ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Moroccan Melodies

COUNTRY(IES)	Morocco
TOUR TYPE	Private
TRANSPORT	A/C minibus
GROUP SIZE	Min: 2 | Max: 14
DURATION	9 days
STARTS	Casablanca, Morocco
ENDS	Marrakech, Morocco
MEALS	Breakfasts - 8, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 3

TOUR ROUTE MAP **9 Days**



ROUTE: **Casablanca** (Start) → **Fes** → **Boikhlal** → **Dades Gorges** → **Skoura** → **Marrakesh** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca, Old city of Rabat, Ancient Meknes & Volubolis ruins, Medina at Fez, camel ride & Berber desert camp, Todra Gorge & Ouarzazate, World Heritage Site of Ait Benhaddhou, Berber villages and Marrakech

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive into Casablanca. Transfer to hotel

Land at Casablanca Airport and travel to your hotel in the city. After some time to rest and settle in, join the scheduled welcome meeting with the tour guide. The briefing provides orientation for the days ahead and allows you to ask practical questions before departure. The rest of the arrival period remains relaxed, giving you an easy introduction to Morocco’s largest city.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Casablanca Airport**
  Arrive at Casablanca Airport to start your Moroccan adventure. Meet your local representative, clear formalities, and transfer into the city.

- **Drive from Casablanca Airport to Casablanca City Hotel**
  Travel from Casablanca Airport to your city hotel by road. Get your first glimpse of Morocco's largest city as you drive through its busy streets.
- **Free Time in Casablanca**
  Relax at your hotel in Casablanca after your journey, perhaps by the pool or with a short stroll nearby. Use the time to rest and adjust before the tour starts fully.
- **Welcome Meeting with Tour Guide in Casablanca**
  Meet your tour guide and fellow travellers at an early evening welcome briefing in Casablanca. Go over the itinerary, ask questions, and get practical information for the days ahead.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Casablanca hotel	None	Single room supplement (MOSGME), Extra day in Casablanca - pre-tour

DAY 2 Casablanca, Rabat, Volubolis & Meknes

Start the day early with a visit, from the outside, to the impressive Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca, the seventh largest in the world and home to the highest minaret, in an amazing location right on the edge of the sea. Head next to Morocco’s nearby capital, Rabat, also strategically located on the Atlantic coastline, which began as a settlement in the third century BC, and enjoy a tour of the old city including the Royal Palace, the Ouadaya Garden and Kasbah, and the Hassan Tower Mosque. Continue to the ancient Roman city of Volubilis, recently listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and dating back as far as AD40, home to some of the most impressive Roman ruins in North Africa. Finally, visit the Berber town of Meknes, formerly the capital of Morocco during the reign of Moulay Ismail, who transformed the town with intricate gateways, beautiful gardens and, at 40m, the largest ramparts in the country. The day ends with the short drive to Fez, where free time offers a gentle first encounter with the city before you spend the night.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca**
  Visit the impressive Hassan II Mosque from the outside, spectacularly located on the Atlantic shoreline. Admire its vast size, intricate decoration and towering minaret.
- **Drive from Casablanca to Rabat**
  Leave Casablanca and drive up the Atlantic coast to Rabat, Morocco's capital city. Enjoy changing views of coastline and suburbs along the way.
- **Explore Rabat City Tour**
  Tour central Rabat to see the Hassan Tower and the Mausoleum of King Mohammed V and King Hassan II, and continue into the Oudaya Kasbah, the historic fortress above the Bou Regreg with its Andalusian gardens. Learn about their importance in modern Moroccan history and admire the ceremonial architecture.
- **Drive from Rabat to Volubilis**
  Travel inland from Rabat toward the Roman ruins of Volubilis. Pass through rural landscapes and small towns en

route.

- **Explore Volubilis**
  Visit the UNESCO-listed ruins of Volubilis, one of North Africa's finest Roman sites. Walk among mosaics, columns and ancient streets that reveal the life of this provincial city.
- **Drive from Volubilis to Meknes**
  Drive a short distance from Volubilis to the historic city of Meknes. Arrive in one of Morocco's former imperial capitals.
- **Explore Meknes City Highlights**
  See Meknes, the Berber city transformed by Sultan Moulay Ismail into a royal capital. Admire its monumental gates, high ramparts and elegant gardens.
- **Drive from Meknes to Fez**
  Continue by road from Meknes to Fez, another of Morocco's imperial cities. Settle in for your first night in this historic cultural centre.
- **Free Time in Fez**
  Enjoy free time in Fez to relax at your hotel or take a short walk nearby. Get an initial impression of the city before tomorrow's full exploration.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Fez hotel	Breakfast

DAY 3 Fez, city tour

Over 1,200 years old, the city of Fez is a labyrinth of souks, mosques and spice filled streets. Delve into its fascinating history on a full tour encompassing the Moulay Idriss mausoleum, the Nejjarine fountain and the Bou Anania Medersa, then spend time confusing your senses in the cacophony of noise surrounding the heady alleyways of the Medieval Medina, home to tanneries, carpet shops and local restaurants, before heading to Fez Jdid to explore the city’s many varied souks. Free time later in the day allows for personal discovery, inviting deeper immersion into the atmosphere and traditions that make Fez one of Morocco’s most iconic destinations. This holdings centres on the medina’s winding streets, artisan workshops and historic landmarks, revealing the city’s enduring role as a cultural and spiritual hub within a UNESCO-listed urban landscape.

ACTIVITIES

- **Visit Fez Medina and City Tour**
  Explore the medieval medina of Fes on a guided tour through its narrow streets and crowded souks. Visit viewpoints, religious buildings from the outside, and neighbourhoods where traditional crafts are still practised.
- **Free Time in Fez**
  Enjoy free time in Fez to relax at your hotel or take a short walk nearby. Get an initial impression of the city before tomorrow's full exploration.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Fez hotel	Breakfast

DAY 4 Across the mountains to the Sahara

From Ifrane, the route travels south through the Ziz Valley, where palm groves and layered landscapes lead towards Erfoud and Merzouga. A camel trek then continues into the dunes of Erg Chebbi and towards a Berber desert camp for the night. The journey provides a striking transition from Morocco's higher inland regions to the open landscapes of the Sahara.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Fez to Ifrane**
  Leave Fez and drive into the Middle Atlas Mountains toward Ifrane. Watch the urban landscape give way to forests and highland scenery.
- **Explore Ifrane Town**
  Take a short walk in Ifrane, known for its tidy streets and European-style architecture. Notice how different it feels from the desert and medina cities you have visited so far.
- **Drive from Ifrane to Erfoud via Ziz Valley**
  Continue across the mountains and descend through the scenic Ziz Valley toward Erfoud. Enjoy views of gorges and palm-filled oases along this ancient caravan route.
- **Drive from Erfoud to Merzouga**
  Travel from Erfoud on the edge of the Sahara to the desert settlement of Merzouga. The scenery becomes increasingly arid as you approach the sand dunes.
- **Drive from Merzouga to Erg Chebbi Desert Camp**
  Transfer by 4WD through the desert from Merzouga to your Berber camp by the Erg Chebbi dunes. Experience the vast open spaces and shifting sands of the Sahara.
- **Camel Trek in Erg Chebbi**
  Join a camel trek into the Erg Chebbi dunes near Merzouga, riding across soft sand as the light changes. Experience the quiet of the desert and stop to watch the sunset over the dunes.
- **Free Time in Berber Desert Camp**
  Spend the evening at a Berber desert camp on the edge of the dunes. Enjoy dinner, a campfire and often traditional music under a sky full of stars.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Berber desert camp	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 5 Drive to Dades via Tinghir and the Todra Gorge

Travel from the desert towards Tinghir and pass through its palm-filled surroundings before continuing to Todra Gorge. Afterwards, follow the road through Dades Canyon and experience a succession of cliffs, unusual rock formations and mountain villages. Reaching the guesthouse in the Dades Valley brings the organised travel to a close, with the remaining time free to rest and enjoy the quieter highland setting.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Berber Desert Camp to Tinghir**
  Leave the desert camp and travel back by vehicle toward the town of Tinghir. Watch the dunes and rocky plains give way to palm-filled valleys.
- **Visit Tinghir Palm Groves and Todra Gorge**
  Explore the oasis town of Tinghir and walk through its extensive palm groves. Continue into the dramatic Todra Gorge, a narrow canyon with towering rock walls and a river running below.
- **Drive from Tinghir to Dades Canyon**
  Drive from Tinghir into the Dades Valley and canyon. Follow a steep, winding road with many switchbacks that reveal striking views of cliffs and the river.
- **Explore Dades Canyon Scenic Drive**
  Discover the scenery of the Dades Canyon with its colourful rock formations and deep valley. Stop at viewpoints to appreciate the rugged landscape shaped by water and time.
- **Free Time in Dades Valley Guesthouse**
  Relax at your guesthouse in the Dades Valley after a day of travel and walking. Enjoy the quiet setting and mountain views.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Deluxe guesthouse or small hotel	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 6 Dades to Skoura and the Valley of the Roses

The route through the Dades Valley is also known as the Road of One Thousand Kasbahs, and you'll catch a spectacular view of a vast valley dotted with small oases and hundreds of ancient fortifications. The sand-coloured walls of the kasbahs may all start to look the same, but each holds a special historical treasure within and offers innumerable opportunities for remarkable photos. Meet Berber nomads in their caves and travel through the fertile Rose Valley, perhaps stopping briefly at Kalaat M'gouna, "the rose city", to purchase rosewater before arriving in Skoura. A quiet little village speckled with palm tree groves, Skoura is surrounded by acres of palm groves, les palmeraies, a paradise of palm and olive trees dotted with kasbahs and small villages, and this is where you find Kasbah Amridil, a kasbah that stands out from the rest. Originally built in the 17th century, it is one of Morocco's most iconic living museums and has withstood the test of time, making it the ideal setting for an insight into the ancient traditions of kasbah life. If you wish, and time allows, you can also take a short hike to a spot overlooking the valley and the old salt mines. Finally, explore the Skoura Oasis and stroll for an hour in the gardens on the north side of the town past almond and olive trees, before dinner and overnight at a beautiful guesthouse.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Dades Valley to Rose Valley**
  Depart the Dades Valley and drive along the Road of One Thousand Kasbahs toward the Rose Valley. See scattered villages, fields and mud-brick fortifications along the way.
- **Explore Roses Valley**
  Stop at viewpoints in the Roses Valley, famous for its fragrant damask roses and annual harvest festival. Enjoy

the contrast between green fields in the valley and rugged mountains around them.

- **Drive from Rose Valley to Skoura**
  Continue from the Rose Valley to the oasis village of Skoura. Arrive among palm groves and small villages dotted with kasbahs.
- **Explore Kasbah Amridil in Skoura**
  Visit Kasbah Amridil, a 17th-century ksar that serves as a living museum of kasbah life. Explore its towers, courtyards and traditional rooms to gain insight into local history.
- **Explore Skoura Oasis Gardens Walk**
  Take a walk through the Skoura Oasis, passing gardens, almond trees and olive groves. Enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of this palm-filled valley.
- **Free Time in Skoura Guesthouse**
  Unwind at your guesthouse in Skoura after a full day of sightseeing. Appreciate the quiet rural surroundings and clear evening skies.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Skoura deluxe guesthouse	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 7 Ouarzazate, Ait Benhaddou and the Atlas Mountains

In Ouarzazate, visit Taourirt Kasbah and Atlas Film Studios before continuing to Ait Benhaddou, whose earthen fortifications recall the caravan routes of southern Morocco. The route then crosses the High Atlas via the Tizi n'Tichka Pass and descends towards Marrakech, combining architectural heritage, cinema associations and mountain travel in a varied journey across the region.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Skoura to Ouarzazate**
  Drive a short distance from Skoura to Ouarzazate, a key crossroads town at the edge of the Sahara. Approach a city framed by the Atlas Mountains.
- **Explore Taourirt Kasbah in Ouarzazate**
  Visit Taourirt Kasbah, a sprawling citadel with hundreds of rooms and courtyards. Explore its maze of corridors and enjoy views toward Lake El Mansour Eddahbi and the surrounding area.
- **Explore Atlas Film Studios in Ouarzazate**
  Tour the film studios of Ouarzazate, where many international movies and TV series have been shot. See sets and props that illustrate the town's role as the “Hollywood of Morocco.”
- **Drive from Ouarzazate to Ait Benhaddou**
  Travel from Ouarzazate to the nearby fortified village of Ait Benhaddou. Follow a route lined with palm groves and traditional earthen villages.
- **Explore Ait Benhaddou**
  Visit the ancient ksar of Ait Benhaddou, a fortified village of earthen buildings perched on a hillside. Walk its narrow lanes and learn how this UNESCO World Heritage site became a backdrop for many films.

- **Drive from Ait Benhaddou to Marrakech via Tizi n'Tichka Pass**
  Cross the High Atlas Mountains from Ait Benhaddou to Marrakech via the Tizi n'Tichka Pass at 2,260 metres. Enjoy dramatic mountain and valley vistas on one of Morocco's most scenic drives.
- **Free Time in Marrakech Evening**
  Arrive in Marrakech and enjoy a free evening to relax or take a first look at the city. You might choose to visit the main square or simply rest at your hotel.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Marrakech hotel	Breakfast

DAY 8 Marrakech city tour

Spend the day discovering Marrakech through a guided city tour before visiting Djemaa el-Fna and the surrounding medina. The sightseeing introduces important architecture and historic areas, while the square provides a more contemporary view of everyday city life. Afterwards, enjoy free time to explore the medina independently or relax, with no additional organised activities specified beyond the main city visits.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Marrakech City Tour**
  Discover Marrakech on a guided city tour, starting in the medina and seeing landmarks such as the Koutoubia minaret, Dar Si Said Museum and the Bahia Palace. Learn about the city's architecture and history as you explore.
- **Explore Djemaa el in Fna Square**
  Visit Djemaa el-Fna, Marrakech's famous central square filled with stalls and street life. By day it hosts juice sellers and performers, and in the evening it transforms into a lively open-air food market.
- **Free Time in Marrakech Medina**
  Spend free time exploring Marrakech's souks and medina lanes at your own pace. This is an ideal opportunity to shop for spices, textiles and souvenirs or relax in a traditional café.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Marrakech hotel	Breakfast

DAY 9 Marrakech, free time, transfer to the airport for departure

Spend the first part of the day at leisure in Marrakech and make your own plans according to your flight time. There are no organised sightseeing activities before departure, so you can rest or explore independently. Later, drive from the hotel to Marrakech Airport and complete the final supported transfer of your Morocco trip before continuing with your onward journey.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Marrakech**
  Enjoy free time in Marrakech to relax at the hotel or explore at your own pace. You may choose to wander nearby streets, browse local shops, or simply unwind by the pool.
- **Drive from Marrakech City Hotel to Marrakech Airport**
  Travel from your Marrakech hotel to the airport for your departure flight. Say farewell to Morocco as you head to the terminal.
- **Depart from Marrakech Airport**
  Depart from Marrakech Menara Airport at the end of your Moroccan Melodies Tour. Board your flight with memories of imperial cities, kasbahs, desert dunes and mountain passes.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/A	Breakfast	Marrakech hot air balloon flight, Marrakech quad-biking, Ourika Valley half day tour, Essaouira day trip, Extra day in Marrakech - post-tour

INCLUDED

- Accommodation in mainly 4-star level and boutique style hotels, and a comfortable Berber desert camp
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of an experienced English speaking local tour leader/driver
- Specialist local guides for sightseeing tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrances fees to monuments as stated

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (not required for many nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Hotel Gala Dinners

Many of Morocco's hotels arrange a very special gala dinner with entertainment in the evening on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Payment for these is often 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$50 to over US$150 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 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. More information is available on request.

Tour Options

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 Casablanca - pre-tour

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.

Single room supplement (MOSGME)

Min numbers: 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

Extra day in Marrakech - post-tour

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) on a bed & breakfast basis. Your airport departure transfer is not included and will be charged as an additional supplement if required based on the number of people in your party. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Marrakech - post-tour

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) on a bed & breakfast basis. Your airport departure transfer is not included and will be charged as an additional supplement if required based on the number of people in your party. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Marrakech quad-biking

Min numbers: 1

This is an exciting half day tour in the desert and countryside outside of Marrakech. You drive for around 50km, with a tea break included, and take in some sand dunes and villages en-route. Prices are available for one or two people sharing a quad-bike. This tour fits in very well after the hot air balloon option.

Note: you will miss the Marrakech city tour if you choose this option.

Essaouira day trip

Min numbers: 1

A day trip is available from Marrakech to the coastal town of Essaouira (approx. 2 ½ hrs drive each way). This is a lovely laid back town with a great beach for kite surfing and wind surfing (tends to be a bit windy for sunbathing), great shopping and lovely streets to explore or to relax in the cafes and restaurants. This option starts at 07:30 and ends at 18:00, and the price is based on a minimum of 2 and includes all transportation and a guide.

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Moroccan 3 and 4-star level on this tour (except the desert berber camp where we stay for 1 night amidst the sand dunes). Local 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.

At the Berber desert camp out in the sand dunes, comfortable permanent Berber tents with mattresses and traditional local blankets are provided. You do not need to bring a sleeping bag, but we do recommend bringing a sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner for extra comfort. Shared toilet facilities are available.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

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. The terrain and public transport options in Morocco mean that we use air conditioned private vehicles throughout this tour. These include cars, minibuses or coaches subject to the size of the group. We switch to 4x4 vehicles for your desert safari.

3 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In Morocco we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for the sightseeing tours in the main destinations (eg. Marrakech, Fez, Rabat, Casablanca). An English speaking tour leader/driver also accompanies the group throughout the 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.

4 Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.

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.

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

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.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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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).

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.

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.

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 many of 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 administred 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 USD2-3 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.

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 vacinnation is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted 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.

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 (70ºF) 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.
