EXPLORE!

Book with confidence

DISCOUNTED

Family Morocco Adventure - Private Tour

MOROCCO - TRIP CODE PTFAT

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

An active adventure in the Moroccan wilderness exploring North Africa's highest mountains and the world's largest desert. Ride mules in the High Atlas and cycle the southern mountain slopes. Explore the great Sahara desert by camel, sleeping in a traditional Berber tent among the dunes. Finally discover the ancient city of Marrakech and experience the evening street entertainment on the Djemaa El Fna Square.

- **Atlas Mountains villages** - Head into the remote Atlas region of the fertile Tighza valley by mule and stay overnight in a traditional Berber gite, enjoying local hospitality.
- **Sahara Desert** - Travel to a desert camp by camel, spend a night camping under the stars.
- **Marrakech** - Explore the captivating medina and Djemaa el Fna with its snake charmers and lively food stalls.

INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 4
Dinner: 2

TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour Leader
Cameleers
Camp Crew
Driver(s)
Muleteer(s)

TRANSPORT
Bicycle
Minibus
On Foot

ACCOMMODATION
1 nights simple camping
1 nights simple gite
4 nights comfortable hotel
1 nights comfortable kasbah

TRIP PACE:
Moderate

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip begins in Marrakech

Arrive in Marrakech. 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 it the ideal starting point.

You will be met by a local guide at Marrakesh Menara Airport (RAK), which is around 20 minutes from the hotel depending on traffic. There are no activities planned today, so feel free to arrive in Marrakech at any time. For those booking their own flights, you will just need to let us know your flight details no later than three weeks prior to departure, in order to be met on arrival.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to relax beside our hotel's swimming pool or take a stroll around Djemaa El Fna Square. Our hotel is located in the heart of the new town surrounded by many restaurants with easy access to the main avenue to the old town.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Meriem (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Drive to Anmiter and ride mules up to the remote Atlas village of Tighza

Unlike many of our private trips, this tour includes an Explore Tour Leader who will be with you throughout your journey to show your family the very best of this diverse country. Departing Marrakech after breakfast head south, crossing over the Tizi 'n Tichka Pass (2260m) following a meandering course into the towering peaks of the Atlas Mountains.

North Africa's greatest mountain range, the High Atlas contains some of the country's wildest landscapes, a region culturally removed from the rest of Morocco and one that has provided a barrier between the northern plains and the pre-Sahara for centuries. 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.

Pass the ruined Glaoui Kasbah of Telouet en route to the fortified village of Anmiter, which lies at the end of the tarmac road. Here, leave the vehicle to join your mules and, at a more relaxed pace, follow a winding track with stunning views onto the small village of Tighza where you spend the night in a remote, local gite high above the valley.

The base for tonight is a family-owned village house in the outskirts of Tighza. This small property features traditional decor throughout and offers large panoramic terraces for you to enjoy views over the village and the High Atlas mountains. There is a small restaurant and a tea room where you can enjoy Berber cuisine; made from fruit and vegetables grown in their own garden. It's a very peaceful and tranquil place to stay.

ACCOMMODATION:
Gite Tighza (or similar)

Grade: Simple Gite

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 3 - Morning valley hike; drive to Ait Ben Haddou for a tour of the historic Kasbah

After breakfast, head out for a hike through the valley in this remote corner of the Atlas. Walking along cultivated fields, learn about the traditional irrigation used in this arid region with channels built to divert the snow melt waters into the terraces and mud built villages. Heading down the southern slopes of the High Atlas, reach the trailhead in Anmiter where the vehicle awaits. The total hike duration is between two and three hours.

A chef will prepare a deserved picnic lunch under the shade of almond trees before continuing the journey.

After one hour driving along the picturesque Ounila Valley, with its barren slopes in sharp contrast to the rich green valley floor, arrive at the famous Kasbah of Ait Ben Haddou. Tonight's hotel is just opposite.

The rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy the swimming pool. Late afternoon when the lights are suitable for the photos, take a guided tour of the UNESCO Heritage Site. Ait Ben Haddou is one of Morocco's most famous locations, a once important stop along the old trading routes between Marrakech and the Sahara during the 16th century and a superb example of a typical fortified ksar.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Ksar Ljanoub (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 4 - Bike ride to Ouarzazate; visit film studios and drive to Tamnougalt

Take to the saddle this morning for a bike ride from Ait Ben Haddou down towards the fertile landscapes of the Draa Valley and the town of Ouarzazate. Helmets are supplied in two sizes, or you can bring your own for a better fit. The total duration is 21km, which whould take approximately two and a half hours. A support vehicle is also in attendence for anyone feeling tired, and in summer months, you'll set off early to avoid the midday heat.

Known as the 'Doorway to the Desert' this fascinating outpost, lying to the south of the High Atlas and sandwiched between the high mountains and the expansive sands of the Sahara is home to one of the

largest movie studios in the world. The Atlas Film Studios boasts an impressive list of productions, including The Mummy, Gladiator, Babel, Kingdom of Heaven and Lawrence of Arabia. Pay a visit to the studios today, taking a tour of some of these famous film sets before departing on the journey through the beautiful Draa Valley.

Driving by bus from Ouarzazate, cross a landscape lined with palm groves, Kasbahs and traditional ksours (villages), en route to the village of Tamnougalt to explore what was once the capital of this remote desert region. The village's name translates as 'meeting point' and its history has been interwoven with the ruling qaids (masters) of the Mezguita region for centuries. Even today it hosts an annual festival in October when all the surrounding villages gather for a celebration of the religious and cultural traditions of these hardy people.

Tonight's kasbah style accommodation is located in the middle of the Draa Valley with its green palm groves. It has a swimming pool and easy access to the valley for nice walks in the fields. The rooms are air conditioned.

ACCOMMODATION:
Kasbah Itrane (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Kasbah

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 5 - Drive via Zagora to Ouled Driss in the desert; afternoon camel ride

Turning south today, follow the course of the Draa River towards the vast oasis of Zagora, referred to by many as 'The Gate of the Desert'. Once a major outpost along the caravan routes, it takes 52 days by camel from here to Timbuktu, or so a nearby sign indicates! Continue on to Tagounite, which lies at the outer fringes of a line of undulating sand dunes that provide a taste of the immense grandeur of the Saharan Desert beyond. Amidst this seemingly inhospitable landscape the desert heat causes the air to blur and quiver, creating mirages that shimmer in the soaring temperatures, the ideal setting to explore in the time honoured manner of the Tuareg nomads.

Taking to camels, form a caravan from the oasis of Ouled Driss (the camel ride may take place in the late afternoon on summer departures). The Arabian camel is ideally suited to these conditions and has long been highly prized by the nomadic peoples of the desert. Living for up to 40 years, they are not only valued for their endurance as beasts of burden, but also for their fur, skin and dung, all of which can be utilised for tents, leather and fuel for the fires.

Stopping to enjoy the quiet desolation of the setting and to learn something of desert life, reach the overnight camp in time to enjoy a late afternoon of bread making, before settling down under a desert sky for the evening. After a hearty Berber style meal settle down under the twinkling blanket of the African sky.

The desert camp consists of a combination of twin person tents and some 3 and 4 person family tents with a central communal tent where the evening meal and breakfast is served. Rather than sleeping in tents, you may choose simply to sleep out in the open, enjoying the rare majesty of the setting and watching out for shooting stars racing across the horizon. Please note a sleeping bag is required for this night, these can be hired locally at an extra cost of 160 Moroccan Dirham (approx £13) per person and need to be requested in advance of travel.

ACCOMMODATION:
Tiraf Nomad Camp (or similar)

Grade: Simple Camping

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 6 - Visit Tamegroute; drive to Ouarzazate

Retracing your steps this morning, head north once more by camel for a couple of hours back to the road. Make a stop at the settlement of Tamegroute to visit its famous 17th century zaouia, one of the most important in the Moroccan Sahara. This was once a centre of great learning and the base of the Naciri Brotherhood, who for centuries held sway over the tribes of the Draa Valley. The holy leaders of Tamegroute were traditionally (up until quite recent times) the arbitrators of desert disputes, settling differences amongst the residents of the surrounding kours and the traders that passed through these lands on the great camel caravans that journeyed through Zagora. Also pay a visit to the local potters' cooperative, before continuing back to Ouarzazate later this afternoon.

Located in the main avenue of Ouarzazate and close to the main market, the hotel has a swimming pool and the rooms are air conditioned.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Perle du Sud (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Drive to Marrakech; afternoon city tour

Today is a final drive northwest back to Marrakech, where the rest of the day is spent exploring a city that has for centuries been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south. This afternoon there will be an opportunity to explore something of its rich heritage with a sightseeing tour of Morocco's fascinating Red City, a city that can boast a staggering array of spectacular architecture and wonderful facades. Like many North African cities, 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 has at 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 Djemaa-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. 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.

After our tour you may like to take some time to enjoy more of the remarkable Medina, haggling for a bargain or two, or simply sit at one of the local cafés and watch the street tableaux unfold before you. Do remember that many of the mosques may be forbidden to non-Muslims and be careful of photographing women, as this may be unacceptable, it is always best to ask.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Meriem (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Marrakech

Today the trip ends, and you'll be taken to Marrakesh Medara Airport (RAK) for your international flight. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart Marrakech at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at the hotel.

Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may have some additional time to wander in the souks of Marrakech or buy your last souvenirs before departure.

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and 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	Plugs	Religion	Language
0	2 Pin Round	Islam	Arabic, Berber, French.

Budgeting and packing

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. While cycling it is no problem for you to wear your regular cycling gear, tight fitting or not.

Summer: Lightweight clothing is ideal, as well as a warm sweater for use in the desert, which can be cold at night at all times of year.

Winter: Pack warm clothes for the day along with thicker clothing for cold nights (Nov-Mar). Heating in Moroccan hotel rooms is variable, so we advise taking warm clothing (eg thermal underwear or track suit bottoms) to sleep in. A waterproof jacket, trousers and fleece are also recommended in the winter months.

Spring/Autumn: The shoulder seasons in Morocco are the perfect time to travel. They are still quite hot, so lightweight clothing is necessary as well as warm clothing for evenings in the desert.

It may also be worth bringing cycling gloves for the mountain bike ride.

Footwear

Lightweight walking bootshoes, plus sandals or trainers for relaxing.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One piece of baggage 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. A 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 the time of year. Sleeping bags can be hired at an extra cost of 160 Moroccan Dirham (approx £13) per person, these must be requested in advance. You may like to bring your own helmet for cycling to ensure a good fit. These can then also be used for the mule and camel rides.

Tipping

Explore leader
Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

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, your leader may collect a tips kitty that they will disperse to local guides and servers for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, we recommend approximately £25-£30 per family member for tipping.

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

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6.00 - 8.00	£8.00 - 12.00	£2.5	£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

Bicycle, Minibus, On Foot

Accommodation notes

The hotel in Marrakech is located in the new city centre with a 20 minute walk from the main Djemaa El Fna Square. The hotel has a swimming pool and a restaurant and the rooms are air conditioned.

In the mountains, stay in a family owned gite village house which has a number of rooms and shared facilities as well as a terrace for great views of the valley. The evening meal is home prepared and eaten together.

The hotel in Ait Ben Haddou is located close to the famous Kasbah of the same name. The hotel features a swimming pool and a restaurant overlooking the valley of Ounilla. The rooms are air conditioned.

The hotel in Tamnougalt is a small property located close to the famous Kasbah Tamnougalt in the middle of the Draa valley. It's surrounded by green palm groves and has easy access to the valley for walks in the fields. The Kasbah is decorated with traditional designs and furnishings throughout and features a restaurant serving Moroccan dishes and a swimming pool. All bedrooms have air conditioning.

After the camping experience in the desert, we use a hotel in Ouarzazate which is located in the main avenue of the town and close to the main market in the city centre. The hotel has a swimming pool and the rooms have air conditioning.

Family swimming

Available at hotels in Marrakech, Ait Benhaddou,Tamnougalt and Ouarzazate

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Essential Information

Government Travel Safety 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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

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

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

UK passport holders are requested to have at least 3 months validity from the date of entry into Morocco. All other nationalities please check with your nearest embassy for requirements of passport

validity.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See 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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

Ability to swim

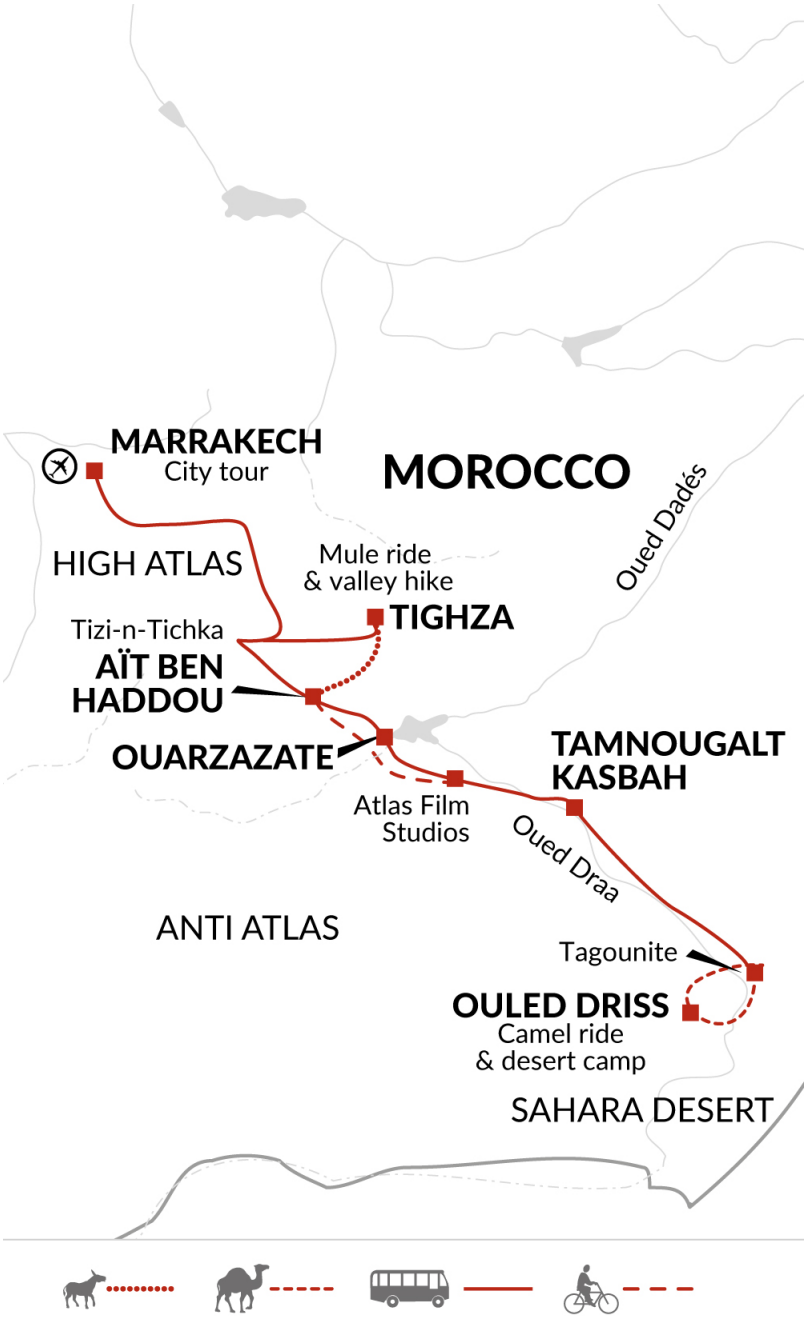
Whether in swimming pools, rivers, lakes, the sea or the ocean, participation requires that you are able to swim unaided for your safe enjoyment.

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.

Ramadan



In 2022, Ramadan runs from 02 April - 02 May. Read more about travelling during Ramadan.

Why book this trip

This tour is designed for a family who enjoys a range of activities from riding mules in the High Atlas mountains and camels in the desert to cycling to a film studio and 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 will share their lifestyle with you.

Reviews

AWARD WINNING EXPLORE LEADERS	PRICE GUARANTEE PROMISE	AIRPORT TRANSFERS