

THE TRAVEL CLUB

HIGHLIGHTS OF MOROCCO

Marrakech, the Sahara & Fes

12 DAYS: Thursday, October 17-Monday, October 28, 2019

\$3,709 per person double occupancy; \$4,209 for single reservations

East meets West in Morocco—a country of ancient cities and rich traditions. Begin in Marrakech—“the epitome of exotic,” says Rick Steves—and one of Morocco’s imperial cities. Travel the High Atlas Mountains to Ait-Ben-Haddou where Lawrence of Arabia and Gladiator were filmed. Over the next few days we’ll visit the oasis town of Rissai, enjoy a jeep ride through the Sahara Desert, see the UNESCO Roman ruins in Volubilis and the holy town of Moulay Idriss Zerhoun. In Fes, Morocco’s cultural capital, visit the old Medina and its souks (markets). Look for ceramics in Fes blue (cobalt), the signature of traditional Fes pottery. Our holiday of sounds, colors and fragrances ends in Casablanca with its French Art Deco architecture and the famous Hassan II Mosque and fashionable La Corniche waterfront.

Your tour package includes

- 10 nights in handpicked hotels, Breakfast daily, 3 lunches, 6 dinners
- Expert Tour Director, Private deluxe motor coach, Guided sightseeing and select entrance fees

Included highlights

- Djemaa el Fna market, Majorelle Garden, Ait-Ben-Haddou, Erg Chebbi sand dunes, Roman Archaeological Site of Volubilis, Fes Medina

Tour pace

You will walk for about 3 hours daily across moderately uneven terrain, including paved roads and cobblestone streets, with some hills and stairs.



FEATURES

Marrakech: Koutoubia Mosque, the Medina, Bahia Palace Saadian Tombs, open air markets and souks. Moroccan cuisine cooking class and lunch. High Atlas Mountains, Ait-Ben-Haddou, Ouarzazate. Kasbah of Taourirt, Visit Kalaat M'Gouna, Todra Gorge. Mausoleum of Moulay Ali Cherif, Erg Chebbi sand dunes of the Sahara Desert, 4x4 Jeep ride through the desert, visit a Bedouin tent for traditional mint tea and snacks, camel ride over the sand dunes. UNESCO-recognized Roman Archaeological Site of Volubilis and holy town of Moulay Idriss Zerhoun. Meknes tour including the Bab Mansour gate. Fes tour including the Mellah Jewish Quarter, old Medina and Mausoleum of Moulay Idriss. Rabat tour including the Mausoleum of Mohammed V and the Kasbah des Oudaïas to see the mouth of the Bou Regreg river and the Andalusian gardens. Casablanca tour including the Hassan II Mosque and La Corniche waterfront area. **OPTIONALS: Marrakech—Moroccan evening & sunset camel ride. Fes—Evening in Fes with dinner & music.**

ACCOMMODATIONS

DAY 1 Overnight flight from Boston

DAYS 2–4 Radisson Blu Hotel, Marrakech

DAY 5 Berber Palace, Ouarzazate

DAYS 6–7 Kasbah Hotel Xaluca Arfoud, Sahara Desert Region

DAYS 8–10 Fes Marriott, Fes

DAY 11 Golden Tulip Farah Hotel, Casablanca

**DAY 12 Return flight to Boston
or similar hotel accommodations**

Overnight flight

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Marrakech today.

Marrakech

Day 2: Arrival in Marrakech

Included meals: Dinner

Welcome to Morocco! Sip a welcome drink with your Tour Director and fellow travelers on a terrace overlooking the lively Djemaa el Fna market. Then, enjoy a welcome dinner.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Marrakech

Included meals: Breakfast

Get a feel for the history of Marrakech, one of Morocco's imperial cities, on this morning's guided tour. • Pass through the sophisticated Gueliz district • Marvel at the massive Koutoubia Mosque, which features a minaret that reaches nearly 200 feet high and dominates the city's skyline • Enter the UNESCO-listed Medina of Marrakech to see the Bahia Palace • Step inside the evocative Saadian Tombs, the mausoleum for the 16th-century ruling princes Return to your hotel and spend some time relaxing before experiencing Marrakech's market culture on this afternoon's guided tour. • Visit Djemaa el Fna, a festive, open-air market where musicians, snake charmers, and clowns perform during the evenings • Walk through the city's vibrant souks to see the many products being sold by the local vendors

Day 4: Cooking class & Majorelle Garden

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Visit a local cooking school and learn how to make Moroccan cuisine and tea during a hands-on cooking class. Enjoy eating the traditional cuisine for lunch. This afternoon, enter Majorelle Garden, which was designed by French architect Jacques Majorelle and purchased by legendary fashion duo Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé in 1998. • Stroll through the twelve-acre botanical garden • Visit the Berber Museum and Yves Saint Laurent memorial Enjoy a free evening in Marrakech or add an excursion.

Experience a taste of Moroccan life on tonight's excursion. First, set out to enjoy a sunset camel ride in a lush desert oasis. Nicknamed "ships of the desert," camels have been a traditional mode of transport for centuries. You'll learn about this history as you follow your guide through the palm grove, stopping to admire the stunning sunset. Then, you'll visit a local family to share mint tea and pastries in their home, learning about the indigenous Berbers. Afterward, head to a nearby restaurant to enjoy a family-style meal with your group. You'll enjoy a glass of wine as you're served regional specialties such as chicken or lamb tagine, a North African stew cooked in an earthenware pot. Save \$10 when you book this excursion up to 3 days before your tour departs (On-tour price: \$135)

Ouarzazate

Day 5: Ouarzazate via Ait-Ben-Haddou

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Transfer through the High Atlas Mountains to Ait-Ben-Haddou. Take a guided tour of the village's UNESCO-listed ksar to see the fortified complex made up of defensive walls and towers. Continue on to Ouarzazate, where movies and shows such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Game of Thrones* were filmed.

Sahara Desert Region

Day 6: Erfoud via the Kasbah of Taourirt & Todra Gorge

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Make several stops as you travel from Ouarzazate to the Sahara Desert region. • Join a local guide and walk through the Kasbah of Taourirt, located in Ouarzazate, to see the alleys, walls, and fortified buildings • Visit Kalaat M'Gouna, nicknamed "the valley of the roses" due to its abundance of roses and the city's annual festival that celebrates the flower • See the Todra Gorge and follow your Tour Director on a short walk along the canyon • Stop to learn about the ancient Berber Qanat water well system

Day 7: Rissani & Erg Chebbi sand dunes

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Spend the morning touring the oasis town of Rissani with your Tour Director. • Enter the Mausoleum of Moulay Ali Cherif • Walk through Ksar El Fida, the oldest ksar in Rissani • Stop at a local fossil shop before returning to Erfoud Enjoy free time to eat lunch and relax at your hotel. This afternoon, head out to the Erg Chebbi sand dunes and discover the otherworldly beauty of the Sahara Desert. • Hop inside a 4x4 Jeep and ride through the desert to visit the town of Merzouga • Visit a Bedouin tent for traditional mint tea and snacks • Learn about Khamlia's Gnawa people, an ethnic group originating from West Africa, and see how they celebrate their culture during a musical performance • Take a camel ride over the sand dunes and soak in the incredible landscape

Fes

Day 8: Fes via Midelt & Ifrane

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Drive through the scenic Ziz Valley and Atlas Mountains to reach the town of Midelt, where you'll enjoy free time to explore and eat lunch. Next, visit Ifrane, a city known for its cedar forests and alpine-style architecture. After, continue on to Fes.

Day 9: Roman Archaeological Site of Volubilis & Meknes

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Head outside of Fes today and begin by visiting some of the most significant historical sites in northern Morocco. • Discover the ancient ruins at the UNESCO-recognized Roman Archaeological Site of Volubilis • See the Roman ruins of the forum, temple, baths, and gates followed by free time to visit the museum • Walk through the holy town of Moulay Idriss Zerhoun, known as the birthplace of Islam in Morocco Continue on to Meknes for an included lunch and a Tour Director-led sightseeing of one of Morocco's imperial cities. • See the

bustling Lahdim Square and Bab el-Khemis gate • View the Bab Mansour gate before entering the ruins of Dar el Ma to see the ancient stables and granaries Return to Fes, where you'll enjoy a free evening.

Day 10: Sightseeing tour of Fes

Included meals: Breakfast

Take a guided tour of Fes, the spiritual and cultural center of Moroccan life. • See the ornate brass doors of the Royal Palace and visit the Mellah Jewish Quarter • View the Bab Bou Jeloud, a blue-tiled gate that exemplifies the Moorish architectural style • Attend a ceramics demonstration, where you'll learn how the intricate and colorful art pieces are created • Explore the UNESCO-listed old Medina on a walking tour through the colorful souks and tanneries • Visit the Mausoleum of Moulay Idriss and a madrassa, a type of local school focused on both secular and religious studies Later, enjoy a free evening in Fes or add an excursion.

Optional Excursion

Evening in Fes: Dinner & Music \$89/pp

Head to a local restaurant in Fes for an evening of traditional entertainment. Enjoy a dinner of regional specialties like shish kebabs and pastilla, an elaborate meat-filled pastry that's known as Fes's signature dish. Afterward, sit back and take in a traditional Moroccan show including musicians, belly dancers, and more. Save \$10 when you book this excursion up to 3 days before your tour departs (On-tour price: \$99)

Casablanca

Day 11: Casablanca via Rabat

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

As you make your way to Casablanca, stop to tour Morocco's capital city of Rabat. • Enter the white and green Mausoleum of Mohammed V, which houses the tombs of the 20th-century king and his two sons • View Hassan Tower, intended to be the world's largest mosque until construction halted in 1199 • Make a photo stop at the Royal Palace • Walk through the Kasbah des Oudaias to see the mouth of the Bou Regreg river and the Andalusian gardens Enjoy free time for lunch before continuing on to Casablanca, where your Tour Director will introduce you to the seaside city made famous by Old Hollywood. • See the Hassan II Mosque, the largest in Morocco • Pass through the fashionable La Corniche waterfront area Tonight, attend a farewell dinner with your fellow travelers.

Day 12: Departure

Included meals: Breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home. *Please note: Some flights may leave Casablanca very early in the morning.*