

**Explore, Part 2.** We continued our exploration of southern Tunisia on Saturday and Sunday, 15 and 16 July.



From the “desert camp” we followed the left side of the magenta road tracings back to Monastir. There had been the possibility that Christine and I would stop for a week in Kairouan (another city holy to Muslims) to teach English, but that did not get arranged.



A typical fruit stand

Those peach pits are small.



Peaches are flat. Top one tilted up.

After the road direction changed from northeastward to northwestward, and where the road was about to cross that tan area, we stopped at the Zaouiet El Anes Hot Springs water well. The water rose from hundreds of meters below the surface. It was fresh, not salty, and was too hot for irrigating crops. The heat was nearly at the limits of what my hand could tolerate. So nearby there were special spiral mounds by which the water would be cooled by evaporation and radiation.



Hot water tower at top, 3 cooling pyramids in this Google Earth view



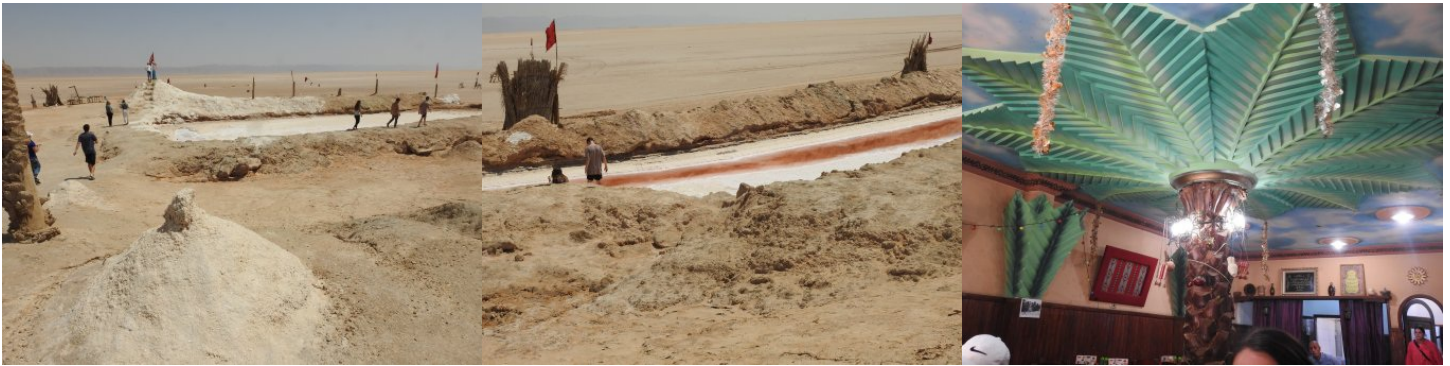
Tower for spraying the hot water for initial cooling.



Spiral pyramid for further cooling of the hot water.

The gray area on the map between Douz and Tozeur is near sea level. At times of abundant rainfall it becomes Tunisia’s largest lake. After the water evaporates, there are salt deposits that are mined (right satellite image). The salt is exported to Europe to melt snow off roads.





Salt mounds and our team members

Water remnant and red algae

Central post in Tozeur restaurant

Long ago our son's apartment in Denver had tall cylindrical pillars in the middle of some rooms. I suggested that they could be decorated to look like palm trees. So I had to photograph this restaurant decorated ceiling. We had a brief tour of the oldest parts of Tozeur. The architecture used special bricks, locally made and arranged in decorative patterns. (The full resolution photos show the detailed patterns better.)



Then we had an afternoon rest before the later excursion to the desert.



Our first stop was the Kingdoms of Fire filming location, seeing the front and back of the set. Next was a rock pillar named Ong Jmal, and our young people were encouraged to climb up there. Then the fleet of safari vehicles ran up and over many steep dune surfaces.



A mirage in the desert. It looks like a shallow lake but it is hot sand that bends the light rays from the sky.



The highlight of the evening was a visit to Far, Far Away... to Tatooine, home of Luke Skywalker of Star Wars fame.



This view was from the top of a sand dune. I collected a sand sample there. Both there and in the village some local kids were showing off their Desert Fox pets. Eventually all safari vehicles drove down the steep bank of the sand dune to reach the village.



My footprints in the sand



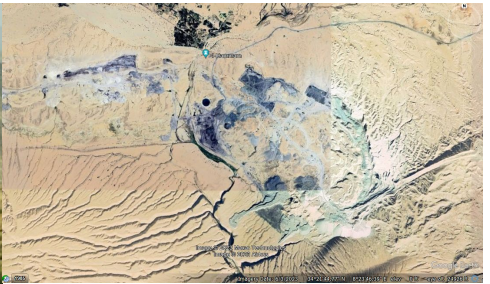
Desert Fox on a rope



Rachel staged the photo at the left. We pretended to be using the Jedi Force.

The view from my hotel window in Tozeur shows many palm trees in the city.





Satellite view of phosphate mine.

Phosphate mine as viewed from the main highway.

This mine is a major resource for Tunisia and its export market, though it causes pollution problems at the processing plant on the Sea coast.

Eventually our trip reached El Jem. At its center is one of the best-preserved Roman coliseums. We toured it immediately after lunch, but we had left our cameras on the bus while having lunch. So I have only this poorly focused photo as we left. The satellite view shows the coliseum symmetry surrounded by the town.



House Bunting in Tozeur



European Bee-eaters seen at Zaouiet hot water facilities



Eurasian Hoopoe in Tozeur



Spanish Sparrow in Tozeur

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