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Morocco discovery.

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MOROCCO | 10DAYS / 9NIGHTS

Route: Round-trip from Marrakech to Agadir OR from/to Casablanca

Type of tour: Culture

Departure days: Friday

TOUR OVERVIEW

Discover the heritage, landscapes, culture and cuisine of Morocco over 10 fascinating days, beginning your odyssey in Marrakech and ending it on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in Agadir. This adventure offers you a second option for your convenience, starting and ending your journey in Casablanca. Wander through bustling markets, explore semi-ruined kasbahs and mazy medinas, relax in lush desert oasis and behold the majesty of the Atlas Mountains, where the contrasts between barren and verdant panoramas will take your breath away. Accommodation is in four-star hotels on a half-board basis with plenty of opportunities to savour the best traditional Moroccan dishes.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Marrakech: Admire the famous Koutoubia Mosque, the beautiful Bahia Palace, the Saadian Tombs and Agdal Garden, and wander through the bustling Jemaa el-Fnaa market.

Casablanca: Enjoy a tour of this cosmopolitan city and admire the magnificent Hassan II Mosque

Meknes: Behold the ancient city gates of Bab Mansour and Bab El-Khemis and the granaries of Moulay Ismail

Fez: See the magnificent Moulay Idriss Zaouïa, enjoy lunch in the Medina, explore the historic Jewish quarter and take in the panoramic views from the Royal Palace and fortifications

Erfoud: Ascend high into the Atlas, discovering ski resorts, former French colonial outposts and bustling market towns en route to this oasis in the Sahara

Tinghir: Discover desert oases and enjoy lunch in the dramatic surroundings of the Todra Gorge

Ouarzazate: Visit the fortified village of Kelaat M'Gouna and awe-inspiring Ait Benhaddou kasbah as well as the Taourirt kasbah in Ouarzazate itself

Agadir: 10 days of magical adventure end in this popular resort on the Atlantic coast, where you can opt for an extension in this beach town

DON'T MISS

A mean tagine: Morocco's most popular dish is a delicious stew made with fish, chicken or lamb and vegetables served with couscous.

Ouallywood: Scenes in Arabia, Egypt, the Holy Land, Tibet and even Yunkai from Game of Thrones have all been filmed at Atlas Studios in Ouarzazate.

Babouche: Colourful, comfortable and cool – Morocco's ubiquitous slippers are undoubtedly the most practical souvenir you can take home with you.

DAY BY DAY OPTION 1

DAY 1 | ARRIVAL MARRAKECH

Check-in at hotel on arrival followed by dinner and lodging.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Marrakech. Dinner included.**

DAY 2 | MARRAKECH – CASABLANCA (250km – 3 hrs)

Bid farewell to Marrakech after breakfast at the hotel, depart for Casablanca, a city whose name evokes Hollywood glamour but is in fact the kingdom's commercial powerhouse. Discover the charms of this cosmopolitan coastal metropolis capital, seeing the elegant boulevards of the French colonial Ville Nouvelle and the majestic Hassan II mosque by the sea (exterior view) and visiting the vast Morocco Mall with some free time for shopping. Continue to the hotel for check-in and dinner. Today, the visitors on the Casablanca option join the tour.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Casablanca on a half-board basis.**

DAY 3 | CASABLANCA – RABAT – MEKNES (250km – 3 hrs)

Take to the road after breakfast at the hotel, driving parallel to the Atlantic towards the capital, Rabat. Enjoy a **guided panoramic tour** of the city, seeing the Royal Palace, the Mausoleum of Mohammed V and the Hassan Tower before wandering through the **Kasbah of the Oudayas** to explore its famous gardens. Break for lunch before departing in the afternoon for Meknes, a former imperial capital during the reign of Moulay Ismail in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Meknes on a half-board basis. Lunch included.**

DAY 4 | MEKNES – MOULAY IDRIS ZERHOUN – VOLUBILIS – FEZ (140km – 2.5 hrs)

Discover Meknes' imperial heritage after breakfast at the hotel. Such was the grandeur of the city that Moulay Ismail built, that Meknes became known as the 'city of a hundred minarets' and is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See the imposing city walls and the beautifully decorated gates of Bab Mansour and Bab El-Khemis; the vast El Hedhim Square, the granaries of Moulay Ismail and much more. After lunch in Meknes, take to the road, driving northwards to the hilltop holy village of **Moulay Idriss Zerhoun**, which is named after a great-grandson of the prophet Mohammed and who is credited with bringing Islam to Morocco. The village is also home to Morocco's only cylindrical minaret. Continue to the ruins of the ancient city of **Volubilis**. Originally built by the Phoenicians, the city came into its own during the Roman Empire and the well-preserved Arch of Caracalla still stands, with a legible triumphal inscription boasting of victories in Britain and Germany among others. The remnants of a temple and basilica are also still visible as are number of magnificent mosaics, which hint at the wealth and opulence of Volubilis in its heyday. The final leg takes you to Fez, for check-in and dinner at the hotel.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Fez on a half-board basis. Lunch included.**



DAY 5 | FEZ

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by a day exploring the fascinating city of Fez. Boasting more than 12 centuries of history as well as a medina that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the oldest university in the planet, Fez is a multifarious city renowned for the splendour of its faded glory. The medina, **Fez el Bali**, is a vast network of winding alleys hemmed in by ancient walls. Despite being car free, the bustle, noise, shouting, smell of tanned leather, delicate aroma of oriental perfumes, barbecues, sweet pastry... All of these elements in this imperial city create a sense of movement and vibrancy that draws you deep into its soul. Head to the **Nejjarine fountain** and you can detect a cedar smell from the carpenters' district. The alleys are lined with places of study or prayers such as madrasas or the magnificent **mausoleum of Moulay Idriss Zaouia**; the most important saint's shrine in Morocco. After lunch in the medina, continue through the rustic narrow streets of the **Mellah**, the former Jewish district, and head to the outskirts to see the **Royal Palace** and to enjoy the extraordinary panoramic view of the whole city offered by the fortifications of the north. Return to the hotel for dinner.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Fez on a half-board basis. Lunch included.**

DAY 6 | FEZ – MIDELT – ERFOUD (450km – 6 hrs)

Depart after breakfast at the hotel, climbing from the 400 metres above sea level of Fez into **the Middle Atlas**, with altitudes of more than 2,000 metres. Admire the contrasting landscapes of imposing massifs solid masses with unusual rock formations and hills covered in dense forests of cedars. The route passes along **Ifrane**, a picturesque ski resort at 1,650 metres, which is famed for its European-style country cottages with sloped roofs. Pause for lunch in Midelt, a former French colonial outpost. Take to the road in the afternoon, passing through the market town of Er-Rich and Tizi N'Talghomt pass en route to Erfoud, for check-in and dinner at the hotel.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Erfoud on a half-board basis. Lunch included.**

DAY 7 | ERFOUD – TODRA GORGE – TINGHIR (150km – 2 hrs)

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before departing Erfoud for a scenic journey to **Tineghir** and the dramatic **Todra Gorge**. Alternatively, there's an optional pre-dawn excursion to the dunes of Merzouga to experience sunrise over the first big hills of the Sahara (not included, to be paid to guide). En route, pass through the **oasis of El Jorf**, where a large palm grove stands in contrast to the colours of the town's adobe homes and the sands of the desert, and the market town of Tinejdad before arriving in Tineghir. Continue to the **Todra Gorge**, which is located, just a 15-minute drive north of the town. A small stream

still flows through this spectacular canyon, which at times is just 10 metres wide and with steep walls as high as 160 metres. Lunch in the middle of the gorge allows you to savour this spectacular natural location while tasting delicious treats. Return to Tineghir for check-in and dinner at the hotel.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Tineghir on a half-board basis. Lunch included.**

DAY 8 | TINGHIR – AIT BENHADDOU – OUARZAZATE (180km – 4 hrs)

After breakfast at the hotel, depart for Ouarzazate via the Dade's Valley, which is also known as the 'valley of one thousand Kasbahs'. The first stop is at the fortified village of **Kelaat M'Gouna**, a fragrant oasis in the heart of the 'valley of the roses'. Continue to **Ait Benhaddou**, which is home to one of the most famous kasbahs of all and has been used as a location for dozens of movies. For centuries, this oasis on the banks of the River Oued Ounila was a key hub on the trans-Saharan trade route and that legacy is writ large on the weather-beaten walls of the kasbah, which is crowned by the ruins of a fortified granary. Wander through this beguiling UNESCO World Heritage Site before enjoying lunch in front of the kasbah – a magical experience that will linger long in the memory. In the afternoon, continue to Ouarzazate to visit the **Taourirt kasbah**, which was one of the bastions of T'hami El Glaoui the powerful Lord of the Atlas during the final decades of French colonial rule. Time permitting, visit also the **Tifoultoute kasbah** some 10km away from the town. Check-in at the hotel followed by dinner.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Ouarzazate on a half-board basis. Lunch included.**



DAY 9 | OUARZAZATE – MARRAKECH (205km – 4 hrs)

Depart after breakfast to Marrakech via Tiz-in-Tichka and Taddert. Upon arrival at your hotel, check-in and enjoy lunch. In the afternoon, the visit continues in the labyrinth of the medina. Visiting the most famous souks in Morocco provides an occasion to admire all the richness of an immensely diversified craftsmanship. With the sunset at the square of **Jemâa el Fna**, acrobats, snake charmers, Gnawa musicians come alive to create a unique moment to absorb Marrakech's heart and spirit. Also, enjoy a visit to a Moroccan herbalist where you can purchase quality herbal products and remedies, a traditional way for curing and/or improving ailments. Then prepare yourself for a tasty Moroccan dinner with folkloric show. Return to your hotel.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Marrakech on a half-board basis (breakfast and lunch in hotel). Dinner included.**

DAY 10 | MARRAKECH – AGADIR (270 km – 3.5 hrs)

After breakfast, tour Marrakech. The historical visit of the city is a journey marked by stages reminiscent of its construction: the famous Koutoubia Mosque, everlasting proof of Hispano-Moorish art, with a 70m high minaret, the Bahia Palace and its garden lined with orange trees, cypress, jasmine, splendours of cedar tree domes and marble columns in the Saadian Tombs. After lunch, continue on to finalize your journey with us in Agadir, where we can organise your hotel with an optional Agadir extension.

▪ **Lunch included.**

END OF SERVICES

DAY BY DAY OPTION 2: FROM/TO CASABLANCA

DAY 1 | ARRIVAL CASABLANCA

Depending on your arrival time, you will join the group for lunch and visit Casablanca, seeing the sites described above.

▪ **Overnight in hotel in Casablanca. Lunch included.**

DAYS 2-8 | SAME ITINERARY AS ABOVE

This tour completes the same itinerary as option 1 described above.

DAY 9 | MARRAKECH – CASABLANCA

After breakfast, visit Marrakech. The historical visit of the city is a journey marked by stages reminiscent of its construction: the famous **Koutoubia Mosque**, everlasting proof of Hispano-Moorish art, with a 70m high minaret, the **Bahia Palace** and its garden lined with orange trees, cypress, jasmine, splendours of cedar tree domes and marble columns in the Saadian Tombs. After lunch, continue your journey back to Casablanca.

- **Overnight in hotel in Casablanca on a bed-and-breakfast basis. Lunch included.**

DAY 10 | CASABLANCA DEPARTURE

Breakfast at the hotel and check-out. Transfer to airport upon request.

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Operated with French and English-speaking guide (Dutch on request) during the whole tour and with English-speaking local guides

ACCOMMODATION:

- 09 nights' accommodation on a half-board basis in 4* or 5* hotels local standard

MEALS:

- 09 breakfasts, 09 lunches, 09 dinners. Services starting with dinner Day 1 and ending with breakfast on Day 10, lunch in the Todra Gorge and lunch in front of Ait Benhaddou kasbah, and including Moroccan dinner show in an old palace in the Marrakech medina on Day 9, Day 8 for Casablanca option

TRANSPORT:

- Transfers during the tour

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Admission to all museums and monuments mentioned in the itinerary

OTHERS:

- Tips in hotels and restaurants

NOT INCLUDED

- Visas and international flights, and airport taxes (clients pay direct)
- Driver-guide gratuities
- Personal travel, baggage and medical insurance
- Telephone bill, laundry and any items of a personal nature such as drinks
- Transfers from airport to hotel and vice versa
- Merzouga dunes sunrise excursion

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

A wide range of optional excursions and pre- and post-programme extensions are available on request. Please ask tour designer Fatima Lahricha for rates and conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting religious or official buildings in Morocco. Shoes should be removed before entering a mosque or private house. Sun protection, sunglasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay