

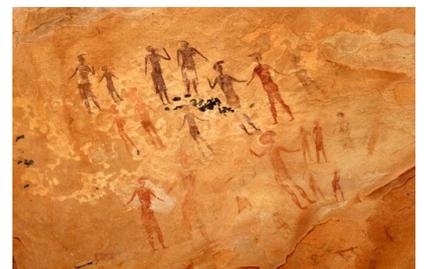
Algeria: Tassili n'Ajjer Is the Gem in the Sahara Desert

The Sahara Desert of Algeria is the backdrop of marvelous mountain ranges popularly known as the Tassili n'Ajjer. The mountain range covers a staggering 72,000 sq. km of the south east of beautiful Algeria, bordering Libya and Niger. It was here where a world class tourist attraction site was discovered in early 1930s and since then it has never ceased to amaze its visitors from all around the world. Tassili n'Ajjer is home to thousands of ancient paintings that are believed to have been delicately painted about 10,000 years ago. Since its discovery in 1933 researchers identified 15,000 of different paintings.



Historically, the plateau on which Tassili n'Ajjer sits on could easily support a large community. It is purported to have been less dry than it is today which gave it its current name that also means a 'plateau of rivers'.

The paintings on the rocks clearly depict the life of the early inhabitants of southern Algeria. They indicate a lifestyle characterized by animal rearing, hunting, raiding and entertainment activities such as dancing. The fascinating paintings have stood the test of time, enduring the unforgiving sun and abrasive sand storms of the dreaded Sahara Desert. This has in time culminated into a sense of pride and a reason for joy to the nation of Algeria.



Today Tassili n'Ajjer is a national park, World Heritage Sites and biosphere reserve. It is not respected only for the artworks but also for a spectacular stone forest that has been created overtime by erosion on the vast sandstone. This has left behind a site to behold together with other land forms; the arches are surely stunning and heavenly beautiful in every sense.

The classified paintings on the rocks are of international importance since they are rich in history as they give clear details of the ancient life, animal migration and the general pattern of climate 10,000 to 15,000

years ago.



There are only about 1,700 inhabitants in the region. They mostly come from the Kel Ajjer Tuareg and the Di'ra community sparsely settled across the plateau but mostly to the northern part where a number of oases are located. Their cultural way of life has been affected and most of the locals now depend on tourism for survival.

The upsurge of local and international tourists has necessitated construction of an international airport at Djanet. From the airport only the most formidable 4wheel drive vehicles can traverse the Tassili n'Ajjer land. All visitors need permission by the Tassili National Park Office at Djanet which also guides and supervises the tourists in the nearby parks.

The mountains are also important resting place for the ever migrating Palaearctic birds. Given the richness of Neolithic artwork in this national park a conservation body was formed to ensure that the artworks are well maintained and taken care off for the benefit of Algeria and the whole world at large. It is highly important to keep this place alive for the benefit of future generations to come.

Date: 2013-09-30

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-algerias-tassili-najjer-is-the-jewel-in-the-sahara-desert-article2197>