Tunisia--*From Carthage to the Festivals of the Sahara Desert*

December 18-28, 2009

Friday December 18, 2009: Departure from the US

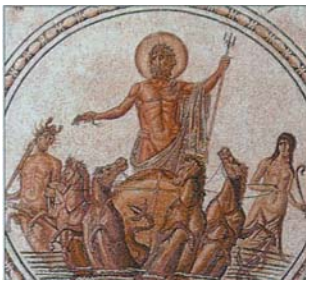
Saturday December 19, 2009: Arrival In Tunis (D)

Personalized welcome by PromoTunisia staff at Tunis Carthage Airport. Transfer and check in Hotel Tunisia Palace 4* in dowtown Tunis near the Medina of Tunis, a newly opened luxurious boutique hotel. Afternoon discovery of the European city of Tunis. Dinner and overnight Tunisia Palace.

Sunday December 20, 2009: Bardo Museum/Carthage/ Sidi Bou Said (B)

Morning visit to the Bardo museum, considered one of the richest museums in the world. Housed in one of the former Husseinite palaces, it encloses all the treasures of Tunisian history: from pre-historic times to the Punic civilization, the Roman era, Christian's times, Muslim civilization and up to the twentieth century and features the world's largest collection of mosaics. Lunch at leisure (suggestion is Pheonix Carthage).

In the afternoon, we will visit to **the UNESCO World Heritage Site City of Carthage,** the oldest phoenician settlement on the coast of North Africa, and its glorious monuments: the Anthonin thermes, the Tophet at Salambo, the Amphiteatre, the Punic ports and the Acropolium. Continue to the WWII american cemetary of Cathage (General Patton's Kasserine Pass battle).



Continue to Sidi Bou Said, a 17th century village with immaculate white and blue houses, that has managed to preserve its charm and peacefulness. Stroll through Sidi Bou's narrow streets bordered by whitewashed houses with blue shutters and doors. Check out the various art galleries, try a bambalouni, light and crispy Tunisian style doughnut with some mint tea in one of the cafes of Sidi Bou Said and enjoy the superb view of the gulf of Tunis from one of Sidi Bou's traditional café.

Dinner at leisure, overnight Tunisia Palace.

Monday December 21, 2009: Medina of Tunis (B, L)

Today is dedicated to visiting the nearby Medina of Tunis, the largest in North Africa (larger than Fez or Cairo) where we will stroll through the various souks and main monuments including palaces being restored and traditional homes which illustrate the way of life and customs of the nineteenth century Tunis.

Lunch at restaurant Escheick serving genuine Tunisia food. Spend some time in the Medina and its Souks, colorful local markets to discover the exquisite craftsmanship of Tunisia's artisans and discover the traditions and cultural heritage of Tunisia in the various libraries and bookstores.

Dinner at leisure-recommended nearby Dar el Jeld, the best restaurant in Tunis http://www.dareljeld.tourism.tn/site2.htm. Overnight in Tunisia Palace.

Tuesday December 22, 2009: Testour/Dougga/Kairouan (B, L, D)

Depart from Tunis. Visit the ancient city of Dougga, one of **the best-preserved roman cities in Africa. Listed in 1997 in the UNESCO World Heritage List**, the town of Dougga, built on an elevated site overlooking a fertile plain, was the capital of Punic and Roman states.
Lunch in Thugga. Continue to Kairouan, the holy city of Tunisia with its impressive Islamic monuments some dating to 670AD. Walk at your leisure in the souks, taste the traditional local pastry stuffed with dates called makroudh, and learn about the traditional savoir-faire of women making rugs.

Check in and dinner at your hotel (La Kasbah 5* lies at the heart of the holy city of Kairouan. This hotel, with a luxurious inside and a sober outlook, merges harmoniously into the Arab-Islamic architecture of the city of Kairouan).

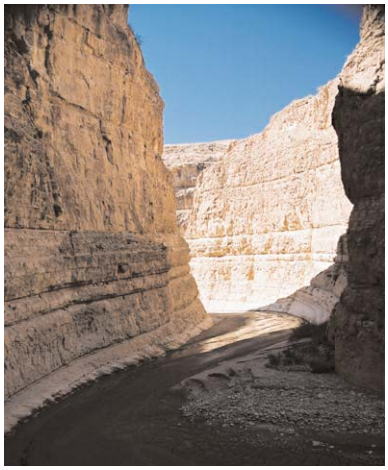
Wednesday December 23, 2009: Kairouan/el Djem (B, L, D)

Morning visit to the ninth century great mosque of Oqba ibn Nafi, an important reference point in Islam and Islamic architecture. Continue to el Djem's spectacular amphitheatre that dates from 238 A.D, and is the second largest in the World only to Rome's. Visit the newly opened small museum and the excavations extending behind the museum where beautiful mosaics have been found. Lunch le Bonheur. Return to Kairouan, free afternoon in the beautiful Medina of Kairouan. Dinner and overnight la Kasbah.

Thursday December 24, 2009: Journey to the Sahara/Tozeur (B, L, D)

After breakfast, continue to Tozeur, an oasis town rising from the sands of the Sahara desert where we will arrive in the afternoon. Visit the Belvedere of Tozeur, with its 300,000 palm trees and over 400 hot and cold springs.

Check in at Ras el Ain 4*. After a special christmas dinner at the hotel, visit to the Dar Cheraiet museum, an architectural jewel born of 1001 nights dreams. The museum, partially outdoor features luxurious decorations and gardens with the most representative scenes of North African life.



Friday December 25, 2009: Mountain Oases (B, L, D)

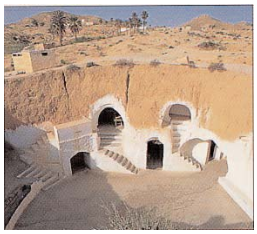
Depart to Metlaoui. Visit the Selja gorges if the Red Lizard Train is available (schedule not yet available), the train belonging to the Bey of Tunisia, ancient Ottoman ruler of Tunisia,part of the colonial heritage of Southern Tunisia. With six wagons, including one used by the Bey, the train takes you to discover the famous and otherwise inaccessible Selja gorges.
Continue by 4X4 to the oasis of Tamerza. Lunch in Tamerza. Explore the Mountain Oases of Mides and Chebika, which are perched in granite mountains above the Sahara and provide scenery for filmmakers in search of Biblical landscapes.
Dinner and overnight Ras el Ain 4*.

Saturday December 26, 2009: Special Day at the Douz Festival of the Sahara desert (B, L, D)

After breakfast, cross the dry salt lake of Chott el Djerid where fantastic forests and cities seem to appear on the horizon, only to be discovered as mirages. Arrive in Douz "gateway to the Sahara." This quiet, oasis village is home to the Festival of the Sahara and will be featuring camel markets and exhibitions illustrating the nomad culture and traditions. Lunch will be provided. Depart for Tataouine, overnight in a brand new ksours style hotel Ksar ouled Haddada 4*. (if the hotel is not opened by Dec 09, we will overnight in a

Djerba 5* hotel)

Sunday December 27, 2009: Tatatouine/Berber Ksours (B, L, D)



This morning drive south through the Dahar Mountains to the Berber village of Tataouine. Here we visit the Ksours, fortified stone castles or homes carved in the steep sides of the surrounding mountains. We will also explore the Ghorfas, buildings in the Ksours originally used by the Berbers as warehouses, then as lodgings. Time permitting, we will explore the Berber village of Matmata and its famous troglodytes, homes built underground to protect the Berbers from summer heat. Berber Ksours are among the most exciting places to explore in Tunisia. One of these fabulous Berber village with its pitted lunar landscapes was the set of the Spielberg's movie Raiders of the Lost Arc and Lucas “Star Wars”.

Continue to the Island of Djerba, land of the Lotus-eaters in Homer's Odyssey and short flight to Tunis (45mn). Overnight at the Tunisia Palace. (depending on flight time, we will either arrange dinner in Djerba or in Tunis).

Monday December 28, 2009: Fly to Europe/US (B)

Transfer to Tunis Carthage international airport

Many testimonies of past travelers have praised Mohamed Halouani, a Tunisia historian and PromoTunisia’ Tour Director for the depth of his knowledge on Tunisian history, arts & traditions. Mohamed truly made their experience unique.

Mohamed Halouani, quick biography:

Mohamed Halouani, our tour director, transformed his profound passion for travel and history into a creative and diversified educational career, designing and carrying out multiple archaeological and cultural trips for diverse institutions, such as The Detroit Institute of Art, The Textile Museum, The American Museum of Natural History, the Vergilian Society and many more organizations.

After having received his Bachelor degrees in English and Spanish, Mohamed Halouani completed his European Master’s in linguistics and Hispanic studies at the Sorbonne University in Paris. He has extensive knowledge on Islamic and secular architecture and Eastern decorative elements.

Mohamed has access to several specialists and private homes/museums as well as families (all these services are included in pricing above) including the architect in charge of restoring an old ottoman palace in the Medina, a private mosaics museum, a local family of Berbers near Matmata and several other “surprises” that provides a unique cultural and people experience to our travelers.

Price Proposal and Inclusions

TUNISIA

- Hotels stays in Double Room
  Tunisia Palace 4*--4 nights, Kasbah Kairouan 5*--2 nights, Ras el Ain 4*--2 nights, Ksar Ouled Haddad 4* or Radisson 5*--1 night

- All Breakfasts, lunches & dinners as specified in itinerary
- Special Christmas Dinner

- All Entrance fees in sites and monuments
  Sidi Bou Said sites, All Carthage monuments & sites
  All Medina monuments in Tunis (including Bardo Museum)
  All sites in Dougga
  All monuments in Kairouan (great mosque, Sidi Sahbi, Aghlabites Bassin…)
  Museum in Dar Cheraiet
  Sites in Djerba
  Red Lizard Train in Mountain Oases (if available)
  Matmata troglodytes
- Local Airfare
  One way Djerba-Tunis

TOTAL TUNISIA 10 DAYS and domestic air /person in Double
$3,050

*** Single Supplement= $600**