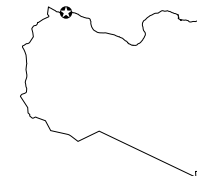


Tripoli طرابلس



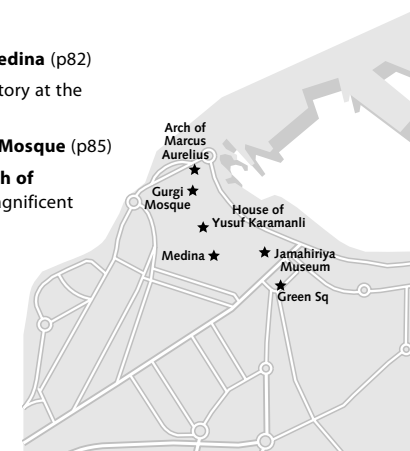
Sophisticated and strongly traditional, Libya's capital (Tarablus in Arabic) is its most alluring city. Tripoli – which once went by the historical sobriquet of the 'White Bride of the Mediterranean' and has more recently been called 'the Havana of North Africa' – is rich in historical influences and brilliantly captures that irresistible fusion of languid Mediterranean charm and clamorous Arab medina. More than anything else, this friendly city is the ideal place to catch the buzz of optimism that characterises the new Libya.

The disparate civilisations that have occupied this stretch of coast all left their mark. The Roman Arch of Marcus Aurelius tells just how many centuries the world's powers have coveted one of North Africa's best natural harbours. The Turkish mosques of the medina speak of Tripoli's historically deep connections to the wider Islamic world; the medina itself is a labyrinth of meandering souqs (markets) and stunning public buildings. The decaying Italianate façades of the city centre offer a reminder of an outside world that's never quite been able to leave Libya alone.

The Tripoli that you now see is a boom town, revelling in its oil wealth and Libya's burgeoning friendship with the West. Yet, with its face to the sea and its back to the Sahara Desert, Tripoli has always been a meeting place of travellers and a crossroads city whose fortunes ebbed and flowed with the political and economic currents of the day. The overall effect is a cosmopolitan, modern city overlaid with the fascinating signposts of history.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lose yourself in the narrow lanes of the **medina** (p82)
- Enjoy a spectacular overview of Libyan history at the **Jamahiriya Museum** (p76)
- Admire the exquisite interior of the **Gurgi Mosque** (p85)
- Imagine Tripoli's Roman heyday at the **Arch of Marcus Aurelius** (p84) and explore the magnificent **House of Yusuf Karamanli** (p86)
- Seek out the ornate **Italianate façades** (p87) east of Green Sq
- Shop without hassle in the **souqs** (p96) of the medina
- Eat lunch in **Mat'am Obaya** (p93) in the medina and dinner at the **fish market** (p95)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: ☎ 021

■ POPULATION: 1.165 MILLION

