



LIBYA DESERT ADVENTURE

Explore the vastness of the Sahara

LIBYA ~ HIKING & CULTURAL JOURNEY ~ 13 DAYS

As seen in Travel & Leisure and on the NBC Today show!

<http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/the-next-adventure-off-the-grid>

TRIP DETAILS

*4 days moderate hiking on
desert terrain*

Easy touring

Some long drives

*7 nights camping,
5 nights hotels*

DATES

Nov 6–Nov 18, '06

Nov 20–Dec 2

Dec 18–Dec 30

Jan 15–Jan 27, '07

Feb 5–Feb 17

Mar 5–Mar 17

*Additional 2007 dates
TBA. Call for details.*

LAND COST

*\$4290 per person
(13-15 members)*

*\$4790 per person
(7-12 members)*

*\$400 per person
internal airfare*

The Sahara has long been beyond the edge of the map, and perhaps nothing is more exciting to a traveler than exploring in a place previously proscribed. In the long tradition of Mountain Travel Sobek exploratories to remote destinations around the world, we led the first-ever American adventure travel trip to Libya in April 2004, just two months after the lifting of U.S. travel restrictions.

Our active itinerary for 2007 is *exclusive* and rewards the true explorer with an unforgettable desert experience! In Libya's southwestern desert you'll explore and hike amid an infinitely spectacular landscape of wild rocky massifs and huge sand dunes, including areas where *no other groups have traveled*. Thanks to our expert team's knowledge and skills, we can go to rarely seen sites where less experienced travelers hesitate to venture. Along the way you'll have the opportunity to meet Tuareg tribes and explore extraordinary prehistoric rock art sites testifying to the once green and rich past of the Sahara.

Libya was once a crossroads of empires, and our trip includes the classical archaeological sites of Leptis Magna and Sabratha, reputed to be the finest Roman ruins outside of Italy, and the ancient city-states of Pentapolis, including Cyrene, once the preeminent city of the Greek world and today the cultural highlight of any visit to Libya.

With the lifting of travel restrictions to Libya, Mountain Travel Sobek is leading the efforts to discover the great adventures and rich cultural experiences in this long forbidden country. This adventure is a rare opportunity to be among the first Americans to see and feel a world apart.

Note—Since the Libyan government has not yet opened a diplomatic representation in the United States, we will inform you on how to process visas well in advance. This process may take upwards of 30 days. We recommend you obtain a second passport if you expect to travel elsewhere during this time.

**TRIP LEVEL
MODERATE**

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Country Note—While Libya is in the process of opening itself to tourism, it is vital to understand that the country’s infrastructure is weak and changes to the itinerary may become necessary in order to maximize what we see and do. The recent history of Libya has favored its oil industry export business, allowing the country’s citizens to live in moderate comfort. However, the Libyan people have remained outside the changes of the outside for what has spanned a generation. You will discover to your pleasure the people are friendly and eager to exchange in friendly greetings, though we should respect the newness of their opening and proceed under the advice of your guides in order to maximize the social contacts our group can make. Roads and communication infrastructure are very basic. While Tuaregs inhabit the desert region we visit, communication and decision-making is left primarily to your European guides.

ITINERARY

☞ This trip begins with a rendezvous at the airport in Tripoli, Libya, on Day 1.

DAY 1 ~ Arrive in Tripoli

Arrive in Tripoli, Libya. You will be met at the airport and transferred to the Al Deyafa Hotel. Afternoon walk around the old part of town. “Welcome” dinner with the group.

D...Al Deyafa Hotel or similar

DAY 2 ~ Sabratha

Drive along the palm-lined coast to the astounding site of Sabratha, with its Greek-inspired architecture set against the blue backdrop of the Mediterranean. Sabratha was constructed in the first and second centuries A.D. and its architecture is based on its neighboring city, Carthage, with its Greek inspiration. Its jewel of a theater, one of the largest in Africa and one of the better restored, is still in excellent condition and used for performances today. After lunch we return to Tripoli and visit the museum, famous for its mosaics and its displays recounting Libyan history. Evening flight to Sebha, arriving in the early evening. Transfer to a campsite for overnight.

B,L,D...Camp near Sebha

DAYS 3-7 ~ Libyan Desert

Drive to the Ajjer part of the Libyan Desert and reach the Tassili (plateau) of Arem N’Oudaden. From here we drive and walk with our camels through an extraordinary diversity of desert landscapes: eroded sandstone peaks and plateaus, sand dunes, wide plains, and canyons—a geological fantasyland sculpted by wind and time. In the pyramidal dune system of **Takiumet**, with its little natural oasis, we can climb one of the main dunes at sunset for a look at the gradual but drastic change of color on the amazing landscape.

Continue through an extraordinary diversity of landscapes to Wadi Aramat, where we visit the **Eher Cave**, one of the most preeminent rupestrian rock art sites in Libya. This site presents some of the most elegant human and animal representations of its kind, including a “flying horse rider,” so called because of the refined expression of this particular artistic style. The cave’s ornate paintings are similar to those in Algeria’s Tassilli N’ajjer area, and display many different art styles, from the most abstract to the highly naturalistic.

In **Wan Regaya**, a geological fantasyland sculpted by wind and time, we’ll see a particularly aesthetically fine rhino.

Our journey with our camels and camel drivers will lead us through some extraordinary landscapes, giving us a real sense of what it was like to be a caravan nomad. Note—We will not have one camel per person, and will alternate between riding and walking.

B,L,D each day...Camp

DAY 8 ~ Tin Alwat – Oubari erg

We leave the eastern part of the Tassili N’Ajjer and drive to the Oubari Lakes. Near Oubari town, we leave the road and continue navigating our way through the sand dunes of the Oubari erg (*erg* is the Arabic name for the great sand seas of the Sahara). Camp surrounded by large sand dunes.

B,L,D...Camp

DAY 9 ~ Oubari Lakes – Sebha – Tripoli

Visit the Oubari Lakes, an oasis in the middle of the desert, a geological miracle that will be our refuge for a few hours. Transfer to Sebha, driving through the village of Germa, the ancient capital of the Garamantes region. In the evening, fly to Tripoli.

D...Al Deyafa Hotel or similar

DAY 10 ~ Leptis Magna – Benghazi

We’ll have an 8:00 a.m. departure and drive east about 75 miles to the Phoenician site of Leptis Magna, which once rivaled Rome in splendor, wealth, and architecture. (Our early arrival will allow us to take advantage of the best light for photographing and before the sun becomes too warm.) This historic site was built during a period of expansionist Roman history and reveals the extent of magnificence of this period of time. The Romans left Leptis Magna in the 7th century, and it remained abandoned and buried under the sands until the early part of the 20th century, when restoration work performed by legions of Italians under the period of Italian expansionism began. We’ll spend the day exploring this immense city, considered the best Roman site in the Mediterranean. Its spectacular architecture includes arches, huge marble and granite baths, shrines, forums, and amphitheaters. In the evening we’ll fly to Benghazi, the second largest city in Libya. Wealthy and with abundant new architecture, it positions itself as Tripoli’s rival among cities. The city owes its prosperity to the oil boom of the 1960s. Its history is tied to its lagoon and it’s the only large port in the Gulf of Syrte.

B,L,D...Hotel Tibesti or similar, Benghazi

DAY 11 ~ Benghazi – Taucheira – Ptolemais – Apollonia

We head in the direction of Ptolemais, one of the five ancient city-states (along with Cyrene, Apollonia, Barce, and Taucheira) known as the Pentapolis. Established by the Greeks during the period of Hellenistic colonization from 600-400 B.C., the Pentapolis became one of the Greek world’s intellectual and artistic centers. Extending from the Gulf of Syrte to the Egyptian border to the east, its southern extremities end along the semi-desert of Djebel Akhdar. This southern border area is carved by deep gorges and offers panoramas of rare beauty. The low-lying *maquis* (shrubby vegetation) that flourishes here benefits from a climate comparable to that of southern Italy.

On the way, we’ll visit one of the most understated of the Greek sites, Taucheira (also known as Tocra). Along the sea stands a small Byzantine fort surrounded by a structure constructed by the Ottomans. The archaeological site is very small and occupies no more than 6,400 square feet.

We’ll then follow the road up along the hills of the Djebel Akhdar, in the middle of the *maquis* dotted by pine trees. As we arrive onto the plateau, the landscape dramatically alters; the bushes and low plants give way to fields of wheat and barley. This is the prime agricultural belt of Libya.

Continue to Ptolemais, descending through a wooded valley offering fine views of the Mediterranean below, where we discover an ancient site with a theater, palace of columns, and the Odeon. We'll spend a couple of hours here to absorb the exceptional atmosphere of Ptolemais, whose ruins allow us to relive the great period of Roman history. Continue to Apollonia for dinner and overnight.

B,L,D...Hotel Manara or similar, Apollonia

DAY 12 ~ Apollonia – Cyrene – Tripoli

After appreciating the sunrise at the ruins of Apollonia, we spend most of the day at the immense city of Cyrene (ancient Cyrenaica), a veritable island in the Mediterranean hidden on the African continent.

The road to Cyrene rises up a high plateau whose top is crowned by the ruins of Cyrene. Along the way we can see the new town of Suzah that encircles ancient Apollonia as well as the offshore reef that protects the port from the ocean waves. This reminds us that Apollonia is the only natural shelter on this coast.

The Arab name *Suzah* derives from the Byzantine name Sousa, which signifies "The city of Christ, the savior." The archaeological site is visible at the borders of where its rampart walls once existed. Only two-thirds of the ancient site is visible today, as the coast has eroded over the centuries since the beginning of Christianity.

Cyrene and the city of Asphadèles, a large metropolis dating from Greek Hellenistic time, are located at 1,800' in the Djebel Akhdar, the highest mountains in Libya. The archaeological site extends over a vast area, blending in with the forms of the surrounding hill. We will stroll through this ancient site much as the Cyrene people did during their time. The agora, valley road, and the temples of Apollon and Zeus are monuments that testify to a distinct aesthetic willpower and religious emotion that energized the lives of these people who gathered around their protective divinity, Apollon.

After our visit, we'll travel the 150 miles (200 kms) back to Benghazi. Evening flight to Tripoli.

B,L,D...Al Deyafa Hotel or similar, Tripoli

DAY 13 ~ Depart

We'll have the morning to relax and enjoy our last day in Tripoli before an early afternoon transfer to the airport for our Europe-bound departure. (Because of flight connections, it may be necessary for you to overnight in Europe on the way home.) Those doing the post-trip extension will visit Tripoli in the morning and drive to Nalut this afternoon (see page 6).

B...

Stay a Little Longer!

Visit the extraordinary UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ghadames, regarded as the finest oasis town in the Sahara. See page 6 for the details.

LAND COST

\$4290 per person (13-15 members)

\$4790 per person (7-12 members)

\$400 internal airfare (Tripoli/Sebha/Tripoli/Benghazi/Tripoli—Mountain Travel Sobek will book and issue these tickets for you)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$800 for “requested” singles; \$400 for “forced” singles, including hotel nights and tent accommodations. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you’re traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we’ll try our best to find you a roommate. If that’s not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

What’s Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations in hotels in Tripoli, Sabratha, Sebha, and Apollonia
- ◆ all arrangements in the field, including camp meals, cook staffs, group gear and equipment
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ airport transfers in Libya
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

What’s Not

International airfare to Tripoli and return; flights within Libya (see separate cost above); meals not noted in itinerary; meals and accommodation in Europe en route or return home; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance as noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); visa processing fees; optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling with us. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

POST-TRIP EXTENSION TO GHADAMES

Ghadames, arguably the finest oasis town in the Sahara, is a desert crossroads of ancient major caravan trading routes close to the modern borders of Algeria and Tunisia. Its Old City is beautifully preserved—though practically deserted—and the town enjoys a UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

DAY 13 ~ Tripoli – Nalut

In the morning we'll visit Tripoli's medina, then in the afternoon drive to Nalut in the Jebel Nafusah, a mountainous arc dominating the coastal plains and a natural haven for refugees escaping various waves of invading armies in the past. Here, the language, traditions, attire, architecture, and culture have remained close to their origins. Nalut's location along the cliffs held a strategic value in times past. Overnight in a simple, modest local hotel.

B,L,D...Hotel TBA, Nalut

DAY 14 ~ Nalut – Ghadames

After having a look around Nalut and its Old Town, we'll continue our drive to Ghadames, the verdant Mediterranean-influenced coastal landscape gradually giving way to the encroaching desert. We cross the old *ksar* (fortified village) of Djar that leads to the immense desert landscape, and the green oasis of Ghadames with its white-crowned rooftops begins to make a distinct profile against the bright palms.

Once in Ghadames, we'll visit the local museum of the old town and enjoy the town's fine Saharan architecture. Its covered alleyways, ramparts, gardens, squares, and fascinating irrigation system are all part of this interesting town. We'll have lunch on the road to have more time to visit the old town of Ghadames.

B,L,D...Hotel TBA, Ghadames

DAY 15 ~ Ghadames – Tripoli

Drive back to Tripoli by a slightly different route. Along the way we'll visit Qasr Al Haj with its fortified granary, one of the last still used in Jebel Nafusah. In the 13th century, peasants used it for protecting wheat and olive oil against pillaging. Continue to Tripoli and overnight at a hotel.

B,L,D...Al Deyafa Hotel or similar, Tripoli

DAY 16 ~ Depart

Transfer to the airport and depart on homeward-bound flight.

B...

Land Cost for Extension

\$890 per person (7 or more members)

\$1190 per person (4-6 members)

\$1590 per person (2-3 members)

\$1790 per person (2 members)

\$500 single supplement (requested); \$350 (forced).

Land Cost includes expert leadership, accommodations in hotels, all arrangements in the field, meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner), airport transfer on Day 16, sightseeing as noted in the itinerary, ground transportation, basic medical and evacuation insurance.

Not included are optional tips to guides, insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance as noted above, items of a personal nature.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Expert Leadership

Expert leadership is the key to an exciting, unforgettable experience. Our trips feature gifted leaders for whom leading trips is a true vocation. Besides showing you wonders you'd never find on your own, they make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of your trip, and take great pleasure in sharing their insights with you. More than just guides, they positively elevate your experience by being teachers, companions, and the best of friends. You'll be in good hands with them every step of the way.

Jacky Roy, 52, is a native of France, with several degrees in law, financial and investment management, and philosophy. After working as a lawyer for 16 years, he took a year off to travel around the world. He returned to France to get a degree in philosophy, then became a tour guide, a passion he has followed for the last 10 years. His travels have taken him to such far-flung places as North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria), West Africa (Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Cameroon), the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and various destinations in Europe. Jacky's interests include reading, writing, sports, meeting people, and good food and wine (each fall he helps harvest the grapes for a friend who owns a chateau near Bordeaux). He is a resident of Vouvant, a medieval city in the west of France. Jacky is married with two children.

Leader assignments will be confirmed in the Final Bulletin sent to you three weeks prior to departure.

Activity Level

Mountain Travel Sobek trips are designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. This trip is moderate in nature: you will be hiking and walking (or riding camels) 3-5 hours a day through varied desert terrain, with some ascents and descents. There are also some long driving days. If your health is questionable or your physical stamina is limited, please discuss other trip options with us.

THE NEXT STEP

Ready to go? Signing up is easy!

Just call us at 1-888-MTSOBK (687-6235) and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website (www.mtsobek.com). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, up-to-date health advice prepared by our consulting physician (an expert in wilderness medicine), and other details from procuring visas to advice on local customs.

Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many

previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers, including Libya (April 2004—see page 1). We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our website at www.mtsobek.com.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control. Please read the Limitations of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form.

Conditions of Participation

Your participation on a Mountain Travel Sobek trip is subject to the conditions stated in the four-page Participant Information Form, which includes the Agreement and Release from Liability and the Booking Conditions. We urge you to read this information carefully, and to call us if you have any questions.

Note on Services

We often use local suppliers who provide services that may include transportation, equipment, logistic support, and other services (hotels, restaurants, etc.). We do not own or operate these independent suppliers. We work with service providers who share our commitment to safety and quality, and work closely with them to develop itineraries unique to Mountain Travel Sobek.

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