

EXPLORE!

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Family Marrakech, Atlas & Essaouira Adventure

MOROCCO - TRIP CODE FMA

FAMILY

Why book this trip?

Explore the souks and spice-infused alleyways of Marrakech, ride a mule on mountain tracks in the High Atlas mountains, learn how to prepare a tajine and kick back on the coast at the ancient fishing port of Essaouira.

- **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.
- **Essaouira** - Ride a camel on the beach, try your hand at surfing and explore the craft markets in the old town.



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 8



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
Minibus
On Foot



ACCOMMODATION
2 nights
comfortable hotel
2 nights premium
hotel
4 nights
comfortable riad



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
14 - 20

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip 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.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Marrakech at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Marrakesh Menara Airport (RAK), which is around 20 minutes' drive. For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting. Should you miss the meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

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 Djemma 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 Almas (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable 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 sweet treats. 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.



ACCOMMODATION:
La Bergerie (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Walks in the foothills, 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)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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.



ACCOMMODATION:
Riad Hida (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Riad



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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)



Grade: Comfortable Riad



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Riad Ben Atar (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Riad



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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:
Hotel Riad Ben Atar (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Riad



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Trip ends in Marrakech

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Marrakech.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Marrakech at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Marrakesh Menara Airport (RAK).

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

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.

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

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

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 organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £15.00 per family member for group 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**

Minibus, On Foot

Accommodation notes

General information: Morocco is a developing country and as such, the accommodation standards are not equivalent to those in Europe and can be more basic. We generally choose our properties because of their location, cleanliness, traditional style or for their welcoming atmosphere, as we endeavour to provide an authentic Moroccan experience. However, some of the properties might have some outdated or simple furniture and the level of service may vary depending on the location.

You may find that availability of hot water is variable or limited in certain locations. Breakfasts are generally continental style. A swimming pool is available on most nights of the trip, but not in Essaouira, where we stay in the old town.

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 Taroudant 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.

Finally in the beach resort of Essaouira we have opted for a hotel in the central old medina, whilst the property meets our standard grade it is more basic than others we stay at, its location in the medina is ideal for exploring. There is a pleasant roof terrace where breakfast is served and it's a short walk to the beach.

Family swimming

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

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 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development 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.

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.

Family information



Join us on a spell bounding 8 day journey encompassing vibrant cities, majestic mountains and expansive beaches. This trip combines the best of Marrakech, walks in the Atlas Mountains and time to relax in Essaouira where we can 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.

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. There are several direct flight options from the UK including Essy Jet, Ryan Air and British Airways arriving in the afternoon. There are also alternative options including Royal Air Maroc via Casablanca arriving 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 11 years old.

Minimum age: This trip is ideal for children of all ages over 7 and is an ideal introduction to small group family adventures for younger families. On certain trips there may be some flexibility to accept children from the age of 5 if travelling with older siblings, please speak to our reservations team for details.

Additional Information



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.

Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**