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M'Zab Valley, Algeria

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M'Zab Valley is a [World Heritage Site](#) in [Algeria](#). Inscribed in 1982, the M'zab is a limestone plateau in the northern Sahara. M'zab is famous for its traditional abodes built by the Ibadite people in the 10th century. There are five walled villages called *ksour* at Wad Mzab which are suited to the environment while ideal for the family structure. The well preserved abodes supported by the intact customs and lifestyle of the people was the reason that M'Zab Valley was inscribed as a World Heritage Site during the 6th [session](#) of the [World Heritage Committee](#), which met on 13-17 December, 1982 in Paris.

The villages of M'Zab Valley do not stay within their dwellings throughout the year. During summer, they migrate to "summer citadels" around palm grove oases. These oases are within the Sahara Desert and are surrounded by an arid country known as chebka.

The nature of the Ibadite society has helped to preserve their customs and social life. A council made up of representative from the seven walled villages decide on religious, social and cultural matters.

What to See in M'Zab Valley

The five walled villages, or ksour, are the highlight of M'Zab Valley. The villages are called Tagherdayt, Beni Isguen, Melika, Bounoura and El-Ateuf. Two more villages, Berianne and El Guerara are two more recent settlement added to the group. Each walled village has its own mosque, built like a fortress, with its minaret double as watchtower. The residences are built in concentric circles around the mosque.

Location

M'zab is within the Ghardaïa province of Algeria, 600 km from Algiers.

World Heritage Site Inscription Details

Location: **N32 28 59.988 E3 40 59.988**

Inscription Year: **1982**

Type of Site: **Cultural**

[Inscription Criteria](#): II, III, V

Getting there

M'Zab is located south of Laghouat. It is reachable by all-terrain vehicle on the Trans-Sahara Highway (N1). It may be best to arrange through a travel agent in Algiers.

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M'Zab Ghardaia, Algeria

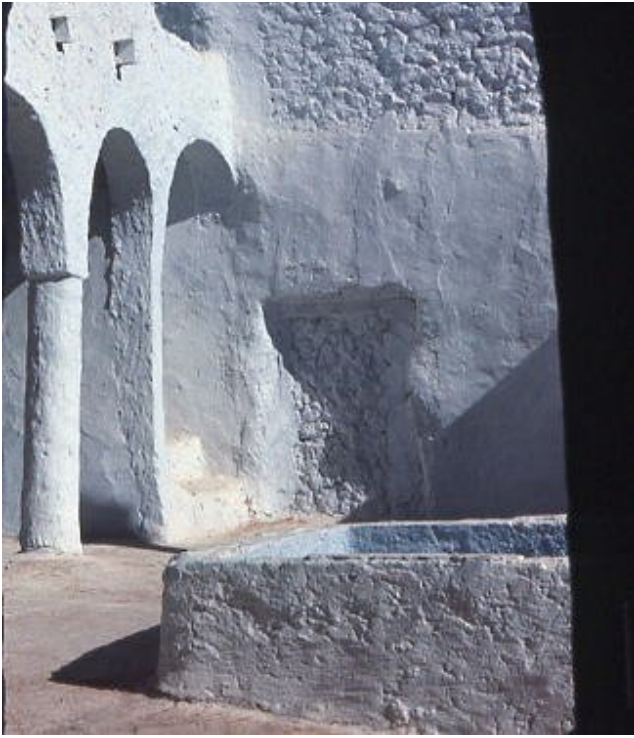
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The mosque at El Ateuf, Algeria

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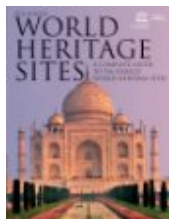
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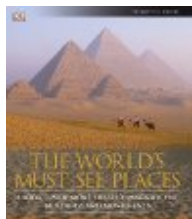
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