



# Ghadames and Tripolitania

LIBYA

Photo by L.F. Paoluzzi



7 days

28 April - 04 May 2025

English speaking tour leader



## The 'unforgettable' of the trip:

- The beautiful landscapes along the **Jebel Nafusa**
- The fortified granary of **Qasr el Haj**, the ruins of **Tarmeisa** and the underground houses of Gharyan
- The narrow streets of the **Ghadames** oasis, the encounter with **Berbers** and **Tuaregs**
- 4x4 adventure over the **Sahara dunes** at sunset
- The Arab and colonial monuments of **Tripoli**, and its bustling souq
- The splendid Roman vestiges of **Sabratha** and **Leptis Magna**



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### Day 1 - Monday 28 April

#### Outward Flight/Tripoli (MJI)

Flight to Tripoli. Meeting with the Kanaga Africa Tours staff, assistance with the exchange of Euros and the possible purchase of a local phone card. Transfer to Hotel Victoria or similar, dinner and overnight in double rooms with services.

### Day 2 - Tuesday 29 April

#### Tripoli/Jebel Nafusa/Ghadames

Breakfast at the hotel and departure for JEBEL NAFUSA. The presence of Berbers in this area is very old, dating back to the 7th century, when Arab armies invaded Libya, and many Berbers took refuge in these mountains. We will admire the fortified granary of QASR AL-HAJ, built to store the crops from the surrounding fields. It was built in the 12th century by the local sheikh, who required farmers to pay a tribute of barley and wheat, which was then redistributed among the poor and pilgrims of the hadj, or sold to finance the upkeep of the mosque. The qsar is circular in shape, and its walls are pierced by the openings of the storehouses facing the courtyard (114 in total, like the number of Suras in the Koran), with palm-wood doors and olive-wood risers. We continue on to the ruins of the stone village of TARMEISA, perched on a narrow rocky outcrop overlooking the Sahel al-Jefara and one of the most spectacular ancient Berber settlements on the Jebel Nafusa. The village is a succession of small porticos and very picturesque passages, including the remains of an oil mill and a nuptial chamber with still traces of bas-reliefs. Finally, we visit the small ethnographic museum of JADU, which preserves agricultural tools and local customs. Lunch in a restaurant and continuation to Ghadames. On arrival, accommodation at the Hotel Dar Ghadames or similar, dinner and overnight in double rooms with services.

### Day 3 - Wednesday 30 April

#### Ghadames

Breakfast at the hotel and a day entirely dedicated to visiting GHADAMES: an oasis in the Libyan desert and an ancient caravan city, splendidly preserved in the heart of the Sahara, it still enchants with its narrow porticoed alleyways and traditional dwellings made of plaster and dried clay, a treasure trove of Berber eras and cultures of the past, and immersed in atmospheres suspended in a timeless dimension. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ghadames was one of the most important commercial hubs on the trans-Saharan routes, thanks to its strategic location, the abundance of water and the proverbial ability of its wealthy merchants who controlled a dense network of impresarios, which made it a compulsory stop for the endless caravans of dromedaries, laden with merchandise that was bartered and sorted here along further routes. The ancient oasis, which legend has it was founded around the Ain al-Faras well, was under Roman control as Cidamus, a Byzantine outpost and finally in the 7th century conquered by the Arabs, who converted the Berber population to Islam, to which a large number of Tuareg peoples were later added. Today, its historic centre is entirely depopulated, but it retains its ancient glories in an exemplary manner amidst the narrow alleys and traditional architecture of the private dwellings, some of which have been renovated or are kept alive seasonally by their owners.





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(continue)

### Day 3 - Wednesday 30 April

There are so many exceptional features of Ghadames that have contributed to shaping its myth and making it a small Berber architectural and urban planning jewel. From the narrow colonnaded alleyways, to preserve the coolness from the desert heat, illuminated from time to time only by an incredible system of skylights, to the small public squares, from the splendid mosques to the characteristic multi-storey houses, built entirely of plaster and clay and decorated with painted arabesques, in which women were relegated to the upper floors and terraces, connected by passages that allowed them to move from one house to another, without going down to the street and being seen by men. Ghadames was also famous for the art of distributing water fairly, through the system of the al-kadus, a large perforated bottle that served as a unit of measurement and also marked time. A watchman was in charge of constantly counting how many bottles were distributed to the city's seven neighbourhoods, divided between the two main clans of the Ait Welid and the Ait Waziten, how many to the gardens and how many to the mosques for ablutions and the travellers' needs. Strolling through the narrow covered entrances of the old town today is an experience that takes one back in time: the dimness of the skylights and the façades of the lime-painted houses, with their beautiful palm-wood portals, embellished with red, green and yellow studs indicating the completion of the owner's pilgrimage to Mecca; the ancient mosques and the theory of niches that enliven their outline; the perimeter walls and the beautiful gardens that surround the settlement. Lunch in a restaurant. In the afternoon, on board a 4x4, we will head towards the DUNES OF SAHARA not far from the city, where we can admire the sunset and taste mella (traditional bread) and mint tea. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.



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### Day 4 - Thursday 01 May

#### Ghadames/Kabaw/Tripoli

Breakfast at the hotel and morning transfer to the north. Lunch in a restaurant in Kabaw. In the afternoon, visit GHARYAN with its underground houses known as dammous, built by the ancient Berber inhabitants of the area to protect themselves from the freezing winters, torrid summers and invaders, as they were not visible from the outside. The living quarters are at the base of a large well about three storeys deep, cut into the walls of what used to be a large inner courtyard. The town is also known for its production of ceramics, from huge serving dishes to jars for storing food. Continuation to Tripoli, accommodation at the Hotel Victoria or similar, dinner and overnight in double rooms with services.

### Day 5 - Friday 02 May

#### Tripoli/Sabratha/Tripoli

Breakfast at the hotel and departure for the Roman ruins of SABRATHA, which were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1982. The monumental theatre, dating back to the Severan era, is undoubtedly the most magnificent of its kind handed down to us by the Roman genius. In a splendid position overlooking the azure waters of the Mediterranean, this splendid monument is visible from a long distance, a scenic attraction that has made it famous not only for its undeniable architectural value. A city of 20,000 inhabitants, Sabratha was much smaller than Leptis Magna, which was home to 100. The Temple of Antoninus and the Southern Temple, the Capitol and the Curia, the Basilica of Justinian and the Forum, the Temple of Serapis and the Temple of Isis, the Baths of Oceanus and the Theatre, are just some of the sumptuous buildings and public places, once decorated with marble, columns, mosaics and frescoes, that framed this jewel of Imperial Rome, of which the Theatre was certainly the masterpiece. Return to TRIPOLI, lunch in a restaurant. In the afternoon, we visit the two souls of the Libyan capital, the orientalist one, which can be breathed in the medina and among the souks, and the Italian colonial-style one, with the beautiful whitewashed facades centred around Martyrs' Square (also known as Green Square). We visit the Ottoman clock tower, some old mosques (exterior), the 18th-century house of Yusuf Karamanli, the souq al-Attara (old spice market), the souq al-Ghizdara (with craftsmen working brass) the souq al-Turk (interesting for its Ottoman palaces and what remains of the 'Cinema Politeama'), the souq al-Ruba (traditional clothes), the Bank of Rome building and the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, at the exact spot where the Cardo and Decumanus of the Roman city of Oea intersected. Dinner in a restaurant and overnight stay in a hotel.





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### Day 6 - Saturday 03 May

#### Tripoli/Leptis Magna/Tripoli

Breakfast at the hotel and a day dedicated to visiting LEPTIS MAGNA which, as its name indicates, was the most important Roman settlement in Africa and today, second in integrity of state of preservation only to Pompeii. Its limestone buildings and monuments have been able to withstand the elements because they were entirely buried by sand for centuries, arriving remarkably intact to the present day, despite having been despoiled of most of its decorations. Probably founded in the 7th century B.C. as a Phoenician port, it was first under Carthaginian influence, becoming part of the Roman sphere of control by the 2nd century B.C., flourishing in strategic importance under Augustus and Hadrian, as a commercial seaport, especially in the traffic of ferocious beasts from sub-Saharan Africa bound for the Empire's circuses, and finally exploding in splendour under Septimius Severus, who, as a native of Leptis Magna himself, transformed it into one of the grandest cities in the Mediterranean in the 2nd century AD, once he became Emperor. Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, its ruins were the subject of impressive archaeological excavations that brought to light its ancient splendour, in the colonnaded streets, forums, basilicas and temples, baths and amphitheatres, and imposing monuments, arranged according to the proverbial urban sumptuousness of Imperial Rome. Everything in Leptis Magna celebrated the luxury and glories of Rome, from the monumental Arch of Septimius Severus to the luxurious Baths of Hadrian, once entirely covered in splendid marble and mosaics, from the Nymphaeum, originally adorned with marble statues, to the magnificent colonnaded street that connected the port to the Forum of the Severans, embellished with capitals of Gorgon and Medusa heads, still standing there today. And again, the imposing Basilica of the Severans, dedicated to the cult of Hercules and Dionysus, the Arches of Trajan and Tiberius, the Market, the Circus and the Amphitheatre outside the walls, without forgetting the port with its stone quays and lighthouse, which unfortunately a clumsy enlargement at the time inexorably exposed to silting up, in fact one of the main causes that decreed the decline of the city a few centuries later. Lunch in a restaurant near the site. In the afternoon, return to Tripoli, dinner and overnight at the hotel.

### Day 7 - Sunday 04 May

#### Tripoli (MJI)/Return flight

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the hotel in time for your return flight. End of services.



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**7 days**

28 April - 04 May 2025

English speaking tour leader

**Individual participation fee in double room**  
(min. 6/max. 16 pax)

**2,890 €/pax**

**in promotion at € 2,790**  
**for booking before 28/01/2025**

### Supplements:

- Enrollment fee: **free!**
- Single room: **260 €**
- Extra night/day use: **on request**
- Visa service: **120 €**
- Extension Tunisia: **on request**

### The fee includes:

- English speaking tour leader;
- English-speaking local drivers/guides;
- Visits and excursions as scheduled;
- All transfers by minibus and 4x4 in the desert (maximum 4 pax/car), including petrol and tolls;
- Full board from Day 1 dinner to Day 7 breakfast;
- 6 nights in hotels, in double rooms with en-suite facilities.

### The fee does not include:

- The visa for Libya;
- Insurance for cancellation, health, luggage;
- Air flights;
- Meals not included in the itinerary;
- Mineral water and beverages;
- Photo and video tips;
- Tips and expenses of a personal nature;
- Everything mentioned in 'supplements';
- Anything not expressly mentioned in 'the fee includes'.

*\*The travel itinerary may be subject to variations beyond our control, should the Libyan authorities reserve the right to allow or disallow visits to certain areas without prior notice.*