

# Djerba

also transliterated as **Jerba** or **Jarbah**, is, at 514 square kilometres (198 sq mi), the largest island of North Africa, located in the Gulf of Gabes, off the coast of Tunisia. It had a population of 139,544 at the 2004 Census, while the latest official estimate (as at 1 July 2013) is 158,941.

Legend has it that Djerba was the island of the Lotus-Eaters where Odysseus was stranded on his voyage through the Mediterranean.

The island, which was called *Meninx* until the third century AD, includes three principal towns. One of these, whose modern name is Būrgū, is found near Midoun in the center of the island. Another city, on the southeast coast of the island at Meninx, was a major producer of priceless murex dye, and is cited by Pliny the Elder as second only to Tyre in this regard. A third important town was the ancient Haribus. The island was densely inhabited in the Roman and Byzantine periods, and probably imported much of the grain consumed by its inhabitants.

During the Middle Ages, Djerba was occupied by members of the Kharejite (Ibadite) sect, who claimed it as their own. The Christians of Sicily and Aragon disputed this claim with the Ibadites. Remains from this period include numerous small mosques dating from as early as the twelfth century, as well as two substantial forts.

The island was controlled twice by the Norman Kingdom of Sicily: in \*1135-1158 and in \*1284-1333. During the second of these periods it was organised as a feudal lordship, with the following Lords of Jerba: 1284-1305 Roger I, 1305-1307 and 1307-1310 Roger II (twice), 1310 Charles, 1310 Francis-Roger III; there were also royal governors, whose times in power partially overlapped with those of the Lords: c. 1305-1308 Simon de Montolieu, 1308-1315 Raymond Montaner.

In 1503, the corsair (pirate) Aruj and his brother Hayreddin Barbarossa took control of the island and turned it into their main base in the western Mediterranean, thus bringing it under Ottoman control. Spain launched a disastrous attempt to capture it in November, 1510. In 1513, after three years in exile in Rome, the Fregosi family returned to Genoa, Ottaviano was elected

Doge, and his brother Federigo Fregosi (archbishop, later cardinal), having become his chief educator, was placed at the head of the army, and defended the republic against internal dangers (revolts of the Adorni and the Fieschi) and external dangers, notably suppression of the Barbary piracy: Cortogoli, a corsair from Tunis, blockaded the coast with a squadron, and within a few days had captured eighteen merchantmen; being given the command of the Genoese fleet, in which Andrea Doria was serving, Federigo surprised Cortogoli before Bizerta. Soon after, he carried out an invasion and occupation of the island and returned to Genoa with great booty.



**El Ghriba synagogue**



**Ghazi Mustapha Fort, Djerba, Tunisia**

Spanish forces returned to Djerba in 1520, and this time were successful in capturing the island. It was twice occupied by Spain, from 1521 to 1524 and from 1551 to 1560; again there were governors: 1521-1524 ..., 1560 Giovanni Andrea Doria.

On May 14, 1560, the Ottoman fleet, under the command of Piyale Pasha and Turgut Reis, severely defeated the *Holy League* of Philip II at the Battle of Djerba. From that time until 1881, Djerba belonged to the Ottoman regency of Tunis.

Subsequently, it came under the French colonial protectorate, which became the modern republic of Tunisia.

An archaeological field survey of Djerba, carried out between 1995 and 2000 under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania, the American Academy in Rome and the Tunisian Institut National du Patrimoine, revealed over 400 archaeological sites, including many Punic and Roman villas.

# Tabarka

(is a coastal town located in north-western Tunisia, at about  $36^{\circ}57'16''\text{N}$   $8^{\circ}45'29''\text{E}$ , close to the border with Algeria. It has been famous for its coral fishing, the Coral Festival of underwater photography and the annual jazz festival. Tabarka's history is a colorful mosaic of Phoenician, Roman, Arabic and Turkish civilizations. The town is dominated by an offshore rock on which is built a Genoese castle. Nationalist leader Habib Bourguiba, later to become president of post-independence Tunisia, was exiled here by the French colonial authorities in 1952.



Tabarka island, 17th century.



Fort Diagram

Although older sources placed Thabraca within the Roman province of Numidia, recent ones agree in placing it in the Roman province of Africa, known also as *Africa Proconsularis*. It was a Roman colony. It was connected by a road with Simitthu, to which it served as a port for the exportation of its famous marbles.

At Thabraca the rebellious Roman official Gildo, the brother of Firmus, committed suicide. Under the Vandal king Gaiseric it had a monastery for men and one for women.

In 1540 the island of the same name which lies at a distance of about 365 yards overlooking the city, was given by the Ottoman Turk bey of Tunis in concession to the Genoese family of Lomellini. The Genoese were in the service of Spain during 1553 at the request of Carlos V of Castile and Aragon that was interested in coral fishing. The Lomellini were part of the circle of Andrea Doria, Doge of Genoa and were related to parental ties to the family Grimaldi (XVI century). Here you can still see the ruins of a fortress stronghold, a church, and some Genoese buildings. The Genoese maintained a fortress garrison there from 1540 to 1742. The Lomellini were part of the inner circle

of Andrea Doria, Doge of Genoa and were related to parental ties to the family Grimaldi (XVI century). The grant was likely due to a never revealed but likely ransom for the release of the pirate Turkish Dragut, captured in 1540 by Giannettino Doria, nephew of Andrea Doria. The Lomellini colonized Tabarca with a group of inhabitants of Pegli, near Genoa, where he had various properties and a huge palace resort. The community of pegliesi lived in Tabarka for several centuries. In 1738 due to the exhaustion of the coral reefs and the deterioration of relations with the Arab population a large group of Tabarkini moved to the Sardinia island of San Pietro, then uninhabited, where they founded a new town of Carloforte. The transfer was made possible thanks to the King of Sardinia, Carlo Emanuele III of Savoy to colonize those lands belonging to Sardinia which were not yet inhabited. The name of Carlisle was chosen in honor of the sovereign. At Tabarka, the ruins consists of a pit once used as a church and some fragments of walls which belonged to Christian buildings. There were also two Ottoman Turkish fortresses, one of which has been repaired.



Close View

In 1741 the Genoese fortress surrendered to the (nominally Ottoman, de facto autonomous) Bey of Tunis. Part of the population was moved to the Sardinian island of San Pietro and the town of Calasetta on the adjacent Island of Sant'Antioco, whose population still speaks a variant of Genoese dialect originating from Tabarka. Others were moved to the Spanish island of New Tabarca.<sup>[7]</sup>

Under French colonial rule it was annexed to the civil district of Souk el-Arba, now in the Tunisian governorate of Jendouba, and a rather important fishing centre. Tabarka Jazz Festival was established in 1973.

# Sousse

is a city in Tunisia, capital of the Sousse Governorate. Located 140 kilometres (87 miles) south of the capital Tunis, the city has 271,428 inhabitants (2014). Sousse is in the central-east of the country, on the Gulf of Hammamet, which is a part of the Mediterranean Sea. The name may be of Berber origin: similar names are found in Libya and in the south of Morocco (Bilād al-Sūs). Its economy is based on transport equipment, processed food, olive oil, textiles and tourism. It is home to the Université de Sousse.



A mosaic depicting Medusa in the Museum of Sousse.



The Ribat of Sousse



Sousse town centre

The Phoenicians founded Hadrumetum in the 11th century BC.

## Roman and Vandal eras

The city allied itself with Rome during the Punic Wars, thereby escaping damage or ruin and entered a relatively peaceful 700-year period under the Pax Romana. Livy wrote that Hadrumetum was the landing place of the Roman army under Scipio Africanus in the second Punic War. Roman usurper Clodius Albinus was born in Hadrumetum.

As part of Bonifacius's revolt against Constantinople, the Vandals were invited in and they took Hadrumetum in 434 AD and renamed the town Hunerikopolis.

During the Vandalic War Justinian retook the town in 534 and restored its Roman name.

### Arab conquest

In the 7th century AD Arab-Islamic armies conquered what is now Tunisia and rapidly spread Arab culture across what had been a thoroughly Romanized and Christianized landscape. The Arabs seized the city, which in the aftermath of Rome's fall was but a remnant of its former self. They renamed the city Sûsa and within a few decades elevated it to the status of the main seaport of the Aghlabid Dynasty. When the Aghlabids invaded Sicily in 827, Sûsa was their main staging ground.

After the Byzantine city of Melite (modern Mdina, Malta) was captured by the Aghlabids in 870, marble from its churches was used to build the castle of Sousse.

### European pushback

In the centuries that followed, as Europe gained technological ascendancy and began pushing back at Islam, Sûsa was briefly occupied by the Normans of Sicily in the 12th century, was later more thoroughly occupied by the Spanish, and in the 18th century was the target of bombardments by the Venetians and the French. The French called the city Sousse.

### Today

Despite the turmoil around it, Sousse's character had retained the solidly Arabian look and feel it had assumed in the centuries after Islam's wars of conquest. Today it is considered one of the best examples of seaward-facing fortifications built by the Arabs. Its ribat, a soaring structure that combined the purposes of a minaret and a watch tower, is in outstanding condition and draws visitors from around the world.

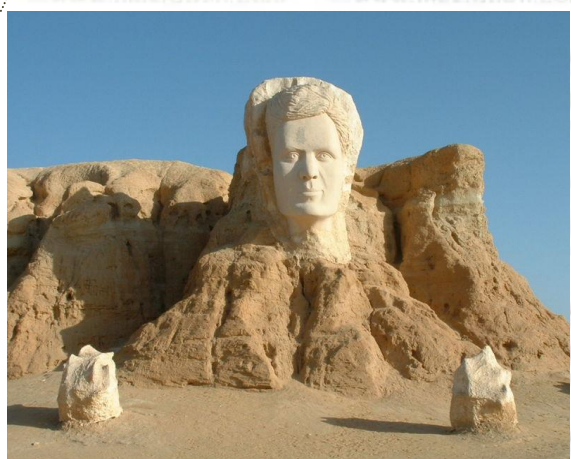
Sousse was the site of Chess interzonal in 1967 which was made famous when American Grandmaster Bobby Fischer withdrew from the tournament even though he was in first place at the time.

These days, Sousse, with a population of about 200,000, retains a medieval heart of narrow, twisted streets, a kasbah and medina, its *ribat* fortress and long wall on the Mediterranean. Surrounding it is a modern city of long, straight roads and more widely spaced buildings.

# Tozeur

The city is located North West of Chott el-Djerid, With hundreds of thousands of palm trees, Tozeur is a large oasis. The dates that are exported from Tozeur are very well known. In ancient times, before the advent of motorized vehicles, the oasis was important for the transportation through the Sahara, which took place in caravans. The name of the city in antiquity was Tusuros, it was an important Roman outpost.

In the medina (old city) of Tozeur, one can find traditional architecture, fashion and workmanship. Like elsewhere in Tunisia, the local population is generally very hospitable towards tourists, and there are also many tourist facilities. From Tozeur one can make trips on a camel, explore the Sahar Desert and get to know the Chott el-Djerid, where one can see Fata Morgana mirages.



# Hammamet

**Hammamet** is a town in Tunisia. Thanks to its beaches, it is a popular destination for swimming and water sports and is one of the primary tourist destinations in Tunisia. It is located in the south-eastern section of Cap Bon and is part of the Nabeul Governorate.

The reported number of inhabitants varies from 100,000 to 400,000 and the population quadruples due to tourists' arrival in the summer.

It is particularly known for jasmine, which is the namesake of the tourist resort of Yasmine Hammamet. All over Hammamet, souvenirs crafted from jasmine can be found.

Around Hammamet, suburbs are being built as migrants from the southern region of the country come to find employment. As a popular tourist destination, the city is economically important to Tunisia.

The 2005 World Scout Conference was held in Hammamet.

