

## Desert & Kasbahs

**Country(ies):** Morocco

**Tour type:** Private

**Transport:** AC minibus/coach & 4WD landcruiser style vehicles

**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 0

**Days:** 8 days

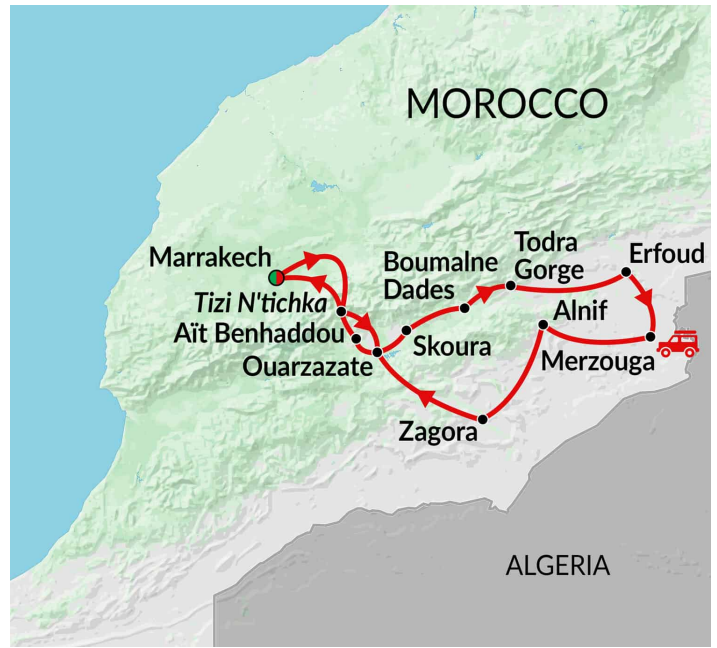
**Start Location:** Marrakech, Morocco

**End Location:** Marrakech, Morocco

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 7, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 7

### Highlights:

Djemaa El Fna Square in Marrakech, high Atlas mountains, Tizi n Tichka pass, Merzouga Desert, Ait Benhaddou, Ouarzazate, desert sands at Zagora



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Welcome to Marrakech. Transfer to hotel

On your arrival in Marrakech airport (RAK) our representative will greet you and transfer you to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to settle in, relax after your flight, and have a first look around. Extra nights are available on request.

**OVERNIGHT:** Marrakech hotel

**MEALS:** Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Single Room Supplement (MOSGDK)

## Day 2: Exploring Marrakech

Unearth the secrets of Marrakech, beginning in the medina, the old walled section of town and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This thousand-year-old city was long a political, economic and cultural center. Marvel at its architectural jewels, including the soaring Koutoubia minaret. Continue to the Bahia Palace, an exemplary of privileged life in the 19th century, the Tiskiwin Museum (Maison Tiskiwin), which houses an impressive collection of North African arts and crafts. The museum, which was founded by a Dutch anthropologist, is organized into geographically themed exhibits, with each room focusing on artifacts from different towns and regions along the ancient trade route from Marrakech to Timbuktu. The works on display include exquisite hand-woven carpets and textiles, traditional Berber clothing and jewelry, intricate basketwork and tribal handicrafts. Later you visit Djemaa el-Fna, Marrakech's main square, which is filled with orange juice stalls and vendors, along with fire-eaters, mime artists, snake-charmers and street musicians performing at every turn. You may also take the opportunity to explore the city's fabled, labyrinthine souks, their bustling alleyways brimming with all manner of wares. Following your visit, return to your hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure, a perfect opportunity to freshen up and get ready for a dinner in a local restaurant. Return to your hotel and overnight.

**OVERNIGHT:** Marrakech hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 3: To Dades via Skoura

As you leave Marrakech, head into the High Atlas Mountains. Our route follows the same one caravans used centuries ago, to bring into Marrakech gold and precious wood from the other side of the ocean of sand, the Sahara. You will be crossing Tizi n Tichka pass, at 2260 meters high. Once over the pass you will get an amazing panoramic views of the Atlas Mountains and the houses of its indigenous villages. Continue to Ouarzazate and stop for a lunch (own expense). Onto yet another lush area, nestled between the deserted crest and the desolate plateaus: Skoura palm grove. Then, our trip reaches Kelaa des Mgouna, famous for the nearby Valley of Roses and 'Rose Festival', where at the end of a 3 day celebration usually held in May, a local girl is crowned 'Rose Queen'. The most looked after product is eaude-rose and two factories in the area distil and export the product. Further on, Boulmane Dades follows, the starting point to explore the spectacular Dades Gorge, a lush carpet set against the massive rocks and quite popular among those interested to trek. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dades hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast,Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 4: Todra Gorge, Tinghir and Merzouga

Back on the road, our first stop is Tinerhir (Tinghir), with its extensive palm grove, the ksours built into the rocky hills above it and its mysterious decaying Jewish quarter. Tinghir has been for generations a stop for nomadic Berber tribes travelling from the mountains north of it towards the desert during the winter months. A rather inconspicuous hidden gem is the 19th century adobe mosque nested within the old crumbling ksour, a heaven for photography enthusiasts. Todra Gorges, lie only 15 km from Tinghir, presenting an arresting spectacle with its crystal clear river emerging from it, its huge walls changing color to magical effect as the day unfolds. Its 300 metres (1000 feet) high walls are home to more than 150 bolted routes and at any time of day you can catch a glimpse of someone rock climbing his way up the gigantic walls.

Before reaching Merzouga where the tarmac ends, we pass Erfoud and Rissani. In Erfoud we may stop for a visit at Musee des Oasis (optional) if time allows. Rissani used to serve as last stop on the great caravan routes south and gold and slave auctions were taking place here as late as 1800's. Before it, the caravan trade and the most important city in Morocco was Sijilmasa, the ruins of which lie opposite Rissani. From its gates, Ibn Battuta and Leo Africanus left Morocco to embark on their illustrious journeys across the Sahara into African countries. Soon after we reach Merzouga and in the distance you glimpse the first leviathans of sand forming the Sahara: the dunes of Erg Chebbi. Dinner and overnight at your hotel. A special night camping under the stars in a comfortable Berber camp on the edge of the dunes is available tonight (includes 4x4 transfers from Erfoud and a sunrise camel ride).

**OVERNIGHT:** Merzouga Kasbah or Riad

**MEALS:** Breakfast,Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 5: To Zagora via the Amazigh villages of Alnif & Tazarine

Enjoy an optional sunrise camel ride along the golden sand dunes in Merzouga. Return to your Riad for breakfast before transferring to Zagora via the Amazigh villages of Alnif and Tazarine. The road to Tazarine sees almost no traffic, providing a scenic link between Tafilalet and Draa Valley. Aside from the landscape, fossils and prehistoric rock carvings are this region's main attraction. The scenery grows wilder as you approach Tazarine, set in a grassy oasis surrounded by bare mountains. Continue to Zagora. Famous for its largest palm valley in Morocco. Dinner and overnight in your hotel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Zagora hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast,Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 6: To Agdez and Ouarzazate

After breakfast, enjoy the tour of Zagora including some of the oldest villages in Morocco. Stop by Tamegroute to visit the village's famous library, which houses ancient Koranic scripts dating back to the 12th century. Visit the pottery section of Tamgroute then transfer to Ouarzazate along the Draa valley. Optional lunch stop at Agdez then continue the trip to Ouarzazate for dinner and overnight.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ouarzazate hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 7: Return to Marrakech via Ait Benhaddou

Begin the day by exploring Ouarzazate, a city originally built as a French garrison in the 1920s. Today, the city is a regional trade center, known for its pottery and carpets. See the Taourirt Kasbah, which now consists of simple clay houses and crenellated towers that are beautifully decorated with geometric motifs. On the way, optional visit to the Film studios. Continue to elaborate Ait Benhaddou, dubbed a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home of the region's most exotic kasbahs, where structures all but defy the laws of gravity as they perch upon the steep slope. Some of these buildings have been featured in films, including Lawrence of Arabia and Gladiator. You journey over the High Atlas Mountains, observing everyday life in remote rural towns, to the fascinating city of Marrakech. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Marrakech hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 8: Your Moroccan adventure comes to an end

Your day is free today to do some last minute shopping or exploring in Marrakech, before we transfer you back to the airport to board your flight back home.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Marrakech - post-tour

### Included:

- Accommodation in boutique hotels, kasbahs & riads
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- English speaking escort driver
- Specialist English speaking guides for sightseeing tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrances fees to monuments and sites visited

### Excluded:

- International flights
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Optional desert camp and sunrise camel ride
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guide & driver
- Any other items not mentioned above

## Notes

### **Hotel Gala Dinners**

Many of Morocco's better hotels arrange a very special gala dinner with entertainment in the evening on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Payment for these is normally optional on Christmas Eve (24 Dec) but may be compulsory on New Year's Eve (31 Dec), whether you attend or not. Prices can range from around US\$30 to over US\$100 per person. Final decisions on prices and whether dinners are compulsory are made relatively close to the time. We aim to always select hotels that make their Gala Dinners optional, though this is not always possible. Gala dinner prices are therefore not included in our prices above, but will be added to your booking if they become required. This generally will only apply if you add a hotel upgrade to your booking. More information is available on request.

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## No Options

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## 1. Accommodation

We use a good quality boutique style 4-star hotel in Marrakech, and then more traditional riad and kasbah style hotels for the rest of the tour. A guide to the normal hotels used on the tour is given on our website. However, these may be substituted for similar style accommodations at the same level subject to availability. If you would like to guarantee specific hotels for the tour, please mention this to us at the time of booking.

For the night in the desert near Merzouga, we stay at a deluxe Berber camp. This has permanent goat hair tents, which are fully furnished with proper beds and bedding, and en-suite bathrooms and toilets.

Upgrades to deluxe 5-star hotels and riads are also available on this tour on request. Please contact us for details and prices.

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## 2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour.

This tour therefore uses private AC 4WD AC landcruiser style vehicles (eg. Toyota Prado - window seats guaranteed) for the journey into the desert. If you are travelling in a larger party, we may use a different type of minivan or minibus suitable for your numbers.

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## 3. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

This is a private tour, and as such is available for any number of travellers. Pricing shown on our website is based on 4 people travelling together. However, customised pricing is also available on request based on the number of people in your party and the types of rooms required (eg. any children, extra beds etc.).

The tour is run with an English speaking escort driver, with a specialist guide used for your city tour in Marrakech. Your escort driver will be able to discuss your plans for the day, make minor adjustments to your itinerary as you go along, talk about local life in Morocco and help you with meals, shopping etc. They will also be able to talk a little about the places you are visiting and their history, but they are not fully licensed professional guides so these explanations will be limited. You will be able to arrange extra site guides at some of the sites you visit along the way (for example if you visit the Taourit Kasbah in Ouarzazate). For groups of 5 or more, we normally provide a driver and a licensed escort guide for the entire tour.

At Encounters Travel we only use local Moroccan guides and drivers. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing and many people describe our Moroccan guides as one of the highlights of their holiday.

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## 4. Dates & Prices

This is a private tour, and as such is available for any number of travellers. Pricing shown on our website is based on 4 people travelling together. However, customised pricing is also available on request based on the number of people in your party and the types of rooms required (eg. any children, extra beds required etc.).

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## 5. Transfers

Many of our Morocco tours include a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in Casablanca/Marrakech airports (depending on the exact itinerary), your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers. Some tours however many not include airport transfers, please check the tour inclusions/exclusions for information on

which transfers are included on your specific trip.

Where transfers are included, these are only included in our tour prices on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary. We will be happy to arrange transfers on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

On our Shoestring group tours we do offer optional hotel upgrades. This may mean that additional pick-up and drop-offs are required each day. We do endeavour to ensure that all hotels used are close to each other and to streamline and time arrangements to limit any extra driving time as much as possible.

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## 6. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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## 7. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## 8. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).

- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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## 9. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

<https://x.com/encounterstravl> (yes, without the 'e')

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## 10. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

### Covid-19

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.**

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## 11. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit

enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.



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## 12. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

### How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

### The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

### Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.

- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

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### **Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!**

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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### **13. Private & Tailor-made Tours**

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

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### **14. International Flights**

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Airport transfers on any days before or after the main tour will incur a supplement. Our Morocco tours either start/finish in Marrakech (RAK) or Casablanca (CMN) airports.

Some packages on our website are sold as flight inclusive and in this event you will see the departure airport listed on the Dates & Prices section. Airlines may vary on these packages, and baggage fees may be subject to an extra fee. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Check in times for international flights to Morocco are generally 2 or 3 hours before departure depending on the airline - we recommend you aim to get to the airport 3 hours before departure to allow for any delays en-route

and in passing through security checks. Online check in is available with most airlines from 24 hours before departure, though low-cost airlines may allow this straight after booking. Seat selection can be done at the point of checking in, either online or at the airport, or by calling the airline direct.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports.

### **Flight CO2 Emissions:**

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## **15. Entrance Fees**

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

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## **16. Tipping**

Tipping and Haggling is an accepted and usual part of life in Morocco and other countries in the region. Wages for service staff are very low and tips are a necessary supplement to meagre incomes. If you are visiting from a country where this is not the case, then we have given some guidelines below which will hopefully prove helpful.

### **Tipping Kitty**

On our **Small Group Tours** we implement a Tipping Kitty for your convenience and to remove the hassle of being asked for tips by main people you may come across during the tour. This kitty will be collected in US Dollars cash at the start of the tour, and administered by your tour guide. You may ask for information on who they are tipping along the way if you wish as often they will do it out of sight for politeness. However, the tipping kitty amount covers people like hotel porters, hotel waiters, local guides for city tours, airport drivers, Berber camel herders and restaurant tips. It does not cover your main tour guide.

Please check the 'Not Included' section of the tour notes for details of the tipping kitty amount for your tour. This amount is payable per person (for adults only - children on family tours do not need to pay it).

This tipping kitty system works well on small group style tours. However, due to the different numbers of people travelling, we do not use it on our **Shoestring** or **Private/Tailor-made** tours.

### **Other tips**

Your main tour guide is not included in our Tipping Kitty. On group tours we suggest you budget around USD 2-4 per person per day to cover the main guide's tip, subject to your personal budget, and your satisfaction with the level of service provided. On private/tailor-made tours we recommend you budget a bit higher.

Throughout your trip you may at times also have a local guide in addition to your main guide. These are covered in the Tipping Kitty on our small group tours, but on other tours we suggest budgetting around USD 2-3 per per day. The same applies to drivers on our Shoestring and Private/Tailor-made tours.

In local markets, and basic restaurants you can leave the loose change. For more up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of the bill.

### **Haggling**

Haggling is a traditional necessity, so never pay too much regard to initial prices. Instead fix an item's value in your mind then negotiate towards it unhurriedly (Moroccans never rush their bargaining), and don't be afraid to simply walk away if the price isn't right. However, if you do mention a price, then you should be prepared to pay it or risk causing offence.

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## 17. Passports and Visas

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities. We recommend that you contact your closest Moroccan consulate or embassy for current information for your nationality.

Currently, many nationalities (including USA, Canada, UK, European, Australian, New Zealand) do not need to obtain a visa to enter Morocco as long as your stay is for less than 3 months. Other nationalities should check with their local consulate.

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## 18. Time

The time in Morocco is the same as GMT (plus 0 hours). Daylight saving adjustments are generally applied between the end of March and the end of October, making the time GBP plus 1 hour. During this period the time may revert back to GMT during Ramadan. Exact dates vary from year to year and sometimes the changes may be scrapped altogether.

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## 19. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

**South Africa:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Namibia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Botswana:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted or travelled through an infected area.

**Zimbabwe:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Zambia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Malawi:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Tanzania:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Kenya:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Uganda:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Sudan:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area. A certificate may also be required for those departing Sudan.

**Morocco:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

**Tunisia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

**Malaria:** Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

**Yellow Fever:** This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transited through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate organised in advance and with you and to hand during the trip.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have. If you are travelling on an Overland tour or your trip includes wildlife safaris then please bear in mind that you may be travelling on bumpy roads and/or rough ground for several hours at a time. This can be very uncomfortable or painful if you have a bad back, and make such conditions worse. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

**Health Declaration:** As many of our Africa tours travel through very remote regions, where medical facilities are limited, we are asking all of our travellers 65 years and over who are joining one of our Africa Overland Adventures to complete the attached medical questionnaire. The information provided to Encounters Travel and our local operational partners will be held to the strictest confidence and will be used only to the extent to provide necessary emergency medical care and/or evaluate physical health and fitness for travel.

We will request this from you approximately 30 days before your trip starts, so that your GP can sign your form based on your current health conditions. Please don't submit this several months in advance, as it is important for us to know you are fit for travel just before the trip departs.

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## 20. Voltage

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C/E). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already. If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

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## 21. Money

The local currency in Morocco is the Dirham. We recommend you bring some cash in a hard currency (US Dollars, GB Pounds, Euros) and a good ATM card. Most major currencies can be converted at most banks, but it's not wise to carry too much. Euros and US Dollars are welcomed more than GB Pounds. Travellers cheques are not easily exchanged. It can be awkward outside of Marrakech to find an ATM machine that takes your card as many Moroccan banks have ATMs that only work with Moroccan cards. Don't put your card in an ATM unless you see the symbol that matches your card on the machine, as you might lose your card! We also suggest trying to avoid using Post Office ATMs. In some smaller towns there are no ATMs that take foreign cards, so be sure you get enough cash to carry you until the next major city. BCM seems to be the best bank, accepting foreign cards in most of their ATMs.

While in Morocco you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs, tips and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in Moroccan Dirham. It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ

greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

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## 22. What to take

**Luggage:** Small or medium sized suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Morocco. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will often be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips - you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

**Luggage limits:** There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

**Clothing:** The Moroccan climate varies according to season and region. The coast has a warm, Mediterranean climate tempered on the eastern coast by southwest trade winds. Inland areas have a hotter, drier, continental climate. In the south of the country, the weather is very hot and dry throughout most of the year, though temperatures can drop dramatically at night, especially in desert and mountains and in the months of December and January. Rain falls from November to March in coastal areas, and the rest of the country is mostly dry with high temperatures in summer and a cooler climate in the mountains. Marrakech and Agadir enjoy an average temperature of 21°C (70°F) in the winter. So, depending the time of year you are visiting you should pack for both hot and cooler conditions. Modesty rates highly in Morocco, especially for women, so to respect the local culture & people, please ensure all clothes are loose fitting and not revealing. Shorts (not hot-pants) are OK in tourist sites, as are T-shirts, but these should not show too much bare flesh (we suggest that your shoulders should remain covered). In the centre of towns and cities outside tourist areas, and when visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

**Other items:** If your tour includes a Berber desert camp then all bedding is provided. However, as sand has a nasty habit of getting everywhere, for comfort, we recommend bringing a light sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner all year round, and a light sleeping bag in the winter months (November to February) when it can get very cold in the desert. We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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