

**ALGERIA**  
**the next great**  
**travel destination?**



While Morocco and Tunisia welcome every year millions of tourists, Algeria remain a destination that puts off potential lovers of Roman ruins, empty beaches, colonial architecture, or unspoiled deserts... Even if having the visa is no longer a headache, there are still too few visitors to take the plunge and visit a country that is now safe after years of civil war.



The first thing you discover when arriving in Algiers is Djamaa el Djazaïr mosque. It houses one of the world's tallest minaret (265 m) and Algerian people are so proud of it. The mosque has become the landmark for Algiers, gaining international recognition for its architectural audacity, but tourists are not allowed to enter inside.



The Djamaa el Djedid Mosque, aka the New Mosque, is an historical and religious site in Algiers city center. It was built in 1660 during the Ottoman rule. The minaret is built in the Ottoman style, similar to those found in Istanbul. The Ottomans ruled Algeria for centuries until the French colonization in 1830. The Algerian constitution declares Islam as the state religion, but is not as rigorous as in some countries: alcohol is over the counter for example.



A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Casbah in Algiers faces significant challenges. Many of its historic buildings are in critical condition due to age and lack of restoration. Many inhabitants and shops have left the Casbah which was no more safe during the civil war. This place could become a paradise for Airbnb rentals, with a view on the mediterranean sea, but the road will be long...



The Casbah played a central role during the Algerian War of Independence against France in the 60s. The narrow alleys constituted a real labyrinth and provided an advantageous position for guerrilla attacks and clandestine activities against the French paratroopers. Nowadays, portraits of martyrs sit alongside those of football clubs on the walls.



Going inside the desert took days and was a real expedition until the government started to build those asphalt roads to allow the army to deploy more easily. Erg Admer offers a unique environment for Algerian army operations due to its huge sand dunes and challenging desert conditions. Those roads are crucial for securing the borders with Niger and Libya against smuggling, migrants, and terrorist infiltrations.



The Tuareg still lead a unique way of life in the Sahara desert, finding their ways thanks to the stars. They still are nomads, moving across the desert in search of water and grazing land for their livestock (goats and camels). Many were working in the tourism industry as Algerian desert attracts most of the tourists visiting the country, but the civil war, the economic crisis and the Covid let many on the dole.



Tamanrasset, located in the Sahara Desert of Algeria, is now considered a safe city for tourists but most of the time, a tourist police escort will follow you, and not only in the desert, but also between big towns on the highways, or in the streets of towns like Constantine or Oran. The Algerian government has taken steps to combat crime and improve safety for tourists, and police escorts are part of the plan, even if you won't feel any threat during your stay and no incidents occurred for years.



Tassili N'Ajjer National Park and the Tadrart Rouge ("Red Mountain ») area are notable locations within the algerian Sahara Desert. The landscapes are stunning, and the sand dunes are unique geological features. Their red color comes from the iron oxide content in the sand. It is a roughly 15/30 km large and 150 km long southern prolongation of the Libyan Tadrart Acacus into Algeria.



Tassili N'Ajjer is famed for its prehistoric rock art, which provide insight into the history and evolution of human civilization in the area. These artworks depict wildlife like giraffes, rhinoceros, elephants, and human activities (hunting, dancing...), indicating that the area was once much wetter and more hospitable for animals and people.



Ghardaïa, located in the M'zab Valley in the Sahara Desert, is renowned for its unique architecture, which is a reflection of the environmental adaptation of the Mozabite people, a Berber ethnic group which can also be found in Oman, famous for his puritanical religious beliefs. Every city hosts a mosque at the top serving as landmark.



Mozabite women in white haïk in the streets of Ksar El Atteuf, Ghardaia. Famous silhouettes you can spot in many orientalist art and paintings. They typically cover their hair and their faces. They just leave an opening to see their environment with only one eye. It is forbidden to wander in the Mozabite villages without a local guide to preserve the privacy of residents.



Ksar Beni Isguen market and auction in Ghardaia is deeply rooted in the local Mozabite culture. It's set within the ksar on a big square. The market and auction are key to preserving the traditional ways of life of the Mozabite people. They serve as a living museum, showcasing the unique cultural practices of the region every day, in the late afternoon, except Friday.



Ksar Tafelt in Ghardaia is a unique and eco-friendly area known for its sustainable practices. The city was finished in 2006 and is designed as ancient local houses. Key aspects of its sustainability are solar power plants for electricity and eco-parks for wastewater treatment. Residents participate in civic works and their sense of collective responsibility has eliminated the need for a police in the city. Ksar Tafelt won a prize at the COP22 climate conference for its ecological design and sustainability efforts.



You'll hardly pass in front of a dates shop without being offered some samples for free in Algeria! The country is one of the world's top date producers, with the industry playing a significant role in rural development, employment, and export revenue. The Ministry of Commerce intends to export Algerian dates like the Deglet Nour variety, often referred to as the « queen of dates », to 150 countries by the end of 2024. This dates industry is planned to create tens of thousands of jobs in a near future.



View of the town and Salah Bey Viaduct, Constantine. The city is famously positioned on a rocky outcrop at an elevation of 640 meters above sea level that is surrounded by the deep ravines of the Rhumel River, making it a natural fortress. The viaduct is often referred to as the "eighth wonder" of the city. This bridge, with its length of 1,119 meters has significantly modernized the urban landscape of Constantine.



University of Mentouri designed by Oscar Niemeyer, Constantine. Niemeyer, the renowned Brazilian architect worked in the 60s in Algeria. It was part of a larger plan to modernize and expand educational facilities in the country after its independence. The university's design reflects Niemeyer's signature style, with sweeping curves and bold, futuristic forms. Unfortunately, the site is not allowed for tourists visits.



Algerian people buying cheap pizzas in Souk El Ghezal, Constantine, Algeria. The success of this cheap food reflects how Algerian citizens face the economic crisis due to the extravagant price of basic food commodities with a severe inflation. The average salary is around 280 euros per month.



Nearly 30% of the total Algerian population is between 15-29 years of age and 70% of the population is under 30 in Algeria. With the economic crisis, this demography leads to a massive wish of immigration to Europe for the youth. Applying for a (costly) visa to leave the country has become a national sport and this leads to all kinds of trafficking and corruption without the certainty of obtaining it most of the times.



It is not always easy to interact with the local population because often your police escort scares away the locals around you. The most curious turn out to be the Algerians returning on vacation to their country, who are surprised to see a tourist in their own country!



Djemila is a UNESCO World Heritage site located in the mountainous region of northern Algeria. This site is renowned for its well-preserved ruins of a Roman town. Founded by the Romans during the 1st century AD as a military garrison town, Djemila's strategic location was chosen for its defensive advantages. The ruins provide a vivid snapshot of Roman town planning and architecture.



Algerian boy near the torso of Jupiter statue in Djemila. The site hosts ruins of one market, temples, villas, baths, cardo, theatre, basilicas, mosaics, and even a prison . But the most impressive thing remain the lack of visitors and the feeling to have the whole site for you, just gently disturbed by laughing kids using the area as a playground.



Oran is a major city in northwest Algeria, situated along the Mediterranean coast. It is the second-largest city in Algeria after the capital, Algiers. Oran has a rich and diverse history, marked by various influences during the previous centuries, including Berber, Spanish, Ottoman, and French. This multicultural heritage is reflected in the city's architecture (fort, art deco houses...) , music (the Rai is from Oran) , and local cuisine.



Inaugurated in June 1973 by Houari Boumediène, Algeria President at the time, the « Andalusian village » is the work of French architect Fernand Pouillon. Located near Oran, on a huge beach, it represented an important link in the country's tourism infrastructure at the time with huge projects. Pouillon's work was promoting a sense of well-being and community.



Algeria was colonized by France for 132 years, until 1962. The testimony of the french times can be observed in numerous buildings like this old Garage in Oran. There is a kind of love-hate relationship between the two nations, with regular visa restrictions on both sides or threats of economic retaliations. Millions of algerian dream to stay in France for a better standard of living while millions of « Pieds noirs » (former french colons) dream to come back in Algeria for a nostalgic visit...

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