

THE  
**SWITCHERS**

Your guide to off-the-beaten-path sustainable travel and shopping

# Algeria





— SPOTLIGHT

# Algeria

While travellers have long flocked to North African countries like Morocco and Egypt, Algeria has remained a slightly off-the-radar destination. Some would-be visitors have baulked at intermittent civil unrest and an involved visa application process. Yet the Algerian government plans on wooing travellers back to this sprawling country — Africa’s largest — by banking on its beguiling contrasts. Refined architecture gives way to haunting deserts, and ancient ruins stand watch over beachside getaways. This fascinating place is the sleeping giant of North African tourism.

This guide will help you travel beyond the standard tourist attractions, and gain a deeper understanding of the country and the innovative entrepreneurs who call it home. On this trip, have a different kind of experience: one that is as responsible and environmentally-conscious as it is fun.

Planning a trip can be overwhelming, so we kept this guide simple. It is separated into four sections:

– THE FOUR SECTIONS YOU WILL FIND:



WHERE TO  
STAY



WHERE TO  
EAT



WHAT TO  
DO



WHAT TO  
BRING HOME

We have also created a [Google Map](#) featuring each location mentioned, and underlined text can be clicked to access relevant websites.

Each section features the projects and creations of our Algeria-based Switchers — the green entrepreneurs who are creating circular, sustainable economies to benefit their country and beyond.

Whether you are traveling for business or work, we hope you discover something new and inspiring through the Switchers highlighted in this guide.

Happy travels!  
The Switchers\*

\*This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.





– HIGHLIGHTS

**4.4**

million tourists

is what the government aims to attract to Algeria by 2027, up from 2.4 million in 2017

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**€183**

was contributed

to the Algerian economy by the tourism industry in 2017

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**1,800**

new hotel infrastructure projects

across Algeria were approved by the Ministry of Tourism in 2017



# Where to Stay

Algeria's tourism sector is still developing, but there are already some great eco-friendly accommodation options available. Algeria's great outdoors will lure you outside the major cities to indulge in a spot of green tourism. Here we have suggested some sustainable home bases for exploring Saharan sand dunes, idyllic mountain-top pastures, and even faint traces of our prehistoric ancestors.



— MAISON TRADITIONNELLE AKHAM

# Maison Traditionnelle Akham

Ghardaïa

## — PERFECT FOR

Chilling out in the oasis of the relaxing, intriguing M'Zab Valley

Many travellers in Algeria make their way to Ghardaïa, the best-resourced launching point for exploring the ancient cities and calming oases of the M'Zab Valley. [Les Bâisseurs des Oasis](#), a sustainable housing company and one of our Switchers, recommends staying at Ghardaïa's leading eco-friendly hotel: **Maison Traditionnelle Akham**. Visitors enjoy sweeping views over the city's palm groves from the traditional guesthouse, which has comfortable rooms and delicious meals prepared by the in-house kitchen. Staff can arrange cultural evenings, tours of the local attractions, and more.



## — ACCOMMODATION

Maison Akham offers simple lodgings for its guests, with the nightly rate ranging from DZD 4,500 (single room) to DZD 9,000 (four-person room).

## — GETTING THERE

A flight from Algiers will take 1.5 hours. The bus is very cheap (DZD 675 to 1,350), but you will be on the road for over ten hours.

## — HOW TO BOOK

You can book by submitting a reservation request through the website's [booking page](#), or by calling directly.



+213 771 774 820 or +213 552 684 342



[Maison Traditionnelle Akham](#)

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— REFUGE DE L'ASSEKREM

# Refuge de l'Assekrem

## Ahaggar National Park

### — PERFECT FOR

Marvelling at the one-of-a-kind Hoggar Mountains with friendly, knowledgeable locals

Way down in southern Algeria, tourists have long sought out the dramatic, craggy outcrops of the Hoggar Mountains. At **Refuge de l'Assekrem**, you can stay in the heart of this dreamscape in Ahaggar National Park, where your bed will be 2,680 meters above sea level. The Bahamou family runs the guest house alongside its other business operation, sustainable travel agency **Tim Missaw Tours**. Their qualified guides will help you unlock the secrets of this uniquely beautiful corner of Algeria, and the local Bedouin people who have long called the Hoggar Mountains home. Refuge de l'Assekrem sources its electricity from an autonomous solar power generator, a project undertaken and maintained by local and foreign organizations.



### — ACCOMMODATION

The nightly rate for rooms is DZD 1,500. You can add breakfast only (DZD 3,000) or dinner and breakfast (DZD 4,000).

### — GETTING THERE

Tamanrasset, the closest major town to the Hoggar Mountains, is a long, long way from Algiers, so catching a plane is your best bet. Direct flights operate on most days. Refuge de l'Assekrem is around a two hour drive from Tamanrasset. Of course, you can discuss transport logistics with Tim Missaw Tours.

### — HOW TO BOOK

You can reach Tim Missaw Tours / Refuge de l'Assekrem directly through the website's [contact page](#).



[Refuge de l'Assekrem Website](#)

S [Read the Story on Switchers](#) >



# Domaine Saint-Augustin

Drea

## — PERFECT FOR

Enjoying crisp mountain air, wandering ancient ruins and supporting a vital historical preservation project

Step back in time and learn about efforts to preserve Algerian patrimony in Souk Ahras, a province tucked away in the eastern highlands. You can set yourself up at **Domaine Saint-Augustin**, a charming bed and breakfast, which is only a short drive from the region's star attraction, Madaure. Originally a Numidian settlement, the Romans colonized Madaure and left behind a mausoleum, a theater and various inscriptions until today. Religious pilgrims enjoy following the trail of St Augustine of Hippo, who studied at Madaure's famous centers of learning. Renowned eco-blogger **Karim Tedjani** credits the local community's restoration efforts at Madaure (and several other cultural sites in Souk Ahras) with preserving these ancient wonders for generations to come.



## — ACCOMMODATION

Domaine Saint-Augustin has private rooms at around DZD 3,400 per night. There are other lodging options in the building's common areas.

## — GETTING THERE

From Algiers, you can fly to Constantine (under an hour), and then travel by car for 2.5 hours. Alternatively, catch a bus if you have around nine hours to spare.

## — HOW TO BOOK

You can make reservations through [Airbnb](#).



+213 560 51 59 10



[Domaine Saint-Augustin Facebook Page](#)



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— DAR TERREHUT

# Dar Terrehut

(re-opening in 2020)

## — PERFECT FOR

Exploring the magical desert of western Algeria with eco-friendly local experts

Over towards the border with Morocco, Switcher **Dar Terrehut** is a sustainable guest house that wants to connect travellers with Algeria's chronically under-explored Saoura region. The owners welcome all kinds of visitors — solo travellers, families, researchers — and help them understand the sparse desert environs, as well as how to reduce our human impact in the area. You can arrange desert tours at Dar Terrehut, which showcase prehistoric fossils and ancient cave paintings. By night, check out live performances of traditional music under the guest house's kheima (tent), while you eat local food and sip herbal teas. Dar Terrehut is closed for now, but expects to re-open in 2020.



## — ACCOMMODATION

The guest house has rooms of varying sizes for different groups. Check with the Dar Terrehut team for prices upon re-opening, but a typical stay cost around DZD 2,000 per night before the closure.

## — GETTING THERE

Plane is almost certainly the most attractive option for reaching Taghit, given its very remote location. You can fly from Algiers to Bechar (around 1.5 hours), from where you can hire a car to Taghit (which should also take 1.5 hours).

## — HOW TO BOOK

Dar Terrehut has handled bookings through Booking.com before, but check again for updated options after the re-opening.

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# What to Bring Home

Why buy standard souvenirs when Algeria is home to such creative green entrepreneurs? Our Switchers have taken their creative eye for design and applied it to upcycle and transform waste into unique products that benefit local artisans and community groups across the country. Pick up a one-of-a-kind item — it is only fitting to accompany your once-in-a-lifetime trip.





# Rima Dates

Ghardaïa

## — WHAT IS IT

Date production is big business in Algeria, with the sector producing around 500 tons of the desert treats each year. But what happens to leftover dates? Hammou Boussada set out to find alternative uses for discarded fruit after completing his studies in plant biotechnology. His company, Rima Dates, incorporates less sought-after date varieties into a range of innovative products, including chocolate, sugar, and almond snacks. Hammou's enterprise also helps local farmers by adding value to produce that would otherwise have little sale value.



## — HOW MUCH

Hammou can provide you with the latest seasonal information on prices.

## — WHERE TO BUY

You can arrange a visit to Hammou's factory in Ghardaïa, or discuss alternative purchasing options, by contacting Rima Dates on [Facebook](#).



[Rima Dates Facebook Page](#)



[Read the Story on Switchers](#) >



# L'Atelier le Printemps

Béjaïa

## – WHAT IS IT

Algeria's textile industry has fallen on hard times in recent years, meaning that many Algerians wear cheap, imported fabrics. Married couple **Anis Ouazane** and **Nardjes Mokhtari** have opened their own upcycled clothing store, **l'Atelier le Printemps**, to save high-quality second-hand fabrics from landfill. You can visit their shop in Béjaïa, pick out your favorite used materials, and then wait for creative extraordinaire Nardjes to sew your customized quilt, handbag, or cushion cover. The pair runs l'Atelier le Printemps according to sustainable best practice, with optimal water and energy efficiency rates.



## – HOW MUCH

Prices fluctuate depending on the particular item, but the Spring 2019 collection features handmade bags (DZD 1,500) and rag dolls (DZD 2,500).

## – WHERE TO BUY

Visit the store at its Cité Tobbal location. After you select your design, l'Atelier le Printemps can send products to Algiers or abroad. Discuss details with the team via Facebook.



[l'Atelier le Printemps Facebook Page](#)

[S Read the Story on Switchers >](#)



# Dattes et Miel

Algiers

## — WHAT IS IT

Organic food store Dattes et Miel (Dates and Honey) sells exactly what you would expect. You can buy Algerian honey, as well as the country's renowned dates, in a convenient Algiers location. Dattes et Miel specializes in different varieties of honey, adding inventive flavor combinations across their wide range. What is more, all products are 100% natural, making them a healthy and environmentally responsible food purchase. Take home some bargains and add an Algerian touch of sweetness to your cooking!

## — HOW MUCH

Dattes et Miel sometimes offers special promotions, when you can secure jars of honey for DZD 800 each (or four jars for DZD 3,000). Check with the store for updated prices.

## — WHERE TO BUY

Visit the Dattes et Miel team at their Algiers store, which is located at 14, Rue Idir Toumi, Ben Aknoun. You can call ahead!



+213 549 79 47 06



[Dattes et Miel Facebook Page](#)

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— RIMA DATES, GHARDAÏA



# What to Do

Algeria has no shortage of exciting attractions for tourists, according to **Amel Ould Amer**. One of our Algerian Switchers, Amel founded consulting firm OptimaDecision to advise on reducing traffic congestion and developing sustainable transport infrastructure. She also speaks passionately about Algerian tourism. “Algeria has a panoply of landscapes, ranging from the Mediterranean coast in the north to the vast, arid Sahara in the south,” said Amel.

These diverse experiences, along with Algeria’s enormous land area, mean you should probably choose a rough “theme” of your trip: be it city, beach, mountain or desert. Here, Amel offers an action-packed, three-day itinerary based in and around Algiers, which allows you to taste the breadth of adventures her country has in store.



— ALGIERS

PEUGEOT



— JARDIN D'ESSAI DU HAMMA

### — DAY ONE

Amel has started off your trip with one of the national capital's heavy-hitters: the [Casbah of Algiers](#). A UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, the Casbah (fortress in Arabic) is an ancient labyrinth of winding alleys, down which you will discover elegant mosques, enticing restaurants and master artisans.

In the casbah, Amel suggests making your way to [Dar Mustapha Pacha](#), a centuries-old Moorish palace that today houses the **National Museum of Miniatures, Illumination and Calligraphy**. Continue to marvel at stately architecture by walking over to the [Palais des Rais](#) (also known as Bastion 23).

For lunch, you can find some tasty seafood in the Fisherman's Quarter of the Casbah. You are on the right track when you spot the beautiful [Djamaa el Djedid](#) (The New Mosque), which the French once dubbed the *Mosquée de la Pêcherie* (The Fishmonger's Mosque).

After you finish eating, catch a train from **Place des Martyrs** metro station to [Jardin d'Essai du Hamma](#). This public garden, which sprawls across 58 hectares, features hundreds of different plant and animal species. You can then wander through the European city, taking in charming old buildings, before finishing with dinner in the Algiers city center (See: What and Where to Eat).



– CHERCHELL

## – DAY TWO

Hire a taxi for your second day and travel along the coast to **Cherchell**, which should take 1.5 hours (around DZD 1,350). These days you will see only a small fishing village, but this community has a very grandiose history.

Millenia ago, Cherchell (Caesarea, to the Romans) ranked with Alexandria and Carthage as a major North African port. Trace ancient footsteps as you wander amongst columns and amphitheaters, with the excellent [Archaeological Museum of Cherchell](#) close at hand to provide context.

Move on to the small town of **Tipaza** for your lunch break. You can pick up some food at a

restaurant in the town center, before exploring the area's ancient Roman, Byzantine and Phoenician remnants. Amel recommends that you take a boat ride in the historic port, and then amble about the UNESCO-listed circus, theater, and more.

On your way home to Algiers, ask your driver to pull over at the [Royal Mausoleum of Mauretania](#) (Tombeau de la Chrétienne, in French). The story goes that this massive, domed tomb holds the remains of Berber King Juba II and his wife Cleopatra Selene II, the daughter of Cleopatra and her Roman paramour Mark Antony. If this remarkable mausoleum is anything to go by, Cleopatra Selene II inherited plenty of her parents' legendary sense of grandeur.



– TIPAZA

### – DAY THREE

Your final day can take in more wide open spaces, starting in **Bouchaoui Park**, which lies just near the town of **Staouéli**. The gardens offer all the space you need to go walking, take a horseback ride, or tuck into a picnic.

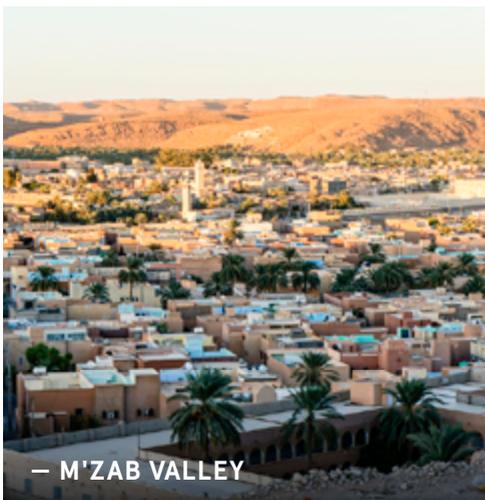
Cap off your whirlwind Algerian adventure at the seaside resort of [Sidi Fredj](#). Here you will find enticing beaches, impressive dunes and a charming marina. Bask in the sunshine, hear the calming waves and start planning your next trip to Algeria.

If you have more time, try getting farther away from the capital. In earlier sections, this guide provides sustainable tourism options in distant places like the Sahara, the [Hoggar Mountains](#) and the [Saoura Valley](#).



An unmissable highlight is the enchanting [M'Zab](#) region, with its five, ancient ksours (fortified cities) and verdant oasis. See for yourself how the Ibadi, the area's original inhabitants, built towns to fit in with the harsh environment around them. Most tourists stay in [Ghardaïa](#), where you can visit our Switcher, [Rima Dates](#).

Another option is the northeastern city of [Constantine](#), nicknamed the “City of Bridges.” Upon arriving, you will instantly see why bridges are so important here: the picturesque town is built into a deep ravine. Enjoy the rarefied atmosphere, and maybe get in touch with our local Switcher, Ammar of [Nawat Cost](#), for some pro tips! Constantine also work well as a stop-off en route to the historic region of [Souk Ahras](#) (See: [Where to Stay](#)).





— HOGGAR MOUNTAINS



€ = DZD 200–500

€€ = DZD 500–1,250

€€€ = DZD 1,250 AND MORE

# What and Where to Eat

Plenty of different cultures have held sway in Algeria over the course of its long history: Amazigh (Berbers), Arabs, Ottomans, Andalusians and French, to name a few. Each group left its own mark on what we know today as Algerian cuisine. For instance, the Amazigh (Berbers) pioneered couscous, whose popularity has now spread all over the world. Tasty baguettes will instead remind you of Algeria's former life as a French colony. And other Algerian favorites, like the savory pastry brik, are of uncertain origin; although some locals will definitely claim the dish as their own!

Here, Amel has listed her must-try experiences of Algerian cuisine. Keep in mind that food in Algeria varies noticeably from region to region, with different areas offering their own local specialty. We suggest that you use Amel's tips as a launching pad for sampling the full range of Algerian culinary delights.



While regional interpretations vary, certain staples underpin cuisine across Algeria. [Couscous](#) barely requires any introduction, given how popular these small balls of crushed semolina have become, far beyond Algeria's borders. Amel recommends **Couscous algérien aux légumes** (Algerian couscous with vegetables), in which the chef serves a spiced broth filled with couscous, carrots, potatoes and turnips.

A more discreet feature on Algerian dining tables is [ras al hanout](#), the time-honored Algerian spice mixture that finds its way into many savory dishes. The name literally translates as “head of the

store,” implying that this blend of spices showcases the vendor's best ingredients. The precise mix varies across Algeria, so taste carefully and decide which version you like best.

Algerians love to put different spins on the legendary [tajine](#). This beloved stew takes its name from the conical earthenware pot in which a combination of meat, fruit and vegetables are slow-cooked for hours. Visitors will likely have come across something like **Tajine de poulet aux olives et champignons** (Chicken, olive and mushroom tajine) before, which Amel puts on her must-try list.





Amel also has some less familiar, tajine-like suggestions for you.

**Tajine hlou** is a sweet variant of tajine, usually made by cooking dried fruits (prunes, apricots, raisins) and fresh fruits (pears, apples) together in sugar. Adding meat is optional. You can also try the wedding party classic **chtitha**, a tomato-based stew of lamb, onions and chickpeas.

If this sounds like a lot of food, Algerian cooks do have some lighter options for you. **Chorba** works well as a starter or as a light lunch in itself. Some chorba recipes call for chicken and chickpeas in a spiced broth; others use lamb and

**freekeh**, a crushed green wheat. You should also try the Algerian take on **brik**, a flaky pastry snack usually stuffed with minced meat. Be warned though: many vendors deep fry brik, which may make it a heavy meal after all!

According to Amel, you can find these local delicacies and more at her favorite Algiers restaurants (€-€€):

- [El Djazaïr](#)
- [Restaurant El Hodna](#)
- [Khaymat El Hodna](#)
- [Restaurant L'empreinte](#)
- [La Palmeraie](#)

# Credits and Disclaimer

To see the location of all businesses and sites mentioned, visit our custom map.



[Access the Algeria Google Map](#)

All photo and statistics credits can be found in this [Document](#).

The Switchers travel guide was created by David Wood and Shaimaa Emam, with assistance from Eman El-Sherbiny and Ananda Alonso.

Have comments or questions? We would love to hear from you at



[theswitchers@scprac.org](mailto:theswitchers@scprac.org)

A special thanks to the Switchers in Algeria, whose knowledge, talents, and innovations made this guide a reality!



Regional Activity Centre  
for Sustainable Consumption  
and Production

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## — DISCLAIMER

*The Switchers is a community of inspiring green entrepreneurs and changemakers in the Mediterranean region.*

*It is also a place where entrepreneurs of a similar passion for the environment can meet.*

*The Switchers are individuals, enterprises or civil society organizations implementing innovative and ecological solutions that contribute to sustainable and fair consumption and production models. They are active in a variety of fields, such as organic farming, green tourism, renewable energy, or waste management.*

*The platform [theswitchers.eu](https://theswitchers.eu) tells their stories of sustainable transformation and change. We aim to contribute towards a more differentiated picture of the region, and shine a light on the people who are working on a greener economy.*

*The Switchers platform has been developed by the [Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production \(SCP/RAC\)](#) in the framework of the [SwitchMed Programme](#).*

*The [SwitchMed Programme](#) is implemented under the coordination of the [United Nations Industrial Development Organization \(UNIDO\)](#) and is executed in collaboration with the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UN Environment\)](#), [Economy Division](#); and the [Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production \(SCP/RAC\)](#) a component of the [United Nations Environment Programme-Mediterranean Action Plan \(UN Environment/MAP\)](#), in close coordination with the [European Commission](#).*

*SwitchMed implementing partners work to accelerate the transition to Green and Circular Economy through capacity development for resource efficiency in the manufacturing industry, training for start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop skills in eco-design, green business plans,*

*marketing and financing for sustainable products and services, agreements with the political leaders to establish a regulatory and legal framework, empowerment of civil society organisations to pioneer socially innovative solutions that tackle environmental challenges, and an action network of interested parties to connect with similar initiatives and networks, exchange information and broaden current activities*

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A coastal landscape featuring large, dark, jagged rock formations scattered across a wide expanse of golden sand dunes. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, suggesting an overcast or late afternoon setting. The overall mood is serene and natural.

Travel  
Well.

THE  
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