

TRAVEL ALGIERS



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The white walls of Algiers

Algiers charms with its Mediterranean harbour views, hilly terrains, Moorish architecture and golden night lights. Here's how to soak up its splendour in 48 hours

Start your morning by inhaling the roses, eating sweet pastries and sipping strong *kahwa* (coffee) on the terrace of the café downhill from the central neo-moorish Grande Poste. Then check out the old postcards from the street stores to get ready to dip into the Algiers of days past.

The **Casbah (1)**, Algiers' old town, is a UNESCO World Heritage-listed citadel dating back to the 16th century. Several museums are situated within it. Best to get familiar beforehand with this important location in the Algerian revolution by watching Gillo Pontecorvo's docu-drama *The Battle of Algiers*. Descending through the labyrinth of narrow lanes you'll pass stores where you can buy local honey, herbal remedies, dates and *gondoras* (traditional Algerian dresses). There's a great book store, *Librairie du Tiers Monde*, on **Place Emir Abdelkader (2)**.

Stroll back along the port to the main drag on rue Didouche Mourad and stop at number 54: Lalla Mina. This former cabaret is now a restaurant where you can taste traditional Algiers meals like *rechta* (angel hair pasta and white sauce) and of course couscous.

Now for a spot of shopping on Didouche Mourad: Ahlam Nid d'Amour at number 90 has gorgeous dresses for a special occasion.

Next, back on the museum trail: perhaps the *Musée des Beaux Arts*, the Bardo (prehistory and ethnography), or *Musée de l'Armée*. Make sure to visit the Maqam Echahid monument to pay homage to the martyrs who died in the fight for the country's independence.

Relax in the stunning **Jardin d'Essai du Hamma (4)**, the botanical gardens established in 1832 – a slice of paradise in the sometimes hectic metropolis. Get

your Instagram glee under the enormous tree where the original *Tarzan* was filmed!

Plunge into a fresh seafood dinner at the Dolphin, perched over the bay. If you're not ready to hit the sack take a taxi to the Portuguese night spot Piano Piano for a dance, or settle into the terrace of the Aurassi hotel to gaze over the golden-lit city with a night cap.

The next day head up to Mont Bouzareah to visit the magnificent 19th-century neo-Byzantine **Notre Dame d'Afrique basilica (2)** and be blown away by the interiors and the view.

Now it's time for what may be the highlight of your trip. An hour's drive out of town is Tipasa, another UNESCO World Heritage site where you will see ancient Phoenician, Roman and Byzantine ruins. As always, souvenir markets are close-by and you can take a short boat ride after your tour, or stroll along the port where fishmongers hawk freshly caught prawns.

In the evening, back in Algiers, head to Hôtel St George for an apéritif and dinner on the flower-scented terrace, then drift off to the whispers and stories of the past guests: Edith Piaf, Simone de Beauvoir and Winston Churchill. ●

Ruby Boukabou in Algiers