

## ALGERIA

**Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++213**

**Ministere du Tourisme et de L'Artisanat:** Rue des Freres Ziata 16070 El Mouradia Algiers Tel (2) 605960 Fax: (2) 747-049

**Capital: Algiers Time: GMT + 1**

**Background:** After a century of rule by France, Algeria became independent in 1962. The surprising first round success of the fundamentalist FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) party in December 1991 balloting caused the army to intervene, crack down on the FIS, and postpone the subsequent elections. The FIS response has resulted in a continuous low-grade civil conflict with the secular state apparatus, which nonetheless has allowed elections featuring pro-government and moderate religious-based parties. FIS's armed wing, the Islamic Salvation Army, dissolved itself in January 2000 and many armed insurgents surrendered under an amnesty program designed to promote national reconciliation. Nevertheless, some residual fighting continues. Other concerns include large-scale unemployment and the need to diversify the petroleum-based economy.

**Location:** Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Morocco and Tunisia

**Map References:** Africa

**Area:** total: 2,381,740 sq km land: 2,381,740 sq km water: 0 sq km

**Climate:** arid to semiarid; mild, wet winters with hot, dry summers along coast; drier with cold winters and hot summers on high plateau; sirocco is a hot, dust/sand-laden wind especially common in summer

**Terrain:** mostly high plateau and desert; some mountains; narrow, discontinuous coastal plain

**Natural Resources:** petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, uranium, lead, zinc

**Population:** 31,193,917 (July 2000 est.)

**Nationality:** noun: Algerian(s) adjective: Algerian

**Ethnic Groups:** Arab-Berber 99%, European less than 1%

**Religions:** Sunni Muslim (state religion) 99%, Christian and Jewish 1%

**Languages:** Arabic (official), French, Berber dialects

**Economy:** The hydrocarbons sector is the backbone of the economy, accounting for roughly 52% of budget revenues, 25% of GDP, and over 95% of export earnings. Algeria has the fifth-largest reserves of natural gas in the world and is the second largest gas exporter; it ranks fourteenth for oil reserves. Algiers' efforts to reform one of the most centrally planned economies in the Arab world stalled in 1992 as the country became embroiled in political turmoil. Burdened with a heavy foreign debt, Algiers concluded a one-year standby arrangement with the IMF in April 1994 and the following year signed onto a three-year extended fund facility which ended 30 April 1998. Some progress on economic reform, Paris Club debt reschedulings in 1995 and 1996, and oil and gas sector expansion contributed to a recovery in growth since 1995. Still, the economy remains heavily dependent on volatile oil and gas revenues. The government has continued efforts to diversify the economy by attracting foreign and domestic investment outside the energy sector, but has had little success in reducing high unemployment and improving living standards.

**Industries:** petroleum, natural gas, light industries, mining, electrical, petrochemical, food processing

**Currency:** 1 Algerian dinar (DA) = 100 centimes

**Railways:** total: 4,820 km (301 km electrified; 215 km double track) standard gauge: 3,664 km 1.435-m gauge (301 km electrified; 215 km double track) narrow gauge: 1,156 km 1.055-m gauge (1996)

**Highways:** total: 104,000 km paved: 71,656 km (including 640 km of expressways) unpaved: 32,344 km (1996 est.)

**Ports and Harbors:** Algiers, Annaba, Arzew, Bejaia, Beni Saf, Dellys, Djendjene, Ghazaouet, Jijel, Mostaganem, Oran, Skikda, Tenes

**Airports:** 137 (1999 est.) Airports - with paved runways: total: 51 over 3,047 m: 8 2,438 to 3,047 m: 25 1,524 to 2,437 m: 12 914 to 1,523 m: 5 under 914 m: 1 (1999 est.) Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 86 2,438 to 3,047 m: 3 1,524 to 2,437 m: 23 914 to 1,523 m: 41 under 914 m: 19 (1999 est.)

**Heliports:** 1 (1999 est.)

**Visa:** nationals of Israel or those with Israeli stamps on their passports are refused entry. Visa required by all

**Duty Free:** goods permitted: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 400g of tobacco, 1 litre of alcoholic beverages, 500ml eau de cologne or 150ml of perfume.

**Health:** a yellow fever certificate is required from travelers over one year of age coming from infected areas. Water is safe to drink

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