

EXPLORE!



Marrakech Express
9 days

Morocco - Trip code QMR

Marrakech Express

On this journey through northern Morocco we visit the great historic cities of Fes and Marrakech. We explore the maze of backstreets and alleyways and discover snake charmers, acrobats, musicians and storytellers in the lively Djemma-el-Fna square, in Marrakech. We also travel to the less-visited Rif Mountains, and to the Andalucian walled town of Chefchouan.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Travel with the locals** - An exhilarating journey by train and bus to discover the highlights of Morocco
- ★ **Tangier** - Morocco's bustling port where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic Ocean
- ★ **Fes** - The atmospheric Medina also known as Mecca of the West
- ★ **Rabat** - Morocco's historic capital and the intriguing Kasbah des Oudaya
- ★ **Marrakech** - The enchanting 'Red City' and the vibrant Djemma-el-Fna Square

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:**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:**8 - 14**

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 Tangier

Our tour starts today in the vibrant city of Tangier. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to start exploring the city independently, before meeting your group and Tour Leader at the hotel.



Accommodation: Hotel Tarik (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Optional guided tour of Tangier; bus to Chefchouan

Colonised by the Romans and Phoenicians, fought over by the Byzantines and the Visigoths and finally taken by the Arabs in the 8th century, Tangier has at heart always been Berber. Its turbulent history saw it become a pawn in the conflicts between the Portuguese, the British and the despotic Moulay Ismail, who finally saw it returned to Moroccan control at the end of the 17th century. This morning there will be an opportunity to explore something of the city with an optional tour of the Medina in the company of a local guide, before we board a public bus south, towards the dramatic setting of Chefchouan. A historical town known for Andalusian influenced Medina with its red tiled roofs and buildings that are painted pure whitewash or an electric blue. Upon arrival we will explore the Medina, scramble up the battlements of the 15th century Kasbah and spend some time browsing the market in the Uta Lhmam square, which is the centre of the town. As well as the historical interest and aesthetic beauty of the architecture, one of the best parts of walking around Chefchouan is the views over the fertile plains of the Rif Mountains.



Accommodation: Hotel Madrid (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Walks in the mountains and visit an abandoned mosque

Today in Chefchaouen there is some free time to explore or tour leader will lead a guided walk to the source of the Ras El Ma - the river that supplies the town with its crystal clear waters. To get there we will walk to the north west of Chefchaouen and join a trail that snakes gently uphill for a couple of miles before reaching the source. From here we walk downhill to get to the Spanish Mosque, built in the 1920's but never used, the mosque has become famous due to being ignored by the local residents. The reason people visit the site is the incredible views over the valleys and mountains from the top of the minaret. This walk should take a 2-3 hours including the mosque visit.



Accommodation: Hotel Madrid (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Bus to Fes

Boarding another public bus this morning we continue our journey south, crossing through the Djebala Mountains and across what was once the old border separating the governed territories from the untamed wilderness. Our journey today takes us into Morocco's cultural heartland to the city of Fes, probably the oldest of the imperial cities, whose fascinating history is rich with wars, murders and political intrigue. At the centre of Moroccan life for countless generations, Fes has played an important part in the country's trade, culture, religion and politics, as well as being an important seat of scientific thought, for centuries. The nightlife is centred mainly around the Avenues Hassan II and Mohammed V in the new town, and with two nights here we have ample chance to experience the whole range of the city's cultural attractions - both ancient and modern. There may be an opportunity today to enjoy a traditional Hammam visit (optional).



Accommodation: Hotel Splendid (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - In Fes

Taking in the mosques and souks of the Fes el Bali (Old Fes) on foot affords the ideal opportunity to explore the souks that line the backstreets of the town, wandering past aromatic spice stalls and taking in the opulent majesty of the 14th century Attarin Medersa, whose intricate decoration and elegant design makes it one of the city's most captivating medieval colleges. One of the city's most impressive monuments is the spectacular Medersa Bou Inania, the 14th century Merenid structure built by the Sultan Abou Inan, whose exquisite carvings and tile work is considered amongst the most exceptional examples of its kind anywhere in Morocco. The afternoon is then free to enjoy at your leisure what is in essence one of the most engaging, and certainly one of the most undiminished, medieval cities anywhere in the Arab world.



Accommodation: Hotel Splendid (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Train to Rabat; optional city tour

Transferring to the railway station this morning we catch the morning train west towards the Atlantic Coast and the city of Rabat. The 3-hour journey should get us in to the city around lunchtime and, after we have transferred to the hotel and had a chance to freshen up, the afternoon affords an opportunity to join an optional guided tour of the city. Rabat was established as the capital of the French protectorate in 1912 and since independence has served as the capital of a modern Morocco. Rabat's history stretches back as far as 8BC, when settlers arrived in what is now the Chellah area, a district that went on to become a prosperous Roman town, before being transformed by the Merinids into a cemetery. The tour will take in something of the city's historic heart, exploring the area around the Hassan Tower and the Mausoleum of Mohammed V, before wandering through the engaging Kasbah des Oudaias, originally a fortified town that is now infused with a distinctly Andalusian flavour.



Accommodation: Hotel Bouregreg (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Train to Marrakech; free afternoon

A morning train takes us south to Marrakech today, where we'll have the better part of two days to explore a city that has for centuries been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south. Marrakech is a city like no other, boasting a staggering array of spectacular architecture and wonderful facades, a place where trade and barter amongst the colourful souks still renders its ancient heart a glittering cacophony of noise and colour. Founded by the Almoravids, the city began life as a fortified ksour, before a comprehensive building programme under Ali Ben Youssef saw the city blossom into an imperial

capital. It was during the 12th century though that Marrakech enjoyed its golden age, when the Almohad dynasty took control and the city saw an influx of poets and scholars and its streets took on some of the grandeur that we see before us today. It was during this period that the great Koutoubia Mosque was built, but then centuries of war and turmoil followed and the city lost some of its imperial glamour. Since independence though the city has revived some of its old fortunes and today it is a vital trading centre and remains one of the country's most popular tourist attractions.



Accommodation: Hotel Ali (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Morning optional walking tour; Afternoon free

This morning there will be an opportunity to explore something of the rich heritage of Morocco's fascinating Red City with an optional sightseeing tour of the city's old quarter. 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) and journeying into this vibrant centre with a local guide affords a chance to discover some of its most enthralling sites. The city's beating heart is the spectacular Djemma-el-Fna, a site not to be missed, where you will find the streets and alleys alive with storytellers and musicians, jugglers and acrobats and clowns. The dominating Koutoubia Minaret, the oldest of the Almohad towers, rises some 70 metres above the surrounding city and presents us with one of the blueprints for future Moroccan architectural design. After the tour the rest of the day is free to continue exploring this amazing city at your leisure. You can wander past vendors selling doughnuts and fried grasshoppers, enjoy the sounds and the smells of the exotic and meander through native markets where Muslim women, their hands and feet dyed with henna, call out to sell their wares.



Accommodation: Hotel Ali (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Tour ends Marrakech

Our tour ends today in Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to spend additional time exploring Marrakech independantly and to buy the last souvenirs in the market.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

This tour is perfect for travellers who want to experience Morocco like a local - on public transport. Many feel that this is the real way to get to grips with culture of the country and on this journey you will see how Moroccans live their lives. This a fantastic tour for the adventurous or those travelling on a budget.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 8



Transport

Bus
Public Bus
Taxi
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

3 nights simple hotel
5 nights standard 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.

Tangier - Walking tour of the Medina MAD400 per group.

Chefchuan - Cookery Class MAD200 per person, plus MAD50-100 per person for lunch options.

Fes - Guided tour of Old Fes MAD500 per group.

Rabat - Guided tour of Kasbah MAD400 per group.

Marrakech - Walking tour of Old City MAD500 per group (for guide plus entrance fees); Hammam MAD150-300 per person.

In addition to the above, you should allow approximately MAD120 for other optional sites and entrance fees in the Imperial Cities.

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 should also cover their heads when

entering a sanctuary, though in general, mosques are forbidden to non-Muslims. For those clients on a cycling holiday please bear this information in mind for times that you are not on the bikes. While cycling it is no problem for both men and women to wear your regular cycling gear, tight fitting or not.

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

Winter: Usually days are warm but much thicker clothing is essential for cold nights (Nov-Mar). 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, trousers and fleece are recommended between December and January.

Footwear

We recommend you bring sandals and good comfortable trainers or lightweight walking shoes.

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

A torch, water bottle, sunhat and high factor sunscreen are all essential, whilst we recommend swimming costumes and towels.

Tipping

Explore leader

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

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, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow approx. £20 for tipping of crew and local guides used.

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

Bus, Public Bus, Taxi, Train

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.

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 often available, especially in the cities.

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 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.

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.
