ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Souks, Sand Dunes & Surf

COUNTRY(IES)	Morocco
TOUR TYPE	Family
TRANSPORT	A/C minibus/coach & 4x4 jeeps
GROUP SIZE	Min: 2 | Max: 16
DURATION	12 days
STARTS	Marrakech, Morocco
ENDS	Marrakech, Morocco
MEALS	Breakfasts - 11, Lunches - 3, Dinners - 7

TOUR ROUTE MAP **12 Days**



ROUTE: **Marrakesh** (Start) → **Ait Benhaddou** → **Nkob** → **Erg Chebbi** → **Todra River** → **Ouarzazate** → **Marrakesh** → **Essaouira** → **Marrakesh** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Marrakech medina, Djemaa El Fna square, N'Kob berber oasis, Todra Gorge, Sahara Desert Berber Camp, Ait Benhaddou UNESCO site, Essaouira

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive in Marrakech. Transfer to hotel

Arrive at Marrakech Airport, where you are met and transferred to your hotel. Depending on your arrival time, relax by the hotel pool or explore Marrakech independently before meeting your tour guide and fellow travellers at 6.00pm. If you arrive after the meeting, introductions will be made the following morning. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Marrakech Airport**
  Arrive at Marrakech Airport and begin your journey through Morocco. Meet your local representative before transferring into the city.
- **Drive from Marrakech Airport to Marrakech City Hotel**
  Travel from the airport to your hotel in central Marrakech. Settle in and get your first impressions of the vibrant

Red City.

- **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.
- **Welcome Meeting with Tour Guide in Marrakech**
  Meet your guide and fellow travellers at the scheduled welcome meeting. Review the itinerary and receive practical information for the days ahead.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Marrakech hotel	Dinner	Single room supplement (FMOR12), Child discount - 5 to 16 years (DIMOSU)

DAY 2 Travel to Ait Benhaddou via Roses Valley and Atlas Mountains

Travel from Marrakech through Roses Valley and across the High Atlas towards Ait Benhaddou. The day is dominated by changing landscapes, moving from cultivated valley country into higher mountain passes before descending again towards the fortified settlement. A visit to the ksar provides the main cultural focus and introduces traditional earthen construction and the area’s historic connection with caravan travel.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Marrakech to Roses Valley**
  Depart Marrakech and travel through the scenic Road of the Roses Valley, famous for its rose cultivation and local products.
- **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 Roses Valley to High Atlas Mountains**
  Continue your journey through the dramatic High Atlas range on a route once used by African traders heading toward Europe.
- **Drive from High Atlas Mountains to Ait Benhaddou**
  Descend into the desert fringes around Ouarzazate and continue toward one of the region's most iconic fortified 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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Ait Benhaddou hotel	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 3 N'Kob Fortified Villages

Travel from Ait Benhaddou to N’Kob and explore the fortified settlements and kasbahs that characterise the area. Continue into the palmerie and see how agriculture has developed around the oasis environment, creating a striking contrast with the surrounding dry terrain. The remaining time is free, allowing you to rest or wander independently after the scheduled visits.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Ait Benhaddou to N'Kob**
  This journey travels from Ait Benhaddou through the scenic landscapes of southern Morocco toward N'Kob, passing rugged mountains, arid plains, and traditional Berber villages along the way. The route offers changing desert scenery and glimpses into remote rural life, with kasbahs and palm groves dotting the landscape. As you continue east, the terrain becomes increasingly dramatic, highlighting the transition into the Draa Valley region. This drive provides a visual contrast between historic fortified settlements and the vast openness of Morocco's desert interior.
- **Explore N'Kob Fortified Villages**
  Discover N'Kob's collection of 45 mudbrick ksouars at the foot of the Jebel Saghro mountains. Learn about the Ait Atta Nomads and their heritage.
- **Explore N'Kob Palmerie**
  Enjoy a peaceful walk through the lush palmerie and take in views of the surrounding mountains and traditional settlements.
- **Free Time in N'Kob**
  Spend the afternoon relaxing at the hotel or join an optional Moroccan cooking class. This is a calm break before heading deeper into southern Morocco.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
N'Kob hotel	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 4 Cross the Draa Valley to the Sahara. Camel Ride and Desert Camp

The route from N'Kob follows the Draa Valley through palm groves, earth-built settlements and mountain landscapes before the scenery gradually becomes more arid. Continue towards Erg Chebbi, where a camel trek enters the dunes and leads to a Berber desert camp for the night. The day creates a complete transition from Morocco's fertile oasis corridor into the open Sahara.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from N'Kob to Draa Valley**
  Travel through the Anti-Atlas and descend into the fertile Draa Valley, renowned for its date palms and fortified villages.

- **Explore Draa Valley**
  Stop to taste fresh dates and learn about the valley's long-standing agricultural traditions.
- **Drive from Draa Valley to Erg Chebbi**
  Continue toward the golden dunes of Erg Chebbi on the edge of the Sahara. The landscape shifts dramatically as you approach the desert.
- **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.
- **Stay Overnight at Berber Desert Camp**
  Stay at a Berber desert camp near the dunes and share a traditional dinner under the stars. Enjoy music around the fire and the rare chance to sleep in the Sahara's stillness.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Berber Desert Camp	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 5 Journey into the Todra Gorge

Leave the dunes around Erg Chebbi and travel towards Todra Gorge, where limestone walls rise more than 300 metres above the narrow valley in places. Spend time taking in the changing colours of the cliffs before enjoying a free afternoon. You can relax, walk through the gorge or palmerie, while optional rock climbing may be available for travellers over 16 if time permits and is not included as a guaranteed activity.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Erg Chebbi to Todra Gorge**
  Leave the Sahara and travel north toward the dramatic rock formations of Todra Gorge.
- **Explore Todra Gorge**
  Walk in the Todra Gorge, where high rock walls tower above a narrow valley floor. Enjoy an easy stroll among palm trees and streams while admiring the sheer cliffs.
- **Free Time in Todra Gorge**
  Use your free time in Todra Gorge to relax at the hotel or continue exploring the valley at your own pace. The setting is ideal for unwinding in nature after days of travel.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Todra Gorge hotel	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 6 Action!! Visit the movie studios of Ouarzazate

Spend the first part of the day in Todra Gorge before visiting a local carpet cooperative and learning more about traditional Berber weaving. The stop provides a cultural counterpoint to the surrounding mountain scenery and

offers insight into an important regional craft. Later, travel onwards to Ouarzazate as the landscape opens into the wider valleys and dry plains associated with southern Morocco.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Todra Gorge**
  Use your free time in Todra Gorge to relax at the hotel or continue exploring the valley at your own pace. The setting is ideal for unwinding in nature after days of travel.
- **Explore Berber Carpet Cooperative**
  Learn how Berber carpets are traditionally woven and enjoy lunch at a local cooperative. You may practise your bargaining skills if you wish to purchase a carpet.
- **Drive from Todra Gorge to Ouarzazate**
  Travel along the Dades and Skoura regions towards Ouarzazate, known as a gateway to the desert and the High Atlas. The road passes palm oases and kasbah-dotted landscapes.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Ouarzazate hotel	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 7 Return to Marrakech and explore Djemaa el Fna Square

Travel from Ouarzazate to Marrakech and return to the busy surroundings of the imperial city after time in Morocco’s south. Once there, spend time at Djemaa el-Fna and take in the markets, food stalls and everyday activity of the square. The visit provides the main cultural focus after the long drive and marks a clear change from the open landscapes and smaller settlements of the southern regions.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Ouarzazate to Marrakech**
  Cross the Atlas Mountains once again as you return toward Marrakech. The drive offers diverse scenery and mountain vistas.
- **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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Marrakech hotel	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 8 Marrakech free day (optional city tour)

Enjoy a full day at leisure in Marrakech, with the freedom to experience the city entirely at your own pace. Without any scheduled activities, time can be spent exploring historic neighbourhoods, relaxing in garden spaces, discovering modern districts, or simply soaking up the atmosphere. The open programme leaves room for both

independent discovery and a slower, more relaxed rhythm.

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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Marrakech hotel	Breakfast

DAY 9 Travel to the coastal town of Essaouira

The drive west from Marrakech crosses inland plains before the atmosphere changes with the approach to the Atlantic coast and Essaouira. Free time on arrival allows for independent exploration of the city's white-and-blue architecture, artistic medina and maritime surroundings. The relaxed pace provides a gentle contrast to Marrakech and an easy introduction to Morocco's Atlantic coast.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Marrakech to Essaouira**
  Leave Marrakech and drive to the Atlantic coast, passing varied countryside en route to Essaouira. Arrive in a historic port town framed by ramparts and beaches.
- **Free Time in Essaouira**
  Spend the rest of the day at leisure in Essaouira after checking into your hotel. You can relax by the ocean, browse artisan workshops or find a café in the medina.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Essaouira hotel	Breakfast

DAY 10 Essaouira Free day

Enjoy a full day at leisure in Essaouira and decide how active or relaxed you would like to be. The medina, fishing harbour, ramparts, craft shops and beachfront are all available for independent exploration, while those who prefer a quieter day can simply unwind by the Atlantic. There are no organised visits, giving you complete flexibility to spend your time according to your own interests.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Essaouira**
  Spend the rest of the day at leisure in Essaouira after checking into your hotel. You can relax by the ocean, browse artisan workshops or find a café in the medina.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Essaouira hotel	Breakfast

DAY 11

Return to Marrakech for one final night

Travel from Essaouira to Marrakech and make the transition from Morocco’s Atlantic coastline back to the interior. The drive ends in the country’s most energetic tourist centre, where the remaining time is free. You can rest after the journey or explore the medina and surrounding neighbourhoods independently, with no additional organised activities attached to the afternoon or evening.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Essaouira to Marrakech**
  Leave the coast and drive inland across plains and farmland to Marrakech. The road brings you to Morocco's famous ochre city at the foot of the High Atlas.
- **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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Marrakech hotel	Breakfast

DAY 12

Tour ends in Marrakech

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
N/A	Breakfast

INCLUDED

- 10 nights accommodation in 3 to 4-star hotels
- 1 nights in a traditional berber desert camp
- Transport in AC minibus/coach or 4x4
- 24-hour airport arrival transfer service
- English speaking tour leader throughout and specialist local guides
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (11 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 7 dinners)
- Entrances fees to monuments as stated

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Departure airport transfer service
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tipping kitty - 2026 - $75 USD, 2027 - $80 USD
- Tips for guides and drivers (not included in the tipping kitty)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Hotel Gala Dinners

Many of Morocco's higher level hotels arrange a very special gala dinner with entertainment in the evening on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Payment for these is normally optional on Christmas Eve (24 Dec) but normally compulsory on New Year's Eve (31 Dec), whether you attend or not. Prices for any compulsory Gala Dinners are included in our tour prices.

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 Morocco - pre-tour (EXSGMO)

Min numbers: 1

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

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Morocco - post-tour (EXSGMO)

Min numbers: 1

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

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Child discount - 5 to 16 years (DIMOSU)

Min numbers: 1

This option can be selected for all children aged 5 to 16 years at the date of travel who will share a room with one or two adults.
We recommend that you contact us for a specific quote for your whole family based on the number and ages of your children, and the number of rooms you'll need.

Locally Available Options

Min numbers: 1

We offer a range of locally available options on this tour, these can be booked via your tour guide once you are in Morocco. Prices are per person, quoted in Moroccan Dirhams and may be subject to change.

- Guided city tour of Marrakech 3 hours (2-4 Pax 200 DH, 5-9 Pax 150 DH, 10 Pax 100 DH)
- Bahia Palace Entry Fee (100 DH)
- Hammam in Marrakech (prices from 150 DH)
- Hot air balloon ride over the High Atlas Mountains (2000 DH)
- Movie Studio visit in Ouarzazate (30 minutes = 80 DH)
- Cooking classes in Todra (300 DH)
- Quad biking in Ouarzazate AGE 16+ ONLY (2 hours = 590DH, 2 hours for 2 pax = 690DH)
- Rock climbing in Todra Gorge - Adult must be present (1 hour = 300 DH)

The below options are only available on tours visiting Essaouira:

- Quad biking in Essaouira AGE 16+ ONLY (2 hours = 590DH, 2 hours for 2 pax = 690DH)
- Horse riding in Essaouira (1 hour = 250 DH, 2/3 hours = approx. 300 DH/390 DH approx.

- Windsurfing in Essaouira (2 hours = approx. 600 DH)
- Surfing in Essaouira (2 hours = approx. 350 DH)
- Kayaking in Essaouira (2 hours = approx. 350 DH)
- Kite surfing in Essaouira (2 hours = approx. 700DH

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

We use good quality mid-range tourist class hotels on this tour, rated at the local Moroccan 3 to 4-star level (local star ratings may vary slightly from international standards). Where possible, an effort has been made to use locally owned, family friendly accommodations for this tour.

Accommodation is based on double, twin en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will have a private double room and generally an extra bed will be added for children.

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

The overnight Berber camp in the desert is spent in simple but comfortable goat hair tents on the edge of the dunes with beds and bedding provided. You may want to bring a sleeping bag or sleeping sheet for extra comfort during the colder winter months (November-February).

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 AC minibuses or coaches throughout this tour, subject to the final size of the group. For your trip into the desert dunes, local 4x4 vehicles are used.

3 Group Makeup / Tour Leader / Guides

We are committed to maintaining small groups wherever possible as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. This tour therefore has a maximum size of 16 people. The minimum number of travellers required for the tour to run is 2.

This is one of our Family tours, and we therefore set the minimum age for travellers to join the tour at 5. There is no maximum age limit, but travellers need to be moderately fit and mobile and in general we would recommend this tour for those travelling with children aged from 5 to 16 years (minimum age 5).

An English speaking guide will accompany the group throughout the tour, along with the driver. We may also use specialist local guides to give extra information at some of the sites visited during the tour. At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local Moroccan guides and drivers. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country

and the sites you are seeing and many people describe our Moroccan guides as one of the highlights of their holiday.

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

4 Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Saturdays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run if a minimum of 2 travellers is reached. If we do not reach this minimum number (which happens very rarely), or other local reasons mean we cannot run the tour, then we will offer you the option to either pay a small supplement to do the tour exactly as planned but privately, to change your date, to transfer to another tour, or we will 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.

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.

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.

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).

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.

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15 Entrance Fees

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

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16 Tipping

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

Tipping Kitty

On 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.

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17 Passports and Visas

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

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

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18 Time

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

altogether.

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.

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20 Voltage

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

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21 Money

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

ATMs.

While in Morocco you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs, tips and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in Moroccan Dirham. It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

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.