



PROJECT DOSSIER

THE SAHARAN OUTBACK

*CAIRO to TUNIS
OR
TUNIS to CAIRO*

42 days
7100 kms (approx.)

EGYPT, LIBYA, TUNISIA



Itinerary Guideline

Cairo to Tunis

Week 1: In Cairo, trip preparation and then travel north to Alexandria to follow the Mediterranean coast to El Alamein, Marsa Matruh, before visiting the desert oasis town of Siwa.

Week 2: We cross into Libya, to Tobruk, visiting the old Greek site of Apollonia and then Benghazi, Libya's second city. Our route now takes us south into the Sahara to Tazerbo, to negotiate the desert tracks to Waw al Namus.

Week 3: Visit the extinct volcanoes at Waw al Namus, before continuing west to Murzuk and Sabha. We now head to the deep south to Ghat in the heart of the Fezzan.

Week 4: We explore the Jabal Acacus – with its dramatic rock outcrops. Hidden away in these are ancient rock paintings and carvings. We employ lighter 4WDs to traverse the great sand dunes. We then return to Sabha to visit the dunes and lakes near Al Fjayj.

Week 5: North to Ghadames – famed for its unique architecture. Then back to the Mediterranean and the dramatic Roman city of Leptis Magna. We visit Tripoli and the site of Sabratha as we travel into Tunisia and to Ile de Jerber.

Week 6: Entering the Tunisian Sahara to Douz, we can trek by camel for two days (optional), before our route takes us through the rugged ranges via Tozuer & Le Kef to Tunis, where our final visit takes in the Roman city at Carthage.

Tunis to Cairo

Week 1: Starting in Tunis, we first visit the nearby ancient Roman site of Carthage, before heading south to Le Kef and Tozuer. We now enter the Sahara and from Douz we can trek by camel for two days (optional).

Week 2: To the Ile de Jerber before entering Libya. We visit the site of Sabratha en route to Tripoli – visiting the country's capital before we explore the grandest of Roman sites, Leptis Magna. Leaving the Mediterranean we drive south to the ancient oasis town of Ghadames.

Week 3: Further south to the “real” Sahara to Sabha – visiting the dunes and lakes near Al Fjayj. Deep in the southwest is Ghat in the heart of the Fezzan. Exploring the Jabal Acacus, we search for hidden rock paintings and carvings amidst dramatic rock outcrops; we then employ lighter 4WDs to traverse the great sand dunes.

Week 4: Back via Sabha, then following desert tracks via Murzuk to the extinct volcanoes at Waw al Namus. We continue our remote desert crossing to Tazerbo.

Week 5: We now head north leaving the Sahara to meet up again with the Mediterranean. Visit Benghazi, Libya’s second city, before driving through the Jebel Akhdar. We visit the old site of Apollonia then via Tobruk to Egypt.

Week 6: Entering Egypt, we visit the ancient oasis town of Siwa, before our journey takes us along the coast from Marsa Matruh to the World War II site of El Alamein, Alexandria, to end our great journey in Cairo.

PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

HIGHLIGHTS & JOURNEY

Following our successful reconnaissance journey along this route (March/April 1998), the published itinerary has been modified to take the best of this region in 42 days. Libya as such, has not featured on anyone’s North Africa or Saharan travels and unfortunately the country has suffered from a lot of bad media in the west. Yet the welcome we received and the ease of travel within the country dispelled any misconception one may have had. Combining Egypt, Libya and Tunisia together presents a great opportunity to travel deep into the Sahara as well as visiting some of the most spectacular Roman and Greek sites along the Mediterranean. The Sahara itself conjures up all those thoughts and dreams of desert travel, so you will certainly fulfil that yearning if that is what you are looking for. You will after all, be joining a “small club” of people who have never embarked on such a journey.

EGYPT

Once we have completed our preparations in Cairo we will travel north to Alexandria to join the Mediterranean coast as we head west to Marsa Matruh. En route we will visit the W.W.II site of El Alamein - then heading south to the very unique Siwa Oasis, probably the most picturesque oasis of the Egyptian Desert.

As it is not possible to cross into Libya from Siwa, we will return north to Shallum where the border crossing will take place.

LIBYA

Having entered from Egypt we will explore the region of Cyrenaica from Tobruk through the Jebel Akhdar - a mountain area which is both geographically stunning and quite different from the rest of the country. We will visit the old Greek ruins of Apollonia – once the port for Cyrene. Benghazi will be our first significant stop on the Gulf of Sirt - this is Libya’s second city. Following the coastline we will head south to Ajdabiya our last sight of the sea before heading into the desert. South to Tazerbo, the source of the Great man-made River project. Our route will then head west on remote desert tracks, often sand matting to travel some 450kms to Waw Kabir, Waw Namus, an extinct volcano set amongst moonscape scenery. Our route will then take us west via Zueila, Murzuk and to the region of the Fezzan.

The Fezzan is the real heart of the Sahara - desert landscape supposedly at its best, highlighted by pre-historic rock art, spectacular rock formations and vast sand seas. From Sabha we travel to the deep south to Ghat in the Acacus region. Here using alternative transport, we will access the desert sands and rock outcrops that hide some of the most ancient rock art found anywhere in Africa. Scenically this region is also stunning and rates as the best you’ll find anywhere in the Sahara. Returning to Sabha, we will use lighter 4WDs to visit the dunes and lakes near Al Fjayj before heading north to Ghadames. Set in the south west of the Jebel Nafusa, Ghadames is an ancient oasis town, famed for its traditional architecture – with a labyrinth of narrow streets, covered walkways and hidden squares.

We now make our way through the Jebel Mafusa and north to the Mediterranean. Leptis Magna is regarded as the best Roman site in the Mediterranean – containing spectacular architecture and forms of great scale. Originally a Phoenician port, it was then settled by the Romans. We visit Tripoli, the country’s capital

and wander its characteristic medina.

Heading for Tunisia, we explore the ruins of Sabratha – in its attractive setting overlooking the Mediterranean.

TUNISIA

Crossing into Tunisia at Ras al-Jehir we will explore the southern Ksor region - the home of the Berbers whose fortified dwellings were built not only for defence but to protect them from the elements of the desert. There should also be the opportunity to visit the Island of Jerbes (believed to be the land of the Lotus-Eaters)- with its distinctive white-washed houses. Then south to Douz, where we can set off on a 2 day Camel Safari and experience the Sahara from a very different point of view. Inland to cross the salt lakes of Chott El-Jerid to Tozer, the Seldja gorge and on to Gafsa, returning to the coast we should have a few relaxing days on some beaches as we head north to Tunis. Upon our arrival in Tunis, we visit the nearby Roman site of Carthage – once the dominant force of north Africa. A fitting end to a great Saharan journey.

GROUP SIZE

21 max. including Encounter staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The high heat of the Sahara, together with minimal facilities throughout much of the expedition's route can take their toll. Living a nomadic/camping lifestyle for two months under these conditions requires a flexible and adaptable approach, and cannot be recommended to many people over the ages of 40-45. Water for personal washing will need to be restricted in many areas.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be paid in US\$ dollars, preferably in cash notes, otherwise recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the Project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN THE COST

All transport, food (except for occasional lunches), camping equipment and supplies, local guides, camping fees, tolls, entrances to the sites

stated under Highlights in the brochure.

THE COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights into Cairo/Tunis and home from Tunis/Cairo, transfers to/from airport and airport taxes, vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major centres (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment and items of a personal nature. Individual entry fees to museums/sites are not included although we do expect these to amount to more than US\$40 to US\$50.

Optional Camel Trek from Douz, allow US\$30. Accommodation and meals in Cairo before departure and Tunis after the completion of the expedition are not included, we may suggest you allow US\$30-40 per day.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter expedition truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables and stools, light, cooking equipment and utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit, malarial prophylaxis.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A medium or lightweight sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack, and a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear, water bottle, personal medicines and toiletries etc. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in the pre-departure information supplied at the time of booking. Soft bags or frameless backpacks are the most suitable kinds of luggage to bring. Most flights into Cairo and Tunis and out of Tunis and Cairo have a 20kg baggage limit.

TRANSPORT

Encounter 4WD expedition truck and some local lightweight vehicles in remote areas of the Libyan Desert. Optional camels in Tunisia.

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout: Occasional and basic campground facilities exist in some cities and centres, usually extending to simple washing/showering and toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. (Everyone's involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic and day to day routines etc.).

MEALS, COOKING AND FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts and evening meals, picnic lunches. Project members are involved in

daily fresh food shopping and meal preparation. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat where available and safe, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves, supplemented by truck supplies of canned and dried goods in areas where fresh supplies will be unavailable or severely limited). In a few larger centres where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will be at your own expense, the cost of these occasional lunches is minimal. Vegetarians usually have no great difficulty maintaining an adequate diet in North Africa, though it must be accepted that for a few days at a time in remoter desert regions fresh supplies may not be available, and your meals may need to rely heavily on canned and dehydrated vegetables, cereal staples, canned fruit etc. Please advise Encounter in advance if you are a strict vegetarian.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid **for not less than 6 months** after the end of the expedition, and which contains not less than **6 blank pages**. Your passport must also be free of any evidence of having visited Israel. Visa requirements and costs will vary according to your nationality. Everyone will require visas for Egypt and Libya and some nationalities will need one for Tunisia. Egyptian visas are very easy to obtain and we are presently arranging a procedure to obtain Libyan visas as they are difficult to get in many countries.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on page 60 of our present brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

As a guideline you should budget approx. US\$100 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional lunches in major centres, (average) en route visa costs, individual museum entry fees and some souvenirs. You should budget a further US\$30-40 per day that you spend in Cairo or Tunis before or after the project to cover hotel, meals etc. Credit cards are generally accepted only in a few of the larger cities in Egypt and Tunisia but not Libya.

We have included an average of what most people spend on souvenirs in the figure previously stated, but it's a subjective amount - and the limit is only what you impose on yourself! Apart from this, and your en route visas, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money during this expedition.

ARRIVING & LEAVING

There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Cairo or Tunis hotel at 18.00hrs, the evening before the expedition departure date. This meeting is also your latest arrival time as we must finalise plans for our departure the next day.

INTERESTING READING

Michael Asher, *In Search of the Forty Day Rd. A Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 2.* Peter Mansfield, *The Arabs*, - Penguin. Although fictional - *The English Patient* is worth reading to give you an impression of the region.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Flights to/from Cairo & Tunis.....
Local payment.....
Visas.....
Vaccinations.....
Insurance.....
Personal spending money.....
Total _____	_____

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.