

## **ALGERIA**

**Algeria**, officially the **People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**, is a country located in North Africa. It is the largest country of the Mediterranean sea, the second largest on the African continent and the eleventh-largest country in the world in terms of land area. It is bordered by Tunisia in the northeast, Libya in the east, Niger in the southeast, Mali and Mauritania in the southwest, a few kilometers of the Western Sahara in the west, Morocco in the northwest, and the Mediterranean Sea in the north. Its size is almost 2,400,000 km<sup>2</sup> with an estimated population near to 35,000,000. The capital of Algeria is Algiers.

### **History**

#### **Ancient history**

Berbers have inhabited Algeria since at least 10,000 BC; after 1000 BC, the Carthaginians began establishing settlements along the coast. The Berbers seized the opportunity offered by the Punic Wars to become independent of Carthage, and Berber kingdoms began to emerge, most notably Numidia. In 200 BC, however, they were once again taken over, this time by the Roman Republic. When the Western Roman Empire collapsed, Berbers became independent again in many areas, while the Vandals took control over other parts,

#### **Arrival of Islam**

After the waves of Muslim Arab armies that conquered Algeria from its former Berber rulers and the rule of the Umayyid Arab Dynasty fell, numerous Dynasties emerged thereafter. Amongst those dynasties are the Fatimids of Egypt. Having converted the Kutama of Kabylie to its cause, the Shia Fatimids overthrew the Rustamids, and conquered Egypt, leaving Algeria and Tunisia to their Zirid vassals. When the latter rebelled, the Shia Fatimids sent in the Banu Hilal, a populous Arab tribe, to weaken them.

### **Geography**

Most of the coastal area is hilly, sometimes even mountainous, and there are a few natural harbours. The area from the coast to the Tell Atlas is fertile. South of the Tell Atlas is a steppe landscape, which ends with the Saharan Atlas; further south, there is the Sahara desert. The Ahaggar Mountains), also known as the Hoggar, are a highland region in central Sahara, southern Algeria. They are located about 1,500 km (932 miles) south of the capital, Algiers and just west of Tamanghasset. Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and Annaba are Algeria's main cities.

### **Climate**

Algeria has a Mediterranean climate along the coast, with mild, wet winters, and hot, dry summers.

### **Population**

The population of Algeria is 33,333,216 (July 2007 est.). About 70% of Algerians live in the northern, coastal area; the minority who inhabit the Sahara are mainly concentrated in oases, although some 1.5 million remain nomadic or partly nomadic. 97% of the population is classified ethnically as either Arab or Berber and religiously as Sunni Muslim. The few non-Sunni Muslims are mainly Ibadis, representing. A mostly foreign Roman Catholic community of about 45,000 people exists, along with about 350,000 Protestant Christians, and some 500 Jewish living in Bejaia.

**Currency:** Dinar

### **Living as an expat – Housing**

Corporate Housing apartment rentals can be obtained for short or long term stays. You can find daily rental rates, weekly rental rates or monthly rental rates for corporate housing availabilities. Most Corporate Housing rentals are furnished rentals, but unfurnished rentals are available. Corporate housing accommodations are the perfect solution for business travelers, traveling nurses, traveling students, internships, study abroad students, short military assignments and more. Corporate Housing rentals can be obtained by searching the local phone book or searching websites such as Cor Owning a property in Algeria which can be rented out or purchasing a property it would be wise to think carefully about purchasing real estate in Algeria because of the factor of political strife; conflict is very much still an issue in the country. In many cases you can rent a property for a short term and then increase or extend the period later. This will give you the opportunity to evaluate the property and the area and assess it's suitability before committing to a longer rental contract. Property owners/agents are often prepared to negotiate on the rental term.

### **Getting there and around**

Getting into Algeria is easy enough, with flights from Europe and within Africa flying directly to Algiers, Oran, Annaba and Constantine in the North and to Tamanrasset and Djanet in the south. Ferries link the northern cities of Algiers, Annaba, Bejaia, Oran and Skikda with Marseilles in France and Algiers and Oran with Alicante in Spain. Land crossings are altogether less reliable and riskier, with the Moroccan border closed, and the Mauritanian and southerly Libyan crossings unsafe. All self-drive tourists entering southern Algeria through Mali, Niger and Libya must arrange to be met at the border by an Algerian guide. Tour agencies in Tamanrasset, Djanet and Adrar can arrange this.

Travel without a vehicle is almost nonexistent and, after the tourist abductions of 2003, self-drive travellers are required to be accompanied by an Algerian guide. Trains operate between the major cities in the north and there's a network of buses, minibuses and shared taxi services throughout the country. However, travelling long distances by public transport require a great deal of time and patience.

### **More information**

For more information on Global Relocation Consultants (GRC) expat relocation services and mobility management please visit our website: [www.grconsultants.org](http://www.grconsultants.org)