

LIVING THE MEDINA: MY JOURNEY WITH MDINTI

Even though I always considered myself as "Bent Rbat," someone deeply familiar with the Medina of Tunis, my journey with Mdinti, which began in late January 2025, completely changed my perspective. I quickly realized that I had only scratched the surface of what lay hidden within the labyrinthine alleys of the Medina.

When I was selected as an intern with **Mdinti** under the guidance of Mrs. Leila Ben Gacem, I initially thought I would simply be working in the communication department of a small project focused on heritage preservation. However, from my very first day, I was struck by the magnitude of this Economic Interest Group—how well it was coordinated, the diverse projects it spearheaded, and, most importantly, the unity among restaurant owners, boutique hotel operators, artisans, and bookstores. Different generations, all working under the same values, striving toward the same goals : preserving the Medina's heritage, revitalizing its dynamic energy, creating jobs for the community, and ensuring its security.

One of the most impactful experiences was interviewing artisans whose families had carried on their crafts for centuries. I had the honor of meeting a fourth-generation Balghaji, a master shoemaker, whose workshop was filled with history and tradition. As he shared stories of his craft, I was completely captivated by the depth of knowledge he possessed.

My first meeting with Mrs. Leila took place at **Dar Ben Gacem**, a boutique hotel that left a lasting impression on me. I still remember the feeling of stepping inside—marveling at the rooftop, the intricate decorations, and the overall charm of the place. It felt like I was walking into a museum, a space where history was alive and breathing.

Then, there was **Dar El Harka**. The name itself intrigued me, and when I finally visited, I found the place to be just as original as its name suggested. The atmosphere, the team spirit, and the work environment were incredibly welcoming. Meeting and working alongside Sarra, Khouloud, Firas, Abir, Imen, and Zohra made me feel like I was part of something bigger.

Each day in Mdinti brought new discoveries and joys. Even the tasks I undertook felt enjoyable—they were a perfect balance of structure, flexibility, and creativity. One of the most memorable events was **"TEDx Pecha Street."** Though my contribution was small, just being part of the team and experiencing the energy at **Saint-Croix** was rewarding.

Then came Medina des Lumières during Ramadan. This event was particularly special—witnessing the Medina transform into a vibrant, artistic haven was truly breathtaking. The entire space felt alive, pulsating with culture, creativity, and history.

Although my journey in Mdinti has not ended—and I hope it never does—I am profoundly grateful for the moments I have experienced here. Each encounter, every project, and all the shared stories have left a mark on me. It feels as if the Medina itself is calling me back, pulling me deeper into its heart. And honestly, I am more than willing to keep exploring.