

# EXPLORE!



## Family Atlas Adventure

9 days

Morocco - Trip code FMA

## Family Atlas Adventure

Encompassing vibrant cities, majestic mountains and expansive beaches. Join us on a spell bounding 8 day journey, ideal for families of all ages. Explore the souks and spice-infused alleyways of Marrakesh. Ride a mule on mountain tracks in the High Atlas mountains enjoying spectacular views and local Berber hospitality along the way. Kick back on the coast as we take time to relax on the coast at the ancient fishing port of Essaouira, take a camel ride at sunset along the Atlantic coast and feast on freshly caught fish cooked right in front of you on the waterfront.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Marrakech** - The atmosphere in Djemaa El Fna square and the bustling souks of the Red City, hear the call to prayer and try haggling at the local markets.
- ★ **The High Atlas** - Take a gentle walk (or ride a mule) through the foothills of North Africa's greatest mountains.
- ★ **Berber Villages** - Meet the friendly local people in remote villages and learn about their life in the mountains.
- ★ **Essaouira** - Ride a camel on the beach. Explore the lively coastal town and markets and relax on the coast. You can even try your hand at surfing.

### 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.

**GROUP SIZE:**

**14 - 20**

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 your tour in the vibrant city of Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may wish to start exploring the Red City independently or you may prefer to relax by the pool, before meeting the group and the Tour Leader at the hotel.

The 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. The building is modern with the swimming pool on the top terrace and rooms are equipped with satellite TV.

### Hotel Almas

Our hotel is centrally located just minutes from the Jamaa El Fna and the Boulevard Mohammed V which is well known for its cafes, restaurants and shops. The hotel offers views of the city from its panoramic terrace. Facilities include a swimming pool and decking area, restaurant and free wi-fi. Rooms are well designed and comfortable with air-conditioning, TV, mini-bar and wireless internet connection.



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



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - In Marrakech; walking tour of the lively markets. Drive to Ouirgane in the Atlas Mountains

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). For generations it has been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south,

who come to trade and barter amongst the colourful souks, turning the centre of the old city into a rich cacophony of noise and colour with spectacular architecture and wonderful facades.

Heading out into this vibrant city accompanied with a local guide, we 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. For those that want to, there is the option to stay in town and make your own way back to the hotel after our city tour, taking time to enjoy more of the remarkable Medina, perhaps haggling for a bargain or two, or simply sitting at one of the local cafés and watching the street tableaux unfold before you.

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. You will find the square alive with storytellers and musicians, jugglers and acrobats, snake charmers and clowns.

Leaving the city behind this afternoon, we drive south towards the craggy peaks and plunging valleys of the Toubkal Massif. Crossing the Haouz Plain we pass through the tiny town of Asni, from where our road begins to climb towards the foothills of the Massif.

Below us the valley of the Oued Rhirhaia stretches out into the distance and small villages cling to the sides of the steep hills as we meander our way towards the village of Ouirgane. The towering peaks of the High Atlas are North Africa's greatest range of mountains, a wild region, culturally removed from the rest of Morocco, and a barrier between the northern plains and the pre-Sahara. 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.

### La Bergerie

La Bergerie is built from local stone in the middle of olive groves. Individual bungalows are dotted around the peaceful gardens which attract a variety of birds. There is also a large swimming pool. It's isolated location gives the opportunities for many walking options.



**Accommodation: La Bergerie** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Walks in the area and visit a local Berber family for lunch


We walk in the Ouirgane area with its magnificent scenery and dramatic landscapes (mules are provided for the younger children). We visit a Berber village and meet a local family for lunch (the cost of this is paid for locally) and learn something more of the unique lifestyles of these most remarkable and hospitable of people. We then walk back to our hotel on a different route with panoramic views of the artificial lake of Ouirgane. The walk will last around four hours in total and can be adapted based upon the group's fitness, their interest and local weather conditions. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure by the pool.



**Accommodation: La Bergerie** (or similar)



Premium Hotel

 Swimming pool available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 4 - Visit the Tin Mal Mosque and drive across the Tizi n' Test pass

Heading south today, we first visit the Tin Mal Mosque. Built in 1156, it is one of the only mosques open to non-Muslims and was once considered the centre of the reign of the powerful Almohades dynasty. After our visit, we take a dramatic drive across the spectacular Tizi n' Test pass and down into the region of the High Atlas. At 2092m, the scenes from the pass are quite spectacular, with views back across to the Toubkal Massif and down into the Souss Valley. Our descent is something of an exhilarating ride, dropping 1600 metres in just 30 km. The views as you can imagine are incredible, with mountain peaks and tiny villages nestling amongst the valley slopes laid out before us. We drive along the orange groves to Taroudant, the old capital of the Souss region and arrive with plenty of time to enjoy the surroundings and relax at the hotel pool.

### Riad Hida

Riad Hida is a Palace of a bygone era named after the Pacha who built it back in the 19th century. The mansion has been lovingly restored and renovated over 30 years by a Danish National who was seduced by the beauty and tranquillity of the location and gardens. Situated in the Souss region it is set with the stunning backdrop of the High Atlas. The lounge areas offer stylish collections of elegant furniture and open fires. Rooms are all individual varying in size and decor but are all comfortable and quiet. There is also a swimming pool and some well maintained gardens.




**Accommodation: Riad Hida** (or similar)

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 Standard Riad

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 Swimming pool available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 5 - Drive to Tiout for walks (or mule ride) to visit a local family and learn how to cook a tagine

This morning we drive to the oasis town of Tiout, which is on the edge of the Anti Atlas. We meet a local family and learn how to cook a tagine (named after the earthenware pot in which it is cooked) of meat, poultry or fish mixed together with vegetables. A walk around the area allows us to visit an oasis and its traditional irrigation system with panoramic views of a local village from an old Kasbah (mules can be hired for the younger children). We walk back to a local Berbers house for lunch (the cost of this is paid for locally) giving the opportunity to experience further the Berber culture (around 3 hours of walking in total) . Driving back to Taroudant, the afternoon allows for more time to discover this small and beautiful market town which is surrounded by red-mud walls. The souks are well worth a closer look and you may be able to find a souvenir or two.



**Accommodation: Riad Hida** (or similar)

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 Standard Riad

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 Swimming pool available

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## DAY 6 - Drive to the Atlantic Coast, sunset camel ride on Essaouira beach

Today we spend the morning driving across the High Atlas towards Chichaoua and then join the new road to Essaouira. We stop off at an Argan oil women's cooperative and learn about how the women from different villages work together to produce the precious oil by pressing the nuts by hand and its economic benefit to the community. After arriving in Essaouira, we check into our hotel opposite the beach and after some free time stroll over to take a camel ride along the beach to enjoy the sunset over the Atlantic ocean.

The resort town of Essaouira is a mecca for water sports enthusiasts from all over the world. Essaouira has a lively yet relaxed feel to it, with whitewashed houses and traditional fishing boats presenting a perfect backdrop for your stay. The town has a rich and somewhat colourful history and its importance as a trading port during the 18th and 19th centuries saw it prosper, attracting British, French, Arab and Jewish merchants and sailors to its shores. These influences are still reflected in the architecture and layout of the town.

### Al Jazira Hotel

Located just 5 minutes' walk from the beach and 15 minutes from the city centre. The hotel offers spacious rooms with traditional style décor, as well as an outdoor pool with a terrace and a small garden area.



**Accommodation: Al Jazira Hotel** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Swimming pool available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 7 - Orientation walk and tour of old town, try surfing and wander the souks

Explore the delightful old medina of Essaouira and its vibrant fishing port with a local guide. Walk through narrow alleyways lined with traditional craft stores and finish up on the historic ramparts for panoramic views of the old town and surrounding coastline.

The afternoon is free to try out a range of water sports including a surfing lesson or visiting the Medina again to snap up some of the locally made rustic leather belts or gleaming gold jewellery. Alternatively wander the town's galleries, cafes and souk.. Try grilled fresh fish, cooked right in front of you at the local market, washed down with a refreshing glass of freshly squeezed orange juice or mint tea.

Swimming is possible but please take local advice on currents before entering the water.



**Accommodation: Al Jazira Hotel** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Swimming pool available

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## DAY 8 - Drive back to Marrakech with free time in the afternoon

We drive back to the 'Red City' of Marrakech, with some time this afternoon to explore something more of this wholly captivating city before our final evening. Marrakech is a city like no other and a walk through its bustling streets will fill the senses and fire the imagination. An option is to traditional Moroccan bath experience at the local neighbourhood hammams.



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



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 9 - Tour ends Marrakech

Your tour ends today in Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to spend some additional time wandering through the souks of Marrakech and buying your last souvenirs.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## Family information

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**Direct flights:** With a direct flying time between London and Marrakesh of just 3 hours 20 minutes, Morocco is an easy going country to travel to with children of all ages without the trials of a long haul flight. We have priced this trip on a direct flight with British Airways arriving in the afternoon. There are alternative options including with Air Maroc which flies via Casablanca and arrives late at night.

**Triple Rooms:** This trip allows the option for a limited amount of triple rooms to be included within the booking on all nights of the holiday. If you would like this option please ask our Sales team for further information.

**Average Age:** As a guide we have identified the actual average age of the children who have travelled on this trip over the last 5 years, to help you decide whether it's the right one for your family. The average age on this trip is 9 years old; this trip is suitable for children of all ages and is an ideal introduction to small group family adventures for younger families.



## Why book this trip

The adventure is designed for families who want to explore the highlights of Morocco with the knowledge of staying in comfortable hotel accommodation during the holiday. The itinerary has been designed to travel to the highlights of the area including the Atlas Mountains, Marrakech and the beach resort of Essaouira plus gives the opportunity to walk through the Atlas Mountains and meet local Berber villagers.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 8



### Transport

Bicycle  
Minibus  
On Foot



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Driver(s)



### Accommodation

4 nights premium hotel  
2 nights standard hotel  
2 nights standard riad

## 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.

Ouirgane - Mule hire between 100 to 150 Moroccan Dirham per person

Ijoukak - Tin Mal Mosque 60 Moroccan Dirham for the group

Essaouira - Surfing lesson 350 Moroccan Dirham 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. While cycling it is no problem for you to wear your regular cycling gear, tight fitting or not.

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 trail boots or robust trainers with good traction soles and sandals.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

### Equipment

We recommend a sunhat, high factor sunscreen, a torch, insect repellent and a water bottle.

### 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 £15 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

Bicycle, Minibus, On Foot

### 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.

The hotel in Marrakech is located in the heart of the new town and surrounded by many restaurants and local shops with a swimming pool, terrace area and rooms that are equipped with satellite TV and air conditioning. Moving on to Ouirgane, the hotel is

built in the middle of olive groves in an isolated location which adds to the relaxing atmosphere. The accommodation also has a swimming pool surrounded by pleasant gardens. Our accommodation in Ouled Berhil is a riad - this old residence is in the middle of a beautiful farm of orange trees and a multitude of flowers surrounding the swimming pool - a great place to soak up the atmosphere of this rural area and its tranquillity. The hotel in Imouzar is located outside the village and overlooks the valley with a swimming pool, gardens and a tennis court. Our hotel in the beach resort of Essaouira is a family run residence with a swimming pool and easy access to the beaches and old town.

## Family swimming

There is a swimming pool at all the hotels on this adventure

## 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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