

GRCEO Post Casbah, Algiers

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Rockin' the Casbah!

A visit to the Casbah, the citadel of Algiers, is a step back in time (it's also many *many* steep steps to climb, but I'll get to that!)

Constructed in the 10th century, the Casbah of Algiers is built on the ruins of old Icosium. Some of the palaces date back to the pre-Ottoman era. There's masonry and mosques dating from the 17th century. There are buildings that have been standing for over 1,000 years. It's been the home of freedom fighters and revolutionaries and borne witness to the French occupation.

It's extraordinary.

There are places you want to return to – the Casbah is one of them.

Whether you start your exploration from the “Low City” and work up, or from the “High City” and work down, don't forget to take in the Ketchaoua Mosque, the Mustapha Pasha Palace which houses a calligraphy museum, and the beautiful Palace of the Dey, a mere handful of the numerous must-sees in this incredibly rich historical and cultural site.

And of course, there's the modern-day marketplace that thrives in these ancient, sometimes crumbling, ruins, and intricate alleyways.

Start your day off with shakshouka, a delicious spicy hot Algerian dish made of eggs poached in a sauce of tomatoes, peppers, onion, and garlic, to keep your energy levels high (you'll need it for the stairs that go up and up and up). Or grab a garantita, a kind of chickpea pie, from one of the street vendors to eat on the go. Then explore the Casbah's narrow streets, meet with the local craftsman, and visit the old shops.

Stop for tea, savour the history, and contemplate the millions of people who've done the same before you over the years.

But pack your walking shoes. Did I mention the stairs?