

# TUNISIA: The Tunis Medina and Downtown

*World Regional Geography*  
*by Lew, Hall & Timothy*

## Virtual Field Trip

Photos and text by: Alan A. Lew

Photos Taken: August 2008



[Creative Commons 3.0. Copyright by Alan A. Lew: Some Rights Reserved](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/)

# Tunis and Carthage

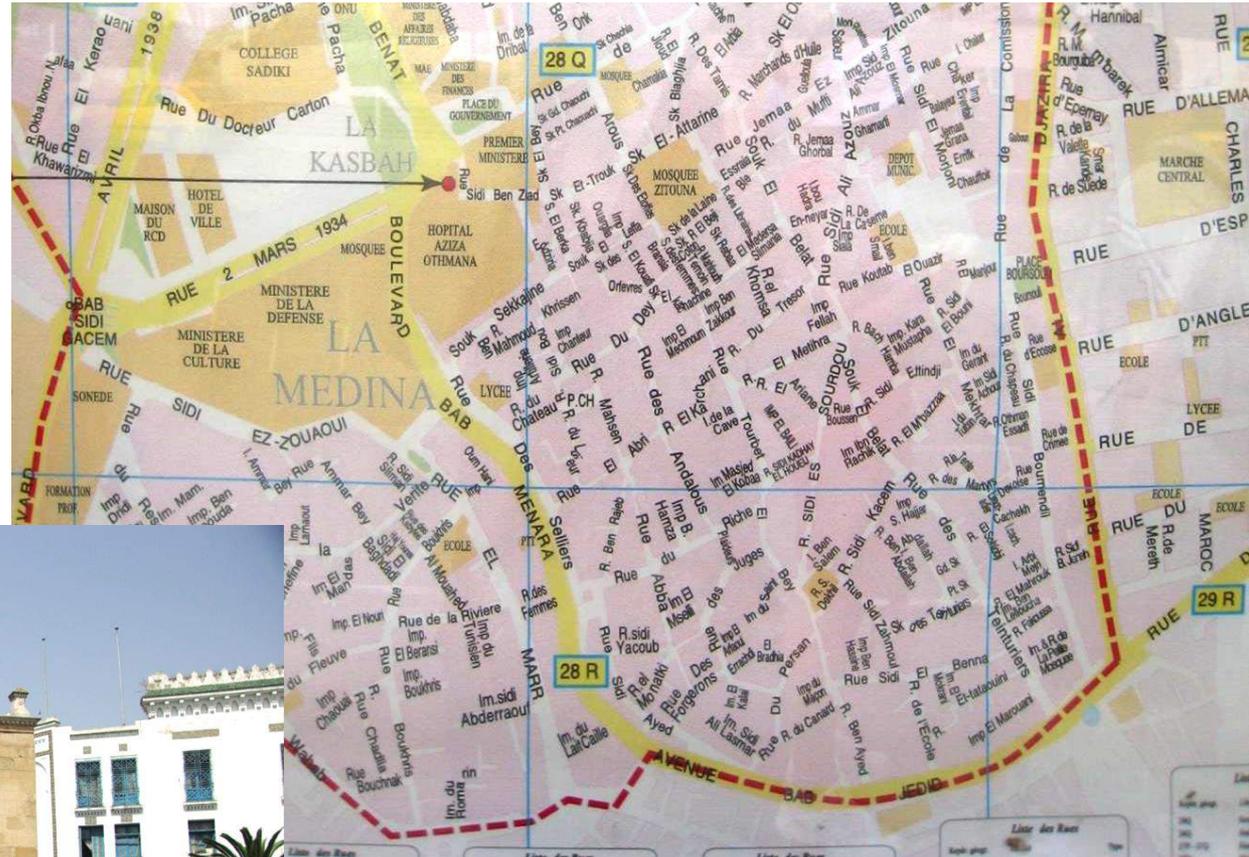
Tunis, and its coastal suburb of Carthage, has historically been occupied by most of the major civilizations of the Mediterranean Sea. It was first settled by Berbers around 1500 BCE. Phoenician settled Carthage in 814 BCE (the date is disputed) and controlled northern Tunisia until the third Punic War (146 BC) when the Romans defeated Hannibal and destroyed both Carthage and Tunis. Tunisia subsequently became the breadbasket of the Roman Empire.

Tunisia became part of the Muslim Arab Empire in the 7th century, which was when the Tunis Medina (old market) was built. Tunis was controlled by Berber dynasties from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it was among the richest and largest cities (about 100,000 pop.) in the Islamic world. France controlled Tunisia as a protectorate from 1881 to 1956, and French is widely spoken there today.



# The Tunis Medina

The Tunis Medina is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is considered to be one of the best old city medina in the Arab World.



The "Porte de France" or Sea Gate, marks the entrance to the Medina from the modern downtown along Avenue de France.

# Medina Paths

Food items and shoes are for sale on one of the more general Medina paths, while pipes and sunglasses are on display on a tourist oriented path.



# Covered Souks

The Jewelry Souk (shopping area) , below, is brightly lit to show off gold and gems. General merchandise is in the covered path on the right.



# Carpets and Perfumes

**Cruise ships bring large numbers of European and American tourists to the Medina's carpet and perfume shops, when they are in town.**



# Viewing Terrace



A few souvenir shops have rooftop terraces to attract tourists. The tower of the Grand Mosque can be seen (top right) along with the covered pathways and skylights (right)



**View of hills to the south of Tunis, left, with a minaret in the foreground, and another terrace and the Medina's Grand Mosque minaret, below.**

# Terrace Views



# Covered and Uncovered Tourist Paths



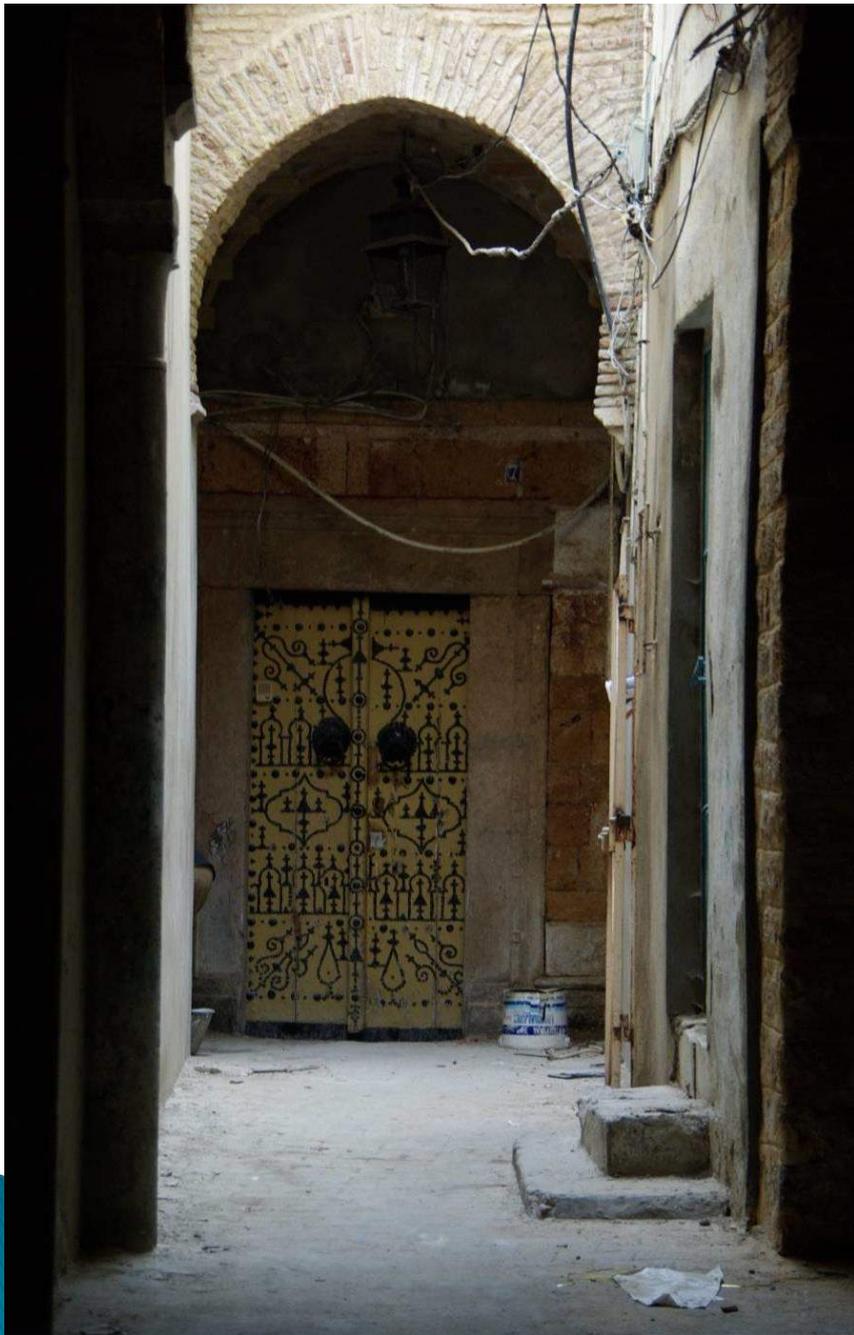
**9000 for the shirts, above, is actually 9 Dinar (or about US\$8.10 in August 2008).**

# The Non-Tourist Medina

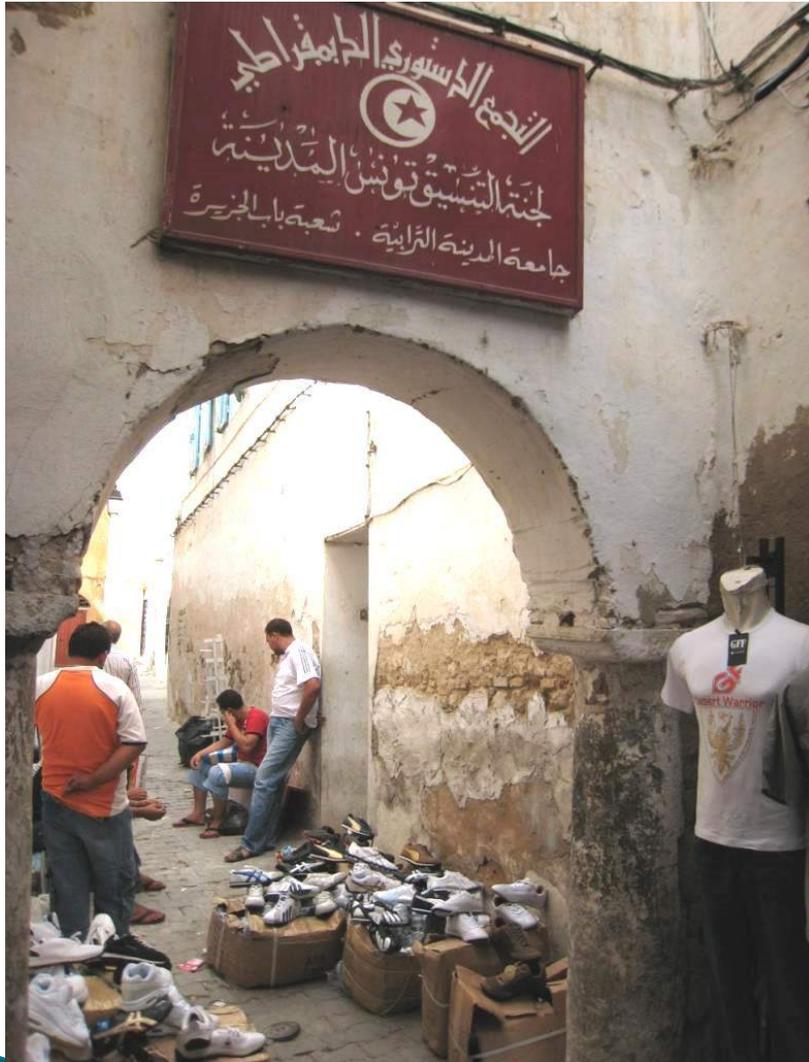
**Most of the Medina is not oriented toward tourists, but instead consists of homes, shops, workshops and warehouses for local residents and business people.**







# The Working Medina



The Shoe Souk, at left. This photo shows one corner of a larger area where many shoes sellers are found. A bakery, above, is located on a quiet pathway in the back region of the Medina.

# The Men's Souk



**The Men's Clothing Souk, is above. Not too far away from this corner of the Medina is the Red Light area, left, with its unusually narrow paths and numerous small doorways.**

# Government Center



**The Tunisian Prime Minister's Office, above and right, is on the edge of the Medina, with a direct path to the Grand Mosque (right). Other major government buildings are nearby.**



# Culture and the Arts



**The Tunisian Ministry of Culture, above, along with the Ministry of Defense, are also on the edge of the Medina. One portion of the Medina has been set aside for art galleries and artist workshops, right.**

# Olives and Spices

Olives, spices, fruits and vegetables are sold in shops and markets on the edge of the Medina.



# Downtown Tunis



# St. Vincent de Paul Cathedral



An electric tram on the Avenue de France in front of the St. Vincent de Paul Cathedral in downtown Tunis.

**CATHEDRALE SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL  
ET SAINTE OLIVIA**

**OUVERTURE - APERTO - OPEN**

TOUS LES JOURS	<b>8h – 12h</b>	*Dimanches après midi fermée
OGNI GIORNO	<b>15h – 18h</b>	Sundays afternoon closed
EVERYDAY		

Si la grande porte est fermée,  
entrez par la **porte latérale** de la rue d'Alger

If the main door is closed,  
please entry by the **lateral door** at rue d'Alger



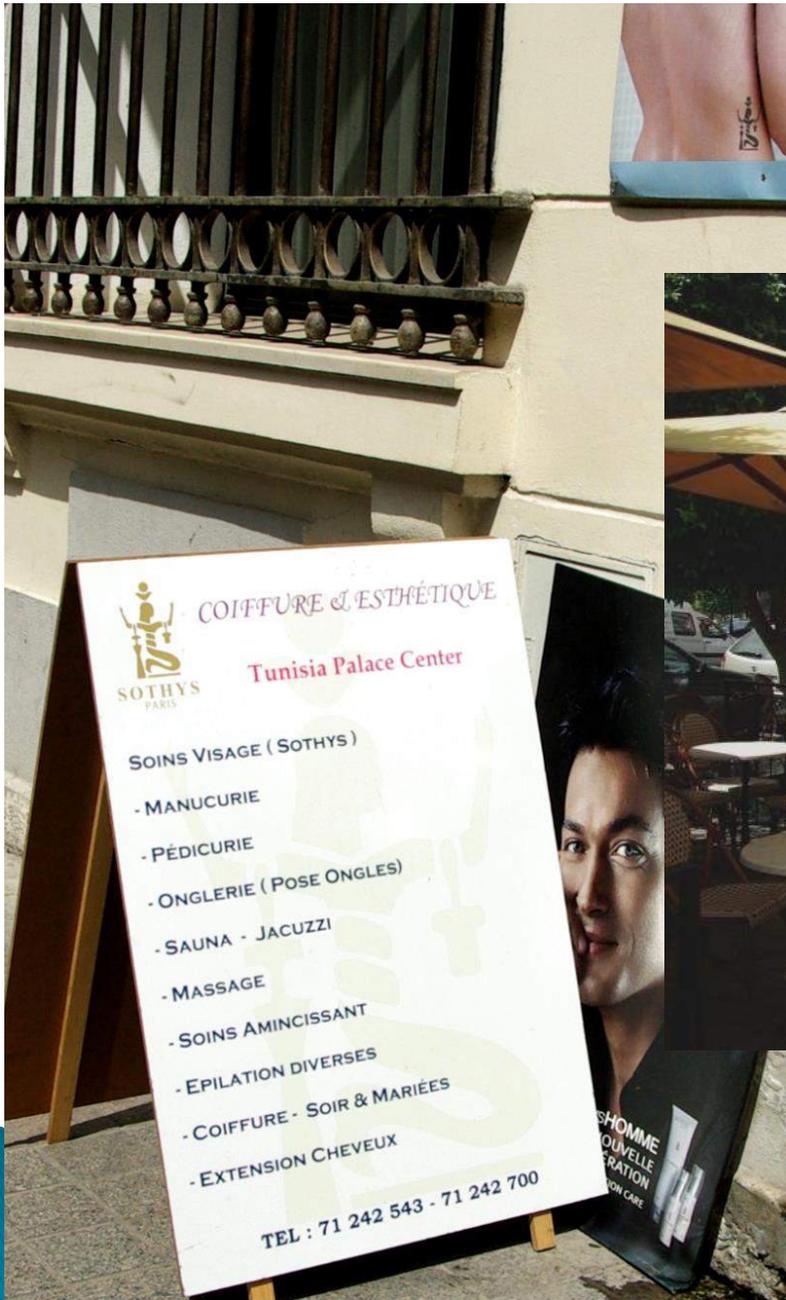
**MESSE - SANTA MESSA - HOLY MASS**

LUNDI – SAMEDI LUNEDI – SABATO MONDAY – SATURDAY	{	<b>7h 30***</b>
		<b>18h 30</b>
DIMANCHE DOMENICA SUNDAY	{	<b>9h (italiano)</b>
		<b>11h</b>
		<b>18h 30***</b> / <b>20h***</b>
		(octobre – avril) / (juin – septembre)

(Misa en Español: el 2º sábado del mes, de octubre a junio a las 18h 30\*\*\*)

\*\*\*Crypte / Crypt entrée par la rue d'Alger / entrance by rue d'Alger

# Fashionable Tunis

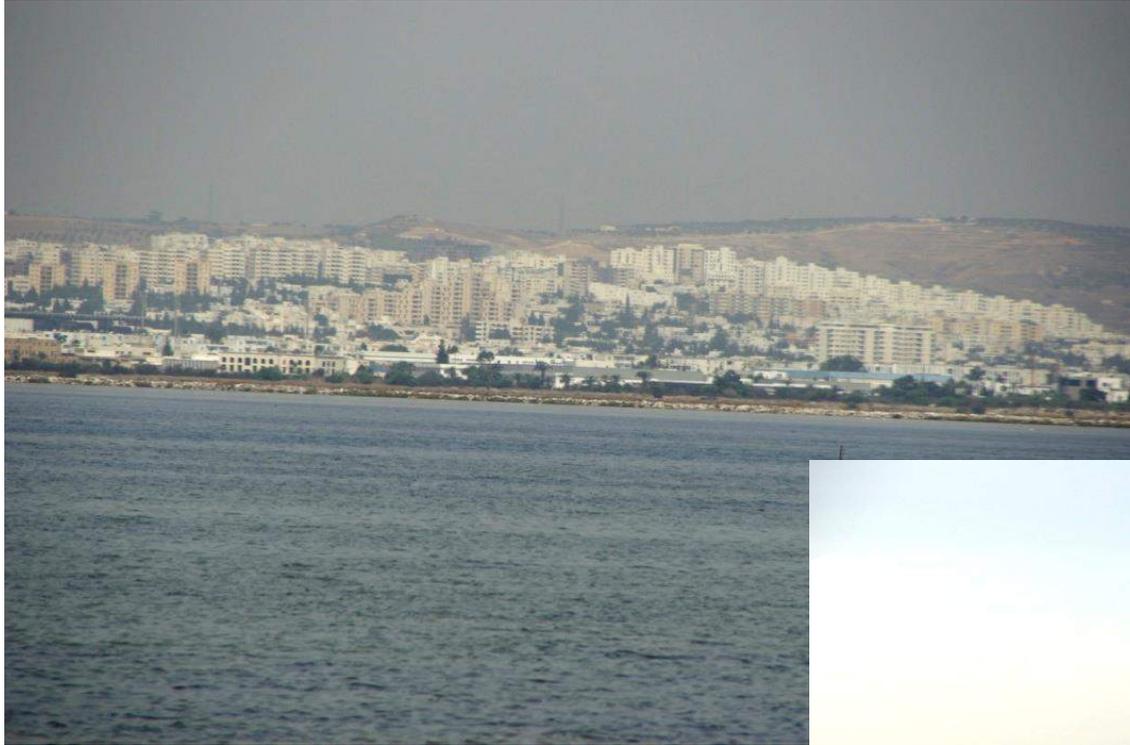


# Scenes on the Avenue de France in Downtown Tunis



**Traffic policewoman (top left), Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (right), and the Performing Arts Centre (above).**

# On the Outskirts of Tunis



**High rise residential area on this hills on the Lake of Tunis (left). A canal connect the Lake of Tunis to the Gulf of Tunis and the Mediterranean Sea (below).**

