

# EXPLORE!

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## Walking in Morocco - Atlas to Atlantic

MOROCCO - TRIP CODE MAA

WALKING AND TREKKING

### Why book this trip?

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This walking trip takes you among the foothills of the majestic High Atlas Mountains to the windswept Atlantic coast. Explore the beaches and valleys, dotted with fruit orchards and tiny villages. Discover ancient Marrakech and the lively craft markets of Essaouira.

- **Riad** - Spend four nights in traditional accommodation
- **Berber people** - Discover their homeland taking lunch with a family
- **Essaouira** - Relax in this laid back town sampling fresh fish

**INCLUDED MEALS**Breakfast: 7  
Lunch: 2**TRIP STAFF**Explore Tour  
Leader**TRANSPORT**

Bus

**ACCOMMODATION**2 nights  
comfortable hotel  
1 nights premium  
hotel  
4 nights  
comfortable riad**WALKING GRADE:**

Easy

**GROUP SIZE:**

10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Marrakech

The trip starts today 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 make it the ideal starting point for our week of walking and exploration of Morocco.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting. There are no other 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. If your flight arrives later in the evening, they will inform you of any essential information after breakfast on day two.

**ACCOMMODATION:**

Hotel Almas (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Atlas Mountains hike through Berber villages; lunch with a local family**

This morning we leave the bright lights of Marrakech behind and head to the small village of Ouirgane in the High Atlas Mountains . Located in the heart of Toubkal National Park, Ouirgane is surrounded by red earth hills and pine forests. On arrival we'll travel to a nearby Berber village to have lunch in a local house, a great opportunity to sample traditional home-cooking and learn more about the Berber culture. In Morocco lunch tends to be the main meal of day, we'll have a fresh salad followed by a traditional Berber omelette cooked in a clay tagine blending eggs with delicious savoury spices.

Following lunch we take a short drive out to the Bridge of Assiff Azdeb, from where we'll walk among the olive groves towards the village of Tikhfist. Stopping at a panoramic view point overlooking the valley we see Lalla Takerskout Lake shimmering below. Taking the path down to the villages of Torort and Anraz, we return to the hotel on foot, surrounded by the scent of juniper and pine.

Our hotel tonight is set within an extensive landscaped garden with spectacular mountain views and a inviting outdoor swimming pool. The rustic rooms are traditionally decorated, arranged around the central courtyard.

Today's eight kilometre walk is expected to take around three hours with 250 metres of ascent and descent.



ACCOMMODATION:  
La Bergerie (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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## **DAY 3 - Walk to 12th century Tinmel Mosque, drive over Tizi 'n' Test Pass to Ouled Berhil**

Today we continue our journey through the mountains, to Ouled Berhil, stopping off along the way to

visit the 12th century Tinmel mosque. We take a short walk crossing the Oued Nfiss Valley to view the red brick fortress from above before entering the site. Tinmel is one of the only two mosques in Morocco open to non-Muslims and was once considered the centre of the powerful Almohades dynasty. You can admire the brick arches and elaborate Mihrab of the roofless building.

Continuing by bus we take a breathtaking drive crossing the High Atlas Mountains over the Tizi n Test pass (2,092 metres) to the Souss Plain. This scenic road is winding and spectacular. Weaving its way up into the mountains through a series of switchbacks, you can take in the fabulous views back across to the Toubkal Massif. Descending to the Souss Valley, across the agricultural plain, past orange groves to arrive at Ouled Berhil.

For the next two nights we'll be staying in a traditional Moroccan house known as a riad. Riad Hida was built in 1860 and the property boasts lush gardens with fountains, palms, fruit trees and an outdoor swimming pool, you may even spot peacocks roaming the grounds. The lounge and dining rooms feature several collectors items, with colourful mosaic adorning the walls and ceilings.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Riad Hida (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Riad**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 4 - Hike in the Afensou Valley and enjoy lunch in a village house**

Today we take an excursion to the valley of Afensou, a scenic drive northwards into the Western High Atlas. Arriving at a view point overlooking the valley, we walk down to Afensou village passing along farm terraces, observing people at work in their gardens and collecting vegetables, affording us an insight into Berber life. We have lunch in Afensou at a family-run guest house, feasting on the famed Moroccan tagine, accompanied by freshly baked Khobz bread, a rounded bread that forms a staple of the local diet. This slow cooked savoury stew is named after the clay dish it's cooked in, bursting with the sweet and sour flavours of dates and spices.

On the way back to Ouled Berhil we make a stop at Taroudante, a walled city in the Souss Valley known as 'Little Marrakesh'. This thriving market town is a meeting place for the mountain Berbers trading their locally produced food and crafts, there will be time to stroll around the Medina.

Today's four kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours with 100 metres of descent.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Riad Hida (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Riad



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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### DAY 5 - Depart the Atlas Mountains for Essaouira; hike Atlantic Coast beaches en route

We leave the Atlas Mountains behind us today as we head to Agadir on the coast and drive alongside the Atlantic Ocean to Sidi Mbarek. This beautiful drive, hugging the coast, takes us past small villages, banana plantations and beaches where you can spot camels and surfers. During the journey keep an eye out for the bizarre sight of goats grazing in the trees! In the south west of Morocco, cloven-hoofed goats climb Argan trees attracted by the fruits' pulp.

This afternoon's walk takes us from the small village of Sidi Mbarek down to the beach, walking along the deserted sand, surrounded by sand dunes and vast ocean views. Arriving at the sleepy surf town Sidi Kaouki the bus will be waiting to take us on to Essaouira.

Essaouira is a colourful coastal fishing town set within 15th century Portuguese fortifications. Whilst here we'll stay in the Riad Al Madina in a beautiful setting within the city walls. This former 19th Century palace has been carefully restored to retain the charm and elegance of its original splendour. Rooms lead off from a central courtyard filled with plants and fountains and there are great views over the city's Medina from the sun terrace.

Today's 12 kilometre walk is expected to take around three hours, along a flat route.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Riad Al Madina (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Riad



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 6 - Walking tour in Essaouira. Explore this charming walled Kasbah with its many craft shops**

This morning we take a walking guided tour of Essaouira. Entering the old walled Medina, passing through a narrow, highly decorated arch, we are greeted by a host of merchants selling local handicrafts and women carrying out their daily routines, veiled in their traditional dress.

We'll walk along the impressive ramparts, admiring the view of the wild Atlantic Ocean, to the port area of the town. This bustling port is crammed with bobbing blue fishing boats. We can observe fishermen mending their nets and try some delicious freshly grilled sardines.

The rest of day is left free for you to explore further at your leisure, strolling around the craft stalls and along the fine sandy beach.



ACCOMMODATION:

Riad Al Medina (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Riad**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 7 - Return to Marrakech, discover the city's souks and Jamaa el Fna Square on a walking tour**

After breakfast we return by bus to Marrakech and in the afternoon take a guided walking tour of the Old City. Marrakech is a feast for the senses and Djemael- Fna Square is a spectacle not to be missed with many street performers to watch and enjoy. The 70m-high tower of the 12th-century, Koutoubia Mosque dominates the skyline. Prohibited from entering this mosque, we'll admire the architecture from the outside.

We visit the ornate 19th century Bahia Palace, with its lush gardens, rooms decorated in elegant Moroccan style and a grand marble-paved courtyard. We see further examples of Moroccan opulence at the Saadian Tombs and the lavish Mausoleum of el Mansour built during the reign of Sultan Ahmad el Mansour during the Saadian dynasty.

There will be time to further explore the souks independently, losing yourself in the maze of narrow

streets.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Almas (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 8 - 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

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## **Trip information**

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### **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.

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## 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.

Essaouira - Surfing lesson 350 Moroccan Dirham per person

### Clothing

Bring light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. The weather conditions in the mountains can be changeable, and it will be cold, especially at night, so bring warmer layers. Tops made from wicking materials which keep you drier and warmer are recommended as a base layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans.

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.

-Warm jacket and trousers - After sunset and before sunrise in the mountains, temperatures can fall. A warm jacket and long warm trousers are the most convenient way of keeping warm

-Breathable wind and waterproof jacket

-T-shirts

-Long sleeved tops

-Sunhat

-Long trousers

-Sleepwear

-Shorts (if you prefer to walk in them)

-Swimwear and towel

-Midlayer Fleece/pullover

-Socks (liner and thicker pair)



-Scarf

## Footwear

We recommend you bring lightweight walking boots or shoes, 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

Bring one main piece of luggage and a 20 litre day sack is recommended. You will need to carry what you need for the day which may include a jumper, camera, sun-cream and water . On hot days you will carry fewer clothes but more drinking water.

## Equipment

- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Head torch or Small Torch (with spare batteries and bulb)
- Camera
- Walking poles (if you usually use them)
- Personal toiletries (including anti-bacterial hand sanitiser and/or wash)
- Personal first aid kit - On each walk a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials.
- Insect repellent
- Reusable water bottle (minimum 1 litre) - Get 15% discount on a Water-to-Go bottle [www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore](http://www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore)

## 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 £25.00 per person for group tipping.

## 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.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus

### Accommodation notes

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.

Our Premium garded hotel in Ouirgane, La Bergerie, is set within an extensive landscaped garden with spectacular mountain views and a inviting outdoor swimming pool. The rustic rooms are traditionally decorated, arranged around the central courtyard.

We spend four nights of this trip staying in a traditional Moroccan house known as a riad. Riad Hida in Ouled Berhil was built in 1860 and the property boasts lush gardens with fountains, palms, fruit trees

and an outdoor swimming pool, you may even spot peacocks roaming the grounds. The lounge and dining rooms feature several collectors items, with colourful mosaic adorning the walls and ceilings. In Essaouria we stay in the Riad Al Madina in a beautiful setting within the city walls. This former 19th Century palace has been carefully restored to retain the charm and elegance of its original splendour. Rooms lead off from a central courtyard filled with plants and fountains and there are great views over the city's Medina from the sun terrace.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK 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.

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](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 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.

## 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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## Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES		
Day 2	8km	3hrs
Day 3	1.5km	1.5hrs
Day 4	4km	2hrs
Day 5	12km	3hrs

### Walking grade

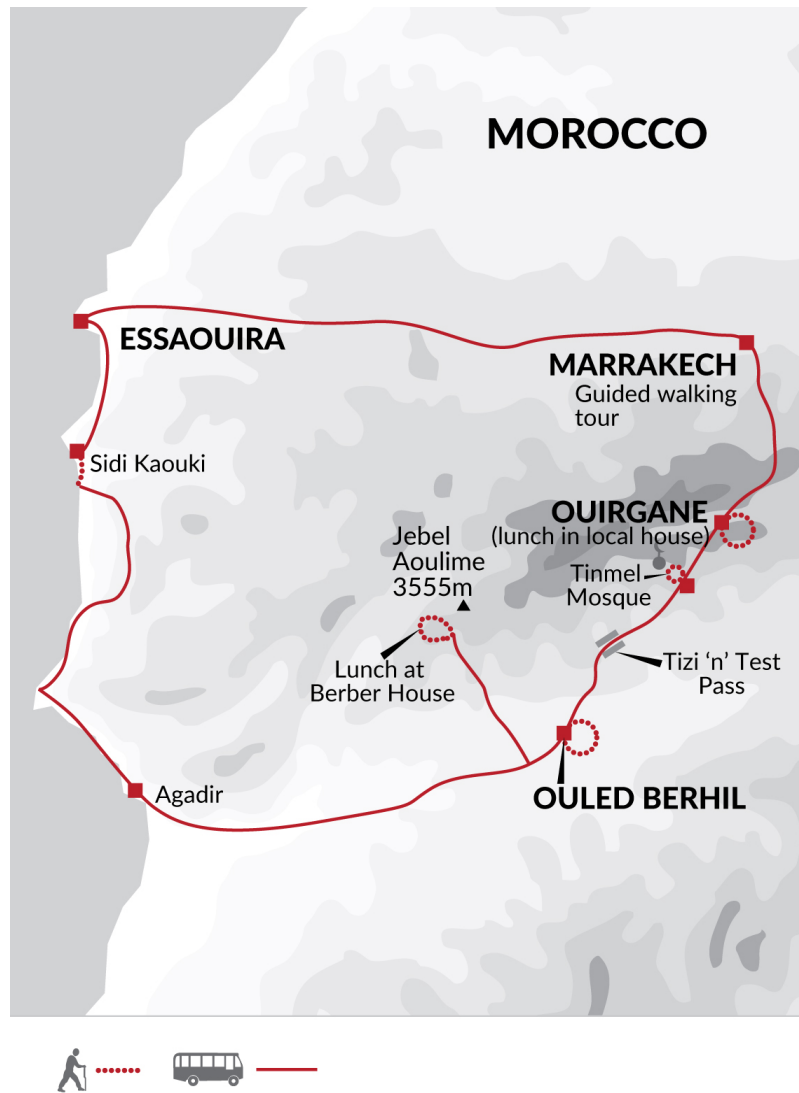
Easy

### Trek details

Walks on 4 days for 1.5 to 4 hours. We follow well-defined footpaths and mule tracks and walk along sandy beaches. The walks can be adapted depending on the interest of the group.

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## Additional Information



## Why book this trip

We wanted to expand our offering in Morocco and run a walking trip without the more challenging Toubkal summit trek, one that was more of an exploratory journey through the country. This one week holiday is exactly that, combining the city souks with day walks in the Atlas Mountains, tasty tagines, Berber culture and the wild coastline. With easy walks and traditional accommodation this holiday is a great choice for your first visit to Morocco.

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## Reviews



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**