

TATOOINE TRIALS

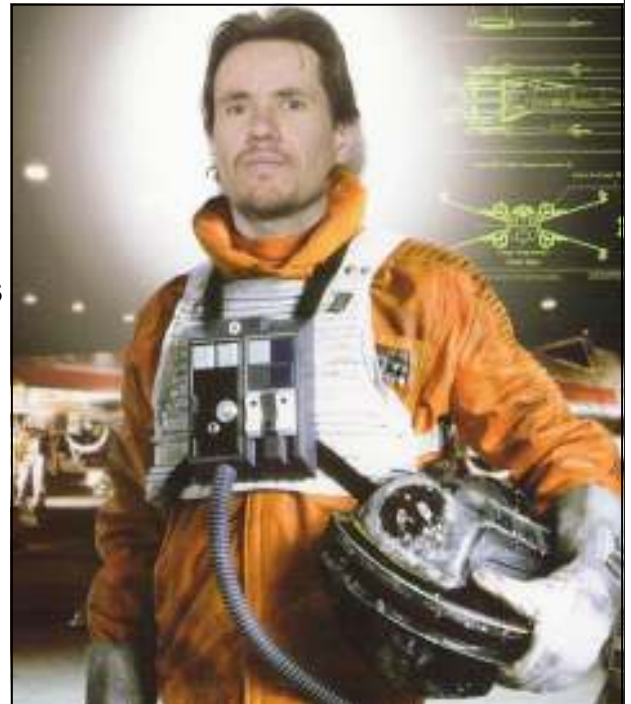
By Ian Trussler

Having spent many years traveling the world visiting Star Wars movie locations, of which some reports have featured in Star Wars Aficionado, I found that in 2007, the 30th anniversary year, I had still not been to Tunisia. Although the thought had crossed my mind many times I somehow never took the leap. I knew it had a wealth of sites to visit but I was put of by the remoteness and perceived problems of visiting such a very "foreign" environment. I wondered about how difficult such a trip would be and had concerns of traveling alone to such a place.

After much deliberation I decided it was now or never as the actual sets left in the desert locations would not last forever, I wasn't getting any younger and I might not feel so adventurous as the years advanced. So I took the plunge and made the trip and what follows is my account of that trip. My intention with this feature is to give people as much information and advice as possible, giving you my honest, no holds barred opinion of what was involved in visiting all the different locations across Tunisia that make up the Tatooine environment.

The first thing you need to be aware of is that the various locations used across the saga are spread far and wide across the southern part of Tunisia. Over the course of a week I traveled hundreds of miles to visit these places and you simply cannot see all the places if you base yourself in just one place.

There are many companies that do trips to Tunisia and many even cater to the Star Wars fan, but if you want to get the most and see all you can related to Star Wars it's best to tailor make your itinerary. I used an excellent website called



STAR WARS AFICIONADO MAGAZINE's very own intrepid adventurer and archaeologist-even Rebel X-wing fighter pilot!!-Ian Trussler.

aspectsoftunisia.com which operate under the parent company of Wigmore Travel based in London. Basically once you have done your research you email them what you want to do and they work out all the flights and accomodation and transfers details for you. It certainly took some of the worry out of things and although you can arrange things yourself or even just wing it once you arrive, I wouldn't recommend it.

I arranged a two centre trip staying in Tozeur and Djerba with a transfer by 4 wheel drive across the desert from one to the other. The trip lasted from Sunday to Saturday and is enough time to do everything if well organized. With hindsight I could maybe have done with one extra day in Tozeur as I did miss out on one location. I stayed 3 nights in Tozeur and 3 nights in Djerba.

What follows is a detailed account of each day of the trip:

Day One

Travel - It isn't possible to fly direct to Tozeur, so you have to do a two stage journey. I flew from Heathrow to Tunis which takes approximately 2.5 - 2.75 hours and then caught a connecting flight to Tozeur. Flights from Tunis to the small towns in the south are not very frequent and I had a very short time of 45 minutes to get my connecting flight once landing in Tunis. At the best of times 45 mins is not very long to go through customs, collect your bags and check in and board another flight. Unfortunately my flight to Tunis was half an hour late leaving me 15 mins to get the flight to Tozeur, stressful to say the least as English is not widely spoken in Tunisia and all signage is in either Arabic or French. I don't speak Arabic and only really have a school boy grasp on French but somehow when needs must you get by and manage to communicate. All my flights relating to this trip were with Tunisair and to be blunt they sucked. Every one of my four flights was late or delayed, information about what was happening was nonexistent so this made for unnerving times. The flight to Tozeur was like something out of Indiana Jones, Lao Che airlines springs to mind, the plane had propellers rather than jet engines, however the hour long flight from Tunis to Tozeur did eventually get me there safely.

I stayed in the Hotel Eldorador Ksar Rouge, a very nice four star hotel and have no complaints about any of the hotels I stayed in on the trip. High standard hotels are very cheap in Tunisia as is the general cost of food and transport.

As a British citizen I did not require a visa to enter Tunisia, just a full passport and no vaccinations are required either, provided you are in good general health and take sensible precautions while there, such as drinking only bottled water. Tunisia has a closed currency which means you cannot take money in or out of the country. Basically you take your own countries currency and change it in the hotel or in banks as and when you need to. You must change all money back before you leave the country and must show the receipts for the currency you changed up during your trip. The Tunisian



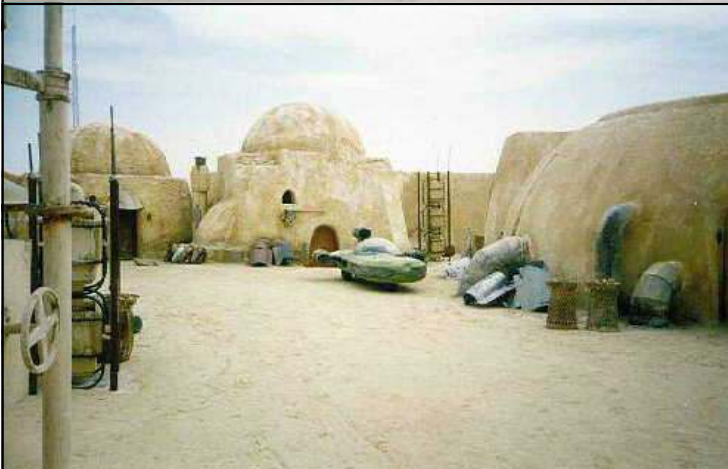
At the Chott El Gharsa location at Tozeur, scenes filmed for EPISODE ONE included the arrival of the Naboo Royal Starship and the brief but enjoyable duel between Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson) and Darth Maul (Ray Park).

currency is the Dinar and the exchange rate at the time of my trip was 2.5 dinars to 1 pound sterling. The exchange rate is fixed by the government so you do not benefit whatsoever by trying to shop around for a better rate. Basically just change small amounts on a daily or bi-daily basis in your hotel.

[Day Two - Locations visited - Mos Espa set and Naboo Royal Starship landing site.](#)

Having arrived in Tozeur so late (midnight) the day before, this was my first chance to get out and see things. All the hotels in Tozeur are located on the main road (a hill) leading into the small town. It is about a 10-15 minute walk into the centre of the town from whichever hotel you stay in.

Tozeur is not a particularly pleasant place to be, the level of poverty and lack of decent living conditions is abundantly apparent. The town stinks as well, so bad it frequently made me wretch. As a fair skinned and fairish haired westerner I stuck out like a sore thumb and was constantly bothered by people either trying to sell me stuff or attempting to gain info from me for somewhat dubious reasons. This is something you simply have to get used to in Tunisia and as a pretty confident person anyway, I did at



Above: still in Tozeur, and near Chott El Gharsa, is the impressive, but now sadly deteriorated set created by LUCASFILM for the Mos Espa spaceport, as seen in EPISODES I and II. The ever reliable, and highly distinctive, moisture vaporators are still there but the famous dome buildings, ten years on, are showing their age compared to how they once looked (left).

times find it disconcerting. Having said that, even though I always felt unbelievably conspicuous, I never felt unsafe or in any real danger but I do think this may have had something to do with being male and that men are clearly more respected than females.

Having quickly had enough of wondering around the town and finding my bearings I went back to the hotel and spoke with their on site excursion agent and arranged a private four wheel drive expedition out into the desert. In a combination of English, French and pointing I thought I had arranged a trip to the famous Lars Family Homestead set. I had shown the agent a picture of the set from AOTC and she nodded and made all the right noises that I would indeed be taken there.

The cost of this trip was 90 dinar, about 35 pounds, not bad for a private trip. When the driver turned up he took me on a brilliant drive through the desert, careering up and

down huge dunes and first stop was a famous landmark called "The Camels Neck", somewhere that had featured in the film "The English Patient" and nearby there was a small piece of set from the film still standing.

Very close by to this site was our next stop, the site used for the Naboo Starship landing site in The Phantom Menace and also for Qui-Gon and Darth Maul's saber fight.



Basically we were out on the Chott El Gharsa, a smaller and somewhat less famous salt flat than Chott El Jerid (more of which later). By now, although excited to be where I was, I knew the Lars Family Homestead was not located near this site. I spoke with



Above and bottom right: more generic shots of Mos Espa. Above: me outside what remains of Watto's infamous junk shop. "No money. No parts. No deal!!"

my driver and re-showed him my picture of the set and he assured me that was what we would go to next. A short trip further on and we traversed over a huge dune and I was confronted with the remains of the pretty impressive set of Mos Espa town.

Although not what I was expecting to see, this was great. The set, now ten years old, is visibly deteriorating and not much is being done to preserve it. The set consists of the main entrance seen on film as Qui-Gon, Jar

et al wander into town, together with three side streets that lead off and what was clearly the area used as Watto's junk yard. In fact the junkyard area still has the remains of the large pod seen in the background when Watto and Qui-Gon make their deal. Several moisture vaporators still litter the set and it all feels so very Star Wars when you walk around. This must have been very impressive indeed when filled with all the extras, additional set dressing and star characters. While walking in and around the streets and buildings you get to truly appreciate the work that goes into creating the much loved world of Star Wars.



When we arrived, my driver and I were

the only visitors there, except for a guy with some camels nearby, hoping to tempt me to take a ride, for a fee obviously. After about 15 mins a convoy of three 4WD's turned up with about 15 American tourists and things got a bit crowded so we split. I had taken loads of pics and seen something I was not expecting at the time so was very happy.

Back in the car I spoke with my driver about the Lars Homestead set and he said he didn't know it, he stopped to ask a driver of the American convoy and I was then told that the set no longer existed and had been destroyed. I knew in my gut this couldn't be true, considering the Mos Espa set was still standing after 10 years, the Lars



Me with the ever reliable moisture vaporators re-created for EPISODE ONE from John Barry's original 1975 production designs. You know that you are in the STAR WARS universe when you see them. As you can see from the opposite pics, this wonderful, evocative location is starting to deteriorate heavily. If only the Tunisian government and LUCASFILM could work together on preserving the area for tourists and generations of STAR WARS fans to come.

Homestead set was younger so must still be there.

In terms of getting to the Mos Espa set, you really do need a 4WD and unless you know where you are going, which seems very unlikely, I would not attempt to go it alone. All the guides/drivers know where it is and can safely take you there. Although it may seem like an adventure to go it alone it just isn't worth it I think when if anything happens out in the desert you can be in serious trouble pretty quick. For the cost of a driver etc, which isn't much, it makes life so much easier.

This trip lasted for about 2 hours and during the drive back to the hotel my driver told me of another excursion he did that included a trip to "Star Wars Canyon" which was close to the town of Mides. I said I would give it some consideration but that I really

wanted to go to the other set (Lars Homestead) out on Chott El Jerid.

Day Three - Location visited - Lars Homestead exterior

I spent the whole night before wrestling with my thoughts on whether to go to Mides and see the SW canyon or trust my gut and search for Luke Skywalker's home. Ultimately I decided that my driver the day before must be wrong and I set out to see for myself if the set all, the main reason I to see this set and I realize my dream.

The Lars Family indeed still exist and edge of the Chott El actually much closer rather than Tozeur, to stay in Tozeur as speak of in Nefta.

I got a taxi to Nefta got there I would be and find out for sure with this iconic set. town than Tozeur and basically one main ramshackle shops buildings. I wandered half an hour and small office with indicated information found a man who English but when I picture he instantly wanted and he

someone to take me there via horse drawn cart for the cost of about 10 pound. I agreed and about 10 minutes later a guide with his horse and cart turned up, he spoke no English and I took a bit of a leap of faith that he was going to take me where I wanted to go.

The journey took about an hour and a half across a extremely barren desert salt flat in searing heat. Thankfully the cart I was sitting in had a shade and I keep out of the direct sun mostly. Even in mid October the heat was intense, averaging temperatures



Above: yep, that's right, I'm the fourth member of the Lars Household and this igloo is mine!!! Below: the original igloo-like shell exterior created for the March 1976 filming of STAR WARS, with the late Phil Brown as Uncle Owen Lars and Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker.



was still there. After went to Tozeur was couldn't not try and

Homestead does is located on the Jerid salt flat and is to the town of Nefta although you want there is nothing to

hoping that once I able to find a guide what the score was Nefta is a smaller consists of drag with a few and a few official around for about came across a signage that and guides. Inside I spoke a tiny bit of showed him my knew what I showed me on a said he could get



in the nineties each day I was in the Tozeur area. The trek across the desert and salt flat was very interesting, we passed many skeletons of dead animals and the carcass of a recently deceased cow as well as a lot of rubbish and burnt out vehicles.

Finally in the distance I could see what I thought was the famous igloo building, shimmering among the mirages created by the sunshine reflecting off the mineral rich salt lake.



Above top: the wonderful Lars Homestead set created by LUCASFILM for ATTACK OF THE CLONES and left in place as a tourist attraction. Above: as the original set looked when built in early 1976 by John Barry's UK team.

It was quite a moment when we arrived, completely alone, not another soul in sight, just me, my guide and the horse. What's left at this site now is the "Igloo" used as the entrance to the underground dwelling, the two crater rings created to give the impression of holes in the ground and the remains of the circular roof of the garage pit. The garage roof now only consists of the wooden framework as all the boarding has been removed, probably by nomads to use as fire wood or shelter materials. The crater

rings have obviously eroded down somewhat from what they once were but are still very impressive. It's a shame that when I took a closer look in the craters I had to side step the human turds as it seems the nomads use them as somewhere to take a dump. Sacrilege!

The Igloo building is in pretty good shape but is beginning to erode in places and clearly these things, like the Mos Espa set will not last forever so it is advisable to visit these places before it's too late. Don't make the mistake I did and go inside the Igloo,



Above: the classic scene, with Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, looking towards the sunset and his yearning for adventure and excitement out amongst the stars. It would be a sequence that would entice millions of people, of all ages, and around the world, to want to be a part of the STAR WARS universe, and enjoy the adventures to come. Above insert: thirty years on, I feel the same way about STAR WARS as I did when I first saw it back in 1978 and recreating Luke's scene at the Lars Homestead location was something that I couldn't miss out on. It's a scene that I know has been imitated by many other fans who have visited the site ever since.

what looked like a solid ground floor was in fact just a very thin surface covering of salt and minerals. When I stepped inside my foot immediately sank about six inches into what can only be described as black tar, instantly covering my shoes in thick sticky black goo. There is nothing to see inside the Igloo but if you must look make sure you stand at the entrance and peer in.

While at this site it is possible to see in the distance the main road that leads out of Nefta passing by. Some say that you can see the set from the road and if you have a 4WD you can drive out to it. I actually really liked my horse drawn excursion as it added a different dimension to the occasion. While I took pictures my guide was busy

digging up salt from the crater and filling a large sack with the stuff. I hoped he wasn't going to use the stuff on any food as it came from what was now a desert toilet.

On the journey back to town I was so pleased that I followed my instinct and didn't listen to the false advice I had been given the day before. If I had missed visiting this site I would never have forgiven myself.



Above top: at the Chott El Jerid dunes outside the town of Douz, amidst the first stirrings of a fresh sandstorm, George Lucas gives directorial instructions to Tunisian locals playing Stormtroopers for the filming of the Imperial forces discovering Threepio and Artoo's downed escape pod. Above right: filming the droids leaving the pod and heading into the unknown. Above left: me at the same location, atop a camel-not an experience I ever want to repeat again in my life!! Uncomfortable would be an understatement!!

[Day Four - Locations visited - The Dune Sea and Lars Family Homestead interiors](#)

So it was time to leave Tozeur behind and begin the 350km plus journey from west to east Tunisia and the island of Djerba. I had pre-booked a private transfer via 4WD as part of my package and my driver turned up as planned at 9am. Leaving Tozeur we drove across the enormous Chott El Jerid salt lake which made for a spectacular site as the Atlas Mountains loomed in the distance to our left for much of the way.

The first stop along the way was the town of Douz. In conversations I had with Robert

Watts (Producer on the Original Trilogy) he had stated that the Grande Dunes area had been used for the scenes of Threepio and the Krayt Dragon skeleton and the Escape Pod crash site/ Stormtroopers "Look Sir Droids" scenes.

I asked my driver if he knew where this area was and he took me out to the edge of town where a somewhat commercialized Camel corral had been set up on the edge of the dunes.

This is basically Sahara desert confronted with golden sand front of you. The thing to do is give and take a camel dunes. For the pound) you get hours trek out into back, stopping suddenly be masked Arab stallion, who from nowhere, tries to get you to get your photo of course. experience, the extremely when we stopped forced to picked up and I sand for the next pleasant.



Above: still at the dunes location, scenes are filmed of the lone Threepio searching for civilisation. Below: the haunting beauty and dangerous desolation of the area is well conveyed.



Although you are just basically surrounded by sand dunes with no trace of anything Star Wars left, it was easy to understand why this site was chosen to represent the bleak wastes of the Dune Sea.

It had taken about 2 hours to get to Douz and we still had a long way to go so we continued our journey through desert and then into rugged hills and mountains as we approached the area of Matmata, famous for its troglodyte dwellings. The hills and mountain sides are peppered with ancient caves, once used as homes as well as the more famous pit dwellings.

the edge of the and you are miles and miles of dunes stretching in only and obvious in to tourist cliché ride out into the cost of 20 dinar (7 approximately an the dunes and half way to confronted by a astride a black seems to appear who desperately sit on his horse and taken, all for a fee Although an camel ride was uncomfortable and halfway and I was dismount, the wind found myself eating 10 minutes, not

We went straight to the troglodyte Sidi Driss, the site Family Homestead Hope and Attack of

The hotel (although it that) consists of which have caves the sides. Of all the was the only one to deal of its movies. Signs point the area used in tiny little hotel bar Eisley Cantina. two pits was used the cliché always smaller in real life film. What is great owner has left all place, the familiar corrugated have the gadgets created for the film famous of all is the Luke and Owen looked on or where Anakin of his this still has the created in 1976 for retouched in 2000 things missing are sat in the middle of a treadwell droid.

Inside the tiny one walls are adorned from the first signed and owner by Gary the hotel Star Wars walls and it's



Above top: You can't be a STAR WARS location finder/fan without visiting the Hotel Sidi Driss in Matmata, home to the Lars Homestead interior during the filming of 1976 and 2000. Above middle: the troglodyte hotel as it looks today. Above: Mark Hamill on the re-dressed site way back in 1976. Some of the recreated props and dressings from AT-TACK OF THE CLONES in 2000 are still there today.

the most famous of structures, the Hotel used for the Lars interiors in A New the Clones.

that's a stretch to call two "holes" both of or rooms dug out of sites I visited, this actually make a big connection to the you in the direction to the movies and the has been named Mos Only the larger of the in the movies and as goes, it's much than it appears on is that the hotels the set dressings in doorways have the linings, the alcoves and machines still in place. Most dining area where argued as Beru Cliegg Lars told mother's abduction, ceiling painting, the first film and for AOTC. The only the vaporators that the courtyard, oh and

room (cave) bar the with framed pictures movie, one of them dedicated to the Kurtz. Elsewhere in posters hang from obvious that they are



very proud and pleased to be associated with the saga.

It was a huge thrill for me to stand in this courtyard and immerse myself in the fantasy. Of all the sites to see this one probably stands the best chance of being around, for fans to visit, long into the future.

Above left: "Where's my Mother?" A pensive Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen) stands atop the steps of the Lars Household. Above right: I thought I'd recreate the same scene, but without the pensive-ness!!!



Left: the legendary interior room of the hotel used as the Lars Homestead dining area- the ceiling mural created by John Barry for STAR WARS is still there today from it's original 1976 filming, and was re-used, with additional re-built set dressings, for use in 2000 for scenes in ATTACK OF THE CLONES. It's a pretty small room, looking bigger on film.

It had taken about an hour and a half from Douz to get to Matmata and we still had a way to go, so we set off on the final leg of our journey to the island of Djerba. We arrived at my hotel at about 4.30pm only to find that the night before there had been a freak storm and the ground floor of the hotel was under a foot of water, but that's another story. I stayed at the Sofitel Palm Beach and it was a lovely hotel.



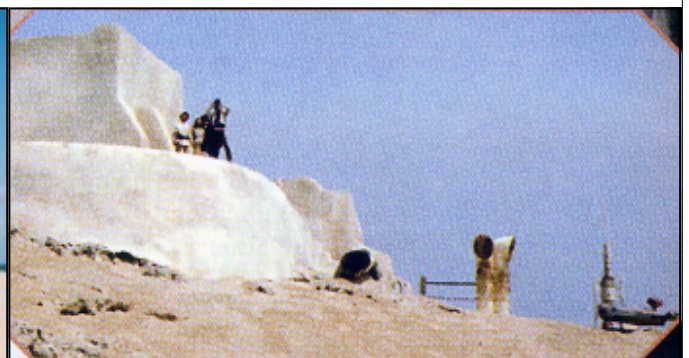
Opposite left: a recreated STAR WARS logo inside the Hotel shows all location finding pilgrims which room the Lars Homestead scene was filmed in. Opposite bottom left: the hotel owners are very proud of their association with STAR WARS and one area has several rare black and white photos and a special dedication/ thank you from Producer Gary Kurtz.



Now at the small fishing village of Djerba I discover the Mosque used to represent the Tosche power station for the lost scenes representing Anchorhead. Above right: the Mosque re-dressed as the power station in 1976 (insert: though the Anchorhead footage was cut, an establishing shot of the town would become the outskirts of Mos Eisley for a brief effects insert scene added in the film's post production phase). Opposite top right: the mosque at it is today. Opposite bottom right: taking a break from filming, John Jay photographs Koo Stark, who played Camie in the cut sequences, for a promotional image at the cliff's edge located near the sea.

[Day Five - Locations visited - Mos Eisley Entrance/ Tosche Station- Anchorhead, Ben Kenobi's House, Cantina and Stormtrooper alley.](#)

Djerba is a small island off the coast of Tunisia which is accessed via ferry or an ancient causeway. The hotel resorts are nearly all located on the north east corner of the island due to the vast amount of sandy beaches in the area. Djerba or particularly this part, is far more commercialized for tourists than Tozeur is and there is much more activity here than in the sleepy desert towns. The weather is also different in that Djerba was quite humid and it rained most nights and the days started quite cloudy and brightened later, whilst Tozeur was very dry and hot with clear blue skies everyday.



Opposite left: another angle of the Mosque at Djerba. Above pic: in this interesting camera angle, Luke's friends come out from their Tosche power station hangout to look at the overhead space battle that he has described. Note Luke's Land-speeder in the distance near the moisture vaporator.

The Star Wars locations on the island are all located around one area, the ferry/fishing port of Ajim, which is about a half hour taxi drive from the tourist/hotel sector and the airport (Melita) also close by.

It is very easy to see all the sites in one day and you have a couple of choices how you go about it. You can either start in the centre of Ajim town, and see the Cantina, then



Opposite right: different angle shots of the small house used as Ben Kenobi's home in the film. Above: alternate angle of Ben's home as seen in the original John Jympson edit of the movie.



take the coast road signed Sidi Jemour and come to Bens house first and then continue on to Anchorhead or the opposite way, which I did.

I got a taxi from my hotel and asked the driver to take me to Sidi Jemour and also showed him a picture, he knew exactly where to go and I also mentioned where else I wanted to go and we agreed a price of 25 dinars (10 pound) and he would take me to the places, wait for me while I took photos etc and then drop me in Ajim town. Not a bad deal I thought until it was all over and I saw the price on the meter that ran the whole time only came to 15 dinar.

It took about 20 minutes or so traveling along dirt tracks essentially, before we arrived at Sidi Jemour, basically an old mosque with another building next door, situated on the coast. There really isn't anything else there or around except these buildings.

This location was used in a long shot as the entrance to Mos Eisley, as Luke's landspeeder zips by with the droids perched in back. Perhaps more importantly it was the location of Tosche Station Anchorhead for all the deleted scenes of Luke, Biggs, Camie and Fixer. The buildings are no longer in use but have been well maintained and again with the clever use of camera angles, Lucas made the place seem much bigger and also disguised the coastline and sea which is extremely nearby. When you view these deleted scenes it is clear that quite a bit of effort went into these as the site had a considerable amount of extra set dressing to give the illusion of a little town

rather than just two small buildings. A great place to visit, particularly given the significance of the scenes filmed here.

Driving south following the same dirt track along the coast, after about 10 minutes you will come to the little fisherman's hut that was used as Ben Kenobi's house. The hut is set back from the road a little way and again has the sea directly behind it. Again the building is well maintained and still in use by fisherman so wish. of two very small and dirt floored this site was used seconds on film original theatrical Hope, it is so instantly recognize you travel the road Well worth just a shame you landspeeder to



Above: I'm outside the Cantina entrance in Ajim!!
Below: as it looked, set-dressed in 1976, for STAR WARS.



From Ben's house road into the town driver dropped me way round the easiest way to find locations is to start area of town, with behind you, follow the centre of town, a large fish and square with the

Standing with the clock tower directly in front of you, take the road to your right and then bear right again and you will be confronted with the building used as the Mos Eisley Cantina. In fact this whole area was used as the approach to the cantina and spaceport streets, despite not being covered in sand anymore it doesn't take much imagination to visualize how it was in 1976. The area has changed somewhat with new buildings having been erected over the 30 years since George Lucas created Mos Eisley. The cantina building itself is abandoned but still in reasonable condition, a few plants have grown up around it which somewhat obscure the view. The building had a false front built onto it in 1976 to create a different entrance and it is still possible to see where that went, the door that is actually the entrance is where the Jawa's were slouched in the movie scene. If you study the movie you will notice that many other traditional domed buildings existed in the area in 1976 that are sadly no longer their. It

maintained and which ever The hut consists bare stone walled rooms. Although for only a few and only in the version of A New iconic that you it from a far as towards Ajim. seeking out, it's don't have a park outside.

we followed the of Ajim. The taxi off and I found my town alone. The the Star Wars from the ferry port the ferry port the main road into past a fountain of onto the centre small clock tower.

seems amazing that this one building still stands alone, like an island surrounded by newer, more modern architecture.

From the cantina it is just a very short walk to the final site. With the cantina and the direction you came from behind you, walk forward and turn right down the next street and then almost immediately on your right will be an alleyway which was used as the site of the Stormtroopers who turn in surprise as the *Millennium Falcon* blasts out of Docking Bay 94 into the skies above them. The white wall and small dome are still clearly recognizable but have now become enclosed by new buildings. The scene in the movie shows a much more open alleyway.

I really only spent half a day finding all the sites in Ajim and around Djerba so returned to my hotel to enjoy the beach and sunshine and make arrangements for the next day and the final location visits.

[Day Six - Locations visited - Mos Espa streets and Slave Quarters](#)

For my last full day in Tunisia I had again booked a private driver and 4WD to take me off the island of Djerba and out into the desert region on the mainland, to visit the sites of Ksar Hadada and the town of Medenine. This trip was a whole days traveling and cost 200 dinar (80 pound) but considering the mileage covered I thought it worth it. Again the meter was running in the car the whole trip and even with long stops



Above top: a Stormtrooper patrol searches for the droids in Mos Eisley spaceport. Above middle: the actual street used for the sequences as it exists now- literally a short walk from where the Cantina location is. Above: the classic scene where the Stormtrooper patrol watches helplessly as the *Millennium Falcon* blasts out of Docking Bay 94 with it's passengers.

in places it only ran bit extra on top it as a tip.

Leaving at 9am it to first drive to Ksar Tataouine region, an storage building, like turned into a hotel that purpose. This background plates to and augment the Tozeur, but most



One of the Ksar sites had previously been scouted by the STAR WARS Production Team in 1975 for a Jawa village scene that was ultimately scrapped for lack of filming time.

up to 185 dinar, but a wasn't so bad, think of

took a couple of hours Hadada in the old traditional grain Sidi Driss in Matmata, but now unused for site was used as make up Mos Espa custom built set near prominently features in



The Phantom location of the scene Shmi discuss the It was also used in called "Dawn before Episode One DVD. notice outside in languages Episode One. Inside little village with tiny around the storage section is condition



Above images: the Ksar Hadada grain storage buildings used for scenes in EPISODE ONE. Below: the steps location used for Qui-Gon and Shmi's conversation.

Menace as the where Qui- Gon and conception of Anakin. the deleted scene the Race" on the The site has a large three different mentioning its use in the Ksar it is like a streets winding units. Only one

this the part filming, the crumbling sorry state.



in good and being maintained, happens to be used for rest is away and in a All the set



The Ksar graineries at Medenine, used for several other EPISODE ONE sequences, including the moment where Anakin leaves his mother, and the previous fight, shot from another angle, that he had with boy Greedo.

dressings have now been removed but I did manage to buy a postcard nearby that's picture was taken when some of the dressings were still in place. A fascinating place to visit for both its cultural history and Star Wars relevance.

Leaving Hadada we then drove for another hour plus to get to the town of Medenine. A reasonably large town by Tunisian standards, this is the location of another Ksar, one which is in far better condition and parts of which are still inhabited. Located in the centre of town near to the small cultural museum, this site was used as the Mos Espa slave quarters where Anakin and Shmi live. The most famous scene filmed here is of Anakin's departure from Shmi, the touching "Don't look back" scene. Also filmed here, using a different angle, was Anakin's fight with Greedo, deleted from The Phantom Menace but included on the DVD.

It's strange that although this site is featured much more prominently in the film, it makes no mention of it anywhere, unlike the less used Ksar Hadada. I was really



Above left: another shot of one of the Ksar graineries at Medenine. Above right: one of the most pivotal scenes in the entire STAR WARS saga would be filmed at the re-dressed location, as Anakin says goodbye to Mom.

pleased to have visited this place as it was only by chance that it happened. I hadn't actually known that Medenine was where this actual location was prior to my trip, thinking Hadada would allow me to see all the Mos Espa areas. Medenine just happened to be on the way back and was a convenient and interesting place to stop. To think I could have missed it, now that would have been a shame.

Content that I had now seen everywhere I wanted to, we headed back to Djerba, arriving back at my hotel by 4.30pm.

[Day Seven - Travel home.](#)

Leaving for the airport early at 8am to fly to Tunis and get my connecting flight back to London. Many delays and disappointments again with Tunisair but grateful to be home in one piece.

Summary

Although it is not somewhere I have any desire to visit again, I am really glad I went, it was a real experience of a different culture and country and I finally got to see the Star Wars sites I had long dreamed of.

The whole trip cost me under 1500 pounds. The package I arranged with *aspectsoftunisia.com* included all flights and accomodation (one half board and one b&b) as well as transfers to and from the airports and the journey from Tozeur to Djerba at a cost of £1100 total. I spent about £250 whilst there, this covered extra food and all the private driver hire and taxi costs. Not too bad considering how much ground I covered.

In hindsight it was fairly easy to see all I wanted, although a better grasp of French would have helped, I got by and no harm came to me despite being such a blatant foreigner.

I would recommend it to any fans out there, but as I said before, sooner rather than later may be advisable before some of these things disappear for ever.

[Where to go & What is there.](#)

Tozeur - Chott El Gharsa - Mos Espa set and Naboo Starship Landing site.

Nefta - Chott El Jerid - Lars Family Homestead exterior.

Mides - Star Wars Canyon (*not visited by myself due to time constraints*)

Douz - Le Grande Dunes - The Dune Sea/ Threepio & Krayt Dragon/Escape and Stormtroopers.

Matamta - Hotel Sidi Driss - Lars Family Homestead interiors.

Djerba - Ajim - Cantina and Mos Eisley streets & Ben Kenobi's house.

Djerba - Sidi Jemour - Tosche Station Anchorhead and Mos Eisley entrance.

Tataouine - Ksar Hadada - Mos Espa streets and Slave Quarters

Medenine - Ksar Medenine – Anakin's Slave Quarters.

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