



# PROJECT DOSSIER

## *TUNISIA, LIBYA & THE SAHARA*

### *TUNIS to TUNIS*

28 days  
4950 kms (approx)

### **TUNISIA & LIBYA**

#### **Itinerary Guideline**

**Day 1:** Arrive Tunis, visit Carthage.

**Days 2 & 3:** Drive south to Kariouan, Sfax and Gabes.

**Days 4 & 5:** We enter Libya, to Zuaran, then south to Ghadames.

**Days 6 to 8:** In Ghadames, then crossing desert tracks to Sabha, in the Fezzan.

**Days 9 & 10:** Travelling further south to Ghat and the Jabal Acacus.

**Days 11 to 13:** Utilising local 4WD we explore the dramatic Acacus region and hidden cave art.

**Days 14 to 17:** Returning via Sabha, we visit the lakes at Al Fjayj before driving north to the Mediterranean.

**Days 19 & 20:** Visit the Roman site of Leptis Magna, the soukh of Tripoli & the site of Sabratha.

**Days 21 to 23:** Cross back into Tunisia to the Isle of Jerba then to the Troglodyte caves at Matmata & to Douz.

**Days 24 to 26:** Camel safari into the Grand Erg Occidental then to Tozeur & Tamerza.

**Days 27 & 28:** We travel through rugged ranges to Le Kef, Dougga and back to Tunis.



#### **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.

#### **TUNISIA AND LIBYA**

Tunisia and Libya encompass all the reasons you need to visit North Africa and the Sahara. Historical Roman sites, Mediterranean beaches, typical Arab Soukhs and Medinas, the greatest desert of all – the Sahara with its remote oasis, rock art and nomadic camel trains. Libya as such, has not featured on anyone's North Africa or Saharan travels for some 25 years, yet it is incredibly friendly and opens her arms to travellers – so it is definitely time to go!

## **TUNISIA**

Tunisia is a very liberal country by Arab standards, probably due to its early move towards westernisation following French colonial rule. Today, the country has developed a reputation for stability in a volatile region due to its high standing in the Arab world. During most of the 1980s it was home to the Arab League. The president Ben Ali continues to keep any serious Islamic opposition under control, keeping a wary eye on events next door in Algeria, and now enjoys good relations with its former colonial ruler, France. Tunisia is by far the smallest of the Maghreb countries and borders on Algeria to the west and Libya to the southeast. The ragged and irregular Mediterranean coastline forms the eastern and northern boundaries, whilst the southern tip is completely covered by the sand sea (erg), the eastern extremity of the Grand Erg Oriental, which also covers a large area of Algeria.

## **LIBYA**

Despite its isolation, due to Gaddafi's support of terrorism and in particular his refusal until recently to hand over the Lockerbie bombers, Gaddafi is seen by most Libyans to have been a beneficial influence over the country and still enjoys considerable support. It is a country in rapid transition from a largely nomadic to a modern consumer society, and will undoubtedly be aided by the recent lifting of sanctions. Libya is the fourth largest country in Africa, although 90% of the population live in the narrow, fertile coastal strip. The interior of the country is largely uninhabited desert dotted with small oases communities. The south western desert known as the Fezzan has desert landscape at its best, highlighted by pre-historic rock art, spectacular rock formations and vast sand seas.

## **Highlights and Route**

Our journey begins in the capital Tunis where we visit the nearby Roman ruins of Carthage – once the dominant force of North Africa. Then we drive south to Kariouan, historically the most important town in the country. Founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Kariouan is where Islam first took hold in the Magreb and the Great Mosque and other religious buildings were constructed. It ranks behind only Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem among Islam's holy places. Then southward via Sfax and Gabes, we enter Libya to Zuaran and then south to the oases town of Ghadames, known as the 'Pearl of the Desert'. Famed for its traditional desert architecture of whitewashed mud-brick houses in

a labyrinth of narrow streets, covered walkways and hidden squares, this town's style is unique to this part of the Sahara. Further south we travel across desert tracks to the real heart of the Sahara to Sabha. This region known as the Fezzan, is scenically stunning - a vast area of largely uninhabited desert with its great sand seas and unworldly rock formations which contain some of the best prehistoric rock art to be found in Africa. In the heart of the Fezzan is the town of Ghat from where using 4WD, we explore the Jabal Acacus, with its pinnacle rock formations that hide the ancient cave art. Returning to Sabha, we use lighter 4WDs to visit the picturesque dunes and lakes near Al Fjayj. We now make our way north through the Jebel Mafusa to the Mediterranean coast and Leptis Magna, regarded as the best Roman site in the Mediterranean and 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. A day is spent on the Island of Jerbes (believed to be the land of the Lotus-Eaters), with its distinctive whitewashed houses. Then we go to explore the Troglodyte caves at Matma. Here the Berbers of the Matma went underground some centuries ago to escape the heat, and here they have remained, dwelling in their underground craters - a surreal place with an almost lunar landscape. South to Douz, we set off on a 2 day Camel Safari to really experience the Sahara from a very different point of view. As our route takes us north we visit the oases towns of Tamerza and Mides, which offer some of the most spectacular settings in the country – rich pockets of vivid green among the harsh yellows and browns of the barren desert. We continue on through rugged ranges to Le Kef and Dougga, another of Tunisia's Roman sites on the edge of the Tebersouk Mountains, before finishing our journey in Tunis.

## **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 4 weeks under these conditions requires a flexible and adaptable approach, and is probably not to 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 and out of Tunis, 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.

Accommodation and meals in Tunis before and 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 and out of Tunis have a 20kg baggage limit.

#### **TRANSPORT**

Encounter 4WD expedition truck and some local lightweight vehicles in remote areas of the Libyan Desert. Camels in Tunisia (2 days).

#### **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 **4 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 Libya and some nationalities will need one for Tunisia. 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\$120 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 Tunisia before or after the project to cover hotel, meals etc. Credit cards are generally accepted only in a few of the larger cities in 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 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**

Katy in Tunisia – Katy Hounsell-Robert  
Fountains in the Sand – Norman Douglas  
North Africa – Lonely Planet  
Sahara Handbook – Simon Glen  
Qaddafi & the Libyan Revolution – David Blundy  
The Arabs - Peter Mansfield  
A History of Arab Peoples – Albert Hourani  
Although fictional – The English Patient is worth reading to give you an impression of the region.

### **OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES**

Flights to/from 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.**