# Tunis Travel Guide

Discover Tunis: Where Ancient Heritage Meets Mediterranean Charm

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## Things to do in Tunis

## Ancient & Historical Sites

Tunis and its surroundings are home to some of the Mediterranean's most significant archaeological treasures. The ancient city of Carthage, once rival to Rome, spreads across the northern suburbs, while the Medina preserves medieval Islamic architecture in its labyrinthine streets.

Must See

### Carthage Archaeological Park

3-4 hours (multiple sites)  No Booking Needed

Map

Explore the remnants of the mighty **Phoenician and Roman city** that once challenged Rome's dominance. The sprawling archaeological site includes the massive *Antonine Baths* (built 146-162 AD), one of the largest Roman bath complexes outside Rome. Visit **Byrsa Hill** for the Carthage National Museum and foundations of 5-story Punic houses with sophisticated cistern and drainage systems. The *Tophet* sanctuary and burial ground reveals Carthaginian religious practices, while the twin **Punic Ports** demonstrate their maritime mastery. The *Roman Villas*, particularly the Villa of the Aviary, showcase exquisite mosaics, columns, and statues from the Roman elite's mansions.



Must See

### Medina of Tunis

3-4 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Wander through one of the world's finest examples of **medieval Islamic urbanism** in this UNESCO-listed old city. The Medina's 700+ monuments include the magnificent *Ez-Zitouna Mosque* (Great Mosque), Tunisia's spiritual heart Founded around 698–699 AD and rebuilt in the 9th century. Navigate the vibrant **souks** where traditional craftsmen continue centuries-old trades: carpet weavers, leather workers, perfume sellers, and metalworkers. Discover hidden gems like ornate *madrasas* (Islamic schools), historic **dars** (traditional houses), and the beautiful *Tourbet el Bey* mausoleum. The **Kasbah** quarter offers glimpses of Hafsid dynasty architecture. Experience authentic Tunisian life while shopping for spices, carpets, ceramics, and traditional goods.



Must See

### Bardo National Museum

2-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Housed in a stunning **15th-century Hafsid palace**, the Bardo Museum is Africa's second-largest museum and home to the world's finest collection of **Roman mosaics**. The museum traces Tunisia's history across millennia through Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods. Marvel at intricate mosaics depicting mythology, daily Roman life, hunting scenes, and maritime themes excavated from sites across Tunisia including Carthage, Dougga, and Utica. Don't miss the *Blue Koran of Kairouan* in the Islamic section, Greek treasures from the 1907 **Mahdia shipwreck**, Punic grimacing masks, and the famous *stele of the priest and child*. The palace architecture itself is breathtaking, with beautifully decorated rooms and courtyards.

## Tips for Ancient & Historical Sites

- **Carthage Ticket:** A combined ticket covers the main Carthage sites; check the current price at the first entrance
- **Bardo Access:** Take metro Line 4 to Bardo station (20 minutes from city center). Entry for foreign visitors: 30 TND since April 2026; closed Mondays
- **Medina Navigation:** Hire a licensed guide (negotiate 40-60 TND for 2-3 hours) to avoid getting lost and learn hidden history
- **Dress Code:** Modest clothing required for mosques (shoulders and knees covered). Women may need to cover hair at religious sites
- **Timing:** Visit Carthage in the morning and late afternoon to avoid midday heat, especially in summer when temperatures exceed 35°C

## Neighborhoods & Districts

Each neighborhood around Tunis offers distinct character and atmosphere, from the picturesque blue-and-white cliff-top village of Sidi Bou Said to the elegant coastal suburb of La Marsa and the historic port of La Goulette.



Must See

### Sidi Bou Said

2-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Often called the **"Blue and White Village,"** this enchanting cliff-top town is Tunisia's most photogenic destination. Every building features brilliant white facades with *cobalt blue* doors, window frames, and wrought-iron railings a colour scheme protected by a 1915 decree promoted by Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger. Wander cobblestone streets lined with **bougainvillea**, browse art galleries, and visit the *Ennejma Ezzahra* palace (now the Center for Arab and Mediterranean Music). Stop at the legendary **Café des Nattes** or *Café des Délices* for mint tea with stunning sea views. The village has inspired countless artists including Paul Klee, August Macke, and Louis Moillet. Visit *Dar El Annabi Museum*, an 18th-century summer home showcasing traditional Tunisian life (includes complimentary mint tea).



Notable

### La Marsa

2-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This upscale coastal suburb combines **beautiful beaches** with residential charm and excellent dining. La Marsa Beach offers Mediterranean swimming and beachside cafés. The neighborhood features elegant villas, trendy restaurants, and the laid-back *Café Plage* perfect for Turkish coffee and people-watching. The area's natural **sand dunes** behind the beach provide picturesque picnic spots. La Marsa represents authentic Tunisian lifestyle away from tourist crowds, with local markets, fresh seafood restaurants, and a relaxed Mediterranean atmosphere.



Optional

### La Goulette

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Tunisia's historic **port district** where cruise ships dock and the TGM train connects to coastal suburbs. La Goulette features a charming harbor, seafood restaurants serving fresh catches, and a multicultural heritage reflecting its Spanish, Italian, Maltese, and Jewish communities. The port offers ferry connections to Sicily and serves as the gateway between downtown Tunis and the coastal attractions of Carthage, Sidi Bou Said, and La Marsa.

## Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- **TGM Train:** The easiest way to visit these coastal areas. Trains run from Tunis Marine station along the coast (0.5-1 TND, ~30 minutes)
- **Best Photo Times:** Early morning (7-9am) or late afternoon (5-7pm) for softer light in Sidi Bou Said
- **Parking:** Limited in Sidi Bou Said arrive early or use TGM train to avoid parking hassles
- **Shopping:** Sidi Bou Said offers high-quality crafts and art, but prices are higher than Medina. Bargain respectfully

## Museums & Galleries

Beyond the world-famous Bardo, Tunis offers specialized museums showcasing everything from Carthaginian artifacts to traditional Tunisian architecture and Arab music heritage.



Top Pick

### Carthage National Museum

1-1.5 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Perched atop **Byrsa Hill** within the Carthage archaeological site, this museum houses an exceptional collection of *Punic and Roman artifacts* excavated from ancient Carthage. Explore Phoenician pottery, jewelry, stelae with inscriptions crucial to Semitic epigraphy, Roman sculptures, coins, and architectural fragments. The museum building itself occupies a former Catholic seminary on Byrsa Hill, the citadel of Punic Carthage. The location offers breathtaking **panoramic views** across the Gulf of Tunis and the archaeological park below.



Notable

### Dar El Annabi Museum

45 minutes - 1 hour  No Booking Needed

Map

Step into an authentic **18th-century summer residence** in Sidi Bou Said showcasing traditional Tunisian aristocratic life. This beautifully preserved *dar* (traditional house) features period furnishings, colorful ceramics, intricate woodwork, and traditional textiles. Each room illustrates different aspects of domestic life: reception areas, women's quarters, kitchen, and courtyard. The museum offers complimentary **mint tea** to visitors while exploring. Experience authentic Tunisian hospitality and architecture in this intimate cultural gem.

Notable

### Ennejma Ezzahra Palace (Center for Arab & Mediterranean Music)

1 hour  No Booking Needed

Map

The former residence of **Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger** (who established Sidi Bou Said's iconic blue-white aesthetic), this stunning *Neo-Moorish palace* built in the early 20th century now houses the Center for Arab and Mediterranean Music. The palace showcases a magnificent collection of **traditional musical instruments** from across the Arab world, hosts concerts of Arabic music, and offers insights into North African musical heritage. The architecture itself with intricate tilework, carved plasterwork, and painted ceilings is worth the visit.

## Tips for Museums & Galleries

- **Photography:** Generally allowed in museums (except flash/tripods). Ask permission at specific exhibits
- **Guided Tours:** English-speaking guides available at major museums (tip 5-10 TND for exceptional service)
- **Combined Visits:** The Carthage Museum on Byrsa Hill is closed for renovation; the open-air sites remain visitable
- **Cultural Respect:** Remove shoes when entering traditional houses, and ask before photographing people

# Religious Sites

Tunis showcases centuries of religious diversity through magnificent mosques, historic zaouias, and colonial-era churches that reflect the city's multicultural heritage.



Top Pick

## Ez-Zitouna Mosque (Great Mosque)

30 minutes (exterior viewing)  No Booking Needed

Map

The spiritual and architectural heart of Tunis, **Ez-Zitouna** (meaning "Olive Tree") is the city's principal mosque and one of North Africa's most significant Islamic monuments. Founded in 732 AD and rebuilt in the 9th century, it spans over *5,000 square meters* with a magnificent courtyard surrounded by marble columns salvaged from Roman Carthage. The mosque features 184 columns of various marble types, a stunning minaret, and serves as the country's primary Islamic university. **Non-Muslims cannot enter** but can admire the exterior architecture and photograph from the entrance. The surrounding medina developed around this religious center.



Top Pick

## St. Louis Cathedral (Carthage)

30-45 minutes  No Booking Needed

Map

Perched dramatically atop **Byrsa Hill** in Carthage, this Byzantine-Moorish cathedral was built in 1890 on Byrsa Hill, the citadel of Punic Carthage, near where French King Louis IX (St. Louis) died during the Eighth Crusade in 1270. The cathedral offers spectacular *360-degree panoramic views* across the Gulf of Tunis, the Mediterranean, and the archaeological ruins below. Now deconsecrated and serving as a cultural venue, the building's striking architecture and historical significance make it a must-visit. The location provides the best viewpoint for understanding Carthage's strategic coastal position.



Optional

## Cathedral of St. Vincent de Paul

30-45 minutes  No Booking Needed

Map

This imposing **Romanesque-Byzantine cathedral** dominates Place de l'Indépendance at the western end of Avenue Habib Bourguiba. Built in 1897 during French colonial rule, it served as the seat of the Archdiocese of Carthage. The cathedral features distinctive twin bell towers, intricate stone carvings, beautiful stained glass, and a grand interior combining European and North African architectural elements. Still an active church with regular Masses, it stands as a striking reminder of Tunisia's colonial history and religious diversity. Visitors can explore the interior's impressive architecture and peaceful atmosphere.

## Tips for Religious Sites

- **Mosque Access:** Non-Muslims generally cannot enter active mosques. Admire exteriors and courtyards where permitted
- **Modest Dress:** Essential for all religious sites cover shoulders, knees, and consider headscarves for women even at exteriors
- **Prayer Times:** Avoid visiting during prayer times (5 daily prayers). Check local times and be respectful of worshippers
- **Photography:** Always ask permission before photographing people at prayer or religious ceremonies
- **Ramadan:** During the holy month, expect reduced hours and increased sensitivity around religious sites

## Squares & Streets

Tunis's public spaces tell the story of the city's evolution from colonial outpost to modern capital, where French-style boulevards meet traditional Arab gates and fountains.



Top Pick

### Avenue Habib Bourguiba

1-2 hours (stroll) No Booking Needed

Map

Tunis's grand **central boulevard**, often compared to Paris's Champs-Élysées, stretches 60 meters wide from Place de l'Indépendance to the Tunis Lake causeway. Named after Tunisia's first president and independence leader, this tree-lined avenue features *colonial-era architecture*, the Municipal Theatre (Art Nouveau style from 1902), government offices, banks, shops, and sidewalk cafés. The broad median planted with ficus trees creates a pleasant promenade. Historic landmarks include the **French Embassy** (1861), Cathedral of St. Vincent de Paul, and the statue of Ibn Khaldoun, Tunisia's famous medieval philosopher. The avenue serves as Tunis's social and commercial heart, buzzing with activity day and night.



Notable

### Bab Bhar (Porte de France)

15-30 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

The **"Sea Gate"** (also called Porte de France) stands as a free-standing arch marking the boundary between the old Medina and modern Tunis. This historic gateway once formed part of the city walls that enclosed the Medina. Today, it serves as the symbolic threshold where *Avenue de France* (extension of Avenue Habib Bourguiba) meets the Medina's labyrinthine alleys. The square around Bab Bhar features a central fountain and bustling activity as locals and tourists pass between old and new Tunis. It's the perfect starting point for Medina exploration.



Optional

### Place de l'Indépendance

30 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

This significant roundabout marks the western terminus of Avenue Habib Bourguiba and serves as a major **civic gathering space**. The square is framed by important landmarks: the French Embassy to the south and the Cathedral of St. Vincent de Paul to the north. At its center stands a statue of *Ibn Khaldoun*, the renowned 14th-century Arab historian and philosopher, looking toward the avenue and lake beyond. The square witnessed historic moments during Tunisia's 2011 Jasmine Revolution with demonstrations calling for democratic reforms.

## Tips for Squares & Streets

- **Safety:** Avenue Habib Bourguiba is generally safe with heavy police/military presence, especially near embassies
- **Cafés:** Numerous sidewalk cafés along the avenue offer perfect people-watching spots. Expect to pay 3-8 TND for coffee/tea
- **Evening Strolls:** The avenue is beautifully lit at night, though as a foreign visitor, stay in well-lit main areas
- **Architecture:** Look up to admire colonial facades, Art Nouveau details, and traditional ironwork balconies

# Food & Dining

Real, highly-rated Restaurants in Tunis, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).

### Restaurant "Le Jardin des Légumes"★★★★★ 4.9 (155)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant "Le Jardin des Légumes" is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.9★ from 155 reviews. Located at 43 Farhat Hached, Tunis 1000, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- Tuesday: 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- Wednesday: 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- Thursday: 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- Friday: 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- Saturday: Closed
- Sunday: Closed

### Restaurant Set Al Habayeb★★★★★ 4.9 (957)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant Set Al Habayeb is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.9★ from 957 reviews. Located at 16 Rue boukhrissan, Tunis 1000, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 1:00 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 1:00 – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 1:00 – 8:30 PM
- Thursday: 1:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 1:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 1:00 – 9:30 PM
- Sunday: Closed

### Bab Tounès★★★★★ 4.8 (517)

1-2 hours

Map

Bab Tounès is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.8★ from 517 reviews. Located at 3 Rue de l’ancienne douane, Tunis 1000, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed

### Com Art Restaurant★★★★★ 4.8 (464)

1-2 hours

Map

Com Art Restaurant is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.8★ from 464 reviews. Located at R52Q+G2X, Tunis, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:15 AM – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM

### La Gargote★★★★★ 4.8 (201)

1-2 hours

Map

La Gargote is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.8★ from 201 reviews. Located at 13 Rue Du Canada, Tunis 1002, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM
- Saturday: Closed
- Sunday: Closed

### Restaurant des Arts★★★★★ 4.8 (502)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant des Arts is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.8★ from 502 reviews. Located at cité de la culture chedli klibi, R56P+C9J, Av. Mohamed 5, Tunis 1002, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM

### DaPietro - L'Antica Pizzeria★★★★★ 4.8 (4,625)

1-2 hours

Map

DaPietro - L'Antica Pizzeria is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.8★ from 4625 reviews. Located at Tunis, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM

### Walima★★★★★ 4.8 (48)

1-2 hours

Map

Walima is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.8★ from 48 reviews. Located at B.P. 345, 1 Av. de la Ligue des Etats Arabes, Tunis 1080, Tunisia.

### Restaurant La Rose de Sable★★★★★ 4.8 (106)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant La Rose de Sable is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.8★ from 106 reviews. Located at Rue Jamaa Ezzitouna, Tunis, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 5:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 5:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 5:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 5:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed

### Dar Slah★★★★★ 4.6 (498)

1-2 hours

Map

Dar Slah is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.6★ from 498 reviews. Located at 145 Rue de la Kasbah, Tunis 1006, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 3:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 3:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 3:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 3:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 3:30 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 3:30 PM
- Sunday: Closed

### SARAY Turkish Cuisine★★★★★ 4.6 (1,634)

1-2 hours

Map

SARAY Turkish Cuisine is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.6★ from 1634 reviews. Located at 91 Av. Hédi Chaker, Tunis, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 AM

### Restaurant Bahroun★★★★★ 4.5 (141)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant Bahroun is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.5★ from 141 reviews. Located at Q5XJ+MXF, Tunis, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 AM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 AM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 AM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 AM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 AM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 AM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 AM

### Restaurant L'Astragale★★★★☆ 4.4 (308)

1-2 hours

Map

Restaurant L'Astragale is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.4★ from 308 reviews. Located at 17, avé Charles Nicole، 6 rue Kadhi Iyadh، Tunis 1082, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 7:45 – 11:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 7:45 – 11:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 7:45 – 11:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 7:45 – 11:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 4:00 PM, 7:45 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 7:45 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: Closed

### Dar El Jeld Restauraunt★★★★☆ 4.3 (1,136)

1-2 hours

Map

Dar El Jeld Restauraunt is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.3★ from 1136 reviews. Located at 5-10، نهج دار الجلد، Street 1005, Tunisia.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 7:30 – 11:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 7:30 – 11:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 7:30 – 11:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 7:30 – 11:30 PM
- Friday: 12:30 – 3:00 PM, 7:30 – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 7:30 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: Closed

**La Vinothèque by La Salle à Manger**★★★★☆ 4.3 (616)

1-2 hours

Map

La Vinothèque by La Salle à Manger is a highly-rated restaurant in Tunis, rated 4.3★ from 616 reviews. Located at 3 Rue Imam Sahnoun, Tunis 1002, Tunisia.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: Closed

## Practical Information

### Optimal Seasons for Tunis

**Spring (March-May):** The *best time to visit* Tunis. Temperatures range 18-25°C (64-77°F), perfect for sightseeing. Flowers bloom, landscapes are green, and tourist crowds are manageable. Ideal for exploring Carthage ruins without oppressive heat.

**Autumn (September-November):** Another excellent period with moderate temperatures (20-28°C / 68-82°F), fewer tourists than summer, and pleasant conditions for walking tours. The Mediterranean is still warm enough for swimming in September.

**Summer (June-August):** Very hot (30-38°C / 86-100°F) with intense sun, especially for archaeological sites. Best suited for beach activities. Book accommodations early as it's peak tourist season. Bring sun protection, hat, and plenty of water.

**Winter (December-February):** Cooler (10-17°C / 50-63°F) and quieter with fewer tourists. Occasional rain but generally mild compared to European winters. Budget-friendly with lower prices. Bring a jacket and layers.

**Ramadan Considerations:** During the Islamic holy month (dates vary annually), many restaurants close during daylight hours, and business hours may be reduced. However, iftar (sunset meal) creates a special atmosphere with communal meals and festive nights.

### Getting Around Tunis & Greater Tunis

### Metro Léger (Light Rail)

The **Tunis Metro** operates 6 lines covering 61+ km with 65 stations. Managed by Transtu, it's affordable (less than 0.5 TND per ride), though often crowded. *Line 4* reaches the Bardo Museum. Tickets purchased at stations or from conductors.

### TGM Train (Tunis-Goulette-Marsa)

Essential for coastal attractions! This historic commuter rail (Tunisia's first, inaugurated 1872) connects downtown *Tunis Marine station* with La Goulette, Carthage, Sidi Bou Said, and La Marsa. **18 stations** along 19km. Trains run every 30 minutes (0.5-1 TND). Perfect for day trips to Carthage and Sidi Bou Said. Full service between Tunis Marine and La Marsa resumed in February 2026 after long works.

### RFR Suburban Rail

Three lines (A, D, E) connect outer suburbs to central station. Line D reaches Bardo Museum (15 minutes). Trains every 20-40 minutes. ~1 TND fare. Modern and spacious.

### Buses

Extensive network operated by Transtu (SNT and TCV companies). Very affordable (0.32+ TND depending on zones) but often extremely crowded, inconsistent schedules, and route information primarily in Arabic. Main stations: Habib Thameur, Ali Belhouane, Tunis Marine, Barcelone.

### Louages (Shared Minivans)

White 8-passenger vans operating *intercity routes* throughout Tunisia. Depart when full (no fixed schedule). Comfortable and affordable, similar prices to buses/trains. Main station at Moncef Bey. Popular for trips to Hammamet, Sousse, Nabeul, etc.

### Taxis

Yellow taxis widely available with meters. Minimum charge 0.90 TND with 50% evening/night surcharge. **Always insist the meter runs** or negotiate price in advance. Watch for red/green light: red = available, green = hired. Avoid taxis without this light. Bolt left Tunisia in May 2025 and Uber does not operate; use metered yellow taxis or local taxi apps.

### Private Transfers

Book through platforms like Daytrip for guaranteed pickups and English-speaking drivers. More expensive but convenient for airport transfers and day trips.

### Rental Cars

Available but costly (includes mandatory insurance and breakdown cover). Minimum age 21. Roads generally good but signs only in Arabic and French. Recommended for exploring beyond Tunis at your own pace.

### ✈ Airport Transfer

**Tunis-Carthage Airport (TUN)** is 8km northeast. Options: Official yellow taxis (15-25 TND to center, insist on meter), a public bus between the airport and Tunis Marine (slower and busier), private transfers, or rental cars.

## Shopping in Tunis

### What to Buy

- **Carpets & Rugs:** Hand-woven kilims and traditional Berber rugs from southern Tunisia. Medina and Kairouan famous for quality
- **Ceramics & Pottery:** Nabeul pottery (especially blue/white designs), decorative plates, tiles, and tagines
- **Leather Goods:** Bags, shoes, belts, and wallets from Medina leather souks
- **Olive Oil:** Tunisia is one of the world's largest producers - buy premium extra virgin olive oil
- **Spices & Harissa:** Authentic harissa paste, cumin, coriander, saffron from spice markets
- **Traditional Clothing:** Embroidered tunics, jebba, chechia (traditional caps), handmade scarves
- **Metalwork:** Brass lanterns, copper trays, silver jewelry (especially Berber designs)
- **Perfumes:** Traditional scents, rose water, orange blossom water from perfume souks

### Shopping Areas

**Tunis Medina Souks:** Most authentic and affordable. Divided by trade (textiles, spices, jewelry, perfumes, leather). Narrow alleys filled with treasures. *Expect aggressive vendors bargaining essential.*

**Sidi Bou Said:** Upscale galleries, art, high-quality crafts. More expensive but unique items and better quality. Less aggressive selling.

**Avenue Habib Bourguiba:** Modern shops, boutiques, bookstores, international brands.

**Carrefour Market:** Western-style supermarket for groceries, toiletries, packaged foods.

### Bargaining Tips

- Initial asking prices often 2-3x fair value start at 40-50% and negotiate
- Stay polite but firm. Walk away if price too high sellers often call you back
- Compare prices at multiple shops before buying expensive items
- Morning visits often yield better prices (vendors want first sales)
- Pay in cash (Tunisian Dinars) for better rates vendors charge more for cards
- Don't feel pressured pushy selling is normal but you control the interaction
- Say "La, shukran" (No, thank you) firmly and keep walking if not interested

### Shopping Customs

Shops typically open 9am-6pm (closed midday 12-2pm). During Ramadan, hours shift dramatically. Most vendors accept euros/dollars but pay in Tunisian Dinars for fairness. Keep receipts for customs and authenticity verification.

## Annual Events & Festivals

### Major Festivals

**Carthage International Festival (July-August):** Tunisia's premier cultural event featuring world-class musicians, theater, dance, and cinema at the ancient Roman Theater of Carthage. Performances from Arab, African, and international artists.

**Tunis International Book Fair (March/April):** Major literary event attracting publishers and authors from across the Arab world and Mediterranean.

**Medina Festival (Ramadan evenings):** Night-time concerts and cultural events within the historic Medina featuring traditional music, crafts demonstrations, and street performances.

**Jazz à Carthage (spring):** International jazz festival held at venues in the Carthage and Gammarth area.

### National Holidays

- **New Year's Day:** January 1
- **Revolution and Youth Day:** December 17 (Revolution Day, commemorating the start of the 2010-2011 revolution)
- **Independence Day:** March 20 (from France, 1956)
- **Martyrs' Day:** April 9
- **Labour Day:** May 1
- **Republic Day:** July 25
- **Women's Day:** August 13
- **Evacuation Day:** October 15 (last French troops left, 1963)

### Islamic Holidays (Dates vary by lunar calendar)

- **Eid al-Fitr:** 3-day celebration ending Ramadan
- **Eid al-Adha:** 4-day Festival of Sacrifice
- **Islamic New Year (Muharram)**
- **Prophet's Birthday (Mawlid)**
- **Ramadan:** Month of fasting (business hours change, restaurants close during day)

*Tip:* During national holidays and religious festivals, museums and attractions may have reduced hours or close. Banks and government offices close. However, festivals create vibrant street atmosphere and special cultural experiences.

## 5 Perfect Day Itineraries for Tunis

### Day 1: Classic Tunis - Ancient & Medieval

**Morning (8am-12pm):** Start at the *Medina of Tunis* before crowds arrive. Enter through Bab Bhar, visit Ez-Zitouna Mosque exterior, explore souks (perfume, textiles, spices). Visit Tourbet el Bey mausoleum. Stop at traditional café for mint tea.

**Lunch (12-1:30pm):** Try authentic **couscous** or **brik** at Medina restaurant.

**Afternoon (from 2pm):** Take metro Line 4 to *Bardo National Museum* (closes 5pm in summer, 4:30pm in winter; closed Mondays). Spend 2-3 hours admiring world-class Roman mosaics. Return to Avenue Habib Bourguiba for evening stroll, coffee at sidewalk café.

**Evening:** Dinner at restaurant near Avenue Habib Bourguiba. Try *ojja*, *fricassee*, or grilled fish.

### Day 2: Carthage & Sidi Bou Said

**Morning (8am-1pm):** Take TGM train to Carthage. Visit *Byrsa Hill* for panoramic views (the Carthage Museum is closed for renovation). Explore **Antonine Baths**, then Punic Ports area. See Roman Villas with mosaics.

**Lunch (1-2:30pm):** Fresh seafood at La Goulette port or continue to Sidi Bou Said.

**Afternoon (3-7pm):** TGM to *Sidi Bou Said*. Wander blue-and-white streets, visit **Dar El Annabi Museum** (with mint tea!), browse art galleries. Stop at **Café des Délices** for spectacular sea views and traditional tea. Watch sunset over Mediterranean.

**Evening:** Return to Tunis or dine at Sidi Bou Said's restaurants with sea views.

### Day 3: UNESCO Day Trip - Kairouan & El Jem

**Early Departure (7-8am):** Book private tour or join group tour. 2-hour drive south.

**Kairouan (10am-1pm):** Visit the *Great Mosque of Kairouan* (4th holiest site in Islam, founded 670 AD), magnificent Aghlabid Basins (9th-century water reservoirs), Sidi Sahbi mausoleum with stunning tilework. Walk through Medina's carpet souks.

**Lunch (1-2pm):** Traditional restaurant in Kairouan or en route to El Jem.

**El Jem (2:30-4:30pm):** Marvel at the **Roman Amphitheater** world's 3rd largest and best-preserved. Climb to upper levels for views. Visit El Jem Museum with exceptional mosaics.

**Return (5-7pm):** Drive back to Tunis with Tunisian countryside views.

*Alternative:* Add Sousse Medina if time permits (coastal city between El Jem and Tunis).

### Day 4: Dougga & Bulla Regia - Roman Tunisia

**Departure (7:30am):** Private tour recommended. 2.5-hour drive southwest.

**Dougga (10am-1pm):** Explore Tunisia's best-preserved **Roman city** (UNESCO site). See the magnificent Theater (seats 3,500), Capitolium Temple dedicated to Jupiter/Juno/Minerva, Licinian Baths, residential quarter, stunning hillside setting. This remote site offers authentic Roman ruins without crowds.

**Lunch (1-2:30pm):** Local restaurant or stop in Testour (optional: visit Great Mosque with reversed clock).

**Bulla Regia (3-5pm):** Unique Roman site where villas had *underground floors* to escape heat seven excavated so far with beautiful mosaics naming each villa. Underground architecture preserved due to innovative design.

**Return (5:30-8pm):** Scenic drive through Tunisia's green countryside.

### Day 5: Local Life & Beaches

**Morning (9am-12pm):** Explore neighborhoods you missed La Marsa for upscale vibe, local markets. Visit **Belvedere Park** for gardens and zoo, or revisit favorite Medina souks for final shopping.

**Lunch (12-2pm):** Beachfront restaurant at La Marsa Beach. Try *couscous with fish* or grilled seafood.

**Afternoon (2-6pm):** Relax at **La Marsa or Carthage beaches**. Swim in Mediterranean, sunbathe, enjoy beach cafés. Walk the natural sand dunes behind La Marsa Beach.

**Evening (6-9pm):** Return to Sidi Bou Said for golden hour photography and farewell dinner at restaurant with sea view terrace. Traditional **mint tea ceremony** and *bambaloni* (honey donuts) for dessert.

*Alternative:* Visit Cathedral of St. Vincent de Paul, explore modern Tunis neighborhoods, or enjoy hammam (traditional bath) experience.

**Pro Tips:** Tours for Kairouan/El Jem and Dougga/Bulla Regia should be booked at least 24 hours in advance. Prices typically 80-150 TND per person including transport, guide, and sometimes lunch. Private tours cost more but offer flexibility.

## Best Instagram & Photography Locations

### Top Photo Spots in Tunis Area

1. **Sidi Bou Said's Blue Streets:** The ultimate Tunisian Instagram shot! *Best time: 7-9am or 5-7pm* for soft light. Capture iconic blue doors, white walls, bougainvillea flowers. Walk uphill from main square for less-crowded doorways. Café des Délices terrace offers stunning Mediterranean views.
2. **St. Louis Cathedral, Byrsa Hill (Carthage):** Panoramic 360° views over Tunis Gulf, Mediterranean, and Carthage ruins. *Best time: Sunrise (6-8am) or golden hour (5-7pm)*. Bring wide-angle lens for landscape shots.
3. **Bardo Museum Interior:** World-class Roman mosaics in palatial setting. Natural light through skylight illuminates artifacts. Photography allowed (no flash). *Best time: 10am-2pm when sunlight floods galleries.*
4. **Tunis Medina Alleys:** Narrow winding streets, traditional architecture, colorful souks. Perfume market and textile souks especially photogenic. *Best time: Early morning (8-10am) for mystical light and fewer crowds.* Ask permission before photographing shopkeepers.
5. **Antonine Baths (Carthage):** Massive Roman columns reflected in pools, Mediterranean backdrop. *Best time: Late afternoon (4-6pm) for golden light on ancient stones.*
6. **Punic Ports, Carthage:** Circular ancient harbors with modern yacht marina. Aerial/elevated view shows unique circular shape. *Best time: Midday for color contrast between blue water and surrounding landscape.*
7. **Avenue Habib Bourguiba:** Colonial architecture, tree-lined boulevard, Cathedral at one end. *Best time: Blue hour (just after sunset) when streetlights create magical atmosphere.*
8. **Café des Nattes, Sidi Bou Said:** Iconic café entrance with blue-and-white tiles. Always crowded but worth the shot!
9. **La Marsa Beach Dunes:** Natural sand dunes with Mediterranean views, less touristy than other beaches. *Best time: Sunset for dramatic colors.*
10. **Dar El Annabi Interior Courtyards:** Traditional Tunisian architecture, intricate tilework, fountains. Perfect for architectural details. Natural lighting ideal for photos.

### Photography Tips

- **Golden Hours:** Tunisia's strong Mediterranean sun is harsh midday. Shoot early morning or late afternoon for best light
- **Respect Privacy:** Always ask permission before photographing people, especially women and at religious sites
- **Drone Restrictions:** Drones heavily regulated in Tunisia. Check permits before flying near archaeological sites or government buildings
- **Best Season:** Spring (March-May) for green landscapes and flowers, or autumn (September-November) for clear skies
- **Equipment:** Bring wide-angle lens for architecture/landscapes, zoom lens for details. Tripod useful for low-light Medina shots

- **Crowd Avoidance:** Visit Carthage and major sites at opening time (8am) to avoid tour buses

### Electricity & Adapters

**Voltage:** Tunisia uses *230V, 50Hz* electrical system same as Europe.

**Plug Types:** Tunisia primarily uses **Type C** (two round pins) and **Type E** (two round pins with hole for earth pin) plugs the European standard.

**Do You Need an Adapter?**

- **From USA/Canada:** YES North America uses 110V with Type A/B plugs. Bring adapter AND check if your devices handle 230V (most modern electronics do)
- **From UK:** YES UK uses Type G (three rectangular pins). Bring adapter
- **From EU/Europe:** NO European plugs work directly in Tunisia
- **From Australia:** YES Australia uses Type I plugs. Bring adapter

**Where to Buy Adapters:** Available at airports, electronics shops in Tunis, and some hotels (at premium). Better to buy before traveling.

**Voltage Converters:** Modern smartphones, laptops, cameras, and tablets typically accept 110-240V (check device label). Hair dryers, straighteners, and other heat appliances often need converters OR buy dual-voltage versions.

**Hotel Amenities:** Most hotels provide some adapters at reception. Higher-end hotels may have multi-plug sockets. Ask when booking.

*Pro Tip:* Universal travel adapter with USB ports is most convenient charges multiple devices simultaneously and works in Tunisia and worldwide.

### Must-Try Tunisian Dishes & Dining Tips

### Essential Tunisian Foods

**Couscous:** Tunisia's *national dish* steamed semolina grains served with vegetables, chickpeas, and meat (lamb, chicken, or fish). Eaten at least weekly in Tunisian households. Expect generous portions. Traditional Friday lunch dish.

**Brik (Brique):** Crispy deep-fried *triangular pastry* filled with egg, tuna, potatoes, capers, parsley, and harissa. The goal: bite carefully to catch the runny egg yolk! Available at street stalls (1-3 TND). Tunisia's most popular snack.

**Harissa:** Essential spicy paste made from roasted red peppers, chili, garlic, cumin, coriander, and olive oil. Used to flavor stews, couscous, and sandwiches. Ranges from mild to very hot.

**Ojja (Chakchouka):** Eggs poached in spicy tomato-pepper sauce, often with merguez sausage. Similar to shakshuka but Tunisian version typically includes meat. Eaten with fresh bread.

**Fricassee:** Fried bread sandwich filled with tuna, hard-boiled egg, olives, potatoes, capers, and harissa. Popular street food invented by Tunisia's Jewish community in the 1800s.

**Lablabi:** Hearty chickpea soup with garlic, cumin, harissa, olive oil, capers, and stale bread. Comforting winter dish eaten hot. Common at lunch/dinner (not breakfast despite some guides).

**Mechouia Salad:** Grilled vegetable salad (tomatoes, peppers, onions, garlic) with tuna and boiled eggs. Refreshing starter, especially in summer.

**Tunisian Salad:** Fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, peppers light and refreshing. Perfect in hot weather.

**Merguez:** Spicy lamb or beef sausage seasoned with harissa/chili peppers. Grilled and served in sandwiches or with couscous.

**Makroud:** Sweet semolina pastries filled with date paste, deep-fried, and soaked in honey. Traditional dessert.

**Bambaloni:** Sweet fried donuts dipped in honey perfect with coffee or mint tea.

### Dining Culture

- **Mint Tea:** National beverage served everywhere. Often complimentary at museums and traditional houses
- **Hospitality:** Tunisians are generous hosts. You may need 2-3 helpings to show appreciation before hosts believe you're full!
- **Eating Times:** Lunch (12-2pm) is main meal. Dinner (7-9pm) often lighter. During Ramadan, restaurants close during day; iftar (sunset meal) creates special atmosphere
- **Bread Culture:** Fresh bread accompanies every meal used to scoop food
- **Halal:** Pork not available (Muslim country). Alcohol legal but limited to hotels, tourist venues, and some restaurants
- **Tipping:** 10% appreciated at restaurants. Round up taxi fares
- **Water:** Stick to bottled water. Restaurants understand if you ask for "eau minérale"

### Where to Eat

**Medina Restaurants:** Authentic traditional cuisine in atmospheric settings historic dars (houses) converted to restaurants.

**Street Food:** Safest at busy stalls with high turnover. Try fricassee and brik from popular vendors. La Marsa's "Chez L'Ami Mustapha" famous for brik.

**Avenue Habib Bourguiba:** Mix of international and local restaurants, sidewalk cafés.

**Coastal Restaurants:** La Goulette and La Marsa excel at fresh seafood grilled fish, calamari, prawns.

**Sidi Bou Said:** Upscale dining with sea views but tourist prices. Restaurant l'Arabesque recommended.

### Food Costs

- Street food: 1-3 TND
- Casual local restaurant: 8-15 TND per meal
- Mid-range restaurant: 20-40 TND per meal
- Upscale dining: 50+ TND per meal
- Café coffee/tea: 2-5 TND

*Foodie Tip:* Don't miss trying couscous with fish (coastal specialty), mlawi sandwich (roadside), and fresh Tunisian olives. The food around La Marsa's "La SafSaf" area is particularly good for authentic local cuisine.

### Tourist Passes & Combined Tickets

**Carthage Multi-Site Ticket:** One ticket for the main sites (the price has risen in recent years; check at the first entrance). This essential pass grants access to multiple Carthage archaeological sites including Antonine Baths, Byrsa Hill/Carthage Museum, Roman Villas, Punic Ports area, and Tophet. Valid for one day. Since April 2026 there is also a combined Bardo Museum + Carthage ticket (45 TND, rising to 70 TND in January 2027). Excellent value for history enthusiasts. Purchase at any Carthage site entrance.

**No Official City Pass:** Tunisia doesn't currently offer a comprehensive multi-day city pass like many European capitals. However, combined tickets and private tour packages often provide better value than visiting attractions separately.

*Pro Tip:* Many tour companies offer full-day packages visiting Carthage + Sidi Bou Said + Bardo Museum + Medina with transport and guide for 80-150 TND per person often better value than organizing separately, especially for first-time visitors.