

EXPLORE!

Tailormade Morocco's Mountains and Medinas

15 days

Morocco - Trip code TMMR1



Tailormade Morocco's Mountains and Medinas Holidays

Souks, Medinas, Oases and Mountains

This fabulous journey through ancient Morocco's imperial cities takes you to colourful, bustling souks where you can try out your bartering skills, to the Saharan Sand Sea of Merzouga to sleep under the stars with the Berbers, and over the High Atlas on a spectacularly scenic drive to the old Portuguese town of Essaouira.

Enriching tailormade journeys – for you

This bespoke journey features some of our favourite spots in Morocco. You can choose to take our destination experts' recommendations and travel just as you see the itinerary here, or contact us to add your own special touches, maybe a cookery class in Marrakech or guided walks in the beautiful High Atlas. We're here to design your perfect holiday.

Call us on 01252 883 184

Trip highlights

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Fly to Casablanca

Arrive in Casablanca and transfer to your hotel.



Accommodation: Club Val D'Anfa (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



None

DAY 2 - Visit Hassan II Mosque and Sightseeing in Rabat; continue to Meknes

This morning you visit the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca before you set forth along the coast heading north, towards Rabat, the city that was established as the capital of their protectorate by the French in 1912 and since independence has served as the capital of a modern Morocco. Rabat's history stretches back as far as 8BC, when settlers arrived in what is now the Chellah area, a district that went on to become a prosperous Roman town, before being transformed by the Merinids into a cemetery. On arrival you will have an opportunity to explore something of the city's historic heart, with a guided walking tour of the area around the Hassan Tower and the Mausoleum of Mohammed V, before wandering through the engaging Kasbah des Oudaias, originally a fortified town that is now infused with a distinctly Andalusian flavour. After taking in the sumptuous grandeur of the Royal Palace you will continue your journey to Meknes, once the heart of the Moroccan Sultanate, lying amidst the landscapes of the Oued Boufekrane River valley. The Sultan loved Meknes, and he would have liked never to leave it once wrote a chronicler to the tyrannical Sultan Moulay Ismail. Ismail (1672- 1727) was a tireless builder, and his greatest efforts were reserved for his capital at Meknes, which at its peak, with over 20 grand gateways and 50 palaces, must have been a sight to inspire any who looked upon it.



Accommodation: Riad El Yacout (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

DAY 3 - Sightseeing in Meknes; drive to Fes via Volubilis

This morning you enjoy a guided tour of the major highlights of Meknes, including the old granaries of the Heri es-Souni and the

Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail himself. In spite of Ismail's seemingly unquenchable blood lust and far from benevolent treatment of his subjects, the sultan still seems to be held in high regard and his tomb is something of a place of reverence even today amongst a people who still see his rule as Morocco's Golden Age. You'll also take in the Bab el Khamis Gate and walk through the city's spectacular centrepiece, the Bab Mansour, en route to the Place el Hedim and the city's Medina, where you can try your bartering skills in the busy markets. From here you head next for the nearby ancient site of Volubilis – the capital of the Roman province of Mauritania Tingitana. The detailed mosaics here are still intact and the site gives a good idea of the layout of provincial settlements. The afternoon then sees us taking the road northeast, travelling via Nzala des Beni Ammar to the country's cultural capital, Fes. Probably the oldest of the imperial cities, its fascinating history is rich with wars, murders and political intrigue. It has played an important part in Moroccan trade, culture, religion and politics as well as being the seat of learning for science. The old and new towns are adjacent but totally separate entities and the panoramic views of Fes El Bali (the old city), seen from the North Borj (tower), are very useful to help you orientate yourself for when you are in the narrow alleyways.



Accommodation: Riad Salam (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 4 - Exploring Fes

You have a full day today to take in the artisan capital of Morocco and during the morning's sightseeing you will have a chance to take in the mosques and souks of the Fes el Bali, view the Royal Palace and drive out to North Bori for some great views back across the city. Craftwork made and sold in the Fes medina is considered amongst the finest in Morocco and a wander through its artisan districts reveal weavers and brass workshops, coppersmiths and tanners, producing beautiful pieces much as they have for generations. Beautiful buildings abound in this city as well, including the Sanctuary of Moulay Idriss 2nd, the Karouine Mosque and the Al Andalus Mosque (viewed from the outside only). After lunch your exploration of the city continues with a tour of Fes El Bali (Old Fes), exploring the souks in the backstreets, wandering past the spice stalls and taking in the opulent majesty of the 14th century Attarin Medersa, whose intricate decoration and elegant design makes it one of the city's most captivating medieval colleges.



Accommodation: Riad Salam (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 5 - Drive over the Middle Atlas to Erfoud

Turning south today you climb steadily into the dramatic landscapes of the Middle Atlas, heading first towards to Imouzzer and Ifrane and passing near the small mountain village of Azrou, which in the Berber tongue translates as 'the rock'. This is the land of the fiercely independent Berbers, the Lords of the Atlas, whose traditions and ways still hold sway up here in their mountain strongholds far away from the cities below. The Berbers present us with a unique view of a way of life lost to the rest of North Africa, where music and dance, even language and religion, are far removed from their Arab neighbours. Continuing into Berber sheep raising country you head to Timadite and over the Col du Zad, before crossing the Tizi N'Tairhemt Camel Pass and continuing via the Gorge du Ziz to Er Rachidia. Finally you traverse a broad plateau past Meski Oasis, the so-called 'Blue Spring' bordering the arid desert plains, from where your journey brings you at last to the on to the desert settlement of Erfoud.



Accommodation: Kasbah Xalucca (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Dinner

DAY 6 - Drive to Merzouga via Rissani; Afternoon optional camel ride & desert camp

Your day starts by following the meandering Ziz River towards Rissani, the last sizeable community and the end of the vegetation belt before the dunes of the Sand Sea begin. The settlement is the homeland of the Alaouite dynasty, which reigned in this region for 300 years, and this morning you'll have an opportunity to visit the founder's Mausoleum and explore something of the local ksour (fortified villages). After lunch, you then drive on to the settlement of Merzouga, which lies on the edge of Erg Chebbi, an area of spectacular high dunes that are amongst some of Morocco's most spectacular natural landscapes. The afternoon is then free to simply relax, take a 4WD trip around the dunes to explore the surrounding area, or take a camel ride into the haunting V-shape dunes that seem to creep slowly across the desert floor. Alternatively, you may choose to appreciate their vastness by climbing them. 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, the rest being covered by vast rock and gravel plains. Today even affords an opportunity to spend tonight camping out in the desert in a traditional Berber-style tent (optional), to truly appreciate the captivating tranquillity of this desert setting.



Accommodation: Kasbah Tombouctou (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Dinner

DAY 7 - Drive to Todra Gorge area

This morning you will leave the southern desert behind and head for the mountains once more. Following an ancient route along the southern slopes of the Atlas, you reach the town of Tinerhir, your base from which to explore the towering vistas of the Todra Gorge. Arriving in the afternoon there is usually time for an initial exploration of the area and perhaps a walk in the famous lush palmeries that line the banks of the nearby Todra River (optional). Extending some way along the river's course, the gardens are a lush oasis of produce, with date palms and olive groves, fruit orchards and almonds, all littered amongst a fertile landscape of grain and vegetables.



Accommodation: Kasbah Lamrani (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available




Breakfast


DAY 8 - Optional walks in Todra Gorge


The dramatic ochre-coloured cliffs of the Todra Gorge rise vertically to leave just a narrow pass through which your track and the river struggle for right of way. In the morning Berber women drive their goats through the narrow gorge to the better grazing land higher up and you have an opportunity to follow their daily ritual and admire the stunning views, as you spend the morning exploring these deep, narrow mountain chasms on foot. You may choose take an optional walk to Abdelali viewpoint for some excellent panoramas across to the Jebel Sahro and down into the gorge. The walk generally takes around 5 hours return and is considered as a moderate trek, but be aware that in high temperatures it can be more demanding (walking boots with ankle support essential). Alternatively you may opt to explore the gorge valley floor following the path of the river and take in the local scenery from one of the nearby cafés.



Accommodation: Kasbah Lamrani (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Swimming pool available


 Breakfast


DAY 9 - Drive to Ait Benhaddou via El Kelaa des M'Gouna & the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs


Driving westwards, you make a short stop in El Kelaa des M'Gouna positioned at the foot of a rocky outcrop that separates the Dades and Mgoun Valleys. Famed for its roses, the town lies blanketed under a landscape of scented blooms each spring, which are then harvested in May during the famous Festival of the Roses and processed into rosewater to be sold throughout the Islamic world. Driving on through the Dades Valley with its fertile oases, you enter the Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs, where each of the oasis towns can boast their own distinctive character, the mud and straw structures becoming more plentiful and more ornate as you progress along the valley. Later this afternoon you make your way towards the small, fortified Berber settlement of Ait Benhaddou, which has been classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and is considered by many to be one of Morocco's most picturesque settings. Studded with crenelated towers and richly decorated, the town's Kasbah is quite spectacular and provided an ideal location for filming scenes from Jesus of Nazareth and Lawrence of Arabia.



Accommodation: La Kasbah (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Breakfast


DAY 10 - Drive to Ouirgane

Heading north, the parched desert sand and stone gives way to the hills and deep gorges of the High Atlas Mountains as you wind your way up and over the Tizi n' Tichka, the highest vehicular pass in Morocco and often snow covered during the winter months. You will then head to the small village of Ouirgane. En route you may have the opportunity of visiting the local market at Tahanoute and the village of Aguersioual, where you will enjoy a mint tea with a Berber family and experience the everyday life of the people of this region. Depending on your arrival time there may be the opportunity for a short hike around Ouirgane, Imlil or alternatively to the Berber village of Matate.



Accommodation: La Bergérie (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Breakfast Dinner

DAY 11 - Drive to Essaouira via Marrakech

Today you head via Marrakech to take the road west to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. Your destination is the historic port of Essaouira. This afternoon you will have free time to enjoy this charming small seaside town.



Accommodation: Dar Loulema (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 12 - Free day in Essaouira

The day is free for independent explorations in this colourful coastal fishing town. Situated within 15th century Portuguese fortifications, the town has a relaxed but lively feel and an experience not to be missed is a visit to the old walled Medina. After passing through the narrow, highly decorated arched entrance, it may be hard to resist snapping up last minute gifts such as locally made rustic leather belts, gleaming gold and silver jewellery, or wooden boxes exquisitely inlaid with ebony and mother of pearl by local craftsmen. The lively throng of the Medina, with its local women carrying out their daily routines, veiled in their traditional dress, forms a sharp contrast to the open golden sands of the harbour area where hopeful seabirds can be seen circling above the fisherman as they return from the blue waters with their daily catches. You suggest a stroll around the old town, perhaps taking in the Mellah (the old Jewish Quarter) or maybe a wander along the fine sandy beach and through the harbour.



Accommodation: Dar Loulema (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 13 - Drive to Marrakech; Afternoon sightseeing tour

A morning drive takes you east to Marrakech, where you'll have the better part of two days to explore a city that has for centuries been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south. This afternoon you take a sightseeing tour of Morocco's fascinating Red City. Like many North African towns, Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Gueliz (the modern French-built city) and the Medina (the Old City), a place where trade and barter amongst the colourful souks still renders its ancient heart a glittering cacophony of noise and colour. Journeying into this vibrant city with a local guide affords a chance to discover some of its most enthralling sites. The city's beating heart is the spectacular Djemma-el-Fna, a site not to be missed and a scene straight out of the pages of the Arabian Nights. Here you will find the streets and alleys alive with storytellers and musicians, jugglers and acrobats, snake charmers and clowns. Marrakech is a city like no other, boasting a staggering array of spectacular architecture and wonderful facades and not to be missed are the Koutoubia mosque and tower, Saadian tombs, Ben Youssef medersa, the Dar Si Said Palace (now the Museum of Moroccan Art) and the Menara gardens. This evening there is also an opportunity to visit a traditional Hammam.



Accommodation: Riad Berta (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 14 - Free day in Marrakech

Today has been left free to continue exploring this amazing city at your leisure. You can wander past vendors selling doughnuts and fried grasshoppers, meander through native markets where Muslim women, their hands and feet dyed with henna, call out to sell their wares, and enjoy the sounds and the smells of the exotic. Perhaps you will prefer to take time to enjoy more of the remarkable Medina, haggling for a bargain or two, or simply sitting at one of the local cafés and watching the street tableaux unfold before you. Do remember that many of the mosques will be forbidden to non-Muslims and be careful of photographing women. If you are unsure, it is always best to ask.



Accommodation: Riad Berta (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 15 - Depart Marrakech

Time to depart Morocco



Breakfast

Tailormade Expert



Meet Sarah Slocomb,
Regional Specialist for Morocco

Call on 01252 883 184.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 14
Dinner: 3



Transport

Private car



Trip staff

Local guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

14 nights premium hotel

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

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

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.

Premium

On Premium level tailor-made holidays you will stay at comfortable mid-range hotels, chosen for their location, ambiance or local character. Your rooms will be clean and well-appointed, with en suite bathrooms and air-conditioning or heating as necessary. Premium level hotels normally have restaurants, bars and often other amenities such as a swimming pool and gardens, offering a good level of comfort at a reasonable price.

Club Val D'Anfa

Ideally located on the corniche, the Club Val D'Anfa is a great place to relax and unwind, whether that be by the hotel swimming pool or walking along the sea front. For those who enjoy being a bit more active, the city centre is only a short drive away. The hotel is tastefully decorated throughout, featuring a flavour of traditional Moroccan designs. Rooms are spacious and comfortable, and the hotel also offers a bar and restaurant.

Riad El Yacout

Riad El Yacout is set within the walls of the Fes medina. The riad has been in the owners family for generations and has been fully restored; each room features traditional designs and handmade furniture, some off the central courtyard while others overlook the swimming pool. Relax in the courtyard, on the rooftop terrace or in one of the many communal areas. The riad has a kitchen and the owners are more than happy to provide cooking lessons.

Riad Salam

Riad Salam is located next to Batha Square offering easy access to the medina and the famous Bab Boujloud Gate. The riad was built at the beginning of the 20th century and has been beautifully designed and decorated. Guest rooms are all individually decorated with Moroccan designs and overlook the quiet interior patio. When not exploring the medina guests can relax in the traditional hammam or enjoy a traditional dish from the restaurant.

Kasbah Xalucca

A haven of comfort and shelter at the edge of the Sahara desert, the Kasbah provides us with an ideal introduction to this exciting region so different from where we have come. With its swimming pool, turkish baths, bar and restaurant, you would be forgiven for not wanting to leave.

Kasbah Tombouctou

The Kasbah Tombouctou is set overlooking the Erg Chebbi sand dunes and offers its guests a comfortable stay in a traditional setting. The building is made from local materials, in keeping with the Kasbah designs, and is decorated throughout with local furnishings and Moroccan designs. Rooms are spacious and have air conditioning. There is also a swimming pool, restaurant, bar and a spa here for you to enjoy.

Kasbah Lamrani

Friendly staff, a great restaurant, swimming pool and large balconies makes for a pleasant stay at the Kasbah Lamrani.

La Kasbah

Built in a traditional style, this hotel has a beautiful location in the village of Ait Benhaddou, overlooking the Kasbah of Ait Benhaddou. Rooms are simply furnished, yet comfortable and are decorated with Moroccan designs. The hotel has a swimming pool, garden and a restaurant serving Moroccan dishes.

La Bergérie

La Bergerie is built from local stone and your individual bungalows are dotted around the peaceful gardens which attract a variety of birds. There is also a large swimming pool. Staff are particularly welcoming and on hand to help organise some great activities during your time here.

Dar Loulema

With only eight rooms the traditionally decorated riad has a cosy and homely feel. Located along the city walls, there are great views of the ocean, from the rooftop terrace.

Riad Berta

This old residential house is a blend of traditional materials combined with modern comfort. Located in the prestigious Kasbah Quarter next to the Royal Place, Riad Berta is about a 15 minute walk from the famous Jamaa El Fna Square on typical animated

streets through the Saadien Tombs and the Bab Agnaou Gate. The Riad has an open courtyard planted with palm trees and surrounded by decorated arches as well as a large terrace where you can enjoy a glass of mint tea with great views of the High Atlas peaks and the green tiled roofs of the Royal Palace. The rooms are all comfortable offering different styles and Moroccan colours.

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](#)

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.
