

## Moroccan Mosaics

**Country(ies):** Morocco

**Tour type:** Small Group

**Transport:** AC minibus & 4x4 vehicle

**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 14

**Days:** 9 Days

**Start location:** Marrakech, Morocco

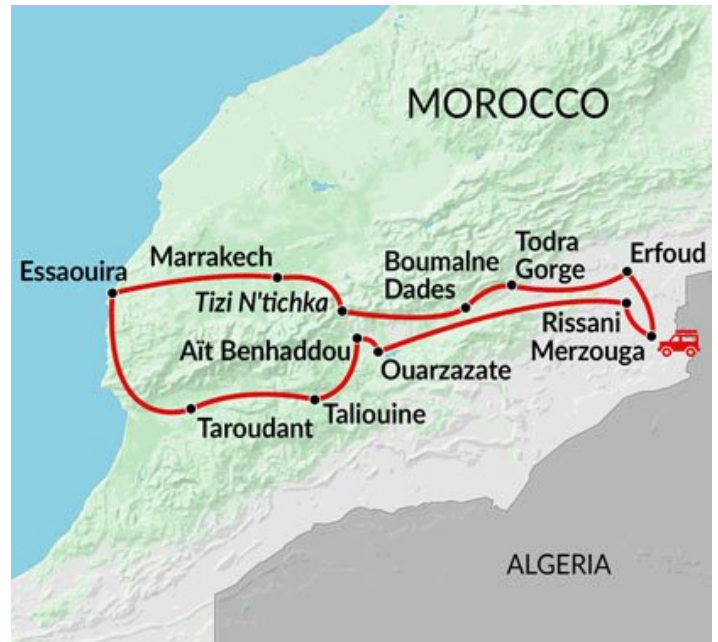
**End location:** Marrakech, Morocco

**Departs On:** Saturday

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 2

**Highlights:** Djemaa El Fna Square in Marrakech, Todra Gorge, Dades Canyon, Berber Desert Camp, Dramatic Ouarzazate, Ait Benhaddou, Taroudant and Essaouira

**Places Visited:** Marrakech, Boumalne Dades, Tinghir, Erfoud, Merzouga, Rissani, Ouarzazate, Taliouine, Taroudant & Essaouira



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive into 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 before the tour starts are available on request.

If you arrive early enough, you can head into Marrakech's famous Djemaa el Fna Square for a first taste of Moroccan food at one of the main street stalls, while watching the many street performers and salesmen offering their wares.

**OVERNIGHT:** Marrakech hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Single room supplement (MOSGMM) || Extra day in Marrakech - pre-tour

## Day 2: Marrakech, city tour

Today's tour of Marrakech begins with a trip to the iconic Koutoubia Mosque, home to the minaret which has become a symbol of the city. We then visit the Mausoleum and Bahia Palace which both host intricate and beautiful Arabic craftsmanship. Then we head to the lively souks and bazaars in Marrakech's famous medina. Home to many different types of traders these narrow and winding streets are bustling with activity and full of sights sounds and smells uniquely Moroccan. Today's tour ends at the lively Djemaa El Fna Square.

**OVERNIGHT:** Marrakech hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Atlas Mountains, Tizi N'Tichka Col, Dades Canyon

After breakfast this morning we enjoy a spectacular drive across the Tizi N'tichka col which at 2,260m is the highest pass in Northern Africa. You'll get great views of the Atlas mountains, with many of the tops covered with snow for much of the year. We then descend and pass Ouarzazate, or 'place of no noise'. An incredibly dramatic landscape, this area has played host to countless well known films. Our final highlight today is a drive through the Dades Canyon with its steep winding access road with numerous switchbacks providing great views of the steep cliffs and the river below which rushes dramatically through the gorge, especially in the spring when the mountain snows are melting. We finish today in Tinghir where we spend the night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Tinghir hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Todra Gorge, Berber desert camp, sunset camel ride

Our next taste of dramatic Moroccan scenery comes at the Todra Gorge close to Tinghir, where we'll stop for a short hike along the valley floor with rocky cliffs towering above us on both sides. We then continue along the 'road of a thousand Kasbahs' to Erfoud before switching into 4WD vehicles to travel to Merzouga and through the Erg Chebbi sand desert to a traditional Berber camp amidst the dunes. Here a sunset camel ride is included plus a walk to the top of some of the dunes for spectacular views as the sun sinks below the horizon. You'll enjoy a hearty Bedouin meal and a campfire this evening, often with local musicians helping enhance the atmosphere, before sleeping in comfortable Berber camel-hair tents.

**OVERNIGHT:** Berber camp

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 5: Draa Valley, Ouarzazate, Ait Benhaddou**

After breakfast with our Berber hosts we head out of the dunes and drive back to Rissani and the birthplace of the Alaouita Dynasty. We leave our 4WD vehicles here and drive to Erfoud. Lodged in an idyllic setting between the Atlas mountains to the north and the Sahara desert to the south, Erfoud is the administrative capital of the region. We continue back along the Road of a Thousand Kasbahs through the Draa Valley to Ouarzazate where we spend the night. While in Ouarzazate we include a tour of the movie studios that have taken advantage of the amazing scenery in the area. Some of the most famous films that have been shot from the Atlas Studios here include Lawrence of Arabi, The Living Daylights, The Last Temptation of Christ, The Man who would be King, The Mummy, Gladiator, Asterix & Obelisk, Kingdom of Heaven, Kundun, Legionnaire, Hanna, and Salmon Fishing in the Yemen (2011), as well as part of the TV series Game of Thrones. Our final visit today is to Morocco's most well known Kasbah at the UNESCO world heritage site of Ait Benhaddou. This is a huge fortified city (ksar - a group of earthen buildings surrounded by high walls), with houses and kasbahs crowding together inside the defensive walls, an excellent example of traditional Moroccan earthen clay architecture.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ouarzazate hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 6: Taliouine Kasbah, Taroudant walled market town**

Our drive today skirts the foothills of the Atlas mountains with some great views to our right hand side, stopping for a break en-route to see the Kasbah at Taliouine and to learn about the production of saffron, the world's most expensive spice, which takes place in only this area in Morocco. If we're lucky we'll see some of Morocco's famous tree climbing goats before we arrive in Taroudant this evening. These goats have learned to climb the local Argan trees in search of the fruit and nuts inside. Taroudant is a large walled Berber market town, and its souqs are reputed to be the best in the south with some excellent local crafts on sale. As you are off the main tourist trail here, you'll get a much more authentic glimpse of everyday life, as well as finding better value in the markets than in Marrakech. The town walls are some of the longest and best preserved in Morocco, with their mud construction changing colour atmospherically as the day progresses - they're best seen in the early evening. You'll have some free time here in Taroudant to explore the souqs, and walk along the walls.

**OVERNIGHT:** Taroudant hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 7: Agadir, coastal drive to Essaouira**

We head to the coast today with our first stop at Morocco's main resort town of Agadir. We'll take a short tour of the harbour and the famous High Kasbah, destroyed by the earthquake of 1960, before continuing along the coast towards the North Atlantic coastal town of Essaouira. Well regarded as one of Morocco's most beautiful areas,

Essaouira has always attracted and inspired artists, drawn by its good light and tranquil, relaxed way of life. Wandering around the old Medina and its fascinating streets dotted with art galleries it's not hard to imagine why the city drew visitors such as Orson Welles and Jimi Hendrix throughout the years. Essaouira has a wide sandy beach, though the prevailing winds and currents mean this is more of a mecca for kite surfers than for swimming or sunbathing.

**OVERNIGHT:** Essaouira hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Essaouira, free time, drive to Marrakech

The first half of the day is free today to explore Essaouira further. You could visit the working port with its busy fish auction market and traditional wooden boat builders; explore the craft stalls and shops in the walled Medina which is UNESCO World Heritage listed and a great example of late 18th century European fortifications in Africa; take a boat trip to the nearby island of Mogador which is a nature reserve popular with birdwatchers; try a windsurfing or kitesurfing lesson from the beach; or just explore randomly at your leisure. While you're here it's also well worth having a meal at one of Essaouira's well known fish stalls, where a wide range of local freshly caught fish and seafood are displayed, ready to be cooked in front of you and served with bread and salad. After lunch we drive back to Marrakech (approx. 2 1/2 hours) for a final evening in this chaotic and busy city.

**OVERNIGHT:** Marrakech hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Marrakech hot air balloon flight || Marrakech quad-biking

## Day 9: Marrakech, free time, transfer to the airport

Your day is free today to explore Marrakech further, and perhaps do some final souvenir shopping and sightseeing before we transfer you to the airport for your departure flight. Subject to your flight time, we can also offer a range of day trips and excursions, including a spectacular hot air balloon flight.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Marrakech hot air balloon flight || Marrakech quad-biking || Ourika Valley half-day tour || Extra day in Marrakech - post-tour

## Included

- Accommodation in 3 and 4-star hotels as per the itinerary
- Overnight Berber desert camp
- Jeep safari and sunset camel ride
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Professional local English speaking tour guide throughout
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrances fees to sites visited in the itinerary

## Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (not required for most nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)

- 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 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.

# 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.

## Single room supplement (MOSGMM)

**Min numbers:** 2 Adults

**Price:** \$265.00

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:** The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

## Extra day in Marrakech - post-tour

**Min numbers:** 1 Adult

**Price:** \$40.00

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 - pre-tour

**Min numbers:** 1 Adult

**Price:** \$70.00

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), staying on a bed & breakfast basis. Your airport arrival 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.

# Tour Notes

## 1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Moroccan 4-star level on this tour (except Taroudant which is 3-star). Local star ratings may vary slightly from international standards. However, we're confident you'll be impressed by the quality of the hotels used. Accommodation is based on double or twin en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will be given a private double room. Single travellers may choose to pay a single room supplement to guarantee themselves a single room throughout the tour. Alternatively, they may choose to share a twin room with another traveller of the same sex. If there are no other single travellers available to pair up with at the time of your booking, then we will need to add the single supplement to the tour price, but will refund this or deduct it from your balance payment if we are able to pair you up later on.

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. Shared toilet facilities are available.

## 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 private vehicles throughout this tour, including a 4x4 for your desert safari.

## 3. Transfers

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.

Your airport transfers 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.

## 4. 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 tab. Airlines may vary on these packages, and baggage fees may be subject to an extra fee. Please check the Inclusions/Exclusions section for details.

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.

## **5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides**

We are committed to being a small group operator 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. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set these tour departures to have a maximum of 20 travellers per guide.

The minimum number of travellers required for the tour to run is 4. If there are only 2 or 3 people in the group then those travellers will be offered the opportunity to still do the tour but to pay a supplement of GBP150 per person. This will be refunded should the group size increase closer to departure (this is very rarely an issue as this is one of our most popular tours).

In Morocco we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. Our local reps in all the towns and cities en-route are also at your service, and will be handling all the practical arrangements for the tour.

At Encounters Travel we only use local Moroccan guides and reps. 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.

## **6. 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.

## **7. Tipping**

Haggling is a traditional necessity, so never pay too much regard to initial prices. Instead fix an items 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.

Bahsis (bahk-sheesh) or tips are common place and customary in Morocco. Wages for service staff are very low and tips are a necessary supplement to meagre incomes.

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in Morocco, tipping is always optional, and the amounts paid

should reflect excellent service. We are often asked for advice on common amounts, and for assistance with tipping. Some suggested guidelines are given below.

**Restaurants and taxis:** Local markets and basic restaurants - leave the loose change. More up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill.

**Local guides:** Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your tour guide. We suggest USD 2-3 per person per day for local guides.

**Drivers:** You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group however USD 2 per person per day is generally appropriate.

**Tour Guides:** To answer your next question. . . as a guideline we suggest for your tour guide between USD 25-40 per person for the entire tour, but ultimately, it's up to your satisfaction with their service and your budget. You should not feel pressured to tip any particular amount.

Note - if you are doing a private tour and not joining a group, then you should budget a higher amount for your driver and guide tips.

## 8. 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.

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 may be 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 a [World Health Organisation map](#) of areas where the virus is present in monkeys and therefore a potential risk to humans. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

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.

## 9. 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.

## 10. 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.

## 11. 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.

## 12. 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.

## 13. 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.

## 14. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Saturday throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run if a minimum of 4 travellers is reached. If we do not reach this minimum number, we will offer you the option to either pay a small supplement to do the tour exactly as planned, change your departure date (or destination) or provide you with a full refund. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and in our brochure. Please check the website for the most up-to-date prices and any special offers.

## 15. 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.

## 16. 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). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

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.*

## 17. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour.

Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

## 18. 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).

## 19. 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)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](http://www.twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

## 20. 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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**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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