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CHAPTER 1: PROFILE

Introduction

Tunisia is situated on North Africa's Mediterranean coast. Geographically, culturally, and politically, it is part of the Maghreb (Arabic for "the West"), the North African region that also includes the modern nations of Libya, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania.^{1, 2} Since ancient times, Tunisia has been a stopping point and a destination for sailors and overland invaders. Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Spaniards, Turks, and French occupied the land until Tunisia's independence in 1956.³ Today, a strong sense of national identity unites a population who are 98% Sunni Muslim, Arabic-language speakers of mixed Arab-Berber descent.^{4, 5}



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Jasmine Revolution protester

Independent Tunisia had only two strong-man presidents in its first 55 years as a republic. Economic development supported a comparatively high standard of living among African nations. However, rising unemployment and poverty, coupled with political repression and corruption, led to a popular revolution in 2011 known as the "Sidi Bouzid Revolt" in the Arab world and as the "Jasmine Revolution" internationally.⁶ In October 2011, interim leaders oversaw the election of a new legislative assembly with elections for new leadership of the reconstituted republic scheduled for 2013.⁷

Geography and Climate

With an area of 163,610 sq km (63,170 sq mi), Tunisia is slightly larger than the state of Georgia.⁸ Its Mediterranean coastline to the north and east is nearly as long as its land boundaries with Algeria to the west and Libya to the southeast. Much of the land was once forest and savanna until the Sahara Desert began expanding. Today several distinct geographic divisions—the mountainous north, the high and low central plains, and the desert south—house a variety of ecosystems, from moist forests to seas of sand. Tunisia's only permanent river, the Medjerda, runs between two northern mountain ranges, flowing northeast from Algeria into the

¹ Harold D. Nelson, "Introduction," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), xix.

² Barnaby Rogerson, "Introduction," in *A Traveller's History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2001), xi-xiii.

³ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Tunisia," 9 March 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5439.htm>

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

⁵ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Tunisia," 9 March 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5439.htm>

⁶ Joan Brodsky Schur, "The Jasmine Revolution: Analyzing Revolutionary Movements in the Classroom," Middle East Outreach Council, no date, <http://www.meoc.us/resources/the-jasmine-revolution>

⁷ Alexis Arieff, "Political Transition in Tunisia," Congressional Research Service, 18 June 2012, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf>

⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

Gulf of Tunis. In the center of the country are large saltwater wetlands known as *chotts*, which were once part of the Mediterranean Sea. Date palm oases among the chotts stand as gateways to the Sahara. One of the Sahara's vast sand seas, the Grand Erg Oriental, covers much of southern Tunisia with dunes averaging 117 m (385 ft) in height.⁹ The Sahara also produces the *sirocco*, hot summer winds that can bring sandstorms to the north of the country.^{10, 11}

A northern and coastal Mediterranean climate of mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers gives way to drier, more extreme weather in the interior plateaus and the desert south. Winter lows in the northern mountains can drop to near freezing at night and only reach daytime highs of 10–12°C (50–54°F). Winter nights in the Sahara can be equally cold, but summer days may reach 50°C (122°F). Annual rainfall averages 80 cm (31 in) in the north but only 10 cm (4 in) in the south. The northwestern mountains may receive 150 cm (60 in) of rain annually, making them the wettest part of North Africa.^{12, 13, 14, 15} The majority of Tunisia's population of 10.7 million live in urban areas that developed in the Mediterranean climatic region.^{16, 17} Those who live in the less hospitable interior have found ways to adapt, from underground cave homes to hilltop *ksour* (granaries).^{18, 19}



© Maria Rosaria Sannino
Desert oasis

⁹ Carol S. Breed et al., "Regional Studies of Sand Seas, Using LANDSAT (ERTS) Imagery," in *A Study of Global Sand Seas* (Geological Survey Professional Paper 1052), ed. Edwin D. McKee (Washington: Government Printing Office for the US Geological Survey, 1979), 336.

¹⁰ Emma Murphy, "Tunisia: Land: Climate," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/609229/Tunisia#toc46597>

¹¹ Elmer R. Reiter, "Handbook for Forecasters in the Mediterranean, Part 1 (ENVPREDRSCHFAC Technical Paper 5–75)," (Monterey, CA: Environmental Prediction Research Facility, Naval Postgraduate School, November 1975), I-11, I-18,

http://www.nrlmry.navy.mil/pubs/forecaster_handbooks/Med_1/Handbook%20for%20Forecasters%20in%20the%20Mediterranean%20Pt.1.pdf

¹² R. Hughes et al., "1.5: Tunisia," in *A Directory of Africa Wetlands* (Wageningen, NL: Ramsar Sites Information Service, Ramsar/Wetlands International, 1992), <http://ramsar.wetlands.org/Portals/15/TUNISIA.pdf>

¹³ National Institute of Statistics-Tunisia, "Statistical Information: Territory: General Data," 2012, <http://www.ins.nat.tn/indexen.php>

¹⁴ National Institute of Statistics-Tunisia, "Statistical Information: Territory: Climatology: Temperature: Annual Temperature Per Main Meteorological Station: Absolute Minimum," 2012, <http://www.ins.nat.tn/indexen.php>

¹⁵ National Institute of Statistics-Tunisia, "Statistical Information: Territory: Climatology: Temperature: Annual Temperature Per Main Meteorological Station: Absolute Maximum," 2012, <http://www.ins.nat.tn/indexen.php>

¹⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

¹⁷ Emma Murphy, "Tunisia: People," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/609229/Tunisia#toc46603>

¹⁸ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, "Gabes, Matmata and the Ksour," in *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 223–225, 232,

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/shop_pickandmix/previews/tunisia-gabes-matmata-the-ksour-preview.pdf

¹⁹ Tore Kjeilen, "Sened Jebel: Village of Berber Caves," *LookLex Encyclopedia*, no date, http://looklex.com/tunisia/sened_j.htm

Major Cities

Tunis

Tunis, the nation's capital and largest city, is more than 3,000 years old and still developing.^{20, 21} It began as a settlement on the southwestern shore of Lake Tunis, an inlet of the Mediterranean Sea. Carthage rose and fell on the lake's opposite shore and is now a high-priced suburb of the modern metropolis. Tunis' Roman history is preserved at the world-famous Bardo Museum, which houses a stellar collection of mosaics.²² In the 7th century, Arabs began construction of the medina (walled old town), now protected as a UNESCO World Heritage site.²³ Ottomans and French expanded the city on reclaimed land to the east.^{24, 25, 26}

The Tunisian revolution reached Tunis in December 2010.²⁷ Protests in January 2011 led to deaths, destruction of government and private property (including the main train station), and an army-enforced curfew.^{28, 29, 30} Since the departure of former president Ben Ali, the post-revolution government has faced continued demonstrations in the city against insults to Islam, economic inequality, and political repression. Violent incidents have brought about temporary states of emergency on several occasions.^{31, 32, 33}



© See Wah Cheng
Sidi Bou Said

²⁰ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 13-14.

²¹ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-5.

²² National Heritage Institute, "The National Museum of Bardo," 16 December 2010, http://www.inp.rnrt.tn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=39&lang=en [webpage translated from French]

²³ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Medina of Tunis," 2012, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/36>

²⁴ Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800–1900* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 34.

²⁵ Paul Sebag, *Tunis: Histoire d'une ville* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), 261.

²⁶ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 65.

²⁷ James L. Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 27.

²⁸ David D. Kirkpatrick, "Protests Spread to Tunisia's Capital, and a Curfew is Decreed," *The New York Times*, 12 January 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/13/world/africa/13tunisia.html?_r=1

²⁹ Al Jazeera, "Army of Streets Amid Tunisia Unrest," 15 January 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/01/2011115135844457245.html>

³⁰ IBN Live, "Anti-govt Protests Intensify in Tunisia," 25 January 2011, <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/antigovt-protests-intensify-in-tunisia/141431-2.html>

³¹ BBC News Africa, "Tunis Declares Curfew after 'Islamist Rioting'," 12 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18416328>

³² Bouazza Ben Bouazza, "Tunisia: 1 Dead, 62 Injured in Riots by Islamists," Associated Press, 13 June 2012, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/tunisia-1-dead-62-injured-riots-islamists>

³³ Mounir Souissi, "Tunisia Seeks to Quell Religious Tension after Unrest," AFP, 13 June 2012, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iWA3YRFouamhLccJVPEsRihrDsCw?docId=CNG.a64e1a6de1eef976ff962261620c8bc6.471>

Sfax

Tunisia's second-largest city is on the east coast opposite the Kerkennah Islands.³⁴ The original Phoenician settlement became a Roman trade center for grain and olive oil. Under Arab rule, Sfax grew as a terminus of the trans-Saharan caravan trade and later as a port for trans-Mediterranean commerce. Ottoman Turks and Barbary pirates moved slaves and gold through the port city before French marines landed in 1881. The French started an industry in Sfax to process and export phosphates from the mines of Gafsa.

Since the 1920s, Sfax's large working class has periodically engaged in labor protests, strikes, and riots.^{35, 36} Sfax workers called a general strike in support of the Tunisian revolution in January 2011.³⁷ Over the years, Sfax's large prison has held a number of high-profile dissidents, including prime minister Hamadi Jebali.^{38, 39, 40} In December 2010, a rapper from Sfax was arrested for lyrics that challenged "Mr. President." The rap song soon became a soundtrack for the revolution.^{41, 42, 43} Afterwards, labor strikes and political protests continued.^{44, 45}

Sousse

Sousse is situated in the Sahel coastal strip on the Gulf of Hammamet, 100 km (60 mi) south of Tunis. The original Phoenician settlement was Hannibal's base in the Second Punic War and later Pompey's headquarters in his battle against Julius Caesar.^{46, 47} Third-century Christians left behind several kilometers of underground catacombs filled



© Damian Entwistle
Sousse medina doorways

³⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Sfax," 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/516005/Sfax>

³⁵ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 85, 98, 112.

³⁶ Nicola Pratt, "Sfax," in *Cities of the Middle East and North Africa: A Historical Encyclopedia*, eds. Michael Dumper and Bruce E. Stanley (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 333.

³⁷ David D. Kirkpatrick, "Protests Spread to Tunisia's Capital, and a Curfew is Decreed," *The New York Times*, 12 January 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/13/world/africa/13tunisia.html?_r=1

³⁸ Matthew S. Gordon, "Sfax," in *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, 2004, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3424602422.html>

³⁹ Eric Goldstein, "Tunisia: Long-Term Solitary Confinement of Political Prisoners," Human Rights Watch, 6 July 2004, 17-19, 22, <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/tunisia0704.pdf>

⁴⁰ Joel Campagna, "Tunisia Report: The Smiling Oppressor," Committee to Protect Journalists, 23 September 2008, <http://cpj.org/reports/2008/09/tunisia-oppression.php>

⁴¹ "El General, the Voice of Tunisia, English Subtitles," YouTube, 10 January 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leGJJ7OouR0>

⁴² Vivienne Walt, "El General and the Rap Anthem of the Mideast Revolution," *Time*, 15 February 2011, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2049456,00.html>

⁴³ Jean-Pierre Filiu, *The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising* (New York: Oxford University Press, 23 November 2011), 37.

⁴⁴ Ahmad Ellali, "Strike in Sfax Train Station Brings Eid Traffic to a Standstill," *TunisiaLive*, 4 November 2011, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2011/11/04/strike-in-sfax-train-station-brings-eid-traffic-to-a-standstill/>

⁴⁵ Adam Le Nevez, "Violence in Tunis Leads to Protests in Regional Cities," *TunisiaLive*, 10 April 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/04/10/violence-in-tunis-leads-to-protests-in-regional-cities/>

⁴⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Sousse," 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/575523/Sousse>

⁴⁷ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, "Sousse," in *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 183.

with 15,000 graves.⁴⁸ Sousse later became the port for the holy city of Kairouan, and its Islamic medina is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.⁴⁹ Sousse's *ribat* (fortified monastery) is an outstanding example of medieval Mediterranean military architecture.⁵⁰ World War II damage led to post-war reconstruction favoring tourism, and the city is now a popular holiday resort with miles of sandy beaches and a marina.⁵¹ However, Sousse's tourism economy has suffered in the wake of the 2011 revolution.⁵² Recent protests in the area have focused on religious issues, such as the right of women to wear the full-face veil known as a *niqab*.⁵³ Disagreements about artistic freedom and respect for Islam preceded violence in June 2012, when a group tried to attack a Sousse art center. A university student later died of wounds to the head.⁵⁴

Kairouan

Kairouan is located on a rocky inland plateau 60 km (36 mi) west of Sousse and 130 km (80 mi) south of Tunis. Tunisians consider Kairouan to be the fourth-holiest site in Islam and worthy of a pilgrimage. One of the Prophet Muhammad's companions, Sidi Sahab, is buried here.⁵⁵ According to popular legend, a well appeared when the city was founded, bringing water from the sacred spring beneath the Grand Mosque in Mecca to the settlement of Kairouan.⁵⁶ The city's entire medina became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988.⁵⁷ Inside the medina, the Grand Mosque of Uqba, originally built in the seventh century, has a minaret 35-m (115-ft) tall. The new Tunisian Islamist organization Ansar al-Sharia uses the mosque as a media symbol and held its second annual meeting in Kairouan in May 2012.^{58, 59, 60}

⁴⁸ Ahmed Jaouadi, "Unearthing the Catacombs of Sousse," *TunisiaLive*, 7 April 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/04/07/unearthing-the-catacombs-of-sousse/>

⁴⁹ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Medina of Sousse," 2012, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/498>

⁵⁰ Ahmed Jaouadi, "Our Guide to Tunisia's UNESCO World Heritage Sites," *TunisiaLive*, 30 May 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/05/30/our-guide-to-tunisias-unesco-world-heritage-sites/>

⁵¹ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, "Around Sousse," in *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 190.

⁵² Seth Sherwood, "Tunisia After the Revolution," *The New York Times*, 5 April 2012,

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2012/04/08/travel/tunisia-after-the-revolution.html?pagewanted=all>

⁵³ Tarek Amara, "Tunisia Islamists Storm University over Veil Ban," *Reuters*, 8 October 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/08/us-tunisia-protest-veil-idUSTRE7971ML20111008>

⁵⁴ Tarek Amara and Lin Noueihed, "Tunisian Salafi Islamists Riot over 'Insulting' Art," *Reuters*, 13 June 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/13/us-tunisia-salafis-clash-idUSBRE85B0XW20120613>

⁵⁵ "Kairouan 1920s [video]," *Travel Film Archive* (Getty Images), 7 May 2008 [upload], <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F3F9aEnJS8&feature=plcp>

⁵⁶ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, "Gabes, Matmata and the Ksour," in *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 195.

⁵⁷ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Kairouan," 2012, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/499>

⁵⁸ Jeffrey R. Halverson, "Extremism and Contested Tunisian Identity in Kairouan," *COMOPS Journal*, 12 October 2011, <http://comops.org/journal/2011/10/12/extremism-and-contested-tunisian-identity-in-kairouan/>

⁵⁹ Houda Trabelsi, "Salafist Congress in Kairouan Draws Thousands," *Magharebia*, 23 May 2012, http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/05/23/feature-01

⁶⁰ Aaron Y. Zelin, "The Salafi Challenge to Tunisia's Nascent Democracy," *Policywatch* 1829, The Washington Institute, 8 December 2011, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-salafi-challenge-to-tunisias-nascent-democracy>

Bizerte

Bizerte is the largest city on Tunisia's northern coast. Phoenicians, Arabs, Spaniards, and pirates occupied the site before the French made it a naval port, connecting Lake Bizerte to the Mediterranean Sea via canal. Bizerte's strategic position near the Straits of Sicily made it a coveted prize during World War II.⁶¹ The French military stayed at the port after granting independence to Tunisia in 1956, and in 1961 more than 1,000 Tunisians died in anti-French protests at the base. The French finally departed Bizerte in 1963.⁶² Bizerte is now a free-trade zone, a regional market center, and a beach resort. Oil refining dominates local industry, followed by phosphate- and iron-ore processing.⁶³



© Jay Owens
Bizerte harbor

History

Berbers

Toward the end of the New Stone Age about 2500 B.C.E., a broad migration of peoples occurred from the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean.^{64, 65, 66} These peoples, later called Berbers, spread throughout North Africa. Some settled in the fertile mountain valleys of the north. Others adapted the horse (introduced to North Africa ca. 1200 B.C.E.) and moved south into the Sahara.⁶⁷ The name "Berber" may derive from Greek *barabaroï*, Latin *barbari*, or Arabic *barbar*, derogatory terms for linguistic and cultural outsiders. Berber peoples refer to themselves as Imazighen ("free men" or "noble ones").^{68, 69, 70}



© Aleksandar Cocek
Berber woman

⁶¹ Historical Division, U.S. War Department, "To Bizerte with the II Corps, 23 April–13 May 1943 (American Forces in Action series)," (Washington: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 10 July 2001),

<http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/bizerte/bizerte-fm.htm>

⁶² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Bizerte," 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/67346/Bizerte>

⁶³ Tore Kjeilen, "Tunisia: Cities and Towns: Bizerte," *LookLex Encyclopædia*, no date.,

<http://looklex.com/e.o/bizerte.htm>

⁶⁴ Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 4.

⁶⁵ Jamie Stokes and Anthony Gorman, eds., "Berbers (Amazigh)," in *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Africa and the Middle East* (New York: Facts on File [Infobase Publishing], 2009), 113.

⁶⁶ Hsain Ilahiane, "Introduction," in *Historical Dictionary of the Berbers, Imazighen* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press [Rowman and Littlefield], 2006), xxxi.

⁶⁷ Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller's History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2001), 8.

⁶⁸ Jamie Stokes and Anthony Gorman, eds., "Berbers (Amazigh)," in *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Africa and the Middle East* (New York: Facts on File [Infobase Publishing], 2009), 112.

⁶⁹ Hsain Ilahiane, "Introduction," in *Historical Dictionary of the Berbers, Imazighen* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press [Rowman and Littlefield], 2006), xxx-xxxxi.

⁷⁰ Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller's History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 1998), 8.

Ancient Empires

The Phoenicians built the first ancient empire in Tunisia.⁷¹ Sea traders and colonizers, they hailed from maritime city-states along the coast of modern Israel, Lebanon, and Syria.⁷² Over time, their settlements linked Phoenicia with silver and gold mines in Numidia (Algeria) and southern Spain, as well as with Phoenician colonies on the islands of Corsica and Sardinia.⁷³ According to legend, Princess Elissa Dido of Tyre founded Carthage on the shore of Lake Tunis in 814 B.C.E. Carthage was the foremost power in North Africa for 500 years, until the expanding Roman republic challenged Phoenicia for its European lands and Mediterranean trade in the Punic Wars (Punic is Latin for “Phoenician”).⁷⁴ At the end of the third war (149-146 B.C.E.), the Romans burned the settlements, destroyed the farms, and enslaved the people of Carthage.⁷⁵

For the next 500 years Romans brought the Pax Romana, the Peace of Rome, to their new province named “Africa.”^{76, 77} Carthage was rebuilt and became the central city of the western Roman Empire, second only to Rome itself.⁷⁸ North Africa’s earliest Christian communities formed in Carthage during this time, including the schismatic Donatist sect that challenged the Roman pope and remained influential until the arrival of Islam.^{79, 80, 81} Rome’s secular power in North Africa ended with the invasion of Vandals from northern Europe in 429.⁸² Byzantines re-claimed Mediterranean North Africa for their empire in the 500s, but Byzantine rule gave way to Arabs in the next century.^{83, 84}



© Jay Morris
Carthage remains

⁷¹ Jamie Stokes and Anthony Gorman, eds., “Phoenicians,” in *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Africa and the Middle East* (New York: Facts on File [Infobase Publishing], 2009), 569.

⁷² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Phoenicia,” 2012,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/457123/Phoenicia>

⁷³ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 5.

⁷⁴ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 27.

⁷⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Third Punic War,” 2012,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/483533/Third-Punic-War>

⁷⁶ Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa* (Hakluyt Society, 1896; Harvard University, 2007), 192.

⁷⁷ Gerald Zarr, “Chapter 1: Land and People,” in *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 22.

⁷⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Africa,” 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/8126/Africa>

⁷⁹ John Iliffe, *Africa: the History of a Continent*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38.

⁸⁰ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 10-11.

⁸¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Donatist,” 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/169009/Donatist>

⁸² Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller’s History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 1998), 99, 105.

⁸³ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 29-30.

⁸⁴ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 11.

Islamic Rule

Muslim conquerors arrived as early as 647 and for nearly a thousand years a succession of Islamic rulers claimed Tunisian territories. Religious and ethnic differences led each new group to challenge and succeed the rival group in power.^{85, 86}

Among the first to arrive were the Umayyads, who conquered Carthage and founded Tunis as a naval base.⁸⁷ Kharijite Berbers from North Africa, who followed a version of Islam that did not require leaders to be Arabs, resisted the Umayyads for decades.^{88, 89}

In 750, the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad replaced the Umayyads.⁹⁰ Abbasids appointed the Berber leader Ibrahim al-Aghlab to govern Africa.⁹¹ His followers and descendants, the Aghlabids, ruled during a Golden Age of art, architecture, and literature, as well as religious and cultural tolerance for affluent Christians and Jews in Tunis and Kairouan.^{92, 93} However, in the 10th century Fatimid missionaries of the Shi'ite sect of Islam arrived from Egypt and encouraged local Berbers to challenge the Aghlabids.^{94, 95}

The Fatimids (and all Shi'ite Muslims) venerated Ali, a successor by birthright to the Islamic caliphate. However, Sunni Muslims had followed Ali's rival as the more capable caliph and regarded the veneration of any person as unorthodox and heretical.^{96, 97}

Although the Fatimids gave the governance of Tunisia to Berber Zirids, anti-Shi'ite rioting led the Zirids to return to Sunni practices. In response, the Fatimids sent the Beni Hilal ("children of the moon") west across North Africa. In 1057 the Hilalians, who were Arab Bedouin nomads,

⁸⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Kairouan," 2012,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/485671/Kairouan>

⁸⁶ Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, "North Africa: From the Arab Conquest to 1830," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2012,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/418538/North-Africa#toc46482>

⁸⁷ Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller's History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 1998), 123-124.

⁸⁸ Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller's History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 1998), 123-124.

⁸⁹ Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 13-14.

⁹⁰ Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 14.

⁹¹ Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller's History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 1998), 140.

⁹² Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 14-17.

⁹³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Aghlabid Dynasty," 2012,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/9138/Aghlabid-dynasty>

⁹⁴ Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller's History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 1998), 147-148.

⁹⁵ Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 18.

⁹⁶ Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 18.

⁹⁷ Phyllis G. Jestice, "Veneration of Holy People," in *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, ed. Phyllis G. Jestice (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 888.

overran Kairouan. Their presence from Libya to Morocco eventually replaced Berber farming with Bedouin herding and produced a lasting cultural Arabization^{98,99}

In the 12th century, Berber Almohads from Morocco invaded Tunisia. The Almohads appointed an autonomous viceroy of Africa, and his Hafsid descendants governed for more than 300 years.¹⁰⁰ Tunis became an important center of Maghrebi Islamic learning and absorbed many Jews and Muslims who were expelled during the Catholic conquest of Spain.¹⁰¹

The Ottoman Empire

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Spanish were competing with the Turkish Ottoman Empire for control of the Mediterranean. The Barbary pirate Khair al-Din, or Barbarossa (“Red Beard”), operated from the Tunisian island of Jerba. He took Tunis for the Ottomans, defeating the Hafsids who had allied with Spain.¹⁰² By 1587, Ottoman governates stretched across the Maghreb. Armies maintained order and collected taxes, while navies collected ransoms and slaves. Although trade eventually replaced piracy as Tunisia’s main source of revenue, the United States and European powers paid the bey (governor) of Tunis for immunity from piracy until the early 1800s.^{103, 104}



© Richard Mortel
Mosque in Jerba

The French Protectorate

The Tunisian leadership spent much of the 19th century in fear of foreign intervention, as France seized neighboring Algeria and Britain took Cyprus. Tunisian fears were realized in 1881, when 40,000 French soldiers and sailors arrived to quell native incursions from Tunisia into Algeria. Two years later, the Marsa Convention introduced a military draft and the French legal code to its new protectorate, leaving only personal matters to the Islamic shari’a courts.^{105, 106} The French focused on economic reforms to benefit France, such as regulating finance and banking, industrializing agriculture, and developing transportation infrastructure.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁸ Barnaby Rogerson, *A Traveller’s History of North Africa* (Brooklyn, NY and Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 1998), 154-156.

⁹⁹ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 19.

¹⁰⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Hafsid Dynasty,” 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9038760/Hafsid-Dynasty>

¹⁰¹ Rebecca Weiner, “Sephardim,” Jewish Virtual Library, 2012, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Sephardim.html>

¹⁰² Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 21-22.

¹⁰³ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 22-25.

¹⁰⁴ Christopher Hitchens, “Jefferson Versus the Muslim Pirates,” *City Journal* (Spring 2007), http://www.city-journal.org/html/17_2_urbanities-thomas_jefferson.html

¹⁰⁵ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 30-32.

¹⁰⁶ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, “Chapter 2: History,” in *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 33-34.

¹⁰⁷ Gerald Zarr, “Chapter 1: Land and People,” in *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 43.

In the 1900s, a movement of French-educated “Young Tunisians” began to resist French occupation. By 1934, Habib Bourguiba established the Neo-Destour (“New Constitution”) nationalist party. On 9 April 1938, French forces fired on nationalist protesters, resulting in the deaths of more than a hundred Tunisians (an event now remembered annually as “Martyrs’ Day”). The French government banned the party, arresting and deporting its leader Bourguiba.^{108, 109} However, through his continuing efforts abroad, support for Tunisian independence grew internationally and at home with the help of such organizations as the trade union *Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens* (UGTT).^{110, 111}

Independence

Political crises throughout North Africa moved France to grant independence to Tunisia in 1956.¹¹² Initially appointed prime minister, Bourguiba became the country’s first president in 1957 when the monarchy was abolished and Tunisia became a republic.¹¹³ Bourguiba ruled the nation as president for 30 years and worked to make Tunisia a secular and modern state on a par with western Europe. While the constitution made Islam the nation’s religion, Bourguiba separated church from state by abolishing the Islamic courts and religious schools and by confiscating land held by religious institutions.^{114, 115, 116} He also introduced the Personal Status Code of 1956 that gave women equal rights under the law, notably in marriage, voting, education, and employment.^{117, 118} Other reforms included the introduction of universal primary education and a public health system.¹¹⁹



© Steve Conover
Tunisian flag

By the mid-1970s, however, slowing economic and democratic development created opposition to Bourguiba’s government among student groups and labor unions such as the UGTT, leading

¹⁰⁸ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 43.

¹⁰⁹ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 33.

¹¹⁰ Larry A. Barrie, “Union Generale Des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT),” in *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, 2004, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3424602775.html>

¹¹¹ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 124.

¹¹² Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 125-129.

¹¹³ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 51.

¹¹⁴ Emma Murphy, “Tunisia: History,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/609229/Tunisia>

¹¹⁵ Gerald Zarr, “Chapter 1: Land and People,” in *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 48.

¹¹⁶ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, “Chapter 2: History,” in *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 37.

¹¹⁷ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, “Habib Bourguiba: Presidency,” 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/75869/Habib-Bourguiba/278559/Presidency>

¹¹⁸ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, “Chapter 2: History,” in *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 37.

¹¹⁹ Gerald Zarr, “Chapter 1: Land and People,” in *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 47-48.

to the formation of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) in 1981.^{120, 121, 122} Government crackdowns on mass demonstrations against high food prices and unemployment in 1978 and 1984 ultimately led to the fall of the regime when the 1987 arrest, trial, and conviction of MTI leaders resulted in the death penalty for Islamists. Fearing a popular uprising if the Islamists were killed, Prime Minister Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali took power in a bloodless coup on 7 November 1987 after doctors deemed Bourguiba unfit to rule.^{123, 124}

Once in office, President Ben Ali invited opposition and civil society groups to sign a National Pact that acknowledged Tunisia's Arab and Islamic heritage, reaffirmed the Personal Status Code, and promised respect for human rights and personal freedoms.^{125, 126} He then tried to maintain stability and power by controlling political opposition—which included denying legal status to opposition parties, as well as arresting and convicting its members.^{127, 128} The Ben Ali regime also suppressed freedoms of speech, the press, and association.^{129, 130}

Unemployed and impoverished Tunisians continued demonstrations against the government in 2008 and 2010, becoming angry over reports that President Ben Ali and his family had been embezzling public funds and assets.^{131, 132, 133}

Revolution and Its Aftermath

Political repression—along with rising food prices, corruption, and high unemployment among Tunisia's educated younger generation—ultimately led to revolt. On 17 December 2010, a fruit vendor in the provincial town of Sidi Bouzid set himself on fire after police confiscated his cart. The self-immolation triggered nationwide protests, forcing President Ben Ali to flee the country on 14 January 2011. Later that year, the Islamist political party al-Nahda (“the Renaissance”),

¹²⁰ David S. Sorenson, *An Introduction to the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press [Perseus Books Group], 2008), 374.

¹²¹ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165-166.

¹²² Aidan Lewis, “Profile: Tunisia’s Ennahda Party,” BBC News Africa, 25 October 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15442859>

¹²³ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165-166, 169-170, 175, 209.

¹²⁴ David S. Sorenson, *An Introduction to the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press [Perseus Books Group], 2008), 372-373.

¹²⁵ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 187-189.

¹²⁶ Andrew Borowiec, *Modern Tunisia: A Democratic Apprenticeship* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 74.

¹²⁷ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 193-194.

¹²⁸ Kamel Labidi, “Tunisia: Independent but Not Free,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2006, <http://mondediplo.com/2006/03/04tunisia>

¹²⁹ Christopher Alexander, *Tunisia: Stability and Reform in the Modern Maghreb* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 64.

¹³⁰ BBC News Africa, “Tunisia Profile: Timeline,” 14 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14107720>

¹³¹ Alexis Arief, “Political Transition in Tunisia (RS21666),” Congressional Research Service, 16 December 2011, 15, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf>

¹³² *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, “Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali,” 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/60277/Zine-al-Abidine-Ben-Ali>

¹³³ Kamel Labidi, “Tunisia: Independent but Not Free,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2006, <http://mondediplo.com/2006/03/04tunisia>

founded in 1981 as the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI), won the most seats in elections for a new Constituent Assembly tasked with producing a new constitution by the end of 2012.^{134, 135}

In mid-2011, Tunisian courts tried and convicted Ben Ali in absentia for committing economic crimes and causing civilian deaths, while the search continued for national assets that his family hid in foreign real estate, yachts, planes, and bank accounts.^{136, 137, 138} Protests in 2012, sometimes turning violent, have focused on obtaining more jobs and better wages, more public respect for Islam, and more government support for civil rights and freedom of expression.^{139, 140, 141}



© Nasser Nouri
Protests against the president

Government

The beginning of Tunisian self-governance predates French colonization and includes the 1857 Fundamental Pact (a civil rights charter) and the 1861 *destour* (“constitution”), the first constitution of the Arabic-speaking world.¹⁴² Since 1956, independent Tunisia has operated as a republic with an elected president and national legislative assembly. Suffrage is universal at age 18, except for active-duty government security forces.¹⁴³ Until the 2011 revolution, the president’s political party controlled the government. Since the revolution, more than 100 political parties have achieved legal status, and the interim government is a coalition dominated by the formerly outlawed Islamist party al-Nahda.^{144, 145}

¹³⁴ Alexis Arieff, “Political Transition in Tunisia (RS21666): Summary,” Congressional Research Service, 18 June 2012, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf> Summary

¹³⁵ Aidan Lewis, “Profile: Tunisia’s Ennahda Party,” BBC News Africa, 25 October 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15442859>

¹³⁶ Agence Presse France, “Tunisia Seizes Dozens of Ben Ali Yachts and Cars: Report,” Google News, 2 February 2012, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jkDK2ZM0AZYqaPFxVn-pwXDRmdcg?docId=CNG.024359129817f80d27d8ccd84469c668.51/>

¹³⁷ Tarek Amara, “Tunisian Court Sentences Ben Ali, Security Chiefs over Killings,” Reuters, 13 June 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/13/us-tunisia-benali-sentence-idUSBRE85C1CZ20120613>

¹³⁸ Robert F. Worth, “Obstacles Mar Quest for Arab Dictators’ Assets,” *The New York Times*, 7 June 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/08/world/middleeast/libya-egypt-and-tunisia-try-to-recover-assets.html?pagewanted=1&tntemail=y&r=4&emc=tnt>

¹³⁹ BBC News Africa, “Tunisian Women Protest to Demand Equality,” 14 August 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19253289>

¹⁴⁰ BBC News Business, “Freedom of Expression in ‘New’ Tunisia,” 20 May 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-18134904>

¹⁴¹ BBC News Africa, “Tunisia Shaken by ‘Islamist Protests,’” 12 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18416327>

¹⁴² Emma Murphy, “Tunisia: The Growth of European Influence,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/609229/Tunisia/46620/The-growth-of-European-influence>

¹⁴³ Central Intelligence Agency, “Algeria,” in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ag.html>

¹⁴⁴ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Tunisia,” 9 March 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5439.htm>

¹⁴⁵ Aidan Lewis, “Profile: Tunisia’s Ennahda Party,” BBC News Africa, 25 October 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15442859>

While the 1959 constitution designated the president as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the military serves the nation, not the president, as demonstrated when the army refused a presidential order to fire on protestors during the 2011 revolution.^{146, 147} Former president Ben Ali (who served as a security chief before taking the presidency) controlled an internal security apparatus that carried out political surveillance and repression, which the interim government has moved to disband.^{148, 149, 150} Civil and criminal law is patterned after the French legal system, with some personal matters shaped by shari'a (Islamic law). Since the revolution, conservative Islamists have tried to increase the role of shari'a in the new constitution, with little success to date. The trials of some Ben Ali-era officials have called into question the effectiveness of post-revolution judicial reforms.^{151, 152}



© David Weekly
Tunis government building

Media

Tunisia has comparatively well-developed telecommunications infrastructure for North Africa.^{153, 154} Dozens of print, radio, and television broadcasters provide information and entertainment in Arabic, French, and English.¹⁵⁵ The mobile phone count (11 million in 2009) exceeds the national population, and the Internet connects some 3.5 million Tunisians domestically and internationally.¹⁵⁶ Tunisians can browse Google in their local language and domain, and almost 2 million use Facebook.^{157, 158}



© Wieland Van Dijk
Rise of Facebook

¹⁴⁶ David D. Kirkpatrick, "In Tunisia, Clashes Continue as Power Shifts a Second Time," *The New York Times*, 15 January 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/world/africa/16tunis.html>

¹⁴⁷ Jane's, "Security, Tunisia," in *Sentinel Security Assessment – North Africa*, 30 January 2012.

¹⁴⁸ BBC News Africa, "Tunisia Interim Leaders Dissolve Secret Police Agency," 7 March 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12669461>

¹⁴⁹ Querine Hanlon, "Security Sector Reform in Tunisia: A Year After the Jasmine Revolution (Special Report 304)," U.S. Institute of Peace, March 2012, 6, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/SR304.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ Jane's, "Security and Foreign Forces, Tunisia," in *Sentinel Security Assessment – North Africa*, 20 April 2012.

¹⁵¹ Tarek Amara, "Tunisian Court Sentences Ben Ali, Security Chiefs over Killings," Reuters, 13 June 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/13/us-tunisia-benali-sentence-idUSBRE85C1CZ20120613>

¹⁵² Human Rights Watch, "Tunisia: Q&A on the Trial of Ben Ali, Others for Killing Protestors," 11 June 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/06/11/tunisia-qa-trial-ben-ali-others-killing-protestors#1>

¹⁵³ Paul Budde Communication Pty Ltd, "Tunisia – Telcoms, Mobile and Broadband," December 2011, http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/1191497/tunisia_telecoms_mobile_and_broadband

¹⁵⁴ Opennetinitiative.net, "Tunisia," 7 August 2009, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/tunisia>

¹⁵⁵ *Mondo Times*, "Tunisia National News Media," 2012, <http://www.mondotimes.com/1/world/tn/341/majormedia>

¹⁵⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

¹⁵⁷ Catharine Smith, "Google Launches New Domains in Iraq, Tunisia," *Huffington Post*, 1 April 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/31/google-launches-new-domai_n_843362.html

¹⁵⁸ Aidan Lewis, "Tunisia Protests: Cyber War Mirrors Unrest on Streets," BBC News, 14 January 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12180954>

Pre-revolution Tunisia came under heavy criticism for its censorship of media technologies and lack of press freedom.^{159, 160} Despite the government's tight restrictions on Internet usage, social media appear to have been an important tool of protesters.^{161, 162} Tunisians are now debating the ethical and religious limits on freedom of expression. The government announced the lifting of restrictions on information in spring 2011 but punished the heads of both private and public broadcasting organizations in 2012. The owner of a private television station was fined for broadcasting "Persepolis," a cartoon deemed insulting to Islam, while the director of a national news channel was fired for including a member of Ben Ali's (now outlawed) political party on a talk show.^{163, 164, 165} In July 2012 the National Authority for the Reform of Information and Communication shut itself down, claiming that the government failed to implement media reforms.¹⁶⁶

Economy

Tunisia's economy has diversified from a traditional emphasis on agriculture to include industrial and service sectors. Mining, manufacturing, banking, tourism, farming, and fishing all have contributed to the country's 5% average economic growth rate over the past 40 years.¹⁶⁷ Since independence, the government has applied both socialist and neoliberal approaches to manage the economy. Funding for water and power infrastructure, price subsidies, education, and public-sector employment helped establish a modest but rising standard of living for a healthy, well-educated workforce. It also created high expectations for opportunities and services in a country of limited resources and revenues. When the country faced inflation and growing budget and trade deficits, the government acted to liberalize (privatize) the economy, increase foreign investment, and reduce public welfare spending. These actions, according to some analysts, increased corruption, the unequal distribution of wealth, unemployment, and poverty. Regional socioeconomic imbalance between the prosperous coast and the impoverished interior also grew. These problems fueled the 2011 revolution. The difficulties of resolving them are



© Jay Owens
Tunisia agricultural market

¹⁵⁹ Opennetinitiative.net, "Tunisia," 7 August 2009, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/tunisia>

¹⁶⁰ Eric Goldstein, "A Middle-Class Revolution," *Foreign Policy*, 18 January 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/18/a_middle_class_revolution?page=0.0

¹⁶¹ David D. Kirkpatrick, "Amid Rioting, Tunisia Closes Universities," *The New York Times*, 10 January 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/11/world/africa/11tunisia.html?ref=tunisia>

¹⁶² Angela Charlton, "Tunisian Bloggers Win Online Media Ward," *Washington Post*, 11 March 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/11/AR2011031102643.html>

¹⁶³ Pasha Magid, "Director of Tunisian National TV Fired for Inviting Ex-RCD Member Onscreen," *TunisiaLive*, 1 July 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/07/01/director-of-tunisian-national-tv-fired-for-inviting-ex-rcd-member-onscreen/>

¹⁶⁴ Reporters Without Borders, "State Media Independence Threatened by Non-Transparent Appointments," 3 July 2012, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4ffead622.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ Mounir Souissi, "Tunisia Media Authority Shuts Down, Citing Censorship," *Agence Presse France/Google News*, 4 July 2012, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5giGQNiWxNhaUFk8avn-oW6AN7N9Q?docId=CNG.3d4dfb998642cb4dc07e4b704572326d.481>

¹⁶⁶ BBC News Africa, "Tunisia Media Commission Resigns over Press Freedom," 5 July 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18717651>

¹⁶⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

testing the new government. Whether the people have the patience to wait for incremental economic changes over the long term is a concern to many analysts.

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Most Tunisians are Arabic-speaking Sunni Muslims descended from Berbers, Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Spaniards, Turks, and others who have intermarried and assimilated into a shared society and culture. Ethnicity is typically mixed and rarely a source of social conflict. A few Berber groups, who settled in the far south or in the hills near the Algerian border, retain a distinct ethnic identity, reinforced by some monolingualism among their Berber language speakers.^{168, 169, 170, 171, 172}



© Daniel Burgui Iguzkiza
Old man drinking tea

Another ethnic group that exists as a trace culture today is the Jews of Jerba. Once a lively colony, most emigrated to the state of Israel in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁷³ Many French and Italian colonists also left Tunisia in the early years after independence. Sub-Saharan Africans may be descendants of slaves or migrant workers.¹⁷⁴

Several varieties of the Arabic language co-exist in Tunisia. Classical Arabic is preserved in the Quran and studied at theological and literary institutes.¹⁷⁵ Modern Standard Arabic is the language of media, government, and public education. Tunisian Arabic, also known as Darija or Tounsi, is one of the dialects of Western Arabic, which is spoken throughout the Maghreb.¹⁷⁶ From Morocco to Libya, Western Arabic speakers will likely understand each other, but they may not be understood by visitors from the Arabian peninsula. For the learner of Arabic, Darija is distinguished by loanwords from French, Italian, Spanish, Berber, and Turkish.¹⁷⁷ Darija is not

¹⁶⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

¹⁶⁹ M. Paul Lewis, ed., "Nafusi," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=jbn

¹⁷⁰ Zouhir Gabsi, "An Outline of Shilha (Berber) Vernacular of Douiret (Southern Tunisia)," (thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2003), <http://arrow.uws.edu.au:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/uws:573>

¹⁷¹ Moha Ennaji, "Aspects of Multilingualism in the Maghreb," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 87 (1991), 7-14.

¹⁷² Maarten Kossmann and B. Grimes, "Berber Languages," in *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, ed. William J. Frawley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 218-221.

¹⁷³ Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Tunisia: Demography," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2248-2249.

¹⁷⁴ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 85-86.

¹⁷⁵ Keith Walters, "Fergie's Prescience: The Changing Nature of Diglossia in Tunisia," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 163 (2003), 77-109.

¹⁷⁶ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 313.

¹⁷⁷ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 154-155.

written in Arabic script but rather transliterated into other alphabets.¹⁷⁸ Textbooks for foreigners use the Tunis dialect of Darija.¹⁷⁹

While Arabic is the official language of Tunisia, French continues to be a second language of government, business, and science.¹⁸⁰ Street signs and government websites are in Arabic, French, and sometimes English.¹⁸¹ In recent decades, English has become a second foreign language in the school curriculum.^{182, 183}

¹⁷⁸ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 313.

¹⁷⁹ M. Paul Lewis, ed., "Languages of Tunisia," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=tn

¹⁸⁰ Emma Murphy, "Tunisia: The Arts," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/609229/Tunisia>

¹⁸¹ Jacques Leclerc, "Tunisie: 4.5 Les Langues de L'Affichage," *L'aménagement Linguistique dans le Monde*, 2012, <http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/afrique/tunisie.htm>

¹⁸² John Battenburg, "English Versus French: Language Rivalry in Tunisia," *World Englishes* 16:2 (July 1997), 281–290, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-971X.00062/abstract>

¹⁸³ Max de Lotbinière, "Tunisia Turns to a New Language Partner," *Guardian Weekly*, 5 February 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/feb/06/tunisia-tefl>

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Tunisia is located on North Africa's Mediterranean coast.
TRUE
 Since ancient times, Tunisia has been a stopping point and a destination for sailors and overland invaders. Phoenicians, Romans, Spaniards, Turks, and French occupied the land that is part of the North African region known as the Maghreb.

2. The Islamic caliphates and dynasties that ruled Tunisia for almost 1,000 years were all descended from Muhammad and seated in his homeland of Arabia.
FALSE
 Caliphates ruled from Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Marrakech. Only the Shi'ite Fatimids emphasized descent from Muhammad. Important Berber dynasties were Aghlabids, Zirids, Almohads, and Hafsids.

3. After 30 years in office, Habib Bourguiba lost the 1986 presidential election to Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.
FALSE
 When President Bourguiba demanded the executions of political opponents, doctors found him unfit to rule. Following this, Ben Ali took power in a bloodless coup.

4. As a French colony, Tunisia adopted the first constitution of the Arab-speaking world.
FALSE
 Prior to the beginning of French colonization in 1881, Tunisia adopted the first constitution of the Arab-speaking world in 1861. Since 1956, independent Tunisia has operated as a republic with an elected president and national assembly.

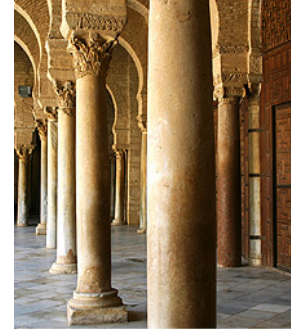
5. The political party al-Nahda ("Renaissance") began as the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI).
TRUE
 The Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) opposed the Bourguiba and Ben Ali governments. Renamed al-Nahda, the group won the most seats in the first post-revolution election.

CHAPTER 2: RELIGION

Introduction

Independent Tunisia may be a secular state, but it is also a Muslim nation. Some 98% of the Tunisian population identify themselves as Muslims, and Islam shapes their lives. Historically significant communities of Christians and Jews have dwindled to less than 2% of the population. Today they enjoy greater tolerance in Tunisia than in other Arab countries, perhaps due to their low, non-threatening numbers, as well as to constitutional safeguards and the religious moderation of most Tunisians.

Since the 2011 revolution, differences among Tunisian Muslims have become pronounced in public discourse. Sunnis, Shi'ites, Ibadis, Sufis, and Salafists disagree about the role of Islam in government, and about the roles of religion and government in relation to gender equity and civil rights. Protests and demonstrations highlighting these issues have become violent on several occasions. Links between extreme Islamists and terrorist organizations are a further concern.¹⁸⁴



© John Whitaker
Kairouan Great Mosque

Islam

The Arabic term *islam* means “to submit” or “to surrender.” Thus, a Muslim is one who submits to the will of Allah, the one true God, according to Islamic ideology.¹⁸⁵ Their holy book is the Quran, which followers believe was revealed to the last of the prophets, Muhammad, in the late seventh century C.E. Muslims also adhere to the *sunna* (teachings) and *hadith* (sayings) of Muhammad, who is held to be the last of the prophets to follow in the monotheistic tradition of Abraham (Ibrahim). Islam has five basic tenets or pillars: giving charity to the poor (*zakat*), praying five times a day (*salat*), fasting during the month of Ramadan (*sawm*), declaring one's faith in Allah (*shahada*), and embarking on a pilgrimage to Mecca if possible (*hajj*).¹⁸⁶ Mecca is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the location of the holiest of Islamic sites, the Kaaba.



© Bellyglad / flickr.com
Mosque interior, Kairouan

Forms of Islam

Most Tunisians are Sunni Muslims.¹⁸⁷ Sunni is the term that came to be used for those Muslims who did not follow the leaders of another Islamic sect, the Shi'ites, which split from the Muslim community in the 7th century. In a disagreement over succession, Shi'ite Muslims followed the

¹⁸⁴ Alexis Arieff, “Political Transition in Tunisia (RS21666),” Congressional Research Service, 18 June 2012, 4-6, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ Frederick Mathewson Deny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), 177.

¹⁸⁶ Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), 118-136.

¹⁸⁷ B.A. Robinson, “Sharia Law within Sunni Islam: A Brief Introduction,” Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, 11 November 2011, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/islsharia.htm>

bloodline of the Prophet Muhammad, while the remaining community chose successive caliphs (leaders) based upon their abilities.¹⁸⁸ Sunni Islam then emerged as the majority branch of Islam, currently representing 80 to 90% of the worldwide Muslim community.¹⁸⁹

The Shi'a-Sunni schism has bloodied many in the Islamic world, including Muslim sects of Fatimids and Zirids in Tunisia. In the 20th century, Tunisian scholar Muhammad al-Tijani al-Samawi inspired a small Shi'ite resurgence.^{190, 191} A secretive group of Shi'ites, presumably radicalized by the 1979 Iranian revolution, is estimated at 10,000.¹⁹²

Other forms of Islam also impact Tunisian life. A North African sect, the Kharijites, has attracted Berbers with its doctrine that the caliph need not be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, nor an Arab, nor a member of the elite.¹⁹³ A population of Ibadi Muslims, an outgrowth of the Kharijites, survives among the Berber speakers on Jerba Island.¹⁹⁴

Sufism, a mystical approach to Islam, has influenced both Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims.¹⁹⁵ In Tunisia, the veneration of holy figures, known as maraboutism, grew from Berber beliefs and practices, folk Islam, and Sufi mysticism. Marabouts are healers who perform miracles and confer blessings on sages or holy warriors. Their *zawiya* (graves), found throughout Tunisia, are sites of pilgrimages and local festivals, where believers come seeking *baraka* (spiritual blessings) or healing from infirmity.^{196, 197}



© Yovanson / flickr.com
Great Mosque in Sousse

Another group, Salafists, are fundamentalist Muslims whose beliefs have developed as a return to the Quran, the *sunna*, and the exemplary behavior of the ancestral *salaf*, the “righteous ancestors of Islam.”^{198, 199, 200} While awaiting a new constitution, Salafists have challenged the interim government of Tunisia, demonstrated for

¹⁸⁸ Fred Donner, “Chapter 1: Muhammad and the Caliphate,” in *Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John Esposito (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15-18.

¹⁸⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Religions,” in *the World Factbook*, no date, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html>

¹⁹⁰ Imam Reza (A.S.) Network, “Shia Muslims Around the World,” 2012, <http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?id=3591>

¹⁹¹ Farrag Ismail, “Tunisia Islamist Trends Back to the Forefront,” *Al Arabiya News*, 20 January 2011, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/01/20/134294.html>

¹⁹² Mehdi Mahbrouk, “Tunisia: The Radicalisation of Religious Policy,” in *Islamist Radicalisation in North Africa*, ed. George Joffe (New York: Routledge, 2012), 63.

¹⁹³ Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 4.

¹⁹⁴ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 269.

¹⁹⁵ A. J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization: The Moslem World Depicted Through Its Literature* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), 218.

¹⁹⁶ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia: Religion,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2256-2257.

¹⁹⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Marabout,” 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/search?query=marabout>

¹⁹⁸ Christopher Alexander, “Tunisia: The Best Bet,” in *The Islamists are Coming: Who They Really Are*, ed. Robin Wright (Washington: USIP, 2012), <http://theislamistsarecoming.wilsoncenter.org/islamists/node/23182>

¹⁹⁹ Juan E. Campo, ed., “Salafism,” in *Encyclopedia of World Religions: Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Facts On File, 2009), 601-602.

the right to wear Islamic attire on college campuses, and rioted against bars, liquor stores, and art exhibits insulting to Islam.^{201, 202, 203} The Salafists also have demanded the “elimination of political parties and elections as infringements on God’s sovereignty.”²⁰⁴

Religion and Government

Tunisia’s 1959 constitution made Islam the state religion, which is likely to carry over into the new constitution expected in 2012.^{205, 206} Although the old constitution further required the republic’s president to be Muslim, this did not stop Tunisia’s first two presidents from adopting un-Islamic laws. For example, the Personal Status Code outlawed the traditional Muslim male practices of polygamy and divorce-at-will. The 1956 law also limited the operating hours of mosques and the administrative power of Muslim religious leaders (*imams*).^{207, 208}



© John Morris
Women in a mosque

In the 1970s, an Islamist movement appeared on Tunisian university campuses and grew into political opposition groups.²⁰⁹ Islamic practices such as wearing female head coverings became acts of protest against the president as much as professions of faith.^{210, 211} Both the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes persecuted Islamist opposition groups as radical terrorists, and many leading Islamists were in exile or in prison during the 2011 revolution.²¹²

The Islamist political party al-Nahda won a 41% majority of legislative seats in the first post-revolution elections.^{213, 214, 215} At its first congress in Tunisia in decades, the party declared itself

²⁰⁰ Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), 177.

²⁰¹ Magharebia, “Tunisian Salafists Raise Flag at Sufi Site,” 11 March 2012,

http://magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/newsbriefs/general/2012/03/11/newsbrief-01

²⁰² Jane’s, “Tunisian Government Expresses Concern over Religious Tensions,” in *Country Risk Daily Report*, 20 March 2012.

²⁰³ Al Jazeera, “Tunisian Leaders Condemn ‘Extremist’ Riots,” 13 June 2012,

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/06/201261313558863257.html>

²⁰⁴ Christopher Alexander, “Tunisia: The Best Bet,” in *The Islamists are Coming: Who They Really Are*, ed. Robin Wright (Washington: USIP, 2012), <http://theislamistsarecoming.wilsoncenter.org/islamists/node/23182>

²⁰⁵ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 113.

²⁰⁶ Alexis Arieff, “Political Transition in Tunisia (RS21666),” Congressional Research Service, 18 June 2012, 2, 5, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf>

²⁰⁷ Association of Religion Data Archives, “Tunisia: Constitution,” 11 May 2011,

http://www.thearda.com/internationaldata/Countries/Country_225_6.asp

²⁰⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “July-December, 2010 International Religious Freedom Report: Tunisia,” 13 September 2011, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010_5/168277.htm

²⁰⁹ Mohamed Elhachmi Hamdi, *The Politicization of Islam: A Case Study of Tunisia*, Chapters 2-4 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

²¹⁰ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 126.

²¹¹ Warren P. Gunderman, “Is Tunisia Tipping?” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 8 February 2011, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Is-Tunisia-Tipping/2011/2/8>

²¹² James L. Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 57-58.

a “moderate” and “centrist” organization that will “guarantee freedom of expression” and “criminalise any attempt to undermine sacred values.”²¹⁶

Religion and Daily Life

Islam is a set of religious actions—beginning from one’s submission to Allah—that defines an entire way of life.²¹⁷ Many Tunisians consider it offensive to say that one does not believe in God; the observance of Islam—including prayer, fasting, dietary and dress codes, and numerous family and public rituals—permeates daily life.²¹⁸ However, since the introduction of secular practices during colonial times, urban Tunisians in particular have observed their Muslim traditions and gone about their work and business in the same rhythm as most European countries. Although Friday is a day-long holiday of prayers in most Arab nations, Tunisian Muslims return to complete their workday after attending congregational prayers during their lunch hour.²¹⁹ A 2012 opinion poll reported that 62.5% of Tunisians were practicing Muslims, but 40% of those prayed at home rather than at a mosque.²²⁰



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Mosque and market

If Salafists have their way, many more Tunisians may feel compelled to increase their public practice of Islam. Defenders of cosmopolitan traditions are calling for the interim government to curb the violent protests of religious fundamentalists.²²¹

Small rituals tied to pre-Islamic beliefs also fill daily life for many Tunisians, who may wear charms to ward off evil. The Hand of Fatima (*khomsa*) is a popular protective symbol, as is the fish.²²²

²¹³ Alexis Arieff, “Political Transition in Tunisia (RS21666): Summary,” Congressional Research Service, 18 June 2012, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf>

²¹⁴ Aidan Lewis, “Profile: Tunisia’s Ennahda Party,” BBC News Africa, 25 October 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15442859>

²¹⁵ Council on Foreign Relations, “Top of the Agenda: Moderate Islamists Claim Victory in Tunisia,” 25 October 2011, <http://www.cfr.org/about/newsletters/archive/newsletter/n209>

²¹⁶ Radio Netherlands Worldwide, “Ennahda Party Vows Moderate Islam in Tunisia,” 20 July 2012, <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/bulletin/ennahda-party-vows-moderate-islam-tunisia>

²¹⁷ Vincent J. Cornell, “Chapter 2: Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge,” in *Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John Esposito (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 67.

²¹⁸ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 67-69.

²¹⁹ Kwintessential, “Tunisia: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette,” 2012, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/tunisia-country-profile.html>

²²⁰ ANSAMED, “Religion: 62.5% of Tunisians are Practicing Muslims,” 7 May 2010, http://ansamed.ansa.it/ansamed/en/news/nations/tunisia/2012/05/07/Religion-62-5-Tunisians-practicing-Muslims_6830623.html

²²¹ Jane’s, “Tunisian Government Expresses Concern over Religious Tensions,” in *Country Risk Daily Report*, 20 March 2012.

²²² J. Henry, “Tunisians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 556.

Religion and Gender

Tunisia's Personal Status Code outlawed many of the gender practices conventionally associated with Islam in the Arab world. Men lost rights to polygamy and divorce-at-will, as well as the legal standing to force young women into marriage. Women gained rights to inherit and own property, divorce and retain child custody, and participate in public life through voting, education, and employment.^{223, 224}

However, not all Tunisians observe the code equally, and Muslim preferences for gender segregation, modesty, and male authority continue to influence social life. Since the 2011 revolution, some Tunisians fear that Islamist influence in the new government will turn back women's legal rights in the future constitution and other laws.^{225, 226, 227} Recently, Tunisian women have begun to express a growing sense of insecurity in public places, fueled by the activities of religious extremists and criminals.^{228, 229, 230}



© Jr-Inc / flickr.com
Covered women

Religious Events and Holidays

Tunisians celebrate the major religious events of the Islamic year as national holidays. Because the Islamic calendar is lunar, the dates for these holidays change each year in accordance with the cycles of the moon. As sacred celebrations, the Islamic holidays are family occasions that typically involve communal prayers, special food, new clothes, music, and firecrackers for children.

Ras al-Am al-Hijri

The Islamic New Year commemorates the Prophet Muhammad's *Hijra* (migration) from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E. When Muhammad began preaching in Mecca, socially prominent families and some merchants became concerned that his sermons would lead to changes in the existing social order.



© Magharebia / flickr.com
Festival of food

²²³ Emma Murphy, "Habib Bourguiba: Presidency," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2012,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/75869/Habib-Bourguiba/278559/Presidency>

²²⁴ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, "Chapter 2: History," in *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 37.

²²⁵ Rana F. Sweis, "Arab Spring Fails to Allay Women's Anxieties," *The New York Times*, 7 March 2012,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/08/world/middleeast/arab-spring-fails-to-allay-womens-anxieties.html?pagewanted=all>

²²⁶ Sana Ajmi, "Tunisian Women Question Future and Role of Personal Status Code," *Tunislive*, 7 March 2012,

<http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/03/07/tunisian-women-question-future-and-role-of-personal-status-code/>

²²⁷ Steve Inskeep, "Tunisian Women Turn Revolution into Opportunity," *National Public Radio*, 5 June 2012,

<http://www.npr.org/2012/06/05/154282351/tunisian-women-turn-revolution-into-opportunity>

²²⁸ Gallup, "After the Arab Uprisings: Women on Rights, Religion, and Rebuilding," Summer 2012,

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/155306/Arab-Uprisings-Women-Rights-Religion-Rebuilding.aspx>

²²⁹ Reuters, "Security Forces Clash with Radical Islamists in Tunisian Town," *Al Arabiya News*, 23 February 2012,

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/02/23/196603.html>

²³⁰ Sarah Leduc, "The Unfinished Revolution of Tunisia's Women," *France24*, 8 March 2012,

<http://www.france24.com/en/20120307-tunisia-unfinished-revolution-international-women-day-rights-islamist>

To remove this threat, they devised a plot to kill him. Sensing danger, he fled to Medina, where he created the first Muslim community in which spiritual and earthly concerns were merged. In Tunisia, it is a quiet holiday with little public activity.²³¹

Mawlid al-Nabi

The Prophet Muhammad's birthday falls on the 12th day of the 3rd month of the Islamic lunar year. Men gather at the mosque while women gather at home for prayers and stories about the Prophet.²³² Sufi Muslims in particular may observe the holiday with a public festival, but for most Tunisians this is a family event.^{233, 234}

Ramadan

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, is believed to be the time when Allah called the Prophet Muhammad to Islam. It is a month of fasting, prayer, charity, and goodwill. From sunup to sundown, even Tunisians who are not otherwise observant Muslims will abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and engaging in sex during daylight hours.²³⁵ They may dress more modestly during the month. Although non-Muslims are not expected to observe the fast, they should not eat or drink in public or in front of a fasting Muslim.²³⁶



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Ramadan feast

Each day during Ramadan, the fast ends at sundown with a large family meal (*iftar*). Public entertainment and all-night parties may follow.²³⁷ President Bourguiba tried but failed to end the month-long celebration, stating that workers were holy warriors in a jihad against economic underdevelopment and therefore should refrain from fasting. Although Tunisians do work through Ramadan, productivity slows.²³⁸

Eid Al-Fitr

The month-long fast of Ramadan ends with the feasting of *Eid al-Fitr*, a three-day holiday in Tunisia. After prayers at the mosque, families gather together for a celebratory meal. This is a traditional time for new clothes. Children receive gifts of money, and charity is given to the poor.²³⁹

²³¹ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 79.

²³² Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 123-125.

²³³ Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Tunisia: Religion," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2256.

²³⁴ *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Tunisia* (New York: DK Publishing, 2005), 39.

²³⁵ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 557.

²³⁶ Kwintessential, "Tunisia – Language, Customs, Culture and Etiquette," 2012,

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/tunisia-country-profile.html>

²³⁷ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 80-82.

²³⁸ Clement Henry Moore, *Tunisia Since Independence: The Dynamics of One-Party Government* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1965), 56-60.

²³⁹ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 123-124.

Exchange 1: Will you be celebrating Eid?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating Eid?	bash tiHtafloob bil 'eed?
Local:	Yes!	in'am!

Eid al-Adha (Eid al-Kabir)

The Feast of Sacrifice marks the end of *haji*, the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. It begins on the 10th day of the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is a two-day holiday in Tunisia.²⁴⁰ Muslims traditionally slaughter a sheep and give meat to the poor during the celebration, which commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son to God.

Places of Worship

The mosques of Tunisia are considered to be among the most beautiful in the Islamic world, and many are exemplars of classical Muslim art and architecture. They also are significant sites of Tunisian intellectual and political activity. The Zeitouna ("olive tree") Mosque of Tunis once housed the oldest university in the Arab Muslim world and was for centuries a major seat of Maghrebi Muslim learning.²⁴¹ Closed by the Bourguiba regime, the mosque will soon re-open as a private institution for Islamic studies.^{242, 243} Kairouan's Grand Mosque of Uqba, the oldest in North Africa, has become a meeting place and media icon for the new Tunisian Islamist organization Ansar al-Sharia.^{244, 245, 246}



© Katherine Herriman
Old mosque in Chenini

Behavior in Places of Worship

Tunisia encourages tourists to visit many of its historical religious sites and monuments.^{247, 248} Nevertheless, local mosques may be closed to non-Muslims.²⁴⁹ Before attempting to enter any mosque, one should inquire if and when it may be visited.

²⁴⁰ Q++ Studio, "Tunisia Public Holidays 2012," <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicolidays2012/tunisia.htm>

²⁴¹ Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 20-21.

²⁴² Wiem Melki, "Zitouna Mosque Resumes Islamic Teaching after 50 Years," *TunisiaLive*, 4 April 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/04/04/zitouna-mosque-resumes-islamic-teaching-after-50-years/>

²⁴³ Malika Zeghal, "Teaching Again at the Zaytuna Mosque in Tunisia," *On Islam and Politics*, 17 May 2012, <https://onislamandpolitics.wordpress.com/category/al-nahdha/>

²⁴⁴ Jeffrey R. Halverson, "Extremism and Contested Tunisian Identity in Kairouan," *COMOPS Journal*, 12 October 2011, <http://comops.org/journal/2011/10/12/extremism-and-contested-tunisian-identity-in-kairouan/>

²⁴⁵ Houda Trabelsi, "Salafist Congress in Kairouan Draws Thousands," *Magharebia*, 23 May 2012, http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/05/23/feature-01

²⁴⁶ Aaron Y. Zelin, "The Salafi Challenge to Tunisia's Nascent Democracy," *Policywatch* 1829, The Washington Institute, 8 December 2011, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-salafi-challenge-to-tunisias-nascent-democracy>

²⁴⁷ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "July-December, 2010 International Religious Freedom Report: Tunisia," 13 September 2011, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010_5/168277.htm

Exchange 2: May I enter the mosque?

Soldier:	May I enter the mosque?	inazhim nudKhul lil jaama'?
Local:	Yes.	in'am, itfaDhal.

Respectful modesty and ritual cleanliness are important aspects of mosque behavior in Tunisia. For males, this means wearing clean, long trousers and long-sleeve shirts. Females should cover their heads and wear long skirts and long-sleeve blouses when entering a mosque.

Exchange 3: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	yalzamnee inghaTee raasee?
Local:	Yes.	in'am, yalzmik.

Muslims wash before praying, and many mosques have a well or basin for this purpose. All visitors must remove their shoes at the door before entering a mosque.²⁵⁰

Exchange 4: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	yalzamnee inaHee sabaaTee fasT il jaama'?
Local:	Yes.	in'am, yalzmik.

A mosque should not be entered if congregational prayers are about to begin or are in progress.

Exchange 5: When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	waqtaash inSaloo?
Local:	We pray at noon.	inSaloo iDhuhur fee nuS inhaar.

Likewise, one should never pass in front of a Muslim who is praying either in the mosque or outside. Doing so invalidates his prayer. Moreover, one does not chew gum or smoke cigarettes in or near a mosque. Inside a mosque, one should never touch religious artifacts or climb the

²⁴⁸ Republic of Tunisia, Ministry of Tourism, "Portail du Tourisme: Zones Touristiques," 2011, <http://www.tourisme.gov.tn/index.php?id=48&L=0>

²⁴⁹ *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Tunisia* (New York: DK Publishing, Inc., 2005), 310.

²⁵⁰ *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Tunisia* (New York: DK Publishing, Inc., 2005), 28.

stairs of the *minbar* or prayer pulpit. Laughter, loud talking, or photography also is taboo in a place of worship.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army, “TRADOC DCSINT Handbook No. 2, Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Factsheets” (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, January 2006), www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf

Chapter 2 Assessment

1. The majority of Tunisians are Shi'a Muslims.
FALSE
 Most Tunisians are Sunni Muslims, but other forms of Islam also are practiced in the country by Shi'ites, Ibadis, Sufis, and Salafists.
2. Since the 2011 revolution, conservative Muslims have challenged the interim government of Tunisia.
TRUE
 Salafist Muslims, who follow a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, have challenged the interim government of Tunisia, demonstrated for the right to wear Islamic attire on college campuses, and rioted against bars, liquor stores, and art exhibits insulting to Islam.
3. Tunisia's Personal Status Code of 1956 provided secular legal support for the country's Islamic traditions and practices.
FALSE
 The Personal Status Code of 1956 outlawed the traditional Muslim male practices of polygamy and divorce-at-will. The law also limited the operating hours of mosques and the administrative power of Muslim religious leaders.
4. The Hand of Fatima and the fish are protective symbols worn by many Tunisians.
TRUE
 Small rituals tied to pre-Islamic beliefs also fill daily life for many Tunisians, who may wear charms to ward off evil. The Hand of Fatima (*khomsa*) is a popular protective symbol, as is the fish.
5. In Tunisia, women do not need to cover their heads when entering a mosque.
FALSE
 Respectful modesty and ritual cleanliness are important aspects of mosque behavior in Tunisia. For males, this means wearing clean, long trousers and long-sleeve shirts. Females should cover their heads and wear long skirts and long-sleeve blouses when entering a mosque.

CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONS

Introduction

Tunisians honor the traditions of both ancient Arab-Berber ancestors and more recent Turkic, French, and Italian predecessors. These traditions mix together to yield a strong sense of a unique national identity that helped bring about Tunisian independence in 1956.²⁵²

Visitors have often described Tunisia as more liberal or tolerant in attitude and more relaxed in practice than other Arab Muslim countries, perhaps resulting from Tunisia's first two presidents, who promoted national traditions that were separate from ethnic and religious influences.^{253, 254} At the same time, the common phrase "In sha'allah" ("God willing") is a reminder of how Islamic traditions still permeate daily life in Tunisia.²⁵⁵



© Stefano Benetti
Alleyway in Tunisia

In the 1970s, some Tunisian intellectuals and university students began to call for a return to traditional values, framed in religious and political terms. In particular, they wanted to detach advantages of economic modernization from what they perceived as the political and moral excesses of Westernization. Actions in support of this return to traditions occasionally became violent: for example, in 1981 a state-run tourist hotel was attacked in order to highlight the disrespectful behavior of non-Muslim foreigners.²⁵⁶ Since the 2011 revolution, similar incidents have recurred, to the chagrin of less traditional Tunisians (and the concern of the tourism industry).^{257, 258}

Values

Tunisian cultural values revolve around the male-headed family and its reputation. The survival and success of the family group is the ultimate aim. Personal plans are often sacrificed for a common goal. Conversely, the actions of any one member can destroy (or elevate) the reputation of the entire family.

Accordingly, conformity to social expectations is encouraged more than expressions of



© Paul Livingstone
Great Mosque prayer hall

²⁵² LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 104.

²⁵³ Warren P. Gunderman, "Is Tunisia Tipping?" Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 8 February 2011, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Is-Tunisia-Tipping/2011/2/8>

²⁵⁴ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 38-40.

²⁵⁵ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 76-77.

²⁵⁶ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 123-126.

²⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Tunisia: Country Specific Information," 20 July 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html

²⁵⁸ Monia Ghanmi, "Tunisian Tourism Sector Condemns Violence," Magharebia, 29 June 2012, http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/06/29/feature-02

individual creativity. Respectful social interaction is important because individuals are managing both personal dignity and group honor.

Tunisians are typically described as warm and gracious, and even the conduct of business rests on establishing friendly personal relationships.²⁵⁹ While business etiquette dictates the scheduling of appointments, a morning appointment may not actually begin until after lunch. Among family and friends the sense of time is further relaxed, and visits may occur unannounced and late in the evening.²⁶⁰

Tunisia falls within the geographical sphere of what some scholars have described as the Mediterranean honor-shame complex.²⁶¹ Masculine honor is the focus of these complex values. Men gain honor through wealth, social status, and demonstrated virility.²⁶² To prove virility in particular, men must guard the sexual activity of their wives. Thus, family honor comes to depend upon virginity and monogamy, the virtuous behavior of women.²⁶³ Regardless of the origins of these values—whether Arab patriarchy, Bedouin nomadism, or Islamic teachings—the result is a gender-segregated society of “two separate worlds” where women disappear into a private sphere.²⁶⁴ Despite government efforts to establish national traditions of gender equity and women’s public participation, some Tunisian women continue to prefer the private sphere.^{265, 266, 267}

Tunisians without honor are shamed. When respect is not properly expressed in social interactions, the resulting shame an individual feels can produce extreme reactions. For example, the street vendor who set himself on fire and sparked the Tunisian revolution did so after being publicly humiliated by police.²⁶⁸

Greetings

In Tunisia, as in most Arab societies, a polite greeting will usually bring a sincere response and open the door to friendly exchanges.

²⁵⁹ Kwintessential, “Tunisia – Language, Customs, Culture and Etiquette,” 2012,

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/tunisia-country-profile.html>

²⁶⁰ “Tunisia: Visiting,” in *CultureGrams World Edition* (Provo, UT: ProQuest, 2012), 3.

²⁶¹ Frank H. Stewart, “The Mediterranean,” in *Honor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 75-78.

²⁶² David Gilmore, “Anthropology of the Mediterranean Area,” in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (1982): 191-192.

²⁶³ Sherifa Zuhur, “Honor, Middle Eastern Notions of,” in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Vol. 3: Game Theory-Lysenkoism*, ed. Maryanne Cline Horowitz (Charles Scribner’s Sons [Gale Virtual Reference Library], 2005).

²⁶⁴ J. Duvignaud, *Change at Shebika: Report from a North African Village*, trans. F. Frenaye (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 16.

²⁶⁵ Carolyn Lamboley, “Talk is Cheap: Addressing Sexual Harassment in Tunisia,” *TunisiaLive*, 14 April 2012,

<http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/04/14/talk-is-cheap-sexual-harassment-in-tunisia/>

²⁶⁶ Ministère de la Santé Publique, République Tunisienne, “Enquête Nationale sur la Violence à l’Egard des Femmes en Tunisie,” 2010, http://www.onfp.tn/liens/violence_29/brochure.pdf

²⁶⁷ Gallup, “After the Arab Uprisings: Women on Rights, Religion, and Rebuilding,” Summer 2012,

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/155306/Arab-Uprisings-Women-Rights-Religion-Rebuilding.aspx>

²⁶⁸ Clark McCauley, “Humiliation and Martyrdom in the Jasmine Revolution,” *Psychology Today*, 3 April 2011, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/friction/201104/humiliation-and-martyrdom-in-the-jasmine-revolution>

Exchange 6: Good morning.

Soldier:	Good morning.	iSbaaH il Kheyr.
Local:	Good morning.	iSbaaH il Kheyr.

When entering a room or making a social call where several men are gathered, it is customary to greet and shake hands with everyone, even if you have met them on a prior occasion.²⁶⁹ The left hand should not be used in a handshake, nor in other social interaction, nor in eating, due to Muslim conventions of cleanliness. However, in Tunisia, this prohibition is sometimes unobserved, particularly in urban areas.²⁷⁰



© Max Italiaander
Girl greeting the door

Exchange 7: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	ishnoowa aHwaalik?
Local:	Fine, very well.	labaas, il Hamdu laah.

It is appropriate to greet a woman if she is in the company of men. If a handshake is appropriate, she will extend her hand to you; do not extend your hand first to avoid mutual discomfort and embarrassment. In lieu of shaking a woman's hand, a nod of acknowledgement is appropriate. After a handshake, a Tunisian may kiss his hand and place it over his heart to show sincerity.²⁷¹

Exchange 8: Good afternoon.

Soldier:	Good afternoon.	inhaarak Tayib.
Local:	Good afternoon.	inhaarak Tayib.

Tunisians show respect in conversation with polite titles of address. For men, *Sidi* (roughly, “Sir” or “Mr.”) or the shorter *Si* is used. For women, one may use *Lella*. (In other contexts, these titles may be translated as “Master,” “Mistress,” or “Saint.”) Tunisians also use French terms of

²⁶⁹ J. Henry, “Tunisians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 558.

²⁷⁰ “Tunisia: Customs and Courtesies,” in *CultureGrams World Edition* (Provo, UT: ProQuest, 2012), 3, http://online.culturegrams.com/pdf/world_pdf.php?id=163

²⁷¹ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 89.

address—*Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle*—and professional titles such as *Docteur* or *Professeur*.²⁷²

Exchange 9: Hi, Mr. Sallamee.

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. Sallamee.	'aslaama see salaamee.
Local:	Hello!	ahla, 'aslaama!
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	ishnoowa aHwaalik, labaas?
Local:	Yes.	al Hamdu laah.

In Tunisian society, the individual is an extension of his or her family. Although asking about family members is a gesture that is both expected and greatly appreciated, men should not ask about the women in another man's family because such interest in another man's women raises questions about his honor.²⁷³

Exchange 10: How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	il 'aayla labaaas?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	labaas a'leyhum, yi'ayshik.

Social Interaction

When exchanging greetings, Americans and Europeans generally prefer to maintain a distance of about 1 meter (3 ft) from each other. Arabs prefer a shorter distance; so one should not be alarmed if personal space feels much smaller.²⁷⁴ Touching also is common among family and friends of the same sex in Tunisia. Women may brush or kiss each other's cheeks several times in greeting, and men may walk together hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm. However, such public displays of affection between members of the opposite sex



© Dennis Jarvis
Talking while working

²⁷² Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 89.

²⁷³ Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Tunisia: Demography," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2255.

²⁷⁴ "Tunisia: Personal Space and Touching," Culture Crossing, no date,
http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=9&CID=207

are generally frowned upon and considered taboo by some Muslims.²⁷⁵

Direct eye contact is a sign of respect, but prolonged eye contact is likely to make both male and female Tunisians uneasy. Staring is offensive and can send the wrong message in Tunisia, where women rarely look into the eyes of males outside their own family.²⁷⁶

Hospitality

Hospitality and generosity—behaviors attributed to Arab, Bedouin, and Islamic sources—are valued expressions of respect in Tunisia.²⁷⁷ Polite social calls in the evening are common, and Tunisians feel honored to invite guests for lunch, tea, or dinner. If invited to a Tunisian’s home, be punctual. Leave shoes at the main door of the house. Greet your host during afternoon or evening hours as follows:



© Veronique Debord-Lazaro
Tunisian house

Exchange 11: Good evening!

Soldier:	Good evening!	leyltik sa'eeda!
Local:	Good evening!	leyltik sa'eeda!

Not all Tunisians entertain mixed-sex groups at home. Be sure to ask ahead instead of assuming that your spouse is included in an invitation.²⁷⁸ When invited for dinner, it is acceptable but not expected to bring a small gift such as fruit or sweets for the children of the house.²⁷⁹ A bottle of wine or liqueur is not an appropriate gift in this Muslim nation.

Exchange 12: I really appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	fee laHqeeqa inqadar feek il karm imtaa'ik.
Local:	It is nothing.	magheyr imzeeya.

²⁷⁵ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 156-157.

²⁷⁶ “Tunisia: Eye Contact,” Culture Crossing, no date, http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=10&CID=207

²⁷⁷ Kwintessential, “Tunisia – Language, Customs, Culture and Etiquette,” 2012, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/tunisia-country-profile.html>

²⁷⁸ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 93.

²⁷⁹ “Tunisia: Visiting,” in *CultureGrams World Edition* (Provo, UT: ProQuest, 2012), 3, http://online.culturegrams.com/pdf/world_pdf.php?id=163

Traditional Foods

In Tunisia, lunch is traditionally the day’s main meal. Native cuisine reflects the country’s Berber, Bedouin, and Mediterranean heritage. Wheat in the form of *couscous* (semolina) is the national dish and the staple of the diet.²⁸⁰ In the absence of couscous, bread and pasta also are becoming popular.



© Colin Mutchler
Tunisian spices

Exchange 13: This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	il maakla haaThee ibneena barsha.
Local:	It’s couscous.	ismoo kuskusee.

Couscous is served with vegetable or meat stews flavored with olives, onions, garlic, spices, and sometimes dried fruit. Near the coast, seafood is a less expensive substitute for lamb. *Loubia* is a popular North African bean stew.

Exchange 14: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	ishnoowa isim il maakla haaThee?
Local:	This is <i>loubia</i> .	haaThee looby.

Brik is a popular Tunisian appetizer made from fried triangles of wafer-thin pastry. The fillings may be savory (egg, cheese, tuna) or sweet (almond or sesame paste).^{281, 282}

²⁸⁰ University of New Hampshire, “The Cultural Cuisine Courier,” no date, 1-2, <http://extension.unh.edu/Counties/Carroll/docs/NCAfrica.pdf>

²⁸¹ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 54.

²⁸² Sean Haley, “Our Guide to Tunisian Cuisine,” TunisiaLive, 1 September 2011, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2011/09/01/our-guide-to-tunisian-cuisine/>

Exchange 15: What ingredients are used to make *brik*?

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make <i>brik</i> ?	ishnoowa il Haajaat ilee tista'milha fil ibreek?
Local:	Eggs, chopped parsley, onion and garlic, plus tuna fish or shredded meat or chicken—all wrapped in phyllo dough.	beeDh, ma'idnoos wu ibSal wu thoom imqaTa' ma'a ishwaya tun wala ilHam wala idjaaj wu lif il kul fee malSooqa.

Dining Etiquette

While European table habits have made inroads in the country, Tunisians traditionally sit on cushions on a carpet to eat. Food is served from a low table or large round metal trays mounted on wooden frames. Guests should wash their hands before eating. Soups and pasta are served with a spoon, but other foods (including couscous) are eaten from a common serving dish with the right hand.²⁸³ Water also may be passed around in a shared glass.²⁸⁴



© Florentin Marius
Local cuisine

Exchange 16: The food tastes so good.

Soldier:	The food tastes so good.	Tu'mit il maakla ibneena barsha.
Local:	Thank you.	yi'ayshik.

After blessing the food, the meal begins when the oldest male or host starts eating. Men and women usually dine separately.²⁸⁵ When the meal has finished and all have washed their hands, tea or coffee may be served with fruits or sweets. At the close of the evening, bid farewell to everyone.

Exchange 17: Good night!

Soldier:	Good night!	tiSbaH 'ala Kheyr!
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²⁸³ “Tunisia: Eating,” in *CultureGrams World Edition* (Provo, UT: ProQuest, 2012), 3, http://online.culturegrams.com/pdf/world_pdf.php?id=163

²⁸⁴ Etiquette Scholar, “International Dining Etiquette: Tunisian,” 2011, http://www.etiquettescholar.com/dining_etiquette/table-etiquette/africa-n_dinner_etiquette/tunisian.html

²⁸⁵ Kwintessential, “Tunisia – Language, Customs, Culture and Etiquette,” 2012, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/tunisia-country-profile.html>

Local:	Good night!	tiSbaH 'ala Kheyr!
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Dress Codes

With its southern Mediterranean climate, Tunisia has two basic seasons: very warm and very cool. A stroll down Tunis' wide Avenue Habib Bourguiba demonstrates both the Tunisian admiration for fashionable European dress and the desire to be comfortable and modest. The most practical dress for the summer months is lightweight, loose-fitting cotton attire. For men, this means trousers and short-sleeve shirts; for women, knee-length skirts and longer-sleeved blouses are appropriate. Apart from tourists at the beach, it is not appropriate for men and women to wear shorts in public.



© Anduze traveller/ flickr.com
Village woman

Exchange 18: How should I dress?

Soldier:	How should I dress?	ishnoowa yalzamnee nalbis?
Local:	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	ilbis iHwaayij waas'een yighaToo badnik.

Tunisians may be fashion conscious in urban settings, but those in the countryside still dress traditionally. Outside of cities, men usually wear a long, white robe known as a *jalabiyya*, and women wear a black outer garment called a *sisfari* that covers them from head to toe.^{286, 287} When the cold winds come down off the Atlas Mountains during the winter, men wear heavy-hooded capes (*bernous*).²⁸⁸ Foreigners find a sweater by day and a medium-weight jacket in the evening indispensable.

Exchange 19: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	il libsa haaThee ma'qoola?
Local:	Yes.	baahya.

²⁸⁶ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 559.

²⁸⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Tunisia: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2012,
<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-93667/Tunisia>

²⁸⁸ Faten Bouraoui, "Traditional Clothes in Tunis: the Fabric of Tunisian Identity," *TunisiaLive*, 17 April 2012,
<http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/04/17/traditional-clothes-in-tunis-the-fabric-of-tunisian-identity/>

Before the 2011 revolution, Tunisian government policy discouraged women from wearing the *hijab* (head covering).^{289, 290, 291} In early 2011, the interim government lifted some restrictions on the Islamic attire, announcing that Muslim women may wear the headscarf for their photos in identification papers.²⁹² Salafists (conservative Islamists) later challenged institutional bans on face veils (*niqabs*), and one such case has gone to court.^{293, 294}

Holidays

In addition to Islamic holidays, Tunisians enjoy secular holidays and local festivals. In 2012, the government decided to drop a national holiday honoring former president Ben Ali. Another former holiday celebrating Tunisian youth was folded into the new Revolution and Youth Day, which commemorates the success of the Sidi Bouzid Revolt.²⁹⁵ The country's non-religious national holidays, often celebrated with family outings or picnics, are listed below.²⁹⁶



© Magharebia / flickr.com
Douz

Holiday	Date	Commemoration
New Year's Day	January 1	Secular (French) new year
Revolution and Youth Day	January 14	2010-2011 Sidi Bouzid Revolt
Independence Day	March 20	1956 independence from France
Martyrs' Day	April 9	1938 killings of nationalist protestors by French
Labor Day	May 1	International labor movements
Republic Day	July 25	1957 declaration of republican government
Women's Day	August 13	1956 adoption of Personal Status Code

²⁸⁹ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 559.

²⁹⁰ Mohammad Ahmad, "Tunisia's Hijab Ban Unconstitutional," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 11 October 2007, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/49443/tunisia-s-hijab-ban-unconstitutional.html>

²⁹¹ Daniel Williams, "Tunisia Veil Case Threatens 'Odious Rag' Struggle (Update 1)," *Bloomberg*, 3 January 2008, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aVnYog.7H.yl&refer=europe>

²⁹² Agence Presse France (AFP), "Tunisia Allows Islamic Veil on ID Papers," Google News, 1 April 2011, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jNKE5wRCHIORAlpVHnQRPdKiKtuw?docId=CNG.35b429a9727c7a4bda711221986b5300.901>

²⁹³ Magharebia, "Tunisian Students, Salafists Clash over Niqab Ban," 30 November 2011,

http://magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/newsbriefs/general/2011/11/30/newsbrief-01

²⁹⁴ Bouazza Ben Bouazza, "Tunisia University Dean in Court in Veil Standoff," Associated Press/ABC News, 5 July 2012, http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/tunisia-university-dean-court-veil-standoff-16716524#.T_Ym8vWnl8E

²⁹⁵ Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia in Malta, "Tunisia News: Independence Day: Interim President Addresses Tunisian People," Tunisian Press Agency (TAP), 21 March 2011, [http://www.atunisie-mt.org/3/12/25.html?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=1329&cHash=d485df5e6cd7dff31f7051dbd0cf76d2](http://www.atunisie-mt.org/3/12/25.html?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=1329&cHash=d485df5e6cd7dff31f7051dbd0cf76d2)

²⁹⁶ Q++ Studio, "Tunisia Public Holidays 2012," no date, <http://www.qppstudio.net/publicholidays2012/tunisia.htm>

Evacuation Day	October 15	1963 departure of French military
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Local festivals celebrate everything from orange blossoms to octopi. Many are designed to preserve and promote regional and national cultural traditions, most famously the International Festival of the Sahara in Douz (which dates from 1910).^{297, 298}

Dos and Don'ts

Do offer a Tunisian a cigarette or a sweet by first taking it from the packet with the fingers of your right hand.

Do acknowledge everyone individually when arriving and leaving an event.

Do remove your shoes before entering a mosque or private dwelling.

Do remember that you, as a Westerner, have a high profile in public places and that your conduct is observed by the local population.

Do summon someone to talk to you by extending your right hand, palm down, and waving your four fingers in an up down motion.

Do remember that the Tunisian sense of time is relaxed, and be patient at meetings and on projects.

Don't speak to, sit next to, or attempt to contact a member of the opposite sex in public, unless she is a member of your family.

Don't consume alcoholic beverages in public places or offer alcoholic drinks to Arabs.

Don't enter mosques without permission.

Don't bring a search dog into a private dwelling. They are viewed as unclean under Islamic law.

Don't sit in such a way that you show the soles of your shoes or the bottoms of your feet to a Tunisian.

Don't offer a piece of food, a gift, or any object to a Muslim using your left hand.

²⁹⁷ *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Tunisia* (New York: DK Publishing, 2005) , 38-44.

²⁹⁸ Festival International of Sahara of Douz, "Presentation [French]," 2006, <http://www.festivaldouz.org.tn/fr/index.php?cat=2&id=1>

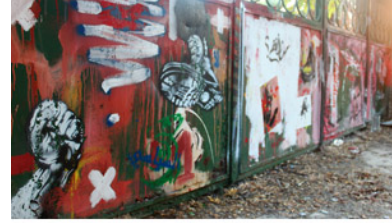
Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Fixed eye contact for a prolonged period with a woman or a man will make Tunisians uncomfortable.
TRUE
Direct eye contact is a sign of respect, but prolonged eye contact is likely to make both male and female Tunisians uneasy. Staring is offensive and can send the wrong message in Tunisia, where women rarely look into the eyes of males outside their own family.
2. Tunisians often wear shorts in public during the hotter months.
FALSE
Apart from tourists at the beach, it is not appropriate for men and women to wear shorts in public. The most practical and acceptable dress for the summer months is loose-fitting cotton attire: trousers and short-sleeve shirts for men; knee-length skirts and blouses for women.
3. The high value that Tunisians place on hospitality and generosity is attributed to the influence of 19th century French colonialism.
FALSE
Hospitality and generosity—behaviors attributed to Arab, Bedouin, and Islamic sources—are valued expressions of respect. Tunisians are typically described as warm and gracious; even the conduct of business rests on establishing friendly personal relationships.
4. It is common for Tunisian women to shake hands with men.
FALSE
It is appropriate to greet a woman if she is in the company of men. If a handshake is appropriate, she will extend her hand to you; do not extend your hand first to avoid mutual discomfort and embarrassment. In lieu of shaking a woman's hand, a nod of acknowledgement is appropriate.
5. Muslims in Tunisia celebrate many secular holidays.
TRUE
In addition to Islamic holidays, Tunisians enjoy many non-religious national holidays, which include New Year's Day, Revolution and Youth Day, Independence Day, Martyr's Day, Labor Day, Republic Day, Women's Day, and Evacuation Day.

CHAPTER 4: URBAN LIFE

Introduction

Tunisia's urban population has grown rapidly since the 1970s.²⁹⁹ More than seven million Tunisians, about two-thirds of the population, now live in urban areas.^{300, 301} Tunisia's cityscapes cover about 20% of the land, concentrated along the north and east coasts of the Mediterranean.^{302, 303} The common description of Tunisia as North Africa's most European country rests largely upon its cities—particularly their French colonial practices and architecture, their tourist resorts, and their wealth. The three largest urban centers—Tunis, Sfax, and Sousse—account for 85% of the country's gross domestic product.³⁰⁴



© Amine Ghrabi
Tunisian graffiti

A typical Tunisian city has a medina—a walled and gated old town, with narrow streets and buildings that are hundreds or thousands of years old—and a *ville nouvelle* (French, “new town”) of European colonial boulevards and buildings. City outskirts contain wealthy suburbs and lower-class ghettos. Public buildings include mosques, markets, and public baths. Homes of stucco and tile are designed for privacy, whether free-standing surrounded by high walls or in high-rise apartment buildings.^{305, 306} In the “informal settlements” on city outskirts, *gourbis*, or permanent tents, are visible.³⁰⁷ About 75% of urban Tunisians own their homes, compared to about 90% of those in rural areas.³⁰⁸

²⁹⁹ Trading Economics, “Urban Population (% of Total) in Tunisia, World Bank Indicators,” 2012,

<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/tunisia/urban-population-percent-of-total-wb-data.html>

³⁰⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, “Tunisia,” in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

³⁰¹ National Institute of Statistics-Tunisia, “Statistical Information: Population Indicators: General Population Data,” 2012, <http://www.ins.nat.tn/indexen.php>

³⁰² LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 81.

³⁰³ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 71.

³⁰⁴ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation, “Interim Strategy Note for the Republic of Tunisia for the Period FY13-14 (Report No. 67692-TN),” World Bank, 17 May 2012, 7,

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/06/27/000350881_20120627090812/Rend ered/PDF/676920CAS0CORR00R201200117020SIMULT.pdf

³⁰⁵ “Tunisia: Lifestyle: Housing,” in *CultureGrams World Edition* (Provo, UT: ProQuest, 2012), 3,

http://online.culturegrams.com/pdf/world_pdf.php?id=163

³⁰⁶ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 96-97.

³⁰⁷ J. Henry, “Tunisians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 558.

³⁰⁸ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, “Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010-2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)” (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 14, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

The Tunisian revolution of 2011 interrupted city commerce, especially tourism. Unemployment, unsatisfactory working conditions, high prices, and increasing religious concerns continue to inspire social protests and labor strikes, which sometimes lead to unannounced facilities closures and temporary city curfews.^{309, 310, 311}

Urbanization

Since independence in 1956, Tunisia's urban population has more than doubled, as rural residents moved to cities in search of better jobs, homes, schools, and hospitals. The current annual urbanization rate of 1.54% is predicted to decline to 1.08% by 2030.³¹² The government has tried to manage the urbanization process in several ways. Slums have been periodically razed and replaced by government-built and controlled "affordable housing." However, renting formal housing remains out of reach for lower-income residents, and controlling the unauthorized development of "informal settlements" continue to be a challenge.³¹³



© Jay Owens
View of Tunisian rooftops

Other government infrastructure projects include the rehabilitation of parks and medinas, as well as master planning for water use, recycling, sanitation, trash management, and transportation (including high-speed light rail).³¹⁴ Disposal of residential and industrial waste is a growing problem that contributes to the pollution of drinking water and resort beaches.^{315, 316, 317, 318}

In response to the growing concentration of population (and wealth) along the north and east coasts, the government has made some efforts to direct urbanization inland. Communications and

³⁰⁹ Tarek Amara, "Tunisia's Economy Still Awaits Post-revolt Bounce," Reuters, 1 February 2012, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/02/01/uk-tunisia-economy-idUKTRE81017J20120201>

³¹⁰ Suzanne Daley, "Tensions on a Campus Mirror Turbulence in a New Tunisia," *The New York Times*, 11 June 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/world/africa/tensions-at-manouba-university-mirror-turbulence-in-tunisia.html?_r=2&emc=tnt&tntemail=y

³¹¹ Sana Ajmi, "Security Restored in Sidi Bouzid Following Attacks on Government Offices," TunisiaLive, 27 July, 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/07/27/security-restored-in-sidi-bouzid-following-attacks-on-government-offices/>

³¹² United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities," in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 121, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

³¹³ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities," in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 97-102, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

³¹⁴ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities," in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 91, 106, 108-109, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

³¹⁵ UNEP Regional Office for Africa, "Tunisia," November 2008, <http://gridnairobi.unep.org/chm/roa/Country%20Profiles/Tunisia.doc>

³¹⁶ *Encyclopedia of Earth*, "Tunisia," 12 June 2012, <http://www.eoearth.org/article/Tunisia>

³¹⁷ <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/07/22/water-crisis-in-gabes-water-water-everywhere-and-not-a-drop-to-drink/>

³¹⁸ Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP, "Tunisia," in *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment* (Nairobi, Kenya: Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP, 2008), 326-327, <http://www.unep.org/dewa/africa/AfricaAtlas/PDF/en/Chapter3c.pdf>

transportation infrastructure, job numbers, and youth training programs are all targets for development.^{319, 320}

Work Problems in Urban Areas

Tunisia's biggest work problem in urban areas is the lack of work. Historically, cities have had most of the country's jobs. Tunis claimed 69% of the national employment opportunities in 2002.³²¹ Urban unemployment rates have been a few percentage points lower than rural rates, despite the impact of rural-to-urban migration and increased competition for available jobs.³²² However, by 2010, unemployment among "high-skilled young individuals" (e.g., graduates of city-based universities) had risen to 44%; many of those unemployed had been out of work for more than a year.³²³ Women suffer disproportionately from urban unemployment, as do workers in the poorer cities of the interior.^{324, 325, 326} In protest of the lack of work-related opportunities, unemployed Tunisians shut down operations at the Gafsa Phosphates Company in mid-2012 with demands for more transparent hiring practices.³²⁷



© Bruno / flickr.com
Men working together

³¹⁹ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities," in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 90, 92, 117, 109, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

³²⁰ Balgis Osman Elasha, "Mapping of Climate Change Threats and Human Development Impacts in the Arab Region," Regional Bureau for Arab States, United Nations Development Programme, 2010, 25, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdrps/paper02-en.pdf>

³²¹ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities," in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 92, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

³²² United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities," in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 94, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

³²³ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation, "Interim Strategy Note for the Republic of Tunisia for the Period FY13–14 (Report No. 67692-TN)," World Bank, 17 May 2012, 8, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/06/27/000350881_20120627090812/Rend ered/PDF/676920CAS0CORR00R201200117020SIMULT.pdf

³²⁴ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation, "Interim Strategy Note for the Republic of Tunisia for the Period FY13–14 (Report No. 67692-TN)," World Bank, 17 May 2012, 8, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/06/27/000350881_20120627090812/Rend ered/PDF/676920CAS0CORR00R201200117020SIMULT.pdf

³²⁵ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Tunisia," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011*, no date, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=186451

³²⁶ Deutsche Welle, "Tunisia Still Struggling After the Revolution," 1 June 2012, <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,15988647,00.html>

³²⁷ ANSAMED, "Tunisia: Strike Paralyzes Mining Area of Gafsa," 3 May 2012, http://ansamed.ansa.it/ansamed/en/news/nations/tunisia/2012/05/03/Tunisia-Strike-paralyses-mining-area-Gafsa_6810013.html

Tunisians who work also are dissatisfied. Both authorized and wildcat strikes are frequent by doctors, police, security officers, postal workers, schoolteachers, industrial workers, municipal workers, and miners.^{328, 329, 330} Large numbers of young men and women are underemployed in the informal urban economy. Child labor also is a problem in street markets and small shops; many domestic servants are underage.^{331, 332}

Healthcare

Independent Tunisia invested heavily in public health infrastructure and services. By 2006, most urban homes had safe drinking water, sewage hookups, and electric power.³³³ A nationwide network of basic healthcare centers and district hospitals grew to provide care, and universal health insurance was designed to pay for medical treatment for all. In urban areas, state-supported regional hospitals and university teaching and research centers developed to provide specialist referral and inpatient services. Semi-public facilities and services also are available and include social security polyclinics, military and security forces hospitals, and employee healthcare centers of large businesses.³³⁴ Traditional health rituals, such as a woman’s first post-partum visit to the public bath, may employ alternative medical practitioners.³³⁵



© Rusty Clark
Sousse hospital

Exchange 20: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	fama isbeeTaar iqreeb hoonee?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	in'am, fasT liblaad.

³²⁸ Ted Wynne, “Labor Strikes Plague New Islamist Governments (Olive Branch Post),” United States Institute of Peace, 7 May 2012, <http://www.usip.org/publications/labor-strikes-plague-new-islamist-governments>

³²⁹ Hend Hassassi, “Gafsa Police Officers Agree to End Their Hunger Strike,” TunisiaLive, 25 May 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/05/25/gafsa-police-officers-agree-to-end-their-hunger-strike/>

³³⁰ Education International, “Tunisia: Strikes to Improve Education System and Teachers’ Status,” 23 May 2012, http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2170

³³¹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia,” in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011*, no date, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=186451

³³² U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report 2012: Tunisia,” no date, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/192368.htm>

³³³ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, “Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010-2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)” (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 15, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

³³⁴ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, “Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010-2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)” (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 25-28, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

³³⁵ J. Henry, “Tunisians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 559.

In reality, Tunisian households now pay for about 50% of annual health expenditures. The rise of private healthcare is bringing specialized treatment to medical tourists, expatriates, and wealthier Tunisians.³³⁶ However, the defection of staff and resources from the public sector to the more lucrative private practices is threatening healthcare for Tunisians who are not wealthy urbanites.³³⁷

Exchange 21: Is Dr. Midessi in, sir?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Midessi in, sir?	duktoor meedaasee hoonee, Khooya?
Local:	No.	laa.

The government regulates the pharmaceutical industry in Tunisia, including the import and domestic production of drugs. Between 1987 and 2002, domestic production increased from 8.7% to nearly 44% of the total amount of pharmaceuticals sold in Tunisia. Most pharmacies (83%) are now in the private sector.³³⁸ In addition to diagnosing minor illnesses, Tunisian pharmacists sell drugs without prescriptions.³³⁹

Exchange 22: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	ti'rif ishnoowa il mushkil?
Local:	No.	laa.

Education

Like healthcare, education was an early focus of the Republic of Tunisia's social development efforts. Education funding continues to be strong, regularly exceeding 20% of annual total government expenditures.^{340, 341} The national ministries of Education, Higher Education, and

³³⁶ Cherifa Lakhoua, "Medical Tourism Industry in Tunisia," 3rd EUNAM Meeting (Hammamet, March 12-13, 2012), http://www.dkfz.de/en/molgen_epidemiology/EUNAM/Dokumente/Tunis2012_ChriFa-MEDICAL-TOURISM-INDUSTRY-IN-TUNISIA.pdf

³³⁷ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, "Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010–2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)" (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 31-33, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

³³⁸ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, "Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010–2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)" (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 28-31, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

³³⁹ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 138.

³⁴⁰ Alexis Arieff, "Political Transition in Tunisia (RS21666)," Congressional Research Service, 18 June 2012, 3 (fn. 7), <http://www.fas.org/sfp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf>

Scientific Research and Social Affairs regulate curricula, recruit and license instructors, and supervise annual country-wide exams. Public education is mandatory until age 16 and free through college.³⁴² Vocational training is available to secondary students who do not elect a university track, and adult education addresses the residual illiteracy of older generations.³⁴³ Higher education boasts 13 urban universities with programs of study in all fields and a virtual university that has provided distance learning since 2002.³⁴⁴ The government reported 346,876 university students in 2011 (of which 212,133, or 61%, were female).³⁴⁵

Exchange 23: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	fama madrasa iqreeba?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Despite its widespread availability, the quality of Tunisian education has been questioned in recent years. Observers have noted that graduates are not prepared for the few skilled positions available. A 2006 study found that Tunisian university students hoped for jobs with large, private enterprises upon graduation but expected to have to make their own jobs by starting their own businesses instead. The same study reported that Tunisian graduate students had much less professional experience, even in family business, than similar students from other countries.³⁴⁶ One recent international analysis suggested that students might be kept in school “in order to avoid their being categorized as unemployed.”³⁴⁷



© Glory Lily / flickr.com
Inside a classroom

³⁴¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, “UIS In Brief: Tunisia,” 2010, http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=7880&BR_Region=40525

³⁴² The World Bank, “Opening Remarks for ‘Beyond Recovery: Tunisia’s Knowledge-Based Approach to Long Term Growth and Job Creation,’” 6 October 2010, <http://go.worldbank.org/68J7YRNIG0>

³⁴³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, “BTI 2012 — Tunisia Country Report” (Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012), 27, 41, <http://www.bti-project.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Tunisia.pdf>

³⁴⁴ Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Tunisia, “Universities,” 20 September 2011, <http://www.universites.tn/anglais/index.htm>

³⁴⁵ Studies, Planning and Programming Office, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Republic of Tunisia, “Higher Education in Features, Academic Year 2010-2011,” 2011, 1, http://www.universites.tn/anglais/donnees_de_base/depliant10-11_ang.pdf

³⁴⁶ Yvon Gasse and Maripier Tremblay, “Entrepreneurial Beliefs and Intentions: A Cross-Cultural Study of University Students in Seven Countries,” *International Journal of Business* 16, no. 4, 2011, 308-311, http://www.craig.csufresno.edu/International_Programs/JC/IJB/Volumes/Volume%2016/V164-1.pdf

³⁴⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung, “BTI 2012 — Tunisia Country Report,” Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012, 46, <http://www.bti-project.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Tunisia.pdf>

Telecommunications

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) regulates Tunisia’s postal, telecommunications, broadcasting, computing, and internet services. Various agencies provide and manage digital certification, e-banking, e-government, e-commerce, ICT security, and ICT training.³⁴⁸ Communications technologies are relatively advanced for Africa, although surveillance and censorship of communications were common before the 2011 revolution.³⁴⁹ Public phones, called *Publitel* or *Taxiphone*, are available and reliable, if not entirely secure.³⁵⁰ While there are only 1.29 million landlines (about 1 for every 10 Tunisians), the number of mobile phones exceeds the total population.³⁵¹



© Hedi Ben Abbes
Interview

Exchange 24: May I use your phone?

Soldier:	May I use your phone?	inazhim nista'mil taleefoonik?
Local:	Sure.	itfaDhal.

Since area codes became part of local telephone numbers in 2001, Tunisian phone numbers are eight digits. A first digit of “7” is a landline, while “9” or “2” usually begin cellular numbers.³⁵² For emergency service in Arabic or French, dial 197.³⁵³

³⁴⁸ Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, “The Ministry,” 2010, <http://www.mincom.tn/index.php?id=320&L=2> (see individual agency sites under “Establishments”)
³⁴⁹ Opennetinitiative.net, “Tunisia,” 7 August 2009, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/tunisia>
³⁵⁰ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 160-161.
³⁵¹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Tunisia,” in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>
³⁵² Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 291.
³⁵³ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia: Country Specific Information,” 20 July 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html

Exchange 25: What is your telephone number?

Soldier:	What is your telephone number?	ishnoowa noomroo taleefoonik?
Local:	My phone number is 75-281-595.	noomrooya Khamsa wu sab'een meyteyn wu waaHid withmaaneen Khamsameeya wu Khamsa wu tis'een.

Transportation

The Ministry of Transport oversees Tunisia's network of sea, air, and land transportation. Ships operate out of seven major ports, including La Goulette in Tunis.³⁵⁴ Tunisia's 29 airports include 7 with international flights.³⁵⁵

Exchange 26: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	ana iTreeq leewaSal lil maTaar?
Local:	The road heading east.	iTreeq ilee yihiz lish sharq.

2,165 km (1,345 mi) of passenger and freight railway lines cross the country.³⁵⁶ In the 19th century, European colonization brought two different gauge rail systems to Tunisia: standard gauge rails to the north and the slower narrow or metre gauge tracks for the phosphate mines to the south.³⁵⁷ The Lezard Rouge (Red Lizard), once the pleasure train of the bey of Tunis, runs on narrow gauge through the scenic Seldja Gorge. Tourist service, suspended most of 2011,



© Bellyglad / flickr.com
Truck transporting rugs

³⁵⁴ Office de la Marine Marchande et des Ports [Tunisia], "Historical Record: Ports Anchored in History," 2008, http://www.ommp.nat.tn/page.php?code_menu=1&code_page=2

Office de la Marine Marchande et des Ports [Tunisia], "Goulette: A Privileged Destination," 2008, http://www.ommp.nat.tn/goulette.php?code_menu=4&code_page=15

³⁵⁵ Office de L'Aviation Civil et des Aeroports [Tunisia], "Office Missions," no date, http://www.oaca.nat.tn/english/index_public_eng_org.htm

³⁵⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

³⁵⁷ Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer Tunisiens, "Historique," 2007, <http://www.sncft.com.tn/fr/sncft/historique.html>

has resumed.^{358, 359}

Exchange 27: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	famaash maHaTit itraa iqreeba?
Local:	No.	laa.

Paved roads date to Roman times and today cross into both Algeria and Libya. With more than 19,000 km (11,800 mi) of paved highways throughout the country, urban areas are accessible by car and bus.³⁶⁰

Exchange 28: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	il kaar iqreeb yooSal?
Local:	Yes.	haw jaay.

Major cities have public and private taxis that provide metered service. If a taxi does not have a meter, be sure to ask the driver how much the fare will be before getting in the car. It also is inadvisable to get into a taxi if another passenger is already in it. Taxi scams are one of the most common complaints of travelers to Tunisia.^{361, 362}



© John Georgiou
Old Car

Exchange 29: Where can I get a cab?

Soldier:	Where can I get a cab?	imneen inazhim naKhuTh taksee?
Local:	Over there.	min hoonee.

³⁵⁸ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 262.

³⁵⁹ Seth Sherwood, "Tunisia after the Revolution," *The New York Times*, 5 April 2012, <http://travel.nytimes.com/2012/04/08/travel/tunisia-after-the-revolution.html?pagewanted=all>

³⁶⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

³⁶¹ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 68, 283.

³⁶² Daniel Jacobs, *The Rough Guide to Tunisia* (New York: Rough Guides, Ltd., 2009), 39.

Tunisia has a unique system of licensed inter-city transportation called *louage*. From the French meaning to rent or hire, the *louage* is a larger sedan or SUV that carries five to seven passengers. Drivers wait with their vehicles at a *place de louage* and depart when enough passengers have gathered. The *louages* are safe, economical, and usually faster than bus or train.^{363, 364}

Exchange 30: Can you take me there?

Soldier:	Can you take me there?	itnazhim it-hiznee ghaadee?
Local:	Yes, I can.	in'am, inazhim.

Tunisia has both international and local car rental agencies, typically located at major airports and hotels. Daily rates are generally higher than in the continental United States. An international driving license and a major credit card are required.

Exchange 31: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	ween inazhim nikree karihba?
Local:	Downtown.	fasT liblaad.

Driving in Tunisia is said to be similar to driving in Italy or France. U.S. drivers accustomed to priority traffic on the left should note that roundabout right-of-way goes to the right-hand lane(s) in Tunisia, and left turns may also require first entering a lane to the right.³⁶⁵ Tunisia has one of the world's highest rates of traffic-accident fatalities. Walking remains the most common means of transportation even in cities, although one-third of those killed in traffic accidents are pedestrians.³⁶⁶

³⁶³ Omar Zaafrani, "The Tunisian Louage is a Vehicle of a Different Stripe," *The National* (UAE), 17 January 2009, <http://www.thenational.ae/lifestyle/travel/the-tunisian-louage-is-a-vehicle-of-a-different-stripe>

³⁶⁴ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 304-305.

³⁶⁵ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 304.

³⁶⁶ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities," in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 107, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

Street Crime and Solicitation

Tunisian cities, especially tourist areas, have their share of pickpockets, purse-snatchers, and beach, car, and hotel burglars. Items left out in residential yards or garages also often are stolen.³⁶⁷ Male gigolos at beach resorts may target wealthy-looking tourists of both sexes.³⁶⁸



© Jay Owens
Tunis medina at dusk

Although violent crime is relatively rare and between acquainted parties, the U.S. Embassy in Tunis noted a general rise in criminal activity in 2012, including daylight muggings in upscale neighborhoods.³⁶⁹ Tunisian women avoid going out alone, especially after dark; women visitors should follow their example to minimize unpleasant encounters with Tunisian men.^{370, 371} In the post-revolution transition period, protests in Tunisian cities often have become violent, leading to temporary states of emergency on several occasions.^{372, 373, 374}

Street Vendors

Most Tunisians are honest, but some street vendors and touts are out to exploit tourists.

Exchange 32: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	yi'ayshik, ishree Haaja.
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	samaHnee, mabqaash 'indee ifloos.

Occasionally, youths can be seen in the old markets begging money from tourists. Aid workers noted an increase in street children during and after the 2011 revolution.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁷ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia: Country Specific Information,” 20 July 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html

³⁶⁸ Daniel Jacobs, *The Rough Guide to Tunisia* (New York: Rough Guides, Ltd., 2009), 52-53.

³⁶⁹ Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia 2012 OSAC Crime and Safety Report,” 14 March 2012, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=12194>

³⁷⁰ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia: Country Specific Information,” 20 July 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html

³⁷¹ Gallup, “After the Arab Uprisings: Women on Rights, Religion, and Rebuilding,” Summer 2012, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/155306/Arab-Uprisings-Women-Rights-Religion-Rebuilding.aspx>

³⁷² Adam Le Nevez, “Violence in Tunis Leads to Protests in Regional Cities,” *TunisiaLive*, 10 April 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/04/10/violence-in-tunis-leads-to-protests-in-regional-cities/>

³⁷³ Tarek Amara and Lin Noueihed, “Tunisian Salafi Islamists Riot over ‘Insulting’ Art,” *Reuters*, 13 June 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/13/us-tunisia-salafis-clash-idUSBRE85B0XW20120613>

³⁷⁴ BBC News Africa, “Tunis Declares Curfew after ‘Islamist Rioting’,” 12 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18416328>

Exchange 33: Give me money

Local:	Give me money	a'Teenee ifloos
Soldier:	I don't have any.	ma 'indee ifloos.

Marketplace

The traditional marketplace (*souq*) is a collection of shops and stalls found in the older areas of Tunisia's cities. The medina of Tunis houses many different such markets, distinguished by type of merchandise, founding craftsmen or merchants.³⁷⁶ Malls and supermarkets in newer upscale areas offer alternative Western-style shopping.³⁷⁷ Retail hours are typically mornings and evenings, interrupted by a long lunch hour; shops outside of tourist areas often close on Sundays.³⁷⁸ Business hours are somewhat shorter in winter and during the annual observance of Ramadan.³⁷⁹



© Jay Owens
Tunisian shop

Exchange 34: How much longer will you be here?

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	qidaash bash tabqa hoonee?
Local:	Three more hours.	ithlaatha iswaaya' aKhreen.

The easiest place to learn about traditional wares is at a government-run artisan shop. The Societe de Commercialisation des Produits de l'Artisanats (SOCOPA), identified by its symbol of the Hand of Fatima above a fish, operates stores in major tourist cities.³⁸⁰ In SOCOPA shops, one can find the best of traditional Tunisian wood and leather goods, silverware and jewelry, perfumes, fabrics and



© John Morris
Street vendor

³⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report 2012: Tunisia," June 2012, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192598.pdf>

³⁷⁶ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 73-74.

³⁷⁷ Consular Section, U.S Embassy Tunis, "General Guidance for American Citizens Living in Tunisia," n.d., 66-67, http://photos.state.gov/libraries/tunisia/231771/PDFs/amcit_booklet.pdf

³⁷⁸ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Tunisia: Country Specific Information," 20 July 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html

³⁷⁹ iExplore, "Tunisia Travel Guide: Shopping," 2012, <http://www.iexplore.com/travel-guides/africa/tunisia/shopping>

³⁸⁰ Ministry of Trade and Handicrafts, Republic of Tunisia, "Enterprise of Commericalisation of Products of Handicrafts 'SOCOPA'," no date, <http://www.socopa.com.tn/index.php>

clothing, basketry, carpets, glass, and pottery.

Exchange 35: Is the market nearby?

Soldier:	Is the market nearby?	isooq iqreeb?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	in'am, min hoonee 'al yimeen.

Exchange 36: Do you sell pottery?

Soldier:	Do you sell pottery?	itbee' il fuKhaar?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Shoppers should always examine merchandise closely, especially more expensive items, since once sold items are difficult to return. If there is an object that is not the correct color or size, a merchant might have suitable sizes and colors in the storehouse.

Exchange 37: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	mazalshee 'andik min haThooma?
Local:	No.	laa.

Exchange 38: May I examine this close up?

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	inazhim inshoof haaTha min iqreeb?
Local:	Sure.	biT Tab'.

Although bargaining is an accepted tradition in the *suqs*, shoppers should only engage in bargaining for items they are serious about buying and have an idea of the market value of the

item before beginning to bargain. Haggling over small differences for inexpensive items should be avoided.^{381, 382}

Exchange 39: Can I buy a carpet with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a carpet with this much money?	inazhim nishree zarbeeya bil ifloos ilee 'indee?
Local:	No.	laa.

Some merchants will accept U.S. dollars or major European currencies, but they might not offer an acceptable exchange rate. For shopping at the market, it is best to carry Tunisian Dinars in a range of denominations.

Exchange 40: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	taqbal id dolaar lamreekee?
Local:	No we only accept Tunisian dinars.	laa niqbaloo kaan id deenaar it toonsee.

Exchange 41: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	itnazhim itSariflee haaTha?
Local:	No.	laa.

Food and Dining

Arab, European (especially French), and other international cuisine can be found in hotels and restaurants in the main cities of Tunisia. The Tunisian National Tourist Office awards *restaurants touristiques* one to three forks according to their quality.³⁸³

³⁸¹ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 115.

³⁸² Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 289-290.

³⁸³ Portail du Tourisme, “Decret no. 89-432 du 31 Mars 1989 Relatif au Classement des Restaurants de Tourisme,” Ministère du Tourisme, République Tunisienne, 2011, <http://www.tourisme.gov.tn/fileadmin/CadreJuridique/Fr/25/D-1989-432.pdf>

Exchange 42: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	maa zilto itsarboo ifToor iSbaaHa?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Tunisian dishes blend the cuisines of Mediterranean North Africa and Europe. While Berbers contributed the national dish, *couscous*, Spaniards brought chilies to North Africa from the New World; Tunisians made *harissa*, a paste of finely milled hot chili peppers, garlic, and olive oil that is served as an appetizer. Other common ingredients include tomatoes, onions, chickpeas, dates, figs, and olives. *Lablabi*, a hearty soup of chickpeas and harissa, is a common breakfast dish, and *shurba* (Arabic for “soup”) also is a traditional evening dish especially popular during Ramadan for breaking the day’s fast.^{384, 385}



© Henning Leweke
Tea

Exchange 43: I’d like some hot soup.

Soldier:	I’d like some hot soup.	inHib shurba isKhoona.
Local:	Sure.	HaaDhir.

Popular snack foods include *brik*, fried triangles of wafer-thin pastry with fillings that are savoury (egg, cheese, tuna) or sweet (almond or sesame paste).³⁸⁶ Casual local dining can be found at *gargottes*, *rotisseries*, or roadside barbecue joints known as *meshoui*.³⁸⁷

Exchange 44: What type of meat is this?

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	ishnoowa naw' il Ham haaTha?
Local:	Lamb.	'aloosh.

³⁸⁴ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 58.

³⁸⁵ Luzita Ball, “Fasting, Fairness, Friendship, Fun and Feeling Fine: The Roles of Food in Islam,” *Shap Journal* XXXII (2009/10), http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/journals/articles_0910/ball.pdf

³⁸⁶ Sean Haley, “Our Guide to Tunisian Cuisine,” *TunisiaLive*, 1 September 2011, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2011/09/01/our-guide-to-tunisian-cuisine/>

³⁸⁷ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 54-57.

Major hotels and many restaurants that cater to tourists have a license to sell alcoholic beverages. Tunisian wineries and breweries produce wine and beer, and liqueurs are distilled from local figs, dates, and herbs.^{388, 389, 390} Nevertheless, because Islam prohibits alcohol, it is better not to offer alcoholic drinks to Muslims and to limit alcohol consumption to inside the hotel or restaurant.

Exchange 45: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	kaas maya yi'ayshik?
Local:	Yes, right away.	idqeeqa injiblik.

The Tunisian kitchen also produces delicious pastries, such as baklava or the “stones of Carthage,” colorful bite-sized cakes topped with sugar walnuts.³⁹¹ Exotic varieties of fruit in season—plums, peaches, pomegranates, grapes, oranges, melons, cactus fruit—are another popular dessert.



© Ali Elangasinghe
Tunisian sweets

Exchange 46: Do you have dessert?

Soldier:	Do you have dessert?	'indik desayr?
Local:	Yes, we have fruits and sweets.	in'am, 'ina ghala wiHloo.

Tunisians also are fond of strong, Turkish-style coffee and sweetened mint tea. City cafes are filled with men talking, playing board or card games, and smoking water pipes. An unaccompanied woman will likely attract unwelcome attention, and there are few mixed-gender or women-only venues.³⁹²

³⁸⁸ Emma Murphy, “Tunisia: Cultural Life: Daily Life and Social Customs,” *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/609229/Tunisia>

³⁸⁹ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 55-56.

³⁹⁰ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 121-123.

³⁹¹ Sean Haley, “Our Guide to Tunisian Cuisine,” *TunisiaLive*, 1 September 2011, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2011/09/01/our-guide-to-tunisian-cuisine/>

³⁹² Daniel Jacobs, *The Rough Guide to Tunisia* (New York: Rough Guides, Ltd., 2009), 42.

Exchange 47: I would like coffee or tea.

Soldier:	I would like coffee or tea.	inHib qahwa wala tey.
Local:	Sure.	HaaDhir.

Tunisians can be seen washing their hands before their meals and their hands and mouth upon completion of the meal. It is a part of Islamic hygiene.

Exchange 48: Where is your restroom?

Soldier:	Where is your restroom?	ween il Hamaam?
Local:	That room to your left, over there.	il beyt ilee 'ala yeesaarik, min ihna.

If dining with a Tunisian companion or driver, it would be a welcome gesture to pay for his or her food as well.

Exchange 49: Put this all in one bill.

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill.	HuT kul shey fee faatoora waaHda.
Local:	Okay.	baahee.

Otherwise, ask for the bill and leave a tip of 5%-10%, if the food and service were excellent.³⁹³

Exchange 50: Can I have my total bill, please?

Soldier:	Can I have my total bill, please?	itnazhim ta'Teena liHsaab il kul, yi'ayshik?
Local:	Yes, of course.	biTbee'a.

³⁹³ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 288.

Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Criminal activity in Tunisian cities has been declining in recent years.
FALSE
Although violent crime is relatively rare and between acquainted parties, the U.S. Embassy in Tunis noted a general rise in criminal activity in 2012, including daylight muggings in upscale neighborhoods. Tunisian women avoid going out alone, especially after dark.
2. Communications technologies in Tunisia are relatively advanced for Africa.
TRUE
Tunisia's postal, telecommunications, broadcasting, computing, and internet services are relatively advanced for Africa, although some of the country's communication's technologies were commonly used for surveillance and censorship before the 2011 revolution.
3. As in the United States, Tunisian healthcare regulations require a visit to the doctor and a prescription to obtain most medicines.
FALSE
The government regulates the pharmaceutical industry in Tunisia, including the import and domestic production of drugs. Most pharmacies are now in the private sector. In addition to diagnosing minor illnesses, Tunisian pharmacists sell many drugs without prescriptions.
4. Bargaining is an acceptable behavior in traditional Tunisian markets (*souqs*).
TRUE
Although bargaining is an accepted tradition, shoppers should only engage in bargaining for items they are serious about buying and have an idea of the market value of the item before beginning to bargain. Haggling over small differences for inexpensive items should be avoided.
5. Driving is the most common means of transportation in Tunisia.
FALSE
Tunisia has one of the world's highest rates of traffic-accident fatalities. Walking remains the most common means of transportation even in cities, although one-third of those killed in traffic accidents are pedestrians.

CHAPTER 5: RURAL LIFE

Introduction

A third of Tunisia's population live outside of urban areas, in the northern mountains and valleys, interior plains, and southern oases and deserts of the country.³⁹⁴ Some rural Tunisians continue in traditional ways of life—farming, herding, and seasonal nomadism. Others make a living in phosphate mines and oil fields, or seek migrant work in cities or abroad.^{395, 396}



© McKay Savage
Elders playing a game

Inhabitants live in a variety of villages, settlements, homesteads, and seasonal camps, loosely connected through a network of weekly markets.³⁹⁷ Culturally, traditional (or “tribal”) values that emphasize the patriarchal family and the will of Allah are strongest in rural areas.³⁹⁸ Observers sometimes describe rural women, especially Berbers, as comparatively free in their daily life.³⁹⁹ The female private sphere of the rural homestead can be sizable, and dress codes of modesty are not always practical in farm work. However, the effects of gender discrimination on rural girls and women are evident in healthcare and education statistics.⁴⁰⁰

A regional divide between the rich urban coast and the poor rural interior dates back to Carthaginian times. Traditional social distinctions ranked an urban aristocracy (*baldi*) and populace (*tunsi*) above rural villagers (*afaqi*) and nomads (*arabi*). Modern socioeconomic stratification added an underclass of landless unemployed.⁴⁰¹ Rural poverty and unemployment rates are several times higher than in cities, while rates of access to water, power, transportation, healthcare, education, and information and communication technologies are lower. This regional imbalance fueled the Sidi Bouzid Revolt that became the Jasmine Revolution of 2011 and continues to motivate rural activism.^{402, 403, 404}

³⁹⁴ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 81-82.

³⁹⁵ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2252.

³⁹⁶ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 73.

³⁹⁷ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2250-2251.

³⁹⁸ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 101-102.

³⁹⁹ Marta Segal Block, *Tunisia* (Chicago: Heinemann [Capstone Global Library LLC]), 2012), 24.

⁴⁰⁰ UN Development Programme, “Tunisia: National Millennium Development Goals Report 2004,” May 2004, 13, 17, 25-27, 36-37, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/undp/mdgr/tunisia-nmdgr-04e.pdf>

⁴⁰¹ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 917.

⁴⁰² Zack Brisson and Kate Krontiris, “Tunisia: From Revolution to Institutions,” Reboot/Infodev/(Washington: World Bank, 2012), 22-39, <http://www.infodev.org/en/Document.1141.pdf>

Tribal Distribution

Since the bey of Tunis put down a tribal rebellion in the 19th century, Tunisian tribes have been less important in the North African nation.⁴⁰⁵ Among the active tribes in the country today include a few Berber groups who settled in the far south or in the hills near the Algerian border and retain a distinct identity reinforced by language and cultural differences.^{406, 407, 408}



© McKay Savage
Rural tent

Jerba Island is home to small groups of Berber Ibadi Muslims and Sephardic Jews.^{409, 410} The descendants of pastoral tribes, such as the Zlass near Kairouan or the Freshish and Mateur near Kasserine and Sbeitla, also may come together as a group for religious celebrations of saintly ancestors or for political elections.⁴¹¹

Exchange 51: Do you know this area very well?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	ti'raf il iblaaSa haaThee bil baahee?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Some localized violence has been reported as tribal conflict since 2011.^{412, 413, 414} To the south, nomadic Saharan Desert tribes cross Libyan-Tunisian-Algerian borders with ease. Their reputed

⁴⁰³ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia: Country Specific Information,” 4 June 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html

⁴⁰⁴ Taylor Luck, “One Year after the Tunisian Revolt Began, Little Has Changed, Residents Say,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 December 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/1223/One-year-after-Tunisian-revolt-began-little-has-changed-residents-say>

⁴⁰⁵ Christopher Alexander, *Tunisia: Stability and Reform in the Modern Maghreb* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 21.

⁴⁰⁶ M. Paul Lewis, ed., “Nafusi,” in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=jbn

⁴⁰⁷ Zouhir Gabsi, “An Outline of Shilha (Berber) Vernacular of Douiret (Southern Tunisia),” (thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2003), <http://arrow.uws.edu.au:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/uws:573>

⁴⁰⁸ Maarten Kossmann and B. Grimes, “Berber Languages,” in *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, ed. William J. Frawley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 218-221.

⁴⁰⁹ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 269.

⁴¹⁰ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia: Demography,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2248-2249.

⁴¹¹ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia: Demography,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2255.

⁴¹² Zied Mhirsi, “Clashes Between [sic] Two Tribes in Mitalaoui: 3 Dead and 90 Injured,” *TunisiaLive*, 4 June 2011, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2011/06/04/clashes-between-two-tribes-in-mitalaoui-3-dead-and-90-injured/>

⁴¹³ Agence France Presse, “Eleven Killed in South Tunisia Tribal Clashes,” *Google News*, 5 June 2011, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gBAQK7INcQj7HrH9ac1OPBPjlpw?docId=CNG.bbaf1601ea15250b70584a4c3761a175.c11>

⁴¹⁴ Tunisian News Agency (TAP), “Violent Clashes Erupt in Bed Guerdane,” 1 May 2012, <http://www.tap.info.tn/en/en/regions/13957-violent-tribal-clashes-erupt-in-ben-guerdane.html>

affiliation with rebel and terrorist groups contributes to warnings against travel in the region.⁴¹⁵ Tunisia declared its Saharan territory a closed military zone in 2012.⁴¹⁶

Land Distribution

Tunisian traditions of land use evolved from Berber and Bedouin practices, and later from Ottoman-interpreted Islam. Land could be collectively owned by a tribe (*arsh*); endowed to support a family, religious, or charitable group (*habous* or *waqf*); dually controlled, e.g. by a farmer and his political patron (*hanshir*); or individually held (*melk* or *mulk*).^{417, 418}



© Ian Riley
Plot of land

Large amounts of Tunisian territory became government property after the end of the Ottoman era. Independent Tunisia nationalized additional tribal and foreign-owned lands.^{419, 420, 421} However, attempts in the 1960s to collectivize rural farmers on state land failed. Regulations limiting the size of individual landholdings, as well as the group water management rights of rural inhabitants, also have deterred subsequent economic development.^{422, 423} Although the government promoted policies of land privatization in the 1990s, such efforts were plagued by corruption and political favoritism.⁴²⁴

Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of the al-Nahda Party, has characterized agrarian land ownership in Islamist terms, suggesting that the Muslim community has the right to take land from owners who do not use it for the common good.^{425, 426} In post-revolution Tunisia, rural agriculturalists hope to establish land ownership and associated water rights without navigating a corrupt

⁴¹⁵ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia: Country Specific Information,” 4 June 2012, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1045.html

⁴¹⁶ Magharebia, “Tunisian Sahara Declared ‘Closed Military Zone,’” 1 July 2012,

http://magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/newsbriefs/general/2012/07/01/newsbrief-05

⁴¹⁷ Christopher Alexander, *Tunisia: Stability and Reform in the Modern Maghreb* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 21.

⁴¹⁸ Ghazi Duwaji, “Land Ownership in Tunisia: An Obstacle to Agricultural Development,” *Land Economics* 44:1 (February 1968), 129-132.

⁴¹⁹ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 90.

⁴²⁰ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 38.

⁴²¹ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2251.

⁴²² Ghazi Duwaji, “Land Ownership in Tunisia: An Obstacle to Agricultural Development,” *Land Economics* 44:1 (February 1968), 129-132.

⁴²³ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2253.

⁴²⁴ Stephen J. King, “Tunisia,” in *Countries at the Crossroads 2007: A Survey of Democratic Governance*, eds. Sanja Kelly, Christopher Walker, Ake Dizard (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 704.

⁴²⁵ Azzam S. Tamimi, *Rachid Ghannouchi: A Democrat within Islamism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 52-53.

⁴²⁶ Aidan Lewis, “Profile: Tunisia’s Ennahda Party,” BBC News Africa, 25 October 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15442859>

bureaucracy.⁴²⁷ Landless peasants also are protesting for pre-colonial family ownership to be restored, and farm workers are organizing for guarantees of living wages and better working conditions.⁴²⁸ Some land disputes between families have escalated to fatal violence.⁴²⁹

Although the Personal Status Code of 1956 began to address issues of gender equality, it did not equalize inheritance rights for women.⁴³⁰ Particularly in rural areas, practices continue to follow Islamic law, keeping land ownership among male family members in preference to inheritance by females. Land ownership by women is therefore less common.

Exchange 52: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	larDh haaThee milkik?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Rural Economy

Less than 20% of the national labor force, including most rural Tunisians, work in agriculture.⁴³¹ Many are subsistence farmers who tend a variety of crops and animals (from cattle in the north to camels in the south) and trade their produce in area markets. Other rural Tunisians are tenant farmers or day laborers tending cash crops that later will be processed at factories and/or exported internationally.⁴³²

Land and water insecurities have contributed to Tunisia's decades-long decline in agricultural employment.^{433, 434} Irrigation is not feasible for small rural farmers in the center and south, who are idle for long periods between infrequent rains.⁴³⁵ Industrial laborers from rural areas



© Knokton / flickr.com
Woman preparing bread

⁴²⁷ Zack Brisson and Kate Krontiris, "Tunisia: From Revolution to Institutions," Reboot/Infodev (Washington: World Bank, 2012), 28, <http://www.infodev.org/en/Document.1141.pdf>

⁴²⁸ Alia Gana, "The Rural and Agricultural Roots of the Tunisian Revolution: When Food Security Matters," *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture & Food* 19:2 (20 May 2012), 208-209, www.ijisaf.org/archive/19/2/gana.pdf

⁴²⁹ Asma Ghribi, "Clan Dispute in Gafsa Results in One Dead and Seven Wounded," *TunisiaLive*, 28 March 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/03/28/clan-dispute-in-gafsa-results-in-one-dead-and-seven-wounded/>

⁴³⁰ Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Tunisia: Discriminatory Family Code," 2012, http://genderindex.org/country/tunisia#_ftnref25

⁴³¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Tunisia," in *The World Factbook*, 31 July 2012, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>

⁴³² Sana Ajmi, "Security Restored in Sidi Bouzid Following Attacks on Government Offices," *TunisiaLive*, 27 July 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/07/27/security-restored-in-sidi-bouzid-following-attacks-on-government-offices/>

⁴³³ World Bank, "Country: Tunisia: Overview," 2012, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia>

⁴³⁴ Zack Brisson and Kate Krontiris, "Tunisia: From Revolution to Institutions," Reboot/Infodev (Washington: World Bank, 2012), 28, <http://www.infodev.org/en/Document.1141.pdf>

⁴³⁵ Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Tunisia," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2250-2252.

also often find themselves out of work or behind in pay.⁴³⁶ The food insecurity that has resulted (in part) from decreasing agricultural production contributes to rural poverty, which has approached rates of 30% in the interior, nearly 10 times the rate in Greater Tunis.^{437, 438}

Rural Healthcare

National statistics mask discrepancies between urban and rural health conditions. Most Tunisians have access to electricity (99.5%), water (94%), and sanitation (85%).^{439, 440, 441}

However, these rates are lower in rural areas, where about 80% of the population has access to safe drinking water and 60% has access to improved sanitation.⁴⁴² Travelers should take potable water when visiting rural areas, where water sources may be contaminated or seasonally dry.⁴⁴³



© Mate Marschalko
Elderly man in wheelchair

Healthcare facilities in rural areas also may be limited. Specialists and emergency treatment are often far away, and ambulance service is rarely available. Rural pharmacies are chronically short of supplies, and travelers should bring prescription medicines with them.⁴⁴⁴ Compared to their urban counterparts, rural mothers are three times more likely to die in childbirth, and their children are twice as likely to be stunted.⁴⁴⁵

⁴³⁶ Sana Ajmi, “Security Restored in Sidi Bouzid Following Attacks on Government Offices,” *TunisiaLive*, 27 July 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/07/27/security-restored-in-sidi-bouzid-following-attacks-on-government-offices/>

⁴³⁷ World Bank, “Country: Tunisia: Overview,” 2012, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia>

⁴³⁸ Zack Brisson and Kate Krontiris, “Tunisia: From Revolution to Institutions,” *Reboot/Infodev* (Washington: World Bank, 2012), 28, <http://www.infodev.org/en/Document.1141.pdf>

⁴³⁹ National Statistical Institute, Ministry of Development and International Cooperation, Republic of Tunisia, *Statistical Indicators of Tunisia*, Issue 19, Edition 2010 (Tunis: CEDEX, December 2010), 6, <http://www.ins.nat.tn/indexen.php>

⁴⁴⁰ Trading Economics, “World Bank Indicators – Tunisia,” 2012, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/world-bank-list-by-country?c=tunisia>

⁴⁴¹ World Bank, “Country: Tunisia: Overview,” 2012, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia>

⁴⁴² Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, “Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010–2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)” (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 15, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

⁴⁴³ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation, “Interim Strategy Note for the Republic of Tunisia for the Period FY13-14 (Report No. 67692-TN),” World Bank, 17 May 2012, 6-7, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/06/27/000350881_20120627090812/Rend ered/PDF/676920CAS0CORR00R201200117020SIMULT.pdf

⁴⁴⁴ Zack Brisson and Kate Krontiris, “Tunisia: From Revolution to Institutions,” *Reboot/Infodev* (Washington: World Bank, 2012), 34, <http://www.infodev.org/en/Document.1141.pdf>

⁴⁴⁵ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation, “Interim Strategy Note for the Republic of Tunisia for the Period FY13-14 (Report No. 67692-TN),” World Bank, 17 May 2012, 6-7, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/06/27/000350881_20120627090812/Rend ered/PDF/676920CAS0CORR00R201200117020SIMULT.pdf

Exchange 53: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	famaash maSaHa iqreeba?
Local:	Yes, over there.	in'am, min hoonee.

Traditional and Islamic medical practices include bonesetting, herbalism, scarification, and spiritual healing.^{446, 447, 448} Life events that require the services of ritual specialists include birth, male circumcision, puberty, and marriage.⁴⁴⁹

Exchange 54: My arm is broken, can you help me?

Soldier:	My arm is broken, can you help me?	eedee imkasra, itnazhim it'aawinee?
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	in'am, inazhim in'aawnik.

Education

Independent Tunisia's program of educational reform led to more schooling in rural areas. However, in sparsely populated areas children often travel several miles a day to attend elementary or secondary school. Rural children also may be kept out of school when their help is needed to harvest crops, tend animals, or otherwise support family finances.⁴⁵⁰ Thus, illiteracy rates are still higher among the rural population, particularly among girls and women.⁴⁵¹



© Bellyglad / flickr.com
Rural high school

⁴⁴⁶ Salim M. Adib, "From the Biomedical Model to the Islamic Alternative: A Brief Overview of Medical Practices in the Contemporary Arab World," *Social Science and Medicine* 58 (2004), 697-702, http://ipac.kacst.edu.sa/edoc/2006/157029_1.pdf

⁴⁴⁷ Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Tunisia," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2257.

⁴⁴⁸ Borgi Wahida, Mahmoud Amor, and Couchane Nabil, "Chapter 12: An Inventory of Ethnomedicinal Plants Used in Tunisia," in *Ethnomedicinal Plants: Revitalizing of Traditional Knowledge of Herbs*, eds. Mahendra Rai, Deepak Acharya and Jose Luis Rios (Science Publishers, 2011), 333-360.

⁴⁴⁹ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 557-559.

⁴⁵⁰ <http://scienceblog.com/community/older/2004/4/20043742.shtml>

⁴⁵¹ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, "Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010-2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)," Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010, 14, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

Exchange 55: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	iSghaarik yimsheeyo lil madrasa?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

The traditional wisdom that only boys deserve education because they will be the breadwinners of the future continues to affect girls in rural areas of Tunisia. Although elementary-school enrollment among girls and boys is nearly even nationwide, rural farm girls attend school in smaller numbers because of their homestead chores.^{452, 453}

Village Life

In Tunisia's rural interior, people grow, raise, catch, or make most things they need for daily life. Men make their livings and their reputations in the public sphere, leaving the management of the household—gardening, goat herding, grain grinding, weaving, cooking, sewing, compound cleaning, laundering, and childrearing—to women. When men must leave home for migrant work, their farming tasks also fall to women.⁴⁵⁴



© Bellyglad / flickr.com
Bedouin family home

Rural Tunisians live as they must. People sit, eat, and sleep on a carpet-covered ground. Inhabitants carry water from distant sources to their homes.⁴⁵⁵ Privacy is protected by distance between homesteads, not the height and thickness of walls. Tea, not coffee, is the social (and economic) drink of choice.⁴⁵⁶

Rural Leadership

The Tunisian government has been highly centralized since independence, concentrating power at the national level in the executive office. In order to communicate with citizens and hear their local concerns, the government established several levels of administrative councils, descending from the regional council of the *wilayat* (“governate,” similar to a U.S. state), through the

⁴⁵² Bertelsmann Stiftung, “BTI 2012—Tunisia Country Report” (Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012), 27, 41, <http://www.bti-project.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Tunisia.pdf>

⁴⁵³ J. Henry, “Tunisians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 560.

⁴⁵⁴ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2252-2254.

⁴⁵⁵ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 82.

⁴⁵⁶ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2250-2251.

council of the *mutamadiyat* (“delegation,” roughly analogous to a county), to the rural council of the *oumada* (“sector”).^{457, 458, 459} The *oumada* was meant to replace the traditional tribal unit of the *shaykhat*. The leader of the *oumada*, known as the *omda*, was often appointed by the government to counter the power of the local *shaykh*.⁴⁶⁰

Exchange 56: Does your mayor live here?

Soldier:	Does your mayor live here?	il 'umda imtaa'kum yi'eesh hoonee?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

The *umda* (“mayor”) may interact with the *mutamadiyat* on behalf of local residents.⁴⁶¹ A local *shaykh* may similarly grant requested help as a kind of personal favor.⁴⁶²

Exchange 57: Can you take me to your mayor?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your mayor?	itnazhim it-hiznee lil 'umda imtaa'kum?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

There are few things in a rural district that escape the notice of the *umda*. This man is in a position to render the greatest assistance to native or foreign visitors.

Exchange 58: Respected mayor we need your help / advice / opinion.

Soldier:	Respected mayor we need your help / advice / opinion.	HaDhrit il 'umda, itnazhim it'aawina / tinSaHna / ti'Teena raayik.
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⁴⁵⁷ Statoids, “Governates of Tunisia,” 18 February 2012, <http://www.statoids.com/utn.html>

⁴⁵⁸ Abderrahmane Ben Boubaker, “Annex 2: Organization of the Public Community in Tunisia,” in *Gender and Participation in Agricultural Development Planning: Lessons from Tunisia* (Case Study), (Tunis: FAO, 1997), <http://www.fao.org/Gender/Static/CaseSt/Tun/tun-e-06.htm#TopOfPage>

⁴⁵⁹ Aude-Annabelle Canesse, “Rural ‘Participation’ and its Framework in Tunisia,” *Journal of Economic and Social Research* 12:1 (2010), 63-88, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/619861047>

⁴⁶⁰ Jean R. Tartter, “Chapter 4: Government and Politics,” in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 224.

⁴⁶¹ Stephen J. King, “Economic Reform and Tunisia’s Hegemonic Party,” in *Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism in the Maghrib*, ed. Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 188.

⁴⁶² Zack Brisson and Kate Krontiris, “Tunisia: From Revolution to Institutions,” Reboot/Infodev (Washington: World Bank, 2012), 37, <http://www.infodev.org/en/Document.1141.pdf>

Local:	Yes.	in'am.
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Different Regions and Ways of Life

Rural Tunisians have adapted to the differing climates and environments of their regions with a variety of working rhythms and housing styles.⁴⁶³ Wet and dry seasons dictate when farming occurs. Crops are generally planted early in the year and harvested as they ripen during the spring or summer months. Traditional whitewashed farm houses are topped by domed brick roofs that funnel air currents for summer cooling and winter heating. A low wall around the homestead keeps out sand and stray animals.⁴⁶⁴



© Carola / flickr.com
Desert man making tent

In southern oases, date palms drink from spring-fed irrigation systems designed centuries ago.⁴⁶⁵ Farmers tend other crops beneath the shade of hundreds of thousands of trees. In the same region, ancient Berbers adapted hilltop granaries for defensible homes and food storage. Ruins of their mud-plastered, multi-storied granaries (*ksour*) are now tourist destinations.⁴⁶⁶ Some Berbers later moved into underground dwellings with large, excavated courtyards.^{467, 468}

Further south in the Sahara, the few nomadic Bedouins remaining in Tunisia are found with their herds. They carry tents on the backs of camels and traverse a network of oases and grazing areas, often crossing the desert borders with Algeria or Libya to reach water and grasses for their animals. Some nomadic Bedouins have branched out into part-time tourist businesses, such as camel trekking.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶³ J. Henry, "Tunisians: Living Conditions," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 558.

⁴⁶⁴ Rosalind Varghese Brown and Michael Spilling, *Tunisia: Cultures of the World* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009), 82.

⁴⁶⁵ Parviz Koohafkan and Miguel A. Altieri, *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems: A Legacy for the Future* (Rome: FAO, 2011), 34-35,

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/giahs/PDF/GIAHS_Booklet_EN_WEB2011.pdf

⁴⁶⁶ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, "Gabes, Matmata and the Ksour," in *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 223-225, 232.

⁴⁶⁷ Gideon Golany, *Earth-Sheltered Dwellings in Tunisia: Ancient Lessons for Modern Design* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1988), 31-35.

⁴⁶⁸ J. Henry, "Tunisians: Gender Issues," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 558.

⁴⁶⁹ *National Geographic*, "Tunisian Camels [video]," no date, http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/animals/mammals-animals/zebras-horses-camels/camel_dromedary_tunisia/

Rural Travel

Walking is the most common means of rural transportation.⁴⁷⁰ Donkeys pull carts and carry people in the north, and camels are still used in the south. However, because livestock share the right of way, the dangers of driving increase in rural areas, where roads also may be unpaved, night lighting is poor or nonexistent, and extreme wind and blowing sand can create hazards.⁴⁷¹ In addition, the lack of cell phone service and traffic police can make breakdowns and accidents more serious. Repair shops, which are located at gasoline stations, tend to be near towns.



© John Morris
Man with camel

Exchange 59: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	fama maHaTit isons iqreeba?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Because breakdowns are frequent along rural highways in Tunisia, travelling with others in multiple vehicles is recommended.

Exchange 60: Is there lodging nearby?

Soldier:	Is there lodging nearby?	famaash uteel iqreeb?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Services for food and lodging also are limited in rural areas of Tunisia. When trekking the Sahara, travelers should register with the Tunisian National Guard. Offices in Douz, Tozeur, or Tatouine will take down information on travelers, vehicles, and itineraries. If a registrant fails to arrive at a destination as expected, the guard will start a search.⁴⁷²

Exchange 61: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

⁴⁷⁰ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, “Chapter 3: The State of Maghreb Cities,” in *The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012), 107, http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2253337_Chapter%203.pdf

⁴⁷¹ U.S. Department of State, “Tunisia 2012 OSAC Crime and Safety Report,” 14 March 2012, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=12194>

⁴⁷² Embassy of the United States, Tunis, Tunisia, “Desert Travel,” no date, <http://tunisia.usembassy.gov/desert-travel.html>

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	famaash meekansya baahee iqreeb?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Checkpoints

Tunisia's Ministry of the Interior is responsible for all internal security forces, including road safety police, metropolitan police, state security forces, and the National Guard (although the National Guard receives training and equipment from the military).^{473, 474} Combined forces reportedly numbered 50,000 before the 2011 revolution and are now estimated at 61,000 (nearly twice the size of the defense forces).^{475, 476} Frequent identity checks at transportation stops and along highways are common in Tunisia.⁴⁷⁷



© Veronique Debord-Lazaro
4X4 vehicles

Exchange 62: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	feenee aqrab nuqTit taftteesh?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	fama zooz keelomater.

Local nationals and foreigners must carry proof of identity at all times.

Exchange 63: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	ma'indik kaan lawraaq haaThee bash it-thabit haweetik?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

⁴⁷³ Jane's, "Security and Foreign Forces, Tunisia," in *Sentinel Security Assessment – North Africa*, 20 April 2012.

⁴⁷⁴ Querine Hanlon, "Security Sector Reform in Tunisia: A Year after the Jasmine Revolution (Special Report 304)," U.S. Institute of Peace, March 2012, 5-6, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/SR304.pdf>

⁴⁷⁵ "Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa: Tunisia," in *The Military Balance* 111:1 (2011), 332-333.

⁴⁷⁶ Querine Hanlon, "Security Sector Reform in Tunisia: A Year after the Jasmine Revolution (Special Report 304)," U.S. Institute of Peace, March 2012, 6, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/SR304.pdf>

⁴⁷⁷ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, "Gabes, Matmata and the Ksour," in *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 302-304.

Drivers can expect random checkpoints along major highways. In all cases it is customary to produce car registration and to get out of the car. Those who insult or argue with law enforcement officials may be imprisoned.⁴⁷⁸

Exchange 64: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	uKhruj mil karihba min faDhlik.
Local:	OK.	HaaDhir.

Exchange 65: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	wareenee wuraaq il karihba.
Local:	OK.	HaaDhir.

Following the revolution in 2011, defense forces as well as police have been involved in maintaining order and security. Border areas with Algeria and Libya have long been sites of smuggling, illegal migration, and occasional insurgency. The 2011 Libyan civil war has been blamed for a recent rise in arms trafficking. Tunisia declared its Saharan territory a closed military zone in 2012.^{479, 480} Therefore, extra checkpoints in areas approaching the frontier tend to be permanent highway fixtures. Vehicle searches are routine.



© 10 10 / flickr.com
Police officer

Exchange 66: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	im'aak ay islaaH?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Several armed incidents in the country since 2011 have been blamed on al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Tunisia has approached the United States for more help to fight the

⁴⁷⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Tunisia 2012 OSAC Crime and Safety Report," 14 March 2012, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=12194>

⁴⁷⁹ Magharebia, "Tunisian Airstrike Hits Traffickers in Tatouine," 21 June 2012, http://magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/newsbriefs/general/2012/06/21/newsbrief-01

⁴⁸⁰ Magharebia, "Tunisian Sahara Declared 'Closed Military Zone'," 1 July 2012, http://magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/newsbriefs/general/2012/07/01/newsbrief-05

terrorist organization.^{481, 482} Since 2003, AQIM and its precursor the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat kidnapped several Europeans traveling in the Sahara region.⁴⁸³ (The Arabic word “Salafist” means “fundamentalist,” reflecting the group’s focus on the original texts of Islam.)⁴⁸⁴

Exchange 67: Did these people threaten you?

Soldier:	Did these people threaten you?	inaas haThooma yihadidoo feek?
Local:	No.	laa.

Land Mines

In 2009, Tunisia cleared the minefields it laid in 1976 and 1980 along its borders with Libya and Algeria. However, mines from World War II remain in the country’s south, center, north, and northwest.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ Mounir Ben Mahmoud, “Confronting Proliferating Jihadists in the Maghreb,” *Al-Monitor*, 26 June 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/06/tunisia---the-jihadist-danger-a.html>

⁴⁸² Houda Trabelsi, “Tunisia Solicits Foreign Help to Counter al-Qaeda Threat,” 22 June 2012, http://magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/06/22/feature-02

⁴⁸³ Aidan Lewis, “Tricky Dealings in Hostage Case,” BBC News Africa, 28 March 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7317495.stm>

⁴⁸⁴ BBC News Africa, “Profile: Al-Qaeda in North Africa,” 8 March 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17308138>

⁴⁸⁵ *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor*, “Tunisia,” 2 November 2011, http://www.the-monitor.org/custom/index.php/region_profiles/print_profile/597

Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Since independence, Tunisia's rural inhabitants have achieved living standards equal to their urban counterparts.

FALSE

The old regional divide between the rich urban coast and the poor rural interior still exists. Rural poverty and unemployment rates are several times higher than in cities, while rates of access to water, power, transportation, healthcare, education, and information technologies are lower.

2. Since being outlawed by the government, there are no tribes in modern Tunisia.

FALSE

Despite efforts by the government of independent Tunisia to replace tribalism with nationalism, tribal areas remain in Tunisia. Some tribes gather for religious or political activities. Some Saharan Desert tribes are reportedly affiliated with rebels and terrorists.

3. Rural land distribution remains contested in post-revolution Tunisia.

TRUE

Landless peasants are protesting for pre-colonial family ownership to be restored, and farm workers are organizing for guarantees of living wages and better working conditions.

4. Rural health emergencies are treated at local trauma centers served by taxi-ambulances.

FALSE

Healthcare facilities in rural areas may be limited. Specialists and emergency treatment are often far away, and ambulance service is rarely available. Rural pharmacies are chronically short of supplies, and travelers should bring prescription medicines with them.

5. Checkpoints are frequent along Tunisian highways, especially near border areas.

TRUE

Frequent identity checks at transportation stops and along highways are common in Tunisia, especially near border areas where the trafficking of arms and people are particular concerns. Local nationals and foreigners must carry proof of identity at all times.

CHAPTER 6: FAMILY LIFE

Introduction

The Arab family, created by kinship descent through the male line, remains the fundamental unit of the Islamic religious community and Tunisian society.⁴⁸⁶ Despite social reforms enacted in the 1950s, men are still dominant in family matters, but wives and daughters can now work outside the home for national socioeconomic progress.⁴⁸⁷ Because of liberalized social norms, both men and women are choosing their own spouses as well as relying on the arrangements of their families.⁴⁸⁸



© Agnes Komjathy
Mosque roof

Although the forces of French colonialism, family planning, and urbanization have reduced the average size of the traditional Tunisian family to just above four persons, family-centered values of mutual respect and support among kin remain strong. Rural migrants reproduce their family and community residential patterns in cities when possible, and urban residents retain close ties to their relatives in rural areas, visiting frequently and for extended periods.^{489, 490, 491, 492}



© See Wah Chang
Man in Sahara

Typical Household and Family Structure

Tunisians have traditionally lived in extended-family households—a man, his wife, his parents, his unmarried children, and (as they marry) his sons' new families.⁴⁹³ Home ownership is a Tunisian cultural ideal. For years official reports have estimated that 80% of households own their homes, with the rate nearer 90% in rural areas.^{494, 495}

⁴⁸⁶ Haim Barakat, "The Arab Family and the Challenge of Change," in *The Arab World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 97-106.

⁴⁸⁷ Lorna Hawker Durrani, "Employment of Women and Social Change," in *Change in Tunisia* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1976), 57-72.

⁴⁸⁸ Lilia Ben Salem and Therese Locoh, "Les Transformations du Mariage et de la Famille," in *Population et Developpement en Tunisie, la Metamorphose*, eds. Jacques Vallin and Therese Locoh (Tunis: Ceres Editions, 2001), 146.

⁴⁸⁹ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 104-107.

⁴⁹⁰ National Institute of Statistics-Tunisia, "Statistical Information: Household's Consumption and Standard of Living: Households and Living Conditions," 2012, <http://www.ins.nat.tn/indexen.php>

⁴⁹¹ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, "Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010-2014 (Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E)" (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 16, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

⁴⁹² "Tunisia: Lifestyle: Family," in *CultureGrams World Edition* (Provo, UT: ProQuest, 2012), 3.

⁴⁹³ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 559.

⁴⁹⁴ International Monetary Fund, "Box 1: Tunisia Housing Policies," in *Tunisia: 2000 Article IV Consultation: Staff Reports* [IMF Country Report No. 01/36], February 2001.

Exchange 68: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	qidaash min waaHid yi'eesh fid daar haaThee?
Local:	Ten.	'ashra.

When possible, families of male relatives live nearby.

Exchange 69: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	'indik iKhwa?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Exchange 70: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	haaThee 'aayiltik ibkulha?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Property ownership is ideally a joint family situation, particularly of rural lands.⁴⁹⁶ Families traditionally cooperate to ensure continuity of ownership across generations, although disputes among siblings can strain family solidarity.⁴⁹⁷

Exchange 71: Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	'ayiltik it'eesh hoonee?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

⁴⁹⁵ Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, "Country Cooperation Strategy for WHO and Tunisia 2010–2014 [Document WHO-EM/ARD/042/E]" (Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, 2010), 14, http://www.emro.who.int/docs/CCS_Tunisia_2010_EN_14488.pdf

⁴⁹⁶ LaVerle Berry and Robert Rinehart, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment," in *Tunisia: A Country Study*, 3rd ed., ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington: American University, 1986), 105.

⁴⁹⁷ N. Abu-Zahra, "Family and Kinship in a Tunisian Peasant Community," in *Mediterranean Family Structures*, ed. J.G. Peristiany (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 166.

Family Roles and Responsibilities

Men and Women

Patriarchal family structure is common in both Arab and Islamic countries. Men are traditionally responsible for providing the family income and for the education and discipline of their children, while women are responsible for running the household and daily childcare.^{498, 499, 500}

Exchange 72: Where do you work, sir?

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	ween tiKhdim, yaa sayid?
Local:	I am a farmer, sir.	niKhdim falaaH, aKhooya.

Hardships from drought and debt regularly force Tunisians, especially young men, to seek work away from their families. In the years following independence, many Tunisian males traveled to European countries or to oil-producing countries like Libya and the Gulf states to work as both skilled and unskilled laborers.⁵⁰¹ Their remittances play a significant role in supporting many Tunisian families.⁵⁰²



© Alvise Forcellini
Man cooking bread

Exchange 73: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	intee il waHeed ilee fee 'ayiltik 'indik Khidma?
Local:	No.	laa.

⁴⁹⁸ Haim Barakat, "The Arab Family and the Challenge of Change," in *The Arab World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 97-106.

⁴⁹⁹ Nuha Abudabbeh, "Chapter 31: Arab Families: Arab Families in a Historical and Cultural Context," in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, eds. Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano, and Nydia Garcia-Preto (New York: Guilford Press, 2005), 426-429.

⁵⁰⁰ Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Tunisia," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2255.

⁵⁰¹ Teresa Graziano, "The Tunisian Diaspora: Between 'Digital Riots' and Web Activism (working paper)" (Paris: Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, April 2012), 5-6, <http://www.e-diasporas.fr/working-papers/Graziano-Tunisians-EN.pdf>

⁵⁰² Nadje Al-Ali, "The Relationship between Migration within and from the Middle East and North-Africa and Pro-Poor Policies (Report)," Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK, July 2004, <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/4888/2/migrationMENAreport-1>

As male members of a family migrate away, females are left to absorb their responsibilities. In agricultural areas, women tend the fields of their own families, and they sometimes work as day laborers in the fields of others. In urban areas, they may have to take on the management of family enterprises. The Personal Status Code (PSC) encouraged women to enter the business and professional world, but they are still expected to be wives and mothers first.

Elders and Children

Showing respect within the family, especially toward elders, is as important as the maintenance of family honor in the wider world. As elder males, fathers are the seat of family authority and the final arbiters of family discipline. A traditional father may sense disrespect in a wide range of his son’s behaviors. A son should not smoke in front of his father, nor observe his father in potentially embarrassing activities (e.g., eating messy food).^{503, 504} As for women, studies suggest that aging may decrease their family power, if declining health interferes with their support network beyond their husband’s kin.⁵⁰⁵



© Dennis Jarvis
Children's puppets

The birth of a child, preferably a son, is the event that proves a woman’s value to her husband and his family.⁵⁰⁶ Traditionally, the entire extended family watches over its children, although formal discipline falls to the father.⁵⁰⁷ When parents divorce (a growing phenomenon), mothers now usually receive physical custody (and rights to pursue child support), but fathers remain the legal guardian.⁵⁰⁸ In rural areas, children take on full adult workloads by age 13 or 14, while urban children more often remain in the formal education system through university.

Exchange 74: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	itrabeet hoonee?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

⁵⁰³ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2256.

⁵⁰⁴ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 97-98.

⁵⁰⁵ Kathryn M. Yount and Emily M. Agree, “The Power of Older Women and Men in Egyptian and Tunisian Families,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66:1 (February 2004), 143, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3599871>

⁵⁰⁶ Marit Thomsland, “Negotiating the ‘In-between’: Modernizing Practices and Identities in Post-Colonial Tunisia (Report R 1992: 10)” (Bergen, Norway: Department of Social Science and Development, Chr. Michelsen Institute, December 1992), 107-108,

http://bora.cmi.no/dspace/bitstream/10202/382/1/R%201992_10%20Marit%20Tjomsland-07122007_1.pdf

⁵⁰⁷ J. Henry, “Tunisians,” in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 559.

⁵⁰⁸ Lilia Ben Salem, “Tunisia,” in *Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*, ed. Sanja Kelly and Julia Breslin (New York: Freedom House; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 10, http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Tunisia.pdf

Marriage and Divorce

Traditionally, Tunisian marriage was the union of two families. Especially in rural areas, marriage among cousins was preferable, and fathers would give daughters younger than 15 to older men. Families still take an active interest in seeing their children married (mothers are known to scout prospective brides for their sons at the public baths).⁵⁰⁹ However, within a few generations of the passage of the Personal Status Code, a large majority of surveyed Tunisians reported that they, and not their parents, chose their own spouses.⁵¹⁰ New social spaces, from shopping malls to Internet chat rooms, permit “dating” beyond the scrutiny of family and community.⁵¹¹



© Bellyglad / flickr.com
Husband and wife

Exchange 75: Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	im'aris?
Local:	No.	laa.

Both young men and women in Tunisia must now be at least 18 years old to legally marry.⁵¹² In 2000, the average age at marriage was reported to be 25.⁵¹³ Men remain single until they are financially able to pay for a wedding and support a family, which often puts them in their mid-twenties or later.⁵¹⁴ Young women may choose to complete their education before agreeing to marry.

A lengthy period of engagement includes the negotiation of a *mahr*, or dowry, which the bride and her family expect from the groom. In many Islamic states, a large *mahr* paid over time is a kind of protection for the bride as she transitions from her family to the family of her new husband. In Tunisia, the late President Bourguiba lowered the cost of dowries and raised the

⁵⁰⁹ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2254.

⁵¹⁰ Lilia Ben Salem and Therese Locoh, “Les Transformations du Mariage et de la Famille,” in *Population et Developpement en Tunisie, la Metamorphose*, eds. Jacques Vallin and Therese Locoh (Tunis: Ceres Editions, 2001), 146.

⁵¹¹ Suad Joseph, ed., “Courtship: Arab States,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, and Sexuality*, vol. 3 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 90-91.

⁵¹² Lilia Ben Salem, “Tunisia,” in *Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*, eds. Sanja Kelly and Julia Breslin (New York: Freedom House; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 8, http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Tunisia.pdf

⁵¹³ Nazeek Nosseir, “Family in the New Millineum: Major Trends Affecting Families in North Africa,” in *Major Trends Affecting Families* (Background Document), Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Economic and Social Council, UN, 2003-2004, 28, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtnosseir.pdf>

⁵¹⁴ Mischa Benoit-Lavelle, “Consumer Debt Trap Brings Suffering to Tunisian Families,” Tunisialive, 15 March 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/03/15/consumer-debt-trap-brings-suffering-to-tunisian-families/>

security of the new bride with the passage of the Personal Status Code.^{515, 516} Some analysts see an improvement in Tunisian marriage over the past decades as men and women have become more comfortable with practices of gender equality.⁵¹⁷ Others note that the laws and contracts that guarantee the balance of rights in marriage are often not enforced.⁵¹⁸

Exchange 76: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	haaThee martik?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Until 1956, Islamic law gave Tunisian men rights to polygamy and to repudiation (*talaq*), unilateral divorce without judicial intervention.⁵¹⁹ In 1956, Tunisia's Personal Status Code outlawed polygamy and repudiation, and gave women rights to initiate divorce. Since the passage of the law, divorce rates have varied. In the 1960s, men were still the majority of those requesting divorce. By the 1980s, requests came equally from men and women. Among women, reasons for divorce expanded from "assurance of food support" to include ill treatment and domestic violence, while the wife's moral conduct became a more common reason among men seeking divorce.⁵²⁰ Although the divorce rate was recently reported as below the world average, al-Nahda leader Rachid Ghannouchi claims Tunisian divorce rates are the third-highest in the Arab world.^{521, 522}



© Katymartin / flickr.com
Tunisian wedding

⁵¹⁵ L. Labidi, "From Sexual Submission to Voluntary Commitment: The Transformation of Family Ties in Contemporary Tunisia," in *The New Arab Family* 24:1/2, ed. Nicholas S. Hopkins (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 121-122.

⁵¹⁶ Katherine Spencer, "Mahr as Contract: Internal Pluralism and External Perspectives," *Onati Socio-Legal Series* 1:2 (20 September 2011), 6-8, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1898527

⁵¹⁷ L. Labidi, "From Sexual Submission to Voluntary Commitment: The Transformation of Family Ties in Contemporary Tunisia," in *The New Arab Family* 24:1/2, ed. Nicholas S. Hopkins (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 117-135.

⁵¹⁸ Mina Balioune-Lutz, "The Making of Gender Equality in Tunisia and Implications for Development (Background Paper)," *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*, World Bank, 2011, 24-26, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/balioune.pdf>

⁵¹⁹ Hafidha Chekir, "Women, the Law, and the Family in Tunisia," *Gender and Development* 4:2 (1996), 44.

⁵²⁰ L. Labidi, "From Sexual Submission to Voluntary Commitment: The Transformation of Family Ties in Contemporary Tunisia," in *The New Arab Family* 24:1/2, ed. Nicholas S. Hopkins (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 127-128.

⁵²¹ NationMaster, "Tunisia: People," 2012, http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo_div_rat-people-divorce-rate [citing CIA World Factbook 28 July 2005]

⁵²² "Tunisia Embraces Pragmatic Islam," *Mail and Guardian Online* [South Africa], 28 October 2011, <http://mg.co.za/print/2011-10-28-tunisia-embraces-pragmatic-islam>

Exchange 77: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	inaas haThooma yiqirboolik?
Local:	No.	laa.

Social Events

Most family events mark the life stages, or important changes in status, of family members—births, pre-puberty rituals, weddings, the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca, and funerals. Some extended families celebrate their connections to a saintly ancestor or marabout with annual festivities.^{523, 524}

Birth and Childhood Rituals

Special foods announce the birth of a child. New mothers are fed *zareer*, a special mix of nuts, sesame seeds, honey, and butter, just after childbirth and again when relatives traditionally visit a week later. The slaughter of a lamb or goat (two for a boy, one for a girl) for a family feast also celebrates the baby's one-week "birthday."⁵²⁵ Soon after birth, the father rubs the baby's gums with a moistened date or other sweet and whispers a verse of the Quran into the baby's ear.⁵²⁶



© Tony Hadnutt
Tunisian dancer

Almost all boys are circumcised well before puberty and often in a hospital. Ritual prayer during the event is followed by congratulations and gifts for the boy at home.⁵²⁷ Less widely practiced is *tasfih*, a pre-menstrual ritual that purports to guard a girl's chastity until marriage. Accompanied by ritual language, the young girl eats raisins dipped in the blood from small cuts in her knee.^{528, 529, 530, 531} A reversal ritual is performed just before her wedding. Mothers perform the *rbat*, a ritual with similar significance, for about-to-be grooms.⁵³²

⁵²³ Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Tunisia," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2255.

⁵²⁴ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 556.

⁵²⁵ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 557-558.

⁵²⁶ "Welcoming a New Born," *Islam's Women*, no date,

http://www.islamswomen.com/marriage/manners_of_welcoming_the_new_born_child_in_islam.php

⁵²⁷ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 558.

⁵²⁸ J. Henry, "Tunisians," in *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 2nd ed., eds. Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 559.

⁵²⁹ Fathia Skhiri, "Le Mariage au Sahel: Le Rites du Tasfih," *Cahiers des Arts et Traditions Populaires* 6 (1977), 53-73.

⁵³⁰ Ibtissem Ben Dridi, *Le Tasfih en Tunisie: Un Rituel de Protection de la Virginite Feminine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

Weddings

The Tunisian wedding is a week-long affair in the countryside and lasts several days even in the city. It is costly and complicated, with crowds of guests at the receptions and festive dinners—with music and dance sponsored by the families of both bride and groom. In the first days, the groom prepares or shops for gifts for the bride, while the bride is prepared with henna decoration.⁵³³ To reach the party on the last day, a motorcade (or camelcade) through the neighborhood is customary.⁵³⁴



© Veroyama / flickr.com
Wedding ceremony

Exchange 78: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	mabrook a'leykum il 'irs!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	sharaftoona ibHiDhoorkum, marHaba beekum.

The pivotal event of the wedding is the transfer of the bride from her father’s home to her husband’s house. The week of seclusion there that traditionally follows is now often replaced by a hotel stay or a honeymoon.

Exchange 79: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	nitmanulkum is sa'aada.
Local:	We are honored.	nitsharfoo.

Funerals

When death comes to a Muslim family, burial follows as soon as possible. The body is cleansed and wrapped in a shroud. Family members may come to view the body at home before it is

⁵³¹ Hamid Zanar, “The Maghreb’s Obsession with Women’s Virginity,” Alakhbar English, 10 July 2012, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/9597>

⁵³² Lilia Labidi, “Funerary Practices: North Africa,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality, and Health*, vol 3, ed. Suad Joseph (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 123-124.

⁵³³ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 108-110.

⁵³⁴ Donna Wheeler, Paul Clammer, and Emilie Filou, *Tunisia*, 5th ed. (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, 2010), 39.

carried away to the mosque for the funeral prayer (*janaza*) and then to the cemetery for burial. Women remain away from the cemetery until the day after burial.

Families pray for the merciful judgment of the departed soul, which is believed to live on. Prayers are traditional for the first three days after the funeral and for the following three Wednesdays. Condolence visits to the family occur on the first four Thursdays and the fortieth day after death.⁵³⁵



© Anne Roberts
Kairouan cemetery

Exchange 80: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	inHib inqadim ta'aazee leek wil 'aayiltik.
Local:	Thank you.	barak il laahu feek.

Men and women visit the grave separately to leave offerings for the deceased. Some families commemorate the anniversary of the death.⁵³⁶

Exchange 81: Please be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	rabee ya'Teekum il qoowa.
Local:	We will try.	tawa inHaawloo.

Naming Conventions

Genealogists have traced family and personal names in Tunisia to Berber, Phoenician, Roman, Arab, Islamic, African, Andalusian, and European origins. Tunisian names, like Tunisian people, come from a variety of sources—including nature and geography, tribes and colonizers, folklore and religion, traditional occupations and slavery, and contemporary fashion.^{537, 538, 539, 540}

⁵³⁵ Gerald Zarr, *Tunisia—Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 111.

⁵³⁶ Nicholas S. Hopkins, “Tunisia,” in *Countries and Their Cultures*, vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2257.

⁵³⁷ Annemarie Schimmel, *Islamic Names* (Edinburgh, U.K.: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 11, 20, 37, 41, 73, 80.

⁵³⁸ Students of the World, “Penpal Statistics: Top 100 Tunisian Names,” no date, <http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/penpals/stats.php3?Pays=TUN>

Tunisian Names	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Origin or Meaning</i>
Al-Tunsi	from Tunis
Chadli	al-Shadhili, Sufi sect
Landoulsi	from Andalusia
Mourou	"Moor"
Zlass	tribe name
<i>Name</i>	<i>Female Personal Names</i>
Imen	"Faith"
Mariam	Mary, mother of Jesus Christ
Mehrezia	after guardian saint of old Tunis
Munji'a	"Saved"
Nour	"Light"
<i>Name</i>	<i>Male Personal Names</i>
Harb	"War"
Mahrez	guardian saint of old Tunis
Mehdi	"Guided to the Right Path"
Muhammad	after the Prophet
Raymond	French substitute for Rahman

Arabic naming conventions, which emphasize patrilineal kinship, have structured Tunisian naming for a thousand years or more. All children, both girls and boys, take their father's family name for life: women do not adopt their husband's family name at marriage. Children commonly

⁵³⁹ Michael Collins Dunn, "An Echo of Al-Andalus: Tunisia's Ma'luf (Editor's Blog, *Middle East Journal*)" (Washington: Middle East Institute, 13 March 2012), <http://mideasti.blogspot.com/2012/03/echo-of-al-andalus-tunisias-maluf.html>

⁵⁴⁰ Houda Mzioudet, "The Patron Saints of Tunis: Healers and Protectors," *TunisiaLive*, 7 June 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/06/07/the-patron-saints-of-tunis-healers-and-protectors/>

take their father’s personal name as a patronymic second name. Parents (or advisers of parents) choose a child’s personal name, often following family traditions or religious guidelines.⁵⁴¹ A child’s name might express hope for its survival, or try to fool or threaten envious spirits. Children might be named after a local marabout, or for a religious activity. Boys’ names often combine the prefix *Abd-* (“servant of”) with a divine attribute, e.g., Abdul (*Abd-Allah*, Servant of the Wise One).

Exchange 82: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	haThooma iSghaarik?
Local:	Yes.	in'am.

Tunisians also invent descriptive nicknames for family and community members (e.g., *Omar 'Atrash*, “Omar the Deaf”). Traditions of gender separation in Tunisian life include a “dual system” of child naming, where young children are nicknamed after their mothers (e.g., *Ibn Mas'uda*, “son of the woman named Massouda”) among women in the private female sphere. One’s mother’s name also is used in traditional healing and fortunetelling.⁵⁴² Since 2003, a mother can legally give her family name to children born out of wedlock.⁵⁴³



© John Georgiou
Boys

⁵⁴¹ UK Government and Interpol, “A Guide to Names and Naming Practices,” March 2006, 8-9, http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

⁵⁴² Sonia S’hiri, “Voices of the Marginalized in Tunisian Narrative,” *Research in African Literatures* 28:3 Arabic Writing in Africa (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, Autumn 1997), 70-71, <http://jstor.org/stable/3820992>

⁵⁴³ Lilia Ben Salem, “Tunisia,” in *Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*, eds. Sanja Kelly and Julia Breslin (New York: Freedom House; Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 10, http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Tunisia.pdf

Chapter 6 Assessment

1. The bride's family gives the groom a dowry (*mahr*) to pay for her upkeep after marriage.

FALSE

A lengthy period of engagement includes the negotiation of a dowry (*mahr*), which the bride and her family expect from the groom. In many Islamic states, a large dowry paid over time is a kind of protection for the bride as she transitions from her family to the family of her new husband.

2. Hardships from drought and debt regularly force Tunisians to work away from their families.

TRUE

In the years following independence, many Tunisian males traveled abroad to work. Their remittances have played a significant role in supporting many Tunisian families. As male members of a family migrate away, females are left to absorb their responsibilities.

3. Smoking in front of one's father may be considered disrespectful in Tunisia.

TRUE

A traditional father may sense disrespect in a wide range of his son's behaviors, including when a son smokes in front of his father or observes his father in potentially embarrassing activities (e.g., eating messy foods).

4. Marriage-age Tunisians usually allow their parents to choose their spouses.

FALSE

Since the passage of the Personal Status Code of 1956, the tradition of arranged marriage is giving way to the personal choice of the bride and groom. New social spaces, from shopping malls to Internet chat rooms, permit "dating" beyond the scrutiny of family and community.

5. Newlywed Tunisians have traditionally lived in the household of the groom's parents.

TRUE

Tunisians have traditionally lived in extended-family households—a man, his wife, his parents, his unmarried children, and (as they marry) his son's new families. When possible, families of male relatives live nearby.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

1. The nation's capital, Tunis, is the country's largest inland city.
TRUE / FALSE
2. Tunisians struggled to achieve independence from France in the first half of the 20th century.
TRUE / FALSE
3. The first legislative assembly elected after the revolution in 2011 was responsible for revising Tunisia's constitution.
TRUE / FALSE
4. Unemployment, poverty, and disparities between the prosperous coast and the impoverished interior are serious economic problems for post-revolution Tunisia.
TRUE / FALSE
5. Most Tunisians are of mixed Arab-Berber descent and bilingual in Arabic and Berber.
TRUE / FALSE
6. The 1959 Tunisian constitution declared Islam the state religion.
TRUE / FALSE
7. The Bourguiba and Ben Ali governments tolerated Islamist political organizations.
TRUE / FALSE
8. Since colonial times, Tunisians have incorporated European attitudes and behaviors into their Muslim way of life.
TRUE / FALSE
9. Non-Muslims must fast and pray during Ramadan in Tunisia.
TRUE / FALSE
10. Christians and Jews enjoy greater tolerance in Tunisia than in other Arab countries.
TRUE / FALSE
11. The guest of honor eats first during meals in Tunisia.
TRUE / FALSE
12. When a Tunisian's family or personal honor is challenged, his or her resulting shame can produce extreme reactions.
TRUE / FALSE

13. Asking about a man's wife and daughters is a polite expression of respect and a typical conversational topic.
TRUE / FALSE
14. Public displays of affection are common between members of the same sex in Tunisia but generally frowned upon between members of the opposite sex.
TRUE / FALSE
15. As a result of the 2011 revolution, the government forbade female government employees from wearing traditional Islamic head coverings (*hijabs*).
TRUE / FALSE
16. More people in the cities own their homes than in the rural areas of Tunisia.
TRUE / FALSE
17. Many college-educated Tunisians are not qualified for the few highly skilled jobs available.
TRUE / FALSE
18. Most of the wealth in Tunisia is concentrated in cities along the north and east coasts.
TRUE / FALSE
19. Tunisia is commonly described as North Africa's most European country.
TRUE / FALSE
20. Private healthcare both supplements and challenges Tunisia's public healthcare system.
TRUE / FALSE
21. In rural areas, Tunisians live in portable housing, such as Bedouin tents.
TRUE / FALSE
22. The work of rural agriculturists produces enough food to satisfy Tunisia's domestic needs.
TRUE / FALSE
23. Tunisia's program of educational reform led to an increase of schools in rural areas.
TRUE / FALSE
24. The Tunisian government modified the traditional rural leadership system, based on the tribal *shaykh*, by introducing the government-appointed position of *umda* ("mayor").
TRUE / FALSE
25. Tunisia's tourism industry has made it easy for visitors to travel alone throughout the Sahara.
TRUE / FALSE

26. One sign of Tunisia's conservative family traditions is that all brides take the family name of their husbands.

TRUE / FALSE

27. Men commonly marry young in Tunisia, so they have enough time to acquire the four wives they are permitted by Islam.

TRUE / FALSE

28. Property ownership is ideally a joint family situation, particularly of rural lands.

TRUE / FALSE

29. Urbanization altered the traditional size and structure of the Tunisian family and household.

TRUE / FALSE

30. Weddings have become quick and easy civil events since the Personal Status Code made brides bear half the expense.

TRUE / FALSE

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