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Trip Notes

TUNISIA DESERT EXPLORER

Trip code: FMT
Country: Tunisia
Amended: October 2010
Edition No: AD - 3 - 2010
Valid from: 25 Aug 2010 - 31 Dec 2010



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Camel safari into the vast Sahara Desert.** We sleep overnight under the stars in a wild camp!
- **Ride on the Red Lizard train.** We travel through dramatic scenery, as the train cuts through narrow gorges.
- **Visit the troglodyte dwellings at Matmata.** We visit Matmata, home to the Star Wars set.
- **Experience the Salt Lake at Chott el Jerid.** We see the salt crystals glimmer in the sunshine. There is also the chance for optional go-karting.
- **The city of Djerba.** We explore the sites and sounds of a North African city with a chance to lose ourselves in Djerba's souks.

SUMMARY



With a varied itinerary, this trip gives a great insight to the rich cultural heritage and amazing landscapes that Tunisia has to offer - no wonder the country has so often been chosen as a setting for Hollywood films!

We travel from the Mediterranean to the Sahara via the troglodyte caves of Matmata and the amazing Chott El Jerid Salt Lake. Our time in the Sahara, where the dunes stretch for miles, is a highlight for many. We take a camel ride into the desert and spend a night sleeping amongst the dunes - truly the best way to experience this amazing landscape.

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

This tour is generally not demanding but you should bear in mind the following:

Temperatures can vary during the day. The temperatures can be very high in the day and December to March the night and early morning temperatures are often low.

The roads in Tunisia are reasonably good and driving conditions are easy for most of the trip. Some of the driving days are reasonably long (4-5 hours is the norm for journeys described in the itinerary). This tour is generally not demanding but you should bear in mind that it may get cold at night and early morning December to March.

Camping accommodation can be quite basic.

Please also be aware that camels are not always comfortable to ride!

We strongly recommend that you read the essential information on page 78 of the Families brochure before booking this holiday. Alternatively go to <http://www.exodus.co.uk/aboutexodus/essential-information>

JOINING THE TRIP IN LONDON

8 days, depart London [day1 - Saturday], return [day 8 - Saturday]

Itinerary start

The international group flight from London is a daytime flight departing on Day 1 of the itinerary.

Due to connecting flight times to Djerba, you will then spend the first night in Tunis and get the connecting flight to Djerba in the morning of day 2.

Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of **Tunisair** (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly, we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

UK Regional Flights

Exodus can arrange flights from the majority of the UK's regional airports that are more flexible and convenient than if booked separately. Please contact our sales team for details.

Please note that if booking your regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the



Exodus Travels Ltd

Grange Mills, Weir Road, London SW12 ONE

Sales & Reservations: (44) 0845 330 6008 • Fax: (44) 020 8673 0779 • E-mail: sales@exodus.co.uk • www.exodus.co.uk



international check in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum connecting time, but baggage handling at Heathrow is known to be subject to delays.

Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if Exodus has booked it. Those arriving from London on non-group flights should read the airport transfer section below for information on reaching the start point. Please check with the Exodus office if you are unsure whether or not a transfer is included.

JOINING THE TRIP IN DJERBA

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RE: START POINT FOR CLIENTS ON TUNISIA DESERT EXPLORER

If you book flights with Exodus:

You will fly to Tunis on day 1 and spend the first night in Tunis. The group flight from Tunis to Djerba will then be on the morning of day 2. All activities will start on arrival in Djerba.

If you book land only with Exodus:

We will book accommodation for you in Djerba on day 1. You will then meet the rest of the group on group flights from London on the morning of day 2. All activities will start on the morning of day 2.

Land Only: 8 days, start Djerba day 1, end Djerba day 8.

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in Djerba on the morning of Day 2 of the itinerary listed below. Details of how to reach the start point are given in the Final Joining Instructions. Hotel check-in times are normally from around 3pm.

Airport Transfers

If you would like us to organise a private transfer for you, the cost is £17 per person and is payable before departure. Please ensure that you provide us with all relevant information at least 2 weeks before departure. Please note that the cost of a taxi is likely to be about £10, should you decide to make your way independently.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

The entries in **bold** at the end of each day indicate the type of accommodation normally used (see accommodation section overleaf for key to codes) and meals included (**B**=Breakfast, **L**=Lunch, **D**=Dinner)

Day 1 Trip starts.

If you have booked land only you will make your own way to Djerba and spend your first night in Djerba. **CH**

If you have booked flights with Exodus, you will spend your first night in Tunis and take the connecting flight Tunis - Djerba early on day 2 to meet all the group. **CH**

Day 2 Those on group flights flight from Tunis to Djerba early this morning. Mid morning we start our tour. We spend time exploring this beautiful island. We see Houmt Souk, Djerba's largest city, with its lively markets. We also visit Guellala, Midoun and Djerba Explore museum (which contains hundreds of living crocodiles!). **CH (B,D)**

Day 3 Leaving Djerba we head to Tataouine, a land of craggy mountains and fortified citadels called ksars, and their interlocking cells known as ghorfas. From Tataouine we have the opportunity to explore two Berber mountain strongholds: Douiret and Chenini, which are hillcrest villages containing fortified granaries once used by the local Berber tribes to protect their stored food from the Arab invaders. **CH (B,D)**

Day 4. We continue our journey across the rocky desert to Matmata home to the troglodytes, people who live underground. Matmata has become famous in more recent years for featuring in the series of the

Star Wars films. We visit what remains of the original film set. We continue to Douz. **CH (B,D)**

Day 5. Douz is the gateway town to the Sahara. There will be time for some exploration or optional activities, plus a visit the town centre and Sahara Desert museum before meeting with the camel drivers for a trek into the Sahara. You will see the cooks and camel drivers cook the traditional food, and bake bread in the sand. We are entertained after dinner by the camel drivers playing traditional music around the campfire. **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 6. We drive to Tozeur across the 2,000 square miles of the Chott El Jerid (salt lake). Tozeur has earned a reputation for the lush beauty of its oasis in which 200,000 date palms thrive. We visit Nefta old town and oasis: famous for its valley filled with thousands of palms, and known as the "basket". There are multiple optional activities available by the salt lake: Quad biking, speed sailing, camel rides (approximate prices are detailed below under 'optional excursions' information). Please note: For the Quad biking children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Speed sailing is wheeled surf on the dry salt lake. This option is only available to adults. We see sunset on Nefta dunes then return to Tozeur. Tonight there is an optional visit of the 1001 night's museum (Dar Cherait) after dinner. **CH (B,D)**



Day 7 We head to Metlaoui for the Red Lizard train excursion. This is an old wooden train given by the French protectorate to the Bey of Tunis (former king of Tunisia). The Red Lizard train runs through the spectacular Selja river canyons. We then continue to the abandoned mountain oasis villages of Midès, Tamerza and Chebika. In Chebika we take a short walk. There is also a free of charge optional 4x4 excursion to visit the film sets of The English patient and Star wars. **CH (BD)**

Day 8 End trip.

Those on land only arrangements end the trip in Tozeur this morning.

Those with flights included depart early morning for the airport and the flight to Tunis. On arrival in Tunis there is a short tour of the city visiting Sidi Bou Said, before returning to the airport. End.

The group return flight to London is a daytime flight arriving home on day 8.

ACCOMMODATION

Normally we use hotels of 2-3 star Tunisian standard, although these are below the same ratings in Europe. Most rooms have private facilities and are normally on a twin-share basis but occasionally three people will share a room. The hotels in Tataouine and Douz have a swimming pool. The tented accommodation is very basic and sleeping arrangements will be in one large communal tent. If the weather is ever poor when we are due to stay in the Bedouin tent, we may transfer to a small hotel in Douz.

Single Accommodation is available at a supplement of £65 (excluding night in desert, which is still a communal Bedouin tent.

Extra Accommodation This can be arranged in Douz or Tunis, please request availability/prices with one of our sales team at time of reservation.



Family of two to four - All family groupings of two and four will be put into either one or two twin rooms. How you decide to share is up to the discretion of the adults.

Family of three - Wherever possible we will put you in a triple room. Please be aware that in some places triple rooms are in short supply. This means that, in practice, a triple room will often simply be a twin room with a mattress on the floor or a further bed squashed in. Where it is impossible to provide a triple room, you will have to decide which of your party takes the single room.

Family of five or more - For larger families, we will provide twin rooms as standard, with a triple room if there is an odd number.

Whilst we will do our very best to ensure that families are roomed close together (in some cases, we can arrange adjoining rooms), we can't guarantee this. Most family holidays occur during peak season and we sometimes have little to no control over where you will be put. You need to come prepared for this.

KEY TO ACCOMMODATION: We indicate in the itinerary what type of accommodation is provided on each day. The descriptions are guidelines only and are used to give an idea of the accommodation offered, rather than an exact description.

CH Comfortable Hotel, Lodge or Gite - twin rooms with en suite facilities, reliable electricity and water supply, good service and some added amenities.

FC Full-service Camping - two person tents sometimes in a private or public campsite that contains a communal ablutions block and other amenities and sometimes in a wild camp with toilet tents and mess tent or dining equipment provided. All camp chores are done for you from erecting / dismantling of your tent, to cooking & washing up.

FOOD & TRANSPORT

Food

In the itinerary we state which meals are included on each day.

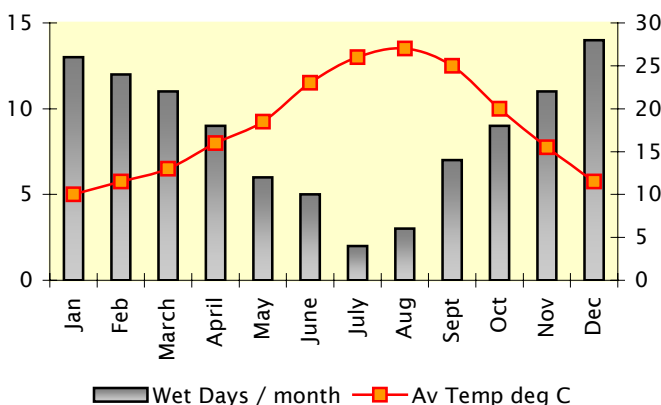
Generally Tunisian food is excellent and small restaurants are to be found everywhere. Prices are reasonable. In main towns it is possible to find good French and Tunisian restaurants where a meal and French wine could cost £20 or more. A dinner can cost anywhere between £5 - 10 depending on what you drink - a good estimate on food would be £12-13 a day. Local beers and soft drinks are available at a very reasonable price, but you can pay UK prices or more for imported alcohol.

Transport

For most of this trip we use an air-conditioned mini or midibus depending on group size, with local drivers.

WEATHER

Weather chart for Tunis



In the summer months the daytime temperatures are around 30°C. In the winter months the daytime temperatures are around 14 to 21°C with night temperatures falling to 6 to 11°C. The days should be clear and sunny. The temperatures in the south are generally a couple of degrees higher. There is a chance of rain from October to April **and on some nights the temperature may fall below freezing.**

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment.



Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company. Exodus trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.

Recent awards for our work on Responsible Tourism

British Travel Awards: Environmentally Responsible Tourism Company.

Responsible Travel Awards: Best Tour Operator.

BA Tourism for Tomorrow Awards: Highly Commended.

For full details of our Responsible Tourism Policy please visit:

www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

No visa is required for British, most (but not all) EU, and Canadian passport holders. Australians do need a visa, which can be obtained on arrival. New Zealanders must obtain a visa in advance. All other nationalities should check with their nearest embassy.

Visa regulations can and do change without notice and if you are not a British passport holder please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

For information on how to obtain visas please call Travcours on 020 7223 5295 or visit their website: <http://www.travcours.com>

Vaccinations and Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for this trip, however it is advised that you are vaccinated against Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid and Hepatitis A.

The above information can change at short notice, and as we are not qualified to answer all your questions in regards to travel health we strongly recommend you contact your GP or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information.

Nomad Travel Clinics are experts in preparing people for travel, providing expert advice on vaccinations, anti-malarial and staying

healthy whilst overseas. We have arranged a special 10% discount for Exodus passengers on any vaccinations that you may require. For information visit the community section of our website or click on this link www.nomadtravel.co.uk/pages/exodus.

For additional information please visit: www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

Insurance - Are you adequately covered?

Please ask for details of the Exodus insurance policy that has been tailored to provide specific cover for our trips. It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). If taking an alternative policy you must be sure that you are covered for any activities that are part of this trip or optional activities that you intend to take part in. For further information please see the insurance section of the Exodus Travel Advice guide or visit www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/travel-insurance.

Local Time is GMT +1hrs

Group, Staff and Support

The group will generally be between 4 and 16 people. There will be a local leader and a driver and local guides where needed.

Join the Exodus Online Community:

Don't forget to visit the Community area on our website. You can view our range of Exodus videos and podcasts, read trip write-ups that have featured in the national media and take advantage of some special deals on travel gear and equipment.

In the Compass Café forum you'll find the Departure Lounge where you can discuss your trip with fellow travellers before you depart. When you get back from your holiday remember to upload your images to the relevant trip page on our website. This helps other people see what our holidays are really like and you'll be automatically entered into our monthly photo competition.

To make full use of the Compass Cafe you'll need to join My Exodus. It's free, registration is simple and easy... so what are you waiting for?

<http://www.exodus.co.uk/community>

MONEY MATTERS

Exodus and Local Payments

There is no local payment on this holiday. Exodus no longer uses local payments to cover part of the cost of the holiday.

If you are comparing prices with other operators, please check the total price paid, as we believe that Exodus continues to offer the best balance between value for money and operational quality.

Currency Information

The national currency of Tunisia is the Dinar (TDN), with an exchange rate of approximately 1.3 to the US\$ and 2.15 to the UK£.

Exchange rates are correct at the time of publication.

Commission Free Holiday Currency

For your commission free holiday currency, pre loaded cash cards and travellers cheques delivered directly to your door at very competitive rates, visit us on www.currency-express.com/exodus and receive free delivery on orders over £300.

ATM availability

ATMs are available in Tunis and the majority of other cities. Please confirm exact locations with your local guide.

Extra Expenses and Spending Money

We suggest that you allow £8 per day to cover postcards, small souvenirs, soft drinks etc. Credit cards are normally accepted for more expensive souvenirs. See also Food.

Optional excursions (approximate, depending on group sizes)

Quad biking:	£40 per adult, £30 per child
Speed surfing:	£30
Camel ride:	£10

Tipping (leader and local staff)

Tipping is part of life in North Africa and you may be asked for tips at the hotel, on excursions and for portage. We suggest you allow at least \$40 exclusively for tipping for this purpose. Your guide will often take this amount off you at the start of the trip and use it to tip for services on your behalf. This is purely to take the hassle out of this activity for you and is not compulsory.

Tipping your Leader

You may feel that your leader has performed well over the course of your time in Tunisia and want to show your appreciation of their services. If you would like to tip your leader we suggest a figure of approximately USD3/4 per person per day. For confirmation the tipping figure stated in the section above does not include any tip for your trip leader.

WHAT TO TAKE

Essential Equipment and Clothing

This should be read in conjunction with our 'What to Pack' section in your Travel Advice booklet (sent when you book).

You will need the following:

Water bottle; sun hat and glasses, suncream, day sack; lightweight walking boots with good ankle support and sole protection, torch (flashlight), towel; light jacket and waterproof. **You will need a sleeping bag for the camel trek.**

During November to March we would also recommend taking a fleece jacket & warm trousers, as the weather is cooler at this time.

Also, don't forget your camera!

Please note that Tunisia is a Muslim country and we ask that you wear modest dress, with shorts that come below the knee and t-shirts that cover the shoulder. Ramadan runs from 9th August - 9th September 2010.

Much of the equipment mentioned above is available at very competitive prices at the Exodus online shop, '[Exodus Travel Essentials](http://www.exodus.co.uk/community)' in partnership with Amazon. Please visit www.exodus.co.uk/community for more information.

Baggage and Baggage Allowance

Exodus kitbags are available for purchase at £25, which includes postage, packing and VAT. Please note that they are available within the UK only.

At time of publication - the standard weight limit for hold baggage on the recommended international carrier for this trip is 20kg.

As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, we suggest you check www.baa.com and/or the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

Reading List:

Exodus suggests below a series of books, guides or maps that may be useful or interesting for your trip.

The Rough Guide Tunisia

Lonely Planet Tunisia

Exodus Travel Essentials Store:

If you are interested in any of these books then you can order them from our very own Exodus shop, '[Exodus Travel Essentials](http://www.exodus.co.uk/community)' in partnership with Amazon.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CLIENTS

Exodus operate a 24 hour duty office for emergencies, which can be contacted on 0044 (0) 1582 644 100.

Anytime that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the essential information in the brochure or at www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/essential-information?

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic,

political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between these Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes are the correct version and supersede the brochure. Abnormal conditions or other events beyond our control can prevail at any time, particularly in remote or off the beaten track destinations, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

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HOW TO BOOK YOUR TRIP

1. Check availability Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.

2. Secure your place You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.

3. Complete your booking and payment When you're ready to book, go to www.exodus.co.uk for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque.

Book with confidence Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.

