

# EXPLORE!

**BEST SELLER**

**Highlights of Morocco**

9 days

Morocco - Trip code MMR



## Highlights of Morocco

Discover the highlights of captivating Morocco on this fast-paced, adventurous trip. From the iconic imperial cities of Marrakech, Fez and Meknes, with their vibrant souks, medinas and ancient Roman ruins, to the golden sand dunes of Erg Chebbi and the friendly Berber villages in the Atlas Mountains, this trip provides an excellent introduction to a charming, exotic country only a few hours away from home.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Imperial cities** - Explore the 3 imperial cities of Marrakech, Meknes and Fes
- ★ **Todra Gorge** - Walk in Morocco's Grand Canyon through spectacular rock formations
- ★ **The Atlas Mountains** - Beautiful mountain scenery in the highest mountain range in North Africa

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

#### TRIP PACE:

##### Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

#### GROUP SIZE:

##### 10 - 15

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join tour Marrakech

Join tour Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flight, you may wish to start exploring the 'Red City' independently.



**Accommodation: Moroccan House** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Morning sightseeing in Marrakech; drive to Beni Mellal

Morocco's famous 'Red City', Marrakech is the spiritual heart of the country, a cultural melting pot of the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south. Blessed with some of the most stunning architecture in Morocco, its mix of tradition, colour and history makes for a fascinating guided walk through its medina this morning. We'll wander through its bustling souks and pay a visit to the remarkable setting of the Bahia Palace, a fusion of Moroccan and Islamic styles that was intended to be the greatest palace of its time. Following our tour we then depart Marrakech, for the beautiful Cascades of Ouzoud, before continuing on through Azilal and on towards Bin el Ouidane Lake. Our final destination today is the city of Beni Mellal, lying at the foot of Mount Tassemit.



**Accommodation: Hotel Ouzoud** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Drive to Fes, sightseeing tour of Meknes en route

Today we drive along the northern slopes of the Middle Atlas Mountains, into the Oued Boufekrane River Valley and on to the city of Meknes, once the heart of the Moroccan Sultanate. Built by the tyrant, Moulay Ismail, the city was once filled with palace and grand gateways and although much of Ismail's capital has crumbled to dust, it still exudes a sense of its former regal grandeur. In the company of a guide we will visit the old granary of Heri es-Souni and the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail himself. In spite of the sultan's infamous blood lust and cruelty, many still see his reign as a golden age and the tomb is held in high regard. From here it is just a short drive on to Fes, where we will spend the next two nights. This afternoon is then free to perhaps visit the holy city of Moulay Idriss and the ancient ruins of Volubilis, once the capital of the Roman province of Mauritania Tingitana.



**Accommodation: Hotel Splendid** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - City tour in Fes; optional trip to Volubilis and Moulay Idriss

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Fes el Bali is probably the oldest of the great imperial cities and certainly the most complete medieval city in the Arab world. This morning we enjoy a tour of the city that has long been regarded as Morocco's 'artisan capital', taking in the medina and the souks and paying a visit to the Royal Palace (Fes El Jedid). Craftwork made and sold in the Fes medina is considered amongst the finest in Morocco and a wander through its artisan districts reveals an array of weavers and brass workshops, coppersmiths and tanners, producing beautiful pieces much as they have for generations. We also take a drive out to the North Borj (tower) for some great panoramic views of the city.



**Accommodation: Hotel Splendid** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Drive over the Middle Atlas Mountains to Merzouga

Today we have a long, but very scenic drive over the Middle Atlas Mountains to Merzouga. These are the lands of the fiercely independent Berbers, the 'Lords of the Atlas', whose timeless traditions still hold sway up here in their mountain strongholds far away from the cities. The road takes us through Ifrane and Azrou where we will take a short walk through the Atlas cedar forest, home of the endangered Barbary macaques. We then continue our drive into the Gorge du Ziz and across the broad plateau towards the desert settlement of Erfoud. Following the meandering course of the Ziz River we then head into the dunes of the Sand Sea, the traditional homeland of the Alaouite, who ruled this region for some 300 years. Our final destination today is the settlement of Merzouga, lying on the edge of the Erg Chebbi, an area of high dunes that are amongst the most spectacular natural landscapes anywhere in Morocco.



## Accommodation: Hotel les Portes du Desert (or similar)



Standard Auberge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Optional camel ride; drive to Tinerhir and hike the Todra Gorge

This morning we have the option to take a camel ride into the dunes to watch the sunrise. The word 'erg' is Arabic for 'great sand dune area' and although many people imagine the Sahara as an endless sea of rolling golden sand dunes, they actually cover only about one-fifth of its surface. Leaving mid-morning we then drive along the southern slopes of the Atlas towards Rissani and from there continue on to the town of Tinerhir, set amongst the dramatic ochre-coloured cliffs of the Todra Gorge. This afternoon we'll take a hike through the narrow gorge, wandering through a landscape of towering, sheer sided walls that in some places are up to 300 metres high and little more than 10 metres wide.



## Accommodation: Kasbah Tabouriht (or similar)



Standard Kasbah



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Drive to Bou Tharar via the 'Road of a 1000 Kasbahs'; visit a Berber village

Returning to Tinehir this morning, we then drive along the famous 'Road of a 1,000 Kasbahs' to Boumaine-Dades. The Dades Valley can boast some of the most authentic Berber settlements anywhere, with each of the oasis towns offering up its own distinctive charm and character. Many of the original kasbahs lie in ruins now, but enough remain to provide a real flavour of Morocco's ancient heritage. Our journey today also takes us via the town of El Kelaa Mgouna and the famous Valley of the Roses, before finally arriving at the Berber village of Bou Tharar, located at the entrance to the wonderfully scenic Mgoun Gorge. This afternoon we'll take a hike through this stunning area, paying a visit to some of the local Berber villages that lie scattered amongst the desert landscapes.



## Accommodation: Hotel Awayou (or similar)



Standard Auberge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 8 - Drive to Marrakech via Ouarzazate and the Tizi n'Tichka Pass

Leaving Bou Tharar after breakfast this morning we drive on to the oasis town of Skoura, where we pay a visit to the kasbah. From here we then continue to Ouarzazate, a desert outpost lying to the south of the High Atlas, sandwiched between the high mountains and the expansive sands of the Sahara. Driving over the Tizi n'Tichka Pass we then make our way back to Marrakech, where we have a free evening to enjoy the many delights of the city. Marrakech is a city like no other, a place where trade and barter still renders its centre a delightful chaos of noise and colour and at its heart you'll find the spectacular Djemma-el-Fna, a site not to be missed.



**Accommodation: Moroccan House** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



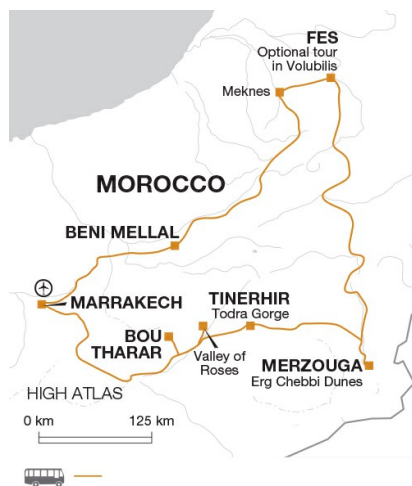
Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Tour ends Marrakech

The tour ends today in Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may wish to spend some additional time in the souks or in the Djemma el Fna Square before departure.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



## Why book this trip

This is a perfect tour for travellers who want to experience the sights and sounds of Morocco in a short time. The tour takes you on a roller-coaster ride from the sensory highs of Fes to the peaceful serenity of the Sahara desert. A wonderful trip to begin your love affair with Morocco.

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 8  
Dinner: 1



## Transport

Minibus



## Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Driver(s)



## Accommodation

2 nights standard auberge  
5 nights standard hotel  
1 nights standard kasbah

# Trip information

## Country information

### Morocco Holidays & Tours

#### Climate

The climate is both Mediterranean and Atlantic. The dry, hot season is from May to October when summer temperatures can reach 38°C and above (if sight seeing is included we will do our best to avoid the heat of the day during this period). Temperatures may drop significantly at times during the night as the day's heat rapidly diminishes. From December to January snow can be expected on mountain passes and it can be wet. In winter, day temperatures will probably be around 18-25°C, dropping to perhaps 0-5°C.

#### Time difference to GMT

0

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Islam

#### Language

Arabic, Berber, French.

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

Fes - Tour of Volubilis approx £1 pp for entry plus approx £13 for guide (per group) Merzouga - Camel Ride at sunrise £15  
Marrakech - Hammam £20

### Clothing

Summer: Clothing should be lightweight. However, a warm sweater is also advisable, as the desert can sometimes get cold at nights, even in the summer. Winter: Usually warm during the day but thicker clothing is essential for cold nights (Nov-Mar). It is advisable to take warm clothing (eg. track suit or thermal underwear) to sleep in, as the quality of heating in Moroccan hotel rooms can be variable. A waterproof jacket, trousers and fleece are recommended in the winter months. Morocco is a Muslim country and it is

important to dress with respect for local customs. People may be offended by shorts or revealing dresses, which can attract unwelcome attention. We advise that in general both men and women should cover shoulders, upper arms and knees. Transparent, plunging necklines and tightfitting clothes should be avoided. Women should also cover their heads when entering a sanctuary, though in general, mosques are forbidden to non-Muslims.

## Footwear

We recommend sandals and walking boots with good ankle support if planning to do the walk in the Todra Gorge.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack.

## Equipment

Water bottle, sunhat and high factor sunscreen are all essential, whilst we recommend swimming costumes and towels.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow approx. £15 for tipping of crew and local guides used.

## Country Information

### Morocco Holidays & Tours

#### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

##### Dinner price

£5.00 - 8.00

##### Beer price

£2.5

##### Water price

£0.6

#### Foreign Exchange

##### Local currency

Moroccan Dirham (MAD).

##### Recommended Currency For Exchange

US Dollars, Sterling and Euros are readily exchangeable. We recommend you take a mixture of cash and credit cards. Scottish bank notes and Australian dollar travellers cheques and cash are NOT normally accepted in Morocco.

##### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you.

##### ATM Availability

ATMs are available in main towns/cities, though can be unreliable.

##### Credit Card Acceptance

Not all places.

##### Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are difficult to exchange and are not recommended.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Minibus

### Accommodation notes

#### Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Morocco is a developing country and as such, the accommodation standards are not equivalent to those in Europe and can be more basic. We generally choose our properties because of their location, cleanliness, traditional style or for their welcoming atmosphere, as we endeavour to provide an authentic Moroccan experience. However, some of the properties might have some outdated or simple furniture and the level of service may vary depending on the location. You may find that availability of hot water is variable or limited in certain locations. Breakfasts are generally continental style. A swimming pool is often available, especially in the cities.

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

#### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Visa Information

Morocco: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

### Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

### Transfers



Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### **Booking a land only package with Explore**

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Morocco Holidays & Tours**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

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