Thank you for a very interesting trip report. Mauritania Airlines (or what was the name of this new version) really seemed like the airline of big contrasts.
The bad factor did not look very good, but anyway I wish the airline the best for the future. Of course it is a good thing to have ambitions, just another thing if it is realistic to realize them.

Thanks for sharing!
73.TFlyer

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 # lychemia From United States of America, joined Oct 2006, 149 posts, RN: 1
Reply 7, posted Mon Jun 27 2011 15:32:41 your local time (3 years 11 months 14 hours ago) and read 14339 times:

I thought Muretania was dangerous? Some westerners have been kidnapped by Al Qaida.

I was often interested in going to Mauretania but after reading this I think I can live without going there.

Thank you for a fascinating report.

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 # globalflyer From United States of America, joined Dec 2005, 968 posts, RN: 3
Reply 8, posted Mon Jun 27 2011 22:37:37 your local time (3 years 11 months 7 hours ago) and read 14000 times:

Hi Soren that was an absolutely fantastic report! Such an exotic carrier and wow a very strict country in terms of photography! You certainly rank up there amongst the adventurous travelers!
I was shocked that the cabin crew wanted their picture taken. Thanks for sharing and happy and safe travels!

Landing on every Continent almost on an annual basis!

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 # Quokka From , joined Dec 1969, posts, RN:
Reply 9, posted Mon Jun 27 2011 22:46:01 your local time (3 years 11 months 5 hours ago) and read 13903 times:

Hi Soren!
What an amazing trip report. Not only do you bring us a fascinating insight into a region most of us have not ventured into, but you highlight the disparity between what is allowed and what is tolerated.

The examples you give of a police commandant giving you permission to photograph while a captain insists you delete some frames but doesn't check to see if all frames have been deleted is a classic example of how travel in some countries is exciting (the want of a better term). It also highlights the idiocy of controlling tourists openly taking photos when professional "spies" can and do whatever they want using far more sophisticated technologies.

But airports are not the only places that have curious restrictions. I recall being in Santorini where I could photograph an urn in the museum by itself but not with my mother stood alongside it. Go figure.

Thank you for sharing. It has stimulated my interest in a destination not previously on my map.

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 # CaptainRed Net From Germany, joined Oct 2010, 707 posts, RN: 10
Reply 10, posted Tue Jun 28 2011 03:21:25 your local time (3 years 11 months 2 hours ago) and read 13690 times:

Hi Soren,

now that was an interesting trip report. Exotic location and an exotic carrier, sure a great experience.

That booking process was quite a longish procedure, I think I would have given up in the meantime. But I guess when you travel in Africa you need a lot of patience and determination.

Quoting Birdwatching (Thread starter):
So I ended up in Commandant McAttar's air conditioned office, an extremely kind, friendly and welcoming man. He showed me photos of several attractions and landscapes of his country on his laptop, including a mock-up of the new airport he believed was going to be completed in 10 years.
Then he told me the photo rules:

Nice, and well done from you to ask for permission, good idea not to get into trouble. I just wonder that he didn't try to collect a few ... from you for this. Anyway you got some interesting pictures on the way. Just a shame that the captain didn't agree but thankfully everything worked out well at the end.

Thanks again for this great report and for the insight in this rather unknown country.

CaptainRed

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 # EL-AL From Israel, joined Oct 2001, 1435 posts, RN: 13
Reply 11, posted Wed Jun 29 2011 08:08:56 your local time (3 years 10 months 4 weeks 23 hours ago) and read 13291 times:

Hello,

Thank you very much for this report - interesting read from a country hardly reported here. This is the first report from there I think. What is it with this photography obsession?

Quoting Birdwatching (Thread starter):
On a backpacking trip to Mauritania

You are braver then me! Can't say your report made me want to pack my bag and head there - looks like a very hard country to travel in.

Quoting Birdwatching (Thread starter):
That's one thing I really don't like about Mauritania. They are now in the "plastic age" and their trash just goes out the window.

Same in Cambodia. Unfortunately.

Thn again for this rare report, I appreciate the effort you made considering the difficulties you had with the photography issue.

LY

In Israel, on order to be a realist, one's must believe in miracles? - David Ben Gurion.

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 # PieterBoth Gold From United Kingdom, joined Jan 2010, 88 posts, RN: 0
Reply 12, posted Wed Jun 29 2011 15:10:40 your local time (3 years 10 months 4 weeks 14 hours ago) and read 13095 times:

Fantastic report, an excellent read! Your descriptions of the whole photography situation and of the photos that are missing add to the mysteriousness of it all! I always imagined the Mauritanian coast to have great beaches where the Sahara meets the Atlantic. Did you see any outside Nouakchott or Nouadhibou?

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 # stylo777 From Turkey, joined Feb 2008, 2108 posts, RN: 10
Reply 13, posted Thu Jun 30 2011 02:32:09 your local time (3 years 10 months 4 weeks 4 hours ago) and read 12883 times:

great report with an amazing background story, absolutely fantastic and enjoyable to read, like watching a movie...

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 # MHTripper From United States of America, joined Feb 2008, 1118 posts, RN: 8
Reply 14, posted Thu Jun 30 2011 08:13:44 your local time (3 years 10 months 3 weeks 6 days 21 hours ago) and read 12706 times:

Wow, backpacking through Mauritania.... that must have been quite the experience!

Quoting Birdwatching (Thread starter):
After some time, to my great surprise, the office was opened from the inside by the guy who lived inside. No kidding! In the office, there was a messy desk and 2 broken chairs, a filthy mattress lying in the corner with flies buzzing around, and an old man telling me I better purchase my ticket at the city office. Why, I asked. Because he couldn't tell me if the flight was actually operating. The city office decides that (!) depending on the amount of bookings. I couldn't really believe this, so I asked him if he would just sell me a ticket, at my own risk. No, he said. Go to the city office. Oh well...

Haha, classic. That airport office is literally pointless.

Quoting Birdwatching (Thread starter):
So I ended up in Commandant McAttar's air conditioned office, an extremely kind, friendly and welcoming man. He showed me photos of several attractions and landscapes of his country on his laptop, including a mock-up of the new airport he believed was going to be completed in 10 years.

That's very cool!

Quoting Birdwatching (Thread starter):
The captain told me several times that the Commandant didn't "own any planes" and that I had to delete the photos, right there and then and before his eyes.

Quite the power trip this captain was on.

Anyways, thank you for this excellent and very interesting trip report. Please keep up the good work!

Need a Boeing 777 Flying Order....Further to fly...LX and LH 777s.

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 # tw723 From United States of America, joined Feb 2004, 6419 posts, RN: 8
Reply 15, posted Thu Jun 30 2011 18:20:08 your local time (3 years 10 months 2 weeks 5 days 15 hours ago) and read 12504 times:

Awesome report! I have been all over Africa, and many countries bordering Mauritania (well, all 4 actually, if you decide to count Western Sahara as part of Morocco...), but that is one country I have never been to...and honestly, never had much desire to. It's fascinating to see pictures of a place I may likely never seen - thanks for that!

Cheers
Zach

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 # eastafspec From France, joined Jan 2008, 886 posts, RN: 20
Reply 17, posted Sun Jul 3 2011 00:41:01 your local time (3 years 10 months 1 weeks 4 days 4 hours ago) and read 12005 times:

Very nice short journey with awesome pictures! Thanks for sharing this experience, I really enjoyed reading and watching every part of this priceless TR

Quoting Birdwatching (Thread starter):
they must have already concluded that I was crazy, after all you can just take a 9-hour bus to Nouadhibou

for an aviation fan: no way!

Fly with Air Burundi, Air Tanzania, Air Uganda, Kenya Airways and Rwandair - Jumuiya ya Afrika mashariki

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 # reifi From Germany, joined Feb 2005, 1478 posts, RN: 1
Reply 18, posted Mon Jul 4 2011 08:24:39 your local time (3 years 10 months 1 weeks 3 days ago) and read 11826 times:

Wow, what a fascinating report! And very well written, loved the situations with the police and alone at the airport. Had to laugh about the guy sleeping in the airport office.
Some things just don't make sense in some countries: Airport ticket offices refusing to sell tickets, photography prohibitions, leaving the country when boarding a domestic flight...

It somehow remembers my domestic flight in Belarus. I also waited at the airport, not sure if the flight would operate, nobody speaking english, airport full of Milice and other officials, but no flights and no passengers... I must write a report of this, too... Although Mauritania is even worse

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 # abrelosojos From Venezuela, joined May 2006, 5143 posts, RN: 55
Reply 19, posted Mon Jul 11 2011 07:09:58 your local time (3 years 10 months 2 weeks 2 days 22 hours ago) and read 11330 times:

Simply one of the most outstanding reports out there. As many know, I love reports that go "off the beaten air corridor", and this definitely fits the bill. I loved the description and the fun at the airport - the stuff A.Netter's do to fly is really quite something.

Thank you so much for an excellent Sunday read. I have Mauritania as a country I want to visit soon!

Saludos,
A

Live, and let live...

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 # WhereToNext From United States of America, joined Jul 2010, 96 posts, RN: 0
Reply 20, posted Mon Jul 11 2011 12:23:38 your local time (3 years 10 months 2 weeks 2 days 17 hours ago) and read 11249 times:

This is one of those 'WOW' trip reports! Talk about 'off the beaten path'. I just couldn't believe the exchange you had with the head of police at the airport!

Not to sound ungrateful, but if you had few more pictures from your Mauritania trip, I'd love to see them!

Thanks again!

-Matt

Next Adventure: TBD

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 # MS5658 From Belgium, joined Oct 2010, 2074 posts, RN: 14
Reply 21, posted Mon Jul 11 2011 15:25:31 your local time (3 years 10 months 2 weeks 2 days 14 hours ago) and read 11192 times:

Wonderfull 'off the beaten path' trip report.

Next trip report: Wolf-watch A330s and Hatonn from MLAC transfer

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 # Birdwatching From Germany, joined Sep 2003, 3913 posts, RN: 50
Reply 22, posted Sun Dec 18 2011 19:41:11 your local time (2 years 5 months 6 days 10 hours ago) and read 9190 times:

Thank to all of you for your comments and remarks! Glad to see you enjoyed reading the report. I have finally uploaded the photo of the aircraft to Airliners.net now, and behold, they actually accepted it into the database. This surprised me as I had really really rare and good photos rejected before. Here it is:

View Large View Medium

Photo © Sören Karbitz

Soren

All the things you probably hate about travelling are warm reminders that I'm home

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 # alexeu From Nauru, joined Oct 2007, 1844 posts, RN: 2
Reply 23, posted Sun Dec 18 2011 20:18:10 your local time (2 years 5 months 6 days 9 hours ago) and read 9074 times:

I am just curious is it possible to go to the other side of peninsula (near Nouadibhou) which is officially part of the Western Sahara?

Great report btw

Alex

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 # Birdwatching From Germany, joined Sep 2003, 3913 posts, RN: 50
Reply 24, posted Sun Dec 18 2011 22:43:24 your local time (2 years 5 months 6 days 6 hours ago) and read 8941 times:

Quoting alexeu (Reply 23):
I am just curious is it possible to go to the other side of peninsula (near Nouadibhou) which is officially part of the Western Sahara?

You are referring to Lagouira (La Agüera). This settlement is abandoned. It is theoretically in Western Sahara territory, in the Polisario part that is not occupied by Morocco, as it is south of the wall. That place is pretty much off-limits to visitors, oddly Mauritanian army guards control it (even though it is not in their country). But the only access is via Cansado near Nouadhibou, there is no road from Nouadhibou or Western Sahara territory, even though every Moroccan map I saw clearly has a road (even paved road) run down the peninsula. This is simply a lie, there is no road whatsoever, you can look at the satellite image on Google Maps, there are not even traces of a road or former road.

The area is heavily mined, and the buildings are all filled with sand, so I guess there is not much of a reason to go there. But I guess you can try. As I found out, if you ask nicely and meet the right people, anything is possible in Mauritania.

Soren

All the things you probably hate about travelling are warm reminders that I'm home

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 # stipica From Croatia, joined Feb 2011, 427 posts, RN: 5
Reply 25, posted Mon Dec 19 2011 08:55:31 your local time (2 years 5 months 5 days 21 hours ago) and read 8737 times:

Hi Soren !
this is a.net lottery trip report and we all win ... including Mauritania Airlines with new photo ... congratulations and thank you stipica

Open your eyes and think

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 # alexeu From Nauru, joined Oct 2007, 1844 posts, RN: 2
Reply 26, posted Mon Dec 19 2011 17:08:39 your local time (2 years 5 months 5 days 11 hours ago) and read 8508 times:

Quoting Birdwatching (Reply 24):

Well, the only reason to go there is simply to put "another country/territory" on my list of countries But it would be shame to travel all the way there and be forbidden to travel there...You were brave enough to visit Mauritania itself.

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 # AirPacific747 From Denmark, joined May 2008, 2641 posts, RN: 24
Reply 27, posted Mon Dec 19 2011 18:02:36 your local time (2 years 5 months 5 days 11 hours ago) and read 8512 times:

Quoting stipica (Reply 25):

Hi Soren !...
this is a.net lottery trip report and we all win ... including Mauritania Airlines with new photo

Indeed! It is a very dangerous place according to the UK;

http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-...iddle-east-north-africa/mauritania

But thank you for a great trip report! It was a very interesting read.

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