

## Tunisia



### Introduction Tunisia

**Background:** Rivalry between French and Italian interests in Tunisia culminated in a French invasion in 1881 and the creation of a protectorate. Agitation for independence in the decades following World War I was finally successful in getting the

French to recognize Tunisia as an independent state in 1956. The country's first president, Habib BOURGUIBA, established a strict one-party state. He dominated the country for 31 years, repressing Islamic fundamentalism and establishing rights for women unmatched by any other Arab nation. Tunisia has long taken a moderate, non-aligned stance in its foreign relations. Domestically, it has sought to defuse rising pressure for a more open political society.

Geography	Tunisia
<b>Location:</b>	Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Algeria and Libya
<b>Geographic coordinates:</b>	34 00 N, 9 00 E
<b>Map references:</b>	Africa
<b>Area:</b>	<i>total:</i> 163,610 sq km <i>land:</i> 155,360 sq km <i>water:</i> 8,250 sq km
<b>Area - comparative:</b>	slightly larger than Georgia
<b>Land boundaries:</b>	<i>total:</i> 1,424 km <i>border countries:</i> Algeria 965 km, Libya 459 km
<b>Coastline:</b>	1,148 km
<b>Maritime claims:</b>	<i>territorial sea:</i> 12 nm <i>contiguous zone:</i> 24 nm
<b>Climate:</b>	temperate in north with mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers; desert in south
<b>Terrain:</b>	mountains in north; hot, dry central plain; semiarid south merges into the Sahara
<b>Elevation extremes:</b>	<i>lowest point:</i> Shatt al Gharsah -17 m <i>highest point:</i> Jebel ech Chambi 1,544 m
<b>Natural resources:</b>	petroleum, phosphates, iron ore, lead, zinc, salt
<b>Land use:</b>	<i>arable land:</i> 17.05% <i>permanent crops:</i> 13.08% <i>other:</i> 69.87% (2005)
<b>Irrigated land:</b>	3,940 sq km (2003)
<b>Natural</b>	NA

**hazards:**

**Environment - current issues:** toxic and hazardous waste disposal is ineffective and poses health risks; water pollution from raw sewage; limited natural fresh water resources; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; desertification

**Environment - international agreements:** *party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands  
*signed, but not ratified:* Marine Life Conservation

**Geography - note:** strategic location in central Mediterranean; Malta and Tunisia are discussing the commercial exploitation of the continental shelf between their countries, particularly for oil exploration

People	Tunisia
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**Population:** 10,175,014 (July 2006 est.)

**Age structure:** *0-14 years:* 24.6% (male 1,293,235/female 1,212,994)  
*15-64 years:* 68.6% (male 3,504,283/female 3,478,268)  
*65 years and over:* 6.7% (male 327,521/female 358,713) (2006 est.)

**Median age:** *total:* 27.8 years  
*male:* 27.3 years  
*female:* 28.3 years (2006 est.)

**Population growth rate:** 0.99% (2006 est.)

**Birth rate:** 15.52 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)

**Death rate:** 5.13 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)

**Net migration rate:** -0.5 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006 est.)

**Sex ratio:** *at birth:* 1.07 male(s)/female  
*under 15 years:* 1.07 male(s)/female  
*15-64 years:* 1.01 male(s)/female  
*65 years and over:* 0.91 male(s)/female  
*total population:* 1.02 male(s)/female (2006 est.)

**Infant mortality rate:** *total:* 23.84 deaths/1,000 live births  
*male:* 26.7 deaths/1,000 live births  
*female:* 20.77 deaths/1,000 live births (2006 est.)

**Life** *total population:* 75.12 years

**expectancy at birth:** *male:* 73.4 years  
*female:* 76.96 years (2006 est.)

**Total fertility rate:** 1.74 children born/woman (2006 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:** less than 0.1% (2005 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:** 1,000 (2003 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:** less than 200 (2003 est.)

**Major infectious diseases:** *degree of risk:* intermediate  
*food or waterborne diseases:* bacterial diarrhea and hepatitis A  
*vectorborne diseases:* may be a significant risk in some locations during the transmission season (typically April through November) (2005)

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

**Ethnic groups:** Arab 98%, European 1%, Jewish and other 1%

**Religions:** Muslim 98%, Christian 1%, Jewish and other 1%

**Languages:** Arabic (official and one of the languages of commerce), French (commerce)

**Literacy:** *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write  
*total population:* 74.3%  
*male:* 83.4%  
*female:* 65.3% (2004 est.)

Government	Tunisia
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**Country name:** *conventional long form:* Tunisian Republic  
*conventional short form:* Tunisia  
*local long form:* Al Jumhuriyah at Tunisiyah  
*local short form:* Tunis

**Government type:** republic

**Capital:** *name:* Tunis  
*geographic coordinates:* 36 48 N, 10 11 E

*time difference:* UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

*daylight saving time:* +1hr, begins last Sunday in March; ends last Sunday in October

- Administrative divisions:** 24 governorates; Ariana (Aryanah), Beja (Bajah), Ben Arous (Bin 'Arus), Bizerte (Banzart), Gabes (Qabis), Gafsa (Qafsah), Jendouba (Jundubah), Kairouan (Al Qayrawan), Kasserine (Al Qasrayn), Kebili (Qibili), Kef (Al Kaf), Mahdia (Al Mahdiah), Manouba (Manubah), Medenine (Madanin), Monastir (Al Munastir), Nabeul (Nabul), Sfax (Safaqis), Sidi Bou Zid (Sidi Bu Zayd), Siliana (Silyanah), Sousse (Susah), Tataouine (Tatawin), Tozeur (Tawzar), Tunis, Zaghouan (Zaghwan)
- Independence:** 20 March 1956 (from France)
- National holiday:** Independence Day, 20 March (1956)
- Constitution:** 1 June 1959; amended 1988, 2002
- Legal system:** based on French civil law system and Shari'a law; some judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court in joint session
- Suffrage:** 20 years of age; universal except for active duty military
- Executive branch:** *chief of state:* President Zine el Abidine BEN ALI (since 7 November 1987)  
*head of government:* Prime Minister Mohamed GHANNOUCHI (since 17 November 1999)  
*cabinet:* Council of Ministers appointed by the president  
*elections:* president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (no term limits); election last held 24 October 2004 (next to be held October 2009); prime minister appointed by the president  
*election results:* President Zine El Abidine BEN ALI reelected for a fourth term; percent of vote - Zine El Abidine BEN ALI 94.5%, Mohamed BOUCHIHA 3.8%, Mohamed Ali HALOUANI 1%
- Legislative branch:** bicameral system consists of the Chamber of Deputies or Majlis al-Nuwaab (189 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms) and the Chamber of Advisors (126 seats; 85 members elected by municipal counselors, deputies, mayors, and professional associations and trade unions; 41 members are presidential appointees; members serve six-year terms)  
*elections:* Chamber of Deputies - last held 24 October 2004 (next to be held October 2009); Chamber of Advisors - last held 3 July 2005 (next to be held July

2011)

*election results:* Chamber of Deputies - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - RCD 152, MDS 14, PUP 11, UDU 7, Al-Tajdid 3, PSL 2; Chamber of Advisors - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - RCD 71 (14 trade union seats vacant (boycotted))

**Judicial branch:** Court of Cassation or Cour de Cassation

**Political parties and leaders:** Al-Tajdid Movement [Ali HALOUANI]; Constitutional Democratic Rally Party (Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique) or RCD [President Zine El Abidine BEN ALI (official ruling party)]; Green Party for Progress or PVP [Mongi KHAMASSI]; Liberal Social Party or PSL [Mounir BEJI]; Movement of Socialist Democrats or MDS [Ismail BOULAHYA]; Popular Unity Party or PUP [Mohamed BOUCHIHA]; Progressive Democratic Party [Nejib CHEBBI]; Unionist Democratic Union or UDU [Ahmed INOUBLI]

**Political pressure groups and leaders:** 18 October Group [collective leadership]; Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties or FDTL [Mustapha Ben JAJAAR]; Tunisian League for Human Rights or LTDH [Mokhtar TRIFI]; note - the Islamic fundamentalist party, Al Nahda (Renaissance), is outlawed

**International organization participation:** ABEDA, ACCT, AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AMU, AU, BSEC (observer), FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITU, ITUC, LAS, MIGA, MONUC, NAM, OAPEC (suspended), OAS (observer), OIC, OIF, ONUB, OPCW, OSCE (partner), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNMEE, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

**Diplomatic representation in the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador Nejib HACHANA  
*chancery:* 1515 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005  
*telephone:* [1] (202) 862-1850  
*FAX:* [1] (202) 862-1858

**Diplomatic representation from the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador designate Robert F. GODEC  
*embassy:* Zone Nord-Est des Berges du Lac Nord de Tunis 1053  
*mailing address:* use embassy street address  
*telephone:* [216] 71 107-000  
*FAX:* [216] 71 107-090

**Flag** red with a white disk in the center bearing a red crescent

**description:** nearly encircling a red five-pointed star; the crescent and star are traditional symbols of Islam

## Economy Tunisia

**Economy - overview:** Tunisia has a diverse economy, with important agricultural, mining, energy, tourism, and manufacturing sectors. Governmental control of economic affairs while still heavy has gradually lessened over the past decade with increasing privatization, simplification of the tax structure, and a prudent approach to debt. Progressive social policies also have helped raise living conditions in Tunisia relative to the region. Real growth slowed to a 15-year low of 1.9% in 2002 because of agricultural drought and lackluster tourism. Increased rain helped to push GDP growth to an average rate of 5% in 2003-06. However, a recession in agriculture, weak expansion in the tourism and textile sectors, and increasing import costs due to rising world energy prices cut growth to 4% in 2006. Tunisia is gradually removing barriers to trade with the EU. Broader privatization, further liberalization of the investment code to increase foreign investment, improvements in government efficiency, and reduction of the trade deficit are among the challenges ahead.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):** \$87.88 billion (2006 est.)

**GDP (official exchange rate):** \$32.95 billion (2006 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:** 4% (2006 est.)

**GDP - per capita (PPP):** \$8,600 (2006 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:** *agriculture:* 12.8%  
*industry:* 31%  
*services:* 56.2% (2006 est.)

**Labor force:** 3.502 million  
*note:* shortage of skilled labor (2006 est.)

**Labor force - by occupation:** *agriculture:* 55%  
*industry:* 23%  
*services:* 22% (1995 est.)

**Unemployment rate:** 13.9% (2006 est.)

<b>Population below poverty line:</b>	7.4% (2005 est.)
<b>Household income or consumption by percentage share:</b>	<i>lowest 10%: 2.3%</i> <i>highest 10%: 31.8% (1995)</i>
<b>Distribution of family income - Gini index:</b>	40 (2005 est.)
<b>Inflation rate (consumer prices):</b>	4.6% (2006 est.)
<b>Investment (gross fixed):</b>	22.3% of GDP (2006 est.)
<b>Budget:</b>	<i>revenues: \$7.728 billion</i> <i>expenditures: \$8.734 billion; including capital expenditures of \$1.6 billion (2006 est.)</i>
<b>Public debt:</b>	57.3% of GDP (2006 est.)
<b>Agriculture - products:</b>	olives, olive oil, grain, tomatoes, citrus fruit, sugar beets, dates, almonds; beef, dairy products
<b>Industries:</b>	petroleum, mining (particularly phosphate and iron ore), tourism, textiles, footwear, agribusiness, beverages
<b>Industrial production growth rate:</b>	4.7% (2006 est.)
<b>Electricity - production:</b>	11.81 billion kWh (2004)
<b>Electricity - production by source:</b>	<i>fossil fuel: 99.5%</i> <i>hydro: 0.5%</i> <i>nuclear: 0%</i> <i>other: 0% (2001)</i>
<b>Electricity - consumption:</b>	10.97 billion kWh (2004)
<b>Electricity - exports:</b>	15 million kWh (2004)
<b>Electricity - imports:</b>	5 million kWh (2004)
<b>Oil - production:</b>	81,530 bbl/day (2004 est.)

**Oil - consumption:** 89,000 bbl/day (2004 est.)

**Oil - exports:** NA bbl/day (2001)

**Oil - imports:** NA bbl/day (2001)

**Oil - proved reserves:** 1.7 billion bbl (2006 est.)

**Natural gas - production:** 2.4 billion cu m (2004 est.)

**Natural gas - consumption:** 3.7 billion cu m (2004 est.)

**Natural gas - exports:** 0 cu m (2004 est.)

**Natural gas - imports:** 1.3 billion cu m (2004 est.)

**Natural gas - proved reserves:** 77.87 billion cu m (1 January 2005 est.)

**Current account balance:** \$-760 million (2006 est.)

**Exports:** \$11.61 billion f.o.b. (2006 est.)

**Exports - commodities:** clothing, semi-finished goods and textiles, agricultural products, mechanical goods, phosphates and chemicals, hydrocarbons

**Exports - partners:** France 30.8%, Italy 21%, Germany 9.3%, Spain 5.5%, Libya 4.4% (2005)

**Imports:** \$13.89 billion f.o.b. (2006 est.)

**Imports - commodities:** textiles, machinery and equipment, hydrocarbons, chemicals, foodstuffs

**Imports - partners:** France 25.8%, Italy 23.1%, Germany 9.6%, Spain 5.6% (2005)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:** \$6.646 billion (2006 est.)

**Debt - external:** \$18.37 billion (30 June 2006 est.)

**Economic aid - recipient:** \$328 million (2004)

**Currency (code):** Tunisian dinar (TND)

**Currency code:** TND

**Exchange rates:** Tunisian dinars per US dollar - 1.31281 (2006), 1.2974 (2005), 1.2455 (2004), 1.2885 (2003), 1.4217 (2002)

**Fiscal year:** calendar year

## Communications Tunisia

**Telephones - main lines in use:** 1,257,500 (2005)

**Telephones - mobile cellular:** 5.681 million (2005)

**Telephone system:** *general assessment:* above the African average and continuing to be upgraded; key centers are Sfax, Sousse, Bizerte, and Tunis; Internet access available  
*domestic:* trunk facilities consist of open-wire lines, coaxial cable, and microwave radio relay  
*international:* country code - 216; 5 submarine cables; satellite earth stations - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) and 1 Arabsat; coaxial cable and microwave radio relay to Algeria and Libya; participant in Medarabtel; two international gateway digital switches

**Radio broadcast stations:** AM 7, FM 20, shortwave 2 (1998)

**Radios:** 2.06 million (1997)

**Television broadcast stations:** 26 (plus 76 repeaters) (1995)

**Televisions:** 920,000 (1997)

**Internet country code:** .tn

**Internet hosts:** 428 (2006)

**Internet Service Providers (ISPs):** 1 (2000)

**Internet users:** 953,800 (2005)

## Transportation Tunisia

**Airports:** 30 (2006)

**Airports - total:** 14  
**with paved runways:** over 3,047 m: 3  
2,438 to 3,047 m: 6  
1,524 to 2,437 m: 2  
914 to 1,523 m: 3 (2006)

**Airports - total:** 16  
**with unpaved runways:** 1,524 to 2,437 m: 2  
914 to 1,523 m: 7  
under 914 m: 7 (2006)

**Pipelines:** gas 2,945 km; oil 1,227 km; refined products 351 km (2006)

**Railways:** *total:* 2,153 km  
*standard gauge:* 471 km 1.435-m gauge  
*narrow gauge:* 1,674 km 1.000-m gauge (65 km electrified)  
*dual gauge:* 8 km 1.435 m and 1.000-m gauges (three rails) (2005)

**Roadways:** *total:* 19,232 km  
*paved:* 12,655 km (including 262 km of expressways)  
*unpaved:* 6,577 km (2004)

**Merchant marine:** *total:* 9 ships (1000 GRT or over) 146,759 GRT/115,118 DWT  
*by type:* bulk carrier 1, cargo 1, chemical tanker 3, passenger/cargo 4 (2006)

**Ports and terminals:** Bizerte, Gabes, La Goulette, Skhira

## Military Tunisia

**Military branches:** Army, Navy, Republic of Tunisia Air Force (Al-Quwwat al-Jawwiya al-Jamahiriyah At'tunisia) (2006)

**Military service age and obligation:** 20 years of age for compulsory military service; conscript service obligation - 12 months; 18 years of age for voluntary military service (2004)

**Manpower available for military service:** *males age 20-49:* 2,441,741  
*females age 20-49:* 2,406,362 (2005 est.)

**Manpower fit for military service:** *males age 20-49: 2,035,431*  
*females age 20-49: 2,000,757 (2005 est.)*

**Manpower reaching military service age annually:** *males age 18-49: 108,817*  
*females age 20-49: 103,087 (2005 est.)*

**Military expenditures - dollar figure:** \$356 million (FY99)

**Military expenditures - percent of GDP:** 1.5% (FY99)

<b>Transnational Issues</b>	<b>Tunisia</b>
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**Disputes - international:** none