

# Moroccan Highlights

**Country(ies):** Morocco

**Tour type:** Small Group

**Transport:** AC Minivan, Minibus or 4x4

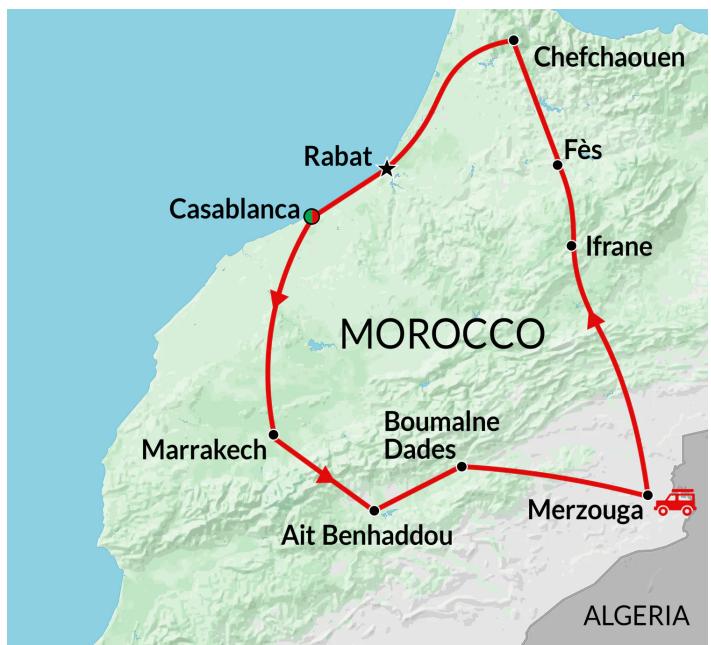
**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 16

**Days:** 9 days

**Start Location:** Casablanca, Morocco

**End Location:** Casablanca, Morocco

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 8, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 4



## Highlights:

Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca; Rabat Royal Palace; Chefchaouen Blue City, Medina, tanneries in Fes; Atlas Mountains; Erg Chebbi Saharan sand dunes; Camel trek & Berber desert camp, Ait Benhaddou

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive in Casablanca, transfer to hotel

Welcome to Morocco! We will meet you on your arrival in Casablanca airport and transfer you to the hotel. Your time is then free to relax by the hotel pool, or explore Casablanca a little independently if you arrive early. We will then have a welcome meeting with the tour guide at 6.00pm where you will meet your fellow travellers. If you arrive late and miss this meeting then we will make the introductions again tomorrow morning. Dinner is included in the hotel tonight.

**OVERNIGHT:** Casablanca hotel

**MEALS:** Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 2: Head to Marrakech. Optional city tour

After breakfast there is an optional yet highly recommended visit to the Hassan II Mosque before we head south via the highway towards bustling Marrakech, with a coffee stop on the way. Admire the landscape before we check in to our hotel in the red city..

After settling into your hotel, the afternoon is yours to unwind by the pool or continue exploring independently. You might consider booking our guided city tour, indulging in a relaxing hammam spa and massage, or visiting the enchanting Majorelle Gardens.

During your time here, you won't want to miss Marrakech's iconic landmark, the rose-hued Koutoubia Mosque, standing tall at 77 meters. Its tower, reminiscent of the Hassan Tower in Rabat and the Giralda Tower in Seville, graces the edge of the medina.

To truly experience Marrakech, a visit to the UNESCO-listed medina and Djemaa el-Fna square is essential. This bustling hub of activity is a captivating spectacle, teeming with snake charmers, musicians, henna artists, spice vendors, and souvenir stalls. Here, we'll spend the evening, where you can immerse yourselves in the city's vibrant atmosphere.

**OVERNIGHT:** Marrakech hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 3: To Boumalne Dades via Ait Benhaddou

Today, our adventure begins with a scenic drive across the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, culminating in the ancient village of Ait Benhaddou. This historic village was once a vital stopping point for caravans, and its unique architecture has made it a UNESCO World Heritage site and a popular filming location for international movies such as "Gladiator," "Prince of Persia," and "Game of Thrones."

Nearby, we'll explore Ouarzazate, a city in southern Morocco known as the "Hollywood of North Africa" due to its numerous film studios.

Continuing our journey, we'll pass through the picturesque Roses Valley, a lush region known for its fragrant damaskina roses. Each year, locals celebrate the rose harvest with a vibrant festival. Our day concludes in Boumalne Dades, a charming town nestled amidst stunning scenery, where we'll spend the night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Boumalne Dades hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 4: Visit the Todra Gorge before a camel trek into the Sahara**

Today, we bid farewell to the Dades Valley and journey eastward to the Todra Gorge. Amidst the palm groves of this oasis, we'll enjoy a leisurely stroll and marvel at the impressive gorges.

Next, we set our sights on the majestic Erg Chebbi dunes of Merzouga, where we'll embark on a camel trek into the vast Sahara Desert. As the sun dips below the horizon, we'll witness the desert's breathtaking transformation.

Our evening unfolds in an authentic Berber Camp on the desert's edge. Here, we'll savor local cuisine, be enchanted by traditional music, and relish a magical night beneath the twinkling Saharan stars.

Please note that to ensure the well being of camels used on this tour, we have the following policies in place:

- Our camels are only used for approximately 1 hour, once per day.
- Camels are free to roam throughout the day and have access to food and water.
- No camels younger than 4 years old are used for camel rides.
- We have a policy of only 1 rider per camel.
- All camels are regularly vet checked.

**OVERNIGHT:** Berber desert camp

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 5: Drive to Fes via Ziz Valley, High Atlas and Ifrane. Keep your eyes peeled for Macaques.**

Following breakfast, our journey takes us through Errachidia and the Ziz Valley, renowned for its abundant date palms. We then traverse the High and Middle Atlas Mountains, a natural barrier between the Sahara Desert and the country's interior.

En route, we'll pause at the Cedar Forest to observe the playful Barbary macaque apes. Our next stop is the charming alpine town of Ifrane, a former French colonial retreat.

Finally, we reach Fes, Morocco's ancient capital, where we'll settle in for the night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Fes hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## **Day 6: Full day exploring Fes**

Considered the largest and oldest medieval city in the world by many, Fes is over 1,200 years old and is famous for its busy Medina. Home to 400,000 inhabitants this is packed with narrow winding streets, mosques, souks and is a heady mix of sights, smells and sounds. We'll spend plenty of time exploring the Medina, seeing various palaces and mosques (which non-Muslims will not be able to enter), and many different crafts on sale. Our guided tour will also include the Fes's famous dye-pits and tanneries, as well as a traditional Moroccan pharmacy and pottery. Finally we'll return to our hotel to relax after a long day of walking and exploring. This evening there is the option for a traditional meal inside the city with live Moroccan entertainment including music, belly dancing and magicians.

**OVERNIGHT:** Fes hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 7: Head to the Blue City of Chefchaouen

This morning we travel on to explore Chefchaouen, a haven of peace and tranquility. High up in the Rif mountains, Chefchaouen is a beautiful blue door and white-walled medina that was originally a Berber post. The main square is the heart of Chefchaouen, with the Kasbah (built back in the 18th century), central mosque and cafes with great local food. You can explore the busy market in a relaxed atmosphere.

Whilst in Chefchaouen, there will be the opportunity to participate in an optional cooking class, which can be booked via your tour guide.

**OVERNIGHT:** Chefchaouen hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 8: Explore Rabat en-route to Casablanca

Setting out early today, we journey south to Rabat, Morocco's official capital. Upon arrival, we'll embark on a guided tour of the city, exploring prominent landmarks such as the Hassan Tower and the Mausoleum of King Mohamed V and his son, Hassan II.

Next, we'll venture into the Oudaya Kasbah, a historic fortress that once served as a bulwark against European incursions. After enjoying a delicious lunch in Rabat, we continue to Casablanca.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 9: Tour ends in Casablanca

Your Moroccan tour with us ends after breakfast today and your time is free until you depart. Our guide or the hotel will help you arrange a taxi for the short drive to the airport, or you can add extra days to explore Casablanca further if you wish.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:****Included:**

- 24hr arrival airport transfer service
- Accommodation in 3-4 star hotels
- 1 night in an authentic Berber Desert Camp
- Transport by air conditioned 4x4 or minibus
- Meals: 8 breakfasts, 4 dinners including a Berber camp dinner
- Guided tour of Ait Benhaddou, Fes & Rabat & Chefchaouen
- English speaking tour guide, plus driver
- Sahara camel trek

**Excluded:**

- International flights
- Travel insurance (mandatory)
- Visas
- Tipping kitty - USD 60
- Departure Airport Transfer
- Tour guide tips
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks & personal expenses
- Optional activities

# 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.

## **Extra day in Morocco - pre-tour (EXSGMO)**

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## **Extra day in Morocco - post-tour (EXSGMO)**

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is not included, but can be easily arranged through your hotel or with the help of your tour guide. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## **Single room supplement**

Min numbers: 1

This tour is based on twin-share accommodation, with single bookers paired up with another traveller of the same sex in the group. If the final group make-up means that no room share is available, you do not need to pay this supplement. However, if you would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, then please add this option to your booking.

**Note:** Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

## **Locally Available Options (Moroccan Highlights)**

Min numbers: 1

The following options are available to arrange locally, while you are on the tour. Payment should be made through your tour guide.

- Guided city tour of Marrakech 3 hours (2-4 Pax 200 DH, 5-9 Pax 150 DH, 10 Pax 100 DH)
- Bahia Palace Entry Fee (100 DH)

- Hammam spa in Marrakech (prices from 150 DH)
- Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca (140 DH)
- Dinner and an Evening's Entertainment in Fes (300 DH)
- Cooking class in Chefchaouen (350 DH)

Note: As these are booked locally, your contract for the provision of these options is with the local provider, not with Encounters Travel.

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## 1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Moroccan 3 and 4-star level on this tour, plus a night in the desert. Here we stay at a simple, traditional Berber camp on the edge of the Erg Chebbi sand dunes. This is a great spot to enjoy sunrise and sunset over the Sahara. Accommodation is in a large shared Berber tent, or you can take your mattress outside and sleep under the stars. Blankets are provided but we recommend that you bring a sleeping bag for the colder winter months from November to April. Shared western-style flushing toilets are available.

Local hotel star ratings may vary slightly from international standards. Accommodation is based on double or twin en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will be given a private double room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing and optional single supplement charges for solo travellers on this tour (please note that the tent remains shared whilst in the desert when selecting the single room supplement option).

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## 2. Transport

Our trips can 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. The terrain, route taken and public transport options in Morocco mean that we use air conditioned private vehicles throughout this tour. These include AC minivans, minibuses or small coaches, appropriate to the size of the group. We always aim to leave a few spare seats to ensure it is comfortable for everyone.

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## 3. Group Makeup / Tour Leader / Guides

We are committed to maintaining small groups wherever possible as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. This tour therefore has a maximum size of 16 people.

The minimum number of travellers required for the tour to run is 2.

This is not a Family tour, and we therefore set the minimum age for travellers to join the tour at 15. There is no maximum age limit, but travellers need to be moderately fit and mobile.

An English speaking guide will accompany the group throughout the tour, along with the driver. We may also use specialist local guides to give extra information at some of the sites visited during the tour.

At Encounters Travel we aim to 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.

We may share this tour with travellers booking through other operators.

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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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