

EXPLORE!

Marrakech and the High Atlas

8 days

Morocco - Trip code LMA



Marrakech and the High Atlas

On this trip walk amongst the foothills of the majestic High Atlas mountains and enjoy some time in the ancient city of Marrakech. Stay in a traditional family-run Berber riad in the mountains and spend four days exploring the impressive surrounding mountains and valleys, dotted with fruit orchards, patchwork fields and tiny mountain villages.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Atlas Mountains** - A centre-based trek in the highest and most scenic mountain range in North Africa.
- ★ **Riad** - Spend four nights in a traditional riad in the tranquil village of Imlil.
- ★ **The Berber People** - Meet the local Berber people, enjoy their warm hospitality and learn about their traditions.
- ★ **Marrakech** - Explore the Red City with its bustling souks 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.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

GROUP SIZE:

8 - 12

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

Arrive Marrakech and check-in at hotel. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may want to start exploring the city independently before meeting your group

and Tour Leader.



Accommodation: Riad Celia (or similar)



Standard Riad



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Day to explore Marrakech. Optional walking tour of the souks.

Marrakech is a feast for the senses. Like many North African towns, Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Gueliz (or modern French-built city) and the Medina (the Old City). It has always been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south and the colourful souks perfectly illustrate this fact. No visit to the city is complete without a visit to the celebrated Djemmael- Fna Square. A spectacle not to be missed with many street performers to watch and enjoy. Also of interest is the Koutoubia mosque, Saadian Tombs and the souks and medina. Perhaps you might like to visit the Dar Si Said Palace (now the Museum of Moroccan Art) and the Minara Gardens or just lose yourself in the maze of narrow streets filled with the sounds, colours and smells of the exotic. Your tour leader will be able to arrange a local guide to give a optional walking tour of the souks. This evening there is the option to visit a hammam and to re-emerge renewed and refreshed and ready to continue our journey.



Accommodation: Riad Celia (or similar)



Standard Riad



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Drive to Imlil. Explore the local villages on foot

This morning we leave the bright lights of Marrakech behind and head into the Atlas Mountains to the small village of Imlil, our base for the next four days. We will be staying in traditional Berber riad with communal salon and open fire, or a breezy rooftop terrace in warmer months. After checking in there should be some time to walk around the local villages to get a feel for the area and meet some of the local people.

Today's two kilometre walk is expected to take around one hour with a total ascent of 110 metres and a descent of 110 metres.



Accommodation: Dar Assarou (or similar)



Standard Riad



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - Walk to the holy shrine of Sidi Chamarouch, following the Mizane Valley.

The beauty of this setting is that stunning scenery is available in abundance, regardless as to how much walking you wish to do. The High Atlas has retained a remoteness and beauty that has been lost elsewhere and the surrounding villages continue life as they have done for centuries. On our first morning here we take a walk to the holy shrine of Sidi Chamarouch, following the Mizane Valley. Straddling a gorge, the village and the shrine sit besides a small waterfall. The village is a jumbled cluster of houses that seem to

melt together in a chaotic mass. The shrine attracts tourists and pilgrims alike, although only the Muslims are allowed to cross the stone bridge to visit the marabout shrine itself. We have a picnic lunch before returning to the riad along the same track.

Today's nine kilometre walk is expected to take around five hours with a total ascent of 610 metres and a descent of 610 metres.



Accommodation: Dar Assarou (or similar)



Standard Riad



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Walk to Tizi Mzik

Today's walk takes us up to Tizi Mzik pass (2,489m). For outsiders, one of the most surprising aspects of walking in these mountains is the friendliness and openness of the villagers as they go about their everyday tasks. Walking through these communities is a refreshing insight into a lost culture set amidst the stunning beauty of the High Atlas Mountains. One evening at the Riad you will have the opportunity to take part in a cookery class. Watch the chef and learn how to prepare local specialities before participating in preparation of the group meal. This is included in the tour and the tour leader will arrange this with the group during your stay.

Today's seven kilometre walk is expected to take around four and a half hours with a total ascent of 749 metres and a descent of 749 metres.



Accommodation: Dar Assarou (or similar)



Standard Riad



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Walk to Ikkis via Tizi-n-Tamaterte

This morning we walk to the pass of Tizi-n- Tamaterte (2,279m). This is easy walking along an old mine road that twists through small villages and the views from the top are stunning. The Imane and Ait Mizane Valleys are stretched out below us and Mount Oukaimeden towers above. Descending through meadows of lupins and conifers, we head for the hamlet of Ikkis & Amsakrou where we stop for lunch before we return to Imlil via a different route. This time we walk to Aguersioual and Taddart, following the course of the river and passing terraces and walnut groves on our way back to the village. Anyone who would prefer less walking today can return to Imlil from Tizi-n-Tamaterte via a dirt road.

Today's 12 kilometre walk is expected to take around eight hours with a total ascent of 739 metres and a descent of 779 metres.



Accommodation: Dar Assarou (or similar)



Standard Riad



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Drive to Marrakech; free afternoon

This morning we have to say goodbye to our mountain home and head back to the Red City of Marrakech. On arrival in the city we check-in to our hotel and the rest of the day is free for more personal exploration of this fascinating city.



Accommodation: Riad Celia (or similar)



Standard Riad



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Tour ends Marrakech

Our tour ends today in Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may wish to spend additional time wandering in the souks independently or buying your last souvenirs.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES



Walking grade

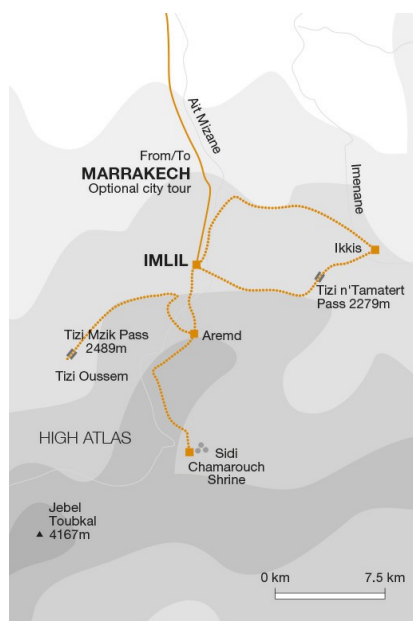
Moderate

Trek details

Walks on 3 days for an average of 6 hours, with an additional orientation walk on arrival to Imlil. We follow well-defined footpaths and mule tracks, the paths in the Atlas Mountains are rocky with some steep and narrow sections. We reach a maximum altitude of 2,489m. We have graded this trek as moderate.

Max walking altitude (m)

2489



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 4
Dinner: 4



Transport

Minibus



Trip staff

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



Accommodation

7 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.

Marrakech - Walking tour £6, Hammam £20.

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, bring some warm clothing for nights in the mountains. Temperatures can drop sharply at night particularly in September/October.

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots with ankle support- leather or fabric are both fine. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself. It is preferable to bring your luggage in soft holdalls rather than a large suitcase - as it is easier to pack them on the coaches (small coaches have very little luggage space). It is also best to pack light as porters can't always be guaranteed. Unrequired and additional luggage can be left in Marrakech at the hotel or with our agent during the trek.

Equipment

We recommend a sunhat, sunscreen, a torch, insect repellent and a water bottle. Binoculars are very useful for bird and animal spotting. Trekking poles can be useful.

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 recognised 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. Accordingly, you should allow approx. £15 per person for tipping of crew and local guides used.

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.

Country Information

Morocco

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£6.00 - 8.00

Dinner price

£8.00 - 12.00

Beer price

£2.5

Water price

£0.6

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Moroccan Dirham (MAD).

Recommended Currency For Exchange

US Dollars, Sterling and Euros are readily exchangeable. We recommend you take a mixture of cash and credit cards. Scottish bank notes and Australian dollar travellers cheques and cash are NOT normally accepted in Morocco.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you.

ATM Availability

ATMs are available in main towns/cities, though can be unreliable.

Credit Card Acceptance

Not all places.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are difficult to exchange and are not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Minibus

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.

Maximum altitude (m)

2489

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.
