



Sahara1

If you have not traveled the Sahara or Northern Africa before, we strongly recommend to start off with this itinerary.

The Great Eastern Erg safari offers the best of both worlds: Sightseeing off the beaten track with hotel accommodation. Roman and Phoenician history, World War II sites, famous filming locations, Berber culture, the oriental markets and the mysterious beauty of the world's largest desert have to be experienced on this itinerary.

You spend one week sightseeing and one week crossing the Sahara on this itinerary. You set off from home at your own pace, your ferry ticket for the channel is an open return and you may leave as early or as late as you wish to take the drive across France at either a leisurely pace - which we would recommend- or in one go to meet the group and your guide outside Marseille for an overnight stop or at Marseille port on the morning of the ferry crossing. Most of our guests split the 600 mls drive through France over two days, adding another two days to the itinerary below.

Itinerary

Great Eastern Erg

Day 1 Ferry crossing Dover - Calais, drive to the south of France and meet the group for dinner in Orange, overnight stop, camping at Port Mioux or optional hotel accommodation.

Day 2 Leave Orange in the morning, drive to Marseille port (55 mls.) and check in for the ferry to Tunis where you have first class accommodation on board, lunch and silver service dinner with the group, evening entertainment in various bars on board.

Day 3 Arrive Tunis early afternoon, drive to Kantaoui and check in at the Hotel Palace. Enjoy a Tunisian speciality dinner and maybe an Arabic massage, a walk on the beach or a swim in the pool or in the sea. Join us on a tour of the palatial residence of the hotels founder.

Day 4 Explore the souks of Sousse or go for a swim in the pool or in the sea before we are heading south via the impressive Coliseum of El Djem, better preserved than the original one in Rome. After a picnic lunch continue on towards Sfax, the only city in Tunisia with a genuine medina (old town) where you can see the traders and craftsmen in action. Dinner and overnight at the hotel Abou Nawas in Sfax.

Day 5 Have a look at the markets in the morning before we set off via Gabes, famous for its palm wine, to Mareth where Montgomery defeated Rommels Africa corps. Visit Rommels headquarters tucked away in the mountains and the small but well made military museum before we continue south towards Tataouine for an overnight stop at the famous hotel El Sangho. Lunch in a traditional restaurant, dinner at the hotel.

Day 6 Stack up with water and fuel in the morning, today is our first night camping. After breakfast at the hotel we are off to explore some of the ancient Berber villages perched high up on the hilltops around Tataouine. After some offroading across track you will see some famous filming locations from the Star Wars movies before we carry on to a spectacular drive across the Dahar mountains. We will reach our makeshift campsite near the village of Toujane with plenty of time to set up camp before sunset. Lunch with a Berber family, dinner at the camp.

Day 7 Take some extra time in the morning to organize your gear after the first night camping. Have a hearty breakfast at the camp before we head to see the cave dwellers and another filming location. Late morning you will get your first glimpse of the Real Sahara from a distance before we arrive at Kebili for our lunch stop at the serviced campsite (with hot showers) where we will also spend the coming night. In the afternoon you can join us for an



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excursion to see the giant salt flats or stroll around town on your own. Lunch and dinner at the campsite.

Day 8 Practise your offroad driving skills today. We set off into the desert across sanddunes for a training session of dune driving and our first night out in the desert. Have lunch in a Berber tent and do some more offroading in the afternoon. Spend the evening in a little oasis by the fire and enjoy some traditional Berber folklore. Dinner and overnight at the camp in the desert.

Day 9 Drive across sanddunes and salt flats after breakfast to get back to civilization. We reach the port of the desert, the lively town of Douz, just before lunchtime, check into the best hotel in town, the El Mouradi, have lunch at the hotel and the afternoon you can relax by the pool, have a Turkish massage or a stroll around town. Lunch, dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Day 10 Stock up with fuel and water in the morning, do some last minute shopping in town before you are off to the highlight of your tour: the crossing of the Sahara. We are having lunch together with Hedi our desert guide and his family and finally we are on our way: five to six days out in the open desert, guided by the natives of the Sahara, the men from the Saharaoui tribe. Our guides find their way without any modern aids such as GPS or compasses and they now, how to utilize the desert natural resources. Dinner at desert camp.

Day

11-15 Your desert crossing will lead you in a south-easterly loop across magnificent sanddunes, you will experience the different forms of terrain in the Sahara, table mountains, rocky plateaus and oasis. Enjoy the fabulous sunsets and the stars at night, so bright that you can clearly see the Milky Way. We drive for about two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon with an extensive lunch break and always get to the sites for our bivouac with plenty of daylight left to organize the camp. On the last day of our desert crossing we are reaching the oasis of Ksar Ghilane, where you take a plunge in the natural pool, filled with fresh warm water from an underground source and slowly get used to civilization again. Breakfast and dinner during the desert crossing is at our desert camps, picnic lunches en route. Dinner at Ksar Ghilane is in a makeshift restaurant.

Day 16 Head across a slow track back up north to Kairouan where you check in to one of the most spectacular hotels in the country: The La Kasbah, a converted medieval jail that is now a five star hotel. Check out one of the specialities of Tunisian cuisine, freshly grilled lamb from a roadside barbecue before we reach Kairouan. Have a look at the old town in Kairouan and shop for some souvenirs or oriental spices to take home. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 17 Take a look at the old town or the mosque in Kairouan, the second holiest city of the Islam before you make your way up further north and back to Tunis for the lunchtime departure of your ferry back to Marseille. Lunch and dinner on board.

Day 18 Arrive in Marseille in the morning, say good bye to your new friends and head back to the UK - or - extend you holiday with a few days in France. You can change your ticket for the channel crossing at no extra cost.