

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

In this guide 'budget' refers to establishments that charge under DA1500 a night for a double room; 'midrange' refers to establishments that charge between DA1500 and DA3500; and 'top end' refers to all establishments that charge over DA3500 for a double room for the night.

Outside of the large northern cities or the tourist towns of the south, really good hotel facilities are few and far between. Single rooms are rare but you'll normally be charged a slightly reduced 'single' price to stay in a twin or double room. Prices tend to stay the same all year although you can often get discounts during the low season.

PRACTICALITIES

- Newspapers and magazines – The major French-language dailies are *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, *El-Watan*, and *Le Soir d'Algérie*. The most popular Arabic-language paper is *El Khabar*.
- Radio and TV – There are three main state-owned radio stations. Channel 1 is in Arabic, Channel 2 in Berber and Channel 3 in French. There are also around 20 local radio stations. The main state-run TV station is called ENTV.
- Electricity – Algeria uses the 220V system. Outlets take European-style two-pin round plugs.
- Weights and Measures – Algeria uses the metric system.

The high tourist season runs from November to March in the south when temperatures are cooler; and the warmer summer months of June to September in the north. At any time of year it pays to make reservations well in advance for accommodation in Algiers; the lack of availability there is notorious. It's also advisable to make reservations for resorts along the Mediterranean coast. In the south you can usually find a room without a problem but the nicest establishments might be full with tour groups during the high season. Some camp sites and guesthouses in the south close during the hotter summer months of May to September, when the weather is uncomfortably hot and there are fewer tourists.

Auberges

A much nicer alternative to hotels are locally run auberges, also known as a *gîte* or *chambres d'hôtes*. In the south these are often called *campings* and although their purpose is not as a camp site in the traditional sense, they often have space where you can put up your tent and have access to shower facilities and meals. Normally oriented towards the tourist trade, these places tend to have more character than hotels,

with rooms in bungalows, traditional-style houses or rondavels and plenty of local artwork and fabrics on display. Rooms tend to be simple, often with shared facilities, but are always spotless. At the majority of auberges you pay per person on a half- or full-board basis. Meals are usually taken with the other guests and the emphasis is on providing good quality regional cooking. Many of these places will also organise activities and tours.

Camping

There are a number of camp sites in the country, particularly along the tourist trail in the Sahara. In the north the sites are limited to a few low-key resorts along the coast. However, due to years of neglect during the '90s, many camp sites are closed or open only sporadically. Those that are open often lack decent facilities. Camp sites cost between DA200 and DA500 per person, and there is usually an additional charge of about DA200 if you have a car. It's not usually possible to hire camping equipment.

You will also come across guesthouses (called, rather confusingly *campings*), which cater to foreign tourists. Many have camp sites attached or space to pitch a tent. These are more expensive than ordinary camp sites but tend to be clean and well managed with excellent shared facilities and good food.

Hostels

There is a system of YHA (Youth Hostel Association) hostels throughout the country offering dorm beds for DA100 to DA150. The standard is normally basic with spartan dorms and shared facilities. There's usually also some sort of common room with a TV or games, as well as a basic café serving snacks. The major drawback is that they are often inconveniently located; and they are not like the backpackers hostels you'll find in Southern Africa. You're unlikely to meet other travellers there, they aren't all that secure and they aren't really suitable for single women – as there are so few women travellers in Algeria, you're liable to end up in a dorm all on your own.

Hotels

At the budget end you can expect a basic double room with sink, shared facilities and sometimes a fan. At the lowest end

of the scale, hotels only have toilets, not bathroom facilities and you will need to use a neighbouring *hammam* (bathroom) or public showers. The standard of cleanliness varies greatly from the spic and span to the downright filthy, with some cheap hotels seeming to double up as brothels. Always ask to see the room first.

Midrange hotels differ greatly. Many are state run and tend to be run down, with indifferent service and shabby interiors; but they are often the only viable choice and are normally well located. You'll also find more modern, private places oriented at tourists and businessmen. At the midrange level you'll normally get satellite TV, air-conditioning and hot water. Most hotels at this price range include breakfast in the room rate, which usually consists of coffee, bread and jam, and if you're lucky a yogurt or some pastries. The majority of hotels in this price range have their own restaurant and many in the south have swimming pools. In this category you'll find many establishments with bars selling alcohol.

In the north many of the hotel buildings date back to the colonial days and still have the original fittings and furnishings: window shutters, washbasin, bidet, wardrobe and a bed which may be so old it wouldn't be out of place in a museum.

At the luxury end of the scale, accommodation is in fairly short supply in most Algerian towns, and plush international-class hotels tend to be limited to Algiers and the big northern cities. Hotels at the top end of the scale often accept credit cards, many will change foreign currency and some have wireless internet access. They will usually have a choice of good quality restaurants and a bar.

ACTIVITIES Cycling

Cycling isn't a common way to visit Algeria, but there are a small number of travellers who visit the country by bicycle. As long as you have sufficient time and are willing to rough it, cycling can be a fun way to see the country. There are no specific cycleways, but the roads are in good condition. You'll certainly be an oddity cycling on the main highways and will have to pay strict attention – Algerian drivers are careless at the best of times.

Cycling in southern Algeria can present a problem, however. Due to current restrictions you'll need to be accompanied, which means getting a guide in a car to follow you. The best time to cycle in the Sahara is the cooler, drier period from November to March.

A highly recommended contact is **Bicycle Africa** (☎ /fax 1-206-767 0848; www.ibike.org/bikeafrica; 4887 Columbia Drive South, Seattle, WA98108-1919, USA). Alternatively, **SabléO** (☎ 33 06 79 95 78 44; www.sableo.com; 1 Lot Jules Comes 66720 Tautavel, France) offers regular cycling trips to the Hoggar Mountains.

Desert Trekking

There are numerous trekking options in Algeria, the most popular being the Hoggar, the Tassili N'Ajjer and the Grand Ergs. Options include walking, 4WD tours, camel treks and even motorbike tours. In the deep south treks are normally organised for small groups, and you must be accompanied by a qualified guide before undertaking such a trek (see p66).

Dune Skiing

A fun way to explore the dunes of the Grand Ergs or Erg Admer is on a pair of skis. This is not often on official itineraries but many companies can arrange this for you. It's literally a question of hauling yourself up the nearest dune, strapping on a pair of real skis and bombing down again with a trail of sand flying behind you. Agencies that can arrange this include Zeriba Voyages (p192) in Djanet.

Rock-Climbing

The area around Tamanrasset in the Hoggar Mountains is the best place for rock-climbing in Algeria, and its spectacular rock formations attract a small but serious number of rock climbers from Europe. Most of the tour companies in Tamanrasset will arrange rock-climbing tours given advance notice. For further information you could also check out *Escalade au Sahara* published by DP Editions, which gives detailed illustrations and instructions of the different routes you can take (complete with advice on equipment and timescale) and includes plenty of beautiful colour photos of the Hoggar Mountains.

Watersports

There are many ways to enjoy Algeria's stunning coastline other than just swimming or sunbathing. Sailing boats, snorkelling and windsurfing equipment can often be hired in the major tourist spots and during the summer season it's possible to arrange scuba trips and fishing excursions.

BUSINESS HOURS

Banks are usually open from around 8.30am in the morning till 3.30pm in the afternoon, often with a one-hour break for lunch around noon. Shops and businesses will usually close a couple of hours later at around 5.30pm. Most cafés are open all day from around 9am to 9pm. Restaurants are open from around noon to 2pm for lunch and 7pm to 10pm for dinner.

The Algerian weekend is Thursday and Friday but several banks and offices open till around noon on Thursday.

During the holy month of Ramadan, most restaurants are closed and many businesses and shops will close early. Business hours will not be listed in this book unless they differ from the above.

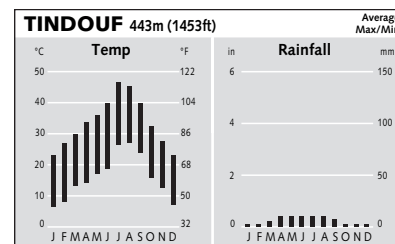
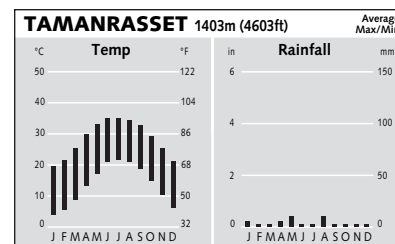
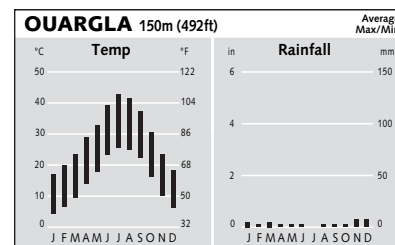
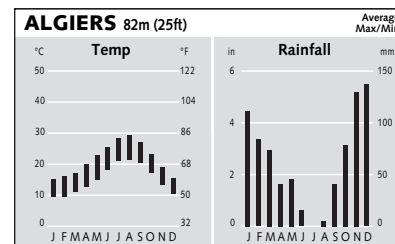
CHILDREN

Algeria has few formal children's attractions or childcare facilities, however the strange landscapes of Southern Algeria are bound to make a profound impression on them. Algerians are family-oriented people who tend to be very friendly towards children and travelling with children can sometimes help to break the ice. Having said that, it can be difficult to travel independently with children in Algeria. Road journeys are long and uncomfortable and outside of Algiers it can be difficult to find canned baby food, wipes, disposable nappies or reliable medical facilities.

The best way to travel with children in Algeria is to organise things in advance. Indeed many tourist agencies in the south have developed special family- or child-friendly trips with a gentler pace. **Essendilène Voyages** (☎ 029 475295; www.essendilene-voyages.com) in Djanet can organise special *voyages familiaux* for families with toddlers and up. **Terres d'Aventure** (☎ 33 08 25 84 78 00; www.terdav.com) organises week-long trips in Algeria for kids as young as six.

CLIMATE CHARTS

In the north summers are hot and humid, and the winters mild and wet. In the Sahara summer is ferociously hot with daytime temperatures seldom below 25°C, but the nights can be very cold, particularly in the Hoggar region. Rainfall ranges from more than 1000mm per year in the northern mountains to zero in the Sahara. Some places go decades without a drop.



For further information on the best time to travel in Algeria see p14.

CUSTOMS

There's no longer any limit on importing bank notes or travellers cheques into the country. However, on entering the country you'll have to fill in a currency declaration form. On it you must list all the foreign currency that you're bringing into Algeria in both cash and travellers cheques as well as declare any valuables that you might be bringing into the country. This includes cameras, video equipment, jewellery and electrical goods. The form has space on which to record all official transactions you make during your stay; in theory this will be checked by customs when you leave the country and if it doesn't tally up you'll be fined. In reality this form is rarely checked and even it is, it will only be given a cursory glance.

You're allowed to bring in 200 cigarettes, 50g of perfume and 1L of liquor or 2L of wine. It is illegal to import weapons, handcuffs, body armour and binoculars. Algerian dinar must be exchanged before leaving the country.

You should also heed the restriction on taking artefacts out of the country. Over the years souvenir hunters and archaeological expeditions have targeted areas such as the Tassili N'Ajjer and the Hoggar. The penalties for doing so are severe and you could have to pay a large fine or might even end up in prison.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Crime

Petty crime in Algeria has increased over the past few years, particularly in large urban centres of the north. Theft, mugging, car-jacking, bag snatching and assault happen as well, especially in urban areas. Don't carry around large amounts of cash and keep an eye on your valuables, particularly when entering the Casbah in Algiers. The far south of the country tends to be safer when it comes to crime, but still watch out for pickpockets operating in the markets of large towns and in crowds. Also, don't leave valuables on display in the car and look for guarded overnight parking places wherever possible.

You might be less likely to get hassled by vendors or hustlers or ripped off in Algeria

that you might be in other countries in the region however. There are relatively few tourists in Algeria and people have yet to become adept at taking them for a ride.

Earthquakes

Northern Algeria is a seismic zone. In 2003 an earthquake hit the area east of Algiers destroying houses, killing more than 2000 people and injuring 10,000 others. If you find yourself in an earthquake when you're inside, stay away from windows and exterior walls and stand in a doorway. If you are outside, find an open space away from buildings, trees and electric masts. If you're driving park on the side of the road and wait for the vibrations to end.

Road Safety

Algeria has some of the craziest drivers around so take extra care while driving in the country. Driving in the south presents a whole host of other problems from sand storms to camels crossing. Overland travel between major cities is not advised after dark, particularly in the mountainous region of the north. You should also watch out for false roadblocks in the north, particularly in the Kabylie region, which often leads to kidnapping. For further advice on travel on the roads see p76.

Security

Although safety in the region has increased, particularly in the south, travellers must still take precautions while travelling here and be aware of the risk of terrorism. Foreigners are not usually targets of violence, and mostly it is the security forces that are targeted, but the indiscriminate nature of bomb attacks on public places (such as markets and bus and train stations) makes caution extremely advisable.

This is particularly a problem in the north of the country and advice at the time of writing was that particular caution should be exercised around Algiers and in the northwest of the country. In 2004 the terrorist group GSPC – the Salafist Group for Call and Combat – identified foreigners as a legitimate target and in September 2006 it reiterated its terrorist agenda and links with Al-Qaeda; in 2007 it changed its name to Al-Qaeda. In 2006 there were a series of bomb attacks carried out in Algeria, one

of which involved a number of expatriate workers. The GSPC was also responsible for the kidnapping of more than 30 foreign tourists in 2003 in the desert and mountainous regions of southeastern Algeria, and the group has claimed responsibility for a number of small-scale attacks in Algeria and in neighbouring countries throughout 2006. A serious attack in April 2007, for which Al-Qaeda claims responsibility, killed dozens and injured more than 100 people.

Expeditions into the Sahara pose a whole host of other problems, from fuel shortages to sandstorms and bandits, and independent travel in the desert regions south of Ghardaïa is currently forbidden by the Algerian government (see the boxed text, p181). Before you undertake any expedition in Algeria, check out the security situation thoroughly.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Algerian Embassies & Consulates

Australia (☎ 02-6286 7355; www.algeriaemb.org.au; 9 Terrigal Crescent, O'Malley, ACT 2606)

Canada (☎ 613-789-8505; www.ambassadeAlgerie.ca; 500 Wilbord Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N2)

France consulate (☎ 01 41 50 48 48; www.consulat-Algerie-bobigny.org; 17 rue Hector Berlioz, 93000 Bobigny); embassy (☎ 01 53 93 20 20; ambassadeAlgerie@free.fr; 50 Rue de Lisbonne, 75008 Paris)

Germany (☎ 49-30-437370; www.algerische-botschaft.de; Görschstraße 45-46, D-13187 Berlin)

Libya (☎ 21821 3610877; 12 rue de Kairouran, Tripoli)

Mali (☎ 220 45 72; BP 2 Daoudabougou, Bamako)

Mauritania (☎ 525 40 07; BP 625 Nouakchott)

Morocco Casablanca (☎ 212 2804175; 159, Blvd Moulay Idriss 1er, Casablanca); Oujda (☎ 212 55710452; 12, rue d'Azrou, Oujda)

Niger (☎ 20 72 35 83; BP 142, Niamey)

Netherlands (☎ 070 352 29 54; www.embalgeria.nl; Van Stolklaan 1, 2585 JS, The Hague)

Tunisia (☎ 216 71 846740; www.consalg.com.tn; 83 av Jugurtha, Tunis)

UK & Ireland consulate (☎ 020-7589 6885; www.algerianconsulate.org.uk; 6 Hyde Park Gate, London SW7 5EW); embassy (☎ 020-7221 7800; www.algerianembassy.org.uk; 54 Holland Park W11 3RS)

USA (☎ 202-265-2800; www.algeria-us.org; 2118 Kalorama Rd NW, Washington SCN 20008)

Embassies & Consulates in Algeria

Australia Australia does not have an embassy or consulate in Algeria. Consular assistance for Australian citizens is provided by the Canadian embassy.

GOVERNMENT TRAVEL ADVICE

The following government websites offer travel advisories and information on current hot spots.

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (☎ 1300 139 281; www.smarttraveller.gov.au)

British Foreign Office (☎ 0845-850-2829; www.fco.gov.uk/countryadvice)

Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs (☎ 800-267-6788; www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca)

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs_909/index.html)

German Federal Foreign Office (☎ 49 30 50 00 0; www.austwaertiges-amt.de)

Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (☎ 81 3-3580-3311; www.mofa.go.jp)

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (☎ 644-439 8000; www.safetravel.govt.nz)

US State Department (☎ 888-407-4747; http://travel.state.gov)

Canada (☎ 021 914951; www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/world/embassies/algeria; 18 rue Mustapha Khalef, Ben Aknoun, Algiers)

Denmark (☎ 021 548228; www.ambalgier.um.dk/da; 12 av Emilie Marquis, Hydra, Algiers)

France (☎ 021 692488; www.ambafrance-dz.org; 25 Chemin A Gadouche, Hydra, Algiers)

Germany (Map pp88-9; ☎ 021 741941; www.algier.diplo.de/Vertretung/algier/de/Startseite.html; 165 Chemin Sfindja, Algiers)

Libya (☎ 021 921502; 15 Chemin Cheikh Bachir el-Ibrahimi, El-Biar)

Mali (☎ 021 691351; Cité DNC/ANP, Villa No 15, Hydra)

Mauritania (☎ 021 937106; 30 rue du Vercors)

Morocco (☎ 021 607408; 8 rue des Cédres, Parc de la Reine)

Niger (☎ 021 788921; 54 rue du Vercors)

Tunisia (☎ 021 691388; 11 rue du Bois de Bologne)

UK (Map pp88-9; ☎ 021 230068; www.britishembassy.gov.uk/algeria; 7th fl, Hilton International Hotel, Pins Maritimes, Algiers)

USA (☎ 021 691255; http://algiers.usembassy.gov;

4 Chemin Cheikh Bachir el-Ibrahimi, El-Biar)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Religious Holidays

During the most important Islamic holidays much commercial life grinds to a halt in Algeria. The Islamic calendar is based on 12 lunar months totalling 354 or 355 days, so the following holidays always occur about 11 days earlier than they did the previous year. The exact dates are based on the moon and only announced shortly before the event.

Ramadan (begins September 2007/August 2008) The ninth month of the Muslim calendar is the annual fasting month when Muslims do not eat or drink during daylight hours, but break their fast after sundown. Throughout Ramadan offices start to wind down early in the day. Most restaurants are closed during this period.

Aïd el-Fitr This major Islamic holiday marks the end of Ramadan.

Aïd el-Kébir (December 2007/November 2008) Celebrates Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son to God on his command, and the last-ditch substitution of a ram. It also coincides with the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca and is marked by great feasts with roasted sheep and a two-day public holiday.

Eid a-Moulid (March 2008/February 2009) Celebrates the birth of the Prophet Mohammed and takes place three months after Aïd el-Kébir.

Other Events

Yennayer (January) Celebrated across the country, this annual festival celebrates the start of the Berber new year.

FOOD & DRINK

Outside the major cities you won't find much choice when it comes to eating out. Most 'restaurants' are in reality identikit cafés, with limited menus (they all seem to specialise in chicken and chips) and an all-male clientele. In most towns in Algeria the only place to get an alcoholic drink is in the more upmarket or state-run hotels.

Stalls selling street food aren't widespread in Algeria and what you do find is quite basic. At most you'll see stalls selling boiled eggs, peanuts and tea, all of which you can get a serving of for around DA10. Occasionally you'll see stalls selling kebabs (although these are usually outside cafés or restaurants), which go for around DA100 a pop. Most of the stalls selling street food are to be found near marketplaces or bus stations (*gares routières*).

Budget restaurants (as listed in this guide) are places where you can get a meal for DA500 and under. At the budget end of the scale you'll find no-frills local cafés

and restaurants with a small choice of menu items, such as omelette with vegetables or chips, couscous and meat, grilled kebabs, or chicken and chips. You won't be given a menu, they'll normally just come up and tell you what they have; a basket of bread is always included in the price.

The midrange restaurants (in which you might actually be handed a physical menu!) tend to have more comfortable surroundings, but you can still eat for between DA500 and DA1000. You'll get more choice at this price range.

'Top end' refers to establishments that cost DA1000 and over where you can get top-class Algerian cooking as well as a good range of French and international food; most top-end restaurants also serve alcohol. There are few top-end restaurants outside of Algiers and the north. For further information on food in Algeria, see p59.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexual sex is illegal for both men and women in Algeria, and incurs a maximum penalty of three years in jail and a stiff fine. You're unlikely to have any problems as a tourist, but discretion is advisable.

HOLIDAYS

In Southern Algeria the main tourist season is from November to March, and the best hotels and guesthouses are often full. On the Mediterranean coast the busiest time of year is the summer, from May to September, and at this time hotel rooms are at a premium.

As well as the following national holidays, Algeria also observes Islamic holidays (see p201).

Labour Day 1 May

Revolutionary Readjustment (1965) 19 June

Independence Day 5 July

National Day (Revolution Day) 1 November

ISLAMIC HOLIDAYS

Holiday	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ramadan begins	13 Sep	2 Sep	22 Aug	11 Aug
Eid al-Fitr	14 Oct	3 Oct	20 Sep	9 Sep
Tabaski	19 Dec	8 Dec	28 Nov	17 Nov
Moulid an-Nabi	31 Mar	20 Mar	9 Mar	27 Feb
New Year begins	21 Jan (1428)	10 Jan (1429)	31 Dec (1430)	20 Dec (1431)
Eid al-Adha	21 Dec	10 Dec	30 Nov	19 Nov

INSURANCE

A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is essential. Some policies specifically exclude dangerous activities, which can include motorcycling, camel trekking and even trekking and travel across the Sahara. Check that the policy covers an emergency flight home and choose one that covers a large sum towards medical expenses in case you need to be evacuated from the Sahara; this can be very expensive. You might prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals on the spot rather than having to pay up and claim later.

For more advice about health insurance policies, see p218. For information about motor insurance, see p215. Worldwide travel insurance is available at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services. You can buy, extend and claim online anytime – even if you're already on the road.

INTERNET ACCESS

Most travellers make constant use of internet cafés and free web-based email such as Yahoo (www.yahoo.com) or Hotmail (www.hotmail.com).

If you're travelling with a notebook or hand-held computer, be aware that your modem may not work once you leave your home country. The safest option is to buy a reputable 'global' modem before you leave home, or buy a local PC-card modem if you're spending an extended time in any one country. For more information on travelling with a portable computer, see www.teleadapt.com.

Internet access is usually available in major towns and tourist areas (with the notable exceptions of Djanet and Timimoun) and connections are normally good. It should cost between DA80 and DA150 an hour to surf. Other than the large and

expensive hotels chains in Algiers, you're unlikely to find hotels with wireless internet connections. Where they can be found we have used the internet symbol (☎) to denote this.

LEGAL MATTERS

When you are in Algeria make sure to respect local laws and penalties, including those that seem overly harsh; they do apply to you. Your government will certainly try to help you if you get arrested or end up in prison, but it can't get you off the hook. The possession, use and trafficking of controlled substances are all serious criminal offences in Algeria, which carry custodial sentences, and the Algerian authorities have recently announced new measures to crack down harder on drug trafficking. Serious crime, such as murder, may attract punishment by the death penalty.

The photography of military or sensitive sites, including military or security personnel, may lead to arrest and detention. Also remember that there are restrictions on taking artefacts (such as stone tools) out of the country – if you're caught this can lead to a fine or even time in prison.

When driving in Algeria you're bound to come across police and military checkpoint on major roads inside and on the outskirts of Algiers and other large cities, as well as on major highways. You should fully cooperate with and show relevant documentation to the security personnel at these checkpoints.

MAPS

It can be difficult to find accurate maps of Algeria's cities and towns and most of the time they're nonexistent. If you need a country map it's a better idea to buy one before you go. The Michelin Map 741 *Africa: North and West* is an accurate and readable choice. Also worth a look is the Insight Travel Map, *North Africa 2003*. Gizi's *Algeria* map is slightly more detailed and also has names in Arabic.

MONEY

The currency of Algeria is called the dinar. Dinar banknotes are issued in the following denominations: 100, 200, 500, and 1000 dinars. See the Quick Reference section on the inside cover for exchange rates and see

p14 for information on the costs involved in travelling in Algeria.

ATMs

You won't have much luck getting money out of ATMs in Algeria. In fact, you will be lucky if you even see an ATM. They are practically unheard of in Southern Algeria and those that you do find tend not to accept foreign cards. Rumour has it, though, that the ATMs belonging to the Credit Populaire d'Algérie *do* accept European ATM cards.

Black Market

A so-called 'black market' does still exist in Algeria, although it is not as widespread as it once was. Money can still be changed on the street should you so choose, and if you ask around discreetly you're sure to find someone to help you out. Moneychangers might also approach you in the street, particularly near border crossings and you may even be offered an exchange by your taxi driver on the way in from the airport. However, you should only change money on the street when it's absolutely necessary. While you'll get a slightly better rate of exchange it really isn't worth the risk. You run the risk of being ripped off or worse. Bear in mind that you're officially supposed to show all your transactions on your currency declaration form. Although it's rarely checked you don't want to be caught out.

Cash

The best foreign currencies to carry are euros, followed by UK pounds. Some Algerians, especially in rural areas, might give prices in centimes rather than dinars (100 centimes equals DA1). To confuse matters further, they might also drop the thousands, so a quote of '130' means 130,000 centimes, ie DA1300. You'll need dinars for day-to-day expenses, although tourist-oriented businesses (hotels, airlines, tour companies and even tourist shops) might accept euros.

Credit Cards

Credit-card facilities are not widespread in Algeria. You'll be able to use them to pay for some top-end hotels and restaurants, some larger travel agencies, car-rental agencies and at some Air Algérie offices in major

cities although a commission of around 5% is usually charged for this. In Southern Algeria even the more expensive hotels and agencies don't accept credit cards. The most useful card is Visa, with MasterCard also accepted in a minority of places. It is possible to get cash advances from Visa and MasterCard credit cards in bank branches in major cities, although this can sometimes prove to be a long and drawn-out process. Authorisation can take anything from half an hour to half a day.

Moneychangers

The best place to change money is in one of the national banks, although it is also possible at many of the upmarket hotels. Tour companies will sometimes change money for you and many tourist-oriented shops will let you pay in euros and then give you dinar as change.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques aren't that much use in Algeria and many banks won't exchange them, especially outside of the larger cities. In the south, facilities for changing travellers cheques are practically unheard of and even when you do find such facilities your travellers cheques will be scrutinised and discussed in great detail before they are approved. In order to change travellers cheques you will need your original receipt.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Print and slide film, batteries and a limited range of camera accessories, including memory sticks for digital cameras are available in major towns. Processing a roll of 36 exposures costs around DA600. In most major towns it is also possible to transfer digital images onto a CD, or to print out photographs from a memory stick. Whatever camera you bring, a dust-proof bag and a cleaning kit is essential. The sunlight in Algeria is very intense, so most people find 100 ISO to be sufficient, with possibly 200 ISO or 400 ISO for long-lens shots, or in the coastal regions of the north.

Do not take photographs of airports, ports, government buildings or anything that looks as if it may be police or military property. Always ask permission before taking a photograph of people and don't snap a

photo if permission is denied. When taking photographs of rock paintings and carvings flash photography is forbidden.

The best times to take photographs in Algeria, especially in the Sahara are in the early morning, just after sunrise, and the hour or so before sunset; the low sun will enhance the colours in your photographs. Filters (eg ultraviolet, polarising or 'skylight') can also help produce good results; ask for advice in a good camera shop.

For the most comprehensive guide to travel photography, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography: A guide to Taking Better Pictures* by internationally renowned photographer Richard I'Anson.

POST

Post offices are widespread throughout the country and are indicated by a yellow sign. The postal system is quite slow and it's possible that you'll arrive home before your postcards do. A letter to Europe should cost DA30. Cards and letters to the USA and Australia cost DA45. Postcards are slightly cheaper. Many post offices also have branches of Western Union.

SHOPPING

You'll find plenty of souvenirs of your trip, including fantastic jewellery; the traditional Berber pieces are beautiful, especially those from the Kabylie region which are made from different combinations of silver, coloured enamel, semiprecious stones and coral. You will also find plenty of magnificent jewellery in the south – made by Tuareg silversmiths, many of whom are from Niger. You'll find intricately carved silver and agate pendants, strangely shaped crosses – look for the famous 'Croix d'Agadez' – heavy earrings and traditional bangles. You could also pick up a traditional Tuareg sword or a *taguelmoust* (Tuareg veil) to shield you from the elements.

Leather goods are of particularly good quality around Tlemcen, which produces leather belts, shoes, bags and poufs. In the Hoggar many Tuareg artisans specialise in leatherwear. You'll see leather sandals in bright shades of red and green, pouches, Tuareg 'wallets' that you wear round your neck to store your valuables, and you may come across intricately decorated camel saddles.

Carpets are made all over Algeria, the designs – traditional and geometric – vary in colour and style from place to place and a lower quality one can be picked up for as little as €10. Good places to buy traditional carpets include Ghardaia and the Souf region.

The Tipaza region is famous for its pottery, where you can get exquisitely decorated bowls, plates and couscouisiers.

When you're in the desert look out for *roses de sable* – natural rock sculptures in the shape of roses, exactly as they are found in the sand.

Even though it's a Muslim country, Algeria is also a wine producer, continuing to maintain vineyards from the colonial era. All of these vineyards are located in the north and, in particular, produce some good-quality red wines. These can usually be bought in specialised shops in the bigger towns, or in souvenir shops at the airport.

Unlike some other countries in the region, bargaining isn't really done in most of Algeria and most shops have fixed prices. Offence can sometime be taken if you try to haggle, too. Once you head further south, to Ghardaia, Djanet and Tamanrasset, bargaining is more acceptable, although you're unlikely to walk away with huge discounts.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Solo travel in southern Algeria can be expensive. If driving through the south you have to arrange to be met by a reputable guide who will accompany you in your car, which can cost anything from €80 a day and up, depending on the season.

Hardly any hotels have single rooms and although they'll usually charge you a reduced rate to stay in a double the reduction is not often significant. The same goes for organised tours. Unless you've organised something in advance, most travel agents will not let you just join in on a group tour, so unless you can find someone to share the costs you'll end up having to arrange a very expensive itinerary for yourself.

The upside is that you may get to interact more with locals. Speaking Arabic or French will make a huge difference to your travels in Algeria. If you are travelling independently, a grasp of at least the basics will help you communicate more effectively –

existing on a diet of broken conversation can prove very frustrating. Algerians are hospitable and you might well be invited for tea or dinner in somebody's home. The down side is that it can be quite isolating – there are not many independent travellers in Algeria, so it could be a good idea to sort out travelling companions before you go. You're unlikely to meet many people to travel with or to share lifts with once you're on the road.

It is possible for solo travellers to get around on public transport, and bus services are relatively frequent, covering all the major destinations of interest. At the time of writing, getting around on public transport in the south could be problematic as you were required to have an invitation from a travel agency as well as a detailed itinerary to account for your time, before being granted a visa. You can get around this (for example, by joining a tour for a short time) and there have been reports of people travelling solo in the south on public transport. However, if you're leaving the south via Tamanrasset or Djanet airports you'll be asked which travel agency you're with and will be in for some hassle if you don't have an answer.

Women travelling solo in Algeria will attract a lot of attention, as even the local women don't tend to travel on their own. You're likely to receive a lot of curious glances and it can be intimidating. Cafés and restaurants away from the big towns of the north are generally all-male establishments and local men may pester you. See p207 for more information on women travellers.

TELEPHONE

Mobile phone usage has seen an explosion in Algeria and use is widespread. Mobile phones are often the only way to get in touch with people, as most Algerians do not have a land line.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phone numbers begin with ☎06 or ☎07. There are four main mobile networks in Algeria: Djezzy, Mobilis, Nedjma and Allo, out of which Djezzy has the most comprehensive coverage. SIM cards are widely available from mobile phone shops, internet cafés or local stores, and

cost around DA80. Calls cost from around DA13 to DA18 a minute for national calls and around DA5 to DA8 for the same network; it's certainly cheaper than using your foreign phone here.

Phone Codes

The country code for Algeria is ☎ 213. To call out of Algeria dial ☎ 00 before the country code.

Phonecards

Post offices and general stores sell phonecards. The most convenient way to phone abroad, however, is by Taxiphone. See below for further details.

Taxiphone

No, not the place to go to call a taxi, a taxiphone is the best way to make a phone call abroad. Taxiphones are essentially small offices with a number of screened-off cabins where you make your call first and then pay later. Expect a five-minute call to Europe to cost about DA300 and a similar call to the USA to cost DA350.

TIME

Algeria is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). There is no daylight saving time. The 24-hour clock is usually used.

TOILETS

Public facilities are not very common in Algeria. Facilities range from squat toilets to Western-style toilets in the more upmarket hotels and restaurants. If you're going to be travelling in more remote areas, carry some toilet paper for when you feel the call of nature.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The best place to find tourist information is the **Office National Algérien du Tourisme** (ONAT; ☎ 021 744448; www.onat-dz.com; 126 bus, rue Didouche-Mourad, Algiers) – Algeria's national tourist office. Its services vary greatly according to its location. Some can help out with local information, organise tours around the country or assist you with a map or a daily guide. Others seem to exist as booking agents for Algerians wanting to go elsewhere. The **Touring Club d'Algérie** (☎ 021 541313; www.algeria.touring.dz; 30 rue Hassene-Benâmane, Algiers) is also a useful source of information.

ONAT has several helpful regional offices including the following:

Constantine (☎ /fax 031 642257; 16 rue Didouche-Mourad)

Ghardaïa (Map p157; ☎ 029 881751; fax 029 884323; 1 blvd Emir-Abdelkader)

Oran (☎ 041 393106, 041 393889; fax 041 390320; 10bis, rue Emir-Abdelkader)

Tamanrasset (☎ 029 334117; fax 029 344191; blvd Emir-Abdelkader)

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Facilities for disabled travellers in Algeria are practically nonexistent. Only the most expensive hotels have lifts, while streets are not always in great condition and ramps and other things to ease access are nowhere to be seen. Bathroom access in most hotels in Algeria can be difficult and most long-distance public transport is not accessible for wheelchairs. There are no tourist facilities in Algeria aimed specifically at the blind or the deaf.

VISAS

All visitors to Algeria except the nationals of Libya, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, the Seychelles, Syria, Tunisia, Western Sahara and Yemen need a visa to enter Algeria. All visas must be arranged in advance at an Algerian embassy or consulate; you cannot get a visa on entry to the country. In general you should get a visa before leaving your home country, although if travelling up to Algeria through West Africa, it might be possible to get a transit visa en route in Agadez, Niger. Visas are valid for either one month or three months from the date of entry, but it can be difficult to obtain a three-month visa as you'll have to provide an itinerary and account for all the time that you'll be there.

To get a visa you fill out two application forms, provide two photographs and, if visiting friends or relatives, a stamped *certificat d'hébergement* (certificate of lodging) signed by your host in Algeria and authenticated by the local authorities in your host's hometown. Otherwise you'll need a confirmed hotel booking or an invitation from a travel agency; for a visit to the south you'll need an invitation from a travel agency and a detailed itinerary for your stay. Travel agencies arrange your invitation and can usually fax the embassy a signed and stamped copy.

Visas cost €35 for one month and €100 for three months for Europeans. Visas for citizens of the USA and Canada cost around €50. Multiple-entry visas cost a few euros more. Transit visas are valid for seven days and you'll have to prove you have adequate financial resources and a valid visa for your country of destination. For visa extensions visit the **Department des Etrangers** (blvd Youssef 19A, Algiers).

Visas for Onward Travel

Visas for the following countries are available from embassies in Algiers (see p200) or consuls in Tamanrasset.

Mali One-month visas cost €10 or €15 for French citizens and are usually issued in 24 hours. You'll need two photos.

Niger One-month visas are issued the same day, costing €50. Three photos and three application forms are required.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

While it's not exactly dangerous to travel as a woman on your own in Algeria, it can prove to be tiresome. It is not common to see women travelling on their own in many parts of the country and consequently you should prepare yourself for the amount of attention you'll receive. In the more laid-back towns of Tamanrasset or Djanet, for example, it will just be curious stares from both men or women. In other places you'll be subjected to a constant barrage of cat-calls and advances.

Travel as a solo woman in Algeria can sometimes be intimidating. Outside of the

big cities and the tourist trail, cafés and restaurants are the preserve of men and you'll receive stares and sometimes outright hostility if you enter.

Inventing a husband and wearing a wedding band is always a good strategy and you should also refer to boyfriends as husbands to gain greater legitimacy for your relationship as, unfortunately, many men in Algeria seem to be under the impression that if an unmarried woman is travelling alone then she's 'available'.

It is essential to dress modestly. This is the most successful strategy for minimising attention. Tucking your hair under a hat or tying it back sometimes helps. Although on the streets of Algiers you can get away with bare arms and tight jeans the rest of the country is a different story. Upper arms, legs, shoulders and cleavage should be covered – you don't want to call unnecessary attention to yourself. It's also a good idea to avoid eye contact with local men.

Avoid going out in the evening, particularly on foot, and avoid isolated areas, roadways and beaches. Hitching is not recommended. If staying in hotels alone it's worth paying a bit more money to stay in a place that's secure. It's not unheard of for a man to come knocking on your door in the middle of the night once it's clear you're a foreign woman staying on your own.

Don't let these concerns ruin your trip however. Most of the attention you'll receive, while annoying, is rarely threatening.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

Algeria is easily reached by air or sea from Continental Europe and the UK and there are also frequent flights to and from the Middle East, North and West Africa. From all other areas you'll have to change in Europe. Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Getting into Algeria is fairly straightforward and immigration officials tend to just check your visa before letting you go on your way. You will have to fill in a landing card before entering, but this is pretty simple and it's printed in Arabic, French and English. You also need to fill in a customs declaration form (p199) stating how much currency and valuables you are bringing into the country. This is supposed to be stamped on entry, and may or may not be checked by customs on your way in. Visas are not issued on arrival and you must arrange a visa in advance before entering the country. See p206 for more information about visa requirements.

Passport

Nationals of Israel are not allowed into the country; if you have a stamp in your passport from here your application might be rejected. For visa information, see p206.

AIR Airports & Airlines

There are direct International flights from Europe to Algiers, Annaba, Bejaia, Constantine, Djanet, Oran, Hassi Messaoud, Tamanrasset and Tlemcen; as well as direct flights from West Africa and the Middle East to Algiers. There are no direct flights to Algeria from North or South America, Asia or Australasia.

Air Algérie is the national carrier and, at the time of writing, the only airline offering internal flights to tourists. Air France, Aigle Azur and British Airways are the main airlines linking Algeria with Europe.

Air Algérie has a fairly decent safety record. Its only fatal air crash was in March 2003, 102 people were killed when a plane lost control shortly after taking off in Tamanrasset. Additionally, a group of unarmed men tried to hijack a domestic Air Algérie flight in January 2003.

The following airlines fly to/from Algeria:

- Aigle Azur** (ZI; ☎ 21 64 14 52; www.aigle-azur.fr)
- Air Algérie** (AH; ☎ 21 65 33 40; www.airAlgerie.dz)
- Air France** (AF; ☎ 21 98 04 04; www.airfrance.com)
- Alitalia** (AZ; ☎ 21 72 73 56; www.alitalia.com)
- British Airways** (BA; ☎ 21 67 09 18; www.ba.com)
- Egypt Air** (MS; ☎ 21 63 39 74; www.egyptair.com)
- JetAir** (☎ 1293 566000; www.jetair.co.uk)

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and any ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & climate change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the USA will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon offset schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Libyan Arab Airlines (LN; ☎ 21 72 51 39; www.libyanarabairline.com)

Lufthansa (LH; ☎ 583 8426; www.lufthansa.com)

Qatar Airways (QR; ☎ 21 67 99 99; www.qatarairways.com)

Royal Air Maroc (AT; ☎ 21 74 45 20/21; www.royalairmaroc.com)

Saudi Arabian Airlines (SV; ☎ 21 68 22 74; www.saudiairlines.com)

Syn-Air (RB; ☎ 21 73 01 02; www.syn-air.com)

Syrian Air (RB; ☎ 21 73 01 02; www.syriaair.com)

Turkish Airlines (TK; ☎ 21 44 68 66; www.thy.com)

Tickets

Since there is so little competition, there are few specials for travel to Algeria. Air Algérie and Air France have daily direct flights from Paris, and British Airways flies to Algiers direct every day except Thursday. Booking online is usually possible and good online agencies include **Opodo** (www.opodo.co.uk) and **Expedia** (www.expedia.com). The best deals to Algeria are from France; **Aigle Azur** (☎ 33 (0) 810 797 997; www.aigle-azur.fr) has regular flights to a number of the more popular tourist destinations in Algeria. **Point Afrique** (www.point-afrique.com) arranges charter flights to Algeria from Paris and Marseilles, and if you're going to Tamanrasset or Djanet it's a better option than changing planes in Algiers.

Africa

Algeria is well connected with North and West Africa, and there are regular direct flights from Libya, Morocco and Egypt to Algiers. Air Algérie flies direct to Niamey (Niger), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Bamako (Mali), Dakar (Senegal) and Nouakchot (Mauritania). There are Air Algérie offices in **Mali** (☎ 233 223159; av Modibo Keita, Bamako), **Egypt** (☎ 202 5740 688; El-Nasr Bldg, El-Nil St, Cairo), **Morocco** (☎ 212 222 5681; 1, rue Elamraoui Brahim, Casablanca), **Senegal** (☎ 221 823 55 48; 2 place de l'Indépendance, Dakar), **Niger** (☎ 227 7338 98; Arcades Rivoli, Niamey), **Mauritania** (☎ 222 525 2059; av Gamel Abdelnasser, Nouakchot) and **Burkina Faso** (☎ 312 102; 398 av Kwame Nkrumah, Ouagadougou). Buying cheap tickets in West and North Africa isn't easy. Usually the best deal you can get is the airline's official excursion fare.

Flights from East Africa tend to go via the Middle East, eg from Nairobi to Istanbul to Algiers. Flying from Southern Africa the best way to get to Algeria is to fly via Egypt.

Australia & New Zealand

Again, there are no direct flights from Australia or New Zealand to Algeria. The best way to get there is via London on British Airways or Paris with Air France. A return ticket from Sydney to Algiers via London

or Paris should cost around A\$1800 and should take about 30 hours. Or you could fly with Egypt Air via Cairo, from where there are onward connections to Algiers.

Both **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) have offices throughout Australia. For online bookings try www.travel.com.au.

In New Zealand both **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782872; www.statravel.co.nz) have branches throughout the country. The site www.travel.co.nz is recommended for online bookings.

Continental Europe

Lufthansa, Alitalia and Air France all have daily connections from their respective countries to Algiers, and Air Algérie also has good connections with Continental Europe. From Spain there are Air Algérie flights three times a week from Barcelona to Algiers, twice a week from Madrid to Algiers, and two a week from Alicante to Oran. From Italy there are three flights a week from Rome to Algiers. From Switzerland there are two flights a week from Geneva to Algiers and one a week from Basel to Constantine. Air Algérie also flies twice a week from Frankfurt and Brussels, and once a week from Moscow. From other European countries the best bet is to connect in Paris. Return fares from Continental Europe range from between €300 and €500.

The following are a list of recommended travel agencies:

Air Fair (☎ 020 620 5121; www.airfair.nl in Dutch) Well-respected Dutch travel agent.

Barcelo Viajes (☎ 902 116 226; www.barceloviajes.com; Spain)

Connections (☎ 02-550 01 00; www.connections.be; Belgium) Has offices throughout the country.

CTS Viaggi (☎ 06 462 0431; www.cts.it; Italy)

Expedia (www.expedia.de; Germany)

STA Travel (☎ 01805 456 422; www.statravel.de; Germany)

TUI (☎ 0848 121 221; www.tui.ch; Switzerland)

For a return flight from Berlin to Algiers prices start at around €400; from Rome prices start at around €350.

France

Air France has daily flights to Algiers from €300 return. Air Algérie operates daily scheduled flights between Paris and Algiers,

and several flights a week between Paris and the international airports at Annaba, Constantine, Oran, Batna and Tlemcen.

In addition there are direct weekly flights from Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Nancy and Nice to Algiers.

You can fly from Lyon to Annaba, Constantine and Oran; from Marseille to Batna, Constantine and Oran; and from Toulouse to Oran. For other destinations in Algeria you'll need to connect in Algiers.

Aigle Azur specialises in flights between France and North Africa and has a variety of different flights from French cities to Algeria. For example, from Paris you can get to Algiers, Annaba, Batna, Constantine, Djanet, Hassi Messaoud, Oran, Tamanrasset and Tlemcen. Flights to Algiers also depart from Lille, Lyon and Toulouse. From Marseilles you can get to Annaba, Constantine, Oran and Tlemcen. The airports at Lyon and Toulouse also have flights to Oran.

Point Afrique is an excellent company that organises tours and flights to countries around North and West Africa. It flies from Paris and Marseille to Djanet and Tamanrasset, the advantage being that for the same price as a straight return you can mix and match – you could fly from Paris to Djanet and then return from Tamanrasset, or even from another country in the region. One-way fares to southern Algeria start from around €300.

However, bear in mind that because it operates lowly charter flights, Point Afrique is further down the pecking order when it comes to airport berths, which means that it is sometimes unable to confirm your exact flight details until not long before your departure. Also bear in mind that airport tax is not included in the flight price. This is normally an additional €65.

Recommended booking agencies in France include the following:

Nouvelles Frontières (☎ 0825 000 747; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr)

OTU Voyages (☎ 0825 004 027; www.out.fr) Has branches across France.

Voyageurs du Monde (☎ 0892 688 363; www.vdm.com)

Middle East

There are good connections between Algeria and the Middle East, and the national airlines of Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey all have regular direct flights to

Algiers. In addition, Air Algérie flies once a week to Amman (Jordan), twice a week to Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Damascus (Syria) and Beirut (Lebanon), and three times a week to Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and Istanbul (Turkey).

UK & Ireland

British Airways flies direct from London every day except Thursday. Prices start from around UK£300 return to Algiers. Twice a week British Airways flies direct to Hassi Messaoud from London Gatwick for around UK£400 return. JetAir, a private charter airline, has return scheduled flights to Hassi Messaoud three times a week.

From Ireland the quickest way to get to Algeria is to fly from Dublin with British Airways via London. It's also worth checking the weekend travel ads in newspapers and travel magazines or in *Time Out*. During popular periods such as peak tourist seasons or at the end of Ramadan, prices may rise by another UK£100 or so on scheduled airlines.

The following travel agents are a good place to start to look for deals.

Africa Travel Centre (☎ 0845 450 1520; www.travelafrica.co.uk; 21 Leigh St London WC1H 9EW)

North South Travel (☎ 01245 608291; www.northsouthtravel.co.uk; Moulsham Mill Centre, Parkway, Chelmsford CM2 7PX) Excellent small travel agency whose profits are put into development projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

STA Travel (☎ 020-7361 6142/7581/4132; www.statravel.co.uk) Has offices throughout the country.

Traillfinders (☎ 020-7938 3939; www.traillfinders.co.uk) Has offices all over the UK.

USA & Canada

Currently there are no direct flights from the USA or Canada to Algeria, but a new service is being planned from Montreal to Algiers on Air Algérie from June 2007. The best way to get there would be to take a flight to London or Paris and change there. From New York this would take about 14 hours. The full economy fare from New York to Algiers is about US\$1000. The economy fare from Toronto to Algiers is about C\$1500.

The following are recommended travel agencies in the USA.

STA Travel (☎ 800-777 0112; www.statravel.com)

Has offices in many major US cities; call the toll-free 800 number for office locations or visit its website.

Pan Express Travel (☎ 212 719-9292; www.panexpresstravel.com) Also worth trying.

Recommended Canadian travel agencies include the following:

Travel CUTS (☎ 800-667 2887; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency and has offices in all major cities.

Flight Centre (☎ 1877 967 5302; www.flightcentre.ca) Has offices all over Canada.

In addition to the internet, good places to search include travel magazines. The weekend editions of major newspapers are also useful. You could try the *New York Times* on the east coast, the *Los Angeles Times* or *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle* on the west coast, and in Canada the *Toronto Star*, *Vancouver Sun* or *Globe & Mail*.

LAND

Algeria has land borders with Tunisia, Libya, Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Morocco. At the time of writing many of Algeria's borders were closed to tourists and the only possible crossings were at Taleb Larbi and Souq Ahras with Tunisia, In Guezzam with Niger and Deb Deb with Libya. On arriving at the border you will normally fill out an immigration card and a currency declaration form and get a passport stamp. If you're driving you'll also fill out a registration form for your vehicle and buy motor insurance.

With any of the following overland routes, you'll need a thorough update on the security situation before setting off. Anybody planning Saharan travel should check out the excellent website www.sahara-overland.com put together by Chris Scott.

Libya

There are two main overland routes you can take from Algeria to Libya: from Djanet on the Algerian side to Ghat on the Libyan side, or from Deb Deb on the Algerian side to Ghadames in Libya. At the time of writing it was not possible to cross into Libya via Ghat. However, if the border reopens anytime soon, shared taxis leave from Djanet's main street to the border at the crack of dawn every day. At the time of research it was possible to cross into Libya from Deb Deb to Ghadames.

An invitation from a tour operator is necessary to obtain a visa for Libya and at the

time of writing it was compulsory to travel with a guide if driving in the south. It is not possible to cross the border using public transport. If driving you'll need to get your passport stamped, rent number plates and buy a Libyan carnet and motor insurance.

Mali

The Malian border crossing is on the Route de Tanezrouft, running through Algeria and Mali, via Adrar and the border at Bordj-Mokhtar, ending in Gao. The security situation in northern Mali has been unstable for some time, meaning that the Tanzerouft trans-Saharan route has been effectively closed to travellers. The situation has improved somewhat recently, but the route is still considered dangerous and cannot be recommended. If you must undertake this route, you'll need to be accompanied to the border by an Algerian guide from a reputable tour company.

To get to Mali overland from Algeria your best bet is to go via Niger, crossing the border at Labbénganza, southeast of Gao. You can pick up a visa for Mali in Tamanrasset, but it is also possible to pick one up at the border for CFA15,000.

Mauritania

Crossing from Algeria into Mauritania is currently not advised due to safety concerns in that corner of the country.

Morocco

All borders between Morocco and Algeria were closed at the time of writing.

Niger

The only viable border post between the two countries at the time of writing was between In Guezzam (Algeria) and Assammaka (Niger), a bit more than 400km south of Tamanrasset. If driving you will need an Algerian guide to accompany you to the border (or pick you up), as it is currently illegal for tourists to drive cars unaccompanied in the Algerian Sahara.

Formalities are carried out at the Algerian border post from where it's another 18km or so to the Nigerian authorities at Assamaka. To enter this region of Niger you'll need a licensed guide and a *feuille de route* (official itinerary), which you'll need to arrange through a Nigerian travel agency.

It is not recommended that you use public transport to cross the border into Niger. However, should the situation improve, getting to In Guezzam from Tamanrasset is reasonably straightforward. There are 4WD taxis that leave on a daily basis and it'll cost you DA1500 for a seat. There's not much point doing this though as you'll then have to find a ride to the border post and then onwards to the Nigerian border post at Assamaka and from there to Arlit. From Arlit south, things are very straightforward though and buses run south to Agadez, Zinder, and Niamey. If there's a group of you it's possible to hire a 4WD taxi in Tamanrasset to take you all the way to Arlit for around DA40,000.

Tunisia

Most overland travellers enter Algeria via Tunisia. Take the ferry from Tunis and then go overland from Nefta in Tunisia to El-Oued in Algeria via the border at Taleb Larbi. If coming by public transport, you can get a shared taxi from Nefta to the border post at Hazoua. It's a few kilometres between the Tunisian and Algeria border posts, but you should be able to get a lift across. After completing formalities at the Algerian side, there are shared taxis that go on to El-Oued. You can sometimes change money at the border, if not you'll be able to at Debila, the first main town after the border.

The other main border point with Tunisia is between Souq Ahras on the Algerian side and Ghardimaou in Tunisia. On both sides the journey can usually be made by *taxis collectifs* (shared taxis), or there are direct air-conditioned buses between Tunis and Annaba or Constantine.

SEA

Algérie Ferries (☎ 021 424650; www.algerieferries.com) and the French company **SNCM** (☎ 33 825 88 80 88; www.sncm.fr) operate regular ferry services between Marseille in France and Oran, Algiers, Bejaia, Skikda and Annaba in Algeria; and between Alicante in Spain and Algiers and Oran.

France

Basic fares cost from around €280 per adult one way and €330 return plus an extra €120 for a cabin. Cars cost from €110 one way; motorbikes from €78.

The following table has information on ferry services from Marseille.

Destination	Frequency (weekly)	Duration (hours)
Algiers	3	22
Annaba	1-2	20
Bejaia	1	21
Oran	3	25
Skikda	2	22

Spain

Basic adult fares cost from €180 one way and €206 return, plus an extra €70 extra for a cabin. Bringing a car costs from €100 one way. It costs from €63 one way to bring a motorcycle and €15 one way for a bike.

From Alicante to Algiers there are two crossings (13 hours) a week. There is a weekly crossing (13 to 15 hours) from Alicante to Oran.

TOURS

Because of the current security situation and the relative difficulty for independent travellers, most people go to Algeria on organised tours. Most of these tours are inclusive and cover your international flight, transport around the country, food, accommodation and guide etc. Most tours to Algeria concentrate on the Sahara; the bulk of them in the desert regions around Tamanrasset and Djanet and some to the Grand Ergs and the M'Zab. Tours are usually conducted in small groups of around eight to 15 people and will either travel by 4WD, trekking on foot with pack animals, or on camels; sometimes it's a combination of all these things. Overland tours used to cross through the Algerian Sahara on trans-Africa expeditions, but since the troubles of the 1990s they have stayed away. Several companies are listed below, but the list is not exhaustive. For tour companies based inside the country, see p217.

Continental Europe

Hommes et Montagnes (☎ 4 3886 6919; www.hommes-et-montagnes.fr) Well-established and extremely professional, this company provides a huge range of trekking options from eight to 22 days. Tours are rated from easy to difficult.

La Route du Sahara (www.laroutedusahara.com) Provides a variety of trekking options in the Sahara as well as

cultural tours to the S'biba festival in Djanet and a 'spiritual trek' following in the footsteps of Charles de Foucauld.

Les Matins du Monde (☎ 4 37 24 90 30; www.lesmatinsdumonde.com) Offers hikes, camel treks and 4WD treks in the Sahara, as well as more specialised tours such as rock-climbing.

Point Afrique (☎ 4 75 97 20 40; www.point-afrique.com) This company doesn't just do flights, it also organises personally tailored and group tours. As well as tours in the Sahara it has treks in the Kabylie Mountains and discovery tours of Northern Algeria's ancient Roman sites.

Terres d'Aventure (☎ 825 847 800; www.terdav.com) Has 10 different desert tours including three family-friendly trips in Algeria for kids as young as six.

Via Nostra (www.vianostra.fr) Offers cultural tours to Northern Algeria.

UK & Ireland

Explore Worldwide (☎ 0870 333 4001; www.explore.co.uk) Has recently launched a small group tour to Algeria, travelling by 4WD, minibus and plane, which takes in Algiers, Tipaza, Ghardaïa, the Tassili N'Ajjer and the Hoggar Mountains.

Sahara Travel (☎ 1 496 8844; www.saharatravel.co.uk) An Ireland-based company that offers 4WD trips in the Algerian Sahara, including self-drive 4WD expeditions where you will be accompanied by a tour leader but drive your own 4WD. Includes channel crossing and ferry crossing from Marseille.

USA & Canada

Adventures Abroad (☎ 1-800 665 3998; www.adventures-abroad.com) Has 12-day small-group tours taking in the ancient sites of the north as well as Tassili N'Ajjer National Park.

Lost Frontiers (☎ 888 508-2454; www.lostfrontiers.com) California-based company offering a three-week tour to the Tassili N'Ajjer and the Hoggar Mountains.

Journeys International (☎ 800 255 8735; www.journeys-intl.com) Offers a North Africa tour that takes in the northern regions of Algeria.

GETTING AROUND

AIR

Because of the huge distances involved in travelling in Algeria, flying can be a good way to get around and there's an excellent network of regional airports. For the more popular and less frequent routes, such as Tamanrasset or Djanet to Algiers, it pays to book well in advance (if you can!). When you've walked through customs to board an internal flight, you'll notice that all of the

passengers' baggage is lying on the tarmac. You have to identify your bag to the ground staff before they put it on the plane. If you don't, it'll get left behind.

Airlines in Algeria

Air Algérie (☎ 021 653340; www.airalgerie.dz) is the national carrier of Algeria and the only airline currently offering internal flights after Khalifa Airways folded in 2003. There are a couple of smaller airlines in operation such as JetAir Sahara but these mainly serve as charter airlines for workers in the oil and gas industries.

Distances are long in Algeria and if travelling independently you'll probably use internal flights at some point. Although it's quicker to get around by air, tickets are expensive and Air Algérie's customer service can be ridiculously inefficient. In theory it's possible to book internal flights before arriving in the country through the website or international Air Algérie offices, but this can be a nightmare. The schedules are often incorrect and many flights unbookable. It is often the case that a flight will appear on the website or timetable but cannot be booked as seats have not been released yet; sometimes they are not released until a few days before the flight.

On the ground there are often delays, cancellations or time changes with little warning. At local Air Algérie offices you will almost certainly have to pay in cash, but this can usually be done in euros as well as dinars.

BUS

Intercity buses are run by the national company SNTV, sometimes known in the south as TVSE. It serves all major tourist destinations in Algeria. Bus trips are reasonably priced, but vary greatly in comfort level, from old, slow, hot dinosaurs to more modern air-conditioned vehicles. Buses also vary in size and are either full-size buses or 30-seater minibuses.

SNTV covers most major destinations in Algeria going as far south as Tamanrasset, although it is less widespread in the south; Djanet, for example is only served by shared taxis. There are also a number of private companies that usually operate from and have small offices in the main city bus terminals. These tend to be more expen-

sive than the national SNTV buses, but are generally more comfortable, modern and air-conditioned. Most long-distance services leave either very early in the morning or at night to escape travelling in the peak heat. Make sure to arrive at the *gare routière* bus station at least half an hour before the departure time. It's also a good idea to make reservations in advance for more popular or long-distance journeys.

Buses are a reasonably priced way of getting around. For example, a journey from Algiers to Ghardaïa costs DA650, and a journey from Ghardaïa to Tamanrasset costs DA1500.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The major route across the Algerian Sahara is the Route du Hoggar, which goes from Ghardaïa to Tamanrasset, and then on to In Guezzam and the Niger frontier. The road is tar all the way to Tamanrasset, although it's patchy after In Salah. Other less-used routes include the Route du Tanezrouft, which runs from Adrar to Borj Mokhtar near the Malian border and includes sections of piste.

There is no longer a need to drive in convoy in Southern Algeria; however, at the time of writing all independent travellers in the south needed to be accompanied by a guide. The guide will meet you at the border and either join you in your own car or, if you are in a motorcycle or bicycle, will follow you in their own car. A guide in your car costs from around €80 a day and must be arranged in advance. Tourist offices in Tamamrasset and Djanet can take care of this.

Algerians aren't exactly known for their careful driving skills; basic road rules are rarely respected and the number of fatal road accidents rises year after year. You'll find plenty of police and army roadblocks on the road, especially in the south. Slow down on approach and wait to be waved through. If you are stopped you'll be asked for papers, passport, visa and perhaps other personal details, such as your home address and the duration of your stay. This can sometimes be a lengthy process but be cooperative.

For further information about driving in the Sahara, see p76. It's also worth consulting the excellent *Sahara Overland* by Chris Scott.

Bring Your Own Vehicle

Anyone planning to bring their vehicle with them to Algeria needs to check in advance what spare parts and petrol are likely to be available. When bringing your car into the country, you'll need vehicle registration documents and it's essential that the details on this document must match those on your vehicle. Unlike some of the neighbouring countries, you don't need a carnet to drive your car into Algeria. Instead you'll be issued with a *passage de conduire* (driving licence) by customs and you'll also have to fill out police and customs declarations forms. European Green Card insurance is not recognised so you'll have to buy car insurance at the border, normally around DA5000 for 30 days for a car and DA2000 for a motorcycle.

If coming from Europe, there are a number of ferry crossings from Marseille in France and Alicante in Spain to several destinations in Algeria. A one-way crossing for a car costs from €386 (including an adult fare). Alternatively, you could come via Tunisia, driving overland to the crossing at Nefta.

Driving Licence

You'll need an International Driving Permit (IDP) as well as your home licence if you wish to drive your own car or hire a car in Algeria. IDPs are easy and cheap to get in your home country and are normally issued by major motoring associations, such as the AA in Britain.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Petrol is relatively cheap in Algeria. At the time of writing petrol cost about DA20 per litre and diesel cost DA14 per litre. Availability of petrol is normally good, with even the smaller towns having at least one petrol pump. In the south the situation is a little different, and with the long distances between towns you should bear in mind that there can be distances of several hundred kilometres between fuel stops. At the time of writing there were also reports of fuel shortages in In Guezzam.

Spare parts will usually be available in all major towns. However, if you have a very recent model it could be a good idea to bring your own spare parts or check with your manufacturer for a list of accredited parts suppliers.

Hire

There are numerous car-hire offices in the major airports in the north and in town centres. They will ask for a piece of identification, an IDL and a deposit; check your contract carefully to see what is included in the insurance; you have to be 24 or over to hire a car in Algeria and have to have had a licence for at least two years, but this varies according to the agent. In the south you will have to hire a car with a driver, and most travel agencies mentioned in this guide provide such a service. A 4WD with driver should cost from €100 to €150 a day depending on the season.

Love Tour Algiers (☎ 021 637111); Hassi Messaoud (☎ 029 754994); Oran (☎ 41 394136); Tlemcen (☎ 43 2246521; www.lovetouralgerie.com); . You must be 30 and over to rent a car from these guys. Cars cost from DA2500 a day.

Magi Car (☎ 021 549393; www.magi-car.com) Has two offices in Algiers and one at the airport. From DA2900 a day for the most basic car, usually a Peugeot 206. A car with driver costs from DA6500 a day.

Rapide Car Algiers international airport (☎ 021 509512; www.rapidecar.com); Bejaia (☎ 034 201048) Rental costs from DA3300 a day and you must be over the age of 26.

Insurance

Fully comprehensive insurance for Algeria is strongly advised, given the number of road accidents that occur here. Make sure you're covered for off-piste travel and if you're planning any cross-border travel, that you're fully insured to do so. In the event of an accident make sure you give your insurance company the accident report as soon as possible.

Third party insurance can be bought at the border from around €50 a month. Green Card insurance is not valid in Algeria.

Road Conditions

Road conditions in Algeria are generally good and most major highways have smooth sealed roads. Notable exceptions are the stretch between In Salah and In Guezzam, which is patchy, and from Reggane to the Malian border at Bordj Mokhtar. Driving off piste is a whole other matter. See p76 for details on driving in the Sahara.

Road Hazards

Some of the biggest road hazards in Algeria are careless drivers – the rules of the road

aren't respected here so always be on your guard. Avoid driving at night – the roads are not well lit, and the highways aren't lit at all. Many cars drive on the road at night without lights, and in rural areas animals wander onto the roads.

In the desert keep an eye out for camels, which are sometimes camouflaged against the sand. After sandstorms watch out for build-up on the road, especially at night; sometimes entire sections of the road can be engulfed with sand. For more specific advice on desert hazards, see p76.

Road Rules

Algerians drive on the right-hand side of the road. If a car is fitted with seatbelts, they must be worn, even for passengers sitting in the back. The use of mobile telephones while driving is forbidden.

Because help can take so long to arrive, Algerians generally try to flag down another car in the event of a breakdown, and there is a lot of camaraderie on the roads.

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country and we don't recommend it. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they do it in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go.

The Sahara has long been a popular region for adventurers in their own vehicles, so backpackers have traditionally hitched rides. At the time of writing there were very few tourists driving though Algeria so chances of picking up a lift were slim. If you're very lucky you might meet a loner who's happy to offer a spare seat in return for help digging when the car gets stuck

in the sand, and possibly a contribution towards fuel – but don't count on it.

LOCAL TRANSPORT Bus

Local buses are large, old and can be unreliable but they're reasonably priced and in the larger cities 10-journey carnets and daily, weekly or longer duration passes are available. If you're only around for a short time, it's often faster to use the minibuses that go around the major towns, such as Algiers and Oran, and work on a fill-up-and-go basis.

Metro

An underground system has been planned for many years in Algiers and construction recently began. The first section of the metro is due to be completed in 2008.

Taxi

Taxis are plentiful in most cities and major towns, though they're busy during the early evening as many people use them to return home after work and the practice of sharing a taxi is widespread. If your taxi doesn't have a meter agree on a price before setting off. Short journeys within town should cost around DA50.

SHARED TAXI

Called *taxis collectifs*, *louanges* or *taxis brousse*, these are normally yellow Peugeots and are a good way of getting around the country. They usually leave from (or near to) the town's main bus station or, in smaller towns, from the local bus/taxi ranks or the main town square.

They tend to be faster than the buses, as they don't have to make so many stops; the

only down side being that there's not as much space for luggage. Shared taxis plough all the main routes in Algeria, from Algiers right down to Tamanrasset. They leave on a fill-up-and-go basis so you'll have to be at the station very early in the morning to get the best chance of catching a ride. They usually take up to six passengers with bags. They are a little more expensive than buses but the journeys are more comfortable and you're more likely to strike up a conversation with your fellow travellers.

From Tamanrasset to the border with Niger and from Adrar to Reggane the routes are covered by 4WD taxis, which cost a little more.

TOURS

Algeria's many tour operators offer 4WD circuits, camel treks, hiking tours, wine-tasting trips and cultural and historic tours. Following is a list of some reliable companies based around the country. For details about foreign travel agencies, see p213.

Club d'Aventure Africaine (☎ 021 697922; www.caa-dz.com; 7 rue des Frères Oughlis, Algiers) Offers tours to the Sahara.

Immidir Voyages (☎ 029344468/2484; www.immidir-voyages.com; Tamanrasset) Excellent and established agency providing 4WD treks and tours around the Tam region, with particularly interesting tours into the Immidir region. The owner is particularly enthusiastic and interested in this area of the country.

Mer de Sable (☎ 049 902595; www.agence-merdesable.com; rue Abd el-Kader Ziadi, Timimoun) Has excellent trips in camel caravans, as well as 4WD tours throughout the region.

Misserghin Tours (☎ 041 458075; www.misserghin-tours.com; 9 ave de Sidi Chami, Oran) Organises visits to villages around Oran and Tlemcen, themed tours such as Oran under the Ottoman Empire and sporting activities such as hunting and fishing.

M'Zab Tours (☎ 029 880002; mzabtours@hotmail.com; av du 1er Novembre, Ghardaïa) An excellent and well-organised agency, it offers individually tailored tours around the M'Zab Valley and the Grand Ergs. It has a sister agency in Tamanrasset.

Timbeur Voyages (☎ 029475270; www.voyages-timbeur.com; Djanet) This is one of Djanet's most established agencies. It has offices next to the market and offers short expeditions, such as trips to Erg Admer and Tagharghart to La Vache Qui Pleure, as well as one-day trips to Jabbarren.

Zenata Voyages (☎ 041 391227; 24 rue de Tripoli, Oran) Offers a number of trips based around the culture and history of Oran and Tlemcen, as well as wine-tasting trips. It also organises hotel reservations and car hire.

TRAIN

Algerian railways are run by the **Société Nationale des Transports Ferroviaires** (SNTF; ☎ 021 711510; www.sntf.dz). The train network consists of some 4500km of tracks in the north of the country and hasn't changed much since colonial times. The tracks go as far as Touggourt in the southeast of the country and Béchar in the southwest. At the time of writing the only trains going as far as Touggourt or Béchar were goods trains, but lines were set to resume to Béchar in late 2007 or early 2008. The Algerian government has also launched a scheme to modernise the tracks and trains and to extend its southeastern lines all the way to Hassi Messaoud.

Trains go from Algiers to Annaba, Constantine, Bejaia, Oran and Skikda. Many of the trains are quite old and slow but they are reasonably reliable. There are 1st- and 2nd-class compartments, family cars, couchettes for overnight journeys and air-conditioning on long journeys. Prices for train travel in Algeria are very reasonable. For example, a 1st-class ticket on the overnight sleeper from Algiers to Annaba costs DA1650.

LES TAXIEURS *Zahia Hafis*

'Taxieur' is the common expression for a taxi driver. The people in Algiers point out that it takes less time to say 'taxieur' than 'chauffeur de taxi' (taxi driver).

Getting a cab in the city is quite easy and very cheap. Some are yellow cabs while others look more like ordinary cars, but with taxi a sign on top. The *taxieur* usually has a meter but it will not always be on, and the driver will most likely say that it does not work (as is the case in many parts of the world). You can insist, but meters rarely work, and if you are in a hurry you must negotiate a price before heading off to your destination.

At rush hour, which is basically all day long, don't be surprised if a *taxieur* picks up other passengers. It is perfectly normal and you will often find that it is actually a good way to meet people. They love to know where you come from and what you think of Algeria. The likelihood is that you will end up chatting and joking with everybody in the car.

Health

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As long as you stay up to date with your vaccinations and take some basic preventive measures, you'd have to be pretty unlucky to succumb to most of the health hazards covered in this chapter. Africa certainly has an impressive selection of diseases on offer, but most of these are extremely rare in Algeria and you're much more likely to get a bout of diarrhoea (in fact, you should bank on it), a cold or an infected mosquito bite than an exotic disease. When it comes to injuries (as opposed to illness), the most likely reason for needing medical help in Algeria is as a result of road accidents – vehicles are rarely well maintained, the roads are potholed and poorly lit, and drink driving is common.

BEFORE YOU GO

A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save you a lot of trouble later. Before a long trip get a check-up from your dentist and from your doctor if you have any regular medication or chronic illness, eg high blood pressure and asthma. You should also organise spare contact lenses and glasses (and take your

optical prescription with you); get a first-aid and medical kit together; and arrange necessary vaccinations.

It's tempting to leave it all to the last minute – don't! Many vaccines don't take effect until two weeks after you've been immunised, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (otherwise known as the yellow booklet), which will list all the vaccinations you've received. This is mandatory for the African countries that require proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry, but it's a good idea to carry it anyway wherever you travel.

Travellers can register with the **International Association for Medical Advice to Travellers** (IMAT; www.iamat.org). Its website can help travellers to find a doctor who has recognised training. Those heading off to very remote areas might like to do a first-aid course (contact the Red Cross or St John's Ambulance) or attend a remote medicine first-aid course, such as that offered by the **Royal Geographical Society** (www.wildernessmedicaltraining.co.uk).

If you are bringing medications with you, carry them in their original containers, clearly labelled. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing all medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

How do you go about getting the best possible medical help? It's difficult to say – it really depends on the severity of your illness or injury and the availability of local help. If malaria is suspected, seek medical help as soon as possible or begin self-medicating if you are off the beaten track (see p222).

INSURANCE

Find out in advance whether your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or will reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures (in many countries doctors expect payment in cash).

It's vital to ensure that your travel insurance will cover the emergency transport required to get you to a hospital in a major city, to better medical facilities elsewhere beyond Algeria, or all the way home, by air and with a medical attendant if necessary. Not all insurance covers this, so check the contract carefully. If you need medical help, your insurance company might be able to help locate the nearest hospital or clinic, or you can ask at your hotel. In an emergency contact your embassy or consulate.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The **World Health Organization** (WHO; www.who.int/en/) recommends all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as for hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. Planning to travel is a great time to ensure that all routine vaccination cover is complete. The consequences of these diseases can be severe, and outbreaks of them do occur.

According to the **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** (www.cdc.gov/), the following vaccinations are recommended for all parts of Africa: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcal meningitis, rabies and typhoid, and boosters for tetanus, diphtheria and measles. Yellow fever is not necessarily required for Algeria unless you are arriving from elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, in which case you may need to show the certificate upon entering Algeria or obtaining your visa.

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

It is a very good idea to carry a medical and first-aid kit with you, to help yourself in the case of minor illness or injury. Following is a list of items you should consider packing.

- acetaminophen (paracetamol) or aspirin
- acetazolamide (Diamox) for treating altitude sickness (prescription only)
- adhesive or paper tape
- antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban) for cuts and abrasions (prescription only)
- antibiotics (prescription only) such as ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin) or norfloxacin (Utinor)
- anti-diarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- antihistamines (for hayfever and allergic reactions)
- anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- antimalaria pills

- bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- DEET-containing insect repellent for use on the skin
- iodine tablets (for water purification)
- oral rehydration salts
- permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents, and bed nets
- pocket knife
- scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- sterile needles, syringes and fluids if travelling to remote areas
- steroid cream or hydrocortisone cream (for allergic rashes)
- sunblock
- syringes and sterile needles
- thermometer

If you are travelling through a malarial area – particularly an area in which falciparum malaria predominates – consider taking a self-diagnostic kit that can identify malaria in the blood from a finger prick.

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the internet. For further information, the Lonely Planet website at www.lonelyplanet.com is a good place to start. The WHO publishes a superb book called *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually and is available online at no cost at www.who.int/ith/. Other websites of general interest to travellers include **MD Travel Health** (www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country, updated daily, also at no cost; the **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** (www.cdc.gov/); and **Fit for Travel** (www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk), which features up-to-date information about outbreaks and is very user-friendly.

It's also a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure, if one is available:

- Australia** (www.dfat.gov.au/travel/)
- Canada** (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/index.html)
- UK** (www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm)
- USA** (www.cdc.gov/travel/)

FURTHER READING

- *A Comprehensive Guide to Wilderness and Travel Medicine* by Eric A Weiss (1998)
- *Healthy Travel* by Jane Wilson-Howarth (1999)

- *Healthy Travel Africa* by Isabelle Young (2000)
- *How to Stay Healthy Abroad* by Richard Dawood (2002)
- *Travel in Health* by Graham Fry (1994)
- *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan (2004)

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots can form in the legs during flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. This formation of clots is known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT), and the longer the flight, the greater the risk. Although most blood clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some might break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they could cause life-threatening complications.

The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it could cause chest pain and breathing difficulty. Travellers who are experiencing any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie contract the leg muscles while sitting), drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

If you're crossing more than five time zones you could suffer jet lag, resulting in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag try drinking plenty of fluids (non-alcoholic) and eating light meals. Upon arrival get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and also meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. The main side effect people find when they take these drugs is drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger (in the form of ginger tea, biscuits or crystallized ginger), which works like a charm for some people.

IN ALGERIA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Health care in Algeria is varied: it can be excellent in the major cities, which generally have well-trained doctors and nurses, but it is often patchy off the beaten track. Medicine and even sterile dressings and intravenous fluids might need to be purchased from a local pharmacy by patients or their relatives. The standard of dental care is equally variable, and there is an increased risk of hepatitis B and HIV transmission via poorly sterilised equipment. By and large, public hospitals in Algeria offer the cheapest service, but will have the least up-to-date equipment and medications; mission hospitals (where donations are the usual form of payment) often have more reasonable facilities; and private hospitals and clinics are more expensive but tend to have more advanced drugs and equipment, and better trained medical staff.

Most drugs can be purchased over the counter in Algeria without a prescription. Many drugs for sale might be ineffective: they might be counterfeit or might not have been stored under the right conditions. The most common examples of counterfeit drugs are malaria tablets and expensive antibiotics, such as ciprofloxacin. Most drugs are available in capital cities, but remote villages will be lucky to have a couple of paracetamol tablets. It is strongly recommended that all drugs for chronic diseases be brought from home. Also, the availability and efficacy of condoms cannot be relied upon – bring all the contraception you'll need. Condoms bought in Algeria might not be of the same quality as in Europe or Australia, and they might have been incorrectly stored.

There is a risk of contracting HIV from infected blood if you receive a blood transfusion in Algeria. **The BloodCare Foundation** (www.bloodcare.org.uk) is a useful source of safe, screened blood, which can be transported to any part of the world within 24 hours.

The cost of health care might seem very cheap compared with developed countries, but good care and drugs might not be available. Evacuation to good medical care (within Algeria or to your own country) can be very expensive indeed.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

It's a formidable list but, as we say, a few precautions go a long way...

Cholera

Cholera is usually only a problem during natural or artificial disasters, eg war, floods or earthquakes, although small outbreaks can also occur at other times. Travellers are rarely affected. It is caused by a bacteria and spread via contaminated drinking water. The main symptom is profuse watery diarrhoea, which causes debilitation if fluids are not replaced quickly. An oral cholera vaccine is available in the USA, but it is not particularly effective. Most cases of cholera could be avoided by close attention to good drinking water and by avoiding potentially contaminated food. Treatment is by fluid replacement (orally or via a drip), but sometimes antibiotics are needed. Attempting self-treatment is not advised.

Diphtheria

Diphtheria is spread through close respiratory contact. It usually causes a temperature and a severe sore throat. Sometimes a membrane forms across the throat, and a tracheostomy is needed to prevent suffocation. Vaccination is recommended for those likely to be in close contact with the local population in infected areas, and is more important for long stays than for short-term trips. The vaccine is given as an injection alone or with tetanus, and lasts 10 years.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is spread through contaminated food (particularly shellfish) and water. It causes jaundice and, although it is rarely fatal, it can cause prolonged lethargy and delayed recovery. If you've had hepatitis A, you shouldn't drink alcohol for up to six months afterwards, but once you've recovered, there won't be any long-term problems. The first symptoms include dark urine and a yellow colour to the whites of the eyes. Sometimes a fever and abdominal pain might be present. Hepatitis A vaccine (avaxim, VAQTA, havrix) is given as an injection: a single dose will give protection for up to a year, and a booster after a year gives 10-year protection. Hepatitis A and typhoid vaccines can also be given as a single dose vaccine, hepatrix or viatim.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is passed on through infected blood, contaminated needles and sexual intercourse. It can also be spread from an infected mother to the baby during childbirth. It affects the liver, causing jaundice and occasionally liver failure. Most people recover completely, but some people might be chronic carriers of the virus, which could eventually lead to cirrhosis or liver cancer. Those visiting high-risk areas for long periods or those with increased social or occupational risk should be immunised. Many countries now routinely give hepatitis B as part of the routine childhood vaccination. It is given singly or can be given at the same time as hepatitis A (hepatyrix).

A course will give protection for at least five years. It can be given over four weeks or six months.

HIV

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), is spread through infected blood and also blood products, by sexual intercourse with an infected partner and from an infected mother to her baby during childbirth and breastfeeding. It can be spread through 'blood to blood' contacts, such as with contaminated instruments during medical, dental, acupuncture and other body-piercing procedures, and through sharing used intravenous needles. At present there is no cure; medication that might keep the disease under control is available, but these drugs are not readily available for travellers either. If you think you might have been infected with HIV a blood test is necessary; a three-month gap after exposure and before testing is required to allow antibodies to appear in the blood.

Leishmaniasis

This is spread through the bite of an infected sandfly. It can cause a slowly growing skin lump or ulcer (the cutaneous form) and sometimes a life-threatening fever with anaemia and weight loss. Dogs can also be carriers of the infection. Sandfly bites should be avoided whenever possible.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is spread through the excreta of infected rodents, especially rats. It can cause

hepatitis and renal failure, which might be fatal. It's unusual for travellers to be affected unless living in poor sanitary conditions. It causes a fever and sometimes jaundice.

Malaria

There is only a slight risk of malaria in Algeria. One million children die annually from malaria in Africa. The risk of malarial transmission at altitudes higher than 2000m is rare. The disease is caused by a parasite in the bloodstream spread via the bite of the female *Anopheles* mosquito. There are several types of malaria; falciparum malaria being the most dangerous type and the predominant form in Africa. Infection rates vary with season and climate, so check out the situation before departure. Unlike most other diseases regularly encountered by travellers, there is no vaccination against malaria (yet). However, several different drugs are used to prevent malaria and new ones are in the pipeline. Up-to-date advice from a travel health clinic is essential as some medication is more suitable for some travellers than others. The pattern of drug-resistant malaria is changing rapidly, so what was advised several years ago might no longer be used.

Malaria can present in several ways. The early stages include headaches, fevers, generalised aches and pains, and malaise, which could be mistaken for flu. Other symptoms can include abdominal pain, diarrhoea and a cough. Anyone who develops a fever in a malarial area should assume malarial infection until a blood test proves negative, even if you have been taking antimalarial medication. If not treated the next stage could develop within 24 hours, particularly if falciparum malaria is the parasite: jaundice, then reduced consciousness and coma (also known as cerebral malaria) followed by death. Treatment in hospital is essential, and the death rate might still be as high as 10% even in the best intensive-care facilities.

Many travellers are under the impression that malaria is a mild illness, that treatment is always easy and successful, and that taking antimalarial drugs causes more illness through side effects than actually getting malaria. In Africa this is unfortunately not true. Side effects of the medication depend on the drug being taken. Doxycycline can cause heartburn and indigestion;

mefloquine (Larium) can bring on anxiety attacks, insomnia and nightmares, and (rarely) severe psychiatric disorders; chloroquine can cause nausea and hair loss; and proguanil can cause mouth ulcers. These side effects are not universal and can be minimized by taking medication correctly, eg with food. Also, some people should not take a particular antimalarial drug, eg people with epilepsy should avoid mefloquine, and doxycycline should not be taken by pregnant women or children younger than 12.

If you decide that you really do not wish to take antimalarial drugs, you must understand the risks and be obsessive about avoiding mosquito bites. Use nets and insect repellent, and report any fever or flulike symptoms to a doctor as soon as possible. Some people advocate homeopathic preparations against malaria, such as Demal200, but as yet there is no conclusive evidence that this is effective, and many homeopaths do not recommend their use.

People of all ages can contract malaria, and falciparum causes the most severe illness. Repeated infections might result eventually in less serious illness. Malaria in pregnancy frequently results in miscarriage

THE ANTIMALARIAL A TO D

A: Awareness of the risk No medication is totally effective, but protection of up to 95% is achievable with most drugs, as long as other measures have been taken.

B: Bites Avoid being bitten at all costs. Sleep in a screened room, use a mosquito spray or coils, and sleep under a permethrin-impregnated net at night. Cover up at night with long trousers and long sleeves, preferably with permethrin-treated clothing. Apply appropriate repellent to all areas of exposed skin in the evenings.

C: Chemical prevention Antimalarial drugs are usually needed in malarial areas. Expert advice is needed as resistance patterns can change and new drugs are in development. Not all antimalarial drugs are suitable for everyone. Most antimalarial drugs need to be started at least a week in advance and continued for four weeks after the last possible exposure to malaria.

D: Diagnosis If you have a fever or flulike illness within a year of travel to a malarial area, malaria is a possibility and immediate medical attention is necessary.

or premature labour. Adults who have survived childhood malaria have developed immunity and usually only develop mild cases of malaria; most Western travellers have no immunity at all. Immunity wanes after 18 months of nonexposure, so even if you have had malaria in the past and used to live in a malaria-prone area, you might no longer be immune.

If you are planning a journey through a malarial area, particularly where falciparum malaria predominates, consider taking standby treatment. Emergency standby treatment should be seen as emergency treatment aimed at saving the patient's life and not as routine self-medication. It should be used only if you will be far from medical facilities and have been advised about the symptoms of malaria and how to use the medication. Medical advice should be sought as soon as possible to confirm whether the treatment has been successful. The type of standby treatment used will depend on local conditions, such as drug resistance, and on what antimalarial drugs were being used before standby treatment. This is worthwhile because you want to avoid contracting a particularly serious form such as cerebral malaria, which affects the brain and central nervous system and can be fatal in 24 hours. Self-diagnostic kits (see p219), which can identify malaria in the blood from a finger prick, are also available in the West.

The risks from malaria to both mother and foetus during pregnancy are considerable. Unless good medical care can be guaranteed, travel throughout Algeria when pregnant – particularly to malarial areas – should be discouraged unless essential. Use emergency standby treatment if you are more than 24 hours away from medical help.

Poliomyelitis

Generally spread through contaminated food and water, one of the vaccines is given in childhood and should be boosted every 10 years, either orally (a drop on the tongue) or as an injection. Polio can be carried asymptotically (ie showing no symptoms) and could cause a transient fever. In rare cases it causes weakness or paralysis of one or more muscles, which might be permanent.

Rabies

Rabies is spread by receiving the bites or licks of an infected animal on broken skin. It is always fatal once the clinical symptoms start (which might be up to several months after an infected bite), so post-bite vaccination should be given as soon as possible. Postbite vaccination (whether or not you've been vaccinated before the bite) prevents the virus from spreading to the central nervous system. Animal handlers should be vaccinated, as should those travelling to remote areas where a reliable source of postbite vaccine is not available within 24 hours. Three preventive injections are needed over a month. If you have not been vaccinated you will need a course of five injections starting 24 hours or as soon as possible after the injury. If you have been vaccinated you will need fewer post-bite injections and have more time to seek medical help.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is passed on through close respiratory contact and occasionally through infected milk or milk products. BCG vaccination is recommended for those likely to be mixing closely with the local population, although it gives only moderate protection against TB. It is more important for long stays than for short-term stays. Inoculation with the BCG vaccine is not available in all countries. It is given routinely to many children in developing countries. The vaccination causes a small permanent scar at the site of injection, and is usually given in a specialised chest clinic. It is a live vaccine and should not be given to pregnant women or immunocompromised individuals.

TB can be asymptomatic, only being picked up on a routine chest X-ray. Alternatively, it can cause a cough, weight loss or fever, sometimes months or even years after exposure.

Typhoid

This is spread through food or water contaminated by infected human faeces. The first symptom is usually a fever or a pink rash on the abdomen. Sometimes septicaemia (blood poisoning) can occur. A typhoid vaccine (typhim Vi, typherix) will give protection for three years. In some

MANDATORY YELLOW FEVER VACCINATION

- North Africa – Not mandatory for any areas of North Africa, but Algeria, Libya and Tunisia require evidence of yellow fever vaccination if entering from an infected country. It is recommended for travellers to Sudan, and might be given to unvaccinated travellers leaving the country.
- Central Africa – Mandatory in Central African Republic (CAR), Congo, Congo (Zaire), Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, and recommended in Chad.
- West Africa – Mandatory in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Sao Tome & Principe and Togo, and recommended for The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.
- East Africa – Mandatory in Rwanda; it is advised for Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.
- Southern Africa – Not mandatory for entry into any countries of Southern Africa, although it is necessary if entering from an infected country.

countries the oral vaccine Vivotif is also available. Antibiotics are usually given as treatment and death is rare unless septicaemia occurs.

Yellow Fever

Travellers should carry a certificate as evidence of vaccination if they have recently been in an infected country, to avoid any possible difficulties with immigration. For a full list of these countries visit the website of the WHO (www.who.int/wer/) or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (www.cdc.gov/travel/blusheet.htm). There is always the possibility that a traveller without a legally required, up-to-date certificate will be vaccinated and detained in isolation at

Yellow Fever Risk in Africa



the port of arrival for up to 10 days or possibly repatriated.

Yellow fever is spread by infected mosquitoes. Symptoms range from a flu-like illness to severe hepatitis (liver inflammation), jaundice and death. The yellow fever vaccination must be given at a designated clinic and is valid for 10 years. It is a live vaccine and must not be given to immunocompromised or pregnant travellers.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

Although it's not inevitable that you will get diarrhoea while travelling in Algeria, it's certainly possible. Diarrhoea is the most common travel-related illness – figures suggest that at least half of travellers to Africa will get diarrhoea at some stage. Sometimes dietary changes, such as increased spices or oils, are the cause. To help prevent diarrhoea, avoid tap water unless you're sure it's safe to drink (see p226). You should also only eat fresh fruits or vegetables if cooked or peeled, and be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurised milk. Although freshly cooked food can often be a safe option, plates or serving utensils might be dirty, so you should be highly selective when eating food from street vendors (make sure that cooked food is piping hot all the way through). If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution containing water (lots), and some salt and sugar. A few loose stools don't require treatment, but if you start having more than four or five stools a day you should start taking an antibiotic

(usually a quinoline drug, such as ciprofloxacin or norfloxacin) and an antidiarrhoeal agent (such as loperamide) if you are not within easy reach of a toilet. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

Amoebic Dysentery

Contracted by eating contaminated food and water, amoebic dysentery causes blood and mucus in the faeces. It can be relatively mild and tends to come on gradually, but seek medical advice if you think you have the illness as it won't clear up without treatment (which is with specific antibiotics).

Giardiasis

This, like amoebic dysentery, is also caused by ingesting contaminated food or water. The illness usually appears a week or more after you have been exposed to the offending parasite. Giardiasis might cause only a short-lived bout of typical travellers' diarrhoea, but it can also cause persistent diarrhoea. Ideally, seek medical advice if you suspect you have giardiasis, but if you are in a remote area you could start a course of antibiotics.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Heat Exhaustion

This condition can occur following heavy sweating and excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt, and is particularly common in hot climates when taking unaccustomed exercise before full acclimatisation. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. Self-treatment: fluid replacement with water and/or fruit juice, and cooling by cold water and fans. The treatment of the salt-loss component consists of consuming salty fluids as in soup, and adding a little more table salt to foods than usual.

Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion is a precursor to the much more serious condition of heatstroke. In this case there is damage to the sweating mechanism, with an excessive rise in body

temperature, irrational and hyperactive behaviour, and eventually loss of consciousness and death. Rapid cooling by spraying the body with water and fanning is ideal. Emergency fluid and electrolyte replacement is usually required by intravenous drip.

Insect Bites & Stings

Mosquitoes might not always carry malaria or dengue fever, but they (and other insects) can cause irritation and infected bites. To avoid this, take the same precautions as you would for avoiding malaria (see p222). Use DEET-based insect repellents. Excellent clothing treatments are also available; mosquitoes that land on treated clothing will die.

Bee and wasp stings cause real problems only to those who have a severe allergy to the stings (anaphylaxis.) If you are one of these people, carry an 'epipen' – an adrenaline (epinephrine) injection, which you can give yourself. This could save your life.

Sandflies are found around the Mediterranean beaches. They usually only cause a nasty itchy bite but can carry a rare skin disorder called cutaneous leishmaniasis (see p221). Prevention of bites with DEET-based repellents is sensible.

Scorpions are frequently found in arid or dry climates. They can cause a painful bite that is sometimes life-threatening. If bitten by a scorpion take a painkiller. Medical treatment should be sought if collapse occurs.

Bed bugs are often found in hostels and cheap hotels. They lead to very itchy, lumpy bites. Spraying the mattress with crawling insect killer after changing bedding will get rid of them.

Scabies is also frequently found in cheap accommodation. These tiny mites live in the skin, particularly between the fingers. They cause an intensely itchy rash. The itch is easily treated with malathion and permethrin lotion from a pharmacy; other members of the household also need treating to avoid spreading scabies, even if they do not show any symptoms.

Snake Bites

Basically, avoid getting bitten! Do not walk barefoot, or stick your hand into holes or cracks. However, 50% of those bitten by venomous snakes are not actually injected

with poison (envenomed). If bitten by a snake do not panic. Immobilise the bitten limb with a splint (such as a stick) and apply a bandage over the site, with firm pressure – similar to bandaging a sprain. Do not apply a tourniquet, or cut or suck the bite. Get medical help as soon as possible so anti-venom can be given if needed.

Water

Never drink tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (such as with iodine tablets). Never drink from streams, rivers and lakes. It's also best to avoid drinking from pumps and wells – some do bring pure water to the surface, but the presence of animals can still contaminate supplies.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling across time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern. Some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can interfere with the effectiveness of oral contraceptives and lead to the risk of pregnancy – remember to take condoms just in case. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

Tampons are available in pharmacies and supermarkets in the major cities of Algeria. Further afield choice is limited to pads and even they can be difficult to find. It's best to take supplies from home or stock up in the major towns.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

At least 80% of the African population relies on traditional medicine, often because conventional Western-style medicine is too expensive, because of prevailing cultural attitudes and beliefs, or simply because in some cases it works.

Although some African remedies seem to work on malaria, sickle cell anaemia, high blood pressure and some AIDS symptoms, most African healers learn their art by apprenticeship, so education (and consequently application of knowledge) is inconsistent and unregulated. Conventionally trained physicians in South Africa, for example, angrily describe how their AIDS patients die of kidney failure because a *sangoma* (traditional healer) has given them an enema containing an essence made from powerful roots. Likewise, when traditional healers administer 'injections' with porcupine quills, knives or dirty razor blades, diseases are often spread or created rather than cured.

Rather than attempting to stamp out traditional practices, or simply pretend they aren't happening, a positive first step taken by some African countries is the regulation of traditional medicine by creating healers' associations and offering courses on such topics as sanitary practices. It remains unlikely in the short term that even a basic level of conventional Western-style medicine will be made available to all the people of Africa (even though the cost of doing so is less than the annual military budget of some Western countries). Traditional medicine, on the other hand, will almost certainly continue to be practised widely throughout the continent.