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**SPIEKERMANN**  
TRAVEL  SERVICE



# NORTH AFRICA

## Tunisia, Algeria & Mauritania

May 06 – 31, 2022

Led by Lecturer, Guide and Historian, Michel Behar

Photo Credit; Gary Krosin

Few countries on earth match the historical, cultural, and natural splendor of Tunisia. Begin and end in the capital city of Tunis with its wondrous medina (ancient city) and fascinating souqs (markets). Travel onward to ancient Carthage, one of the most important cities in the ancient Roman Empire. Other important historical sites include Dougga, Sousse, Oudna, and Kerkouane, as well as the sacred Islamic site of Kairouan. Algeria is a vast country of breathtaking scenery, well-preserved Roman ruins, pre-historic cave paintings and a strong Berber culture. Your journey will take you from the sweeping shoreline to the majestic mountains, through the huge wilderness of the Sahara Desert into the palm-fringed oases. Some of the highlights include the Roman ruins of Timgad, the former Roman port of Caesarea, the oasis town of Bou Saada and the Kasbah of Algiers. This fascinating tour offers the adventurous traveler an alluring blend of art, history, culture and scenery, including the marvelous city of Constantine, the city of gorges and bridges. Mauritania boasts many natural wonders, as well as ancient cities. In the Middle Ages, Mauritania was the seat of the Almoravid movement that spread Islam throughout North Africa. Highlights include two of its four "ksour" (villages) - Chinguetti and Ouadane - located in northern Mauritania. Chinguetti is a medieval Berber trading center, with stark, unadorned buildings that reflect the strict religious beliefs of the Almoravids. Ouadane is an oasis settlement concealed by waves of golden sand dunes and home to an ancient mosque (and UNESCO World Heritage Site). So, come and join us on this amazing journey spanning three countries, or select the segments that are most intriguing to you.

## Ihab Zaki

Managing Director, Spiekermann Travel

### Friday, May 06 Arrive in Tunis (TUNISIA)



Upon arrival in Tunis, (depending on your arrival time), our staff will be at the airport to greet you and assist with your transfer to the *Tunisia Palace Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(D)**

### Saturday, May 07 Tunis



Your North African adventure begins with a visit to the Bardo National Museum, one of the best archaeological museums in the Mediterranean region, and the second most important museum in Africa, after the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This museum traces the history of Tunisia and its civilization over many millennia. Housed in an old, 18th century palace that once belonged to the Beys (former Turkish rulers of Tunisia) this museum is particularly well-known for its beautiful collection of Roman-Byzantine mosaics, the world's largest in fact. Afterwards, drive to Carthage, which was a major city during the Roman Empire, to explore some of its amazing Roman ruins, including villas, in which you will find more interesting mosaics. The well-preserved Carthage Roman Theater will help you imagine what life was like during ancient Roman times. At the Punic Harbor, there are two basins where the mightiest fleets in the Mediterranean once docked. Also visit the famous Antonine Roman baths, believed to be third largest baths in the Roman Empire. From there, continue onto the hill called Byrsa where you can enjoy a spectacular view overlooking the coast and city. Then continue on to the town of Sidi Bou Said, an incredibly picturesque town located at the top of a steep cliff, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Take a stroll through its white and blue painted streets and explore the town's outdoor market place. You will be amazed by the incredible views here. Return to the *Hotel* in Tunis for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Sunday, May 08 Dougga - Kairouan



Today, you head west to Dougga, an ancient Numidian-Roman city, considered to be the best-preserved archaeological site in Tunisia. This former Berber and Roman settlement has been protected from modern urbanization, making it one of the best destinations for exploring Roman ruins. Discover the theater, built around 168 A.D. and one of the best-preserved sites in all of Roman-Africa. Next, see the city forum ruins and the well-preserved second century Capitol Temple, dedicated to Jupiter. Other sites

you'll explore are the Baths of Caracalla, which date back to the third century, and the site of the market square. After lunch, drive to the ancient city of Kairouan, an important holy place for Muslims around the world. It was also the film location for the hit movie, 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' (the city was the stand-in city for Cairo). Check-in to *La Kasbah* or similar for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Monday, May 09 Kairouan - El Jem - Sousse



This morning, you'll spend some time exploring the Islamic monuments of Kairouan, including the Grand Mosque, established in 670 AD, making it one of the oldest places of worship in the Islamic world. Also visit the 17th century Mausoleum of the Barber, which is actually a zaouia (Islamic school or monastery) and burial place of Abu Zama El Belaoui, a companion to the Prophet Mohammed. Before stopping for lunch, spend some time wandering the town's medina. This afternoon, drive to El Jem and marvel at the unique third century Roman Amphitheater, one of the best-preserved ancient amphitheaters in the world. Also, see a fascinating collection of mosaics depicting the life and times of Roman North Africa at the El Jem Museum. Continue with a drive to Sousse where you will check in to the *Hotel Iberostar Diar Al Andalous* or similar for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Tuesday, May 10 Sousse (Monastir)



After breakfast, you will visit the second most famous archaeological museum in Tunisia - the Sousse Museum, which is housed in the 11th century Kasbah. This impressive museum contains an extensive collection of Roman mosaics and artifacts that date back to the second century B.C. You will then take a walk through the old town and its medina and lose yourself in its souqs. After lunch, continue on to Monastir, once a Punic commercial harbor and one of the earliest Islamic towns in Tunisia. Explore the Ribat, an 8th century fortress built by the Arabs, which now houses the National Museum for Islamic Art. Also, visit the Mausoleum of former President Habib Bourguiba and his family. Return to the *Hotel* in Sousse for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

### Wednesday, May 11 Sousse - Oudna- Zaghouan -Tunis



After breakfast, drive north of Sousse to Oudna (Uthina), a re-

cently excavated ancient city with a fine amphitheater and multi-story temple. Continue on to the rosy-hued Roman town of Thuburbo Majus. Once a Punic town, it was later turned into a settlement for military veterans by Augustus around 27 BC. Here you will see the second century forum, the palestra, and peristyle houses with well-preserved mosaics. You'll then continue on to Zaghouan, where you'll see an ancient 60-mile-long aqueduct that once supplied water to Carthage. Zaghouan is also famous for its roses. The drive ends in Tunis where you'll check back in to the *Tunisia Palace Hotel or similar* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 12  
Tunis (Cape Bon & Kerkouane)



Today, you will follow the path of the earliest Phoenician seafarers who established the first trading center in Tunisia around the 8th century B.C. Drive along the Cape Bon area, through the mountains and valleys, until you reach Al Haouaria. Early Carthaginians quarried the sandstone that built their houses in this authentic small town. Much of the sandstone, which was quarried underground, was their main trade and you will have the chance to visit some of the largest quarries that date back to Carthaginian times. Continue on to Kerkouane, considered the only historical city with Punic and Carthaginian architectural heritage left in the world. The ruins here include houses, baths, temples and streets. Stop for lunch enroute then return to your *Hotel* in Tunis for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 13  
Tunis



Spend the morning exploring the different neighborhoods of the medina and its Islamic monuments, mosques, madrassas, and hammams (baths). You will also have a chance to meet an architect and a journalist who will each enlighten you about the development of Tunisian society and arts. Return to your *Hotel* in Tunis for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 14  
Tunis - Algiers (ALGERIA)



After breakfast, you will either transfer to the airport for your flight back to the USA OR continue on to Algiers "arriving the same day" **(B,L,D)**

*NB: For those just arriving from the USA, you will be met upon arrival and transferred to the Hotel for check-in, dinner and overnight. (D)*

Sunday, May 15  
Algiers



Algiers is the capital and largest city in Algeria, located on the Mediterranean Sea. It's white-washed buildings can be seen rising up from the sea. Your full day tour of Algiers begins with a stroll through the old walled city of The Casbah (the citadel of Algiers), a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an excellent architectural masterpiece. This Casbah remains one of the world's most mythical labyrinths while its huddled houses appear to tumble down the hillside and spill out into the sea. Enjoy lunch in the city. In the afternoon, make a stop at Place des Martyrs, a large monument commemorating the Algerian War for Independence. Next, visit the Emir Abdelkader Square, a panoram-

ic square with a statue of the founder of the Algerian nation. Stop by the opera house and the neo-Moorish Grande Poste. Then continue to visit the Bardo Museum, which is housed in a Moorish-style villa and The Antiquities Museum, which contains some fine mosaics that were found at various archaeological sites throughout Algeria. At the end of the day, and if time permits, stop at the 19th century Cathedral of Notre Dame d'Afrique, which overlooks the Bay of Algiers. Return to your Algiers *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, May 16  
Algiers –Annaba –Tiddis- Constantine



In the morning, transfer to the airport for your flight to Annaba. On arrival, immediately head out to the site of Hippo Regius, an ancient city that was the home of the philosopher, Augustine of Hippo. Up the hill, above the Hippo Regius site, is a museum displaying many of the relics found at the site including a sculpture of Emperor zVespasian? Next, visit the 19th century Roman Catholic Basilica of St. Augustine. Stop for lunch, and then drive on towards Tiddis, an old Roman outpost, to admire its arches, Temple of Mithras, baths, forum, and cisterns. Arrive in Constantine at the end of the day and check in to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

*NB: As the church will be open for service on this day, we may not be able to go inside.*

Tuesday, May 17  
Constantine



Spend the day exploring Constantine or "The City of Bridges" (formerly known as Cirta). It is a dramatic city of precipitous cliffs and deep gorges and a lofty setting for one of Algeria's most labyrinthine Casbahs. Visit its excellent Cirta Museum, known in particular for its Roman mosaics and Punic artifacts as well as fine paintings and sculptures. Next, visit the impressive Ahmad Bey Palace and Gardens, former home of the Ottoman ruler. Other sites throughout the city include the Monument of Sidi M'Cid (commemorating the victims of WWI), the Mosque of Emir Abdelkader and the beautiful Opera House. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 18  
Constantine–Medracen- Lambaesis)



Today you will drive out to the late 3rd century Royal Tomb of Medracen, which housed the remains of Numidian royalty. This massive structure was built from stone blocks with a circular base and cone-shaped roof. Continue on to the well-preserved Roman town of Timgad (ancient Thamugadi) considered the "Pompeii of Africa". This city, founded by Emperor Trajan around 100 A.D., was the largest Roman settlement ever built in North Africa. It was later abandoned and taken over by the sand, which preserved many of its ruins. You will spend the day exploring the colonnaded streets, temples, public buildings, villas and museum. See the Trajan's Arch, one of the city's most impressive structures and the Theater, which was cut into the hillside. Lunch will be en route. In the afternoon, visit the nearby city of Lambaesis, a Roman garrison town with an amphitheater, a set of baths, the Arch of Severus, and the praetorium (Roman camp) of the Third Augustan Legion, transfer to the *Hotel* for check in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 19  
Constantine – Djemila - Bou Saada



After breakfast, you will drive out to Djemila, one of North Africa's most monumental sites. The wheel-rutted streets of ancient Cuicul, founded by Emperor Nerva Trajan in the 1st century to house his veterans, are lined with colonnades and a clutch of elaborate houses, Byzantine churches, and ancient temples. Equally impressive is Djemila's stunning museum, where every square inch of its immense walls are plastered with mosaics. We will have lunch in town. In the afternoon, we drive to Bou Saada (known as "place of happiness" and "the happy city"). It is also the first Saharan oasis occupied for a long time by the cattle-raising Ouled Nail nomadic tribe. The city is an important market place and trading post for nomads selling items such as jewelry, metalwork, carpets, and bousaidi knives. Check in to your *Hotel* in Bou Saada for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 20  
Bou Saada



Your day begins with a visit to the famous Dinot's Museum. Dinot was a French artist (1861-1929) who established himself in Bou Saada and is even buried here. You will marvel over his original collection of 19th century paintings and then visit his tomb. Next, head downtown to visit the handicraft center of Bou Saada, a very interesting shopping experience. Then explore the old medina or "ksar" within the city walls. After lunch, make the drive to El Hamel, a small town built in the 11th century and on two hills at the foot of Mt. Omrane. Explore the enormous religious Complex of El Hamel, founded in the 19th century by Sidi Mohammed Ben Belgacem. Within the complex are the majestic Mausoleum of Sidi Abulkacem, the mosque, and the madrasa. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 21  
Bou Saada - Ghardaia



Today's journey takes you across the M'zab region via the historical city of Laghouat (halfway between Boussaada and Ghardaia). Here you will visit the ethnographical museum to learn more about the local culture, followed by lunch at a local restaurant. In the afternoon, you will continue on to Ghardaia, founded about 1,000 years ago by the Mozabites, a Muslim Ibadite sect that includes the Berbers. This fortified town was built around a cave, said to be inhabited by the female saint, "Daia". Ghardaia is divided into three walled sections: The first, in the center, is the historical Mozabite area where white, pink, and red houses made of sand, clay, and gypsum are built up around a pyramid-shaped mosque; the second is the traditional Jewish Quarter with its many wells and craft shops; and the third is the Medabian Quarter. Check in to your *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 22  
Ghardaia



Today, you will spend some time marveling at the art and architecture of the Mozabites, who are the Berbers of southern Algeria. They live in a unique valley amid the desert and along the River M'zab. Explore Ghardaia and its old town including the market place and mosques. Next, visit El-Ateuf, the oldest town in the region to see the simple whitewashed mosque and Sheikh Sidi Brahim's tomb. After lunch, continue on to Beni Izguen,

where the women cover themselves with white veils, and take a stroll through the town. You will admire the unique architecture known as "vernacular" in this medieval city and World Heritage Site. Return to your *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, May 23  
Ghardaia- Algiers



After an early breakfast, transfer to the airport for your morning flight to Algiers, where you will be met and driven out to the Kabyle region, east of Algiers. The drive through the Berber mountains and the scattered towns and villages via the city of Tizi Ouzou is spectacular. Tizi Ouzou is located in the Assif N Sebaou valley surrounded by mountains. Arrive at the small city of Beni Yenni, made world famous for its surviving traditions of silver jewelry making, for a close-up look into the Berber culture and lives. We will have lunch in a traditional house, then visit the little town and the jewelers. In the late afternoon, return to Algiers and check in to your *Hotel*, followed by dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, May 24  
Algiers (Cherchell & Tipasa)



A full day excursion today takes you out of the city and to the Roman town of Cherchell, stopping along the way to see the Tombeau de la Chrétienne (Mausoleum of Mauritania), one of North Africa's most enigmatic archaeological wonders. The tomb was built in the 3rd century B.C. by the king of Mauretania, Juba I, and his wife, Cleopatra Selene II. In Cherchell, you will visit the Archaeology Museum, which houses many statues and coffins from the Roman era, as well as ornate mosaics. After lunch, you will continue on to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Tipasa, located on the Mediterranean coast. Take a stroll among the amphitheater, 4th century basilica, forum, and museum before returning to Algiers where you will have your final dinner in Algeria and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 25  
Algiers -Nouakchott (MAURITANIA)



This morning, you will have free time to spend at your leisure - either to visit more of the city's museums, do some shopping, or spend some time wandering the kasbah. After lunch, transfer to the airport for your flight to Nouakchott (Mauritania), which is the capital and the largest city in Mauritania, as well as the administrative and economic center. **(B,L)**

For those arriving from the US, you will be met upon your arrival and transferred to the *Hotel* for check-in and overnight.

*Note: Dinner is provided for arrivals into Nouakchott prior to 8:00 PM, otherwise, not included for later arrivals.*

Thursday, May 26  
Nouakchott - Atar



After breakfast, you will depart for Atar, capital of the Adrar region, discovering the nomadic camps along the way. In Atar, you will be warmly welcomed by the friendly faces of the locals and find the markets worth exploring. There is an historic mosque here, as well. Transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 27  
Atar - Chinguetti



Today you will drive to Chinguetti, the seventh holy city of Islam

and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Founded in the 13th century, this medieval Berber town was the center of several trans-Saharan trade routes. The city is threatened by encroaching desert and even some of the homes have been abandoned to the sands. Here you will see the Minaret, which is topped by the symbolic ostrich eggs, the Friday Mosque, and the water tower. Overnight and dinner will be at the *Auberge Hotel (or similar)*. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 28  
**Chinguetti (Ouadane)**



In the morning, depart for Guelb Errichat ("Africa's Eye"); an impressive crater that looks like a blue eye from the sky. There are many theories about how this amazing geological wonder was formed. It was originally thought it was created by an asteroid, but later argued that it was created by a volcanic eruption. Now it is said that it may have been caused by uplifted rock sculpted by years of erosion. Then we will drive to the ancient city of Ouadane, once a stop along the trans-Saharan trade route. This small town and UNESCO World Heritage Site, contains many well-preserved ruins. After lunch, return to your hotel in Chinguetti for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 29  
**Chinguetti - Atar**



After breakfast, start the day with some spectacular views of the canyon and mountain range from the Amogjar Pass. This is also the location where the famous french movie "Fort Saganne", starring Gerard Depardieu, was filmed. After lunch, explore the caves containing ancient Neolithic rock paintings discovered by French naturalist, Theodore Monod, depicting lush grassland with giraffes and antelope. Then, drive back to Atar and check in to your hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, May 30  
**Atar (Terjit & Azougui)**



This morning, we will drive across The White Valley area to Terjit, the most beautiful oasis in Mauritania, where thermal springs and marvelous pools awaits you for a relaxing soak. This green oasis is nestled in a valley gorge, very much appreciated by visitors for its beauty and fresh air and the opportunity to "swim in the desert". Afterwards, explore the remains of Azougui, the ancient capital of the Almoravids. The Almoravids were Muslim warriors who conquered Morocco, Spain and sub-Saharan Africa during the 11th century A.D. A fortress was built here amid 20,000 palm trees. The city wall still stands today and, through the maze of rocks, you can find the rest of the ruins including the necropolis of Imam Hadrami, an 11th century warrior. Afterwards, return to your *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, May 31  
**Atar - Nouakchott - USA**

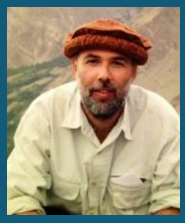


Today you will return to Nouakchott in time for lunch. Afterwards, visit the National Museum and its notable archaeological and ethnographical collections including arrowheads, ancient pottery fragments, and traditional costumes of Mauritania. Also, take a stroll through the traditional market of gold and handcraft market. After lunch, transfer to the airport for your flight back to USA. **(B,L)**

**"We reserve the right to change the order of activities or places visited due to unforeseen schedule conflicts or in order to make the itinerary run smoothly"**

**Remarks:** The itinerary is subject to change depending on the schedule of internal flights within Algeria (it can only be firmed up around 1 month before departure). Also the sequence of the program could change based on domestic flight schedule. The visa for Algeria takes about one week after we have provided approval letters/invitations for each client. Your passport must not include any Israeli stamps





*About your Lecturer...* Michel Behar boasts an impressive list of credentials and just reading through it makes you want to meet this person and share the road with him. A Dutch citizen, after his studies of Russian and Arabic in the Netherlands he took a course of advanced Arabic at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. Fluent in 12 languages including Farsi,

English, Turkish, and Hebrew, he has an understanding of 7 others. He has been a tour manager since 1987 leading groups for US, Dutch, Swiss, German, and British companies. He has accompanied custom tours as a leader/photographer for many prestigious museums, universities and other institutions. He has traveled extensively throughout the world and visited all 21 Arab countries and for the last 20 years has turned his passion for photography into a second career. Touring has afforded him the opportunity to capture stirring images from out of the way places in Iran, Pakistan and Mongolia just to name a few. His work has been exhibited in museums in the Netherlands and New York. He currently lectures on current affairs related to the Near East and the ethnic groups

inhabiting this region. During this same period, he has dabbled in journalism writing for several European newspapers on topics as varied as technology and economics. He writes travel blogs and has done freelance work for travel guides and likes of course what else World Music. He also is an expert in Sahara led tours such as in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Mali, Niger, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa, and West Africa.

#### Tour includes:

- Arrival and departure airport transfers
- Hotel accommodations in Superior (4\* level) (except some 2-3 \* hotels in parts of Mauritania).
- Transfers/transportation by air-conditioned motor coach and 4-wheel drive vehicles.
- Meals as per itinerary: B-breakfast, L-lunch and D-dinner.
- Bottled mineral water on vehicles during touring.
- Tipping to guide, driver, porters, hotel and restaurant staff throughout tours (provided minimum participants be met).
- All tours as per itinerary including guidance and entrance fees.
- Local taxes and service charges on included items.

#### Trip Grade:

*II Active:* Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule, and some very long rides. A few times you may be delayed by the security personnel at some checkpoints and this necessitates a tolerant and patient attitude.

#### Lodging Level:

\*\*\* - \*\*\*\* *Superior to Luxury:* Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars) and some are Luxury: regular style-usually large- hotels, typical western standard with ample venues, and full amenities (4 or 5 stars)

#### Tour Cost (Land Only):

**Tunisia: \$1,995.00**

*Per person sharing in double occupancy*

**Single Supplement: \$395.00**

**Algeria: \$4,995.00**

*Per person sharing in double occupancy*

**Single Supplement: \$795.00**

**Mauritania: \$3,995.00**

*Per person sharing in double occupancy*

**Single Supplement: \$395.00**

*Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 12 participants*

*Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: \*\*\*-\*\*\*\**

#### Tour does not include:

- International airfare or any flights between countries
- Visa fees for Algeria (obtainable in USA for approx. \$160) and Mauritania (obtainable on arrival for \$60).
- Meals not listed or beverages with all meals.
- Dayroom or overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules.
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on scheduled tour dates.
- Items of a personal nature (laundry, phone calls, emails, excess luggage, etc.)
- Trip surcharge to operate below minimum required.
- Travel protection insurance (**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**).



