

TUNISIA

Country name	Tunisia
State title	Republic of Tunisia ¹
Name of citizen	Tunisian
Official language	Arabic ² [ara] ³
Country name in official language	Tūnis تونس [ara]
State title in official language	Al Jumhūrīyah at Tūnisīyah الجمهورية التونسية [ara]
Script	Perso-Arabic ⁴
Romanization System	<i>Not applicable (see Geographical Names Policy below)</i>
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	TN/TUN
Capital (PCGN recommended name)	Tunis
Capital in official language	Tūnis تونس [ara]
Population / Area	11.97 million ⁵ / 163,610km ²

Introduction

Tunisia is in northwest Africa, in the region known as the Maghreb⁶. It is bordered by Algeria to the west, Libya to the southeast and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east. Over the years the Romans, Arabs, Ottoman Turks and French have sought to control the region, with Tunisia's strategic location offering access to vital shipping routes and the Sahara. The ancient city of Carthage⁷ (Arabic: قرطاج, Qartāj) was one of the great cities of antiquity (a residential suburb of the capital city, Tunis, has since subsumed the area). Tunisia's history is reflected in the geographical names, with Amazigh⁸, Spanish, Italian, Maltese, Turkish and French influences⁹.

¹ Republic of Tunisia is the English-language state title preferred by the Tunisian government. Prior to 2014, the name Tunisian Republic was widely used, a more literal translation of the state title in French and Arabic. The French state title is République Tunisienne.

² Tunisian Constitution 2014: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia_2014.pdf

³ The ISO 639-3 three letter language codes are included in brackets after language names in this document.

⁴ Although Arabic, the official language of Tunisia, is written in Perso-Arabic script, Roman script is also widely used. PCGN recommends taking the French-style Roman-script spellings as found on official Tunisian mapping for use on UK products.

⁵ Data from the Census of Population and Housing 2024: <https://www.ins.tn/en/publication/population-and-housing-census-2024>

⁶ The name Maghreb (Romanized-Arabic: Al Maghrib), derived from the Arabic word *gharb* (meaning 'west'), applies to the Arabic-speaking area of northwest Africa, generally including Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and the disputed territory of Western Sahara.

⁷ The name is derived from Phoenician, meaning 'new city'.

⁸ Formerly known as Berber, a term which is now considered pejorative. The language of the Amazigh people is variously known as Tamazight, Tamaziyt, Amazigh or Amazighe.

⁹ http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ines_Zribi2/publication/270568583_A_Conventional_Orthography_for_Tunisian_Arabic/links/54ad65b90cf2828b29fc7aea.pdf

Geographical names policy

It is PCGN policy for Tunisia to take the French-style Roman-script¹⁰ spellings of geographical names as found on official Tunisian mapping for use on UK products. Although Arabic, the official language of Tunisia, is written in Perso-Arabic script, romanization of the names using either the 1956 BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Arabic, or the 1973 French IGN Romanization System results in different Roman-script spellings to those found on official sources and on the ground. Accordingly, PCGN avoids introducing an additional set of names through romanization when official Roman-script names are available. BGN/PCGN romanized Arabic names have been provided next to the Arabic script in this paper for information only. The names that are found on road signs are generally written in both Arabic and French-style Roman-script. All diacritical marks (see below for details), apostrophes and hyphens should be retained.

Language

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the official language of Tunisia. MSA is used for official written purposes e.g. government, education, books and newspapers (as it is throughout the Arab world). Spoken varieties of Arabic differ from one region to another and the dialect spoken in Tunisia is Tunisian Arabic¹¹ [aeb]. Tunisian Arabic is closely related to the Maltese language [mlt]. French [fra], plays a major role in the country, despite having no official status; it is spoken by 64% of the population, mostly as a second language¹². It is widely used in education, the press, business, and on building and road signs. There is also a small minority of speakers of Shilha¹³ [shi], an Amazigh language.

Sounds exist in Tunisian Arabic that are not present in MSA. The way that these phonemes are represented in Arabic script can be inconsistent, leading to various spellings of the same name in both Arabic and Roman script. Where it is available, a modified Qāf (ق) with three dots (ق) (which is not present in MSA) is used in Tunisia to represent the sound 'g'. When ق is not available, the Arabic letters غ , ق and ك (gh, q and k) can also be found being used to represent this sound in Tunisia.

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings¹⁴):

Tunisian place names written in French-style Roman-script may contain **French** letter-diacritic combinations (shown below with their Unicode encoding) in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
È	00C8	è	00E8
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA

¹⁰ The use of French-style Roman-script names being a legacy of Tunisia's French colonial past.

¹¹ Tunisian people call it دارجة (variously spelt in Roman script as Dārjah, Darja, Derja, Derija) meaning everyday/colloquial language.

¹² <http://www.francophonie.org/Tunisie.html>

¹³ *Shilha* is the Arabic term for Moroccan Tamazight varieties. It is referred to as *Tachelhit* in French sources. <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/shi>

¹⁴ See www.unicode.org

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Ë	00CB	ë	00EB
Î	00CE	î	00EE
Ï	00CF	ï	00EF
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Œ	0152	œ	0153
Ù	00D9	ù	00F9
Û	00DB	û	00FB
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC
Ÿ *	0178	ÿ *	00FF

* rarely encountered

Map of Tunisia



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

Tunisia is divided into 24 governorates (French: *gouvernorat*, Arabic: ولاية *wilāyah*) (ADM1s) which are sub-divided into 264 delegations (French: *délégation*, Arabic: معتمدية *mu'tamadīyah*) (ADM2s) and further subdivided into municipalities (French: *municipalité*, Arabic: بلدية *baladīyah*), and in rural areas, into sectors (French: *secteur*, Arabic: عمادة *imādah*) (ADM3s).

In 2023, Tunisia grouped the 24 governorates into five numbered districts, sometimes known as regions (French: *district*, Arabic: إقليم *lqīm*) for some administrative and planning purposes.¹⁵ These do not form part of the formal administrative structure, but for information the groupings of governorates are as follows:

District 1: Bizerte, Béja, Jendouba, El Kef
District 2: Tunis, Ariana, Ben Arous, Zaghouan, Manouba, Nabeul
District 3: Siliana, Sousse, Kasserine, Kairouan, Monastir, Mahdia
District 4: Tozeur, Sidi Bouzid, Sfax, Gafsa
District 5: Tataouine, Gabès, Kébili, Médenine

The list of ADM1s below reflects the current structure with the recommended spelling of the governorates given in bold. Maps of the ADM1s and ADM2s can be found on the [Tunisian Ministry of Industry website](#).

Governorate name ¹⁶ - French-style Roman script	Governorate name – Arabic script & BGN/PCGN Romanization	Governorate - variant names	ISO 3166-2 Code	Administrative Centre (PPLA) – Roman script and location	Administrative Centre – variant names
Ariana ¹⁷ Gouvernorat de l'Ariana	ولاية أريانة (<i>Wilāyat</i> ¹⁸ <i>Aryānah</i>)	Gouvernorat de Ariana	TN-12	Ariana (36° 51' 36" N, 010° 11' 36" E)	Aryānah, El Ariana, L'Ariana

¹⁵ [Decree No. 589 of 21 September 2023](#) .

¹⁶ Short form in **bold** is recommended for HMG use.

¹⁷ Ariana governorate split in two in September 2000 to create the new governorate of Manouba.

¹⁸ The generic *Wilāyah* changes to *Wilāyat* when followed by the specific place name.

TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

Governorate name ¹⁶ - French-style Roman script	Governorate name – Arabic script & BGN/PCGN Romanization	Governorate - variant names	ISO 3166-2 Code	Administrative Centre (PPLA) – Roman script and location	Administrative Centre – variant names
Béja Gouvernorat de Béja	ولاية باجة (<i>Wilāyat Bājah</i>)	Gouvernorat de Bédja	TN-31	Béja (36° 43' 32" N, 009° 10' 54" E)	Bājah, Bedja
Ben Arous Gouvernorat de Ben Arous	ولاية بن عروس (<i>Wilāyat Bin 'Arūs</i>)		TN-13	Ben Arous (36° 45' 11" N, 010° 13' 08" E)	Bin 'Arūs
Bizerte Gouvernorat de Bizerte	ولاية بنزرت (<i>Wilāyat Banzart</i>)		TN-23	Bizerte (37° 16' 28" N, 009° 52' 26" E)	Banzart, Biserta, Bizerta, Hippo Diarrhytus, Hippou Aksa
Gabès Gouvernorat de Gabès	ولاية قابس (<i>Wilāyat Qābis</i>)	ولاية كابس (<i>Wilāyat Kābis</i>), ولاية قابس (<i>Wilāyat Gābis</i>)	TN-81	Gabès (33° 52' 53" N, 010° 05' 54" E)	Abes, Gābis, Kābis, Qābis, Qabes, Tacapae, Tacape, Cabes, Gabs
Gafsa Gouvernorat de Gafsa	ولاية قفصة (<i>Wilāyat Qafṣah</i>)	ولاية كفصة (<i>Wilāyat Kafṣah</i>), ولاية قفصة (<i>Wilāyat Gafṣah</i>)	TN-71	Gafsa (34° 25' 30" N, 008° 47' 03" E)	Capsa, Gafṣah, Gafsah, Gafso, Justiniana, Kafṣa, Qafṣah
Jendouba Gouvernorat de Jendouba	ولاية جندوبة (<i>Wilāyat Jundūbah</i>)	Gouvernorat de Djendouba, Gouvernorat de Souk el Arba, Wilāyat Sūq al Arba'ā'	TN-32	Jendouba (36° 30' 04" N, 008° 46' 49" E)	Jundūbah, Souk el Arba, Souq el Arba, Sūq al Arba'ā'

TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

Governorate name ¹⁶ - French-style Roman script	Governorate name – Arabic script & BGN/PCGN Romanization	Governorate - variant names	ISO 3166-2 Code	Administrative Centre (PPLA) – Roman script and location	Administrative Centre – variant names
Kairouan Gouvernorat de Kairouan	جهة كلميم واد نون القيروان ولاية (<i>Wilāyat al Qayrawān</i>)	ولاية الكيرون (<i>Wilāyat al Kayrawān</i>), ولاية القيروان (<i>Wilāyat al Gayrawān</i>)	TN-41	Kairouan (35° 40' 41" N, 010° 05' 47" E)	Al Kayrawān, Al Qayrawān, Al Gayrawān, Kairwan, Qairouan, Qairwan
Kasserine Gouvernorat de Kasserine	ولاية القصرين (<i>Wilāyat al Qaṣrayn</i>)	ولاية الكصرين (<i>Wilāyat al Kaṣrayn</i>), ولاية القصرين (<i>Wilāyat al Gaṣrayn</i>) Gouvernorat de Sbeitla, Subayṭilah	TN-42	Kasserine (35° 10' 03" N, 008° 50' 11" E)	Al Qaṣrayn, Kasserin, Qasserine
Kébili Gouvernorat de Kébili	ولاية قبلي (<i>Wilāyat Qibilī</i>)	Gouvernorat de Kebili, ولاية كبلي (<i>Wilāyat Kibilī</i>), ولاية قبلي (<i>Wilāyat Gibilī</i>)	TN-73	Kébili (33° 42' 16" N, 008° 58' 09" E)	Qibilī
El Kef Gouvernorat du Kef	ولاية الكاف (<i>Wilāyat al Kāf</i>)	Kef, Gouvernorat de Kef, Le Kef	TN-33	El Kef (36° 10' 27" N, 008° 42' 18" E)	Kef, Le Kef, Al Kāf, Chakbanaria, Chikka Benar, Sicca Veneria
Mahdia Gouvernorat de Mahdia	ولاية المهدية (<i>Wilāyat al Mahdīyah</i>)	-	TN-53	Mahdia (35° 30' 17" N, 011° 03' 44" E)	Al Mahdīyah, Madhia, Mahedia, Mehdiya, Zella, El Mahdia
Manouba Gouvernorat de Manouba	ولاية منوبة (<i>Wilāyat Manūbah</i>)	Gouvernorat de la Manouba	TN-14	Manouba (36° 48' 29" N, 010° 05' 50" E)	La Manouba, Manūbah

TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

Governorate name ¹⁶ - French-style Roman script	Governorate name – Arabic script & BGN/PCGN Romanization	Governorate - variant names	ISO 3166-2 Code	Administrative Centre (PPLA) – Roman script and location	Administrative Centre – variant names
Médenine Gouvernorat de Médenine	ولاية مدنين (<i>Wilāyat Madanīn</i>)	Gouvernorat de Mednine	TN-82	Médenine (33° 21' 18" N, 010° 30' 20" E)	Madanīn, Medenine
Monastir Gouvernorat de Monastir	ولاية المنستير (<i>Wilāyat al Munastīr</i>)	Wilayat Munastir	TN-52	Monastir (35° 47' 00" N, 010° 50' 00" E)	Al Munastīr, El Menstir, Hadrumetum, Ruspina
Nabeul Gouvernorat de Nabeul	ولاية نابل (<i>Wilāyat Nābul</i>)	Al Waṭan al Qiblī, Gouvernorat de Cap Bon, Wilāyat al Waṭan al Qiblī	TN-21	Nabeul (36° 27' 22" N, 010° 44' 15" E)	Naboel, Nābul
Sfax Gouvernorat de Sfax	ولاية صفاقس (<i>Wilāyat Ṣafāqis</i>)	-	TN-61	Sfax (34° 44' 26" N, 010° 45' 37" E)	Ṣafāqis, Taparura, Sfaqis
Sidi Bouzid Gouvernorat de Sidi Bouzid	ولاية سيدي بوزيد (<i>Wilāyat Sīdī Bū Zayd</i>)	Wilāyat Sīdī Bū Zayd	TN-43	Sidi Bouzid (35° 02' 18" N, 009° 29' 06" E)	Gammouda, Qamūdah, Sidi Bou Zid, Sīdī Bū Zayd
Siliana Gouvernorat de Siliana	ولاية سليانة (<i>Wilāyat Silyānah</i>)	-	TN-34	Siliana (36° 05' 06" N, 009° 22' 15" E)	Silyānah, Souk el Kremis

TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

Governorate name ¹⁶ - French-style Roman script	Governorate name – Arabic script & BGN/PCGN Romanization	Governorate - variant names	ISO 3166-2 Code	Administrative Centre (PPLA) – Roman script and location	Administrative Centre – variant names
Sousse Gouvernorat de Sousse	ولاية سوسة (<i>Wilāyat Sūsah</i>)	-	TN-51	Sousse (35° 49' 31" N, 010° 38' 13" E)	Hadrumetum, Sousa, Souse, Soussa, Susa, Sūsah
Tataouine Gouvernorat de Tataouine	ولاية تطاوين (<i>Wilāyat Taṭāwīn</i>)	-	TN-83	Tataouine (32° 55' 47" N, 010° 27' 06" E)	Foum Tatahouine, Foum Tataouine, Fumm Tattauin, Fum Taṭāwīn, Tatahouine, Taṭāwīn
Tozeur Gouvernorat de Tozeur	ولاية توزر (<i>Wilāyat Tawzar</i>)	-	TN-72	Tozeur (33° 55' 11" N, 008° 08' 01" E)	Tawzar
Tunis Gouvernorat de Tunis	ولاية تونس (<i>Wilāyat Tūnis</i>)	Gouvernorat de Tunis and Banlieue, Tunis Banlieue, Tunis et Banlieue, Wilāyat Tūnis wa al Aḥwāz	TN-11	Tunis ¹⁹ (36° 48' 22" N, 010° 10' 16" E)	Tunes, Tunez, Tunisi, Tunis- Ville
Zaghuan Gouvernorat de Zaghuan	ولاية زغوان (<i>Wilāyat Zaghwān</i>)	Gouvernorate de Zaghuan	TN-22	Zaghuan (36° 24' 10" N, 010° 08' 35" E)	Zaghouane, Zaghwān, Zarhouan

¹⁹ Capital city.

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Approved Name	Arabic Name (Romanized in brackets)	Conventional Name	Variant Names/Spellings	Location (coordinates)	Feature Type
Atlas Mountains ²⁰	جبال الأطلس (Jibāl al Aṭlas)	Atlas Mountains	El Atlas	32° 00' 00" N 002° 00' 00" W	Mountain range
Tell Atlas ²¹	الأطلس التلي (Al Aṭlas at Tallī)	Tell Atlas	Atlas Tellien; Atlas Méditerranéen; Little Atlas; Maritime Atlas	36° 00' 00" N 001° 00' 00" E	Mountain range
Cap Bon	الرأس الطيب (Ar Ra's at Ṭayyib)	Cape Bon	Watan El-Kibli; Sharṭk Peninsula	37° 05' 00" N 011° 02' 20" E	Peninsula
Carthage	قرطاج (Qarṭāj)	Carthage	Qarṭājannah	36° 52' 00" N 010° 20' 00" E	Ancient Ruins
Île de Djerba	جزيرة جربة (Jazīrat Jarbah)		Île de Jerba; Djerbeh; Gerba; Jarbah; Jazīrat Jarbah; Isola di Gérba	33° 48' 00" N 010° 54' 00" E	Island
Îles Kerkennah	جزر قرقنة (Juzur Qarqanah)	Kerkennah Islands	Kerkenah Islands; Juzur Qarqanah; Isles Kerkenah; Qerqenah Islands	34° 42' 56" N, 011° 11' 25" E	Islands
Chott El Jerid	شط الجريد (Shaṭṭ al Jarīd)		Chott el Jerid; Chott el Jérid; Chott el Djérid; Chott Djerid; Shott el Jerid	33° 44' 54" N 008° 13' 46" E	Sabkha
Chott El Fejaj	شط الفجاج (Shaṭṭ al Fijāj)		Chott el Fedjaj; Chott El Fedjej; Chott Fedjadj; Chott el Fedjedj; Shaṭṭ al Fijāj	33° 54' 16" N 009° 10' 44" E	Sabkha
Chott El Gharsa	شط الغرسة (Shaṭṭ al Gharsah)		Chott el Rharsa; Chott Rharsa; Chott el Gharsa; Shaṭṭ al Gharsah	34° 06' 19" N, 007° 48' 51" E	Sabkha
Oued Mellègue	وادي ملاق (Wādī Mallāq)		Oued Mellègue; Oued Mellegue; Oued Mellgue; Wād Mallāq	36° 32' 04" N 008° 50' 44" E	River
Oued Mejerda	وادي مجردة (Wādī Majardah)		Oued Mejirda; Oued Mjirda; Wādī Majardah; Wādī Mejerha; Oued Medjerda; Wād Mujayridah	33° 35' 08" N 010° 23' 00" E	Wadi / river

²⁰ The Atlas Mountains are a series of mountain ranges in northwest Africa spanning Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

²¹ The Tell Atlas is a mountain chain belonging to the Atlas mountain range, stretching from Morocco, through Algeria to Tunisia.

PCGN Approved Name	Arabic Name (Romanized in brackets)	Conventional Name	Variant Names/Spellings	Location (coordinates)	Feature Type
Île de La Galite (Jalta)	جزيرة جالطة (Jazīrat Jālīṭah)	Jalta	Île de La Galite; Île Galite; Isola Galite, Jazīrat Jālīṭah; Jalta Island	37° 31' 34" N 008° 55' 44" E	Island
Canal de la Galite	-		Galita Channel; Canal de Jālīṭah	37° 21' 13" N 009° 00' 28" E	Marine channel
Utica	أتيك (Uṭayk)	Utica	Utique; Utika; Ruines d'Utique	37° 04' 00" N 010° 04' 00" E	Ancient Ruins
Golfe de Gabès	خليج قابس (Khalīj Qābis)	Gulf of Gabes	Golfe de Qabès; Petite Syrte; Lesser Syrtis; Syrtis Minor; Cabès; Cables; Gaps; خليج قابس	34° 00' 00" N 009° 00' 00" E	Gulf
Golfe de Hammamet	خليج الحمامات (Khalīj al Hammāmāt)	Gulf of Hammamet	Golfe d'Hammamet; Gulf of Hamamet	36° 02' 28" N 010° 32' 00" E	Gulf
Golfe de Tunis	خليج تونس (Khalīj Tūnis)	Gulf of Tunis		40° 40' 00" N 028° 15' 00" E	Gulf

Recognised Border Crossing Points

Bordering country	PCGN Approved Name (Tunisian side)	PCGN Approved Name (other side)	Approximate location
Libya	Dhéhiba	Wāzin	32° 00' 29" N, 010° 49' 12" E
Libya	Ras Jédir	Ra's Ajdīr	33° 07' 35" N, 011° 33' 30" E
Algeria	Hazoua	Taleb Larbi	33° 43' 38" N, 007° 33' 53" E
Algeria	Midès	Betita	34° 27' 26" N, 008° 00' 13" E
Algeria	Sidi Boubaker	Bir El Ater	34° 46' 06" N, 008° 16' 56" E
Algeria	Bou Chebka	El Alaouinia	35° 10' 18" N, 008° 25' 10" E
Algeria	Haidra	Ras el Aïoun	35° 32' 48" N, 008° 21' 40" E
Algeria	Kalaat Senan	El Meridj	35° 47' 12" N, 008° 15' 56" E
Algeria	Sakiet Sidi Youssef	<i>unconfirmed</i>	36° 13' 42" N, 008° 21' 03" E
Algeria	Ghardimaou	Ain Zana	36° 25' 42" N, 008° 22' 18" E
Algeria	Babouch	El Aïoun	36° 48' 14" N, 008° 38' 16" E
Algeria	Tabarka	Oum Teboul	36° 54' 52" N, 008° 39' 00" E

Useful references

- BBC country profile: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14107241> (no longer updated)
- Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/place/Tunisia>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ts.html>
- Government of Tunisia official portal: <http://www.ministeres.tn>
- Ethnologue report on languages of Tunisia: <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/TN/>
- FCDO travel advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/tunisia>
- Tunisia Constitution 2014: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia_2014.pdf
- Tunisian Industry Portal: <http://www.tunisieindustrie.nat.tn/fr/doc.asp?mcat=13&mrub=105> (click on link to find maps of ADM1 and ADM2s)
- <http://opendata.interieur.gov.tn/fr/catalog/delegations-par-gouvernorats-de-la-republique>
- Tunisia National Institute of Statistics: <http://www.ins.nat.tn/indexen.php>
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: <https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSHome/index.html>
- UNHCR report on North Africa: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486166.html>

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