

Language

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ARABIC

Arabic is the official language of Tunisia. However, the Arabic spoken on the streets differs greatly from the standard Arabic written in newspapers and spoken on the radio (which is known as Modern Standard Arabic or MSA). MSA is the written and spoken lingua franca that is common to all Arabic-speaking countries.

Tunisian Arabic is from the group of Arabic dialects known as the Western dialects, which also includes Moroccan Arabic

and Algerian Arabic. It is fun, but difficult to learn. It's basically a dialect of the standard language, but so different in many respects as to be virtually another language. As with most dialects, it's the everyday language that differs the most from that of Tunisia's other Arabic-speaking neighbours. More specialised or educated language tends to be pretty much the same across the Arab world, although pronunciation may vary considerably. An Arab from, say, Jordan or Iraq will have no problem having a chat about politics or literature with a Tunisian, but might have more trouble making themselves understood in a Tunisian grocery shop.

There is no official written form of the Tunisian Arabic dialect, although there is no practical reason for this – The Tunisian writer 'Abd al-'Aziz Laroui wrote his famous collections of short stories exclusively in Tunisian Arabic. However, the use of Tunisian Arabic in literary fields is generally not readily accepted. A 1997 translation into Tunisian Arabic of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* was greeted with much criticism by those who felt it was a threat to the national written language of the country – Modern Standard Arabic. For some reason though, foreigners who specifically want to learn Tunisian Arabic instead of MSA are told that it can't be written in script, and are then presented with one system or other of transliteration – none of them totally satisfactory. If you're getting a headache now, you'll have some idea of why few non-Arabs and non-Muslims embark on the study of the language.

Nevertheless, if you take the time to learn even a handful of words and phrases, you'll discover and experience much more while travelling through the country.

TRANSLITERATION

Converting what for most outsiders is just a bunch of squiggles into meaningful words (ie those written using the Roman alphabet) is a tricky business – in fact, no really satisfactory system of transliteration has been established, and probably never will be. For

THE STANDARD ARABIC ALPHABET

Final	Medial	Initial	Alone	Transliteration	Pronunciation
ا		ا	ا	ā/aa	as in 'father'/as the long 'a' sound in 'air'
ب	ب	ب	ب	b	as in 'bet'
ت	ت	ت	ت	t	as in 'ten'
ث	ث	ث	ث	th	as in 'thin'
ج	ج	ج	ج	j	as in 'jet'
ح	ح	ح	ح	H	a strongly whispered 'h', like a sigh of relief
خ	خ	خ	خ	kh	as the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i>
د	د	د	د	d	as in 'dim'
ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ	dh	as the 'th' in 'this'; also as d or z
ر	ر	ر	ر	r	a rolled 'r', as in the Spanish word <i>caro</i>
ز	ز	ز	ز	z	as in 'zip'
س	س	س	س	s	as in 'so', never as in 'wisdom'
ش	ش	ش	ش	sh	as in 'ship'
ص	ص	ص	ص		emphatic 's' (see below)
ض	ض	ض	ض		emphatic 'd' (see below)
ط	ط	ط	ط		emphatic 't' (see below)
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ		emphatic 'dh' (see below)
ع	ع	ع	ع	'	the Arabic letter 'ayn'; pronounce as a glottal stop – like the closing of the throat before saying 'Oh-oh!' (see Other Sounds on p321)
غ	غ	غ	غ	gh	a guttural sound like Parisian 'r'
ف	ف	ف	ف	f	as in 'far'
ق	ق	ق	ق	q	a strongly guttural 'k' sound; also often pronounced as a glottal stop
ك	ك	ك	ك	k	as in 'king'
ل	ل	ل	ل	l	as in 'lamb'
م	م	م	م	m	as in 'me'
ن	ن	ن	ن	n	as in 'name'
ه	ه	ه	ه	h	as in 'ham'
و	و	و	و	w	as in 'wet'; or
oo				oo	long, as in 'food'; or
ow				ow	as in 'how'
ي	ي	ي	ي	y	as in 'yes'; or
ee				ee	as in 'beer', only softer; or
ai/ay				ai/ay	as in 'aisle'/as the 'ay' in 'day'

Vowels Not all Arabic vowel sounds are represented in the alphabet. For more information on the vowel sounds used in this language guide, see Pronunciation on p321.

Emphatic Consonants To simplify the transliteration system used in this book, the emphatic consonants have not been differentiated from their non-emphatic counterparts.

this book, an attempt has been made to standardise some spellings of place names and the like.

There is only one article in Arabic: *al* (the). It's also sometimes written as 'il' or 'el', occasionally contracted to 'l' and sometimes modifies to reflect the first consonant of the following noun, eg in Saladin's name, Salah ad-Din (righteousness of the faith), the 'al' has been modified to 'ad' before the 'd' of 'Din'. The article *el* is used only in a few instances in this book, such as well-known places (El-Jem, Borj el-Khadra) or where locals have used it in restaurant and hotel names.

The whole business of transliteration is fraught with pitfalls, and the reality is that it simply isn't possible to devise a truly 'correct' system. The locals themselves can only guess at how to make the conversion – and the result is often amusing. The fact that French and English have had a big influence in Tunisia has also led to many interesting ideas on transliteration. Don't be taken aback if you start noticing half a dozen different spellings for the same thing.

For some reason, the letters **q** and **k** have caused enormous problems, and have been interchanged willy-nilly in transliteration. For a long time, Iraq (which in Arabic is spelled with what can only be described in English using its nearest-sounding equivalent: 'q') was written, even by scholars, as 'Irak'. Other examples of an Arabic **q** receiving such treatment are *souq* (market), often written 'souk', and *qasr* (castle), sometimes written 'kasr'. It's a bit like spelling English 'as she is spoke' – imagine the results if Australians, Americans, Scots and Londoners were all given free rein to write English the way they pronounce it!

PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation of Arabic can be somewhat tongue-tying for those unfamiliar with the intonation and combination of sounds. The following guide should help, but it isn't complete because the myriad rules governing pronunciation and vowel use are too extensive to be covered here.

Vowels

a	as in 'had' (sometimes very short)
aa	like the long 'a' sound in 'air'
ā	as the 'a' in 'father'

e	as in 'bet' (sometimes very short)
ee	as in 'beer', only softer
i	as in 'hit'
o	as in 'hot'
oo	as in 'food'
u	as in 'put'

Diphthongs

ow	as in 'how'
ai	as in 'aisle'
ay	as in 'day'

Consonants

Pronunciation of Arabic consonants is covered in the alphabet table on p320. Note that when double consonants occur in transliterations, each consonant is pronounced. For example, *il-Hammaam*, (bathhouse), is pronounced 'il-ham-maam'.

Other Sounds

Arabic has two sounds that are very tricky for non-Arabs to produce, the 'ayn and the glottal stop. The letter 'ayn represents a sound with no English equivalent that comes even close – it is similar to the glottal stop (which is not actually represented in the alphabet) but the muscles at the back of the throat are gagged more forcefully and air is allowed to escape, creating a sound that has been described as reminiscent of someone being strangled! In many transliteration systems 'ayn is represented by an opening quotation mark, and the glottal stop by a closing quotation mark. To make the transliterations in this language guide (and throughout the rest of the book) easier to use, we have not distinguished between the glottal stop and the 'ayn, using the closing quotation mark to represent both sounds. You'll find that Arab speakers will still understand you.

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...	<i>ana infarkis 'ala ...</i>
hotel	<i>ooteel</i>
youth hostel	<i>dār ash-shabaab</i>

Where can I find a cheap hotel?

birabbi ween famma ooteel rakhees?

What is the address?

shneeya l-adreesa?

Could you write the address, please?

mumkin tiktibshee l-adreesa

Do you have rooms available?

'andkumshee beet faarigha?

I'd like (a) ...	inHebb
I'd like to book (a) ...	birabbi inHebb naHjiz ...
bed	fارش
single room	beet li waaHid
double room	beet doobal
room with two beds	beet ma' zooz afraash
room with a bathroom	beet ma' beet banoo
room with air-con/ fan	beet ma' akleemateesur/ marwaha

in the name of ...	bi 'ism ...
date	taareekh
from (date) to (date)	min yoom (...) li yoom (...)
credit card ...	kart kredee ...
number	noomroo
expiry date	taareekh al-'intihaa
How much is it ...?	qaddaash ...?
per night	bi qaddaash il-leela
per person	lil waaHid

Do you have any cheaper rooms?

'andkumshree byoot arkhas?

May I see it?

mumkin inshoofoo?

Where is the bathroom?

ween il-beet banoo?

I'm/We're leaving today.

(ana nimshi/aHna nimsheeo) l-yoom.

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	'aslaama
(response)	'aslaama
Hello/Welcome.	marHaba beek (to one person)
(response)	marHaba beekum (to a group)
	'ayshik
Good morning.	sbāH al-kheer
(response)	sbāH al-kheer
Good evening.	masa' l-kheer
(response)	masa' l-kheer
Good night.	tisbaH 'ala kheer
(response)	tisbaH 'ala kheer
Goodbye.	bi s-slaama
Yes.	ayy (or na'am – more formal)
No.	la

Please.

birabbi (used when asking for something in a shop)
 tfaddel/ tfaddloo (to man/group; used when offering something or inviting someone)
 itfaddel/ itfaddloo (to man/group; similar, or can mean 'Please, go ahead and do something')

Thank you.	barkallaoo feek/'ayshik
(response)	min gheer muziyya

Excuse me.

saamaHnee (to one person)
 saamHoonnee (to group)
 min gheer muziyya

That's fine/You're welcome.**Sorry.** (ie forgive me)

mitaasif/a (m/f)
 shnuwwa ismek inti?

What's your name?**My name is ...**

ismee ...
 nitsharrafoo (pol)

Pleased to meet you.**How are you?**

shnuwwa Hawaalek? (to one person)
 shnuwwa Hawaalkum? (to a group)

la baas ilHamdu lillah
 mineen inti?

I'm fine.**Where are you from?****I'm from ...****I like/don't like ...****Just a minute.**

ana min ...
 ana inHebb/manHebbish
 daqeeqa waaHida

DIRECTIONS**Where is ...?**

ween ...?

Go straight ahead.

tool

Turn left.

door al-lisaar

Turn right.

door al-limeen

at the (next) corner

fi l-kwan (illi jayy)

at the traffic lights

fi dhow laHmar

behind

wara

in front of

quddaam

far (from)

ba'eed ('ala)

near (to)

qreeb (min)

opposite

mqābil

here

hoonee/hnaa

there

ghādee

this address

haadhee l-adreesa

north

shamaal

south

janoob

east

sharq

west

gharb

beach

il-bHar

bridge

il-qantra

castle

il-qala'

my hotel

il-ooteel mtaa'ee

island

jazeera

main square

is-saaHa l-kabeera

mosque

il-jaami'

museum

il-matHaf

old city

il-madeena

palace

il-qasr

ruins

il-athār

sea

il-baHr

square

il-saaHa

street

ish-shaara'

village

al-qarya

EMERGENCIES – ARABIC

Help!	'awnoonee!
There's been an accident.	famma Hādith!
I'm lost.	ana dhāyi/dhāy'a
Go away!	khalleenee rāyidh/a!
Call a doctor!	jeeboolee it-tabeeb!
Call the police!	jeeboolee il-bolees!
I've been robbed.	sarqoolee Hwayji
Where are the toilets?	ween it-twalet?

HEALTH

I'm ill.	ana mreedh/a (m/f)
My friend is ill.	sāHbi/sāHibti mreedh/a (m/f)
It hurts here.	yuwja'ni hnaa

I'm ...	ana mreedh/a bi ... (m/f)
asthmatic	l-fadda
diabetic	s- sukkar
epileptic	l-epilepsee

I'm allergic ...	'andee Hasasiyya ...
to antibiotics	min antbiotique
to aspirin	min asbireen
to bees	min naHl
to nuts	min looz
to peanuts	kakwiyya
to penicillin	min penisileen

antiseptic	dwaā l-aHmar
aspirin	asbireen
condoms	preservateef (rifel, brand name)
contraceptive	wasaa'il mana' il Haml

I have ...	'andee ...
diarrhoea	kirshee tijree
fever	skhāna
headache	wjee't it ir-rās

hospital	sbeetar
medicine	dwaā
pharmacy	saydaliyya
pregnant	Hebla
prescription	warqit at-tabeeb
sanitary napkins	alwees (brand name)
stomachache	wjee't il-maada
sunblock cream	kreema did ish-shams
tampons	tampax

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?	tittkallim ingleeziyya?
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Does anyone here speak English?

famma skhoon yitkallim bi l-ingleziyya?

How do you say ... in Tunisian Arabic?

kifaash taqool ... bi t-toonsee?

What does ... mean?

aash ta'nee ...

I understand.

nifhim

I don't understand.

ma nifhimsh

Please write it down.

mumkin tiktibhaalee

Can you show me (on the map)?

mumkin twarreenee (fi l- khareeta)?

NUMBERS

Arabic numerals are simple to learn and, unlike the written language, run from left to right. Pay attention to the order of the words in numbers from 21 to 99. When followed by a noun, the pronunciation of *miyya* changes to *meet* for the numbers 100 and 300–900, and the noun is always used in its singular form.

0	sifr	٠
1	waaHid	١
2	zooz/ithneen	٢
3	thlaatha	٣
4	arb'a	٤
5	khamsa	٥
6	sitta	٦
7	sab'a	٧
8	thmaanya	٨
9	tis'a	٩
10	'ashra	١٠
11	Hadaash	١١
12	ithnāsh	١٢
13	thlattāsh	١٣
14	arba'tāsh	١٤
15	khamastāsh	١٥
16	sittāsh	١٦
17	saba'tāsh	١٧
18	thamantāsh	١٨
19	tisa'tāsh	١٩
20	'ashreen	٢٠
21	waaHid oo 'ashreen	٢١
22	ithneen oo 'ashreen	٢٢
30	thalatheen	٣٠
40	arba'een	٤٠
50	khamseen	٥٠
60	sitteen	٦٠
70	sab'een	٧٠
80	thamaneen	٨٠

90	tis'een	٩٠
100	miyya (meet before a noun)	١٠٠
200	meeteen	٢٠٠
1000	alf	١٠٠٠
2000	alfeen	٢٠٠٠

How many? qaddaash min?

PAPERWORK

name	ism
nationality	jinsiyya
date/place of birth	tareekh/maHal il-milād
sex (gender)	jins
passport	paspoor
visa	veeza

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	shkoon?
What?	shnuwwa/aash?
When?	waqtaash?
Where?	ween?
How?	keefaash?
Which?	aama?

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...	inHebb nishree ...
How much is it?	qaddaash haadha?
I don't like it.	ma y'ajibneesh
May I look at it?	mumkin inshoofu?
I'm just looking.	qa'ad inshoof bark
It's cheap.	hiyya rakheesa
It's too expensive.	ghaalee shwayya
More than ...	mush akthār min ...
I'll take it.	nishreeha

Can you give me ...?	tnajjemshee t'amelee ...?
a discount	takhfeedh
a good price	soom beheh

Do you accept ...?	taakhudh ...?
credit cards	kart kredee
traveller cheques	sheekaata siyaHiyya

more	akthir
less	aqall
smaller	asghar
bigger	akbar

I'm looking for ...	ana infarkis 'ala
a bank	banka
the bazaar/market	is-sooq
the city centre	wist il-blaad
the (...) embassy	as-sifāra (...)
the post office	il-boosta

the telephone centre *it-taxiphone*
the tourist office *maktab is-siyaaHa*

I want to change ... *inHebb nijbid ...*
money *fuloos*
travellers cheques *sheekaata siyaHiyya*

Where is an internet café? *wayn famma intanet kafay?*

TIME & DATES

What time is it?	qaddaash il-waqt?
It's (8 o'clock).	tawwa (ith-thmaanya)
in the morning	fi s-sbaaH
in the afternoon	fi l-'asheeya
in the evening	fi l-leel
today	il-yoom
tomorrow	ghudwa
yesterday	ilbaaraH
day	yoom
month	sh-har
week	jim'a
year	'am
early	bikree
late	makhkhir
daily	kull yoom

Monday	inhar il-ihnteen
Tuesday	inhar ith-thlaatha
Wednesday	inhar il-arba'
Thursday	inhar il-khamees
Friday	inhar ij-juma'
Saturday	inhar is-sibt
Sunday	inhar il-aHadd

January	janfee
February	feevree
March	māris
April	avreel
May	may
June	jwān
July	jweelya
August	oot
September	sibtamber
October	uktoober
November	nuvamber
December	disamber

TRANSPORT

Public Transport

When does the ...	Waqtaash timshee/tuwsil ...?
leave/arrive?	
boat	il-flooka
bus	il-kār

ferry *il-ferry*
plane *it-tayyāra*
train *it-treenoo*

I'd like a ... ticket. *inHebb tiskira ...*
one-way *maashee akahow*
return *maashi oo jayy*
1st-class *daarija oola*
2nd-class *daarija thaanya*

I want to go to ...
inHebb nimshee

The train has been delayed.

it-treenoo wakher

The train has been cancelled.

naHāow it-treenoo

Which bus goes to ...?

enayhee il-kār timshee li- ...?

Does this bus go to ...?

il-kār haadhee timshee li ...?

Please tell me when we arrive in ...

birabbi qullee waqtillee nuwsiloo fi ...

What is the fare to ...?

qaddaash it-tiskira li ...?

Stop here, please.

birabbi waqif hoonee

Wait!

istanna!

the first	il-awwil/oola (m/f)
the last	il-aakhir
the next	illi jayy
airport	il-matār
bus station	mHattat il-kār
bus stop	mHatta
city	il-madeena
platform number	noomroo il-qay
station	il-maHatta
ticket office	il-geeshay
timetable	jadwal awqāt
train station	maHattat il-treenoo

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a/an ...	inHebb nikree ...
car	karhaba
4WD	too terran
motorbike	mutoor
bicycle	bisklaat
camel	jmal
donkey	bheem
guide	geed
horse	Hsān

Is this the road to ...?
it-treeq haadha iyhizz li ...?

(How long) Can I park here?

mumkin inwaqqif karhabti hoonee (Hatta waqtaash)?

Where do I pay?

ween inkhallis?

I need a mechanic.

Haajti bi mekanisyan

The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...)

il-karhaba tāHit on pan 'and ...

The car/motorbike won't start.

il-karhaba ma tHebbish tikhdim

I have a flat tyre.

'andee 'ajla mafshoosha

I've run out of petrol.

wfaalee l-essans

I've had an accident.

'amelt hādith

Where's a service station?

ween il-kiyosk?

Please fill it up.

birabbi 'abbeelee

I'd like (30) litres.

inHebb thalaatheen eetra

diesel *diyaysel*

leaded petrol *essans normaal (regular)*

essans sooper (super)

unleaded petrol *essans son plom*

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Is there a/an ...?

famma ...?

I need a/an ...

Haajti bi...

car baby seat

kursi mtaa' baybiyaat li l-karhaba

child-minding service

kresh

children's menu

menyu mtaa' li s-sghār

(disposable) nappies/diapers

koosh

infant milk formula

Haleeb baybiyaat

(English-speaking) babysitter

babysitter (illi tikkallim bi l-ingleeziyya)

highchair

kursi baybiyaat

potty

kasreeya

stroller

karooosa

Are children allowed?

tiqbloo is-sghār?

FRENCH

Almost everybody in Tunisia speaks French, so if the thought of getting your mind around Arabic is too much, it'd be a good investment to learn a little French instead.

In French, an important distinction is made between *tu* and *vous*, which both mean 'you'. The informal *tu* is only used when addressing people you know well, or children. When addressing an adult who is not a personal friend, *vous* should be used unless the person invites you to use *tu*.

PRONUNCIATION

The pronunciation guides included with each French phrase should help in getting your message across. Here are a few of the trickier letters used in written French:

- j** as the 's' in 'leisure', eg *jour* (day)
c before **e** and **i**, as the 's' in 'sit'; before **a**, **o** and **u** it's pronounced as English 'k'. When underscored with a 'cedilla' (ç) it's pronounced as the 's' in 'sit'.
r pronounced from the back of the throat while constricting the muscles to restrict the flow of air
n, m where a syllable ends in a single **n** or **m**, these letters are not pronounced, but the vowel is given a nasal pronunciation

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for	<i>Je cherche ...</i>	zher shersh ...
a ...		
campground	<i>un camping</i>	un kom-peeng
guesthouse	<i>une pension (de famille)</i>	ewn pon-syon (der fa-mee-ler)
hotel	<i>un hôtel</i>	un o-tel
youth hostel	<i>une auberge de jeunesse</i>	ewn o-berzh der zher-nes

Where is a cheap hotel?

Où est-ce qu'on peut trouver un hôtel pas cher?
oo es-kon per troo-vay un o-tel pa shair

What is the address?

Quelle est l'adresse?
kel e la-dres

Could you write it down, please?

Est-ce que vous pourriez l'écrire, s'il vous plaît?
e-sker voo poo-ryay lay-kreer seel voo play

Do you have any rooms available?

Est-ce que vous avez des chambres libres?
e-sker voo-za-vay day shom-brer lee-brer

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone or written requests)

To ...	<i>A l'attention de ...</i>
From ...	<i>De la part de ...</i>
Date	<i>Date</i>
I'd like to book ...	<i>Je voudrais réserver ... (see the list under 'Accommodation' for bed and room options)</i>
	<i>du ... au ...</i>
in the name of ...	<i>au nom de ...</i>
from ... (date) to ...	<i>du ... au ...</i>
credit card	<i>carte de crédit</i>
number	<i>numéro</i>
expiry date	<i>date d'expiration</i>

Please confirm availability and price.	<i>Veillez confirmer la disponibilité et le prix.</i>
---	---

I'd like (a) ...	<i>Je voudrais ...</i>	zher voo-dray ...
single room	<i>une chambre à un lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a un lee
double-bed room	<i>une chambre avec un grand lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek un gron lee
twin room with two beds	<i>une chambre avec des lits jumeaux</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek day lee zhew-mo
room with a bathroom	<i>une chambre avec une salle de bains</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek ewn sal der bun
to share a dorm	<i>coucher dans un dortoir</i>	koo-sheer don zun dor-twa

How much is it ...?	<i>Quel est le prix ...?</i>	kel e ler pree ...
per night	<i>par nuit</i>	par nwee
per person	<i>par personne</i>	par per-son

May I see it?

Est-ce que je peux voir la chambre?
es-ker zher per vva la shom-brer

Where is the bathroom?

Où est la salle de bains?
oo e la sal der bun

Where is the toilet?

Où sont les toilettes?
oo-son lay twa-let

I'm leaving today.

Je pars aujourd'hui.
zher par o-zhoor-dwee

We're leaving today.

Nous partons aujourd'hui.
noo par-ton o-zhoor-dwee

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>Bonjour.</i>	bon-zhoor
Goodbye.	<i>Au revoir.</i>	o-rer-vva
Yes.	<i>Oui.</i>	wee
No.	<i>Non.</i>	no
Please.	<i>S'il vous plaît.</i>	seel voo play
Thank you.	<i>Merci.</i>	mair-see
You're welcome.	<i>Je vous en prie.</i>	zher voo-zon pree
	<i>De rien. (inf)</i>	der ree-en
Excuse me.	<i>Excuse-moi.</i>	ek-skew-zay-mwa
Sorry. (forgive me)	<i>Pardon.</i>	par-don

What's your name?

Comment vous appelez-vous? (pol)
ko-mon voo-za-pay-lay voo
Comment tu t'appelles? (inf)
ko-mon tew ta-pel

My name is ...

Je m'appelle ...
zher ma-pel ...

Where are you from?

De quel pays êtes-vous?
der kel pay-ee et-voo
De quel pays es-tu? (inf)
der kel pay-ee e-tew

I'm from ...

Je viens de ...
zher vyen der ...

I like ...

J'aime ...
zhem ...

I don't like ...

Je n'aime pas ...
zher nem pa ...

Just a minute.

Une minute.
ewn mee-newt

DIRECTIONS

Where is ...?

Où est ...?
oo e ...

Go straight ahead.

Continuez tout droit.
kon-teen-way too drwa

Turn left.

Tournez à gauche.
toor-nay a gosh

Turn right.

Tournez à droite.
toor-nay a drwa

at the corner

au coin
o kwun

at the traffic lights

aux feux
o fer

behind

derrière
dair-ryair

in front of

devant
der-von

far (from)

loin (de)
lwun (der)

near (to)

près (de)
pray (der)

opposite

en face de
on fas der

beach

la plage
la plazh

castle

le château
ler sha-to

EMERGENCIES

Help!

Au secours!
o skoor

There's been an accident!

Il y a eu un accident!
eel ya ew un ak-see-don

I'm lost.

Je me suis égaré/e. (m/f)
zhe me swee-zay-ga-ray

Leave me alone!

Fichez-moi la paix!
fee-shay-mwa la pay

Call ...!

Appelez ...!
a-play ...
a doctor
un médecin
un mayd-sun
the police
la police
la po-lees

island

l'île
leel

main square

la place centrale
la plas son-tral

mosque

la mosquée
la mos-kay

museum

le musée
ler mew-zay

old city

la vieille ville
la vyay veel

ruins

les ruines
lay rween

sea

la mer
la mair

street

la rue
la roo

village

le village
ler vee-lazh

HEALTH

I'm ill.

Je suis malade.
zher swee ma-lad

It hurts here.

J'ai une douleur ici.
zhay ewn doo-ler ee-see

I'm ...

Je suis ...
zher swee ...
asthmatic
asthmatique
(2)as-ma-teek
diabetic
diabétique
dee-a-bay-teek
epileptic
épileptique
(2)ay-pee-lep-teek

I'm allergic

Je suis allergique ...
zher swee za-lair-zheek ...

antibiotics

aux antibiotiques
o zon-tee-byo-teek

aspirin

à l'aspirine
a las-pee-reen

bees

aux abeilles
o za-bay-yer

nuts

aux noix
o nwa

peanuts

aux cacahuètes
o ka-ka-wet

penicillin

à la pénicilline
a la pay-nee-see-leen

antiseptic

l'antiseptique
lon-tee-sep-teek

aspirin

l'aspirine
las-pee-reen

condoms

des préservatifs
day pray-zair-va-teef

contraceptive

le contraceptif
ler kon-tra-sep-teef

diarrhoea

la diarrhée
la dya-ray

medicine

le médicament
ler may-dee-ka-mon

nausea

la nausée
la no-zay

sunblock cream

la crème solaire
la krem so-lair

tampons

des tampons
day tom-pon

antiseptic

hygiéniques
ee-zhen-eeek

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?

Parlez-vous anglais? par-lay-voov ong-lay

Does anyone here speak English?

Y a-t-il quelqu'un qui parle anglais? ya-teel kel-kung kee par long-glay

How do you say ... in French?

Comment est-ce qu'on dit ... en français? ko-mon es-kon dee ... on fron-say

What does ... mean?

Que veut dire ...? ker ver deer ...

I understand.

Je comprends. zher kom-pron

I don't understand.

Je ne comprends pas. zher ner kom-pron pa

Could you write it down, please?

Est-ce que vous pouvez l'écrire? es-ker voo poo-vay lay-kreer

Can you show me (on the map)?

Pouvez-vous m'indiquer (sur la carte)? poo-vay-voov mun-dee-kay (sewr la kart)

NUMBERS

0	zero	zay-ro
1	un	un
2	deux	der
3	trois	trwa
4	quatre	ka-trer
5	cinq	sungk
6	six	sees
7	sept	set
8	huit	weet
9	neuf	nerf
10	dix	dees
11	onze	onz
12	douze	dooz
13	treize	trez
14	quatorze	ka-torz
15	quinze	kunz
16	seize	sez
17	dix-sept	dee-set
18	dix-huit	dee-zweet
19	dix-neuf	deez-nerf
20	vingt	vung
21	vingt et un	vung tay un
22	vingt-deux	vung-der
30	trente	tront
40	quarante	ka-ront
50	cinquante	sung-kont
60	soixante	swa-sont
70	soixante-dix	swa-son-dees
80	quatre-vingts	ka-trer-vung
90	quatre-vingt-dix	ka-trer-vung-dees
100	cent	son

1000	mille	meel
How many?	Combien?	kom-byun

PAPERWORK

name	nom	nom
nationality	nationalité	na-syo-na-lee-tay
date/place	date/place	dat/plas
of birth	de naissance	der nay-sons
sex/gender	sexe	seks
passport	pasport	pas-por
visa	visa	vee-za

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	Qui?	kee
What?	Quoi?	kwa
What is it?	Qu'est-ce que c'est?	kes-ker say
When?	Quand?	kon
Where?	Où?	oo
Which?	Quel/Quelle?	kel
Why?	Pourquoi?	poor-kwa
How?	Comment?	ko-mon

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...	<i>Je voudrais acheter ...</i>	zher voo-dray ash-tay ...
How much is it?	<i>C'est combien?</i>	say kom-byun
I don't like it.	<i>Cela ne me plaît pas.</i>	ser-la ner mer play pa
May I look at it?	<i>Est-ce que je peux le voir?</i>	es-ker zher per ler vvar
I'm just looking.	<i>Je regarde.</i>	zher rer-gard
It's cheap.	<i>Ce n'est pas cher.</i>	ser nay pa shair
It's too expensive.	<i>C'est trop cher.</i>	say tro shair
I'll take it.	<i>Je le prends.</i>	zher ler pron

Can I pay by ...?	<i>Est-ce que je peux payer avec ...?</i>	es-ker zher per pay-yay a-vek ...
credit card	<i>ma carte de crédit</i>	ma kart der kray-dee
travellers cheques	<i>des chèques de voyage</i>	day shek der vva-yazh

more	plus	plew
less	moins	mwa
smaller	plus petit	plew per-tee
bigger	plus grand	plew gron

Where can I can find ...?	<i>Où est-ce qu'on peut trouver ...?</i>	oo es-kon per troo-vay ...
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I'm looking for ...	<i>Je cherche ...</i>	zhe shers ...
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a bank	<i>une banque</i>	ewn bonk
the bazaar	<i>le bazar</i>	ler ba-zar
the ... embassy	<i>l'ambassade de ...</i>	lam-ba-sahd der ...
the hospital	<i>l'hôpital</i>	lo-pee-tal
the market	<i>le marché</i>	ler mar-shay
the police	<i>la police</i>	la po-lees
the post office	<i>le bureau de poste</i>	ler bew-ro der post
a public phone	<i>une cabine téléphonique</i>	ewn ka-been tay-lay-fo-neek
a public toilet	<i>les toilettes</i>	lay twa-let

TIME & DATES

What time is it?	<i>Quelle heure est-il?</i>	kel er e til
It's (8) o'clock.	<i>Il est (huit) heures.</i>	il e (weet) er
It's half past ...	<i>Il est (...) heures et demie.</i>	il e (...) er e day-mee
in the morning	<i>du matin</i>	dew ma-tun
in the afternoon	<i>de l'après-midi</i>	der la-pray-mee-dee
in the evening	<i>du soir</i>	dew swar
today	<i>aujourd'hui</i>	o-zhoor-dwee
tomorrow	<i>demain</i>	der-mun
yesterday	<i>hier</i>	yair
day	<i>jour</i>	zhoor
month	<i>mois</i>	mwa
week	<i>semaine</i>	se-men
year	<i>année</i>	a-nay
early	<i>tôt</i>	to
late	<i>en retard</i>	on rer-tar
daily	<i>quotidien (m) quotidienne (f)</i>	ko-tee-dyun ko-tee-dyen

Monday	<i>lundi</i>	lun-dee
Tuesday	<i>mardi</i>	mar-dee
Wednesday	<i>mercredi</i>	mair-krer-dee
Thursday	<i>jeudi</i>	zher-dee
Friday	<i>vendredi</i>	von-drer-dee
Saturday	<i>samedi</i>	sam-dee
Sunday	<i>dimanche</i>	dee-monsh

January	<i>janvier</i>	zhon-vyay
February	<i>février</i>	fayv-ryay
March	<i>mars</i>	mars
April	<i>avril</i>	a-vreel
May	<i>mai</i>	may
June	<i>juin</i>	zhwun
July	<i>juillet</i>	zhwee-yay
August	<i>août</i>	oot
September	<i>septembre</i>	sep-tom-brer
October	<i>octobre</i>	ok-to-brer
November	<i>novembre</i>	no-vom-brer
December	<i>décembre</i>	day-som-brer

TRANSPORT
Public Transport

What time does ... leave/arrive?	<i>À quelle heure part/arrive ...?</i>	a kel er par/a-reev ...
boat	<i>le bateau</i>	ler ba-to
bus	<i>le bus</i>	ler bews
plane	<i>l'avion</i>	la-yyon
train	<i>le train</i>	ler trun

I'd like a ... ticket.	<i>Je voudrais un billet ...</i>	zher voo-dray un bee-yay ...
one-way return	<i>simple aller et retour</i>	sum-pler a-lay ay rer-toor
1st class	<i>de première classe</i>	der prem-yair klas
2nd class	<i>de deuxième classe</i>	der der-zeyem klas

I want to go to ...

Je voudrais aller à ... zher voo-dray a-lay a ...

The train has been delayed.

Le train est en retard. ler trun et on rer-tar

The train has been cancelled.

Le train a été annulé. ler trun a ay-tay a-new-lay

the first	<i>le premier (m) la première (f)</i>	ler prer-myay la prer-myay
the last	<i>le dernier (m) la dernière (f)</i>	ler dair-nyay la dair-nyair
platform number	<i>le numéro de quai</i>	ler new-may-ro der kay
ticket office	<i>le guichet</i>	ler gee-shay
timetable	<i>l'horaire</i>	lo-rair
train station	<i>la gare</i>	la gar

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a/an...	<i>Je voudrais louer ...</i>	zher voo-dray loo-way ...
car	<i>une voiture</i>	ewn vva-tewr
4WD	<i>un quatre-quatre</i>	un kat-kat
motorbike	<i>une moto</i>	ewn mo-to
bicycle	<i>un vélo</i>	un vay-lo

Is this the road to ...?

C'est la route pour ...? say la root poor ...

Where's a service station?

Où est-ce qu'il y a une station-service? oo es-keel ya ewn sta-yyon-ser-vees

Please fill it up.

Le plein, s'il vous plaît. ler plun seel voo play

I'd like ... litres.

Je voudrais ... litres. zher voo-dray ... lee-trer

petrol/gas	<i>essence</i>	ay-sons
diesel	<i>diesel</i>	dyay-zel

(How long) Can I park here?

(Combien de temps) (kom-byun der tom)
Est-ce que je peux es-ker zher per
stationner ici? sta-syo-nay ee-see?

Where do I pay?

Où est-ce que je paie? oo es-ker zher pay?

I need a mechanic.

J'ai besoin d'un zhay ber-zwun dun
mécanicien. may-ka-nee-syun

The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...)

La voiture moto est la vwa-tewr/mo-to ay
tombée en panne (à ...) tom-bay on pan (a ...)

The car/motorbike won't start.

La voiture/moto ne la vwa-tewr/mo-to ner
veut pas démarrer. ver pa day-ma-ray

I have a flat tyre.

Mon pneu est à plat. mom pner ay ta pla

I've run out of petrol.

Je suis en panne zher swee zon pan
d'essence. day-sons

I had an accident.

J'ai eu un accident. zhay ew un ak-see-don

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Is there a/an ...?

Y a-t-il ...? ya teel ...

I need a/an ...

J'ai besoin ... zhay ber-zwun ...

car baby seat

d'un siège-enfant dun syezh-on-fon

child-minding service

d'une garderie dewn gar-dree

children's menu

d'un menu pour enfants dun mer-new poor on-fon

disposable nappies/diapers

de couches-culottes der koosh-kew-lot

infant milk formula

de lait maternisé de lay ma-ter-nee-zay

(English-speaking) babysitter

d'une baby-sitter (qui dewn ba-bee-see-ter (kee
parle anglais) parl ong-glai)

highchair

d'une chaise haute dewn shay zot

potty

d'un pot de bébé dun po der bay-bay

stroller

d'une poussette dewn poo-set

Are children allowed?

Les enfants sont lay zon-fon son
permis? pair-mee



Also available from Lonely Planet:
French Phrasebook

Glossary

This glossary includes terms and abbreviations you may come across during your travels in Tunisia. Where appropriate, the capital letter in brackets indicates whether the terms are French (F) or Arabic (A).

Abbasids – Baghdad-based ruling dynasty (AD 749–1258) of the Arab/Islamic Empire
Africa Proconsularis – Roman province of Africa
Aghlabids – Arab dynasty based in Kairouan who ruled Tunisia (AD 800–909)
ain (A) – water source or spring
Allah (A) – Muslim name for God
alloucha (A) – thick-pile, woven, woollen Berber rug
Almohads – Berber rulers of Spain and North Africa (1130–1269)
Almoravids – dynasty of Berbers from the Sahara; reigned from 1061 to 1106 in Morocco and the Maghreb, and later in Andalusia, after 1086.
ASM – Association de Sauvegarde de la Medina; group charged with preserving the medinas of a number of Tunisian towns
assaba (A) – headband worn by Berber women
auberge de jeunesse (F) – youth hostel affiliated to Hostelling International

bab (A) – city gate
bakhnoug (A) – traditional shawl worn by Berber women
Barbary Coast – European term for the Mediterranean coast of North Africa in the 16th to 19th centuries
basilica – Roman building used for public administration; early Christian church
Berbers – indigenous (non-Arab) people of North Africa
bey – provincial governor in the Ottoman Empire; rulers of Tunisia from the 17th century until independence in 1957
bezness – local slang for beach-gigolo ‘business’
borj (A) – fort (literally ‘tower’)
boukha (A) – local spirit made from figs
brochette (F) – kebab
burnous (A) – hooded winter cape worn by men

calèche (F) – horse-drawn carriage
caliph – Islamic ruler, originally referred to the successors of the Prophet Mohammed
camionnette (F) – small pick-up used as a taxi
capitol – main temple of a Roman town, usually situated in the forum
caravanserai – see *funduq*
casse-croûte (F) – Tunisian fast food; a sandwich made from half a French loaf stuffed with a variety of fillings

centre des stages et des vacances (F) – holiday camps
chechia (A) – red felt hat
chorba (A) – soup, also spelt *shorba*
chott (A) – salt lake or marsh
confort (F) – class above 1st class on passenger trains
corniche (F) – coastal road
corsairs – pirates, especially those who operated on the North African coast from the 16th to the 19th century
couscous – semolina granules, the staple food of Tunisia

dar (A) – town house or palace
deglat ennour (A) – type of date (literally ‘finger of light’)
destour (A) – literally ‘constitution’ but also the name for Habib Bourguiba’s political party before independence
dey – the Ottoman army’s equivalent of a sergeant; rulers of Tunisia in the 16th century
diwan – assembly (in the Ottoman Empire)

eid (A) – feast
Eid al-Adha (A) – feast of Sacrifice marking the pilgrimage to Mecca; sometimes called Eid al-Kebir
Eid al-Fitr (A) – feast of the Breaking of the Fast, celebrated at the end of Ramadan
emir (A) – military commander or governor
erg (A) – sand sea; desert

Fatimids – Muslim dynasty (AD 909–1171) who defeated the Aghlabids and ruled Tunisia from Mahdia from AD 909 to 969
forum – open space at the centre of Roman towns
fouta (A) – cotton bath towel provided in a *hammam*
funduq (A) – former lodging houses or inns for the travelling merchants of the camel caravans, also known as *caravanserai*; Arab word for hotel

gare routière (F) – bus station
gargotte (F) – cheap restaurant that serves basic food
gargoulette (F) – pottery amphora used in traditional octopus catching technique on Jerba
ghar (A) – cave
ghorfa (A) – literally, room; especially a long, barrel-vaulted room built to store grain
guetiffa – a thick-pile, knotted Berber carpet

Hafsids – rulers of *Ifriqiyya* from the 13th to the 16th century
haj (A) – the pilgrimage to the holy sites in and around Mecca, the pinnacle of a devout Muslim’s life
hammam (A) – public bathhouse

harissa (A) – spicy chilli paste
harout (A) – traditional Jerban weaver's workshop
hedeyed (A) – finely engraved, wide bracelets made of gold or silver
hejab (A) – woman's veil or headscarf
Hejira (A) – Mohammed's flight from Mecca in AD 622; also the name of the Muslim calendar
Hilalian tribes – tribes of Upper Egypt who invaded the Maghreb in the 11th century, causing great destruction
Hizb al-Nahda – Renaissance Party, the main Islamic opposition party
Husseinites – dynasty of beys who ruled Tunisia from 1705 to 1957

Ibadites – an offshoot of the Kharijite sect found only on Jerba, in the villages of the M'Zab Valley in Algeria and in Oman
ibn (A) – son of
Ifriqiyya – Arab province of North Africa, including Tunisia and parts of Libya
iftar (A) – (also spelt *ftur*) the breaking of the day's fast during Ramadan
imam (A) – religious teacher

jebel (A) – hill or mountain
jihad (A) – holy war

kalaa (A) – Berber hill fort
kasbah (A) – fort or citadel
kassa (A) – a coarse mitten used in the steam room of a *hammam*
Kharijites – puritanical Islamic sect, which broke away from the mainstream Sunnis in AD 657 and inspired Berber rebellions from the 8th to the 10th century
kholkal (A) – gold or silver anklets
khomsa – Hand-of-Fatima motif
khutba (A) – weekly sermon in the mosque
kilim (A) – woven rug decorated with typical Berber motifs
koubba (A) – small domed tomb
ksar (A) – (plural *ksour*) a fortified Berber stronghold consisting of many *ghorfas*
ksibah (A) – small fort
ksour (A) – (singular *ksar*) fortified Berber stronghold consisting of many *ghorfas*
kuttab (A) – Quranic primary school

Limes Tripolitanus – the defensive line developed by the Romans in southern Tunisia
louage (F) – shared long-distance taxi

Maghreb – term used to describe northwest Africa, including Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia
maison des jeunes (F) – government-run youth hostel
malouf (A) – musical form that originated in Andalusia and adopted as traditional Tunisian music

marabout (A) – Muslim holy man or saint
masjid (A) – small local mosque
medersa (A) – Quranic school
medina (A) – city; the old quarter of Tunisian towns and cities
menzel (A) – fortified family dwelling found on Jerba
mergoum (A) – woven carpet with geometric designs
mihrab (A) – vaulted niche in a mosque, which indicates the direction of Mecca
minaret (A) – tower (literally 'lighthouse') of a mosque from which the *muezzin* calls the faithful to prayer
minbar (A) – the pulpit in a mosque
mouloud (A) – Maghreb term for the Moulid an-Nabi, the feast celebrating the birth of the Prophet Mohammed
mousseum (A) – pilgrimage to a shrine or to a tomb of a *marabout*
muezzin (A) – mosque official who calls the faithful to prayer
Muradites – line of Tunisian *beys*, ruling from the 17th to 18th century

nador (A) – watchtower
Numidians – tribe from present-day Algeria, who once controlled Northern Tunisia; founders of the cities of Bulla Regia, Sicca (El-Kef) and Thugga (Dougga)

ONAT – the Office National de l'Artisanat Tunisien; government-run fixed-price craft shops
ONTT – Office National du Tourisme Tunisien; government-run national tourist office
Ottoman Empire – former Turkish Empire, of which Tunisia was part; based in Constantinople from the late 13th century to the end of WWI
oud – lute
oued (A) – river; also dry riverbed
Ouergherma (A) – 17th-century Berber confederation that ruled from Medenine

palmeriaie (F) – palm grove; the area around an oasis where date palms, vegetables and fruit are grown
pasha – provincial governor or high official in the Ottoman Empire
pâtisserie (F) – cake and pastry shop
pension (F) – guesthouse
Phoenicians – a great seafaring nation, based in modern Lebanon, which dominated trade in the Mediterranean in the 1st millennium BC; founders of Carthage
PSD – Parti Socialiste Destourien (called the Neo-Destour Party before 1964); the first nationalist party in Tunisia
Punic – the Phoenician culture that evolved in North Africa
Punic Wars – three wars waged between Rome and Carthage in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, resulting in the destruction of Carthage by the Romans in 146 BC

qibla (A) – the direction of Mecca in a mosque, indicated by the *mihrab*
Quran (A) – the holy book of Islam

Ramadan – ninth month of the Muslim year, a time of fasting
razzegoui (A) – a large white grape that ripens to a pink blush
RCD – Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique; President Ben Ali's ruling party
ribat (A) – fortified Islamic monastery
rôtisserie (F) – basic restaurant serving roast chicken

Sahel – eastern part of central Tunisia occupying the large, fertile coastal bulge between the Gulf of Hammamet and the Gulf of Gabès
sand rose – crystallised gypsum found in desert and sold as souvenirs
Sharia'a (A) – Quranic law
sheesha (A) – water pipe used to smoke tobacco; also spelt *chicha*
Shiite – one of two main Islamic sects (see also Sunni); its followers believe that the true *imams* are descended from Ali
sidi (A) – saint
skifa (A) – gate

SNCF – Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Tunisiens; the national railway company
SNTRI – Société Nationale du Transport Interurbain; the national bus company
souq (A) – market
stele – gravestone
Sufi – follower of Islamic mystical orders that emphasise dancing, chanting and trances to attain unity with God
Sunni – the main Islamic sect (see also Shiite) derived from followers of the Umayyad caliphate
syndicat d'initiative (F) – municipal tourist office

Taxiphone – public telephone
Tell – the high plains of the Tunisian Dorsale, in central Tunisia
thibarine – a local spirit from the village of Thibar near Dougga
tophet – sacrificial site
tourbet (A) – mausoleum

Umayyad – first great dynasty of Arab Muslim rulers (AD 661–750), based in Damascus

zaouia (A) – a complex surrounding the tomb of a saint
zone touristique (F) – tourist strip

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