

AFRICA · HISTORY · BEACHES · DESERT · CULTURE · FOOD



Tunisia

Tunisia fits Roman ruins, Saharan dunes and Mediterranean beaches into one compact, affordable country. Wander the souks of Tunis's UNESCO-listed medina, look out from blue-shuttered Sidi Bou Said above the remains of Carthage, stand in El Jem's colossal amphitheatre and ride camels into the Grand Erg Oriental from Douz. It's an easy, good-value introduction to North Africa.



The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all travel to parts of Tunisia.

Read the latest FCDO travel advice before planning a trip. Your travel insurance may be invalid if you travel against FCDO advice. FCDO advice last updated 24 July 2026.

 CAPITAL Tunis	 CURRENCY Tunisian dinar (TND) £1 ≈ TND 4.00	 LANGUAGE Tunisian Arabic, French	 BEST TIME Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct
 DAILY BUDGET £35–£160 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type C, E 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h 55m direct ~£150–£420 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

Tunisia is North Africa's smallest country, with a green Mediterranean north, the olive-grove plains of the Sahel coast and a desert south that runs into the Sahara. A classic first trip starts in Tunis, with its medina, the Bardo Museum's Roman mosaics, Carthage and Sidi Bou Said, then heads south via Kairouan's Great Mosque and El Jem's amphitheatre to the oasis towns of Tozeur and Douz, the troglodyte homes of Matmata and the island of Djerba. Many UK visitors instead base themselves at a beach resort such as Hammamet, Sousse or Monastir and add day trips.

Tunisia is excellent value: dinars stretch far in guesthouses, louages and café terraces, and even good hotels cost less than in southern Europe. Away from the resorts, tourism is low-key, and the medinas of Tunis, Sousse and Kairouan feel workaday rather than staged. French is widely spoken alongside Tunisian Arabic, which helps independent travellers. Summer heat in the south is fierce, so desert trips are best from autumn to spring. Expect some persistent hassle in souks and at big sites, and a slower pace during Ramadan. It suits history lovers, beach-goers on a budget and anyone wanting an easy first taste of the Sahara.

Top 5 highlights

1

ARCHITECTURE

Sidi Bou Said

Blue doors and whitewashed walls tumble down a clifftop above the Gulf of Tunis. Sip mint tea with pine nuts at the Café des Délices or Café des Nattes, then take the TGM a couple of stops to Carthage's ruins.

2

HISTORY

El Jem amphitheatre

Built in the 3rd century AD for around 35,000 spectators, this colossal Roman amphitheatre is one of the best preserved anywhere and towers over a small modern town. It's UNESCO-listed and rarely crowded.

3

ADVENTURE

Douz and the Grand Erg Oriental

The self-styled 'Gateway to the Sahara' is the base for camel treks, 4x4 trips and overnight camps among the dunes of the Grand Erg Oriental. Ksar Ghilane's warm spring-fed pool makes a classic further stop.

4

SACRED SITE

Great Mosque of Kairouan

Founded in 670 and largely rebuilt in the 9th century, one of North Africa's oldest mosques anchors Tunisia's holiest city. Non-Muslims may visit the vast courtyard and view the prayer hall from its doors; dress modestly.

5

HISTORY

Dougga

A UNESCO-listed Roman town spread across a hillside of olive groves, with a superb Capitol, theatre, baths and a Libyco-Punic mausoleum. It's often called North Africa's best-preserved small Roman town, and you may have it to yourself.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Tunis

≈ 2.6 million people

The capital pairs a French-built Ville Nouvelle with a UNESCO-listed medina of souks and mosques; the Bardo Museum and the TGM train to Carthage and Sidi Bou Said fill two days easily.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Sfax

≈ 600,000 people

Tunisia's industrial second city has an intact walled medina with busy working souks and few tourists; it is also the ferry port for the quiet Kerkennah Islands.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Sousse

≈ 450,000 people

A resort city with a UNESCO-listed medina, a fortified ribat and a fine mosaics museum, plus long beaches north at Port El Kantaoui; a convenient base for El Jem and Kairouan.

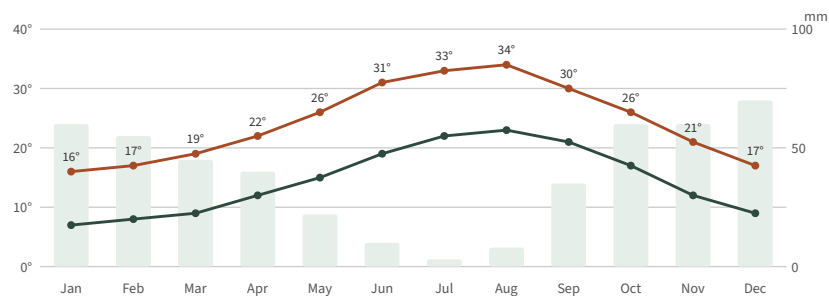
Figures are approximate urban-area populations; the city communes alone are much smaller (2024 census: Tunis about 605,000, Sfax 274,000, Sousse 240,000).

When to go to Tunisia

Best time: **Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct.**

**Average climate in Tunis**

— High °C
 — Low °C
 ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jul–Aug	International Festival of Carthage Running since 1964, this summer festival fills Carthage's restored Roman theatre on warm nights with Arab pop stars, Tunisian classics and international acts.
Dec	International Festival of the Sahara Held in Douz, usually in late December, with camel races, horsemanship displays, sloughi hounds, Bedouin poetry and re-enacted desert weddings; book accommodation early.

How much does Tunisia cost?

SHOESTRING £35 per person / day ≈ TND 140 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £75 per person / day ≈ TND 300 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £160 per person / day ≈ TND 641 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Couscous Steamed semolina topped with a harissa-red stew of lamb, chicken or, along the coast, fish; part of a Maghreb tradition inscribed on UNESCO's intangible heritage list.	Brik Paper-thin malsouka pastry folded around a raw egg, tuna, capers and parsley, then deep-fried; eat it carefully with your fingers so the yolk doesn't escape.	Lablabi A cheap, garlicky chickpea soup ladled over torn stale bread and spiked with harissa, cumin and olive oil; a working-class breakfast served at small cafés everywhere.
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Getting around

SNCFT trains run from Tunis down the coast to Sousse, Sfax and Gabès, and the Sahel Metro links Sousse, Monastir and Mahdia. Louages, shared minibuses that leave when full, reach almost every town quickly and cheaply. The TGM light railway connects Tunis with Carthage, Sidi Bou Said and La Marsa. Tunisair Express flies to Djerba and Tozeur. Hire a car or driver for the desert; city taxis are metered.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  C E 230V — bring a UK-to-C/E adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Ambulance: 190 Fire and car accidents: 198 Police (when in towns and cities): 197 National Guard (when in rural areas and small villages): 193 Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +216	TIME ZONE UTC+1 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Varies — bottled or filtered is safer

DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Around 10% in tourist restaurants is appreciated; round up taxi fares, leave small change at cafés and tip guides and camel handlers a few dinars.

ETIQUETTE

Dress modestly in medinas and away from beaches, especially in Kairouan and the south. During Ramadan avoid eating or smoking in public by day, ask before photographing people and haggle good-humouredly in souks.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Tunis–Carthage International Airport (TUN), Tunis; Enfidha–Hammamet International Airport (NBE), Enfidha; Djerba–Zarzis International Airport (DJE), Djerba

Visas & entry for Tunisia

Shown for a British passport.

Visa on arrival

You can visit Tunisia without a visa for up to 90 days, except for holders of Crown Dependency passports, who may need to buy a visa on arrival. Contact the Tunisian Embassy in the UK for information on how to apply.

Make sure you get your passport stamped.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Hepatitis B

Measles

Rabies

Typhoid

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Tunisia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 1 Jan 2027

New Year's Day

Thu 14 Jan 2027	Revolution and Youth Day
Tue 9 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Wed 10 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr Holiday (date may shift)
Thu 11 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr Holiday (date may shift)
Sat 20 Mar 2027	Independence Day
Fri 9 Apr 2027	Martyrs' Day
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Sat 15 May 2027	Day of Arafah (date may shift)
Sun 16 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Mon 17 May 2027	Eid al-Adha Holiday (date may shift)
Tue 18 May 2027	Eid al-Adha Holiday (date may shift)
Sun 6 Jun 2027	Islamic New Year (date may shift)
Sun 25 Jul 2027	Republic Day
Fri 13 Aug 2027	Women's Day
Sat 14 Aug 2027	Prophet's Birthday (date may shift)
Fri 15 Oct 2027	Evacuation Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Tunisian Arabic

ENGLISH	TUNISIAN ARABIC	SAY IT
Hello	عالسلامة	<i>ah-SLEH-mah</i>
Thank you	يعيشك	<i>yah-AYSH-ek</i>
Please	من فضلك	<i>min FAD-lek</i>
Excuse me	سامحني	<i>SAH-mah-nee</i>
How much is this?	بقدّاش هذا؟	<i>b-kad-DESH HEH-dha</i>

Know before you go

The dinar is a closed currency, so you can't buy it in the UK; use ATMs or change cash on arrival, and keep exchange receipts if you want to change leftovers back.

In Tunis, insist that taxi meters are switched on, and agree prices up front for camel rides, quad bikes and the unofficial guides who approach visitors at big sites.

Check the FCDO travel advice before planning trips into the far south or near the Algerian and Libyan borders, where it may advise against some travel.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.