

Magical Morocco

Duration 11 days/10 nights



Our Magical Morocco tour is a fabulous experience of touring the amazing land of 1,000 Kasbahs, the most famous desert in the world, Arabic architecture, Berber villages, stunning mountains, in short 'MOROCCO'.

A magical travel adventure where you immerse yourself in a totally different, rich and wonderful culture.



This tour is an exclusive private tour for a minimum of two guests, so we can normally schedule it to meet the start date you require.

Day 1: ARRIVAL

We collect you upon arrival at Marrakech airport, or Casablanca, and take you to check-in to your beautiful Riad located near the centre of Marrakech where you will stay for the next 2 nights.

Marrakech, is the fourth largest city in the Kingdom of Morocco. It is located to the west of the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, which provide a dramatic backdrop.

Founded in 1062 in the Almoravid period, Marrakech grew rapidly and established itself as a cultural and religious centre and became a trading centre for Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa. Andalusian craftsmen from Seville and Córdoba built and decorated numerous palaces in the city.

The city became the Capital of the 'Almoravid' Emirate, with great wealth from Gold and Silver being brought there in travelling caravans.

As a result of its cultural reputation, Marrakesh attracted many writers and artists, especially from Andalucía, including the famous philosopher Averroes of Córdoba.

Marrakech is one of the great Citadels of the Muslim World and is known as the 'Jewel of the South'. The main square, Djemaa el Fna is the busiest in Africa.

The Medina quarter of the city is a Unesco World Heritage site, with the largest traditional market 'souk' in Morocco.



Enjoy a relaxing time and evening in Marrakech and take dinner in your Riad or at one of the great restaurants including:

- M Rooftop
- Entrepotes
- Dar Cherifa

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Day 2: MARRAKECH

Your local guide will meet you after breakfast and give you a full day tour of the city.



Sites worth visiting include:

- La Bahia Palace and Gardens – built in the late 19th Century and intended to be the greatest palace of its time
- Koutoubia Mosque – the largest Mosque in Marrakech
- The Saadian Tombs – a historic Royal Necropolis
- Old Medina & Souks
- Djemma el Fna Plaza

Through a twisting maze of narrow streets and alleyways, the sounds, sights and smells are an amazing assault on the senses. Traditional craftsmen, using centuries old techniques, fabricate all manner of items in metal, leather, fabrics and glass. And the main square is packed with snake charmers, story tellers and magicians. Enjoy a second evening and night in your Riad.

Day 3: AIT BENHADDOU & OUARZAZATE

Travelling from Marrakech, you soon reach the climb into the High Atlas Mountains where you will see some local Berber villages, their colours blending them into the rocky mountain backdrop.

The villagers being mainly self-sufficient growing fruit and vegetables and generally only eating old or sick animals for meat. They trade in the markets for tea, sugar, clothes and a little money.

Crossing the Tizi n Tichka Pass (2160m), we reach the ancient village of Ait Benhaddou.

One of Morocco's eight Unesco world heritage sites, it is exceptionally well preserved.

The setting for several Hollywood movies, scenes for the epic 'Gladiator' 'Jesus of Nazareth' and 'The Mummy' were filmed here, as well as episodes of 'Game of Thrones'.

Enjoy time exploring with a local guide, and enjoy lunch on one of the restaurant terraces with views of the Kasbahs.

After the visit, we take the short drive to Ouarzazate, the name being Berber and meaning 'noiseless and peaceful'. Check-in to your Riad and explore Ouarzazate.



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Known as the Gateway to the Sahara Desert, it is home to the huge Taourit Kasbah.

Kasbah being the buildings, fortresses, Palaces built for powerful rulers of the region.

And, if you have time, and are a film fan, CLA studios gives a good impression of how sets for films are constructed, since Ouarzazate is also known as Morocco's Hollywood.

Consideration for dinner include:

- Ksar El Kabbaba

- La Kasbah des sables
- Douyria

Day 4: OUARZAZATE to MERZOUGA

After breakfast, we travel to Merzouga via the Dades Valley, Todra Gorge and Tinghir.

Known as the Route of 1,000 Kasbahs, the route is a spectacular drive winding through the Dades Valley that lies between the Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains.

There are, indeed, more than 1,000 kasbahs, in this context meaning fortresses, in the area.

After visiting the spectacular 160m deep gorge and lunch, we arrive at Merzouga late afternoon.

Check in to Riad Chebbi and stay the night.

Day 5: MERZOUGA & LUXURY BERBER CAMP

Enjoy the day relaxing at the Riad and early evening transfer to the desert camp either by 1 hour 30 minute sunset camel ride or 4 x 4, as you prefer.

In the camp, you have a private tent with bathroom/shower.

Dinner and breakfast are included.

To admire the sky at night in the Sarah desert is something really special.



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Day 6: NORTHWARD TO FES



After breakfast in the camp, you are transported by 4 x 4 back to Merzouga and we travel to north to Fes, the second largest city in Morocco after Casablanca, founded in the 8th & 9th centuries.

It reached its zenith in the Marinid-era, regaining the status as the capital.

Fes is considered the cultural and spiritual centre of Morocco.

Numerous madrasas, mosques, zawiyas and city gates were constructed, which survived up until today.

These buildings are considered the hallmarks of Moorish and Moroccan architectural styles.

Our journey is a full day travel and, departing Merzouga, we first reach the Ziz Valley as we start the climb up the Atlas Mountains.

Reaching the halfway point, we stop for lunch.

After lunch, we continue northwards and take a stop near Azrou/Ifran, inhabited by the Macaque Silvanus (a Barbary Ape, although it's actually a monkey not an ape) in the cedar forests.

We continue to reach Fes and check-in to the lovely Riad for the next two nights.

Spend the evening and night in Fes.



Take dinner at one of the great restaurants including:

- Dar Tajine Fes
- Darori Resto
- La Cave

Day 7: FES

After breakfast, the local guide meets you and gives you a tour of the city.

Fes is one of the most intact medieval Arab Cities.

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Marinid Sultans founded the Fes Jdid Quarter, where newer places and gardens were established.

During this time, the Jewish population of the city grew, with the Mellah, the Jewish Quarter, attracting Jewish migrants from other North African regions.

The City has the oldest Medina in the world.

Sites include:

- Dar Batha – a former palace turned into a museum in 1915. The entrance has a beautiful Andalusian style garden
- Chouara Tannery – the oldest tannery in the world, but rub some mint under your nose !
- Medersa (Madrassa) Bou Inania – a stunning architectural Islamic theological college
- Fez Medina – twisting winding narrow lanes with centuries old monuments and mosques



Spend a second night in Fes.

Day 8: CHEFCHAOUEN

After breakfast, we depart for the 'Blue City' of Chefchaouen. The city was founded in 1471 as a kasbah fortress by Moulay Ali Rashid al-Alami, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.



It was founded to fight the Portuguese invasions of Northern Morocco.

In 1920, Spanish troops seized Chefchaouen to form part of Spanish Morocco and it was returned after the independence of Morocco in 1956.

The blue of the city is said to symbolize the sky, and heaven, and serve as a reminder to lead a spiritual life.

The journey from Fes takes around 3 hours 30 minutes and, upon arrival, check-in to your delightful Riad.

Chefchaouen is wonderfully situated beneath the impressive peaks of the Rif mountains and is one of the prettiest places in Morocco. In the afternoon, you can wander the blue narrow lanes, take lunch at Café Clock with a spectacular rooftop view over the medina.

Your visit to Chefchaouen is not guided, so you can spend time at your own pace soaking in the atmospheric City.

Maybe consider a local course in bread making or calligraphy.

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Walk up to the Spanish Mosque to enjoy views of the mountains and medina.

For dinner consider booking a table in the beautiful back garden of El Jaleo.

Day 9: MEKNES

After breakfast, travel to Meknes. Meknes is one of the four imperial cities of Morocco. It was founded in the 11th century by the Almoravids as a military settlement.

Meknes was the capital of Morocco for a period during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The historic architecture of the city is a Spanish-Moorish style similar to Andalusia and it is surrounded by high walls with great doors.



You will have a local guide give you a tour of Meknes.

Sites to visit in Meknes include:



- Meknes Medina – a not too touristy medina, particularly pretty in places, bustling like all medinas
- UNESCO listed City walls – surrounding the city they remain as a legacy to the founding of Meknes as a fortified settlement
- Bab Mansour gate – a huge 16 metres wide entrance to the City with fabulously ornate towers either side
- Bou Inania Medersa – a school of Koranic learning with beautiful decoration and architecture
- El Hedim Square – the main market square full of

stalls, snake charmers, storytellers, a smaller version of the main square in Marrakesh

- Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail – born in 1647, a sultan of the Alaouite dynasty, he led successful armies taking thousands of Christian prisoners to build his royal palace in Meknes, as well as developing many areas of the city.

In the evening consider dinner at:

- Baraka
- Gout de Meknes



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Day 10: CASABLANCA

After breakfast, drive just under 3 hours to Casablanca. Check in to your hotel and take lunch at one of the sea front restaurants.



Casablanca is the largest city in Morocco and the 8th largest in the Arab world.

An industrial port city, it may not be the most atmospheric of the Moroccan cities we visit, but with some fascinating architecture, a bustling arts and culture scene and amazing restaurants, it's definitely should be included within your Moroccan tour itinerary.

It is also the ideal place to stay for your subsequent departure, since it has a large international airport.

The city's French colonial legacy is seen in its downtown architecture, a blend of Moorish style and European art deco.

Standing partly over the water, the enormous Hassan II Mosque, completed in 1993, has a 210m minaret topped with lasers directed toward Mecca.

The City represents the modern Morocco economy and many of the historic Art Deco villas of the city are now galleries and museums.

The waterfront boulevard 'La Corniche' is lined with beach cafés, chic lounges, and ocean-view restaurants. It wouldn't seem out of place on the French Riviera with the ocean view 'Le Cabestan' a wonderful place to have your final dinner and a cocktail in Morocco.

Your time in Casablanca is unguided, so you can relax and enjoy time in the vibrant City.



Spend the evening and night in Casablanca and places to consider for dinner include:

- Le Cabestan
- La Closerie
- Oncle Blend
- Mood's Café Restaurant

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Day 11: DEPARTURE

Free time in Casablanca until time to transfer to the airport for your departure.

ACCOMMODATION

For your tour of Morocco, you will predominately stay at boutique Riads.



Breakfast is included.

All accommodation is subject to availability for the dates for your tour.

Riads typically only have a handful of rooms and, if appropriate, we will source suitable, equivalent alternatives.

We have listed below typical accommodation.

| | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Marrakesh | - | Riad Al Uzza (2 nights) |
| Ouarzazate | - | Riad Dar Daif (1 night) |
| Merzouga | - | Riad Chebbi & Luxury Berber Camp Experience |
| Fes | - | Riad Fes Maya |
| Chefchaouen | - | Riad Nila |
| Meknes | - | Riad Zidania |
| Casablanca | - | Art Palace Suites & Spa |

PRICE: £2,850 GBP per person
Single Supplement £695



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Notes:

- The tour is a private tour dedicated to 2 to 6 guests, so it has flexibility to be modified if you require and we can provide a supplementary quotation accordingly.
- The accommodation detailed above is typical of the accommodation used for your tour, but is subject to availability.
- Bed and breakfast accommodation is included within the price, but no other meals other than the dinner in the Sahara desert camp.
- Non-Muslim visitors can generally enter the grounds and plazas of mosques, but are not allowed to enter the prayer hall. Each may have its own rules.
- Monument entrance fees, other meals or expenditure are not included.
- You will have a dedicated tour leader with air-conditioned tour vehicle for the duration of the tour.
- Local guides will be provided in the cities, where appropriate.
- Prices are based on two guests sharing a room.
- Prices do not include and flights, taxi or train fares.
- Tipping is at your discretion.
- Whilst we have listed some restaurants in each location, we also recommend that you consider eating in the Riads, since they all serve lovely traditional Moroccan fare and, after a long day sightseeing, it is a pleasure to relax in the Riads with their traditional style..
- Prices are in £GBP.

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