

# Central West & the Tell



The hills and mountains of the Tunisian Dorsale and the Tell – the high plains north of the Dorsale that were the granary of ancient Rome – offer visitors a variety of captivating options far from the coastal crowds.

The Romans bequeathed to this region a number of exceptional cities, now in ruins but rich in beguiling hints of their prosperous past. The undoubted highlight is Dougga, spread over an enchanting hillside overlooking grain fields and gentle hills. Also spectacular is Sufetula (Sbeitla), which has the feel of a Roman frontier town and is especially magical in the early-morning light.

The Roman cities of Mactaris (Makthar) and Ammædara (Haidra) still evoke the sense of luxury and isolation characteristic of more remote Roman outposts, and serve as poignant symbols of western Tunisia's lonely sense of having been left behind by history.

Less than an hour from Tunis, the Roman cities of Thuburbo Majus and Uthina (Oudhna) also present evocative ruins, though the majority of their most outstanding mosaics are now in Tunis' Bardo Museum. Jugurtha's Table, almost on the Algerian frontier, is a remote, hauntingly beautiful mesa where Berber resistance to Roman rule enjoyed its proudest hour before being swept away.

For fans of urban delights, the friendly city of Le Kef, guarded by a towering kasbah (fort), captures the Tell's irrepressible spirit. With its cobbled streets, cafes that time forgot and panoramic hillside setting, it's one of Tunisia's best-kept secrets.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Exploring glorious, golden **Dougga** (p160), perhaps Tunisia's most enchanting Roman site
- Taking the waters like a Roman in remote **Hamman Mellegue** (p169)
- Wandering among the Roman temples of **Sufetula** (Sbeitla; p176), lit up by morning sunlight
- Chilling in **Le Kef** (p164), an atmospheric hill-top town with a proud multicultural history
- Hiking up **Jugurtha's Table** (p173), a spectacular natural fortress in the middle of nowhere



