



**USAID**  
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# Activity Newsletter | July 2022

# Visit Tunisia



## Greetings friends and supporters of Visit Tunisia,

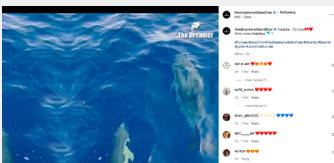
The past several weeks have been very memorable in Tunisia. Tunisian Ons Jabeur made history by becoming the first Arab/ African person to reach a Grand Slam Final (Wimbledon), families reunited to celebrate the sacred Islamic holiday Eid al Adha, and several notable international figures (such as British chef Jamie Oliver) came to Tunisia on vacation.

This momentum builds into August as travelers arrive to soak up the sun on the 713-mile-long Mediterranean coastline, and several of Tunisia’s top historical sites spring to life with art and music. In the next few weeks, the ancient Roman sites of Carthage, El Jem, and Dougga each host respective music festivals, attracting well-known local, regional, and international talent to Tunisia’s awe-inspiring ruins.

In this newsletter, we’re excited to take you on a journey through our evolving activities and introduce you to even more Tunisian destinations and innovators. As always, we thank you for your interest in supporting Tunisia’s growing tourism industry.

Warmly,  
**Leila Calnan**  
Chief of Party, USAID Visit Tunisia Activity

## USAID VISIT TUNISIA ACTIVITIES & NEWS



### Domestic Marketing Campaign Spotlights Djerba, Tabarka, and Jalta

Throughout late June and July, the “Tounes Lik” campaign put out promotional content and teaser videos about the southern coastal town of Mahdia, the southern island of Djerba, the north-western town of Tabarka, and the northern island of Jalta on the La Galite archipelago.

[Read more](#)



### Tunisian Festival Organizers Draw Inspiration From Smithsonian Folklife Festival

From June 20-27, USAID Visit Tunisia accompanied five Tunisian event/festival organizers to the Smithsonian Folklife festival, which celebrates living cultural traditions from around the world and brings in more than 1 million visitors per year.

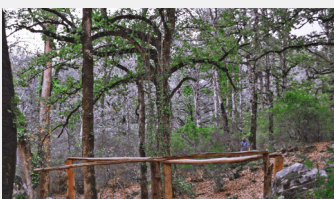
[Read about their experience](#)



### USAID Visit Tunisia Launches International Survey for National Tourism Strategy (NTS)

The online consultation survey drew input on the NTS from international tourism stakeholders, such as travel agents, tour operators, and international industry federations.

[Learn about the survey’s findings](#)



### USAID Visit Tunisia/CrossBoundary Ink Transaction Advisory Deals With Promising Tourism Projects

Green Hill, Tunisia’s first luxury green hotel, and Tunistoric, a renovation project in the medina of Tunis, are the first two projects that will receive joint USAID Visit Tunisia/CrossBoundary Investment Facilitation support.

[Learn more about these projects](#)

# DOMESTIC MARKETING CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHTS DJERBA, TABARKA, JALTA

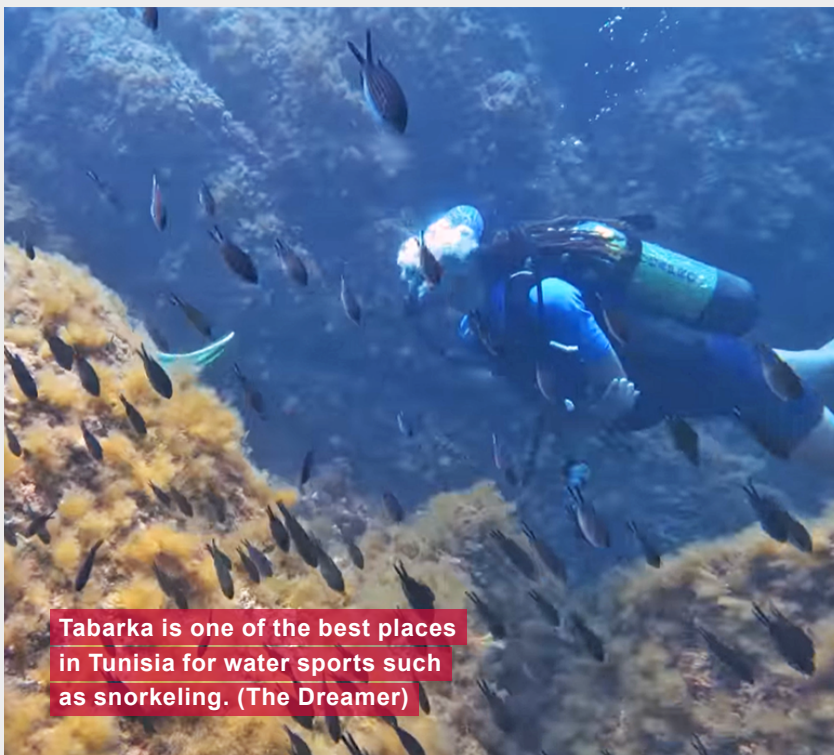


With USAID Visit Tunisia’s support, the National Tourism Office (ONTT) continued its Domestic Marketing Campaign in full swing, releasing promotional content on diverse getaway destinations that are already driving up tourism numbers, local operators said.

Throughout late June and July, the “Tounes Lik” campaign put out promotional content and teaser videos about the southern coastal town of **Mahdia**, the southern island of **Djerba**, the north-western town of **Tabarka**, and the northern island of **Jalta** on the La Galite archipelago.

The profile-raising content is sparking new domestic travel trends, including to traditionally undervisited tourism spots.

Jebli Wathik owner of Dar El Ain adventures in Tabarka, and Farouk Zammouri, owner of Atyma Cycling, an outdoor adventures company in Zaghouan, said their businesses have been “flooded with bookings” since they were featured in videos produced by USAID Visit Tunisia’s content creator partner The Dreamer.



**Tabarka is one of the best places in Tunisia for water sports such as snorkeling. (The Dreamer)**

On social media, users praised the video content for inspiring them to explore the unique scenery and culture of their country.

“Excellent work that deserves thanks and encouragement,” read one comment on social media. “Our country is beautiful.”

So far, the “Tounes Lik” campaign content has received more than 6 million views on social media and drawn extremely high engagement rates. The Dreamer’s recent [video](#) on the island of Jalta drew more than 1.1 million views on Facebook in only one week.

A small island 80 km north of Bizerte, Jalta is a quiet, remote former fishing village that hosts diverse marine life, such as manna rays, flounders, and sea turtles. The uninhabited island takes effort to reach, but it is a prime destination for those looking to hike, camp, snorkel, or star-gaze in relative solitude.



On the opposite side of the country is the island of Djerba, home to some of Tunisia's finest beaches, as well as North Africa's oldest synagogue and Jewish community. Each year, Djerba's El Ghriba pilgrimage draws thousands of Jewish pilgrims from around the world to celebrate their ancient culture and traditions on the island.



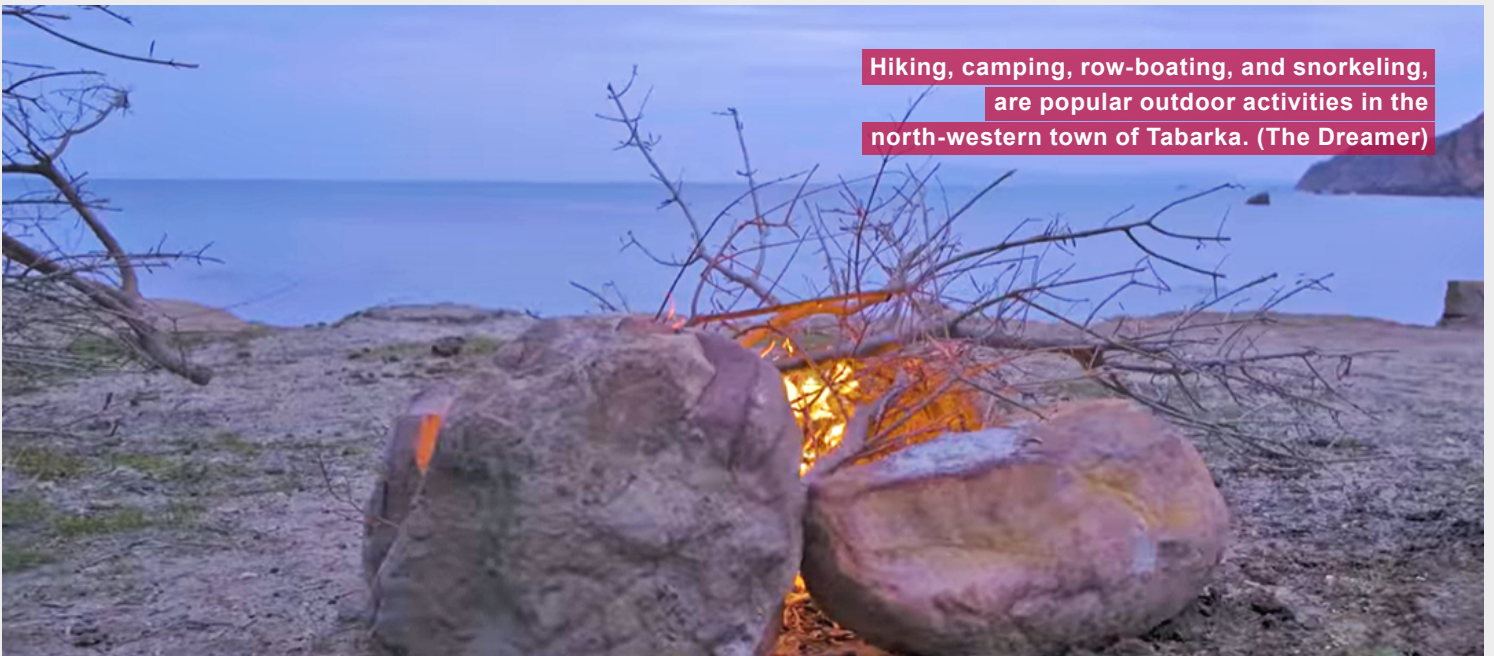
Visitors can reach Jalta by boat from Tabarka or Bizerte.

The sun rises over the coast of Tunisia's southern island of Djerba. (The Dreamer)



Tabarka, a north-western coastal town 15 km from the Algerian border, has lush forests, clear seas, and five-star resorts. Its waters are great for coral fishing, snorkeling, and underwater photography. Each year, the town also hosts a popular jazz festival.

Hiking, camping, row-boating, and snorkeling, are popular outdoor activities in the north-western town of Tabarka. (The Dreamer)



In the coming month, Tunisians can expect more content on the Tounes Lik [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages featuring the northern coastal town of El Haouaria and the Kerkennah Islands.



# TUNISIAN FESTIVAL ORGANIZERS DRAW INSPIRATION FROM SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL



USAID Visit Tunisia kicked off the Festival Incubator Program, a technical assistance/ mentoring program for Tunisian event and festival organizers, with a study tour to the **Smithsonian Folklife Festival** in Washington, D.C.

From June 20-27, USAID Visit Tunisia accompanied five event/festival organizers to the festival, which celebrates living cultural traditions from around the world, bringing in more than 1 million visitors per year.

Throughout the week, the organizers participated in cultural workshops and narrative sessions; interviewed festival organizer staff on the event's organization process; and volunteered in festival activities, such as the marketplace.



**Tunisian event/festival organizers meet with Rebecca Fenton, co-curator of "United Arab Emirates: Living Landscape | Living Memory" (R) at the 2022 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.**

The event/festival organizers said the experience provided them with valuable insight on festival organization, operations, and fundraising which they will look to incorporate in their own events.

Tunisia's events and festivals are key to attracting both domestic and international tourism, as well as showcasing the country's unique natural and cultural tourism offerings. Each year, the organizers participating in USAID Visit Tunisia's Festival Incubator Program host events that attract a combined 1 million visitors.

To build their capacity and improve the quality and reach of these events, USAID Visit Tunisia will work with these organizers in programming, design, operations, community engagement, and marketing.

# USAID VISIT TUNISIA LAUNCHES INTERNATIONAL SURVEY FOR NATIONAL TOURISM STRATEGY



Attracting tourists from international markets is key to Tunisia's tourism recovery. (Magharebia/ Creative Commons)

USAID Visit Tunisia has engaged public and private actors throughout the tourism industry to help develop an inclusive National Tourism Strategy (NTS) that will lead to sustainable tourism growth.

On June 28, USAID Visit Tunisia released an online consultation survey to draw input on the NTS from international tourism stakeholders, such as travel agents, tour operators, and international industry federations.

These international tourism actors are critical to Tunisia's tourism development, bringing in guests from high-value markets such as France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Poland, and Switzerland that are likely to return year after year.

The NTS online consultation survey, available in French and English, collected 354 responses before its closing date of July 12. The majority of respondents (51%) backed the proposed vision statement: "Together for innovative and sustainable tourism." 27.5% selected the vision statement "Attractive destination for an exclusive experience," while the remaining respondents (21.5%) chose "Working together to build the travel destination of the 21st century."

Based on their survey results, as well as **feedback** from more than 460 local tourism actors in May, we will finalize the strategy with the Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts (MOTH). The MOTH plans to go public with the strategy on September 27, World Tourism Day 2022, setting the roadmap for steady tourism growth in the years ahead.





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**CROSSBOUNDARY**  
**ADVISORY**

## **USAID VISIT TUNISIA/CROSSBOUNDARY INK TRANSACTION ADVISORY DEALS WITH PROMISING TOURISM PROJECTS**


As part of its mission to promote investment in Tunisia's sustainable tourism industry, USAID Visit Tunisia's partner CrossBoundary signed initial transaction advisory agreements with two Tunisian tourism companies/initiatives – Green Hill, Tunisia's first luxury green hotel, and Tunistoric, a renovation project in the medina of Tunis.

As per the agreements, CrossBoundary, a global investment advisory firm that has advised on \$800 million of closed transactions in underserved areas across the world, will provide the companies with comprehensive fundraising assistance. This may include support with marketing documentation, financial modeling, market research, feasibility studies, investor matching, or structuring/negotiating deals with potential investors.

USAID Visit Tunisia/CrossBoundary selected Green Hill and Tunistoric for support out of a pool of 88 applicants based on their commercial sustainability, investment potential, impact on alternative tourism, and potential for job-creation, particularly for women and youth.

Both Green Hill and Tunistoric are innovative tourism projects with strong commercial potential that will preserve Tunisia's cultural or natural heritage and expand tourism revenue/jobs.

**Green Hill**, around the corner from the small north-western town of Beni Mtir, Ain Draham, is a high-end eco-hotel with 12 cabin-themed rooms and 18 chalets overlooking the region's lush forests. Its spa center uses water sourced from one of the world's hottest natural springs, Hammam Salhine, known for its therapeutic properties.



Green Hill is known for its high-quality thermal spa services.

Tunistoric is a project based in the Tunis medina that transforms old properties into modern attractions such as guesthouses, restaurants, and cafes, and renovates sites with cultural, historic, and touristic value. Its activities not only attract more visitors to the Tunis medina, but create direct and indirect sustainable tourism jobs.

Over the next three months, CrossBoundary aims to onboard two to three new companies to provide investment facilitation support to. Throughout the USAID Visit Tunisia project, it will support at least 12 tourism companies and projects as part of its efforts to mobilize more than \$20 million of commercial credit and investment into Tunisia's sustainable tourism sector.

USAID Visit Tunisia/CrossBoundary will continue to accept and evaluate expressions of interest (EOIs) from tourism businesses, projects, or investors on a rolling basis. Interested applicants should check [USAID Visit Tunisia's website](#) for details on the program, eligibility criteria, and the application process.