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## The Fortified City / The Medina of Sousse

Sousse, in central Tunisia is a typical example of a town dating from the first centuries of Islam. Arabs first occupied this region in the 9th century.

They rebuilt Sousse as an impregnable fortified town.

Unusually, the main Mosque is just inside the city walls.

It's part of the fortifications.

Originally, there were no high towers and hardly any decoration in the prayer hall.

The mosque's outer walls form a second barrier of protection.

This is the old city inside the fortified walls.

The main shopping area – or souk – is here. People come to buy every day items.

The oldest building inside the old city is The Ribat.

It is a place of worship AND is fortified.

It was part of a first generation of coastal forts stretching from Egypt to Morocco used to protect Islam from Byzantine fleets.

Worshippers used a cloister on the second floor as a residence.

Defenders of the faith kept watch from this 38-metre-high tower.

Sousse, with its location on the Mediterranean AND at the entrance to the Sahara, has also been vulnerable to attack from European powers during its history. It's survived several crises.

The city today is the third largest in Tunisia.

Fortifications have protected the city for more than a thousand years.

This district in the old city's south-west is remarkable for ...

... this 30 metre high tower.

Towers like this dotted the Mediterranean coast – they communicated by relaying signals.

Torches were used to send messages to places up to hundreds of miles away along the Mediterranean coast.

The tower is now used as a lighthouse.

Islamic powers in North Africa protected themselves by maintaining close communication while expanding their control and influence over the region.