

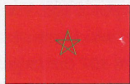
# NORTH AFRICA

## TUNISIA



AREA 163,610 sq km  
POPULATION 10,629,000  
MONEY Tunisian dinar

## MOROCCO



AREA 446,550 sq km  
POPULATION 31,968,000  
MONEY Moroccan dirham

## MALI



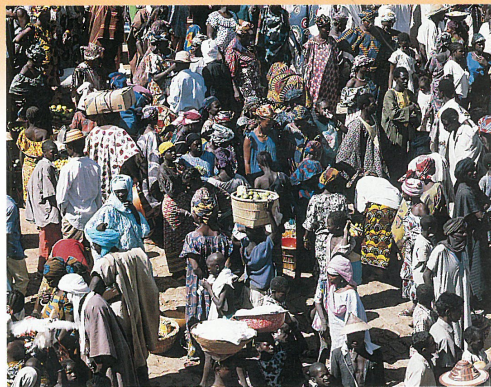
AREA 1,240,192 sq km  
POPULATION 14,160,000  
MONEY CFA franc

**M**OST of North Africa is desert – but not all. The coastlines and mountains of north-west Africa get winter rain: good crops are grown and the coasts of Tunisia and Morocco are popular with tourists.

Most of these countries are Islamic. Morocco has the oldest university in the world: the Islamic University in Fez. South Sudan is the only country that is mainly Christian. It was part of Sudan, but became an independent country in 2011 after a long civil war.

People can live in the desert if there is water. Some modern settlements have been built deep in the desert where there are valuable minerals, and water is pumped from underground. These minerals are the main reason why some countries are richer than others. Algeria and Libya have plenty of oil beneath the desert.

South of the Sahara is the ‘Sahel’ – a large semi-desert area. Some years have good rains; some years very little rain. Mali, Niger, Chad and South Sudan are among the poorest nations in the world.

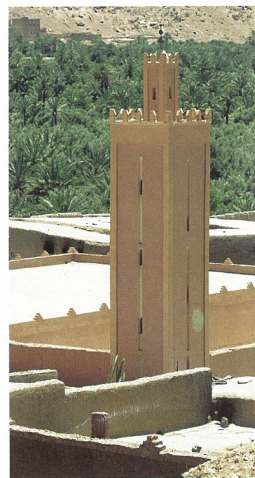


▲ A market near Timbuktu, in Mali, is a place to meet as well as to trade. People bring the goods they hope to sell in locally made baskets or in re-used cartons which they balance on their heads.

## EGYPT



AREA 1,001,449 sq km  
POPULATION 82,080,000  
MONEY Egyptian pound



▲ Mosque in Morocco. This tower is a minaret: part of an Islamic mosque. It is used to announce the times of prayer to all the village. The village is in the Ziz River valley, south of the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Notice the flat roofs of the houses and the date palms.

## SUEZ CANAL



This old print shows the procession of ships through the Suez Canal at its opening in December 1869. The canal links the Mediterranean with the Red Sea (see map: G1). It was dug in 1859–69 by Arabs, organized by a Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps. Before the canal opened, the route by sea from Europe to India and the Far East was around the whole of Africa.



▲ Oasis near Lake Djerid, Tunisia. Water is just below the ground, so date palms can grow well. But in the background, great sand dunes loom on the skyline. If they advance, they may cover the oasis and kill the crops.

Egypt is a desert country. Its fertile land is ‘the gift of the Nile’. It has the biggest population of any North African country. Its capital, Cairo, is one of the biggest cities in the world. The River Nile brings water to the valley and delta. The land on the east side of the Nile is carefully used, using irrigation and is crowded with people. The rest of Egypt is empty. Find Cairo and the Nile on the world population map on page 11 which shows the most and empty areas very clearly. Lack of rain has helped to preserve many of the monuments, pyramids and tombs built by the ancient Egyptians. The pyramids near Cairo, are about 4500 years old (page 53). They are three of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world still surviving.

