

9 days/8 Nights

Departs Daily Sep. - Jun.



## Moroccan Discovery: Casablanca, Fez, Merzouga, Ouarzazate & Marrakesh

Attention adventure seekers! This diverse and creative itinerary truly captures the essence of exotic Morocco. Explore the desert kingdom and gateway to North Africa by experiencing its vibrant culture with a nod to its French colonial past. This amazing odyssey will tempt your senses with visits to imposing kasbahs, bustling colorful souks, the seaside resort of Essaouira, and the UNESCO Heritage site of Ait-Ben-Haddou. You'll take a thrilling camel ride before camping in the Sahara, amid breathtaking natural settings. Your tour also includes stays in captivating Casablanca, the historic walled city of Fez, and ending this whirlwind trip in energetic Marrakesh.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

- 1 Night Casablanca
- 2 Nights Fez

- 1 Night Merzouga Desert Camping

- 1 Night Ouarzazate
- 3 Nights Marrakesh

### INCLUSIONS

- Private Casablanca Tour
- Private Fez Medieval Heritage Tour
- Camel Ride
- Private Hidden Sides of Marrakesh Tour

- Private Essaouira and Atlantic Coast Tour
- Visits to Meknes, Volubilis, Dades, Todgha Gorges, Ait Ben Haddou & Telouet

- Private Transportation Throughout
- 1 Dinner
- Daily Breakfast



### CASABLANCA:

After arriving at the Casablanca Airport, meet your driver for a private transfer to your hotel. After checking in, your local guide will meet you at the hotel for your private tour of this cosmopolitan port. Start the visit from the old city area where you will visit the impressive Hassan II mosque to discover one of the most interesting architectural achievements in modern Morocco. Visit Le "Marché Central", the French food and flower market, before you stop on Mohamed V square, one of the main squares of Casablanca, to admire the neo-Moorish style architecture of several official buildings such as the town hall and the court of justice built in 1930's. Visit the largest church in Casablanca, "Notre Dame De Lourdes", where you will discover one of the most impressive works in stained glass accomplished by a French artist in the mid 1950's.

This evening, with recommendations from your hotel, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. Moroccan cuisine combines spices, herbs, and fresh ingredients, including tajine, (a North African stew made with stewed meat and vegetables), and couscous. Although a Muslim country, Morocco produces quality wines that one can order in most restaurants, including their excellent reds. And for serious tea drinkers, order their famous tea: an infusion of geranium, verbena and mint.

*(Accommodations, Casablanca)*

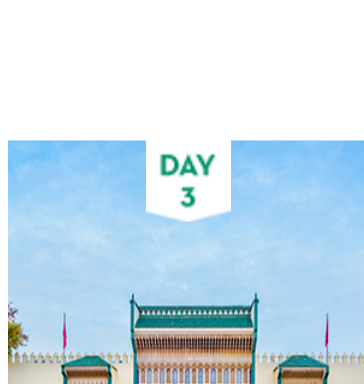


### FEZ:

After breakfast, you'll have a transfer to Fez. Along the way, you'll stop in Meknes, a medieval city rebuilt by King Moulay Ismail in the 17th century. Some of the famous sites include the El Heri Souani stables; a vast, cathedral-like home for the sultan's 12,000 horses. Other attractions include the mausoleum of Moulay Ismail with its harmonious Moorish design, and Bab El Mansour gate, the most beautiful in North Africa, with an amazing arrangement of tile work.

A short distance away is Volubilis, a partly excavated Roman and Berber city, built over two thousand years ago when this part of the country was a Roman province. Their footprints are still visible, as you gaze at one of the most beautiful collections of mosaics, which have remained at the original site since their discovery in the early 20th Century. After arriving in Fez, dinner will be on your own this evening.

*(Breakfast, Casablanca, Accommodations, Fez)*

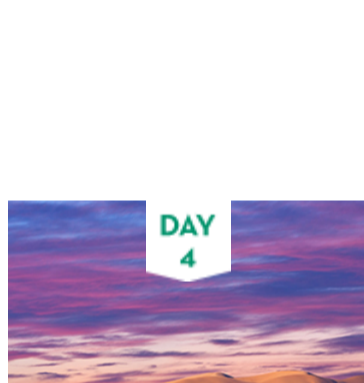


### FEZ:

After breakfast, meet your guide for a Private Medieval Heritage tour of this historical city. You'll learn about the history of Morocco and how people from different origins, religions and cultures settled this region. This cultural visit will begin in the El Jid, the beautifully built Jewish quarter, which stands next to the 14th century Royal Palace. You will have access to the recently restored synagogue of Aben Danan, built in the 17th century, and learn about the history of Judaism in this area. The tour continues past Quaraouiyine University; the oldest existing university in the world.

Pass through one of the main gates of the city, reaching the lush, historical gardens of Jnan Sbil, replete with eucalyptus, weeping willows, and citrus trees. You'll visit the 19th century Royal Palace. Founded in 1915, it's the oldest museum of Moroccan traditional arts. Then drive along the beautifully restored ramparts before stopping to enjoy the stunning view of the city from the hilltops. Before returning to your hotel, enjoy a stop at a pottery making village, where this ancestral fine craft is still practiced. Returning to your hotel, the remainder of the day is at your leisure.

*(Breakfast & Accommodations, Fez)*



### MERZOUGA DESERT CAMP:

An exciting day awaits you, beginning with a transfer to Merzouga, the gateway to the Erg Chebbi dunes. From here, you'll ride in a 4 x 4 vehicle, racing across the hamada (stoney desert). Then complete your ride to the Gold Sand Desert camp on a camel\* (about 45 minutes), where a warm welcome awaits you. This traditional Arab tented camp offers "hotel room" comfort with luxuriously appointed accommodations. Later, catch the spectacular sunset over the dunes, then enjoy a traditional meal, freshly prepared and served by candlelight. Then return to your private tent with ensuite facilities including a king or double bed, a full-size shower with hot and cold water, sink, and a WC.

*\*The camel ride portion is optional, so if travelers prefer, they can opt to take the 4x4 vehicle all the way to the pottery camp.*

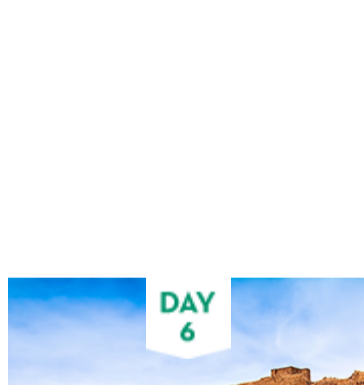
*(Breakfast, Fez, Dinner & Accommodations, Merzouga Desert Camp)*



### OUARZAZATE:

After breakfast, you'll depart the Desert Camp to Ouarzazate (war-zazat). You'll take a 4X4 vehicle to Erfoud, before switching to a car for the remainder of your trip today. Along the way, you'll visit Dades; widely considered one of the most attractive Moroccan cities. This lush and green area hugs the Dades River, which rises from the High Atlas Mountains before emptying into Morocco's largest river, the Draa. Later, your drive continues to the Todra (Togda) Gorge. Situated on the east side of the Atlas Mountains it's home to one of the world's most spectacular canyons. Here, both the Todra and Dades Rivers have carved out cliff-sided canyons on their final 25-mile stretch through the mountains, leaving behind this series of reliefs and etches in the rock. Arriving in Ouarzazate, nicknamed "the doorway to the Sahara", you can explore the pedestrian plaza, and dinner will be on your own this evening.

*(Breakfast, Merzouga Desert Camp, Accommodations, Ouarzazate)*

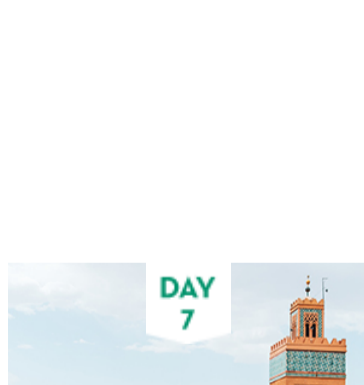


### MARRAKESH:

After breakfast, you'll drive along the foothills on the southern slopes of the High Atlas to the site of Ait-Ben-Haddou. This UNESCO Heritage Site is the most famous ksar in the Ounila Valley. The walls of Ait-Ben-Haddou will be familiar to those who have seen Game of Thrones or Gladiator; both filmed here. The ksar, a group of earthen buildings surrounded by high walls, is a traditional pre-Saharan habitat, and the Ksar of Ait-Ben-Haddou is a striking example of southern Moroccan architecture. Continuing your journey, you'll arrive in historic Telouet.

The Telouet is a Kasbah (fortress), along the former route of the caravans from the Sahara over the Atlas Mountains to Marrakesh. Telouet also once had a thriving Jewish community, entrusted by the Glaoui with managing the all-important salt trade. Salt mines are still active in the area, and prized pink salt found along the nearby Oued Mellah (Salt River). Departing Telouet, you'll arrive in the "Red City" Marrakesh. After checking into your hotel, dinner will be on your own this evening.

*(Breakfast, Ouarzazate, Accommodations, Marrakesh)*

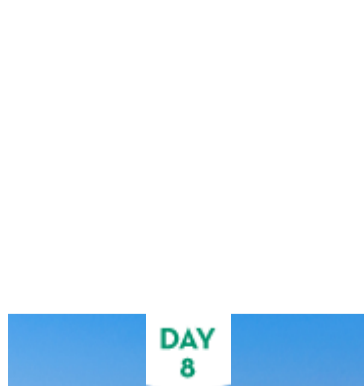


### MARRAKESH:

Today, enjoy an informative private walking tour to experience the hidden sides of Marrakesh. You'll see the traditional activities of the inhabitants of the old city and understand their way of life as well as some remains of the glorious past of this medieval capital of Morocco. Your tour starts at one of the historical gates of the old Medina, crossing some of the oldest quarters in the Medina of Marrakech. Along the way, you'll pass old fountains, historical gates, then stop to visit an old bakery and sample some of the local bread. You'll see firsthand the furnace that heats their public steam baths and learn the role they play in the social life of each quarter. Visit a sumptuous Moorish palace that was once the home of a Moroccan minister until the end of the 19th century and admire the marvelous Moorish architecture.

Then discover the hidden quarters and the historical caravanserai called Fondouks; once used as hotels for the caravan traders. They are still in use today by Marrakesh artisans who have set their workshops in many of them to perpetuate their ancestral skills of making a variety of local crafts. After your tour, the remainder of the day is free for relaxing or exploring on your own.

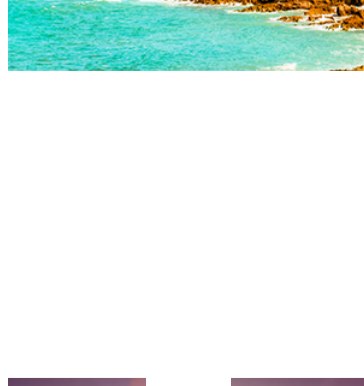
*(Breakfast & Accommodations, Marrakesh)*



### MARRAKESH:

Your day begins early to discover the bohemian vibe of Essaouira, a picturesque and quirky seaside resort built in a Mediterranean style on the Atlantic coast. Known as "the ruby of the Moroccan coast", this quaint town displays a fine example of Moorish architecture and Portuguese art. Before arriving, you'll travel through forests famed for their argan oil, and stroll beneath date palms at a Berber oasis. Arriving in Essaouira, explore the old medina listed as a "UNESCO World Heritage site", as well as the city's long beach (6 miles), rich with the pungent scent of salt air and strong coffee. Then enjoy lunch, served in a cafe overlooking the dramatic Atlantic coastline before returning to Marrakesh.

*(Breakfast & Accommodations, Marrakesh)*



### DEPART MARRAKESH:

After breakfast, meet your driver for a private transfer to Marrakesh Airport for your return home, or on to your next Avanti Destination!

*(Breakfast, Marrakesh)*

*\*\* Itinerary and inclusions are subject to change*