



Algeria

POPULATION: 34 million

CAPITAL CITY: Algiers

CURRENCY: Algerian Dinar (AD)

CLIMATE: Algeria is an arid and semi-arid country. The coastal areas experience mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. The Sahara desert has been known to not produce rain in some parts for up to 20 years, with temperatures reaching 55 degrees. During Algeria's summers, a hot Sirocco wind blows, bringing with it dust and sand. Summer is generally from June to September with temperatures of 40 degrees; winter is from October to May with temperatures varying from 6 to 19 degrees.

VISAS: South Africans require a visa to enter Algeria, which can be obtained from the Algeria High Commission in Pretoria.

BUSINESS HOTELS: Algeria has a range of great hotels across the country, with well-known chains such as Holiday Inn, City Lodge, Marriot, Radisson and Ritz Hotels. Beachfront hotels are quite popular as the climate on the coast is usually cooler. There is generally a mini bar, a hair dryer, Internet access, room service, air-conditioning and cable TV, plus tennis courts, an indoor gym, a beauty salon, free parking, shopping facilities, a spa, a restaurant and a swimming pool, and conference and meeting facilities

BUSINESS RESTAURANTS: The hotels cater for à la carte dining with African or international cuisines. Algerian cuisine has a range of influences with food favourites including stews, lamb, vegetables, grains and dried fruits. Algeria's national dish is couscous, which is steamed and then served with meat, vegetables and sauce. The

French have contributed greatly to Algerian food, especially with their aperitifs and sweets. Spices in Algerian cuisine include cumin, caraway, marjoram, coriander and fennel. Typically, lamb and chicken are used as well as fish from the Mediterranean.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Algeria offers a wealth of outdoor adventures, such as cycling, walking, horse-riding and hiking. The country offers unsurpassed natural beauty for the nature lover from the Ahaggar Mountains to the Sahara Desert, to the World Heritage Site of the Tassili n'Ajjer mountain range and the limestone valley of M'Zab. Animal and bird lovers will find a treasure-trove of exploration in the Gouraya National Park, Belezma National Park, Tassili National Park and the Mergueb Nature Reserve, with animals such as leopard, marsh mongoose, fennec, cheetah, red fox, exotic birds and migratory birds. History buffs will find pause for thought in Hammadid, the empire's first capital city, the breathtaking citadel of the Casbah of Algiers, and the town of Tipasa and the Roman ruins of Timgad and Djemila.

AIRLINES: The national carrier is Air Algérie. Airlines that fly into the country are British Airways, KLM, Air France and Alitalia.

AIRPORTS : The main airports can be found at Algiers, Constantine, Annaba and Oran. These airports provide 97% of all airport services and cater for international as well as domestic flights.

GETTING AROUND: Most travel is by car and bus, and the country can be accessed by road or air. Air Algérie offers domestic flights, but pre-booking is advisable, as these can be full. Car hire is the preferred form of travel as it allows for traversing large portions of the country, though most

Situated in North Africa, Algeria is the second-largest country in Africa. The country offers a diverse terrain with sea and mountain landscapes and is bordered by Morocco, Mali, Libya, Tunisia, Niger, the Mediterranean Sea, and the sandy dunes of the Saharan. The desert covers over 80% of the country's land in the south. Algeria is rich in natural resources like petroleum, iron ore, uranium, zinc, lead, natural gas and uranium, yet agriculture still plays a vital role in the economy with cotton, tobacco, olive oil, cereals, figs, cork, barley, wheat, vegetables and citrus fruits as the main exports. Today tourism plays a significant role in the economy as well.

roads are unpaved. Taxis and buses are available, and travel by railway is a safe option.

LANGUAGE: The official language is Arabic, with French and Berber dialects widely spoken.

TRIBES: Algerians are Berber in origin, not Arab. The minority that identifies themselves as Berber live mostly in the mountainous region of Kabylie, east of Algiers.

CONNECTIVITY: Mobile roaming agreements for MTN, Vodacom and Cell C clients are available, with good coverage in urban areas. Internet access is provided at hotels and a few Internet cafes.

HEALTH: Visitors who plan to visit rural areas of the country are advised to wear long sleeves and pants to avoid tick bites. All tap water must be filtered, boiled or disinfected with chemicals. Ensure all beverages are bottled and not served with ice. Fruit and vegetables must be cooked or peeled. Only eat food that is served hot. Do not purchase food from street vendors. Meat and fish must be well-cooked. Avoid potentially toxic fish such as barracuda, red snapper, sea bass, grouper and amberjack. Bilharzia is a risk from rivers, ponds and lakes and it is advisable not to enter them at all. Medical facilities are fair in Algeria, and only accept cash. It is advisable that visitors bring a supply of their chronic medication and a medical kit for emergencies. No health immunisation or vaccination certificates are required of travellers from South Africa.

CONTACTS: Algeria High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 342 5074/75