

Day 1

Casablanca - Rabat

Our local representative will be awaiting your arrival at Casablanca International Airport. Please look for him in the arrival hall. He will be holding a sign with your name on it. He will escort you to your private vehicle. Then start discovering Morocco's largest city and economic capital, Casablanca, best representation of the modern side of Morocco. Begin the city tour of Casablanca with an outside visit of Hassan II Mosque. It is the largest mosque in the country and the 7th largest in the world. You then continue to the Ain Diab Corniche for a pleasant stroll along the coast. Your next stop is Mohammed V Square in the city center. The city tour includes also the Habous Quarter, one of the oldest areas in Casablanca. The district was built by the French in the 1930s as an attempted solution to the ongoing housing shortage. It marries the best of traditional Moroccan architecture with modern facilities and French ideals - even the mosque fronts onto a strip of grassy lawn just like a village church. Then we will leave Casablanca along the coastline to Rabat for overnight.

Duration 1 Night

Accommodation

Riad Zyo

Day 2

Rabat - Tangiers

After breakfast, explore Morocco's political and administrative capital. A clean central beach, an intact and evocative Kasbah, and an attractive walled medina that is far less touristy than those in other large cities. Our tour starts from the Mohammed V and Hassan II Mausoleum, Hassan Tower, the landmark of Rabat and one of the oldest mosques of Morocco. The Kasbah des Oudaya, Rabat's historic citadel occupies the site of the original Ribat (fortress-monastery) that gave the city its name. This afternoon, we drive along the Atlantic Coast to Tangiers. En route, there is hardly a better place for lunch (own expense) than the village of Moulay Bouselham. Time allowing, we will perhaps stop at Asilah (a small-town from the Roman era) known for its imposing ramparts and Portuguese fortifications which enclose the old town of white and blue washed houses. Continuing our drive along the Atlantic coast (1 hour), we soon enter the urban area of Tangier. We penetrate the intricate medina of Tangier and reach our hotel for the next two nights.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 2 Nights

Accommodation

Hilton Garden Inn Tanger City Center

Day 3

Tangiers

Today we explore Tangier, an incredibly unique city with many landmarks: Morocco's main gate to Europe and the settling place of many artists from around the world. Flanked by a row of French colonial-era buildings Mendoubia gardens, is popular with young couples and local families on weekends. On a peak of the central hill, surrounded by historic cannons, an engraved stone monument displays the speech King Mohammed V gave to the French asking for Moroccan independence in 1947. We visit the Marshan district and its Roman tombs and admire the Moresque interiors of St Andrews church. This magnificent church is a tribute to the harmony of Christianity and Islam where you can see the Lord's Prayer written in exquisite Arabic calligraphy and the numerous Andalusian-Moroccan touches throughout the building. We cross the fish market where fresh fish is sold at auction to arrive to the Jewish cemetery, dominating the sea front. Head to the American legation, the first American property to ever open outside the United States. Descend onto Petit Socco and have a mint tea at Cafe Tingis, a favorite with the Beat Generation. A 15-minute drive outside Tangier, where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean is Cap Spartel and the legendary cave of Hercules where he rested after he retrieved the "golden apple". It's interesting how the cave, in the shape of the continent of Africa, opens and looks out toward the Atlantic. Enjoy a free time at the beach then drive back to your hotel for overnight.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Day 4

Tangiers - Chefchaouen

After breakfast we drive to Chefchaouen or (Chaouen). The roads wind around the valley edges as we travel towards the Rif Mountains. En route we explore Tetouan, one of the two major ports of Morocco on the Mediterranean Sea, famous for the beautiful patios and palaces of Moresque heritage. Erected on an ancient Roman site, Tetouan was destroyed during the 15th century by the Portuguese. The fall of the kingdom of Granada in southern Spain in 1492 marked the renaissance of Tetouan. More than its architecture, the cuisine, the music, the jewelry and the embroidery speak of their Andalusian origin. Perhaps, visit the Ethnographical Museum to admire the glory of its Moresque Heritage. We continue to Chefchaouen through the dramatic gorges of Oued Laou, connecting the Mediterranean beaches to the world famous azure town. Upon arrival, we explore Chefchaouen, quite likely the most charming village in Morocco with its Medina, Bab el Ansar and the famed Ras el Maa (waterfall), where a short walk takes us to Rif Sebbanine, the laundry district and its 15th century mosque. Chefchaouen is about losing ourselves in its streets. Their Kasbah built in the 15th century is worth a detour. Overnight at the hotel.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 1 Night

Accommodation

Dar Echchaouen Maison d'hotes and Riad

Day 5

Chefchaouen - Volubilis and Meknes - Fes

Drive to Ouazzane, the holy city for Moroccan Jewish population who still make pilgrimages to venerate the tomb of several marabouts (Moroccan saints), particularly Moul Anrhaz, the local name for Rabbi Amram ben Diwan, an eighteenth-century rabbi who lived in the city and whose burial site is associated with several miracles. Home of many pillars of Sufism. We drive to the ancient Roman city of Volubilis to explore its stunning ruins. Impressive stone arches and columns, some tumbled down and others still standing tall against the vivid blue sky, invite us to take a step back in time. Only about half of the 40-hectare UNESCO site at Volubilis has been excavated. The better-known monuments are in the northern part of the site, farthest from the entrance in the south: The Capitol, dedicated to the Triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, dates to 218AD; the Basilica and 1300 sq. meter Forum are nearby. Here, floors of what were once family dwellings are still covered with decorative tile mosaics depicting mythological beings, such as Orpheus charming animals with his lyre and Hercules performing his legendary 12 labors. That so many of these tiles are still in place and exhibiting their colors after centuries of exposure to the elements, is astonishing. Then off to the Imperial city of Meknes, the one-time home of the Moroccan sultanate with its all-winding narrow streets in the medina and grand buildings that warrant it as an imperial city. Remnants of three sets of fortifications, ingeniously incorporated into the city's road networks, emphasize its past importance and glory. The king's tomb sits at the heart of what remains of the original imperial city, flanked by an almighty royal granary, the magnificent Bab el-Mansour. Continue to Fes for overnight.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 2 Nights

Accommodation

Hotel L'Escale

Day 6

Fes

Today you take a step back in time to the Middle Ages when you visit one of the most imperial, timeless and untouched cities in the world - Fez El Bali (Old Fez) - the cultural heart of Morocco. You explore some of the 9000 narrow lanes, alleys and souks (open air markets) that make-up the labyrinth of the city's old quarter, originally founded in the 8th century AD. The Imperial capital was a renowned center of medieval learning and at its heart still remains the Karaouine, one of the oldest, still functioning universities in the world. In the neighboring building is the Attarine Medersa (Koranic college), a jewel of Hispano-Moorish architecture, built in the 14th century. Then the Nejjarine Square, with its beautiful fountain an elaborate tile-work mosaics, the Fondouq (Caravanserai) has been converted to a museum of carpentry artifacts. In the 13th Century the Merinide Dynasty built Fez El Jdid (New Fez) with its Royal Palace, mosques, madrasas (Koranic schools), souks and the city wall. Most notably, Fez El Jdid is home

to the mellah (Jewish quarter), which provides an interesting insight into Jewish architecture. The wrought iron decorated windows and splendid carved wood balconies of the old mansions are particularly outstanding. The medieval Medina is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Return to tour hotel for overnight.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Day 7

Fes - Ifrane - Midelt - Erfoud

This morning, depart Fes. Pass through many amazing cities and villages, the first of which are Ifrane, nicknamed "Morocco's Switzerland," is a charming ski town populated by European-style chalets. Continue on to Midelt, which serves as the commercial center of a large agricultural hinterland. It is also one of Morocco's principal cities for the mining of several minerals. You will have some free time in Midelt, before you continue your journey through the dramatic Ziz Gorge to arrive in Erfoud. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Dinner

Duration 1 Night

Accommodation

Kasbah Hotel Chergui

Day 8

Erfoud - Khamlia - Merzouga

After breakfast, a 4x4 vehicle will be waiting for you to continue your adventure by heading towards the dunes of Erg Chebbi, possibly the largest dunes in the Sahara desert. En route, visit the villages in the surroundings area for a closer contact with the Berber culture, before arrival to Rissani, visit of camel milk cooperative, then continue to Rissani and visit one of the best traditional market in Sahara, "a place where they sell just donkeys and other markets for sheep, goats and cows. Stop at El Khamlia village for lunch included. Continue to the African village or "Gnawa village". Then continue to Erg Chabbi. The dunes of Erg Chebbi are a strikingly strange natural formation. On the top of the flattest area you could imagine, suddenly a long mountain of sand rises. This mountain is surrounded by flat and desolate nature on all sides, and you could end up wondering if it really is real. But so it is, even if its existence is so weird that it has given rise to legends and myths among the locals. Upon arrival at the camp you will witness the sunset from over the desert dunes and be astounded by the peace and calm as well as the changing colors of the landscape.

This evening, get onto the back of a camel and venture into the desert for a chance to see one of the most beautiful sunsets of your lifetime. Traverse the golden sands of the Sahara until you reach a perfect

viewing spot for one of the Nature's greatest shows. As another day comes to an end, watch the sky come to life with a fiery glow and the rays playfully change the colors of the endless dunes around you. Enjoy your dinner under tent then overnight.

Meal Plan Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Duration 1 Night

Accommodation

Madu Luxury Camp

Day 9

Merzouga - Dades - Skoura - Ouarzazate

We drive to Tinghir and Todra Gorges, the highest and narrowest gorges of Morocco. Situated on the east side of the High Atlas Mountains, the Todra Gorges are recognized around the world as one of the most spectacular canyons. Here, both the Todra and Dades Rivers have carved out cliff-sided canyons on their 25-miles stretch through the mountains, leaving behind a series of landforms and etches in the rock. The Todra is the name of the last 600 meters (just under 2,000 feet) of the canyons. The gorge is popular for its hiking paths and a well-maintained dirt road for visitors to share with mules and donkeys. After lunch (on your own), we'll drive through the Dades Valley with its majestic sandcastles and incredible rock formations known as Monkey Toes. The route through Dades Valley is also known as the Road of One Thousand Kasbahs. You'll catch a spectacular view of a vast valley dotted with small s and hundreds of ancient fortifications. The sand-colored walls of the Kasbahs may all start to look the same, but each holds a special historical treasure within, and offer innumerable opportunities for remarkable photos. Continue to Skoura, a quiet little village speckled with palm tree groves, Skoura is surrounded by acres of palm groves, which are a paradise of palm and olive trees peppered with Kasbahs and small villages. This is where we find Kasbah Amridil that stands out from the rest. Originally built in the 17th century, it is one of Morocco's most iconic living museums that has withstood the test of time. Then we drive to Ouarzazate for dinner and overnight.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Dinner

Duration 1 Night

Accommodation

Dar Chamaa

Day 10

Ouarzazate - Ait Ben Haddou - Marrakech

After breakfast, we visit Taourir Kasbahs, one of the most beautiful Kasbahs in Morocco. After the French left in the 1953, the movie business flourished in Ouarzazate. Optional visit of the film studios where

some of the most famous desert landscapes are filmed. You might recognize the sand-colored houses of this impressive Ksar (Arabic for "fortified city") when you see the spectacular fortress of Ait Ben Haddou, the iconic landscape immortalized in such films as,

Lawrence of Arabia, Gladiator, and Alexander. Ait Ben Haddou is a massive fortification made up of six Kasbahs all protected by UNESCO. You can spend time in its maze of winding streets until reaching a fortified granary at the top which provides an amazing view of the valley. We leave Ait Ben Haddou, crossing the High Atlas Mountains via the magnificent Tiz In Tichka pass to Marrakech, our home for the next three nights.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 3 Nights

Accommodation

Longue Vie Hotel Marrakech

Day 11

Marrakech

After breakfast, enjoy the city tour of Marrakesh, the "Red City", a majestic place filled with palaces, gardens, markets, and mosques. Upon arrival, you will first stand by the Koutoubia Mosque with its 282 ft minaret, an architectural landmark dating back to the late 12th century.

You will continue to the 19th century stunning Bahia palace and discover the intricate work done by the local artisans to decorate this splendid home built by a powerful Vizir for his Harem. The building includes one hundred and fifty rooms, countless courtyards and interior gardens, a veritable labyrinth of corridors, a Koranic school, hammams, a harem, stables. From there we will start exploring artisan quarters and the colorful Souks to interact with the real life of Marrakech people.

Continue to Dar El Bacha Museum, built in 1910 and was the residence of Thami El Glaoui, named Pasha of Marrakech by Sultan Moulay Youssef in 1912. It is one of the medina's finest examples of Riad architecture, dripping with Moroccan Zellige (colorful geometric tilework), intricate white plasterwork and heavy carved cedar-wood lintels.

Before sunset we will be strolling in the square of which the city is so famed, Jemaa El Fna, where hundreds of locals and tourists come to spend the end of the day watching jugglers, dancers, fortune tellers, story tellers and traditional musicians. After the tour, head to your hotel to freshen up. When you are ready, transfer to a local restaurant in the medina to enjoy a typical Moroccan dinner with entertainment. After the dinner, back to your hotel for overnight.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Day 12

Marrakech

Optional excursion to Essaouira where you will enjoy most of the day at leisure. This relatively small, easily navigable beach city is ideal for a free day. Essaouira has got a distinct multicultural feel, resulting from the large Portuguese, French, and Jewish populations that once called it home. Its mild climate and expansive stretches of ocean sand also place it among Morocco's top beach towns. Essaouira's walled medina was added to Unesco's World Heritage list in 2001. Its well-preserved, late-18th-century fortified layout is a prime example of European military architecture in North Africa. For the visitor, the mellow atmosphere, narrow winding streets lined with colorful shops, whitewashed houses and heavy old wooden doors make it a wonderful place to stroll. Later in the afternoon you will be transferred back to Marrakech.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Day 13

Casablanca Airport

After breakfast, we will transfer you to the airport for your return flight.

Meal Plan Breakfast