



AFRICA Travel

MAGAZINE

Algeria

Egypt

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Western Sahara

Northern Africa World Edition



THE RIADS OF MARRAKECH ARE EVERYTHING



by Muguette Goufrani

While I was born in Morocco and began my career there with our family's tour company and Royal Air Maroc, before working my way

around the world, my return as part of the Africa Travel Association, has been a true rediscovery. Marrakech was ATA's host city for a Cultural and Ecotourism Conference in 1996 and Fez had the same honors in 2002. As Morocco's third largest city and a bustling center of commerce, Marrakech is high on our list as an ideal convention site and place to visit. The metropolitan area comprises the Médina, a walled city built centuries ago as a fortification, surrounded by one of the most

modern communities anywhere, with upscale shops, famous name hotels, leafy parks and treed boulevards.

Hidden Treasures

Within the Médina itself you will find several huge doors, which like the entrance to Ali Baba's cave, open up to reveal what North Africans call a 'riad.' During a stop in Marrakech enroute to Casablanca, we had the pleasure of staying at the Hotel Riad Shama, and visiting several others including the Hotel Riad Oasis. Both are operated by the same company and each has its unique attractions - magical Arabian architecture and decor, pools and oriental lounges,

spacious bed rooms, cosy fireplaces and luxury bathrooms. Want to enjoy the fresh air of Southern Morocco and a bird's eye view of the exotic surroundings within the Médina? Each riad provides guests with access to a roof terrace or sundeck. How did we know about these two attractive riads? We spent some time learning about them from the general manager herself - during our weeks at ITB Berlin and the Salon International de Tourism in

Paris. After checking in at the Hotel Riad Shama, we took a walk through the souk, a huge marketplace with products and services of every description - and plenty of bargains awaiting your pleasure. Close





A FINE HOTEL SHOULD BE - AND MUCH MORE

by is Djemaa el Fna, one of the busiest market squares in Africa, with snake charmers, acrobats, story-tellers, dancers, and musicians. By night, the square turns into an open-air restaurant where traditional Moroccan dishes, such as cous cous and tangine are on the menu.

What is a Riad?

A traditional Riad is a Moroccan home or palace, which often includes an interior garden. The ancient Roman city of Volubilis, which we visited in 2002, during our conference in Fez, provides a reference for the beginnings of riad architecture. The design of these courtyard dwellings in the coastal regions of Morocco

were an adaptation and modification of the Roman villa. When the Almoravids conquered Spain in the 11th century they sent Muslim, Christian and Jewish artisans from Spain to Morocco to work on monuments. These artisans brought with them the idea of arranging the rooms of the house around the central open-air courtyard that



has become today's riads. The riads were inward focused which allowed for family privacy and protection from the weather in Morocco. This inward focus was expressed in the central location of most of the interior gardens and courtyards and the lack of large windows

on the exterior clay or mud brick walls. Entrance to these houses is a major transitional experience and encourages reflection because all of the rooms open into the central atrium space. In the central garden of traditional riads there are often four orange or lemon trees and possibly a fountain. The walls of the riads are adorned with tadelakt plaster and zellige tiles. The style of these riads has changed over the years, but the basic form is still used in designs today. Many riads are now used as hotels or restaurants. *Photos from the Riad Shama are on the above page (left) and those from the Riad Oasis are on above page (right). To find out more or to book rooms for yourself or group at either hotel, contact Mugnette Goufrani by e-mail: airhwy@smartt.com* **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



HAPPY RETURNS TO MOGADOR FOR FESTIVAL D'

By Jerry W. Bird



It's been seven long years since we first toured Morocco with the Ministry of Tourism as part of the ATA media team. This time, our purpose is to set up Africa Travel Magazine's first office in Africa, here at

Essaouira, a beautiful Atlantic Coast city, once known as Mogador. A world-class golf course development, with multi-star hotels is underway and many other attractions are on the horizon. Since arriving from Paris on Royal Air Maroc, we have visited Rabat, with brief stops at Safi and Al Jaddida, spent two days in Casablanca and another in Marrakech, meeting old friends and new. Some of our positive impressions were a new Autoroute, with divided highway and the start of a Tramway system in Rabat. Muguet's brother, **Maurice Goufrani** of the Pompidou Centre in Paris, asked us to make sure we covered **Festival Gnaoua** (Gnaoua) Essaouira, a unique musical experience, June 24-29, 2009. This event is high on our agenda and is in the **Venues World Edition**, now available for download at www.africa-ata.org/venues.pdf

Known as the "windy city," Essaouira is Morocco's wind-surfing capital, where the sky is ablaze with multi colored kites from dawn to dusk every day.

Flashback 2002

Here we are, basking in the noonday sun on North Africa's Atlantic Coast at Essaouira, Morocco, following a journey of discovery which began in the Imperial City of Fès and continued via Rabat, Casablanca and Marrakech. In a few days, we will drive south to the resort city of Agadir, with its luxury beach front hotels and lavish casinos, catering to the jet set of Europe, Africa and Middle East. Most North Americans have yet to really discover Morocco's coastal resort cities - and that's a prime opportunity for our magazine, read by travel professionals



and their clients.

We are enjoying a nautical view of Essaouira's historic seaport, once known as Mogador, from our dockside table at "Chez Sam." Highly recommended by locals in the know, this charming waterfront restaurant is surrounded by fishing boats and marine activity. Men repairing fish-nets, shucking shrimp and sorting sardines, looming skeletons of boats under construction add to the scene. The interior of Chez Sam reminds me of Trader Vic's, once a popular hang-out in our home port of Vancouver, and Ivar's in Seattle. The fresh seafood, decor and atmosphere are magnificent and the impressive gallery of celebrity photos; Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong, Stevie Wonder and others, attests to the fact that the owner comes from the world of jazz. Sam and his huge, jet black dog Nikita joined our table a few days later, and thanks to that rendezvous, I was able to learn the history of this outstanding restaurateur and the origin of the Essaouira (Mogador) seaport's most popular eatery.

Freshness is the order of the day, every day at Chez Sam and also at the many outdoor stalls, perched side-by-side along the dock area. Each offers visitors fresh caught products from the sea to the table and each competes vigorously with its neighbour for our attention. Barkers, menu boards and tempting displays of fresh catch from the Atlantic is their marketing approach. I enjoyed a generous portion of sole fillet and



ESSAOUIRA GNAOUA, A MUSICAL BANQUET

fresh salad for less than five dollars U.S. My two colleagues split a large crab for a similar tab. Overhead a flotilla of sea gulls was dipping and diving against a background of crashing whitecaps, rocky outcrops and rugged remnants of the centuries old Portuguese fort that marks the city's place in history. Some call this the "city of winds ... and when we visited Essaouira earlier this same week, a minor storm was brewing. Gusts swept the area clear of surfers, bathers, wanderers and beachcombers. A few lonesome camel drivers still tended their stalls near the far end of the crescent shaped beach, and the waves grew even more fierce as they pounded the shore. But today, near the end of December,

the weather is as balmy as any spring afternoon, and the buyers and browsers are out in force, filling the Medina with its dozens of shops and stalls. We found an excellent Cyber Cafe right by the entrance and are getting our dozens of e-mail letters ready to send around the world. It's a great way to stay in touch, which is why we always carry our 'portable office - a reliable Macintosh laptop computer.

Arabian Nights On New Years Eve in Morocco

One of my favorite meeting places in Essaouira is the 5-star Sofitel Mogador, located on the main promenade facing the beach. Here's where we spent one of the most enjoyable New Year's Eve celebrations in years. It started with an invitation to a Fashion Show, which continued into the wee hours. For starters, the hotel's dining room staff were all decked like Aladdin (of the lamp), and the entire ballroom looked like a scene from Arabian Nights, complete with belly dancers, mariachis with their Spanish guitars, Magicians and special visual and musical effects. The entire evening was unforgettable.

We then moved to the hotel's beach side restaurant, where the music was going full tilt. One of local girls modeled Muguette's bottle- green gown with shoulder wrap- one of several gifts we received from our friend and former Tourism Minister, Hon. Sylla Diakite of Conakry, Guinea. The Moroccan Khaftan fashion segment of the evening proved highly popular.

Doors of Hospitality

Another friendly, convenient place to meet is the Hotel des Isles. Next to the Medina and offers a full range of services. Since we spent almost two weeks in the immediate area, we are pleased to recommend a stay in Essaouira to any traveler looking for something different. Photos courtesy: Thierry Mareschal and the Essaouira Cultural Center.

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Photo: L – R: Hisham Zaazou, First Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Egypt; Hon. Shamsa S. Mwangunga, Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania and ATA President; Amr El Ezaby, Chairman, Egyptian Tourist Authority; Edward Bergman, ATA Executive Director; and Mohamed Hegazy, Deputy Director Tourism, Egyptian Tourist Office, US and Latin America.



Photo: L- R: Altaf Visram, Sales & Reservations Director, African Mecca Safaris; Gregg Truman, VP in Marketing, South African Airways; Hon. Shamsa Selengia Mwangunga, MP, Minister of Natural Resources & Tourism, the United Republic Of Tanzania; Juliet Kichao, Africa Dream Safaris; and Daniel Yamat, Project Manager for the Enashiva Nature Refuge, Thomson Safaris



More photo captions and several additional pages to come.



AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION HOLDS 34TH ANNUAL CONGRESS

Our grand Egyptian Experience included participation in the ATA 34th Annual Congress, held at Cairo's Hotel Conrad, luxury accommodation in the heart of a great and historic city. The event was a huge success, with many top speakers, an enchanted evening at Cairo's Citadel and a dinner cruise on the Maxim Floating Restaurant. Host Country Day featured the Egyptian Museum, Giza Pyramids, the Sphinx and Khan el-Khalili market. Visit www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm or download our Northern Africa World Edition for more about this world class tourism and business destination.

Magical Media City

Moevenpick's Hotel Cairo Media City is a luxury oasis resort in a unique, all new community on Cairo's outskirts. During our week-long stay as guests, we had an opportunity to interview General Manager Amr Kallini and staff for online radio, and learn why this outstanding resort won awards as the Best Conference facility in



Africa and the Middle East. Excerpts from our series of radio interviews appears in our Moevenpick Africa Profile.

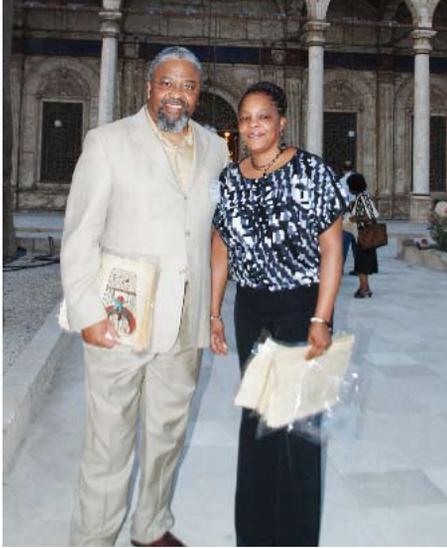
Cruising the Nile in Style

After an EgyptAir flight to Aswan, we boarded Moevenpick M/S Royal Lily for an unforgettable Nile cruise to Luxor. Fellow passenger and world traveler Barbara Crews from the USA described it as the finest riverboat they had ever been on. Hats off to Mahmoud Farouk and staff.

ATA Congress Highlights

The 34th Annual Congress of The Africa Travel Association (ATA) held in Cairo, Egypt, May 17 /21 brought together more than 300 travel industry professionals from the US, Canada and Africa including tourism ministers, tourist boards, airlines, hoteliers, ground operators, as well as representatives from business, non-profit and development sectors, to address some of the challenges facing the travel, tourism, transport and hospitality industries across Africa. Held at the Conrad Cairo Hotel,

the ATA Congress was hosted by the Hon. Zoheir Garranah, Egyptian Minister of Tourism and Amr El Ezaby, Chairman, Egyptian Tourist Authority (ETA), In his opening remarks, Amr El Ezaby said that the ATA Congress presented an extraordinary opportunity for people to share information and ideas on developing and marketing the tourism products of Africa. "Until 20-30 years ago, Egypt was a one product destination, the Classic Egypt tour. But in the 1980's Egypt started to diversify its product in order to retain its competitive edge, by developing resort tourism on the Red Sea, desert tourism and cultural tourism. This diversification led to dramatic demand and generated an increase of infrastructure from 18,000 rooms in 1982 to 210,000 rooms in 2008 . Today, Egypt is striving to change its image even further by developing high-end resorts to appeal to the luxury market." The success of Egypt's diversification strategy is reflected in the country's continued growth of tourism arrivals despite the challenges of the recent economic climate – realizing a 17% growth worldwide in 2008.



IN CAIRO AS EGYPT'S TOURISM CONTINUES TO EXPAND

Powerful Presentations

Hon. Shamsa S. Mwangunga, Tanzania's Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism and ATA President, Eddie Bergman, ATA Executive Director also spoke at the opening session of the ATA Congress. Other presenters included among others such high profile Egyptians as the Minister of Tourism, the ETA Chairman, Hisham Zaazou, First Assistant to the Minister of Tourism, and Ahmed El Nahas, Chairman Egyptian Tourism Federation. Ray Whelan, Official Representative for Accommodation, Ticketing, Hospitality and Technology for FIFA World Cups 2010 and Lisa Simon, President, US- based National Tour Association (NTA) were also speakers at the congress representing two major segments, Sports Tourism and American Tour operators respectively. The Hon.

Garranah officially welcomed all the ATA Congress delegates at a festive gala dinner outdoors at the Salah El Din Citadel. Delegates enjoyed a spectacular sunset and panoramic view of the city while they dined on Egyptian cuisine and enjoyed a special Dervish dance and music performance. At the conclusion of the Congress, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism hosted all ATA Congress delegates on a full-day tour to the National Museum in Cairo and to

the Pyramids that concluded with a dinner cruise on the Nile.

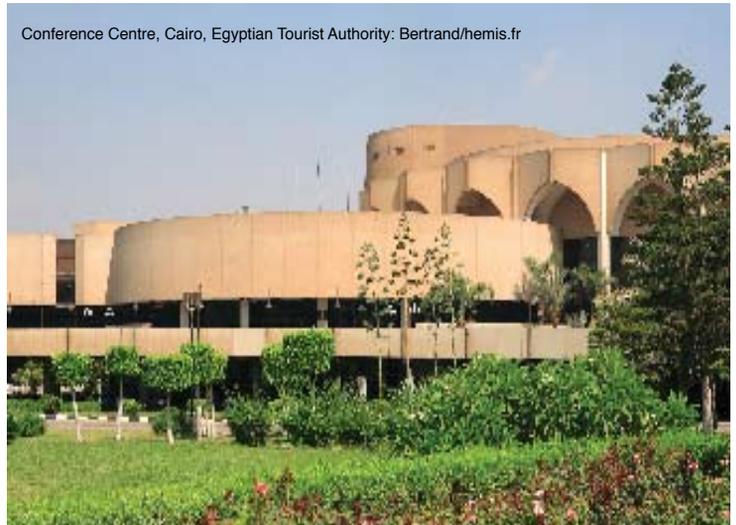
This special feature, which continues on the following pages, contains highlights of the ATA 34th Annual Congress, plus post congress visits by our editorial team and others throughout the host country. For more, visit www.africa-ata.org/egypt.htm



"THE ROMANCE OF EGYPT BECKONS ATA'S WORLDWIDE MEMBERSHIP TO



Conference Centre, Cairo, Egyptian Tourist Authority: Bertrand/hemis.fr



Conference Centre, Cairo, Egyptian Tourist Authority: Bertrand/hemis.fr



Red Sea hanging coral reef and diver, Egyptian Tourist Authority: Arnaud/ hemis.fr



Photo courtesy of ATA/ Bradford Marketing

Home to ancient sites and world famous monuments, including the Giza Pyramids, the Great Sphinx, the Nile and Red Sea coral reefs, Sharm El Sheik Resort, as well as the grand Khan El Khalily market, Egypt stands as one of the African continent's top travel draws.

Egypt to Host ATA 34th Annual Congress, May 2009

The Egyptian Tourism Ministry, in cooperation with the Egyptian Tourist Authority, will host the Africa Travel Association's 34th Annual Congress in Cairo, May 17-22, 2009.

This joint announcement was made by Hon. Zoheir Garranah, Egyptian Tourism Minister, and Edward Bergman, ATA Executive Directorat "It is with great pride that we are now working with ATA to welcome the world to Egypt for ATA's Annual Congress," said Minister Garranah. "We look forward to welcoming the world to our country."

Connecting Destination Africa

Under the above banner, ATA's hallmark event will be attended by African tourism ministers, national tourism board direc-

tors, private sector leaders, travel agents, tour operators, heads of nongovernmental organizations, scholars, and members of the media, who will discuss together challenges related to global tourism promotion to Africa.

"ATA is looking forward to engaging with the world's leading travel specialists to bring the world to Africa," Bergman said. "By combining Egypt's unique capacity to achieve record numbers in tourist arrivals with ATA's ability to bring diverse industry leaders together to shape Africa's tourism agenda, this meeting holds tremendous promise for change in the industry and the global marketplace."

Active in ATA since 1983

ATA held its eighth congress in Cairo; its 16th was held in 1991. Today, tourism is the largest source of foreign currency revenue in Egypt and authorities plan to welcome 16 million tourism arrivals by 2014. "We anticipate that the 2009 Congress will not only help Egypt reach its target, but it will also help the country generate

even more tourism growth from the U.S. and Africa, as well as from Asia and the Caribbean" said Bergman.

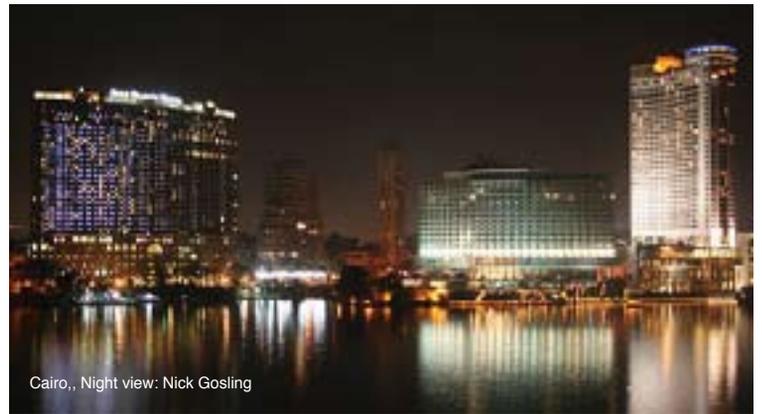
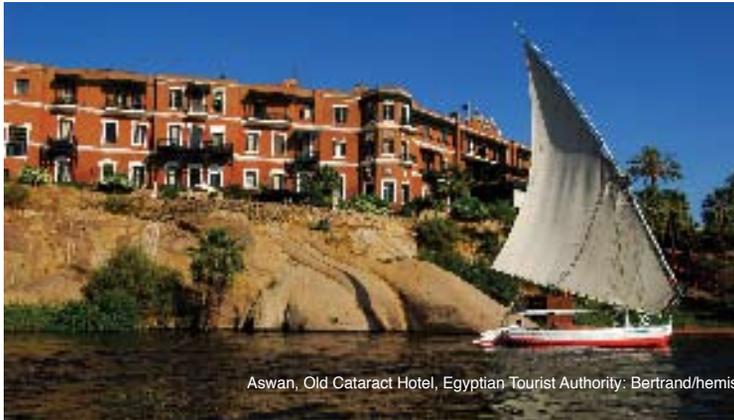
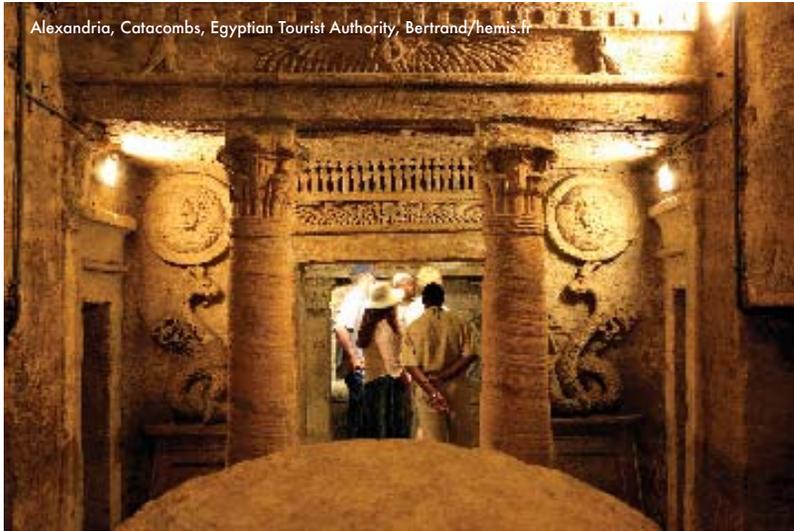
The Congress, to be held at the Cairo International Conference Center (CICC), will run for five days, engaging participants in working discussions on a range of topics, such as intra-African industry cooperation, infrastructure development and investment opportunities. Roundtables for ministers, suppliers, travel agents and tour operators, alongside special networking events, a

marketplace expo, and ATA Young Professionals events, will also be held. For the first time, ATA will also organize networking opportunities for Africans living in the Diaspora as part of its new Africa Diaspora Initiative.

"Egypt also stands as an example for other African destinations to turn to, especially given that foreign and Egyptian investments helped drive the tourism boom by helping the government target coast regions and build supportive tourism infrastructure, including accommodation stock and better



EXPERIENCE ATTRACTIONS OF THE AGES, MAY 17-22, 2009"



airport services. In fact, ATA delegates will arrive in Egypt's newly opened international airport," said Bergman.

Host Country Pre Post Tours

Egypt will organize a Host Country Day for delegates, who will have the opportunity to explore some of these tourism spots, as well as many more. Pre and post-country tours will also be offered.

To prepare for the event, ATA sent a delegation to Egypt in August, 2008 for a site inspection. The team met Hon. Zoheir Garranah, Minister of Tourism, Mr. Amr El Ezabi, Chairman of the Egyptian Tourist Authority (ETA), as well as Mr. Riad Kabil, Secretary General of the Egyptian Travel Agents Association, a 1,600-member association.

The ATA delegation also met Captain Tawfik Assy, Chair of Egyptair Holding Company, and Mr. Ashraf Osman, EGYPTAIR's General Manager of Sales to introduce the association and the congress. of the event. For more information on Egypt, visit the Egyptian Tourist Authority (ETA) website at www.egypt.travel.

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Africa is immense, diverse and endlessly fascinating

Africa covers nearly 13 million square miles. Nearly a sixth of the world's people live in its 55 nations. There are more than 800 languages and dialects in Africa, the vast majority of which are spoken by fewer than 100,000 people. There are no jungles in Africa, but nearly 15% of the continent is covered by rainforest. The largest of the three major African deserts, the Sahara, covers more than 1/4 of the continent. Of the 6.5 million people who sailed across the Atlantic before 1736, almost 5.5 million, or 82%, were African. Africa can hold the land occupied by China, India, Argentina, Europe, New Zealand and the continental United States with room to spare. Africa is a miracle-rich continent with abundant supplies of iron, copper and gold. Visit the exhibit and learn more about this incredibly large, heterogeneous and infinitely interesting continent.

And you can see it all in one day.

Opening for Museum of African American History:
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TIME





ALI'S AFRICA PEACE CARAVAN ROLLS ON ACROSS THE

On this page is a selection photos received via Sandy Dhuyvetter of TravelTalk Radio on behalf of Ali Liaquat of Djibouti, whose Africa Peace Caravan began at Arusha, Tanzania and will end up in Cairo, Egypt for the ATA 34th Congress. Here are Ali's latest comments. "I was waiting and dreaming since 1998 to travel in Sudan. At that time, it was impossible for me to get a visa and advice from diplomatic authorities, so I had to cancel my trip. In 2003, I tried a second time to reach Sudan when I organized a journey which was joining Brussels to Djibouti by the road. I got the visa for Sudan but I had to cancel in Tunis because of other unfortunate reasons after 20 days of travel. With ATA and the Africa Peace Caravan, I tried my third chance to go in Sudan. We heard a lot of negative things about Sudan with media, and some people advised us to avoid go-

ing there. But we decided to go - spent 20 days in Sudan where I realized my dream. Everything was difficult at the beginning, we were waiting a lot of time after asking our visas without any news from the Sudan Embassy. We were not sure that we could get it and even thought to cancel our trip in Sudan a third time. We finally got our visas after a two-months waiting. When we arrived at the border at Galabat, everything was different. We were taken into account, as we were never been in any other country before, as well by the authorities of Customs and Immigration, as by the Sudanese population. We were so surprised that each person that we met, young, old, children's, workers of the Government or not, saying to us "You are welcome in Sudan." Everyone wanted to help and paid attention on our needs. At the border, two military

joined us in the Caravan to go the next city. Arriving there, they came down from the car and a Police car escorted us until Gedaref. It was a real Olympic Torch relay as we expected and described in the feedback from Africa Peace Caravan. We thought in the beginning that this escort was to watch me. We understood quickly that it was to protect me in the border zone, as it is a sensitive area of the country and to help us in the case that we have a mechanic problem or any one else other difficulty. When we arrived in Gedaref, a delegation from the Ministry of Tourism was waiting us at hosted warmly at the checkpoint police before coming in the city. They invited us for a lunch and organized a visit of Gedaref. In the afternoon, we left Gedaref for Wad Medani. But at 7pm o'clock at 6 km be-



MOUNTAINS AND DESERT DUNES TO CAIRO, EGYPT

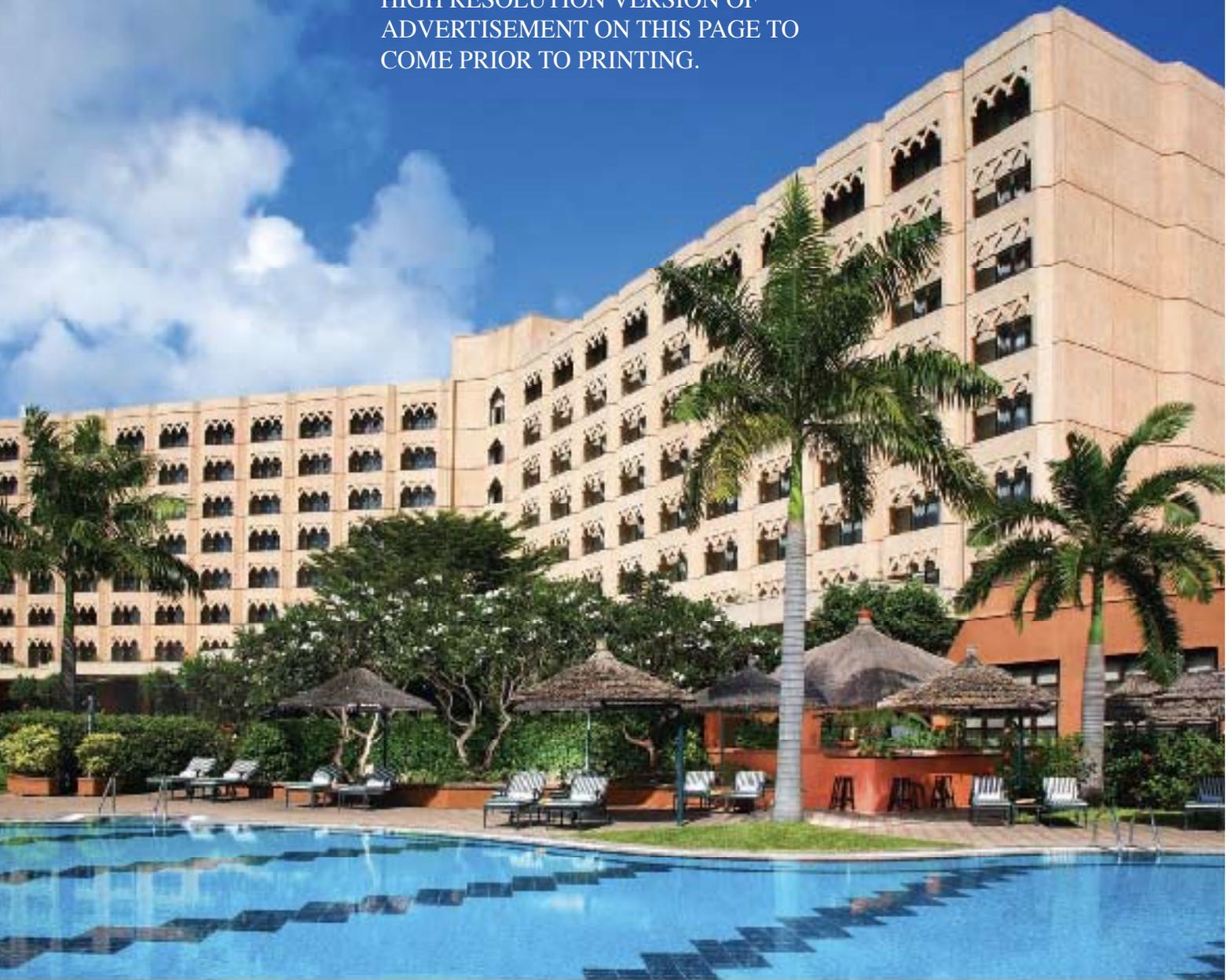
fore arriving in the city we broke down the clutch cable. Fortunately we were immobilized in a filing station. People came towards us by saying “You are welcome in Sudan. Leave your car here for the moment and go to have your dinner. We will send to you a mechanic tomorrow morning”. We spent our night in the filing station by sleeping on the roof of the Caravan. The morning of the day after, the mechanic arrived to fix the clutch cable. But it was

badly repaired and we knew that it would break down later. In fact, when he will go back up the cable, it broke down. We were afraid that the cable became too short if he cut it a second time. I preferred by security to alert our Sudanese contact from the Police without waiting in case that we stayed blocked in this filing station with a broken cable that would be difficult to replace. He answered that I had to go in the first Police office and they are going to help. But in that time, the mechanics fixed the cable. Anyway, I decided to go in the first Police Station to greet them. we were received with the usual comment “You are welcome in Sudan” and the Head

of Police sent us a Policeman with a motor-bike to indicate us the good road to take to go to Khartoum. We arrived at Khartoum on a week-end so we were hosted by a friend from the French Embassy that we met in Addis Ababa and his colleague and by the Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti. The Ambassador of Djibouti organized a meeting for us with the Federal Ministry of Tourism of Sudan and they invited us for a visit of the city during two all days. The final day, we met an old colleague from the French Legion, who is now a Security officer at the United Nations. He invited us to stay with him and his family for our last night in Khartoum and he escorted us until the Police of Khartoum checkpoint. When we arrived at Atbara, a delegation of the Ministry of Tourism waited us to assist us in their Town.
Continued on page 51



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THE LANDMARK CAIRO TOWER REOPENS IN TIME TO DAZZLE AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION (ATA) DELEGATES COMING FOR THE 34TH ANNUAL CONGRESS MAY 17-21, 2009

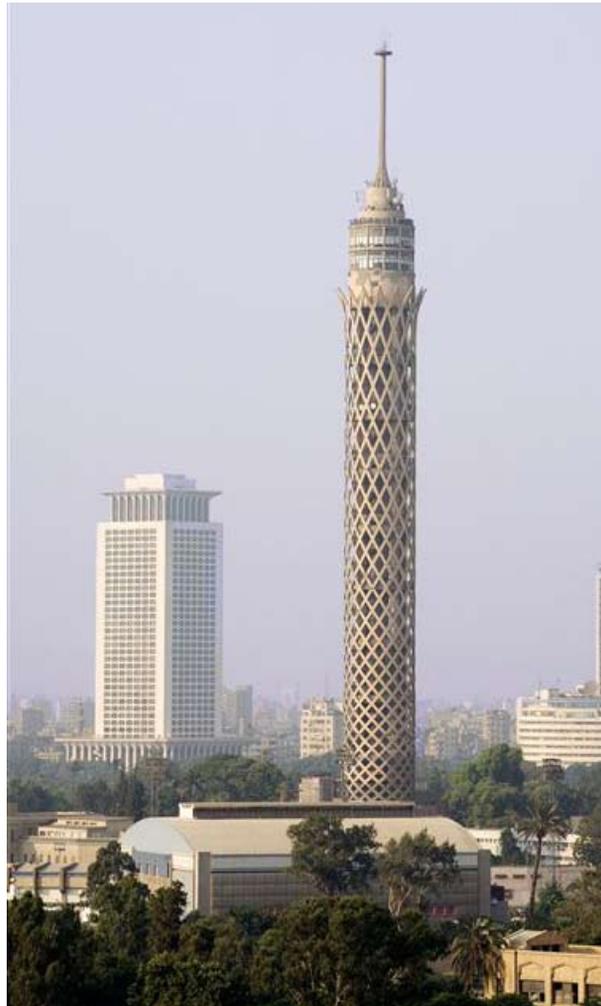
The 60 Story High Icon Boasts New State-Of-The-Art Nighttime Lighting Effects And Panoramic View Restaurants

CAIRO, EGYPT, May 13, 2009 – Cairo's famous icon, the 60 story high Cairo Tower, has just reopened with stunning new LED nighttime light effects and panoramic view restaurants. This Cairo landmark will most certainly be an added attraction for the delegates participating in the 34th Annual Congress of The Africa Travel Association (ATA) scheduled to open Sunday, May 17 at the Conrad Nile Hotel in Cairo.

The ATA Congress, hosted by the Hon. Zoheir Garranah, Egyptian Minister of Tourism and Amr El Ezaby, Chairman, Egyptian Tourist Authority (ETA), will bring together travel industry professionals from the US, Canada and Africa including tourism ministers, tourist boards, airlines, hoteliers, ground operators, as well as representatives from business, non-profit and development sectors, to address some of the challenges facing the travel, tourism, transport and hospitality industries across Africa.

High profile Egyptian speakers will include, among others, the Minister of Tourism, the ETA Chairman, Hisham Zaazou, First Assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Ahmed El Nahas, Chairman Egyptian Tourism Federation and Elhamy El Zayat, Chairman, Emeco Travel.

Other featured speakers will include Hon. Shamsa S. Mwangunga, Tanzania's Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism and ATA President, Eddie Bergman, ATA Executive Director, Dr. Elham M.A. Ibrahim,



African Union Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy, Ray Whelan, Official Representative for Accommodation, Ticketing, Hospitality and Technology for FIFA World Cups 2010 and Lisa Simon, President, US-based National Tour Association (NTA).

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism will host all ATA Congress delegates on a full-day tour to the National Museum in Cairo and to the Pyramids that will conclude with a dinner cruise on the Nile.

“The Cairo Tower has always been a point of reference in the City for visitors as well as Egyptians,” said Mr. Sayed Khalifa, Director, Egyptian Tourist Office for US and

Latin America. “Now with four diverse restaurants, and the unmatched panoramic views of Cairo and its famous sites, the Cairo Tower is once again a tourist attraction. Although not part of the official tour, we encourage the ATA delegates to find time to visit the Cairo Tower on their own and enjoy the spectacular view and some of the wonderful restaurants.” The highest spot in Cairo, enhanced with strategically placed telescopes, The Panoramic View on the top floor offers spectacular views of the Egypt's bustling Metropolis. The 360 Revolving Restaurant on the 59th floor, offers an array of International cuisine. The Garden Coffee shop on the 60th floor of the Cairo Tower has a more informal dining atmosphere. The new

VIP Restaurant and Lounge features luxurious furnishings and an elegant upscale menu. The Tower now also has space for meetings and conferences. The visiting hours are from 9AM to Midnight.

For more information on Egypt visit www.egypt.travel; for more information on the ATA Congress, registration and program visit www.africa-travelassociation.org.

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Emperor Angelish in coral, Red Sea, Egyptian Tourist Authority: Arnaud/hemis.fr



Red Sea Pink Anemone and Clown Fish, Egyptian Tourist Authority: Arnaud/hemis.fr

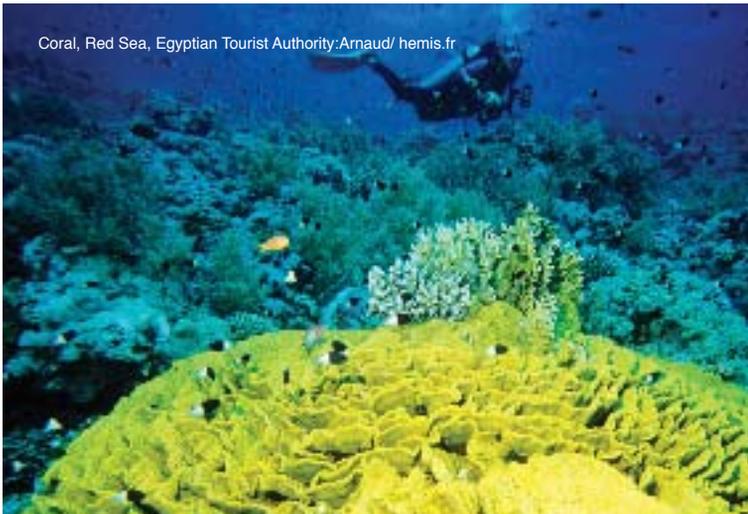


Red Sea swimmers, Egyptian Tourist Authority Arnaud/ hemis

Divers, Eyptian Tourist Authority: Arnaud/ hemis.f



Coral, Red Sea, Egyptian Tourist Authority:Arnaud/ hemis.fr



Hawksbill Sea Turtle, Red Sea. Egyptian Tourist Authority, Arnaud/hemis.fr



Marsa Alam Glass bottom boat, Eyptian Tour

Treasures of the Deep

Egypt is a prime location for diving year round, where visitors will discover famous shipwrecks, stunning coral formations, caves and a colorful variety of sea creatures. Some of the popular sites are Sharm el-Sheikh, Dahab, Murghada, Tiran, Marsa Alam and Ras Banas. You will find more about this exciting travel option on our award winning website www.africa-ata.org/egypt.htm - or www.egypt.travel

The Pharaohs Await You in Egypt the Eternal

by Habeeb Salloum

From atop the Cairo Tower, the mighty Nile appears to be overwhelmed by the edging luxury hotels and towering apartment buildings. Beyond, the city with its crowded streets, literally infested with humanity, spreads out to the horizon. In between the avenues with their mass of darting autos, one sees a thousand minarets of new and historic mosques, peppered with a number of Coptic-Christian basilicas. It appears to be an inviting city to explore - a mixture of eastern exoticism and Western sophistication.

Yet, this is not what the millions of people traveling to Egypt want to see. If one turns atop the Tower to the other side, in the distance, a visitor glimpses the outline of the Great Pyramids. Located on a desert plateau on the western edge of the city, they are the magnets that draw these tourists. It is as if the pharaohs of Ancient Egypt are still caring for their descendants. Of the millions of tourists who travel to Egypt, the vast majority come to view the monumental vestiges left by one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever known.

Europeans and North Americans, traveling in groups, usually stop in Cairo, the cultural capital of the Arab world, but never in reality see Africa's largest city, milling with some 15 million inhabitants. They spend one or two days visiting the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities and the Great Pyramids, then are whisked southward to see the other eye-bulging works of the ancient Egyptians around Luxor and Aswan.

Pyramids and Sphinx, World's Enduring Monuments

Perhaps the tour operators have a point when they steer their herds toward these world renowned monuments. By any standard, the pyramids - the only one of the 'Seven Wonders of the World' which still exist - are an unbelievable accomplishment by ancient man. It is said that no traveler who has viewed them for the first time, has not gasped in awe, overwhelmed by their majesty. With their guardian, the

Sphinx, They stand on a desert plateau some 15 km (9.3 mi) from the heart of Cairo. Since the days of ancient Greece and continuing to modern times, they have been visited, written about, explored and, in this century, have become a part of world mythology.

Called the Giza Pyramids to distinguish them from the other 108 pyramids in the country, they are approached by a wide-straight road built in the 19th century by the Empress Eugénie, the wife of Napoleon III. She came during the inauguration of the Suez Canal and in order to see the pyramids, the empress constructed this avenue called Al-Ahram - in Arabic meaning 'the pyramids'.

Giza Pyramids of Cheops, Chephren and Mykerinos

In the early 1960s, when I first visited the pyramids, this road was mostly edged by desert. Today, it is one of Cairo's major and longest streets and, on both sides, a forest of buildings cover every inch of space to the very edge of these venerable monuments. Standing immutably majestic, the Giza Pyramids of Cheops, Chephren and Mykerinos, the most famous of all the attractions in Egypt, have watched humans come and go for untold centuries. The largest and oldest of these is the Great Pyramid of Cheops, erected about 2590 B.C. Its base covers 6 ha (13 ac) and it is estimated to

contain 3 million separate blocks of stones, averaging 2 1/2 tons each. vital role in the lives of Egypt's kings and peasants. Today, for many, they are the trademark of lasting power, drawing, from across the globe, tourists and those who dabble in magic and the extraterrestrial. Watching haughtily over the pyramids is the nearby famous Sphinx, carved out of solid natural rock by Chephren the son of Cheops, the builder of the second pyramid. He had this huge statue sculptured from soft limestone with a lion's body, and a god's face - believed to be his own. For over 45 centuries, it has defied time, witnessing all the morning suns civilized man has seen. Carved in the midst of temples, which are in the process of being excavated, this half man half beast statue has acquired, through the centuries, an air of mystery and romance.

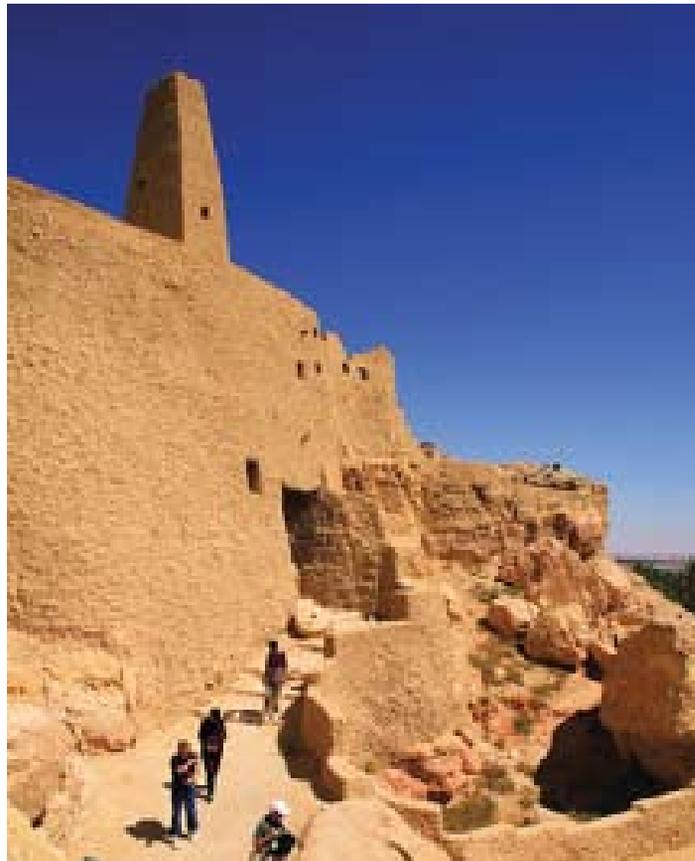
The magnificence of the pyramids and the Sphinx are superbly portrayed in the 'Sound and Light' shows, presented nightly. After sunset throughout the year, on different nights, in Arabic, English, French and German, these shows, the finest of their kind presented anywhere, draw droves of tourists. They add much to the appreciation of the Giza pharaonic monuments and their history.

Museum of Antiquities

On the other hand, more thrilling to many tourists is the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, housing some 100 thousand exhibits.

It contains a very rich store of remains from the Ancient Egyptian civilizations, including the 4000 piece treasure found in Tutankhamen's tomb. Few museums in the world can even come close to its impressive exhibits. This huge classical-style museum was built in 1853 by Auguste Mariette, the great pioneer archaeologist, but its collection has only occupied the building since 1902. Days are needed to truly appreciate the exhibits, not the half or one day tours allotted most visitors. *For more information visit www.africa-ata.org/egypt.htm*

Photos copyright Egyptian Tourist Authority



DISCOVER THE LURE OF EGYPT'S SEA COAST DESTINATIONS AT



Delegates to the 34th Annual Africa Travel Association (ATA) Congress in Cairo May 17-21, 2009 will have an exciting opportunity to discover Egypt's rapidly developing sea coast destinations on pre or post conference trips. Alexandria, on the Mediterranean Sea and Egypt's second largest city, is the gateway to one of the hot spots for development on the north coast. Along the Red Sea coast and on the Sinai Peninsula, the popular and well known Sharm el-Sheikh is now joined by some other tourist centers like Hurghada, Marsa Alam and the newly opened luxurious Marina complex at Port Ghalib. This coastal boom is due in large part to the increased air access with the opening of new regional international airports.

EGYPT'S SEA COAST DESTINATIONS: ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria, or "Alex" as it is affectionately called by Egyptians and those "in the know," is often referred to as the "Pearl of the Mediterranean." Rich in History and culture, Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC, served as the capital of Greco-Roman Egypt and was also the setting for the stormy relationship between Anthony and Cleopatra. Few people know that it also boasted the famous Pharos lighthouse that was one of the original Wonders of the Ancient World along with the Pyramids. Ancient Alexandria was also the center of learning and the Alexandria Library was the largest in the World.

Only 225 km from Cairo, Modern Alexandria is the country's largest Seaport and an important year-round tourist destination. There is no question that the romantic image and attraction of this exotic Mediterranean

port was made famous by many western authors, including Lawrence Durrell, who made it the setting for his famous novel, "The Alexandria Quartet." The Cecil Hotel mentioned in his book is a wonderful example of post colonial architecture, and is being renovated by Sofitel to become

one of their new "Legend" hotels.

Alexandria has many ancient landmarks and archaeological sites to explore including the Roman Amphitheatre, the Villa Al Toyour (Birds Villa), the first Mosaic Museum in Egypt, the Al Anfushi Tombs, El Shatby Necropolis, Pompey's Pillar and the Catacombs of Kom El Shoqafa. The Graeco-Roman Museum has a fascinating collection which covers the period from the 34th Century BC to the 7th Century AD. One of the foremost Alexandrian landmarks today is the Sutlan Qaitbey Fort, on the original site of the "Pharos" lighthouse.

Bibliotheca Alexandria and planned Underwater Museum to Boost City's Tourism

It is the more than its millions of books that attract over 800,000 visitors annually to the new state-of-the-art "Bibliotheca Alexandria" (Alexandria Library) opened in 2002 and built in the shape of a disc facing the Mediterranean. Its geodesic dome houses a lecture hall and Planetarium equipped with an IMAX screen and a Museum of Archaeology. The basement contains 8000 ancient manuscripts and rare books. Definitely a must-see for visitors to Alexandria.

Ambitious plans to create Egypt's first Underwater Museum will complement the excitement of Alexandria's Library. In the year 356, Alexandria was hit by a tsunami, followed by subsequent earthquakes. The result was that some of the city's greatest archaeological treasures were buried in the sea. Since 1994, divers have been excavating sphinxes, granite blocks and what are thought to be pieces of the Pharos lighthouse. The grand vision for the Underwater

Museum in Alexandria calls for an immersed fiber glass tunnel that will allow visitors a dry place to view these ancient monuments.

The real lure of Alexandria, however, is the tantalizing rhythm of this City, which ebbs and flows like the tides of the sea. To experience the local "Alex" the visitor must wander its labyrinth of streets in the ancient quarters, and join the locals at sun set as they promenade along the Corniche as it winds its way around the harbor.

THE NORTH COAST BEYOND ALEXANDRIA

West of Alexandria lie miles of beautiful white sandy beaches, stretching along the Mediterranean Sea to the border with Libya. This Mediterranean coastline has been the focus of new development and increased air access. The North Coast is now served by airports in Alexandria, **El-Alamein**, **Borg el-Arab** and **Marsa Matruh**. The seaside resorts, ranging from the ultra luxurious to more modest family resorts, are popular during the summer time with both local and foreign tourists.

Mariut: 15 km west of Alexandria

The region's climate is ideal for spa tourism and relaxation. In addition to Lake Mariut, there are the extensive remains of the early Christian City of Abu Mena.

Agami: 25 Km West of Alexandria

Now the meeting-place for the jet set, Agami is called the "Egyptian Saint-Tropez" with fashionable restaurants, nightclubs, luxury cars and villas. Swimming however is restricted to private beaches.

Abu Sir: 50km West of Alexandria

Abu Sir is the name given by the Bedouins to the ancient Ptolemaic city of Tappsiris Magna. However, all that remains of the city is the 30m-high lighthouse, a quarter-sized replica of the "Ancient Wonder of the World" Lighthouse that had stood in Alexandria's port. Three beautiful beaches are located nearby.

Borg el-Arab: 60km West of Alexandria

Founded in 1988 by President Mubarak, Borg el-Arab has become a prestigious destination. With the opening of the Hilton Hotel, it is an ideal family resort and has excellent water sports facilities.

El-Alamein/Marina El Alamein:

106 Km from Alexandria

A port city known primarily as the site of historic World War II battles, El Alamein has now emerged as one of Egypt's most exclusive resorts. The Marina El Alamein, with Venice-like canals, is comprised of

THE AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION 34TH ANNUAL CONGRESS

luxurious villas, chalets and upscale shops.

Sidi Abdel Rahman: 125 Km from Alexandria

This wonderful bay is one of the best-kept secrets of Egypt's entire north coast. The village has managed to preserve its traditional Bedouin way of life and remains relatively underdeveloped, guaranteeing an air of authenticity. The only hotel catering for tourists, El-Alamein, offers visitors pristine beaches.

Marsa Matruh: 240 km West of Alexandria

Totally to the other extreme from Sidi Abdel Rahman, Marsa Matruh is a large city, which is packed during the summer. Popular for its lovely bay, sparkling turquoise waters and white sandy beaches, Marsa Matruh is said to have been founded by Alexander the Great on his way to the Siwa Oasis.

EGYPT'S SEA COAST DESTINATIONS: SINAI PENINSULA

Sharm el-Sheikh, more often referred to as "Sharm", is an ideal resort for diving and swimming with beautiful beaches, coral reefs and the Ras Mohamad National Park. Visitors can select from a wide range of accommodations--five star luxuries to budget hotels. It is also an excellent jumping off point for tours to some of the historic places in the Sinai, including St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of "Jebel Musa" where Moses is said to have received the Ten Commandments. Desert Safaris feature visits to a Bedouin village and a camel ride

in the desert sands.

For smaller, peaceful resorts with beautiful beaches and wonderful diving and snorkeling one should not miss Dahab, Nuweiba, and Taba, all north of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Red Sea Coast: Hurgada

Once a small fishing village founded in the early 20th Century, Hurgada is now one of the foremost tourist resorts along the Red Sea and world famous as a center for international aquatic sports. Known as the center for diving, water sports and night life, it is also known to the Europeans as a "party town." The developments north and south of the city offer visitors more peaceful options including golf. The many beautiful islands off shore offer wonderful snorkeling and diving day trips.

El Gorna, 20 kms north of Hurgada, is luxury resort complex with a marina, another "must see" on this coast.

Red Sea Coast: Port Ghalib Marina and Resort Complex

The recently opened Port Ghalib Marina and Resort Complex, five minutes from the new Marsa Alam International Airport, is definitely the new "buzz" on the Red Sea. A yachtsmen's paradise, this ultra deluxe resort with a marina (can accommodate 1000 boats) and four hotels (the five-star deluxe Intercontinental Palace Port Ghalib Resort, the five star twin Crowne Plaza properties, Sahara Sands and Sahara Oasis, and the four- star Marina Lodge Port Ghalib, will certainly rival that of the more established resorts of Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurgada.

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ATA CONGRESS: "CONNECTING DESTINATION AFRICA"

The theme of the four-day Africa Travel Association Congress is "Connecting Destination Africa." The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and the Egyptian Tourist Authority (ETA) are subsidizing hotel accommodations for all delegates and providing transportation, logistical support, and a full day of tours in Cairo itself. The "host day" tour will include a visit to the only remaining Wonder of the Ancient World, The Pyramids in Giza, as well as a visit to the National Museum.

Egypt Air, the official Congress Carrier, is offering discount rates for all delegates for as low as \$711 (not including tax) round-trip New York/Cairo/New York in economy class on a first come basis. Egypt Air is a member of Star Alliance.

For more information about Egypt: www.egypt.travel

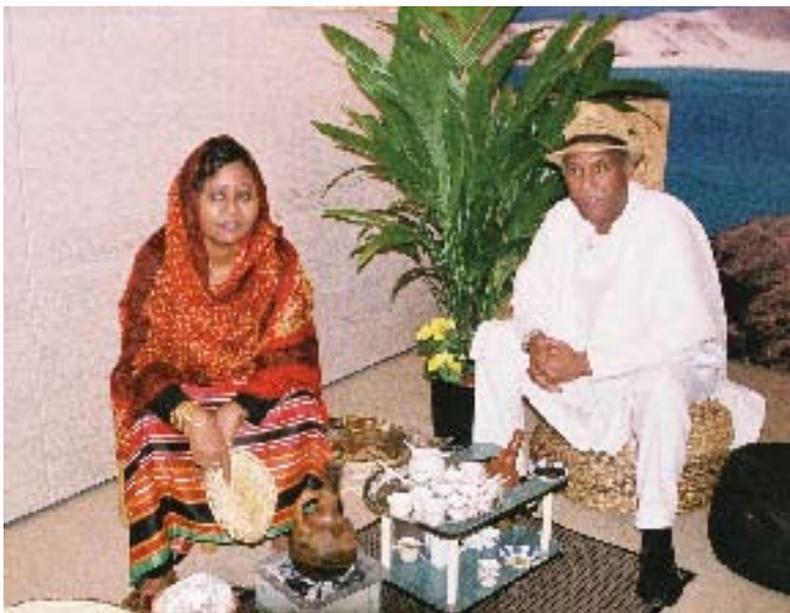
For more information about the ATA Congress and for online ATA Egypt Congress registration: www.africatravelassociation.org

Photos (left) Sinai, Naama Bay beach in Sharm el-Sheikh. (below) Port Ghalib





AFRICA TRAVEL MAGAZINE PROMOTES ATA MEMBERSHIP PLUS ATA



34TH CONGRESS AT ITB BERLIN & SALON DE TOURISME, PARIS



FROM THE COMFORT OF MOEVENPICK HOTEL CAIRO MEDIA CITY TO A LUXURY



Text and more photos to come

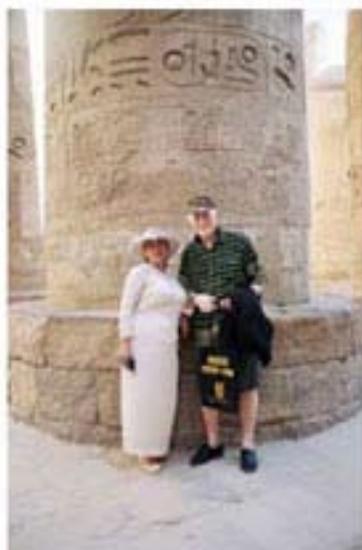
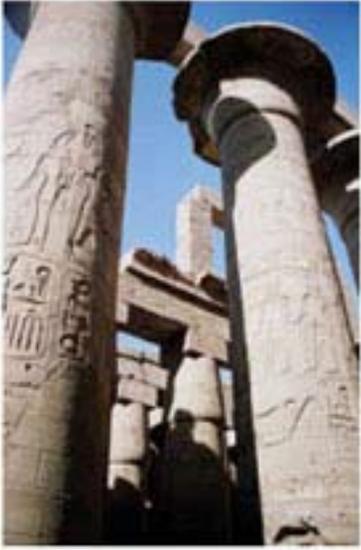
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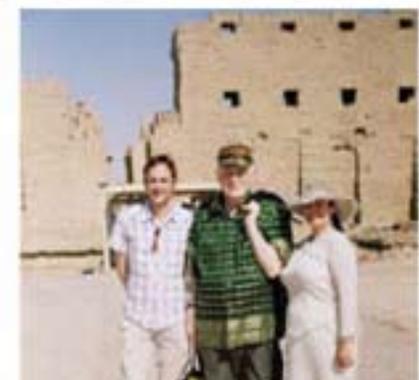
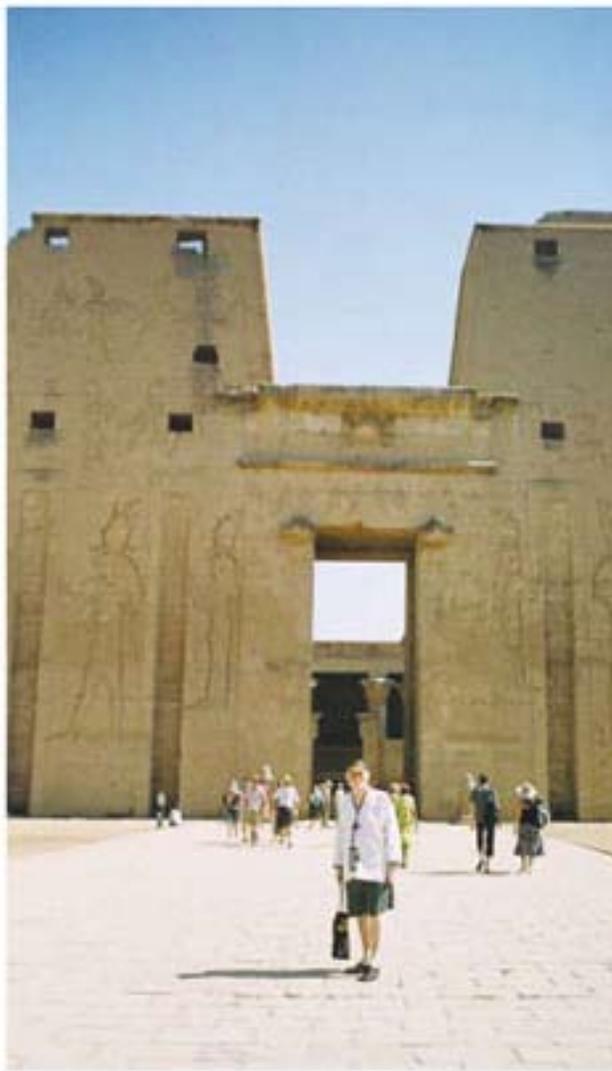


CRUISE FROM ASWAN TO LUXOR ABOARD THE MOEVENPICK M/S ROYAL LILY

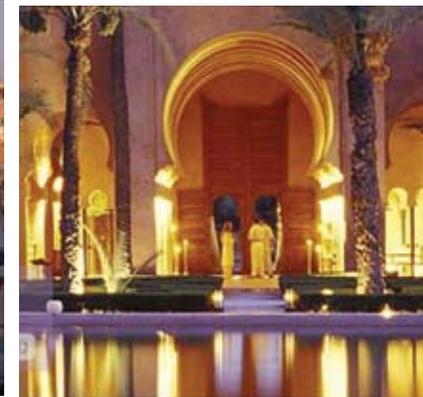


Mr. Amr Kallini, General Manager, Moevenpick Hotel Cairo- Media City, our host. Mr. Kallini participated in a hotel panel at the ATA 34th World Congress in Cairo, May 17-21, 2009.





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A BERBER WEDDING FAIR PLUS OTHER

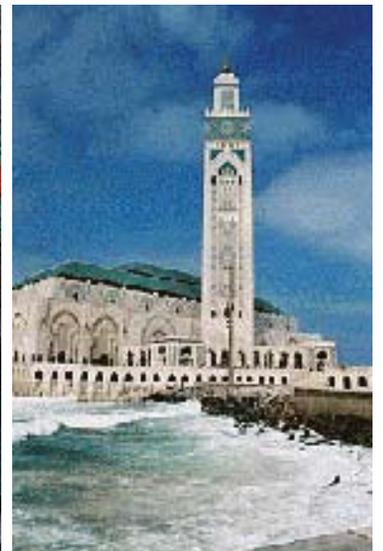
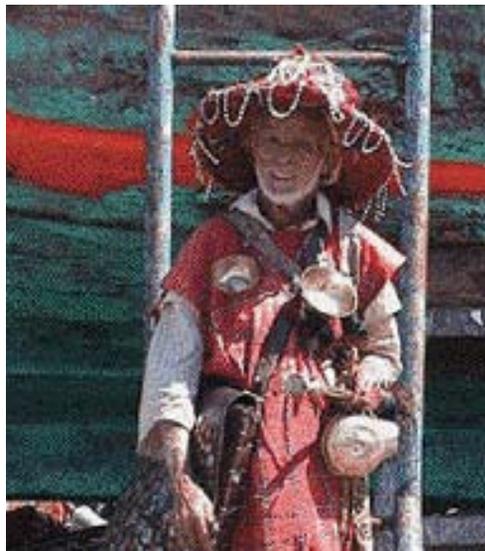
By Muguette Goufrani

My father, who owned and operated a tour company in Casablanca, Morocco and France for many years, took me along with a group of German tourists to visit a traditional “Wedding Fair” at Hadiddou Imilchil, a Berber village in southern Morocco. While I knew that many Berber Fairs combine a local Saint’s Day with a regional market event, only at September’s ‘mousslem’ (pilgrimage) of Imilchil, have I seen such a colorful pageant, with instant engagement, and a mass exchange of marriage vows. Berbers have inhabited North Africa for centuries, some being of Caucasian ancestry, with fair complexions and blue eyes. Visitors may think of Berbers as exotic outsiders, yet they preceded the Arabs in settling Morocco, and they remain the



country’s main culture. This is expressed by the phrase, “Morocco is Berber - the roots and the leaves of freedom.” **A unique experience** While the Wedding Fair is key part of Berber marital custom, families usually arrange marriages in their home village. Women are free to divorce and remarry. At the mousslem, divorced and widowed women form the majority, and are identified by their pointed head-dress. The courtship is a family affair as I learned after accepting an invitation to drink mint tea in the goat hair tent of a Berber elder. His oldest daughter Malika, prettied up her divorced 18 year old sister Yasmina with traditional beauty aids - rubbing saffron colored powder into her sister’s eyebrows, applying kohl to outline her eyes and carmine rouged to her cheeks. A wool

cape, striped in tribal colors, covered her white dress; then a cone shaped headdress was assembled, held on by loops of spangled wool. I gave Yasmina a silver chain as a wedding gift, since silver brings good luck. Many Westerners think that Moroccans purchase their wives at the fair, but in truth, marriage depends on mutual consent and family approval. **Friends get involved** The language of gesture is as clearly understood by these people as the spoken word. By having a friend help him choose a bride (with often no more than a silhouette and two dark eyes as a clue) the groom gets overcomes his shyness. All day long, in pairs, these men weave in and out amongst a cluster of anxious brides. Then, welcomed by a shy glance or a quick nod, the suitor will stop to speak to the lady, encouraged by a signal from his friend’s reassuring hand. Once this happens, the newly acquainted boy and girl unite, holding hands as a sign of intent. Male relatives who



MOROCCAN CULTURAL TREASURES

accompany the bride-to-be lend advice, often making snap judgment calls at first sight. If rejection is signaled by a broken handclasp, it's time to look elsewhere.

When a bride does give consent, she may speak the magic phrase, "You have captured my liver." Since a healthy liver aids digestion and promotes well-being, in Berber culture it's the liver, not the heart that's considered the location of true love. Might one say, "Darling, my liver pines for you?" Often snowbound behind village walls for up to six months a year, the new couples must learn to live in harmony. Despite those old Foreign Legion movies from the 50s, which showed Berbers as being fierce, hot tempered and warlike, they believe in "paix chez eux" (peace at home).

Moroccan food

Who wouldn't enjoy steamed semolina, topped with a meat and vegetable sauce called couscous? Or tajines, a vegetable stew that contains rabbit, lamb, goat or

chicken meat, combined with prunes, apricots or raisins. Pastilla (baked pigeon pie) is made of layered filo pastry, with nuts and spices, and coated with sugar. With your morning coffee, try a

light deep fried Spanish doughnut, we call *sfinj*, or *cornes de gazelle* pastries.

Berber history and culture

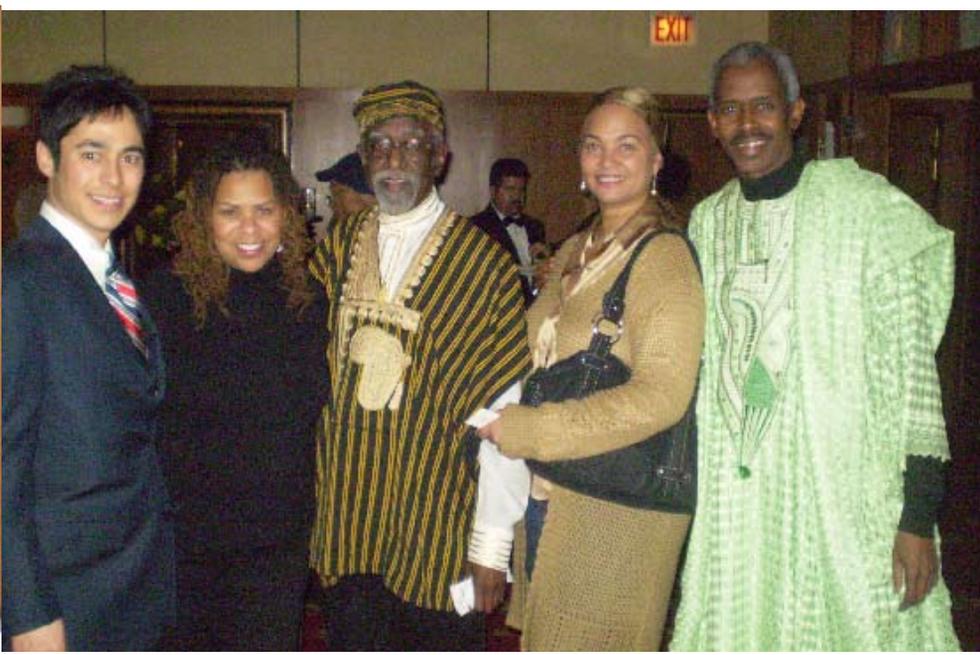
Most of the 27 million Moroccans are Berbers, Arabs or Moors (people of mixed Berber and Arab descent), whose ancestors built the mighty Moorish empire that once ruled Spain, Portugal and most of Northern Africa. Most Berbers dwell in the mountains, while the Arabs and Moors live on the plain and desert. Most cities have a European section a Jewish enclave, and a Medina (Arab-Moorish section). Over the past 3,000 years, its geographic location has given Morocco a strategic importance far beyond its small size. The country has taken the best from the Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Berbers, Portuguese, Spanish and French.

For more information visit: www.africa-ata.org/morocco.htm

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ADVANCE ACTIVITY BOOSTS ATTENDANCE FOR

The 2009 Destination Egypt Road Show Featured Visits to to Three Cities to Promote Africa Travel Association's 34th Annual Congress in Cairo.

ATA members and guests welcomed the Africa Travel Association's Destination Egypt Road Show in the United States, which stopped in Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles. The tourism promotion event showcased Egypt as a top African destination and host of ATA's 34th Annual Congress, to be held in Cairo from May 17-21. "I am honored to work with ATA to bring travel and tourism experts and enthusiasts across the U.S. to Egypt," said Egyptian Tourist Authority Director El Sayed M. Khalifa. "Egypt is home to the world's most ancient and modern sites, attracting travelers and tourists from around the world since the beginning of time. Egypt continues to be one of Africa's top travel draws and I look forward to inviting the US travel market to experience the eye-opening country."

Networking

In each city - Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles- an evening cocktail reception for travel specialists interested in tourism to the African continent and specifically the Northern African destination Egypt will be held. Brief presentations of Egypt's diverse travel products and ATA's annual

hallmark event will be given at the networking event.

Egypt Air, the country's flag carrier airline and the Official Congress Carrier raffled one round-trip ticket from New York to Egypt at each event to be used for the congress.

"ATA has longstanding ties with Egypt. We held our 8th Congress in Cairo in May 1983 and our 16th in 1991," said ATA Executive Director Edward Bergman. "We hope the 2009 Congress will help Egypt reach its target of 16 million tourism arrivals by 2014, with an increase of arrivals from the U.S. and Africa".

Partnering with the ATA Chicago Chapter, Adventures in Travel Expo Chicago and the American Society of Travel Agents-Midwest Chapter, ATA organized the first reception in Chicago on January 9 at Petterino's restaurant, located at 150 North Dearborn. The Atlanta event, co-hosted by the ATA-Atlanta Chapter and the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA)-Southeast Chapter, was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, located at the Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia at 4355 Ashford Dunwoody Road on January 26.

The final stop on the Road Show was Los Angeles on February 16. Co-hosted by SoCal-ATA, the Southern California ATA chapter, the dinner event was held at the Marriott Hotel at 6336 Bristol Parkway in Culver City.

Africa Travel Association (ATA)

The Africa Travel Association is the premier global travel association promoting tourism to Africa and intra-Africa travel and partnership since 1975. ATA members include ministries of tourism and culture, national tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, travel trade media, public relations firms, students, NGOs, individuals, and SME's. visit ATA online at www.africatravelassociation.org or call +1.212.447.1357.

ATA's 34th Annual Congress in Cairo, Egypt

The Congress, to be held at the Cairo International Conference Center (CICC), will run for five days, engaging participants in working discussions on a range of topics, such as intra-African industry cooperation, infrastructure development and investment opportunities. Roundtables for ministers, suppliers, travel agents and tour operators, alongside special networking events, a marketplace expo, and ATA Young Professionals events, will also be held. ATA will also organize networking opportunities for Africans living in the Diaspora as part of its Africa Diaspora Initiative. Congress delegates will stay at the Fairmont Heliopolis Hotel. For more information, visit <http://africatravelassociation.org/ata/events/ac.html>.

About Egypt Air

For more information on Egypt Air and to check departures and arrivals, visit <http://www.egyptair.com>





ATA 34th ANNUAL CONGRESS IN CAIRO, EGYPT

Online Registration

The Africa Travel Association (ATA) has launched online registration for the Second Annual U.S.-Africa Tourism Seminar, which will take place at the Washington Convention Center from February 19-20, two days prior to the Adventures Travel Expo (ATE) travel mart.

Focusing on Sports, Adventure and Diaspora Travel and Tourism, the two-day event will showcase Africa as a top tourism destination from the U.S. and as a site for investment and business exploration in one of the world's fastest growing tourism markets. "In addition to some of the world's most spectacular natural wonders, Africa offers some of the most unique and exciting travel products," said Eddie Bergman, ATA Executive Director. "With Africa's improving infrastructures, a growing private sector and an increasing awareness of the role the travel industry can play in a country's socio-economic development, Africa is poised to increase its global marketshare in tourism."

Global representatives from the public and private sectors and travel industry will convene in Washington, D.C. to discuss Africa as a leading travel destination and hear from expert panelists about Africa's travel products, particularly in the areas of sports tourism, adventure travel, tourism infrastructure development, responsible and sustainable tourism, business and investment opportunities, airline access, and travel trends.

Travel agents and tour operators, who

market, sell and specialize in Africa, are encouraged to attend the seminar, which will include a workshop on marketing and branding Destination Africa with leading industry experts. In addition, a number of speakers on other workshops panels will also address these topics in their presentations.

The seminar will also feature two workshops on African diaspora tourism. One will focus on the role of the diaspora in changing perceptions of Africa in the U.S. and another will focus on the emerging African diaspora tourism products, such as cultural and heritage tours, as well as investment opportunities.

"As a native of Senegal now living in Atlanta, I think its important for émigrés to invest in Africa, either by visiting the continent or, if they can't go back physically, by 'going back' economically and culturally," said Ogo Sow, ATA Diaspora Affairs Advisor. "The African Diaspora is a logical bridge between the USA and Africa and ATA can help build this bridge."

To register and to find more information on the seminar, as well as sponsorship opportunities, visit <http://www.africatravelassociation.org/ata/events/uats.html>.

About the Africa Travel Association (ATA) The Africa Travel Association, a U.S.-based non-profit, is the world's premier travel industry trade association promoting tourism to Africa and intra-Africa travel and partnership since 1975. ATA members include ministries of tourism and culture, national tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel

a wide range of travel options, including: cultural vacations, eco-travel, wilderness treks, safaris, island getaways, adventure trips, volunteer vacations, luxury train journeys and itineraries for sports and outdoor enthusiasts. Sales were reported to be strong across all categories.

"The robust attendance and sales at Adventures in Travel Expo surpassed our and our exhibitors' expectations, especially amid rampant reports of a tourism downturn," noted John Golicz, CEO of Unicomm, producers of the Expo. "This event illustrates that now more than ever, travel providers need to tune their marketing programs to reach qualified active travelers if they want to sustain growth in 2009."

Commenting on the Expo, Tourism Tasmania's North American Representative Karen Stolz said, "I've been at this show for five or six years and consumer interest in Tasmania was probably the strongest it has ever been." She added that her colleagues from Qantas Vacations, which specializes in vacations to Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, concurred that it was the best consumer show that they had been to in a very long time.

Lisa Greyhill, representing the Adventure Travelers Society, commented: "As a tour operator, we were especially pleased with the turnout at the Chicago Adventures in Travel Expo. Despite challenging weather, the show was very well attended by members of the press, agent community and consumers of all ages and demographics. More on www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm

Air Highways to Northern Africa

About Egyptair

EGYPTAIR is the world-renowned national airline of the Egypt, based in the cosmopolitan city of Cairo. In more than 76 years, EGYPTAIR has experienced extraordinary growth, taken the lead to be the first airline in the Middle East and Africa and the seventh in the world to join IATA and become a treasured brand. Throughout its 76 years of service and, as a result of continuous investments, EGYPTAIR has successfully extended its network over the years to reach more than 1,624 weekly departures to 69 cities in 44 countries carrying more than 7.5 million passengers in 2007/2008 with an increase of 20% comparing to same period of last year. Currently EGYPTAIR has one of the most modern fleets with an average age of eight years which consists of 51 aircrafts and targeting to reach 75 aircrafts in 2013. In 2004, EGYPTAIR demonstrated the scale of its commitment to the highest standards of safety by being the first IOSA certified airline in the Middle East and Africa. EGYPTAIR is a member of Star Alliance since July 2008.

History of Egyptair

May 1932

EGYPTAIR is one of the pioneer airlines in the world, established in May 1932 to become the seventh carrier in the world.

August 1933

EGYPTAIR commenced commercial operation with Spartan cruiser from Cairo to Alexandria.

1935

A total of 12 De Havilland were added to the fleet.

During the Second World War, the Egyptian Government took over the airline and changed its name to Misr Airlines.

1946

The name was changed again to MisrAir and 10 Beach crafts were purchased adding the American technology to the fleet.

1949

MisrAir bought 10 Vickers Vikings and the following year put into service a French Aircraft, the Languedoc.

1956

MisrAir got merged with Syrian Airlines forming a new identity "United Arab Airlines-UAA".

1960

UAA enhanced the fleet with Comet 4-c

jets becoming the first Carrier in the Middle East to use the jets.

1968

UAA introduced the Boeing 707-320c to cope with the growing international traffic and to operate longer routes.

1969

EGYPTAIR became the first Airline in the Middle East to fly Boeing 707s.

1971

MisrAir and Syrian Airlines split resulting in a new identity "EGYPTAIR".

July 2002

By the Presidential Decree number 137/2002; EGYPTAIR became a Holding Company with seven subsidiaries.

July 2008

On July 17th 2008, EGYPTAIR, have joined the Star Alliance network, the largest airline alliance in the world, to offer its customers better flight connections and more comfortable travel. EGYPTAIR's membership to the Star Alliance network is unique in that it is the only airline based in North Africa and Middle East part of the network.

About United

United Airlines (NASDAQ: UUA) operates more than 3,000* flights a day on United and United Express to more than 200 U.S. domestic and international destinations from its hubs in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Chicago and Washington, D.C. With key global air rights in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and Latin America, United is one of the largest international carriers based in the United States. United also is a founding member of Star Alliance, which provides connections for our customers to 975 destinations in 162 countries worldwide. United's 52,000 employees reside in every U.S. state and in many countries around the world. News releases and other information about United can be found at the company's Web site at www.united.com.

United Airlines, EGYPTAIR Codeshare

United Airlines and EGYPTAIR have signed an agreement to offer codeshare flights, which would expand the international destinations and enhance the frequent flyer benefits offered to customers of both carriers. Beginning in summer 2009, United will place its code on EGYPTAIR flights linking New York Kennedy and London

Heathrow with Cairo.

"Our relationship with EGYPTAIR – and the added convenience of nonstop service from the United States and United Kingdom to Egypt – will offer customers more choice to this vibrant part of the world," said Glenn F. Tilton, United's chairman, president and chief executive officer. "We are pleased to deepen our relationship with this key Star Alliance partner for the benefit of United and EGYPTAIR customers."

EGYPTAIR will place its code on United flights linking New York Kennedy with Los Angeles and San Francisco, and on flights linking London Heathrow with Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington Dulles. "We are excited to link United's expansive network with our trans-Atlantic service," says Captain Tawfik Assy, chairman and chief executive officer of EGYPTAIR Holding Company. "These additional options give our customers more ways to reach regions across the United States. With the inauguration of Terminal 3 at Cairo Airport early next year, Star Alliance carriers will execute the move under one roof concept in one of the most modern airports in the region."

New Flights to Dar Es Salaam

New operation to Dar Es Salaam starting on 2nd of June 2009 EGYPTAIR will operate Dar el salam capital of Tanzania, four flights weekly, Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, you can enjoy the African sun during your safari watch the Kilimanjaro Mountain which is not only grand in presence but also in spirit. Whatever you choose to do in Kilimanjaro and Tanzania, you can guarantee that you'll take away memories that will last a life time

EGYPTAIR Hosts 99th IATP Conference in Cairo

EGYPTAIR has great pleasure to host the 99th (International Airlines Technical pool) conference in Cairo during 7-nice March 2009. The International Airlines Technical Pool (IATP) is a convention of airlines made up of over 1000 airlines members where members of the aviation industry gather twice yearly to discuss sharing of resources, reducing costs, while improving operating efficiency. IATP established in 1948 and EGYPTAIR joined the IATP in 1962.



IATP is a non profitable organization which provides a global airline network to facilitate the exchange of ideas and cooperation reduces aircraft parts inventory expense & reduces airline operational delays & cancellations by sharing resources and many other benefits. IATP conferences are considered a unique venue which provides the opportunity to conduct pool in business-whether it's spare parts or line maintenance- in the most efficient manner while allowing sharing industry knowledge , network, and reunite with colleagues. IATP promotes goodwill towards all its members , explores new directions within the frame of the mission. During the IATP management committee meeting in Cairo on November 2006 they nominated EGYPTAIR as a main sponsor for the 99th IATP conference march 2009. During the 97th TATP conference in Kuala LUMPUR, Malaysia on 8-12, 2008, ENG. Essam HANAFY THE Material Director of EGYPTAIR Maintenance (EGME) was elected to be a member in the management committee of the IATP among five permanent board members, And he was selected during the IATP Management Committee meeting at Cyprus on November 2008 to become the Vice president for the IATP organization . This selection reflects the success, good image, reputation and high standard EGYPTAIR reached world wide During the 98th IATP conference in Luxembourg 9th-5th of October 2008, a committee from EGYPTAIR maintenance and Engineering participated to have an overview about the conference nature in terms of arrangements and requirements. EGYPTAIR'S committee presentable presence led to confirm Egyptair nomination to host the 99th IATP conference in Cairo.

Many attendees and delegates confirmed their reservations and also expressed interest in some tourism programs held in EGYPT. We expect to have over 500 attendees in



the conference with families. Planning and arrangements for the 99th IATP conference started a year prior to the event. Hard efforts and activities are exerted to make it a success. Through cooperation between EGYPTAIR subsidiaries in addition to the training center and depending on team work, great support and guidance by EGYPTAIR M&E Company chairman Eng. Abd El Aziz Fadel EGYPTAIR, we are looking forward for a successful IATP CONFERENCE IN Cairo. For more information www.iatp.com

EGYPTAIR - STAR ALLIANCE: Part of Largest Airline Network

On July 17th 2008, EGYPTAIR joined the Star Alliance network, the largest airline alliance in the world, to offer its customers better flight connections and more comfortable travel. EGYPTAIR's membership to the Star Alliance network is unique in that it is the only airline based in North Africa and Middle East part of the network. read more about Star Alliance benefits

About Star Alliance

In 1997, a group of five world-class airlines got together to create something never seen before – an alliance that brought together networks, lounge access, check-in services, ticketing and dozens of other services to improve the travel experience for customers and efficiencies for the carriers. They called it the Star Alliance network . After EgyptAir joined in July 2008 the alliance grew to 21 members and 3 regional members , with Air India confirmed as future member carrier. A large network of carriers means more choices for customers. Our alliance members fly to more destinations than the competition. And that

equates to easier travel and quicker connections. The main goal has always been to make the travel experience smoother for customers. That means doing things such as locating

the member carriers closer together in airports, introducing new technologies, building common facilities at airports, coordinating schedules and installing connection teams for faster transfers of passengers and baggage. A multitude of other initiatives has been implemented and more are in the works. The brand – including the familiar star-shaped logo – represents the promise that the alliance strives to deliver, and it lets the customer know that wherever they are in the world, the alliance is there to help them enjoy a smooth travel experience. Star Alliance received the Air Transport World Market Leadership Award in 2008 and was voted Best Airline Alliance by Business Traveller Magazine in 2003, 2006 and 2007 and by Skytrax in 2003, 2005 and 2007.

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AURA OF CARTHAGE AND HANNIBAL STILL LIVE ON

by Habeeb Salloum

Standing atop Mount Byrsa, the acropolis of both Punic and Roman Carthage, I surveyed the panorama of the modern spread-out urban centre covering the historic ruins which, without doubt, form an important part of the heritage of humankind. After having a short time before explored the few Punic, also known as Phoenician or Carthaginian, and Roman remains, so far uncovered, it was easy to fantasize about the Punic/Roman wars and their most renowned hero, Hannibal - one of the greatest army commanders in the ancient world and Carthage's most illustrious son. Among its once splendid villas and richly adorned temples, he must have strolled, planning his battles with mighty Rome. Leading his 59,000 men and 40 elephants over the Alps in an epic march, he kept Rome for years under the threat of his troops. Even though he won many battles, he was never able to occupy that city. Eventually, he had to return to defend Carthage. At the Battle of Zama near Carthage, his army was defeated in 202 B.C. and he fled to Asia Minor where, rather than be captured by the Romans, he committed suicide.

Today, Hannibal and his city, of which only traces remain, are remembered by modern day Tunisians with pride. Ancient Carthage, once the richest city in the world, is marketed by Tunisian Tourism as a 'storehouse of history'. Throughout the country, hotels and businesses carry the name of its courageous Carthaginian leader and his city. Modern Tunisia owes a great deal to Hannibal in the building of its national character. His city might be no more, but its memory remains. Carthage, derived from the Phoenician Kart Hadascht (new village), was established in 814 B.C. by the Phoenician princess, Elissa-Dido, who had fled Tyre, in present day Lebanon, to escape the wrath of her brother Pygmalion. In the ensuing centuries her descendants created a navy which ruled the seas, guarding Carthage and its empire until, in 146 B.C., the city was destroyed by the Romans and their Berber allies. They razed it to the ground and scattered salt on the ruins to ensure that it would rise again. Roman historians gleefully describe how thoroughly they demolished the city. During the razing, its libraries were burned, hence, all we know of Carthage was written by her



conquerors.

Yet, only a century later, the Romans built atop the Phoenician ruins, New Carthage and made it the capital of their African province. It quickly grew until it became a cultured and cosmopolitan urban centre with a large university and the second largest city in the empire. Subsequently, Christians - Saint Augustine was born here - Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs and Turks took over the city as it gradually declined. According to Edward Gibbon, at the beginning of the 16th century Carthage had only a mosque, a college without students, some thirty shops and five hundred ignorant peasants.

French Influence

By the 19th century, little of the city still stood. It almost became a ghost town after its stones had been pillaged as building materials for other towns. When the French occupied Tunisia in 1881, they built a massive cathedral on the summit of Mount Byrsa - known to its new conquerors as the hill of Saint Louis. It was named after the Crusader King Louis IX who was killed trying to conquer Tunisia and was believed to have been buried here.

After the French occupation, his supposed bones were taken back to France. Atop his burial spot, the Catholic Carmelite Order decided to carry on his Crusade to Christianize North Africa. They built the cathedral as a base for this modern Crusade. Yet, it all came to naught.

The French left in the 1950s and today the cathedral is an empty historic structure, edged by remnants of a Punic neighbourhood. Beside it stands a museum where archaeological finds from Carthage's past are exhibited, relating to three major periods in Carthage's history - Phoenicio-Punic, Romano-African and Arab-Islamic. The wide

range of objects from ceramics, mosaics, inscriptions and pottery to sarcophagi, sculptures, and stelae reflect the particular nature of each age.

The museum only houses a minuscule part of the remnants of ancient Carthage. A modern sparkling-white town dotted with pine trees and mimosa cover most of the ruins

of the Punic and Roman city. Only here and there have parts of the historic metropolis been uncovered.

Of these, the most famous are the remains of the Antonine [Antoine] Thermal Baths, covering 3 1/2 ha (8.6 ac). The third largest and the most imposing in the Roman Empire, they were completed in 162 A.D. after 12 years of work by thousands of slave laborers. A large drawing on a plaque of the baths in their days of glory and a re-erected granite column 15 m (49 ft) high, topped by a white capital give visitors an idea of the luxury and the immense size of the baths. Even the little that remains is quite impressive.

The 2nd century Roman theatre was one of the largest in the empire, but through the centuries it was almost totally razed to the ground. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was partially reconstructed. Today, it retains little from its past, yet, as it did in Roman times, it still draws visitors, providing an attractive setting in July and August for the International Festival of Music, Singing and Dancing.

On the Odeon plateau, facing Byrsa's twin hill, there is an entire quarter of Roman villas, a number partially excavated - the most notable being called 'Villa de la Volière'. It is positioned around a courtyard colonnade and from its terrace there is a marvelous view of the sea.

As to Punic Carthage, the Magon Quarter near Antonie Thermal Baths was originally Phoenician but rebuilt by the Romans. The Punic Quarter, edging the cathedral is largely preserved because the Romans used the site as a dumping ground during their building of New Carthage. Dating from the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., excavation has

revealed a collection of carefully built and laid-out houses on a regular grid system. These were endowed in their time with all the conveniences and comforts of that age which included plastered walls, sewers, tiled floors and water tanks. In the ensuing centuries, the Romans inherited these Punic building features and they came down to us as a legacy of Rome.

Opposite the Roman theatre stands the tophet - a Punic cemetery, appearing like a shrub-filled elegant garden. In it, a Punic crematorium and many small stone coffins with carvings of children on their face have been unearthed. Guides point to these as indication of child sacrifice. Yet, it has never been proven that the Carthaginians prac-

ticed this form of offering to the gods. Only the Romans, Carthage's mortal enemies, have accused them of this cruel practice. As I wandered through Carthage's scattered ruins, I thought of how our world would be today if Hannibal had occupied Rome. No doubt, instead of the Roman gods, the Phoenician god Baal-Hammon and the goddess Tanit would have been the supreme beings of the pre-Christian Mediterranean lands. Who knows what would have come thereafter. Yet, was Carthage truly destroyed? Even though the Romans erased the Punic city from the face of the earth, its renown is imprinted on the soul of modern day Tunisia.

How To Get There:

Carthage is only a suburb of Tunis - tramway costs less than \$1. and taxis about \$5.

Facts About Tunisia:

- 1) To enter Tunisia, no visas are necessary for travellers from western Europe, Japan, the U.S.A. and Canada.
 - 2) It is best to travel to southern Tunisia in spring or autumn. In summer it is very hot.
 - 3) The currency used in Tunisia is the dinar - one US dollar is worth 1.25 dinars. Tunisia is one of the few countries in the world where hotels give a better exchange rate than the banks.
 - 4) In all of Tunisia, taxis are metered and very reasonable; buses and shared taxis (louages) connect all towns and villages; tour companies offer excursions; autos can be rented - small ones for about \$60. per day, fully insured.
 - 5) Hotels in Tunisia are very reasonably priced. However, it is best book through a tour company. They can offer even better prices.
 - 6) Try Tunisian food. It's very tasty. Four of the best dishes are: couscous - prepared in seemingly hundreds of different ways - from sweet to very hot; briq - a thin pastry which comes with a variety of fillings, but always includes an egg; chakhouka - a ratatouille which is offered in many types; and spaghetti cooked Tunisian style - for me the epitome of Spaghetti dishes.
 - 7) There is less crime in Tunisia than in western Europe or North America, but beware of pick- pocketers, especially in crowded trains, buses and souks.
 - 8) When taking tours, make sure the guide speaks English. If you do not ask, French will be the language spoken.
 - 9) Tunisia is the most sophisticated, relaxed and tolerant state in North Africa. Women travellers are very safe when travelling alone.
 - 10) With the exception of its capital, Tunis, Tunisia is geared up for tourism. The most up-to-date touristic facilities are found in all its resorts.
- Note: All prices quoted are in US dollars.

*For Further Information, Contact:
Tunisia Tourist Office, 1253 1515 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20005 Tel : (202) 466-2546. Fax : (202) 466-2553. or Web: www.tunisiaonline.com and www.tourismtunisia.com
Habeeb Salloum*

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DJERBA - TUNISIA'S ISLE OF FORGETFULNESS

Photos and story by Habeeb Salloum

No different from Ulysses, who some authors have described as Djerba's first tourist, a traveler will find the people of this Tunisian isle friendly and hospitable. From the first day of a visit, the delightful charms of Djerba (also spelled Jerba) will hold most travelers spellbound.

Why this island, which travelers have labeled, 'Isle of Forgetfulness', holds visitors under its spell, is virtually unexplainable.

A great many attribute it to its magic halo - a combination of a clear-blue sky, shining white houses, clean and well-kept towns, tree-covered countryside and warm, yet not too hot climate. Whatever the case, a good number of travelers go into raptures when describing this island - made famous by Ulysses. Photo: Villas amongst the palms, Djerba

Land of Lotus Eaters

According to Greek mythology, Djerba was the home of the seductive lotus eaters. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Ulysses almost lost his men when the beautiful maidens of the island fed them the lotus flower. The men were so pleasantly intoxicated by the lotus that Ulysses found it almost impossible to make them return to their ships.

Yet, even if this story is only a fable, Djerba has, for many centuries, enraptured travelers who have been lucky enough to land on its shores. A veritable floating garden, rising from the sea like a mirage, the island's spell of forgetfulness which supposedly entrapped visitors in ancient times, has not faded with the passing centuries. It is said that Djerba is a land of dreams, created by nature to enchant the imagination of the human soul.

In Djerba's Phoenician and Roman periods, the island and its principal town were known by the Phoenician name of Meninx whose ruins are to be found near the 6 km (4 mi) Phoenician based Roman causeway, which joins the island to the mainland.

After the Muslim conquest, Djerba became the haven for an Islamic sect, known as Kharidjite, which today, in its present form, only exists on this island.

During the Middle Ages, the inhabitants withstood the most powerful and ruthless rulers of Mediterranean Europe. From the 12th to the 16th centuries, the people of this Isle of

forgetfulness fought almost continuously, usually against the Spaniards, but at times against the united kings of Christendom. Djerba is a 614 sq km (238 sq mi) flat island situated off the southern coast of Tunisia, not far from the Libyan border. It is joined to the mainland with a 6 km (3.6 mi) causeway built on a Roman foundation. More than 145,000 inhabitants, mostly of Berber origin, live on this isle of mythology. Its 133 km (83 mi) shoreline abounds with sandy-white beaches, gently lapped by the warm-azure waters of the Mediterranean

Covered with trees and flowers, the island is in reality one huge oasis covered with more than 1,000,000 date palms and 700,000 olive trees, some over 3000 years old. In between, small fields of apricots, carobs, figs, grapes, grenadines, lemons, mandarins, oranges and pomegranates cover almost every empty space. Only travelers dreaming of Djerba's mythology are usually disappointed, nowhere is the fabled lotus fruit to be found.

Here and there amid these fields, watered from some 2700 wells, are the breathtaking white, small villages and isolated homes. The striking white houses, known as menzels, and their architecture, unique to the island, appear like white jewels, sprinkled between the greenery. Their rounded domes and bright snowy color, embellished by

sky-blue wrought iron trimmings, sparkle in the sunlight and give the buildings an appealing charm. Inside, there are clean courtyards filled with trees and flowers. Set amid these fairy tale buildings are to be found the some eye-catching 200 small mosques - many of the older ones built as fortresses to ward off invaders.

Houmt-Souk, which means market center, with a population of 45,000, is the capital of the island and one of the most picturesque urban centers in Tunisia. It is a well-kept bright town centered around the souk area, overflowing with handicraft products.

Traditional clothing, blankets woven since the time of Hannibal, beautifully wrought gold and silver jewelry, leather goods, straw mats and beautiful pottery saturate the markets.

In town, two of the most important usual stopovers for visitors are the Museum of Folklore and Popular Art, displaying traditional costumes and jewelry; and the historic fortress of Borj el-Kebir, a 15th century Arab citadel. Interesting to many tourists is the plaque nearby marking the spot where once 5000 skulls of a Spanish defeat were once piled pyramid style.

Even though overpowered by Houmt-Souk, each of the other tiny towns on the island, is noted for some specialty in its artisan's handiwork or is a place of historic importance. Ajim, from where a ferry can be taken to the mainland, is a sponge fishing

town; El-May has a colorful market; Fatou produces fine hand-woven baskets and rush mats; Guellala has been the center for the hand manufacture of exquisite ceramics and pottery since the time King Midas; La Ghriba is noted for its synagogue and adjoining monastery whose foundations were laid in 584 B.C.; Mah-boubine is famous for its backyard gardens; Midoun is celebrated for its Gougou dancers; and Sedouikech is well-known for its handmade camel muzzles, fishing baskets and straw hats.

Enhancing these and other villages, are Djerba's annual 300 days of sunshine and warm blue waters with their cooling breezes, edged glittering



sands, embellished by the many attractive and comfortable modern hotels with the most up-to-date tourist facilities. Without disturbing the calm and peace, 125 of these eye-catching tourist palaces - the largest Dar Djerba with 2,500 beds - built in traditional menzel style, fit neatly into the palm-saturated landscape. Nature and the edifices built by man have merged together to strengthen the island's magic spell.

These attractive and comfortable hotels, hospitable and friendly people with a slow-moving lifestyle, breathtaking countryside, mild winters, cool summers and tantalizing sea, make Djerba one of Tunisia's most popular tourist spots. Located on Europe's doorsteps, the island which some call the 'Little Mediterranean Polynesia' has since the time of Ulysses been drawing travelers. Annually, it hosts some 600,000 visitors - 50% of these Germans.

With the softness of its sweet-serene air, perfumed with the flowers of the many fruit trees, overshadowed by clear blue sky and ringed by golden sands, this paradise isle entraps even the most skeptical visitor. Our guide had a point when he remarked as we climbed the ferry at Ajim for the mainland, "I always think of Djerba as Tunisia's isle of forgetfulness."

How To Get There:

There are good bus connections between Djerba and all the large urban centers in Tunisia. Djerba also, has an airport through which most of the tourists are processed and has good connections to the city of Tunis and some centers in Europe. When driving, to reach the island, cross from the mainland on the causeway or take a ferry Facts About Djerba and Tunisia:

- 1) To enter Tunisia, no visas are necessary for travelers from Western Europe, Japan, U.S.A. and Canada.
- 2) It is best to travel to Djerba in spring or autumn. In summer, the island teems with tourists.
- 3) The currency used in Tunisia is the dinar - one US dollar is worth 1.25 dinar. Tunisia is one of the few countries in the world where hotels give a better exchange rate than the banks.
- 4) To tour the island, taxis are metered and very reasonable; buses and shared taxis (louages) connect all towns and villages; tour companies offer excursions; autos can be rented - small ones for about 75 dinars per day, fully insured; tour companies offer excursions; but the best way to relish Djerba's atmosphere is to hire a bicycle - the island is flat and very easy to navigate.

5) Hotels on the island are very reasonably priced. However, it is best to book through a tour company. They can offer even better prices. A good hotel to stay in on Djerba is Hotel Melia Djerba Menzel - cost for double room from \$30. - \$68., depending on season.

6) Try Tunisian food. It's very tasty. Three of the best dishes are cous-cous. Prepared in seemingly hundreds of different ways - from sweet to very hot; briq - a thin pastry which comes with a variety of fillings, but always includes an egg; chakchouka - a ratatouille which is offered in many types; and spaghetti cooked Tunisian style - for me the epitome of Spaghetti dishes. Also, Djerba is noted for its fresh seafood dishes. One will not be disappointed when dining on these fruits of the sea.

7) There is less crime in Tunisia than in Western Europe or North America, but beware of pick-pockets, especially in crowded trains, buses and souks.

8) When taking tours, make sure the guide speaks English. If you do not ask, French will be the language spoken.

9) Tunisia is the most sophisticated, relaxed and tolerant state in North Africa. Women travelers are very safe when traveling alone.

10) With the exception of its capital, Tunis, Tunisia is geared up for tourism. The most up-to-date touristic facilities are found in all its resorts. Note: All prices quoted are in US dollars.

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MOROCCO'S VEGETABLE FOODS

by Habeeb Salloum

No one who has enjoyed couscous, the national dish of Morocco, in all its meat varieties, will dream that in many peasant homes this delicacy is prepared solely from vegetables and semolina. These toilers of the soil who never taste meat for weeks at a time prepare, not only their couscous, but almost all their dishes from grain and vegetables. With the right amount of herbs and spices they create incredibly tasty meals, forming an important part of the Moroccan kitchen - a cuisine with an illustrious history. A great number of the Moroccans firmly believe that no other country's culinary art has reached the exalted heights of their cooking. A number of travellers support this assessment, stating that if the food of this North African country is not the greatest in the world, it stands near the top as one of the world's eminent cuisines.

Ethnic Variety

In that spellbinding land with its long sandy coasts, rich plains, towering mountains, and endless deserts, many civilizations have come and gone. Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arab's, Spanish Muslims, and the Berbers, the original inhabitants of the country, all had their day. They ruled the country for awhile then faded into history. Their cuisines, with a touch of Portuguese, Turkish and Jewish influences, helped in the creation of the modern Moroccan.

Well-known culinary experts have written that great food and glorious civilizations complement each other. They go on to say that what creates a noteworthy cuisine are: abundance of ingredients; outside influences; a noble civilization; and refined palace life.

Hence, in the elegant palaces of the rich in Fez and Marrakesh where the great Arab-Islamic civilization of Spain had its greatest impact, the culinary art of Morocco reached its epitome of perfection. Paula Wolfert in her book, *Couscous and the Other Good Foods From Morocco*, writes that Moroccan cooking is the last of the great undiscovered cuisines.

Included in this relatively unknown kitchen with a distinguished past are the tasty dishes of the workers and peasants. In their daily Menues, little meat is utilized. The

grains and vegetables are combined with numerous herbs and spices to produce savory and satisfying meals.

The herbs: chervil, garlic, fresh coriander leaves, mint and parsley are blended with the spices: aniseed, cayenne, cinnamon, cumin, ginger, paprika, pepper, saffron, turmeric and ras el-hanout (a blend of spices) to produce mouth-watering dishes. To give these non-meat creations even more zest, onions, olives, pickled lemons, almonds and sesame seeds are utilized extensively.

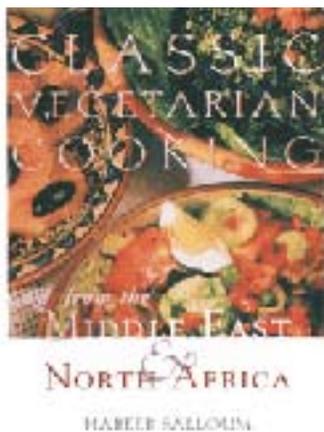
Soups, the mainstay of the poorer peasants and at times their only meal of the day, are based mostly on chickpeas and lentils. Infused with herbs and spices, they become delightful creations. The most widely prepared of these soups is harira - the ultimate of Moroccan soups. In the cities, the wealthy, in addition to the vegetables,

utilize all types of meat to create their mouth-watering hariras. Yet, the peasants' meatless hariras are a match for any of these soups..

Moroccan salads differ to some extent from the usual well-known salads. They are, in most cases, prepared from cooked vegetables and are somewhat zesty but not spicy

hot. In the homes of the affluent, they are served at the beginning of the meal as appetizers. However, for the poor, like the soups, they are usually the main course. As to stews, the Moroccan kitchen would be much poorer without the delectable vegetable tajines. Fragrant, zesty, spicy or sweet, they are always delicious and inviting. Simmered to produce tasty sauces, their enticing aromas, as they cook, makes even the one who has just eaten yearn to sample the simmering dish.

Perhaps, more than any other food, couscous, Morocco's national dish, is cooked by the peasants solely from vegetables. A Berber dish embellished by the Arabs and Spanish Muslims, it is prepared in endless varieties. Pleasing to the eye, it is served on a platter and the couscous is heaped pyramid style with a hollow on top which is filled with the stew. Known as the king of the Moroccan kitchen, it is served at the end of diffas (great feasts) to satiate the hunger of guests. Hence, complying with Arab hos-



pitality that 'no guest can go home hungry'. For sweets, the Moroccans are known for their creations based on honey, almonds, sugar and flaky dough. The honey and almonds have always been utilized in Moroccan pastry. The sugar and flaky dough were introduced by the Arabs to North Africa and Spain.

With an illustrious background and centuries of evolution, Moroccan cuisine has made for itself a notch in the cooking of the world. In all strata of society, the housewife prepares her dishes so perfectly that it is considered vulgar to place salt on the table. Usually, she keeps secret her own recipes and improves them with the passing years until they reach perfection.

For one visiting Morocco there is not much chance to try these home-cooked meals. Nevertheless, travellers should not leave the country without having a meal in restaurants set in a converted Moorish-Andalusian palace which are to be found in every large city. Here, with haunting Arab music as a background, one can enjoy a sumptuous Moroccan repast which always includes a number of tempting vegetarian dishes. Such a meal will leave with most visitors, when they return to their native lands, a deep nostalgia for that country's food.

On the other hand, if a person cannot journey to the enchanting and fascinating land of the Moors, these few vegetarian foods will give an insight into their great cuisine.

VEGETABLE HARIRA

Serves about 12

- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium sized onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
- 1 small hot pepper, finely chopped
- 1 cup lentils, soaked overnight
- 2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 2 cups stewed tomatoes
- 8 cups water
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons ginger
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/4 cup rice
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice

In a large saucepan, heat oil, then sauté onions over medium heat for 10 minutes. Add garlic, coriander leaves and hot pepper, then stir-fry for a further 5 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients, except the lemon juice, then bring to a boil. Cover and cook



over medium heat for 35 minutes or until the rice and lentils are well done, adding more water if necessary or if a more liquid soup is desired. Stir in lemon juice, then serve.

BROAD BEAN PURÉE - BIESAR

Serves about 8

- 2 cups large dried broad beans, soaked for 24 hours, then skinned
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika

In a pot, place broad beans, garlic and cumin, then cover with water and bring to boil. Cover saucepan, then cook over medium heat for 50 minutes or until beans are cooked. Drain, but reserve the water. Place beans and the remaining ingredients, except paprika, in a food processor, then add 1 1/2 cups of the bottom part of the reserved water with the sediment and purée. Place purée in a pot, then heat. Spread on a serving platter, then decorate with paprika and serve immediately.

EGGPLANT PURÉE - DANJAL

Serves about 8

- 1 large eggplant
 - 4 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 large onion, finely chopped
 - 1 medium sweet green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
 - 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
 - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 - 1/2 teaspoon paprika
 - 1/2 teaspoon cumin
 - 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
 - 3 tablespoons lemon juice
 - 1 tomato, finely chopped
- Place eggplant in a 375 F preheated oven,

then bake until skin begins to blacken and becomes blistered. Remove and allow to cool.

In the meantime, heat oil in a frying pan, then sauté onion over medium heat for 10 minutes. Add the green pepper, then sauté for further 10 minutes.

Peel eggplant, then mash and add, along with remaining ingredients, except tomato, to frying pan contents. Thoroughly mix, then place on a flat serving platter. Decorate with tomato, then serve.

PARSLEY SALAD - SHLADA

MADNOUSSE / Serves from 4 to 6

- 1 large bunch of wide leaf parsley (Italian), washed, stemmed and chopped
 - 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
 - 1 large Spanish onion, finely chopped
 - 1 medium sweet red pepper, finely chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 3 tablespoons olive oil
 - 3 tablespoons lemon juice
 - 1 teaspoon dried mint
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 - 1/2 cup black olives, pitted and halved
- Place all ingredients, except olives, in a salad bowl, then thoroughly mix. Decorate with olives, then serve immediately.

CARROT SALAD - SHLADA

DISJADA / Serves 4 to 6

- 1 pound carrots, scraped, washed, then sliced into thin rounds
 - 4 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
 - 4 tablespoons olive oil
 - 4 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
 - 3 tablespoons lemon juice
 - 1 teaspoon paprika
 - 1/2 teaspoon cumin
 - 1/8 teaspoon chili powder
- Place carrots, garlic and 1 teaspoon of the salt in a saucepan, then cover with water and bring to boil. Cover, then cook over medium heat for 20 minutes and drain.

In a frying pan, heat oil, then stir-fry carrots over medium heat for 10 minutes or until the carrots are cooked.

In a salad bowl, mix the remaining ingredients, including the remainder of the salt. Stir in carrots, then serve hot or cold.

SPINACH SALAD - SHLADA

BEGGOULA / Serves 6 to 8

In Morocco, a mallow called beggoula is used when preparing this dish. However, spinach, although not as tasty, is a good substitute.

- 2 packages spinach (10 oz 284 g), washed and chopped
- 1/2 hot pepper, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice

Place spinach, hot pepper and oregano in a pot, then cover with water and bring to boil. Cook over medium heat for 3 minutes, then remove from heat and drain.

In a saucepan, heat oil, then add spinach and remaining ingredients, except lemon juice. Stir-fry for 5 minutes, then remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice, then place on a platter. Serve hot or cold.

ZUCCHINI STEW - AL-GHARA

BI TOMATOM / Serves 6 to 8

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 zucchini, 8 to 10 inches long, diced unpeeled into 1 inch cubes
- 3 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

In a saucepan, heat oil, then sauté onions over medium heat for 15 minutes or until they turn golden brown. Add remaining ingredients, then bring to boil. Cover and cook for 25 minutes over medium heat, then serve hot or cold.

GREEN BROAD BEANS IN OIL -

FOOL BI ZAYT / Serves from 4 to 6

1 pound green freshly shelled or frozen broad or lima beans
1 1/2 cups water
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
2 cloves garlic, crushed
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon cumin
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/8 teaspoon cayenne
2 tablespoons lemon juice

In a saucepan, place all ingredients, except the lemon juice, then bring to boil. Cover and cook over medium heat for 25 minutes or until the beans are done. Stir in lemon juice, then serve hot or cold.

BEAN STEW - LUBIA / Serves 6 to 8

2 cups dried navy or similar type bean, soaked for 24 hours, then drained
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
1 small hot pepper, finely chopped
3 cups stewed tomatoes
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1/2 teaspoon cumin
pinch of saffron
4 tablespoons lemon juice

In a saucepan, place beans and cover, up to 2 inches above, with water, then bring to a boil. Cover and cook for 1 1/2 hours over medium heat or until the beans are cooked, adding more water if necessary.

In the meantime, in a frying pan, heat oil, then sauté onions over medium heat for 15 minutes. Add garlic, coriander leaves and hot pepper, then stir-fry for further 5 minutes. Add frying pan contents and remaining ingredients to beans, then bring to boil, adding more water if necessary. Re-cover, then cook for 30 minutes, adding a little more water if necessary. Stir in lemon juice, then serve hot or cold.

VEGETABLE TAJINE

Serves 6 to 8

4 tablespoons butter
2 medium onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic crushed
4 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
1 small hot pepper, finely chopped

4 medium potatoes, peeled, the sliced into 1/4 inch thick slices
2 medium sized carrots, scraped, then cut into thin rounds
1 can chickpeas (19 oz 540 ml), with its water
2 cups stewed tomatoes
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon cumin
pinch of saffron
1 lemon, quartered, then sliced into thin slices
1/2 cup pitted green olives

In a casserole, melt butter, then sauté onions, garlic, coriander leaves and hot pepper over medium heat for 10 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients, except the lemon slices and olives, then place in a 3500 F preheated oven, then cover and bake for 1 hour, or until vegetables are cooked. Place lemon slices and olives evenly otop, then re-cover and bake for a further 10 minutes. Serve hot from the casserole.

VEGETABLE COUSCOUS

Serves about 12

A couscouisiere is needed for this recipe. However if one is not available a double boiler with a perforated top may be substituted.

2 cups couscous
5 tablespoons butter, melted
4 tablespoons cooking oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
1 hot pepper, finely chopped
1 can chickpeas (19 oz 540 ml), with its water
2 cups stewed tomatoes
1/2 cup lentils
2 medium carrots, scraped and quartered, then cut lengthwise into 2 inch long pieces
2 medium parsnips, peeled and quartered, then cut lengthwise into 2 inch long pieces
2 medium sized potatoes, peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes
1 small turnip, about 3 inch in diameter, peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes
1/4 cup raisins
3 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon allspice
pinch of saffron
6 cups water
1 teaspoon paprika
1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds

Place couscous and butter in a bowl, then thoroughly mix until all kernels are coated. Place in top part of the couscouisiere, then set aside.

In the bottom part of the couscouisiere, heat oil, then sauté onion, garlic, coriander leaves and hot pepper over medium heat for 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients, except paprika, and sesame seeds, and bring to a boil, then fit the top part of the couscous filled couscouisiere with the couscous on the bottom part and seal the two parts together with a piece of cloth impregnated with flour. Cook over medium heat for 20 minutes, stirring couscous once in a while to make sure no lumps are formed, then slowly sprinkle, while constantly stirring, a cup of water over couscous. Cook for further 30 minutes, continuing to stir couscous every few minutes. Remove top part of the couscouisiere and ensure the vegetables are cooked. If not, cook for further few minutes.

Place couscous on a large serving platter, pyramid shape, then make well on top. Place cooked vegetables with a little of the sauce in the well, then decorate couscous with paprika and sesame seeds. Serve immediately with remaining sauce in a gravy bowl and remaining vegetables in a separate bowl.

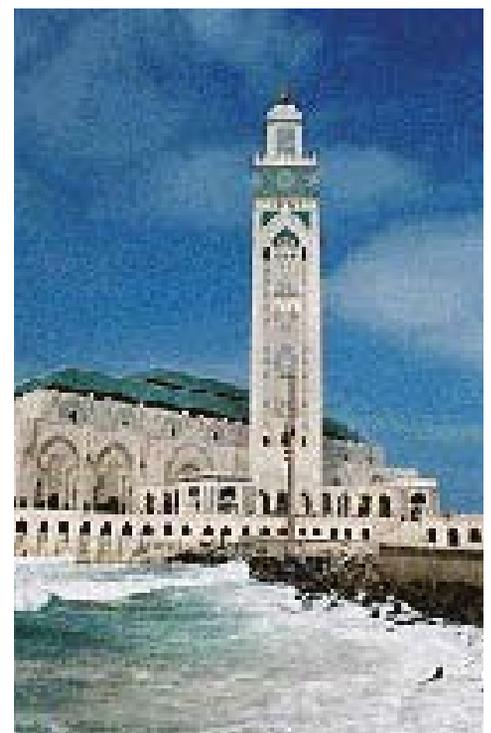
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Discovering Marrakech

Great Cities of Morocco

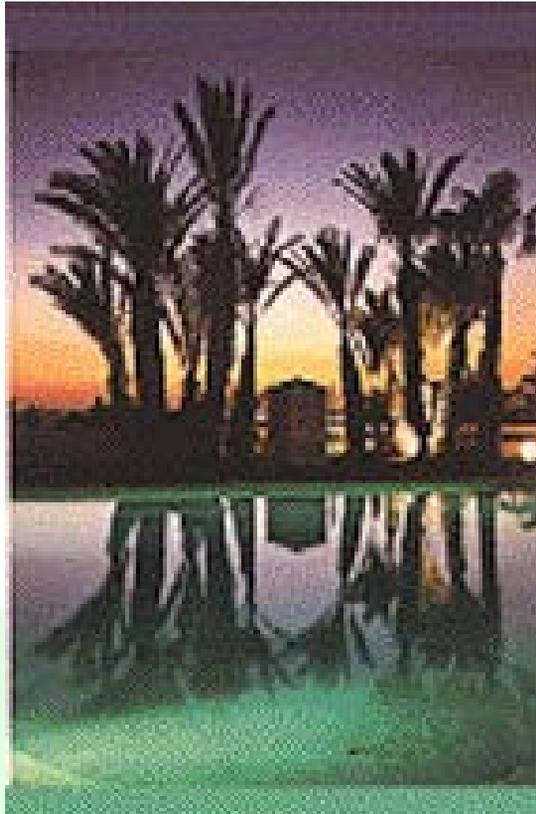
by Jerry W. Bird

A destination where one may enjoy the customs, culture and pleasures of laid back tourism, Marrakech is loaded with outstanding attractions and accommodation. Its conference facilities are a magnet for international events, trade missions and summits, such as our ATA Ecotourism Symposium at Le Palais du Congrès. Where else are all the walls and buildings tinted in a rich pastel pink, the broad avenues and promenades lined with rows and rows of orange trees with ripe fruit dangling from their branches like holiday ornaments? In five days of discovery, we managed to visit a wide cross section of riads and hotel facilities, in order to give our readers an idea of the choice available for all price ranges.

During a week long escorted tour, we had the good fortune of selecting a guide, who has become a good friend and ambassador for Morocco in general and Marrakech in particular. Chafiq Bahra speaks French, English and Italian, as well as Morocco's native languages, and is a member of Morocco's Professional Tour Guides Association. Chafiq gave me a solid understanding of the country and its people, including the basics of Islam. While I've much more to learn in the months ahead, our readers will benefit from his fountain of information in our coming issues.

We had the opportunity to visit the elegant **Hotel Mansour Eddahbi** where we were warmly received. Many of the staff remembered Muguette from her last visit when the Africa Travel Association brought a large contingent of travel agents here for an Ecotourism Symposium in 1996.

Hotel Tichka: The weather reports from Western Europe and North America's east coast were frightening this morning, but here we are basking in the sun, enjoying breakfast on the spacious patio by the emerald pool. We had the pleasure of staying in this fine member of the Salam Hotel group on the post ATA Ecotourism



Symposium tour provided by the Morocco National Tourist Office, and liked it so much, we decided to stay a second time on our own. The architecture and interior design are exceptional, with high ceilings and large, ornate metal chandeliers. The interior walls are a gallery of Moroccan art, and the corner fireplace makes you want to stay the entire evening. We discovered the unique history of the hotel, its designer (An American), and other reasons why our hosts recommended it to the Africa Travel Association for our media tour.



More to come.

Imperial Borj: We had the pleasure of a chance meeting with a familiar friend, Marie-Elyse Gbedo, former Tourism Minister of Benin and a Presidential candidate. Later that day we met her at this great hotel for an interview session regarding her visions for West Africa in the coming decade. This meeting was timely, since Ms. Gbedo was in the city for the African Professional Women's Association Conference. Watch for her comments and a description of the Imperial Borj hotel.

The Amanjena: When one thinks of luxury living, a standout in Marrakech is this relatively new resort, bordered by a lush 18-hole golf course on the city's outskirts, with the majestic snowcapped Atlas Mountains forming the backdrop to a picture of paradise in North Africa. I enjoyed the guided tour of this rambling resort, from self-contained suites, to dining area, library, business and health facilities. I look forward to the day when we can arrange a function for some of our North American corporate clients here in Marrakech.

La Mamounia: Muguette Goufrani and I had the opportunity to visit to La Mamounia twice during our stay in Marrakech. She remembers this hotel as a meeting place, where herself, friends and family spent many happy moments during her career. The hotel's name was derived from its beautiful, spacious and deliciously perfumed gardens - a unique wedding gift to the Prince Moulay Mamoun from his father some 200 years ago (more about the gardens later). In 1922, architects Prost and Marchisio designed the hotel, combining the popular Art Deco look with traditional Moroccan designs. George Washington slept here? No but many well known icons of our times, from Ronald and Nancy Reagan, to Charles de Gaulle, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill - helped make La Mamounia one of the most famous addresses in North Africa.

Photo courtesy of Morocco National Tourist Office.



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