

PROMOTUNISIA AND ONLY TUNISIA

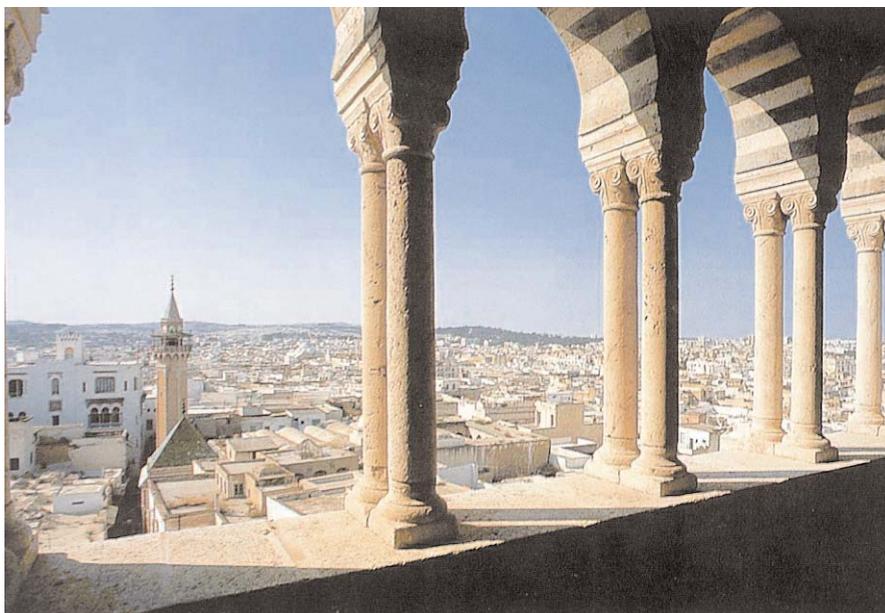
PromoTunisia specializes in historical and cultural tours exclusively to Tunisia.

By Al Haut

TUNISIA IS POSITIONED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AT THE HEADLAND OF NORTHERN AFRICA. WELCOMING VISITORS as early as Ulysses, this small country has a 3,000 year history that includes ancient Carthage, the Romans and the Muslim world and on whose soil Byzantines, Spanish and Ottomans left their indelible footprints. Tunisia is one of the few places in the world where clients can compress centuries of history played out in diverse environments ranging from lush mountain forests to the exotic Sahara as well as a 750 mile coastline, which were once the crossroads of East and West.

History

PromoTunisia was founded in 2002 as the English speaking marketing arm of Promotel, a long established and highly respected inbound operator. The company's mission is to target the U.S. market, specifically clients interested in archeology and culture, with offerings of guided holidays built around themes such as music, festivals, cuisine, arts and traditions with the added bonus of providing clients with a Tunisian people experience. "We focus on Tunisia", comments Mr. Mohamed Malouche, the company's general manager, "because it is our motherland - we know it, love it and are expert at making clients fully enjoy it." Based in Atlanta, Mr. Malouche and his associates are responsible for U.S. operations. Serving as president and CEO of the Tunisia based parent company is Mr. Malouche's father, a 50-year veteran in tourism including tenure as head of the country's national tourist office. He heads up a staff of 27 which includes some of the best educated professionals in the country with extensive knowledge of history and culture and fluency in English. Collectively, the company is uniquely positioned to understand the expectations and needs of their U.S. clientele because of experience having lived in the U.S. Moreover, the company's collective knowledge and experience, professional contacts and industry affiliations translate into lower prices for higher quality services. Privileged relationships and connections further guarantee an experience traditional tour operators cannot deliver. The company crafts its journeys to include personal encounters such as with a nomad family in the middle of the Sahara and participation in festivals with even deeper emersions such as learning how to cook couscous with a local chef.



The medina of Tunis and its narrow streets seen from the top of the Zitouna mosque.

Inspiration

Part of the inspiration for starting PromoTunisia was the realization that despite millenniums of history and amazing culture, Europeans, who make up most of Tunisia's tourism, come primarily for beach holidays. "We decided to fill this gap", Mr. Malouche explains, "with a new segment of clients, the Americans who would not come for our beaches but would certainly come to find out more about our culture, history, cuisine and the Sahara. We knew we would be successful because the U.S. market is massive and not enough effort had been made in the past to promote Tunisia". PromoTunisia's products appeal to upscale first time visitors as well as sophisticated travelers. Roughly 60% of clients are retired and the balance are professionals with typically all having an interest in archeology, culture and to some degree the Sahara. The company's core business is escorted tours but independent travelers are welcome. Agents can expect an eagerness to customize itineraries to whatever extent their clients might wish.

Cultural Tours

PromoTunisia tours are atypical. In groups of no more than 15 and led by archeologists as passionate about their country as they are

knowledgeable, clients are guaranteed a truly personal experience. Focused on the richness of Tunisia and its diversity in every area from natural wonders to cuisine, clients are taken deep into a Tunisia unknown to most tourists. Back to back activities are avoided and a full day and several afternoons are purposely designated at leisure so that clients have the benefit of an indepen-

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A camel ride is always a memorable activity for your clients.

dent tour at a package price. A popular offering is the company's ten day all-inclusive Kasbah to Sahara tour. Beginning in Tunis, clients visit the UNESCO World Heritage Sights of Carthage and Dougga, the best preserved city in Africa, the holy city of Kairouan, El Djem, home to a coliseum second only to Rome's, the troglodyte homes of

Matmata made famous by Star Wars and Raiders of the Lost Ark, the remains of Berber villages, desert and mountain oases and Douz, the doorway to the Great Erg Oriental of the Sahara, the world's most famous desert. As with all tours, hotels are four and five star in restored historical buildings, away from tourist zones and always close to local points of interest such as monuments or colorful markets.

Private dinners and parties are presented within tents and palaces and opportunities for hiking as well as camel or horseback riding are pleasant bonuses. PromoTunisia goes the extra mile by providing extras and surprises such as cocktails in the dunes, unexpected pastries and gifts at a tour's conclusion. "We want our travelers to be delighted!" comments Mr. Malouche, emphasizing his company's commitment to provide absolutely the best possible client experience. With departures scheduled for early May and early October, the cost of the tour is \$2,850 (land only) and is commissionable at 10%.

The Switzerland of Africa

Tunisia is often called the Switzerland of Africa because of its economic success story. But beyond that are qualities of political stability, security and safety, moderation and tolerance and a multiplicity of faces in harmony with each other. Clients will be warmly welcomed and made to feel at home and this may well be their most enduring

memory.

While PromoTunisia's cultural/archeology tours will always be their signature products, the company is expanding its portfolio with an upscale tour focused on golf, an upscale tour focused on thalassotherapy (the therapeutic use of sea water) and an upscale tour focused on adventure in the Sahara Desert. Possible extensions to Sicily and Malta are being considered and, although a few years down the road, Mr. Malouche envisions an exciting tour which would bundle destinations around a common theme.

Representing the source of 80% of their bookings, travel agents are PromoTunisia's best clients. To further increase agent awareness, the company hosts Night in Tunisia events to promote both their country and their tours. Highlights include an audio/visual presentation, a conference, music and delicacies flown in overnight from Tunis.

This fall, the company has scheduled two presentations in Atlanta, two in Denver and two in the Washington, D.C. area. The company also organizes FAM trips taking their travel agent partners on an accelerated eight day overview of Tunisia's various products at wholesale cost. FAM trips for this fall and early next year are in the planning stage.

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BOTSWANA TOURISM UP 100%

When business is up in the low season you know that you are doing something right. According to Tlhabologo Ndzinge, director of tourism, for Botswana arrivals from the United States continue to increase. "Since 1999 tourism arrivals have increased 100% reaching with nearly 30,000 Americans visiting every year.

Coming on the heels of a very successful agent familiarization trip for APTA members last year, 2004 is off to a great start and the U.S. is expected to become Botswana's biggest inbound market ahead of the United Kingdom and Germany."

Known for its abundant wildlife, Okavango Delta, and the Kalahari Sand Dunes Ms. Ndzinge adds that " Botswana is perceived a safe destination, with easy access by air, no visa requirements, English speaking country".

Botswana Tourism will also continue its Destination Gabarone Initiative in order to draw attention to the destinations excellent architectural and historic sites.

Botswana Tourism,
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The old village of Sidi Bou is known for its distinctive white washed houses with blue shutters.