

Algeria



Embassy of Algeria to the United States of America

Dear reader:

Allow me to extend to you a very warm welcome at the door of a beautiful, enchanting and magnificent country called Algeria. Let me be your humble guide and take you throughout the pages of this travel brochure to a land endowed with historical vestiges, geographical variety, natural beauty, rich and succulent cuisine, and world-renowned human hospitality.

Whatever perspective – historical or geographical – one chooses to look at Algeria, the end result is practically the same as what one feels when looking at a rare gem: awe and fascination. From Roman ruins to the vestiges of cities reflecting the great Islamic dynasties that ruled over North Africa, the path of history is rich with memorials of high times and decadence of foreign presence. Algeria's heritage is immense. Every region of the country is an open-air museum and universality is all around.

Geographically, Algeria stands out in terms of size and variety of terrain and climate. Second-largest country in Africa with 2,381,741 square kilometers (919,595 square miles or about 3 ½ times the size of Texas), it boasts a 1,200 km-long and beautiful coastline on the Mediterranean Sea, peppered with little coves, seaports, pristine white sand beaches, and unvarnished, natural beauty. It is also a place where water easily meets the rock of the northern mountain ranges, pointing in the direction of the High Plateaus regions. From there, the door to the Sahara desert beckons: The air dries up, the landscape turns rocky, sandy, and vast, and the sky seems endless. Driving further south towards places with names like Timimoun, Tassili N'Ajjer, Tamanrasset, one gets a feel for the indescribable beauty and serenity of the area and for the immensity of the country.

I hope this brief introduction has spiked your curiosity about my country and left you wanting to learn more about it. I invite you to discover Algeria as you leaf through this brochure and embark on a new and beautiful journey. See you there.

Abdallah Baali

Ambassador of Algeria to the United States of America

Content

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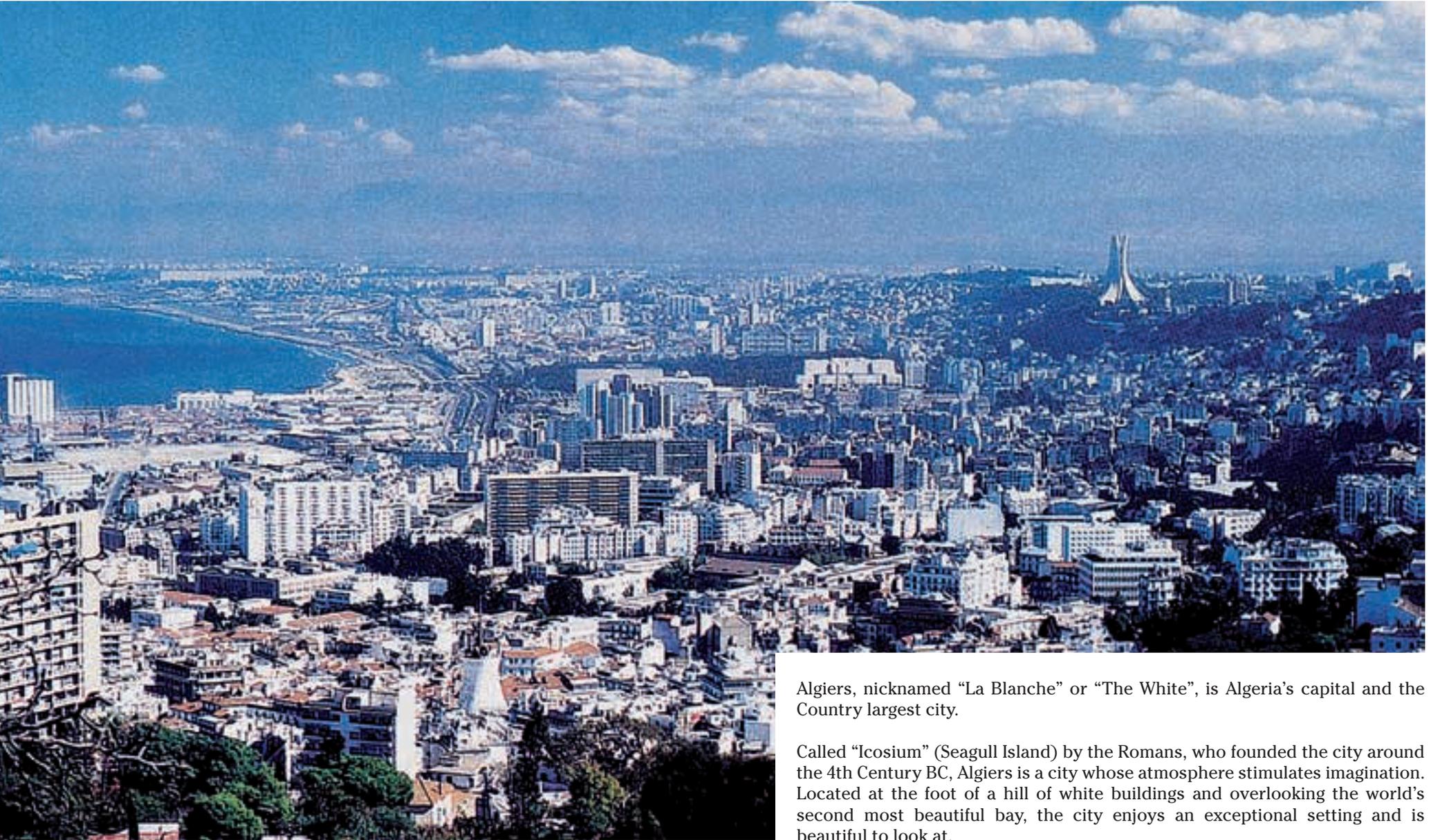
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Some Cities of Algeria



Algiers, nicknamed “La Blanche” or “The White”, is Algeria’s capital and the Country largest city.

Called “Icosium” (Seagull Island) by the Romans, who founded the city around the 4th Century BC, Algiers is a city whose atmosphere stimulates imagination. Located at the foot of a hill of white buildings and overlooking the world’s second most beautiful bay, the city enjoys an exceptional setting and is beautiful to look at.

Some of Algiers' most prestigious sites include:



The Basilica of Notre Dame d'Afrique

Erected in 1872 in the Byzantine style, the Basilica of Our Lady of Africa is a monument dedicated to the Virgin Mary (known as Lalla Meriem in Arabic). Inside the church, the top of the chancel bears an inscription in French reading: "Notre Dame d'Afrique, Pray for us and for the Muslims".

The Government Palace and its beautiful ornate gardens

The Admiralty

L'Amirauté, as it is known in French, is the area of Algiers harbor where the Port Authority and Coast Guard headquarters are located. It is also a marina where small boats and ships are stationed.

Djamaa El Djedid

Built in 1660 under the Turkish Regency, "The New Mosque" is located at the Martyrs' Square in the Fisheries area, near the Admiralty.

Djamaa El Kebir

Algiers' oldest mosque, "The Big Mosque" was built in the 11th Century under the Almoravid Dynasty (1056-1147).

Algiers "The White"



Basilica Notre Dame d'Afrique



Djamaa El Djedid

The Casbah

It is the Old City – Turkish City – of Algiers. Originally the term "casbah" designated the Citadel which was overlooking the "Medina", or town. Gradually, over time, the term came to include the entire old city.

The fortifications that protected the Casbah, as well as the top and bottom of the city, have now disappeared. "In building the Casbah, the old masters had achieved an architectural and urbanism masterpiece", said the famous French architect Le Corbusier. It is a fact that this compact mass in the heart of Algiers never ceases to amaze and surprise the visitors.

Hanging on a hillside, houses are overlaid. Terraces overlook other terraces where, with the sea as background, colorful clothes are left to dry in the sun. From steep stairways to alleys sneaking under corbelled constructions or out in the open, everything makes the Casbah a real labyrinth, where getting lost is always a lot of fun.

Ketchaoua Mosque

This imposing mosque was built in 1794 by Baba Hassan, the Turkish Dey who ruled Algiers at that time. Across from the Ketchaoua Mosque is the beautiful residence of Dar Aziza Bent el Bey (Palace of Princess Azziza, Daughter of the Bey)



Ketchaoua Mosque



Terraces of History

In one of the most beautiful Mediterranean maritime sites, overhanging islets where a Carthaginian trading post was installed since the IV century before J-C, the Casbah represents a unique type of medina or Islamic towns. Place of memory and history, it embraces the vestiges of the citadel, ancient mosques, ottoman palaces, as well as traditional urban structure associated with a deep sense of community:

Casbah – World Heritage

That is how UNESCO presents, in a short description, Algiers Casbah, listed by the United Nations institution as mankind universal heritage. A 100-acre triangle, located on a 125 m high hill, this place called the Old Town, is a jewel case hosted by a hill overhanging the sea. It was accessible through five doors: Bab El Oued, Bab Edzira (that no longer exists), Bab Azzoun, Bab Ejdid and Bab El Bahria.

In addition to its architectural treasures, the Casbah is a famous historical site, the most sensational pages of which have been written during the November Revolution. This city, which has been immortalized by several films, remains a lively emblematic place in Algiers.



Algiers Casbah



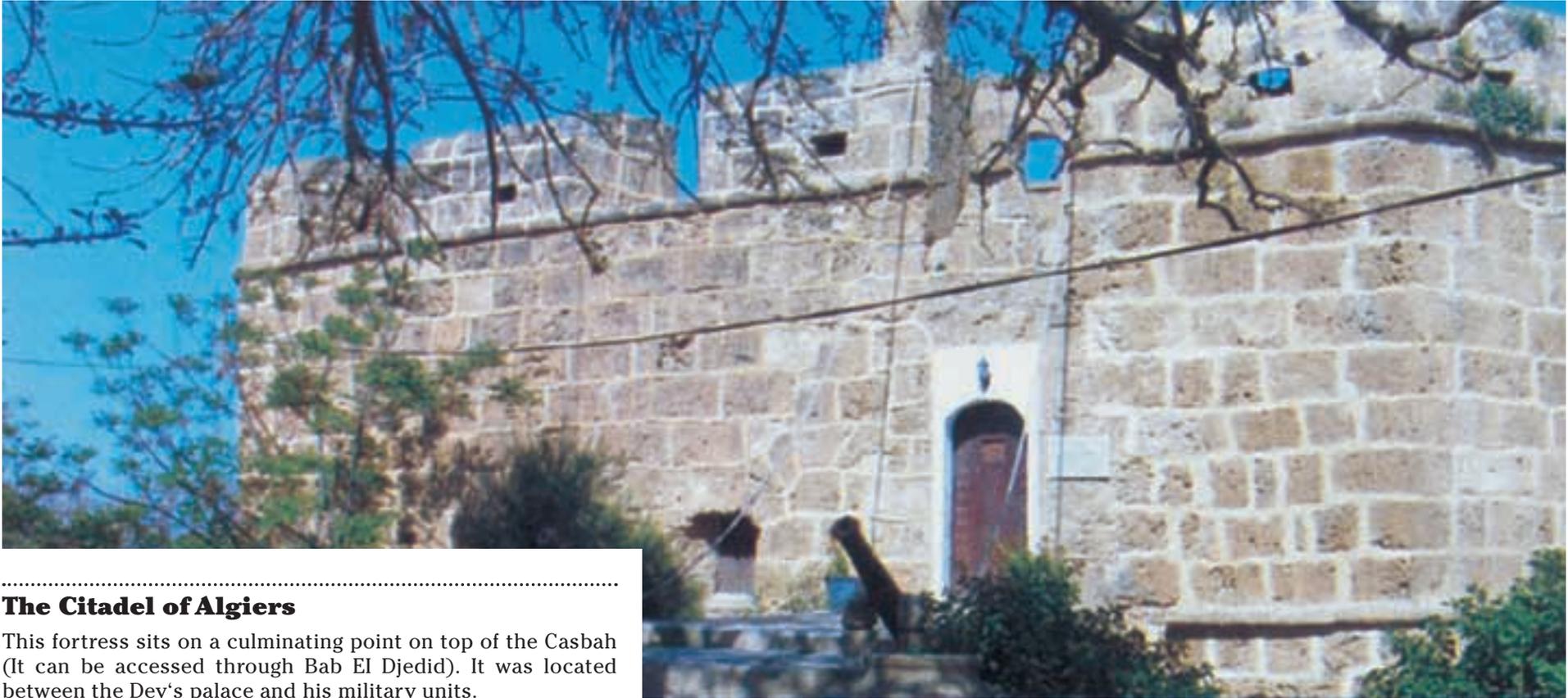
The Martyrs' Monument

The Martyrs' Monument (Maqam Eshaheed)

Located high over the Algiers hill, this 92 m monument was built in 1984. It has three concrete and steel palms shooting up from a vast esplanade over the "Eternal Flame". The monument is dedicated to those who sacrificed themselves for Algeria's independence during the war of national liberation.

Riadh El Feth

Near the huge 92 m high concrete monument stands a 296 acre commercial complex which is considered a cultural temple and an arts center. In the middle of the gardens, socio-cultural centers, libraries, an open-air theater, three movie theaters, boutiques and all kinds of restaurants (Next to the Martyrs' Monument).



The Citadel of Algiers

This fortress sits on a culminating point on top of the Casbah (It can be accessed through Bab El Djedid). It was located between the Dey's palace and his military units.

The Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions

The Museum is located at the bottom part of the Casbah, in the old Palace of Khedaouedj El Amia (Princess Khdawej the Blind). This stylish residence was built in the 14th century on the remains of a 12th century zaouia.





Bab El Oued

One of the “rampart gates” of Old Algiers (“Bab” means Door or Gate in Arabic), this neighborhood stretches in area northwest from the Casbah. It was established at the end of the 18th century and later one of the areas inhabited by the European population of Algiers.

Villa Abdel-el-Tif

One of the oldest residences of the Dey of Algiers. It is located uphill from the “Jardin d’Essais” park and agronomy research center. While each of Algiers’ many old neighborhoods, including Bordj El Bahri (Fort de l’Eau), Belcourt, Saint-Eugène, Ain-Beniane, El-Harrach, Bouzaréah, Bab El-Oued, La Grande Poste, the Casbah, Hydra and Soustara, has its own history and secrets, they all share in the city’s same history and the same passions and love for life. Algiers pours out on its inhabitants the same joy, the joy of interdependent and warm people. Algiers has given birth to poets, painters and musicians.



View from the Cervantes Caverns



The Cervantes Caverns

Cervantes Caverns is situated on the hill overlooking the Belouizdad (Belcourt) area. The name Cervantes Caverns were named after Miguel Cervantes Saavedra, the Spanish author of Don Quichote who was also a famous navigator and sailor who spent five years in Algiers.

Hotels in Algiers

Hotels in the center of the capital city and its outskirts are offering great service and accommodation.

Algiers's coastline is magnificent and it is generally kept untouched in its natural state. Not far from Algiers, numerous spas and thermal stations greet both domestic and foreign visitors. The rich and diversified historical and cultural background of Algiers is outstanding and easily noticeable. There are many monuments and museums to visit.

Algiers has a lot to offer for people who enjoy tourism, history and culture.





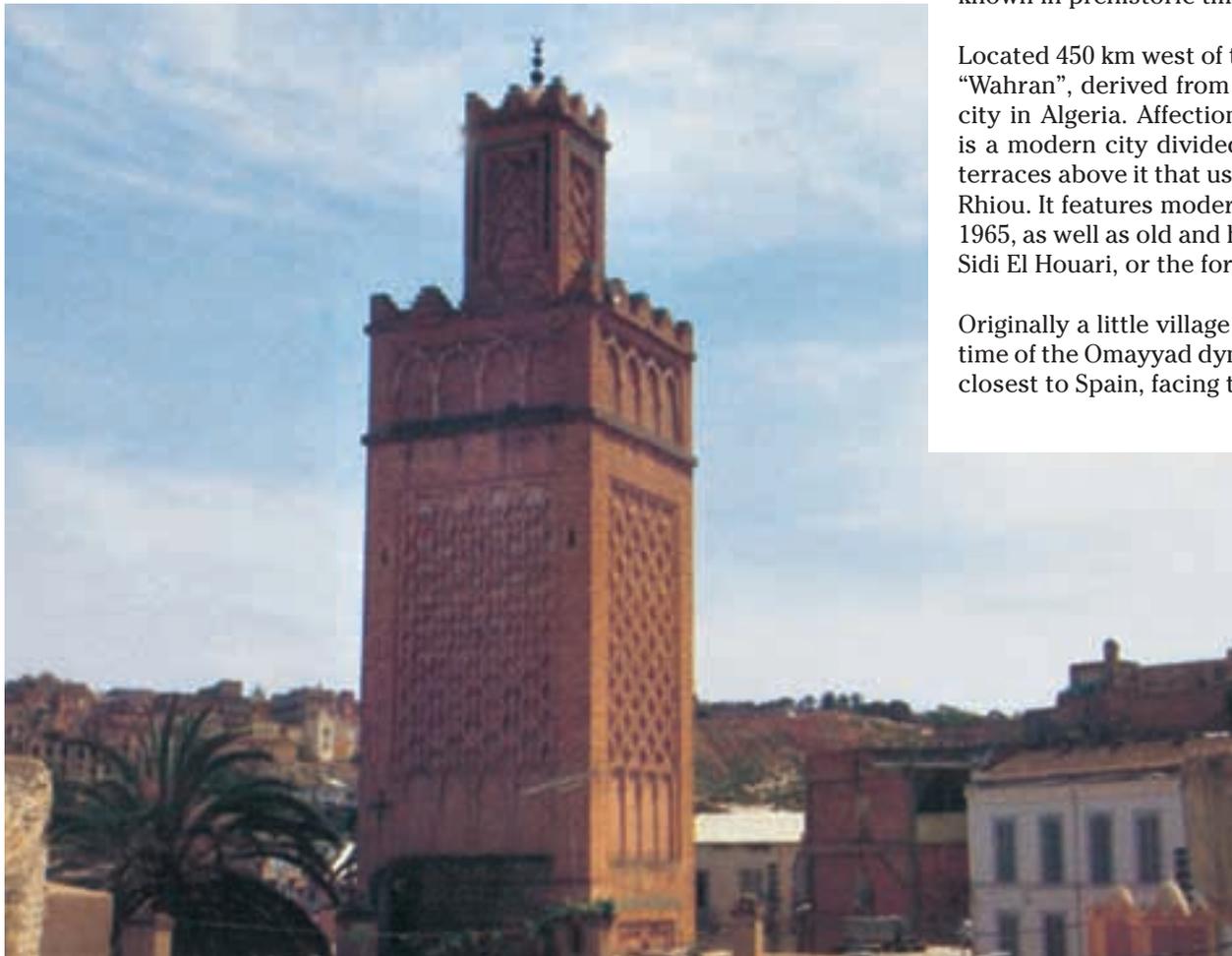
The Fort "Djebel El Marsa"

From the heights of the hill of Santa Cruz, looking down below at the bay, the visitor will admire the beauty of an area where Africa and the Mediterranean meet and overlap. According to the French philosopher and teacher Jean Grenier: "This handful of white coins tossed about is Oran, this stain of purple ink is the Mediterranean, and this golden dust on a silver mirror is the salt from the plain filtering through the sun".

Because of the numerous caves dotting the surrounding hills, the city of Oran was known in prehistoric times as "Les Cavernes" (the caves).

Located 450 km west of the capital city of Algiers, Oran – whose name in Arabic is "Wahran", derived from the Berber meaning "Two Lions" – is the second largest city in Algeria. Affectionately known as "El Bahia", or "The Radiant One", Oran is a modern city divided into a waterfront and old and new sections occupying terraces above it that used to be separated by a now built-over ravine of the River Rhiou. It features modern infrastructures, such as the University of Oran build in 1965, as well as old and historical monuments, such as the Casbah, the Mosque of Sidi El Houari, or the former Barracks of the Janissaries.

Originally a little village settled by an Andalusian fisherman from Cordoba at the time of the Omayyad dynasty, Oran is the part of Algeria that is geographically the closest to Spain, facing the cities of Almeria and Cartagena.





Santa Cruz d'Oran



Tipaza is a province located 70 km west of the capital Algiers. It is situated on the coastline under Mount Chenoua, at extremities of the Sahe hills. It has an estimated population of 506,053 inhabitants and covers an area of 2,166 square kilometers. Tipaza is also the name of a charming little coastal city located at the foot of Mount Chenoua and famous for its numerous Roman ruins, including the “Tombeau de la Chrétienne” (Tomb of the Christian Woman).

Sheltered by Mount Chenoua nearby, the port-city was an ideal site chosen by the Phoenicians on the road to the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar) in order to establish their famed trading posts. The relics of the past are a sign of the importance of Tipaza which has known an outstanding boom under the reign of Juba II from Numidia. Tipaza has become the Cesar’s continuation base where he created a real Greco-Latin heart of art and culture, letting flourish elements of Numidia.



Tipaza

On the first century of our era, under the principdom of Claudius, Tipaza became a Latin colony before changing in the 2nd century into a Roman colony and expanding to the west at the expense of an ancient necropolis.

Mount Chenoua is the culminating point of the Sahel range. After a couple of hours, hikers can reach a lookout point from which they can enjoy a magnificent panorama and endless blue skies over the beautiful Mediterranean Sea.

The Corniche of Chenoua which extends to the city of Cherchell shelters little picturesque beaches. The Chenoua Cape offers a stunning sight on the bay and a walk to the cliff's caves is also unique.

The Museum of Tipaza offers unique historical collections about the Roman times and visitors can admire beautiful coins from bygone eras. The Museum also exhibits fragments of Punic steles from the Tanit cult, Roman antiques, a Venus statue known as "The Chaste Venus".





Roman Mausoleum

Three pagan sarcophagi

The first represents a Roman couple, The second sarcophagus (one of the most beautiful discoveries ever made in North Africa) is devoted to Pelops, son of Tantalus, and his wife Hippodamia. The third one (The Sea Centaurs and The Nereids) is a large mosaic with a central panel representing three chained slaves surrounded by heads symbolizing all the African races. Other artifacts exhibited at the Museum include potteries, ceramics, ancient jewelry and diverse ancient objects.

Tipaza is classified by UNESCO as part of World Heritage legacy





The city of Tizi-Ouzou got its name from the Berber word for “Gorse Pass” to reflect the profusion of this thorny plant with yellow flowers growing in the area of Marabout Sidi Belloua which overlooks the city. Tizi Ouzou’s early fortifications were of interest to the Phoenicians who established trading posts in the area, as did the Romans before them. Today, visitors can still admire beautiful relics that are still standing.

Roman ruins in nearby areas of Touarga and Djamaa Saharidj attest to an organized government by the name of Kingdom of Koukou was dominant at the time, in what is now the city of Ain El-Hammam.

Tizi-Ouzou

Sites and monuments:

Roman ruins of Tigzirt (Iomnuim), site of Taksebt (Rusupisir), Azzefoun (Rusazu), Djamaa Saharidj (Bida Municipium). Kabylie is a very beautiful mountainous area where villages seem to be clinging to the mountains.

Tizi-Ouzou is located halfway between the Mediterranean and the high elevations of the Djurdjura mountain range. Places of interest are as numerous as varied, depending on the time of year and include skiing, mountain climbing, boar and game hunting, hiking.

Local attractions, such as the mountain resorts of Tala Guilef and Tikjda offer nice accommodation and rank among the best in the country. Tala Guilef is hiking and mountain climbing and ski resort located at an altitude of 1,500 m on the edge of a forest of cedar and oak trees. At the Tirourda Pass, which borders the Soummam Valley, guides are available to lead good hikers on great paths towards two famous places in the area:



The Cave of the Maccabees, at the bottom of which lays a mysterious mummy; and the Cemetery of the Monkeys, cavity where many skeletons of these animals lay. The area is also renowned for its pottery, which is among the most popular traditional crafts typical of the region.

Ath Hichem, a village close to Ain El Hammam (1,089 m) is specialized in the weaving of short-pile carpets, backhanders, etc ... decorated in bright-colored patterns. In Ath Yenni (800 to 900 m), table cloth and napkins are woven with red, black and yellow lines and are usually worn as wrap-around skirts (named "Foota") by local women. The area of Ath Yenni is known for its generations of goldsmiths. The reputation of the silver jewels encrusted with coral and enamel produced in the area extends beyond the region of Kabylie.

The Roman Heritage

Algeria is undoubtedly one of the rare countries in the world in which clues of the Roman civilization remain the most vivid ones, even though modern time try to catch back with them. As part of Africa, Algeria is the country with the largest vestigial wealth, including Roman ruins resulting from 5 centuries of Roman domination started in the year 46 of Christian era (A.C).

After being completely cleared from its powerful opponent Carthage in the year 146 (B.C), thanks notably to the help provided by the Numids led by King Massinissa, Rome was forced to split the country into provinces, leaving the rest of the empire to Massinissa.

A century later, Rome showed real ambitions and decided to include Numidia into its possessions and became the new ruler of North Africa. Hence, three regions of Algeria have undergone the Roman invasion which resulted in the build-up of 500 cities in Latin civilization. The introduction of Rome in Algeria started from the Phoenician trading point Lol. This small port will have then the privilege of becoming the capital of Caesarian Mauretania, after being baptized by Juba II, grandson of Massinissa in tribute to Roman emperor Augustus. While invading the Algerian coastal territory, and ports founded by Phoenicians, new cities and Roman towns saw the day along the Mediterranean: Igilgili (Jijel), Saldæ (Bedjaia) Rusguniaie (Matifou) and Cartenna(Ténès).

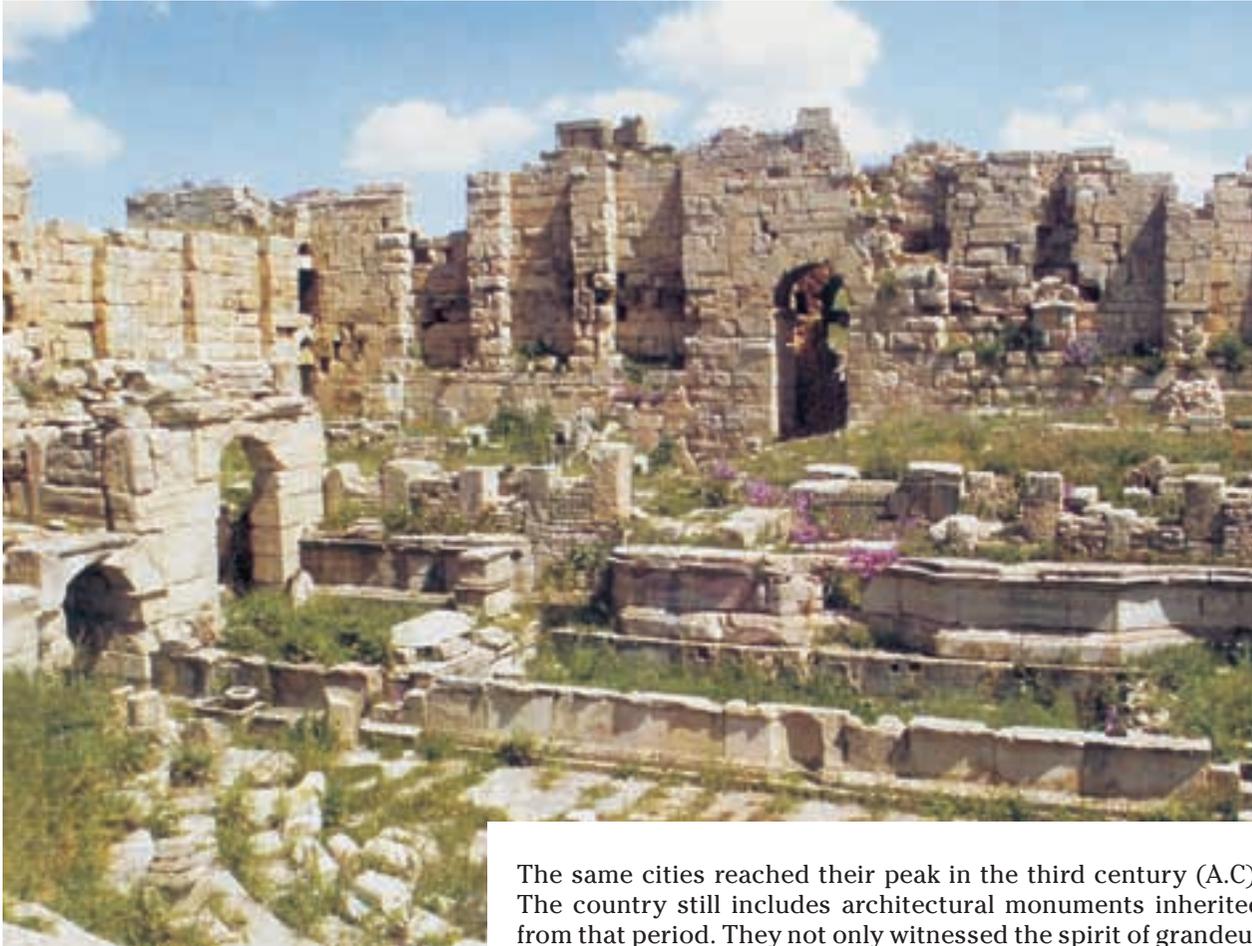
Once the coastal line was taken, Rome headed into the country to erect military bases in regions considered strategic, such as Lambaisis (Lambèse), Thamougadi (Timgad), Sitifis (Sétif), Cuicul (Djemila) under the reign of Emperor Nerva Trajan at the end of the first century. Rome then extended its hegemony in North Africa to include the third of the whole Maghreb, what would be then called the African Proconsular Governance gathering Libya, Tunisia and a part of the Algerian territory. A territory extending from Hippo-Regius (Hippone, now Annaba) to Calama (Guelma) up to Thagast (Souk Ahras) passing by Madauros (M'Daourouche) and Thevest (Tébessa).





The second province of the Western side included the mouth of Ampasage, which is the Oued El Kebir river passing by a series of valleys in the west of Djemila and the plain of Hodna up to Laghouat. So to extend its rule over the Numidian plains, Rome launched its army to the Aures, concentrating their forces in the North East, in Thevest from where they cleared military bases whose mission were to cover up the eastern pro-consular province until the Tripolitania (Libya) and the Western part of Numidia.

Numidia used to be the heart of the Roman Algeria. It served during three centuries as the main headquarter of the Roman army. It was the most modernized region of Algeria. However, ruins of the ancient cities Thevest, Lambèse are the most beautiful Roman ruins of the Aurès. From the 1st to the 2nd century, and nearly all over where Roman armies went, new cities were built.



The same cities reached their peak in the third century (A.C). The country still includes architectural monuments inherited from that period. They not only witnessed the spirit of grandeur of the Roman civilization but also the interest of Algeria to the Roman Empire. The edification of Thamagadi (Timgad) as well as other cities were not conducted for military purposes; It was directed to have the local population on the Roman side, i.e. Berbers who refused to be ruled by Rome.

So to colonize these areas, Rome opened doors to any person able to settle in these cities with citizenship and Roman rights. All these monuments witnessed the huge extension of Roman occupation which has imperially marked the mother land of Massinissa, Syfax, Juba and Jugurtha as well as other Kings and Berber aguelids who used to be sometimes Roman allies, and rebels against the occupation to recover their ancestral land.

The Roman presence in Algeria during five centuries has given birth to about 500 cities stretching out over the country. From the North to the East, one may still admire the architectural masterpiece left by the Romans, notably in Tipaza, Cherchell, Annaba, Timgad, Djemila. On the contrary, in the west of the country, the situation shows another aspect. New cities and other monuments have since a long time ago been overshadowed by ancient cities. Now there are just a few clues left - slabs with some Latin inscription, such as in Tlemcen where flatstones have already served in the construction of the Agadir Mosque.

From the Roman Altava called today Ouled Mimoun, only a few ruins remain out of this ancient city which used to be an important military stronghold stretching over 400 to 500 ha Out of these ancient western cities of Algeria we can name Mers El Kebir (Portus Divini) which means the divine door. It is for Albulac (Ain temouchent) where few clues of mixed Berber and roman cities stand.

The same thing for Hammam Bouhdjar, Dracones, where only some ruins remain, identifying ancient Roman baths. They all are certainly clues of the Roman interest in water spring compound, since all roman cities were endowed with such monuments. On the other hand, it is also a military checkpoint in charge of the security of Roman convoys crossing through the Portus Magnus. However, in Siga, or Takembrit in Berber, l'Albalae is an important Roman city which used to be with Cirta one of the most important capitals of the Massaesyale Kingdom, which was ruled in the west by the Berber king Syfax, overthrown by Massinissa.



We can still find fragments of walls, thermal baths, aqueducts, and statues pottery and old coins found there are now in the museums of Tlemcen and Oran.

It is the same for Bethioua, the ancient Portus Magnus, where the ruins of the Roman city still stand at the east of the locality, and where we can find thermal baths and a sanctuary. The rest of the city is entirely covered by concrete, but diverse objects and mosaics have been taken to the Museum of Oran, Relizane (Ighil Izane in Berber) which were part of the Syfax kingdom between 230 and 202 BC. It was conquered by Rome in the year 40 BC.



Clues dating back to Latin civilization still exist in this region, notably in Mina nearby Relizane as well as in Irzen, Gum Tboul and Douar R'Madi. At their arrival in Mascara, the Romans found Berber tribes who fought them. In spite of these, the Romans set foot in the region to build a military stronghold named Castra Nova (New fortress).

Like all Roman defensive cities, it was built along their lines crossing Temouchent (Albue), Bouhdjar (Dracones) as well as Arale (Regiale) and Sifa to protect their vital base while Castra Nova was part of the Mauretanian administration. Tenes, or Roman Cartenna, is the beautiful Mediterranean city located between Algiers and Oran. It is known for having been a Phoenician trading port whose economic importance and commercial exchange have helped Romans to found Cartenna. We also found several ruins dating back to the Roman times, with such mosaics bearing Latin inscription. As the rest of the country, Roman cities in the west of Algeria knew the same fall and the same faith. A lot of them have been destroyed by the Vandals and the Byzantine. Earthquakes and hardships of the time came to cause damage to these monuments resulting from the misconduct of men.



Cherchell



Cherchell, the ancient Caesarea, is located at 100 km from Algiers (Icosium). It used to be a famous Roman city and a prestigious capital of the ancient Punic Mauretanian kingdom.

Even so, fifteen centuries are enough to erase clues of such glorious civilization. In Cherchell, Roman tracks are still vivid, particularly in the city's two museums, where the glory of Caesarea is evident in the huge statues and divinities of the old epoch, not to mention the sublime mosaics which still decorate the walls.

Although they coveted the trading port of Lol, established previously by the Phoenicians, the Romans chose at first to name Juba II at the head of his ancestral kingdom, which during his reign became the vibrant capital of the western Mediterranean in the image of Rome. He then named his kingdom “Caesarea” as a tribute to the Emperor Augustus Caesar. The city then bathed in magnificence and became the city of arts and the cradle of Greek and Roman civilization, thanks to the son of Juba who was taken to Rome at the age of 5 to be raised in the culture of Rome, the Latin culture.

Caesarea was also the city which witnessed the birth of Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) who captured the Roman throne and has done a lot for the prosperity of North Africa. Today, one can still admire some master pieces of Caesarea, notably the giant statues which ornate a large park in the city, part of what used to be the Roman Theater or the Arches of the Aqueducts.

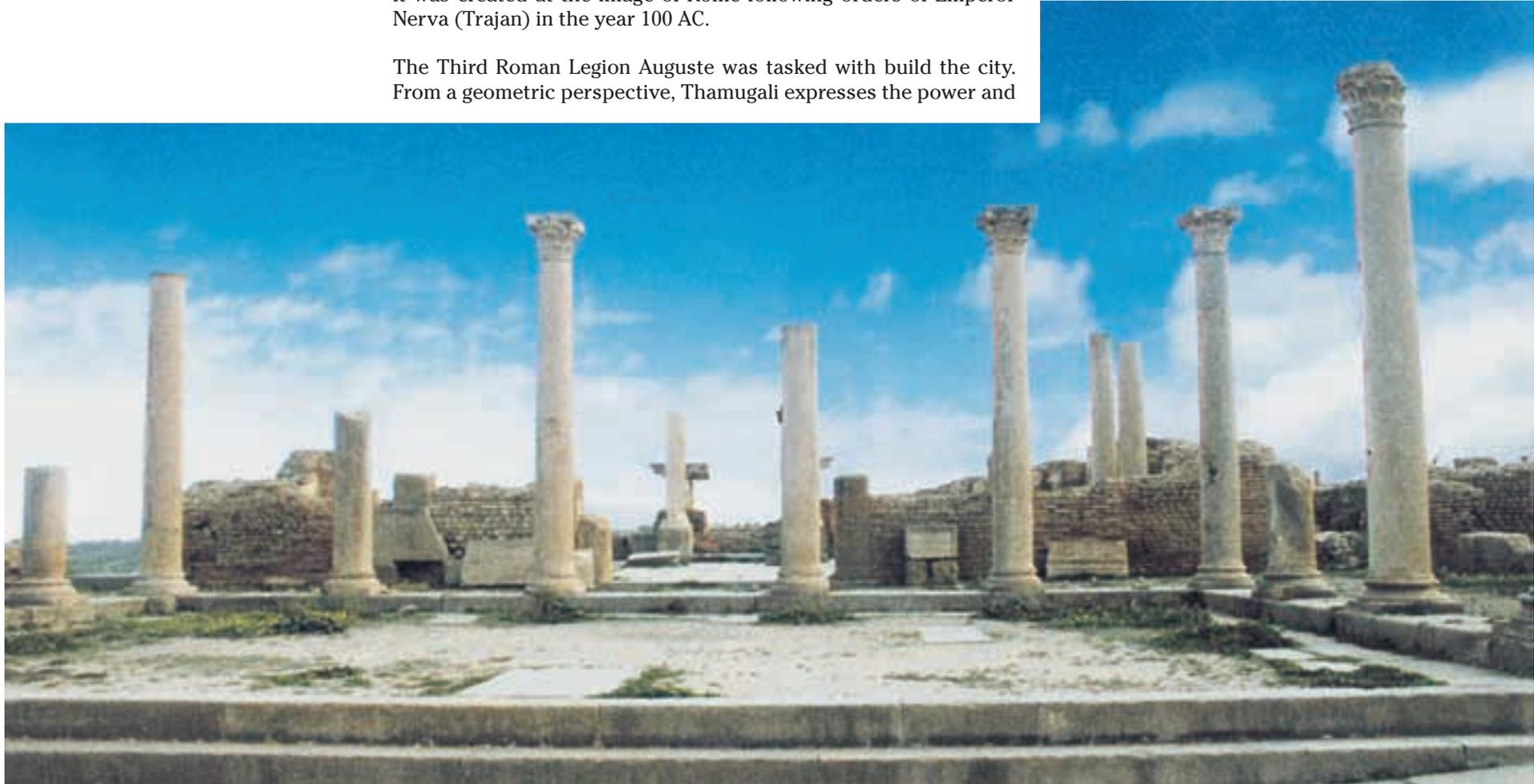
On the other hand, at El Djamila (Cjuiculi) or Thamugadi (Timgad), one could have hoped to dig up the ancient Caesarea; unfortunately, a lot of its monuments have been destroyed through the centuries. If some still remain in the city, they might still be buried under houses, pavement or even under land.



Timgad

Timgad, or “Colonia Marciana Trajana Thamugadi”, is one of the most famous Roman cities in Algeria. This prestigious city of the Aures has survived time to reveal all its beauty and majesty. It was created at the image of Rome following orders of Emperor Nerva (Trajan) in the year 100 AC.

The Third Roman Legion Auguste was tasked with build the city. From a geometric perspective, Thamugali expresses the power and





grandeur of Rome. The architectural style, of pure urban realization, bears the seal of the Army: All monuments were erected to give Roman character to a city.

The whole City of Timgad looks like a huge chessboard where different cases show houses and monuments well assembled along the intersecting ways cutting the city in four parts. The city was part of military network whose mission was to watch and prevent Berbers assaults from the Aures who opposed Roman occupation. Thamugadi was a strategic point and an important junction on the main road leading from Thevest to Lambæsis (Lambèse).

At the end of the 5th century, Berbers of the Aures took back the city and destroyed its defensive walls. However, Timgad kept on existing because, in the 7th century, the Byzantines built up a chapel and fortifications to protect it during the reign of Justinian. The grandeur of Thamugadi where a cultural festival is held every year, resides in the beauty of the scenery. The city's architecture is unique and captivates the imagination.









Castellum Tiddiranorum is the Tiddis or Ksantina el Kadima of today and is located at 30 km from Constantine. Built on the ancient Cirta, Constantine now stands on top of the “Rock” looking like an impregnable fortress. This city is part of a series of fortified villages.

At the beginning of the Roman occupation, the Republic of Castelli Tidditanorium was a military camp which later became a charming city after undergoing several architectural changes. The Roman urban style in Tiddis was a real masterpiece, if not exceptional. Tiddis remain a lesson of the past and owes its existence to Rome and was inhabited by Berbers before the Romans settled in.

In Roman times, clay - the wealth of the region - was exploited for pottery and contributed to the region’s prosperity.



Tiddis

Tlemcen

Tlemcen, the Pearl of the Maghreb, is a city of art and history. It is still privileged to have preserved a lot from its prestigious past.

Nowadays, one may still admire several monuments that have witnessed the reigns of different and successive Islamic dynasties that ruled over Tlemcen. During the Roman occupation, the city used to be called Pomaria, which means „Gardens“ because of the abundance in greenery and fruity trees. Today, there still are some flat stones dating back to that glorious era. Some of that material was taken from the site of “Agadir”, where ancient Roman Pomaria was erected, and was used to build a mosque minaret. On some of those stones could be read the following Latin inscription:

**O. God Saint Aulisva Flavus Cassianus
Préfet de l'aile Severiens Explorors Pomarisiens.**

Similarly to the majority of Roman cities, ancient Tlemcen was built by soldiers and was protected against Mauretania.

Pomaria is said to have been established in the early Severian era, at the same time as Alta (Ouled Mimoun) and Numerus Syrorum (Maghnia). That was stated in the inscription discovered on the site and on military road signs found along the Tafna river at the junction between Maghnia Siga and Tlemcen. From military camp, the location was turned into a prestigious city with the required Roman monuments. Although it was originally built for strategic reasons, Pomaria did not seem to have played any political role in the region during the Roman military rule or later. This is even less the case during the times of the Vandal and the Byzantine occupations. On the other hand, under the Islamic dynasties, it became a center of political power and its rule extended far, making it the capital of the Central Maghreb



Annaba, Souk-Ahras & Saint Augustine the Algerian

One of the towering figures of medieval philosophy whose authority and thought came to exert a pervasive and enduring influence well into the modern period (e.g. Descartes and especially Malebranche) and even up to the present day, Saint Augustine was born Aurelius Augustinus on November 13, 354 CE in Thagaste, in the eastern Algerian city of Souk Ahras and 650 km from the capital city of Algiers. More commonly known as “Saint Augustine of Hippo”, often simply as “Augustine”, he was the son of Patricius, a Roman citizen and a Pagan, and Monique, a convert to Christianity, and was educated in Thagaste and Madauros, both in what is now Algeria and Carthage.

The genial author of *Confessions* and *City of God* was the founder of African monasticism and is one of the most famous sons of Algeria.





Augustine converted to Christianity in 386 and was baptized by Bishop Ambrose of Milan on Easter Sunday 387. Having spent five years in Rome (his only time outside North Africa), he returned to his place of birth, Thagaste, and would spend the rest of his years immersed in the affairs and controversies of the Church into which he had been recently baptized. In 391, Augustine was ordained priest of Hippo Regius (now the Algerian city of Annaba) and in 395 he was made Bishop. He died in August 430 in Hippo, thirty-five years later, as the Vandals were besieging the gates of the city.

On April 1-6, 2001, an international conference was held in Algiers and Annaba on “The Africanness and Universality of Augustine”, under the sponsorship of the Algerian Higher Islamic Council, the Augustinian University of Rome and the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Speaking at the conference, the Archbishop of Algiers, Mgr Henri Tessier established a parallel between Augustine’s body of work, namely his City of God, and the contribution of the famous Muslim scholar Mawardi, particularly his Treaty on the Imamate, to say that “both the Christian thinker and the Muslim jurist wanted to “let the work of God shape the minds of men” and not substitute a religious law for the free temporal power of men”, thus debunking the claims of those who misinterpreted Augustine’s view on faith to “justify the holy wars of history”.

For Augustine, faith is the result of divine grace and can never be imposed other than accepted as a truth and freely confronted to that held by others. Numerous scholars underlined that the alliance of faith, intelligence, and freedom proclaimed by the “Roman-African” philosopher would later be adopted by Thomas d’Aquin in the Christian tradition but also by Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Ghazali, whose works reflected their beliefs as strong bulwarks against any fundamentalist or extremist views.

Seaside

When the Sea captures Man

In Algeria, if the sea captures man, it is to make him happier, and if there is any happy marriage, it is indeed between man and the sea. The blue sea spreads its always changing, constantly captivating charms on 1,200 km. From Marsa Ben Mhidi to El Kala, it is a permanent invitation to discovery of incomparably beautiful sites.

Beaches

Thin sand or pebble beaches and coves unfold and show off their charms. For the pleasure of swimming, lazing around, for the magic scenery of marine depths or to do a bit of fishing, summer visitors will find these sites magical.







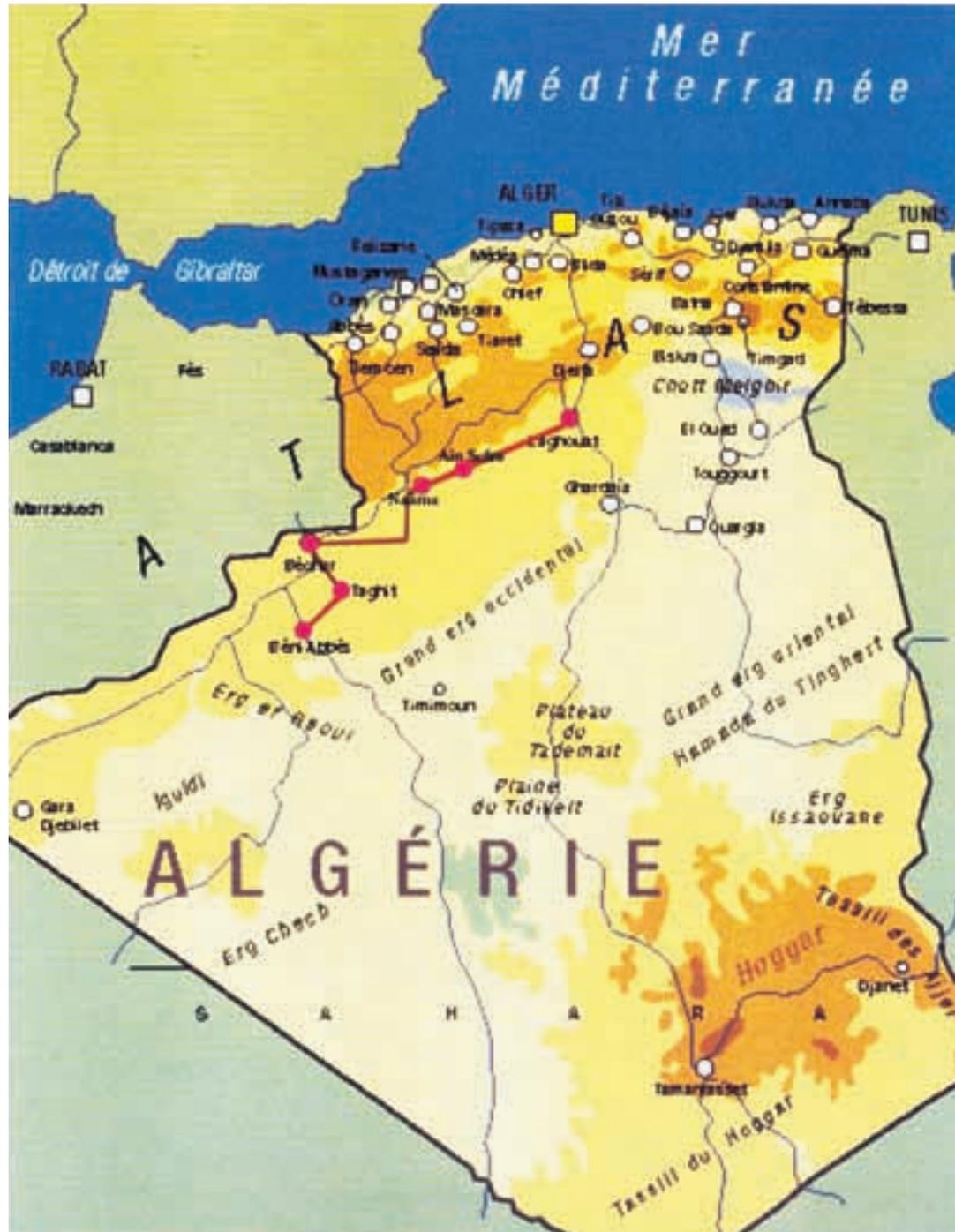
“Imagine that during the same day, you can move from the Djurdjura snowy slopes to the beach, to Roman vestiges to oasis palm groves, or from a museum in Algiers to a garden in Ghardaia”.

This pithy sentence in a tourist guide sums up very well the variety of landscapes in Algeria. And it is indeed easy to get out of the sea to climb mountain tops still covered with a white coat.

Algeria counts many mountain ranges spreading out from the North to the South of the country. The Tellian Atlas, with its famous winter resort of Chrea, the Ouarsenis and the cedar grove of Tissemsilt, the Djurdjura and Mount Lalla Khedidja, Tikjda and Tala Guilef resorts, the Aures, with Mount Chelia and the splendor of gorges and mountain passes that take your breath away, the staged descent through Rhoufi balconies to the doors of the Great South, but also in this Great South, the majestic Hoggar and Tassili.

Mountains





The Road of the Ksout

A Mythical Path

Mythical and emblematic constructions of the South, the ksour represent a very instructive stop. These cities with their original architecture adapted to climate harshness, forbidding but convivial, are genuine jewels challenging time.

Each oasis has its own ksar, and if tonality varies, philosophy is the same, allowing man to live in a microcosm that seems closed and forbidden to foreigners but which, with the key of hospitality, enables you to find out that the ksour are really an oasis within an oasis. An exceptional route, the famous ksour road makes you discover such jewels, from the Wilaya of Bechar through Naama and El Bayadh, until the Wilaya of Laghouat for those who want to continue this enchanting tour





Sahara

Its highest point, the Atakor, is the “roof” of Algeria with an altitude of 2,500 meters. Sahara means also tours that cannot be ignored: M’zab Valley, Touat, Gourara and Saoura, Souf, the Oasis and Ksour road and many others. So many spaces for relaxation and enriching encounters and discoveries – all that and an azure sky and golden ochre magic desert as background.

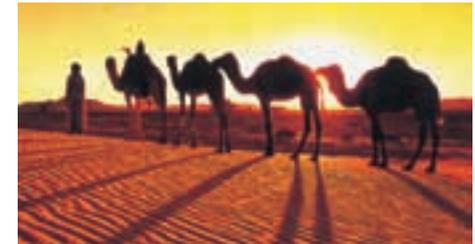
Assekrem Plateau is certainly the most famous site where visitors can admire the most beautiful and enchanting sunrises and sunsets.

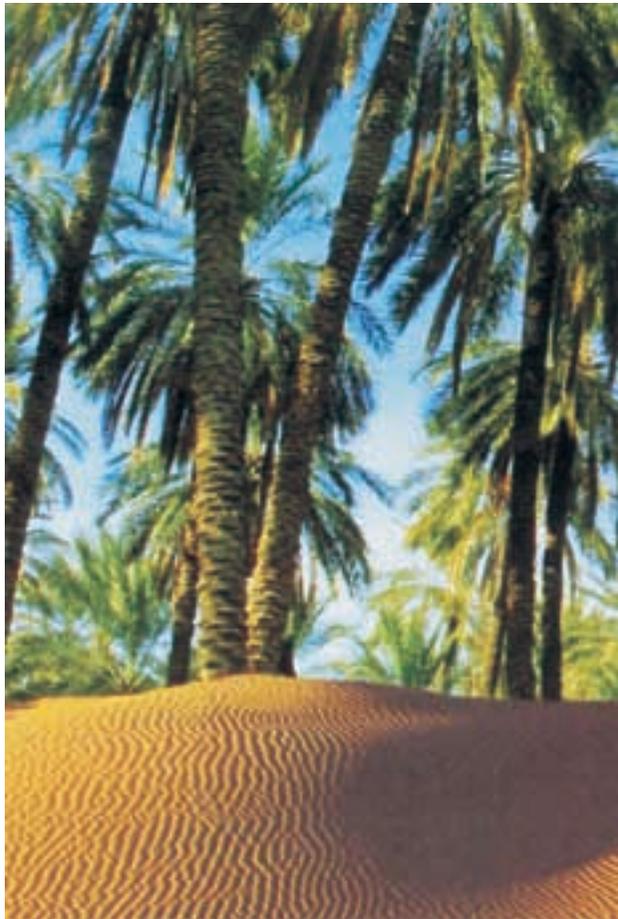


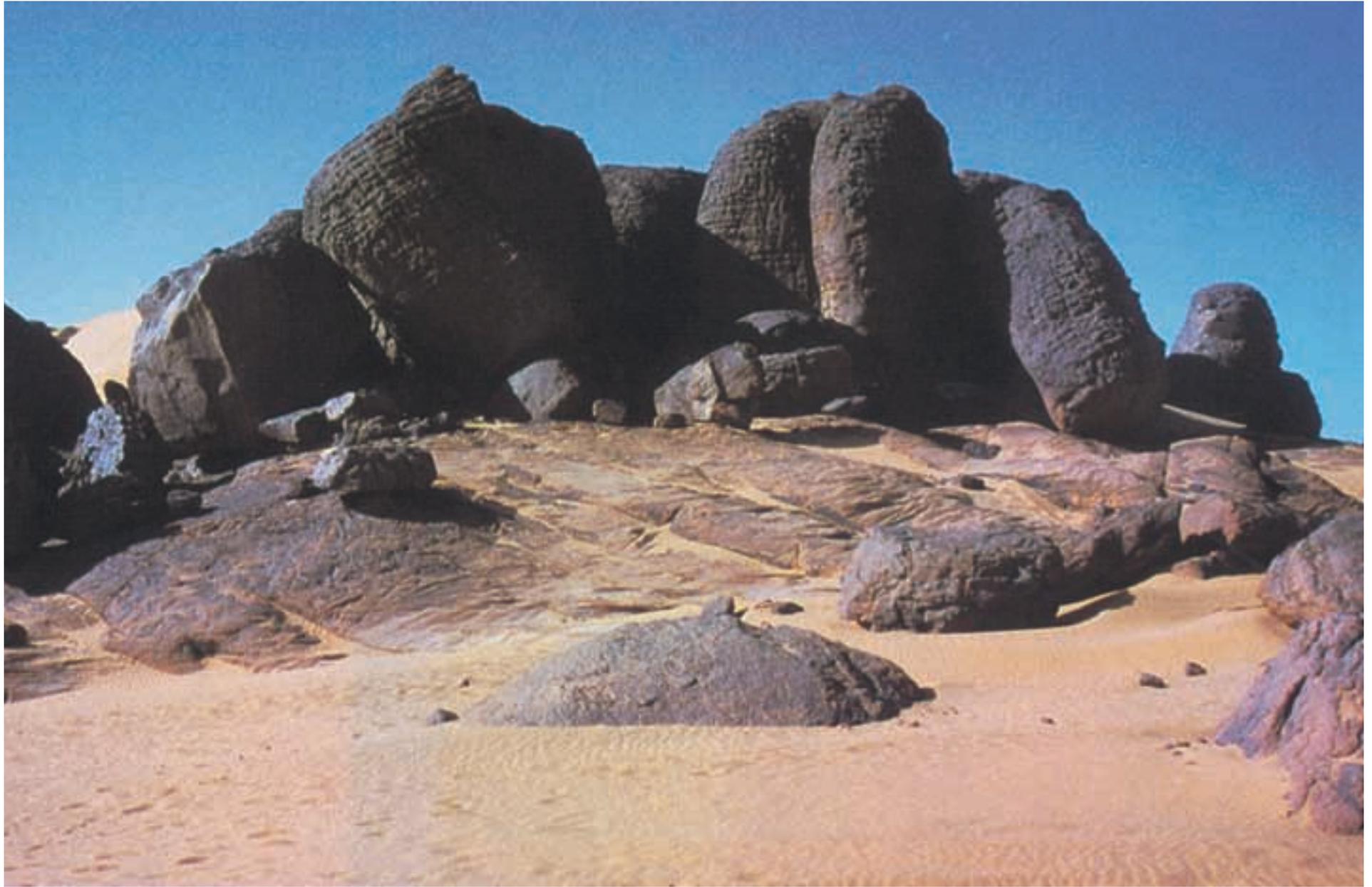
With its peaceful surroundings, the desert facilitates escape and meditation. In Algeria, the Sahara Desert is a precious asset for tourism. Largest desert in the world, the Sahara covers 4/5th of Algeria’s territory. Although it extends to other countries, it is in Algeria that the Sahara Desert reveals the most fascinating aspects of its awesome beauty

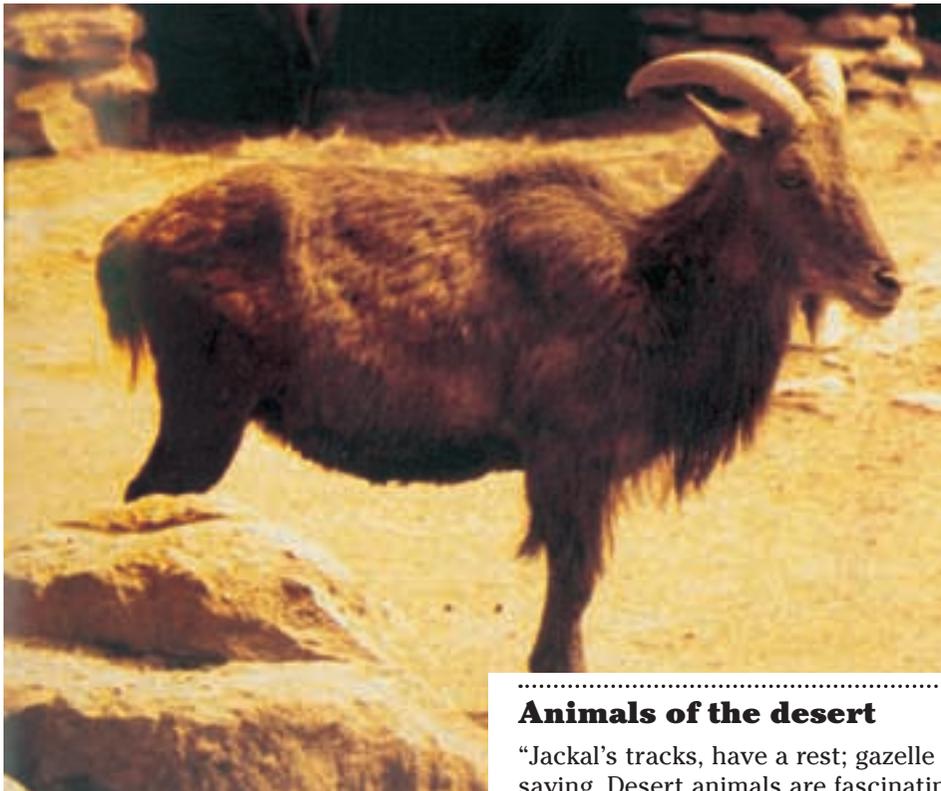
Endless sand seas, majestic granite and volcanic mountains, oases with indescribable charms, the Sahara is also a reserve of valuable and unique biodiversity – Endless opportunities for ecotourism.

The best known sites are the Ahaggar in the area of Tamanrasset. This genuine circular plateau has a diameter that is more than 130 km wide and reaches an average altitude of 2,000 meters.









Animals of the desert

“Jackal’s tracks, have a rest; gazelle tracks, tighten your belt”, goes a Touareg saying. Desert animals are fascinating species living in a hostile environment.

In such desert lands, where water is rare and often nonexistent, several species are however present, faithful companions of man, rare and mysterious creatures. The most famous and most usual one is the dromedary, or the goat, that represent the main livestock in these desert expanses. Fauna is however very rich in wild species, the name and specificities of which are commensurate with those spaces full of mysteries, beauties and legends.

These rare species are protected and include the cheetah, the royal eagle, the cuffed mouflon, the scrawny fox, Dorcas gazelle, the “fouette-queue” lizard, the ostrich, the fennec, the heron, the sand cat, the rocks daman, the desert monitor, and the variable agam. Fauna is also rich with birds, such as the white-eyed weathar, oricou vulture, fish-like desert barbel, as well as many reptile species such as the horned viper and the hitting adder, scorpions ...

Algeria is the country of the Sahara, and its national mascot is the beautiful, peaceful and affectionate but extremely resistant fennec.





Hoggar-Tassili

The Ahaggar (Hoggar) is located between the 12th and 25th parallels of the Northern Hemisphere, spanning the Tropic of Cancer. It covers an area of approximately 50,000 km².

The Tassili N'Ahaggar is located about 300 km southeast of Tamanrasset, the "administrative center of Hoggar", a few hundred kilometers from the border with Niger. The N'Ajjer Tassili is located about 600 km northeast of Tamanrasset, i.e., very near the Libyan border.

The Ahaggar forms the orographic center of the Sahara. Its grand and imposing relief is extremely varied. The Ahaggar is at the heart of the Sahara. It is a circular massif dominated by a plateau with an average altitude of 2,000m, and is spiked with peaks reaching almost 3,000m. This platform is called Atakor (the skull). Tamanrasset, in the heart of the Ahaggar, and has around 1,400m while Mount Tahat reaches up to 3,303m.

About an average distance of 200 km around the Ahaggar, we find the Tassili:

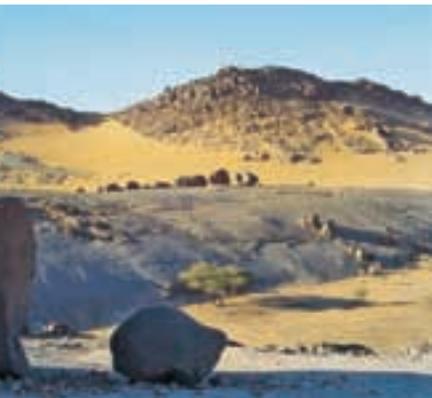
In the north: the N.moudir Tassili

In the east: the N'ajjer Tassili

In the southeast: the N'ahaggar Tassili and the Tin Reroh Tassili

In the southwest: the Missao Tassili

In the northwest: the Oued Jerad.



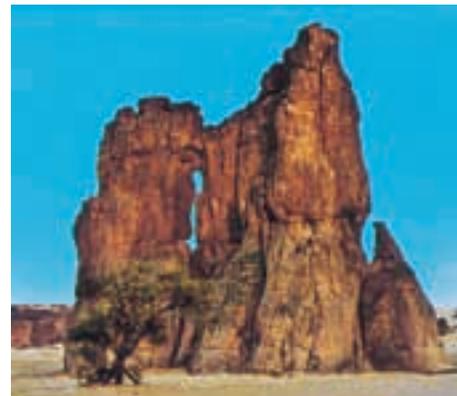


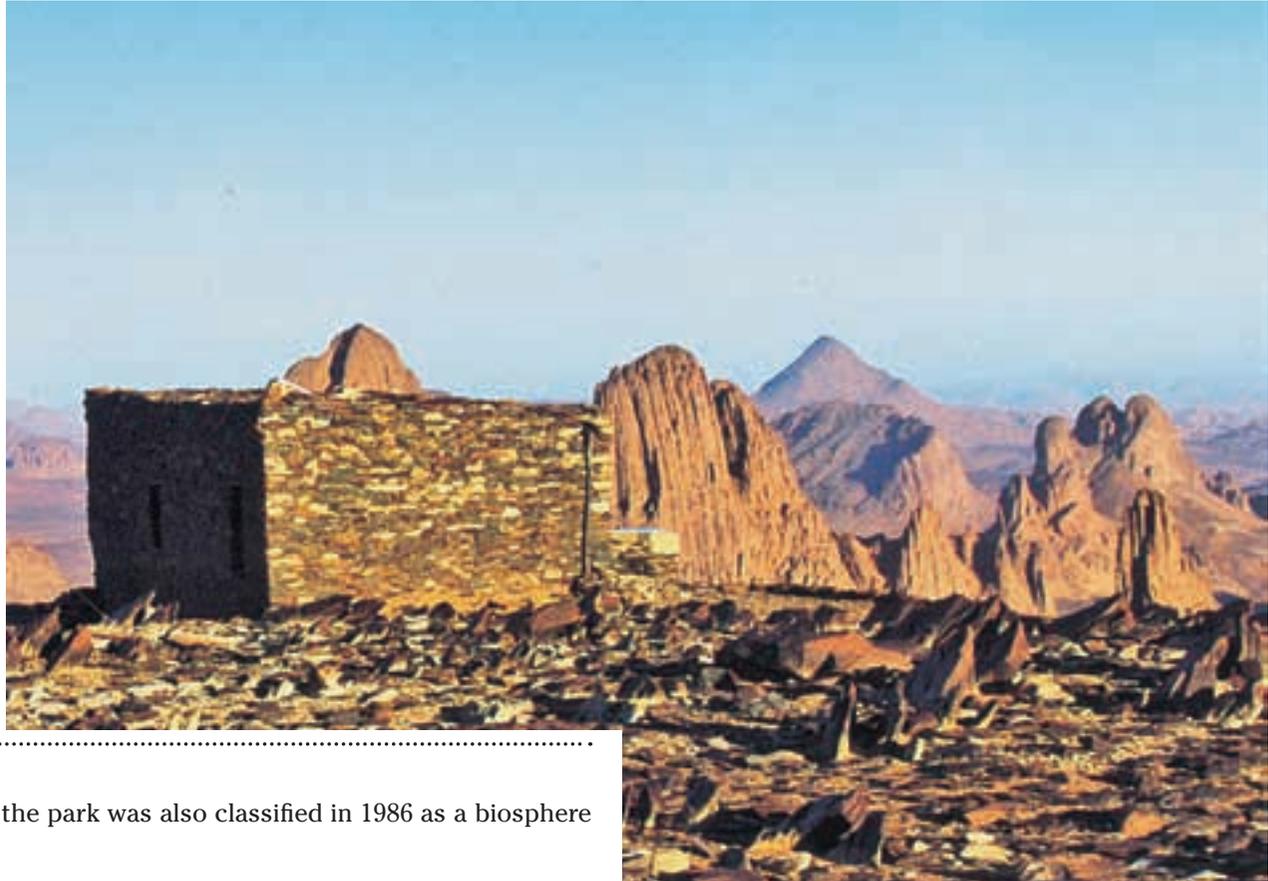
The N'Ajjer Tassili

Located at about 600 km northwest of Tamanrasset, the Tassili N'Ajjer or Tassili Azguer is a vast sandstone and lunar appearance plateau, with such a great beauty. It seems like an iceberg aground in the middle of a sand sea; it forms a band of 750 km length and a width varying from 60 to 100 km, covers 120,000 km² and rises to 1,500 meters above sea level. It has the largest concentration of paintings and rock carvings ever known.

The N'Ajjer Tassili is emerging from the sands that surround the majority of its periphery: in the east, Libyan sand seas; in the south, the vast Tenere and Admer Erg, in the north, the Issaouane Erg, and the Bourharet Erg. More than the Hoggar, which shares some aspects with the Alps mountain range, the N'Ajjer Tassili immerses the visitor in a new and fascinating world: steep cliffs melting in the sand, forest stones carved by erosion in a maze of fantastic gueltas (small lakes or water holes) dug in the sandstone basins, and deep canyons well supplied with water.

The Tassili has many gueltas that are rich in residual aquatic fauna.





The Tassili National Park

Ranked since 1982 part of World Heritage by UNESCO, the park was also classified in 1986 as a biosphere reserve (M.A.B).

It is an area of great geological interest, which hosts one of the most important set of prehistoric cave art in the world. Thanks to more than 15,000 drawings and engravings one can follow up to 6,000 years of history before our era, such as climate change, wildlife migration, and the evolution of human life within the confines of the Sahara.

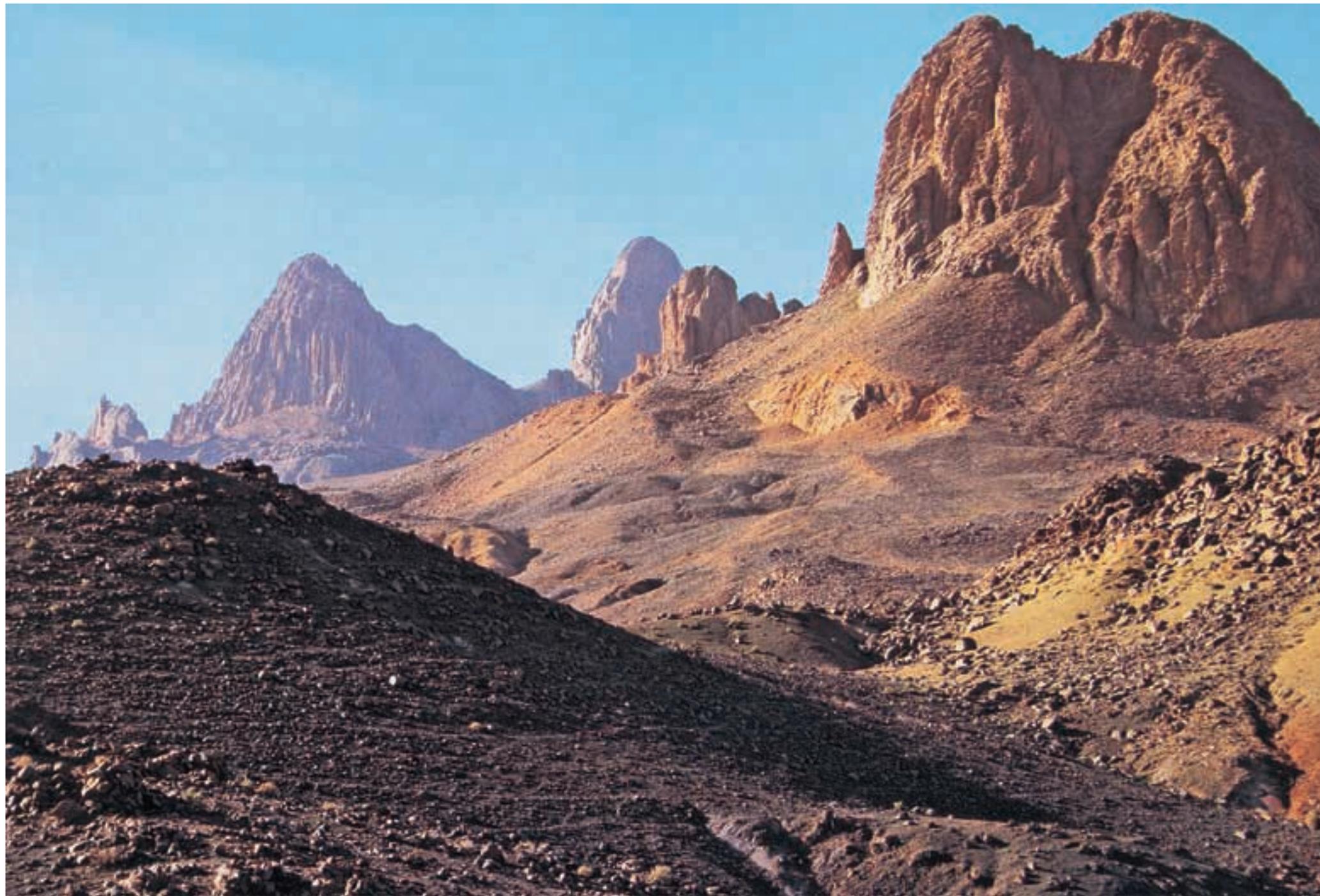
The geological formations with niches erosion has carved in sandstone are exceptionally beautiful. Covering an area of 80,000 km², the Tassili National Park has an average altitude of 15,000 m. The park is well individualized on its western boundary by a long cliff stretching over nearly 700 km².

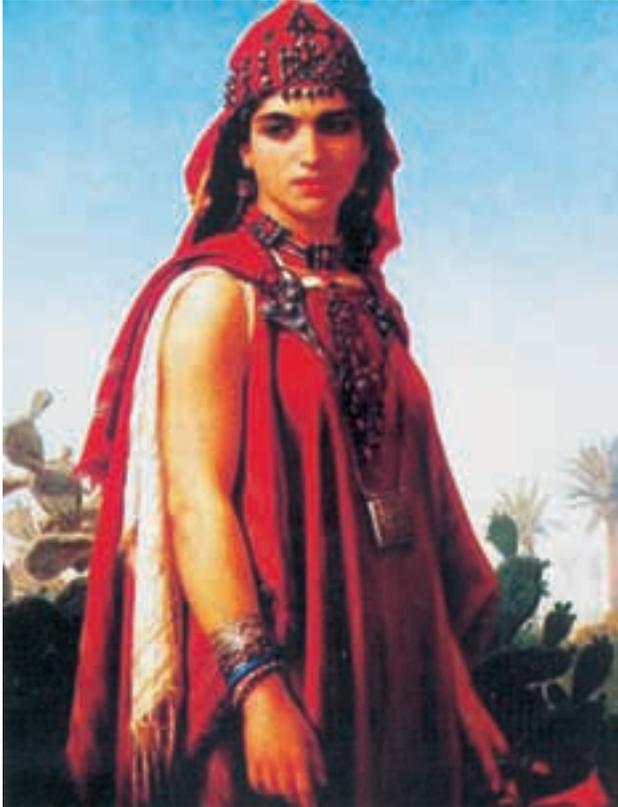
This 500 m high cliff makes Tassili a kind of a natural fortress (of Akba). The inside of the fortress is driven by an incredible network of canyons with gueltas, water sources, and vegetation belts. Tuareg populations settle in Iherir, Aharhar, and Tamadjet. The plateau of Assekrem shelters the Charles de Foucauld Hermitage, built in 1910 and restored in 1955. The Hermitage consists of a high dry rock chapel, a narrow room containing history, geology, and ethnology books Foucauld was studying during his “retirement”.

“We too often picture Foucauld under the religious aspect only, ignoring the other facets of his personality. Many are unaware that he was a formidable linguist, the first major specialist in Targui language and culture. He was also a talented writer, author of more than 6,000 letters. Besides, he also was an excellent cartoonist”.

Antoine Chatelard
Member of Jesus Little Brothers Association,
settled in Tamanrasset since 1954.





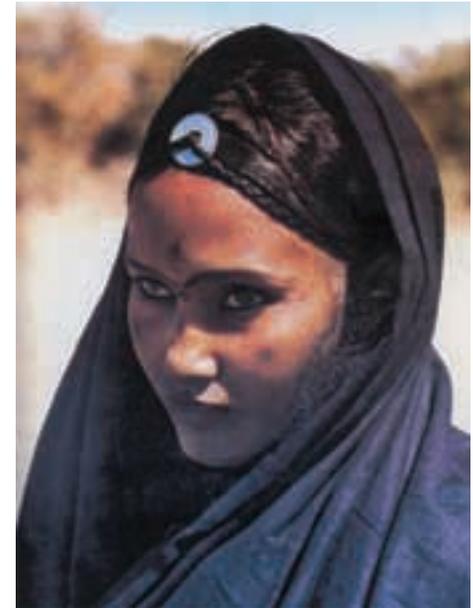


Portraits and Roots





Population and Language of the Central Sahara



The Tuareg live in five different countries:

The Tuareg, also called Imuhar (plural of Amahar), have settled in the Sahara Desert. The total Tuareg population numbers between 1,000,000 to 2,000,000.

In Niger, where they live for the most part (mostly around Agadez, in open air camps). In Mali, which also has a high density of Tuareg in places such as Adrar and Gao. In Algeria, where 20,000 Tuaregs are spread mainly around Tamanrasset in the Ahaggar, and Djanet in the N' Ajjer Tassili. In Burkina Faso and Libya, where a few thousand Tuareg live.

Tuareg Society

Tuareg society is organized around a “Senior Wiseman” called “Amenokal” who is elected by the Imraren, or tribe leaders. Each tribe has its own territory and is led by a leader called Amrar. Tuareg tribes are nomadic goat and camel herders. Their encampments are composed of a number of tents, with members of a single extended family living in a cluster of tents grouped together.

Legend has it that the first Tuareg appeared in the Sahara Desert led by a woman ancestor named Tin-Hinan. Mother of nobility, Tin-Hinan was born in the Tafilalet and might have come to the Ahaggar with no apparent reason, with her servant Takamat who would be the ancestor of Dragali.



