**Algeria**

**POP 40.7 MILLION / 213**

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**Why Go?**

Africa’s largest country lies just a short hop from Europe. The north, with its snow-flecked mountains and stunning coastline, is home to urbane and charismatic cities such as Algiers and Constantine, as well as some of the most magnificent Roman sites in existence including Timgad and Djemila, both vast, perfectly preserved Roman towns with barely another tourist in sight.

Algeria’s other big draw is its extraordinary Saharan region. Whether it’s a glimpse of the sand seas that surround Timimoun, or the burnt-red mountains of the far south, these are the desert landscapes of legend.

But, for all its peach-coloured dunes and grand ruins, it’s perhaps the Algerians themselves, who welcome visitors with warmth and curiosity, that are the real highlight of this nation. For accessible adventure and a complex, enthralling cultural odyssey, head for Algeria.

**Best Places to Eat**
- Le Caïd (p57)
- Cafe-Restaurant El Salam (p56)
- Café Tontonville (p57)

**Best Places to Sleep**
- ST Hotel (p56)
- Hôtel el-Djazaïr (p56)
- Hôtel des Princes (p59)

**When to Go**

**Algiers**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>J</td>
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- **Nov–Apr** Less ferocious temperatures mean high season in the Sahara (the autumn date harvest is a bonus).
- **Mar–Jul** The north literally blossoms in the spring; warm, dry days are perfect for exploring Roman sites.
- **Aug** It’s very hot throughout the country and the beaches are busy with local tourists. Avoid the Sahara.
Algiers (Al-Jazaïr) never fails to make an impression. This is a city of rare beauty and of thrilling, disorientating and sometimes brutal contrast. The country’s turbulent history is writ large in the city’s richly textured architecture: wide French-built boulevards and elegant apartments and villas, Socialist-era monuments and public buildings, and an enduring Islamic heart secreted in the steep, hillside Casbah. Labyrinthine streets spill down to the yawning big blue of the Bay of Algiers, sea and sky and green ravines glimpsed at every step. Though people often spend just enough time in Algiers to organise an onward journey, it’s a fascinating place well worth at least a couple of days’ exploration.

**Algeria Highlights**

1. **Djemila** (p58) Listening out for the ghostly footsteps of Roman legionnaires in this beautiful ruined town.
2. **Timgad** (p58) Standing atop the theatre and surveying the ruined grandeur of this vast Roman city.
3. **Hippo Regius** (p58) Picnicking among the flowers surrounded by the tapering columns of the Roman city.
5. **Ghardaïa** (p60) Bargaining for a carpet, peeking at a medieval town and then swimming in the shade of date palms.
6. **Timimoun** (p59) Striking out into the dunes of the Grand Erg Occidental from this red oasis.