

# EXPLORE!

**BIG 15 SALE**

**Family Moroccan Imperial Cities**  
10 days

Morocco - Trip code FMO



## Family Moroccan Imperial Cities

Immerse yourself in the exotic colours and cultures that make Morocco a truly captivating destination for families. Explore the medieval imperial cities of Fez and Marrakesh, camp under the stars in the Sahara, climb the vast sand dunes at Merzouga and trek in the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs. Spend time with local Berber communities in the Rose Valley where we get to explore the valleys on foot. A great all round family adventure.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Historic Imperial cities** - Experience Morocco's oldest imperial city, Fez and Marrakech with its vast central market place brimming with activity, Djemaa El-Fna.
- ★ **Fez** - Lose yourself in the melee of the centuries-old souks.
- ★ **Travel into the desert** - Travel like a nomad in a camel caravan and climb vast sand dunes in the Saharan desert.
- ★ **Explore the Atlas Mountains** - Go behind the scenes of Game of Thrones and Gladiator in Ait Benhaddou and discover the remote region of dramatic gorges and tranquil valleys.

#### 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 - 16**

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 the trip in Fes.

Arrive at Fes airport, drive a short distance to our hotel and check in. For those arriving earlier in the day, it's recommended you hire a local guide if you wish to head into the medina, we recommend getting a guide as it is so immense it's very easy to lose your way! Alternatively kick back and relax by the hotel swimming pool.



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



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Explore the medieval city of Fes the including Royal Palace and the bustling souks in the medina.

After breakfast we take a guided group walking tour of the old city, known locally as Fes el Bali. During this morning's sightseeing we will view the Royal Palace and drive out to North Bori for some great views back across the city.

On route back to the medina we make a stop at a ceramic factory, where you can see potters working in the traditional way before starting our tour of the historic centre of Fes El Bali (Old Fes). We head into the souks and backstreets, wandering past the spice stalls and taking in the opulent majesty that makes Fes such a popular destination. As we head deeper into the historic medina the thrum of traffic quickly fades, replaced by the clamour of shopkeepers selling their ware. Noisy and pungent, the medina of Fes is a totally absorbing experience.

Our city guide walks us through different sections of the souk - from those selling brass, copper, wooden craft and leather. Craftwork made and sold in the Fes medina is considered amongst the finest in Morocco. And of course, no visit to Fes is complete without a visit to the tanneries, known for the iconic view overlooking its dye pits.

After lunch our exploration of the city continues with a the luxurious majesty of the 14th century Attarin Madrasa whose intricate decoration and elegant design makes it one of the city's most captivating medieval colleges. As we walk through the market we smell freshly cooked baghrir, or Berber pancakes and we can try Harira soup, a tasty broth made from chickpeas, tomatoes and Moroccan spices.

You may consider heading back to the Palais Jamai after the tour for a drink late afternoon to watching the sunset over the Medina while a dozen prayer calls vie for attention, an experience you'll likely remember for a long time.



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



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Travel across mountain passes into the Sahara desert to the oasis town of Erfoud.

Heading south, a long but rewarding travelling day takes us over the stunning Middle Atlas, heading first towards to Immouzer 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 are far removed from their Arab neighbours.

Continuing into Berber sheep-raising country we head to Timadite and over the Col du Zad, before crossing the Tizi N'Tairhemt pass and continuing via the Gorge du Ziz to Er Rachidia. Finally we traverse a broad plateau past Meski Oasis, the so-called Blue Spring bordering the arid desert plains, from where our journey brings us at last into the Sahara to the desert settlement of Erfoud. Total journey time approximately 7 hours excluding stops.



**Accommodation: Hotel Le Riad** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Lunch with a local family, camel ride to Bedouin camp in the dunes for sunset.

This morning is a chance to rest and relax by the hotel pool before leaving late morning for Merzouga. We break for lunch at a local family's home and try out Tajine - the national dish of Morocco.

With a backdrop of the Erg Chebbi sand dunes, the charming Saharan village of Merzouga feels perfectly isolated; the Erg Chebbi dunes are the most stunning in the country and a highlight of any visit to Morocco. Mid-afternoon, meet our team of camel handlers and set off on a memorable Saharan experience, a two hour camel trek through the dunes to an oasis, where we spend the night in a simple Bedouin camp. The Erg Chebbi is one of the world's iconic landscapes, a vast sea of shifting wind-swept sand with towering dunes up to 150 metres in height. On arrival in camp there is time to explore the largest sand sea in Morocco or to relax by the dunes. The sand sea is famed for its pink tones that take on a spectacular rose colour at sunset, a photographers dream.

Tonight we stay in a traditional Bedouin camp, with large family tents exclusively for our group. Although there is a dining tent, most

of our groups prefer to dine under the stars. Please note we recommend you bring a 3-4 season sleeping bag depending on season, sleeping bags can be hired at an extra cost, however these must be requested in advance.



**Accommodation: Bedouin Camp** (or similar)



Simple Camping



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 5 - Sunrise over the dunes. Camel ride back to Merzouga, drive to Todra Gorge

After sunrise, we leave our desert camp and travel by camel, back to Merzouga where we have the chance to freshen up before heading to the Berber town of Tinghir (approximately 3.5 hours' drive). After we check into our hotel, we drive up the valley to the impressive Todra Gorge. For those that wish to, head out for a guided short walk here and appreciate the forces of nature. The gorge is a massive trench that rises over 250 metres and is one of Morocco's greatest natural sights. As we walk, the rocks change colour as the sun progressively moves through the sky. Dinner is included tonight.



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



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 6 - Explore the Dades Gorge. Continue to the mountain valleys.

Known as the Valley of One Thousand Kasbahs, the Dades Valley region has some of the most authentic Berber settlements of all the Southern Oasis Valleys, each of the oasis towns benefiting from its own distinctive feel. Whilst many of the original Kasbahs now lie in ruins, there are still enough to give a real flavour of Morocco's ancient heritage, with some of the valley women still favouring the traditional colourful dress and ornaments worn by their ancestors.

This morning we'll pass through this fascinating landscape, heading for the Dades Gorge. The waters of the Dades River feed the Dades Valley as it flows from the slopes of the High Atlas and across the high plateau, carving the great chasms of the Dades Gorge, before it continues to feed the waters of the Ouarzazate Lake and the Draa.

We'll go for a walk along the Dades river taking in a landscape steeped in natural and cultural treasures, where Kasbahs and kours (fortified villages) lie amongst fertile fields of almond and walnut trees and towering limestone cliffs.

Then we continue and drive to the Valley of roses and the village of BouTrarar, lying at the foot of a rocky outcrop that separates the Dades and Mgoun Valleys. Famed for its roses, the village 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.

Tonight stay in a simple guesthouse.



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



Standard Auberge



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 7 - Full day to explore the beauty of the Valley of the Roses, home to Morocco's most villages.

We spend the day in this amazing valley formed by many rivers coming all from the Mgoun massif. After breakfast we drive to the village of Alemnoun to walk through the canyon of Targhia Agouti, full of laurels and olive groves. We break for picnic lunch outside the canyons then continue along fields of wheat and barley surrounded by rose bushes. Towards the end of the walk we have the opportunity to visit a traditional Kasbah joining the owner for a cup of tea in their house. Total walking time, five hours plus time for lunch and stops for kids to explore old kasbahs along the way, approximately 15km.



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



Standard Auberge



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 8 - Travel to picture-perfect Ait Benhaddou, negotiate your way through its winding alleys.

After breakfast we drive to the desert city of Ouarzazate and on to the well-preserved Kasbah Ait Benhaddou, considered by many to be one of Morocco's most picturesque settings. Studded with richly decorated fortified towers, the town's Kasbah is quite spectacular and provided an ideal location for filming scenes from Game of Thrones, Jesus of Nazareth and Gladiator. Take time strolling through the winding streets of old town accompanied by your Explore leader, it's well worth making the effort to walk the top of the hill, from where you can enjoy the views across the surrounding plains.



**Accommodation: Hotel Ksar Ljanoub** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Drive over the high Tizi n' Tichka Pass to Marrakech for a walking tour.

After breakfast head for Marrakech passing over the high Tizi n' Tichka pass at 2,260 meters, the highest mountain pass in North Africa before descending into the green valleys of the Marrakech plains.

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. In the afternoon head out for a guided tour to help us find our feet and soak up the atmosphere of this amazing city. Our guide will take us to the Bahia Palace and the Saadian tombs. End in the Djemma el Fna, where the town becomes a maze of bustling bazaars, palaces and mosques. It is worth seeing this renowned landmark in the evening, as Marrakech revolves around this open-air central square. With the food stalls, snake charmers, juice-sellers and acrobats, it is a place of night-time entertainment for both local people and visitors.



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



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Free time to discover the sights of Marrakech where the trip ends.

The trip 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.

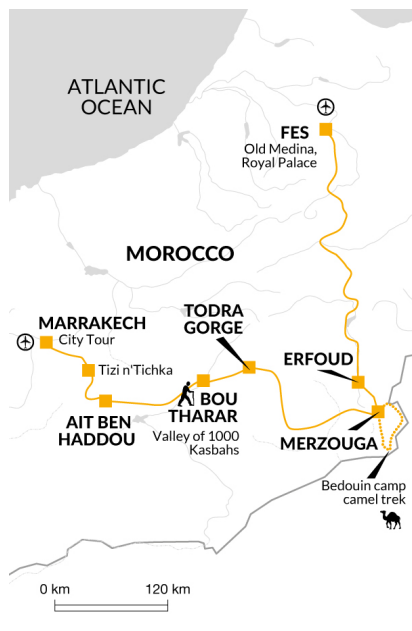


Meals Provided: Breakfast

## Family information

Minimum age

7



## Why book this trip

This tour is designed for families who enjoy a range of activities from riding camels in the desert, exploring the winding souks of Fez, walking amongst the mountains and visiting the Berber villages and their people. It's a journey as well as an active trip where the scenery changes daily and it gives you the chance to meet up with locals including a unique experience where camel handlers of the nomad tribes share a their lifestyle with the group.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 9  
Lunch: 3  
Dinner: 4



### Transport

Minibus  
On Foot



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Cameleers  
Cook  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)  
Support Driver(s)



### Accommodation

2 nights standard auberge  
1 nights simple camping  
5 nights standard hotel  
1 nights premium hotel

## Trip information

### Country information

#### Morocco

##### 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**

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

A selection of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your Family adventure. Whilst the basic tour price you pay before you travel includes a great selection of highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from a carefully selected range of additional excursions and activities or take time to relax, the choice is yours. At certain destinations along the way there may be several options to choose from and it may not be possible to fit all the activities in; your Explore Leader will be able to give advice on which are the most suitable for your family.

Marrakech:

Day 10: Enjoy a traditional hammam £5 per person.

### **Clothing**

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 and older girls should also cover their heads when entering a sanctuary, though in general, mosques are forbidden to non-Muslims.

Summer: Clothing should be lightweight. However, a warm jumper is also advisable, as the desert can sometimes get cold at nights, even in the summer.

Winter: Warm days but much thicker clothing is essential for cold nights (between November and March). 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, jumper trousers and fleece are recommended between December and March.

### **Footwear**

Lightweight walking bootshoes, plus sandals or trainers for relaxing.

### **Luggage**

20kg

### **Luggage: On tour**

One piece of baggage (suitcases not suitable as luggage is stored on the roof racks of our 4WD vehicles and we are restricted on weight) and a daypack for the walks.

### **Equipment**

A head torch, water bottle, sunhat and high factor sunscreen are all essential, whilst we recommend swimming costumes and towels. Sleeping mattress will be provided for the desert camp or you may prefer to bring your own thermarest. Please also bring a 3-4 season sleeping bag depending on season (sleeping bags can be hired at an extra cost, these must be requested in advance).

### **Tipping**



### Explore leader

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

### Local crew

In this region, tipping is a recognised part of life across the service industry. Local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

To assist with this your Explore Leader may organise a group tips kitty for included activities and meals, they will then account for kitty use throughout the tour.

For this we suggest £25 per family member.

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

## Country Information

### Morocco

#### 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.

**Lunch price**

£6.00 - 8.00

**Dinner price**

£8.00 - 12.00

**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, On Foot

## 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.

### Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### 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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## Non refundable permits

### Morocco

#### 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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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