Tunisian government following the death of the son. Today, the mansion continues to serve as a center for the study of Arabic music and on occasions, a performance venue. We will have an opportunity learn about what makes Arabic music so different from that of Western music.

After, we travel to a region north of Tunis, where the rural farmland provides an abundance of Tunisia's agricultural products. Taking winding rural roads, we will also have the opportunity to visit the small, but impressive site of Utica, which has its roots dating from the Punic period.

Afternoon return to Tunis-Gammarth area.

Overnight: Mövenpick Hotel Gammarth Tunis

Meals: B,L,D

Day 4: Apr 02 Tues: Tunis

Travel: Our day again takes place in the Tunis environs.

Activities: Morning talk about "Women's Rights in Islam" in Tunisia followed by a late morning visit to an NGO project, one of many such projects now underway in Tunisia provided with U.S. financial support to assist in the continuing democratization efforts.

Additional meetings: possibly Foreign Ministry, media, and Islamic leader(s).

We will have a pre-dinner opportunity to learn about the contemporary Tunisian art scene by one who is well positioned to know.

Dinner at leisure this evening.

Overnight: Mövenpick Hotel Gammarth Tunis

Meals: B,L

Day 5: Apr 03 Wed: Dougga and the northwest

Travel: This morning we check out of our hotel and depart via scenic rural roads for Tunisia's northwest.

Activities: A region little impacted by the tourism development along Tunisia's coast, the northwest is a region of verdant hills and mountains, with April weather bringing the wildflowers and the greenery that makes the area so beautiful. After approximately two and half hours of driving, you arrive at your primary destination, the Roman site of Dougga, Tunisia's most expansive site. Covering some 60 acres and laid out on a steep slope



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some 2,000 feet above the plain, Dougga was known as the “city of temples.” UNESCO named Dougga as a World Heritage Site in 1997, describing it as “the best preserved Roman small town in North Africa.”

Visit the theater, which today is used for the Dougga Drama festival and accommodates almost 3,500 people; the Temple of Saturn, under which was found evidence of a pre-Roman sanctuary dedicated to the Carthaginian god Gal; and the Temples of Augustan Piety and Mercury. The grandest structure is the Capitol that was dedicated to the gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, and to the glory of co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucus Verus. From Dougga, you drive approximately two and a half hours to Kairouan, arriving by early evening.

Overnight: La Kasbah Kairouan

Meals: B,L,D

Day 6: Apr 04 Thurs: Kairouan – El Jem – Sousse

Travel: Touring around Kairouan and then drive to El Jem and Sousse.

Activities: Often referred to as Tunisia’s Holy City, Kairouan was the primary base following the Revolution of Tunisia’s Islamic party, Ennahda. Founded in about 670, the Great Mosque of Kairouan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city was founded and subsequently developed during early Islamic times. Kairouan’s Great Mosque, dating from the 7th century, is reputed to be the oldest mosque in Africa. Kairouan’s location along the caravan routes also provided a base for a flourishing crafts industry. The region still provides the base for much of Tunisia’s craft industry, particularly rugs and textiles.



From Kairouan, we continue southeast some 65 kms to El Jem. El Jem was known in Roman times as Thysdrus and noted for its amphitheater, which is similar to the coliseum of Rome, you will have a tour through the amphitheater, as well as a visit to the very impressive mosaic collection at the El Jem Museum.

From El Jem, you drive to Sousse, approximately one hour’s drive. We should arrive to Sousse late afternoon. Dinner and overnight in Sousse.

Overnight: Mövenpick Resort & Marine Spa Sousse

Meals: B,L,D

Day 7: Apr 05 Fri: Sousse

Travel: Sousse.

Activities: This morning we take a short ride to the city of Monastir, a coastal town less than an hour south of Sousse. Monastir was the birthplace and hosts the tomb of Habib Bourguiba, who was the leader of Tunisia’s liberation movement in the 1950’s and the newly independent Republic’s first President. Bourguiba’s legacy on Tunisia remains today and plays an important role in what makes Tunisia and Tunisians different from other Arab countries. Jim Falk speaks about Bourguiba during our visit to Monastir, sharing background on this important figure in Tunisia’s modern history.

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Following our visit to Monastir, we return to Sousse where we will have an opportunity to explore Sousse, from its historic heart, including, the recently renovated and expanded Sousse Museum, with its dramatic display of mosaics found in the region.

We will also have an opportunity to meet with some English speaking students and young professionals from the University of Sousse to get their input about Tunisia's politics and contemporary issues.

The remainder of the afternoon is independent, providing time to enjoy the seaside setting of your resort hotel, book a spa treatment or explore nearby areas.

Overnight: Mövenpick Resort & Marine Spa Sousse

Meals: B,L,D

Day 8: Apr 06 Sat: Return to Tunis

Travel: Morning return to Tunis.

Activities: We will have a walking tour of the historic heart of Tunis, the medina, which is particularly active on Saturdays. There are narrow streets with architectural character, as well as a maze of small alleyways filled with merchants offering everything from ceramics, rugs and more.

The remainder of the afternoon is independent for you to explore the medina or the many streets just outside the medina. Lunch selections are given providing the opportunity with many options for your independent lunch.

We regroup at the hotel at an appointed time to depart for our "Farewell Dinner" in an historic setting within the Kasbah.



Overnight: Tunisia Palace - Tunis

Meals: B, D

Day 9: Apr 07 Sun: Tunis Departure

Travel: Depart Tunis for airport.

Transfers will be arranged for your return flight(s) to the US. For those continuing on the extension to the south of Tunisia, you will have an early morning transfer for your flight to the south.

Activities: Return flight from Tunis or depart for optional extension.

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Costs

| Price | Includes: |
|----------------------|---|
| \$4,300 per person | Accommodation for 8 nights; All meals listed in the program indicated by B, L, D; Airport transfers; Tunisian guide; Meetings with highly placed officials in the government, as well as with leading opposition members; Bottled water at lunch, dinner and on the bus; Wine at group dinners; and Air conditioned bus for travel. |
| | No Single Supplement! |
| Not Included: | Airline charges for luggage; International Flights; Gratuities to Tunisian guide and driver; Travel Insurance; Additional alcoholic drinks not included during group dinner; Any purchases of a personal nature, hotel expenditures such as laundry, mini-bar, business center related expenses and spa expenses; and Any item not listed above |

Hotels

| City | Hotel | URL |
|----------------|--|---|
| Tunis-Gammarth | Mövenpick Hotel Gammarth Tunis (5 stars) | https://www.movenpick.com/en/africa/tunisia/tunis/hotel-tunis-gammarth/overview/ |
| Kairouan | La Kasbah Kairouan (5 stars) | https://www.goldenyasmin.com/fr/la-kasbah/ |
| Sousse | Mövenpick Resort & Marine Spa Sousse (5 stars) | https://www.movenpick.com/en/africa/tunisia/sousse/hotel-sousse/overview/ |
| Tunis | Tunisia Palace | http://www.tunisiapalace.com/ |

Optional Extension for the Sahara region and the island of Djerba

Itinerary

Day 9: Apr 07 Sun: Tunis Departure

Travel: Depart Tunis for airport for flight to Djerba.

(Fun Fact - In Greek mythology the lotus-eaters were a race of people living on an island dominated by lotus plants. Polybius identified the land of the lotus-eaters as the island of Djerba.)

Activities: Upon arrival in Djerba, you cross the island to the southern tip and take the ferry to the mainland to visit the region of Matmata. This region's crater like topography is dotted with troglodyte dwellings. Its exotic settings provided one of the film locations for the movie, Star Wars. You will have an opportunity to explore some of these dwellings and the region.

We continue on to Ksar Ghilane, a desert encampment amidst the dunes. Your tent has its own electricity, air-conditioning and heating and *en suite* bathroom with shower. Your afternoon arrival allows you the opportunity to take a camel trek of over two hours amidst the dunes.



Overnight: Yadis Ksar Ghilane - Ksar Ghilane (Tented camp in the desert)

Meals: B,L,D

Day 10: Apr 8 Mon: Ksour region, Djerba island

Travel: Following breakfast, you depart Ksar Ghilane to the east and end in Djerba.

Activities: Your first stop after driving through the rugged terrain will be the mountaintop Berber village of Chenini.

We take a walk amidst this ancient village, where the unique architecture served the multiple purposes of a home, storage and defensive position. We continue from Chenini into the Ksour region, known for its unique architecture. By late afternoon, you take an old Roman causeway, putting you back on the island of Djerba.



Overnight: Radisson Blue - Djerba

Meals: B,L,D

Day 11: Apr 09 Tues: Djerba Island

Travel: Around Djerba Island

Activities: Today is devoted to exploring the island and learning about the traditions of Djerba before the advent of the 1960's and 70's when tourism and flights to the island impacted the local population. Today's touring will also include a visit to the Ghriba synagogue, one of the numerous synagogues still in use today by Djerba's Jewish community, which dates its presence on the island to more than 2,000 years.

By early afternoon, we arrive in Houmt Souk, the main market town on the island. This compact, Mediterranean town has a charm that makes shopping, sitting in a café or enjoying lunch a wonderful place to spend a few hours.

Arrangements will be made to bring you back to your resort hotel, thus providing an opportunity for those who might wish to book one of the many treatments offered in the hotel's spa.



Overnight: Radisson Blue - Djerba

Meals: B,L,D

Day 12: Apr 10 Wed: Return to Tunis

Travel: Depart Djerba airport for your return flight to Tunis.

Activities: Upon your arrival, we explore the Tunis area, with the opportunity to more deeply explore the medina, which is a short walk from your very special hotel in the heart of the medina. Lunch and dinner will be traditional Tunisian cuisine in two very interesting venues.

Overnight: Palais Bayram - Tunis

Meals: B,L,D

Day 13: Apr 11 Thurs: Tunis Departure

Travel: Transfers will be arranged for your departure from Tunis-Carthage airport.

Meals: B

Hotels

| City | Hotel | URL |
|--------------|-------------------------|---|
| Ksar Ghilane | Yadis Ksar Ghilane | http://www.yadis.com/en.154.campement-ksar-ghilane.html |
| Djerba | Radisson Blu (5 stars) | www.djerba.radissonas.com |
| Tunis | Palais Bayram (5 stars) | http://palaisbayram.com/ |

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Costs for Optional Extension to the South

| Price | Includes: |
|---|--|
| \$1,525 (5+ people) \$1,675 (2-4 people) | Hotels and tented camp; All meals; Baggage fees on domestic flights; Travel Insurance; Gratuity to local guide and driver Airport transfer on departure day; and Private English speaking guide and private vehicle. |
| | No Single Supplement! |
| Not Included: | N/A |