

Highlights of Morocco.

Moroccan Heritage Tour.

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MOROCCO | 11DAYS / 10 NIGHTS

Route: Round-trip from and to Marrakech (Possibility from/to Casablanca or Agadir)

Type of tour: Culture


Departure days: Saturday

TOUR OVERVIEW

This 11-day expedition takes you to see the highlights of Morocco. Learn about Moroccan culture and art and marvel at the diverse landscapes across this incredible country. Visit the imperial cities of Morocco: Marrakech, Casablanca, Rabat, Fès and Meknes. See the Atlas Mountains, kasbahs and the Sahara desert, valleys and gorges, Atlantic and Mediterranean waters, and the rolling countryside. Learn about Moroccan history, culture and enjoy the diversity of the Moroccan landscape. Accommodation is in choice hotels on a half or full-board basis with plenty of opportunities to savour the best in traditional Moroccan cuisine, including a spectacular dinner show in a historic palace in the Marrakech Medina.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

DURATION: 11 days / 10 nights



Start & finish destination
Marrakech

Destinations

2. Casablanca	4. Meknes	6. Erfoud
3. Tangier	5. Fès	7. Ouarzazate

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

Tangier: Known as the gateway to Europe due to its proximity to Spain, Tangier has an interesting cultural diversity with a rich past

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

Fès: See the magnificent Moulay Idriss Zaouia, 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

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

Ouarzazate: Visit the fortified village of Kelaat M'Gouna as well as the Taourirt kasbah in Ouarzazate itself

Ait Benhaddou: Home to one of the most famous kasbahs of all as it has been used as a location for dozens of Hollywood movies

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

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

DAY 1 | ARRIVAL MARRAKECH

On arrival, check in to your hotel followed by dinner and lodging. If your incoming flight arrives to Agadir, on arrival at the airport, take a three-hour transfer (not included) to Marrakech where you spend the first night. If your incoming flight arrives to Casablanca, spend the first night here and meet up with the group upon their arrival tomorrow (supplement for hotel, dinner included, transfer airport to hotel not included).

- Overnight in hotel in Marrakech or Casablanca on a half-board basis.

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

Bid farewell to Marrakech for now after breakfast at the hotel and depart for Casablanca, a city whose name evokes Hollywood glamour but is in fact the kingdom's commercial powerhouse. Arrive in time for lunch (optional). Travellers arriving to the Casablanca airport today are welcomed in time for lunch to join the tour. Discover the charms of this cosmopolitan coastal metropolis capital, seeing the **central market**, the **Habous district**, the **Royal Palace**, **Mohamed V square**, the residential area of Anfa, the majestic **Hassan II mosque** by the sea (exterior view) and the **Corniche** of Casablanca.

- **Overnight in hotel at Casablanca on a half-board basis. Lunch included on full-board basis.**

DAY 3 | CASABLANCA – RABAT – TANGIER (340km – 3.5 hrs)

Take to the road after breakfast at the hotel, following the Atlantic coastline north 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. Stop for lunch (optional). Continue along the coast to **Tangier**, pass by the **Caves of Hercules and Cape Spartel** where legend has it that here Hercules separated Africa from Europe. This is the point where the waters of the Mediterranean and those of the Atlantic begin to mix.

- **Overnight in hotel at Tangier on a half-board basis. Lunch included on full-board basis.**

DAY 4 | TANGIER – CHEFCHAOUEN – MEKNES (310km – 5.5 hrs)

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by an outing to discover Tangier native Ibn Battuta's birthplace in the medina, a famous 14th century traveller and writer. Then visit the old town, seeing the **Grand and Petit Socco** (squares), the **Grand Mosque**, the souk, the former palace of the Sultan Moulay Ismail (exterior) and the Mendoubia Gardens. Continue to **Chefchaouen**. Here we visit of the medina and the winding alleys of this charming blue and white village, reminiscent of the small Andalusian villages of southern Spain. Visit the Ethnographic Museum, also known as the Kasbah Museum, the first structure of its kind in the region to get a look into the past. Chefchaouen is part of the territory protected by UNESCO's Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean, so take advantage and admire the surrounds. Continue the visit to **Ras el Maa**, the water source that supplies all of Chaouen with drinking water. Visit of the wash houses where locals hand-wash their laundry. Continue afterwards by a path towards the hilltop Bouzaafer Mosque. Continue the journey and check in to your hotel in Meknes upon arrival.

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



DAY 5 | MEKNES – VOLUBILIS – FÈS (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 Hedim Square, the granaries of Moulay Ismail and much more. After lunch (optional) 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 Fès, for check-in and dinner at the hotel.

- **Overnight in hotel at Fès on a half-board basis. Lunch included on full-board basis**

DAY 6 | FÈS

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by a day exploring the fascinating city of Fès. 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, Fès is multifarious city renowned for the splendour of its faded glory. The medina, **Fès 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 **Nejjarrine fountain** and you can detect a cedar smell from the carpenters' district. The alleys are lined with places of study or prayers such as madrasahs or the magnificent **mausoleum of Moulay Idriss Zaouia**; the most important saint's shrine in Morocco. After lunch in the medina (optional), 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 Fès on a half-board basis. Lunch included on full-board basis.**

DAY 7 | FÈS – MIDELT – ERFOUD (450km – 6 hrs)

Depart after breakfast at the hotel, climbing from the 400 metres above sea level of Fès 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 cedar forests. 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 (optional) 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 on full-board basis.**

DAY 8 | ERFOUD – TINEGHIR – OUARZAZATE (340km – 5.25 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 Tineghir on your own (optional). Depart for Ouarzazate via the Dade's Valley, which is also known as the 'valley of one thousand kasbahs'. Stop at the fortified village of **Kelaat M'Gouna**, a fragrant oasis in the heart of the 'valley of the roses' before arriving to today's final destination.

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

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

After breakfast, 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, also visit the **Tifoutoute kasbah** some 10 kilometres away from the town. Heading to **Ait Ben Haddou**, which is home to one of the most famous kasbahs of all and has been used as a location for dozens of films. 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 (optional) in front of the kasbah – a magical experience that will linger long in the memory. Continue to Marrakech for check-in and dinner at the hotel.

- **Overnight in hotel in Marrakech on a half-board basis. Lunch included on full-board basis.**

DAY 10 | MARRAKECH

Today we tour Marrakech after breakfast at the hotel. The historical visit of the city is a journey marked by stages reminiscent of its construction: the famous **Koutoubia Mosque**, everlasting proof of Hispano-Moresque art, with a 70-metre-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**. Lunch at the hotel with the afternoon free to enjoy the beauty of Marrakech, or elect an optional excursion. In the evening, perhaps enjoy a typical dinner show in an old palace located in the Medina of Marrakech (optional).

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

DAY 11 | DEPARTURE MARRAKECH

Check out after breakfast at the hotel or opt to extend your stay by selecting one of our extensions, such as a longer stay in Marrakech or a beach extension in the lovely seaside town of Agadir, or an extension to Casablanca.

- **Breakfast included.**

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Operated with English or French-speaking guide (Dutch on request) with English or French-speaking local guides

ACCOMMODATION:

- Half-board with 3*/ 4*/ 5* category options

MEALS:

- Half-board basis: 10 breakfasts, 09 dinners, lunch Day 10 (dinner Day 10 not included)
- Full-board optional basis: 10 breakfasts, 09 lunches, 10 dinners including typical dinner show in Medina of Marrakech

TRANSPORT:

- Air-conditioned bus during the tour

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Admission to all museums and monuments mentioned in the itinerary: Panoramic tour of Casablanca with visit exterior of Mosque Hassan II & the corniche of Casablanca; Panoramic tour of Rabat & visit the Kasbah of the Oudayas; Panoramic tour of Tanger, Caves of Hercules and Cape Spartel; Panoramic tour of Meknès: visit of the granaries of Moulay Ismail, Visit of Volubilis; Fes: Fès el Bali, Nejjarine Fountain, Mausoleum of Moulay Idriss Zaouia, the Mellah, exterior of Royal Palace, panoramic view the fortifications of the north; Ouarzazate: visit of Kasbah Taourirt, Kasbah Tifoultout (time-permitting); Ait Ben Haddou; Marrakech, Jmaa el Fnaa square, visit to Moroccan herbalist, Koutoubia mosque exterior, Bahia Palace, Saadian tombs

OTHERS:

- Tips in hotels and restaurant

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

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. Sun protection, sunglasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay.