

## Morocco

### Hiking / Cultural

### *Guided Tour*

#### Tour descriptions

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Day 1                    |           |
| Arrive Marrakesh         |           |
| Day 2                    |           |
| Sightseeing Marrakesh    |           |
| Day 3                    |           |
| Drive to Atlas Mountains |           |
| Day 4                    | 5 hr walk |
| Boutghrar                |           |
| Day 5                    | 5 hr walk |
| Agouti Gorge             |           |
| Day 6                    | 5 hr walk |
| Mgoun Valley             |           |
| Day 7                    | 5 hr walk |
| Dades Valley             |           |
| Day 8                    |           |
| Drive to Merzouga Dunes  |           |
| Day 9                    | 4 hr walk |
| Sand Dunes or Erg Chebbi |           |
| Day 10                   | 4 hr walk |
| Sahara Desert walk       |           |
| Day 11                   |           |
| Rest day                 |           |
| Day 12                   |           |
| To Ouarzazate drive      |           |
| Day 13                   |           |
| Drive to Marrakesh       |           |
| Day 14                   |           |
| Free day                 |           |
| Day 15                   |           |
| Transfer to Airport      |           |

### Tour Details

**Dates:** October 14-28

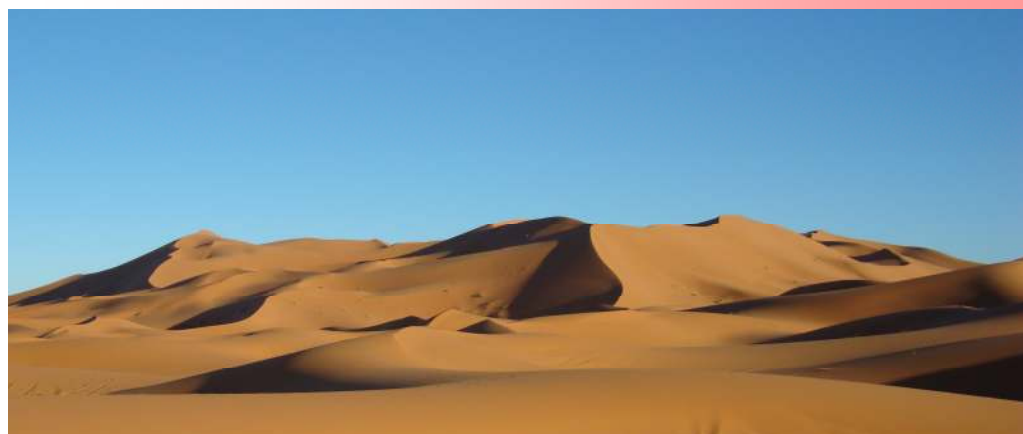
**Length:** 15 days / 14 nights

**Pre Trip extension possible**

**Cost per person:** CD \$3650

**Grade:** Moderate

**Starts/Ends:** Marrakesh



## *Valley of the Roses to the Dunes*

The Kingdom of Morocco is truly one of our most exotic destinations, with beautiful beaches on one end, high Atlas mountains, and the stark beauty of the Sahara to make the picture complete. Add to this equation, the remote villages, mud and clay architecture of the Kasbahs and boisterous markets of Marrakesh.

Starting in Marrakesh, visit the souks, and try your hand at bargaining with the best! The introduction Morocco starts with the narrow laneways which wind their way through the magical city. Hike into the Atlas Montains, following ancient caravan routes. Then off to the desert to discover the sand dunes with a cobalt blue sky in the background, fertile oases, all with mountains in the distance. Ride a camel, truck or hike to our destination at our campsite under the stars—a magnificent adventure.



### *Fast Facts*

- Hiking in the dunes of the Sahara desert
  - Most meals and services included
  - Fully supported tour with English speaking guide
  - Cultural visits to Marrakesh and beyond
  - Entrance fees as indicated
- Not included:
- Airfares
  - Some meals
  - Travel insurance
  - Tips as desired

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 Arrive Marrakesh

Meet in one of Morocco's most beautiful cities. Take in the exotic ambience of this city, rich in history, palaces and culture. Overnight: Les Sources Berberes 2 nights

### Day 2 Marrakesh

Explore the narrow lanes and streets of the medina (old fortified town) and the bustling sounds and sights of this fascinating city. Some of the highlights include the Menara Gardens, Koutoubia Mosque and the Djemaa el Fna square one of the busiest main squares in the world. After lunch, there is time to explore the souk in the afternoon, with all its multi-coloured fabrics, spices, shoes and jewels.

### Day 3 Scenic drive to Ait Bouguemez Valley

Depart in the morning for a full day transfer and explore the sand-kissed countryside through the Bouguemez Valley. Though some roads are still accessible only by mule or 4WD, paved roads have given unprecedented entry to Morocco's 'happy valley' with its mudbrick towers, red-dish homes and rich, cultivated terraces. Overnight Ecolodge Lodge 2x

### Day 4 The High Atlas Mountains Village Walk

Visit the heart of the Ait Bougmez Valley, in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Enjoy a stay at the Ecolodge, this area is considered to be one of the most beautiful and unspoiled in Morocco.

### Day 5 Rbat to Touda Ecolodge

Following the ancient caravan route, we hike on the red sand and the mountains with the sturdy blue-grey rock underneath our feet. We hike for about 5 hours stopping en route for lunch and time to sit back and enjoy the stillness around us and the captivating sunset. Overnight for 2 nights at Touda, the first eco-friendly accommodation in the Geopark of Mgoun.

### Day 6 Zaout Oulemzi

We explore this area which is tucked away amongst the high ridges of the Central Atlas Mountains, see the stunningly beautiful Ait Bougmez Valley and its people who have managed to preserve a traditional way of life that closely follows the seasons and is based on agriculture and the herding of livestock.

### Day 7 To Ecolodge Sawadi

Today we drive from Oulemzi to Skoura, stopping en route for a break and lunch. Sawadi is a guesthouse with the comfort of a riad, located at the heart of one of the most beautiful palm grove of Morocco, at 40km from Ouarzazate and 15km from the Atlas foothills. Sawadi is above all an ecolodge, an oasis before the desert.

### Day 8 Transfer to Merzouga Dunes

Morning drive to the valley to explore the lush green oasis running along the deep valley inhabited by a Berber population in Kasbahs and nicely designed villages.





### Day 8 continued

Passing by Erfoud known for fossils and the quality of its dates, our adventure continues through an arid desert plain that lead us to Merzouga. We overnight in a Kasbah hotel near the dunes. Overnight Riad Chebbi

### Day 9 Camping in the Dunes 4 hours walk

We take our breakfast while the camels are loaded, then meet up with our camel handlers and start our adventure through the sea of sand dunes of Erg Chebbi. Enjoying the incredible panorama and the diversity of the colors, our caravan takes us to our camp in the middle of nowhere at the feet of the highest dunes, lunch in the camp, in the afternoon we start a hike through the sea of dunes to reach the highest one for a wonderful and magical sunset, then down to the camp. Luxury Camp Bouchedor

### Day 10 To Erg Chebbi

Wake up early in the morning if you wish to see a wonderful sunrise before breakfast. We start our hike northward passing through small dunes, seeing a different kind of desert, which is largely shaped mainly by wind. In the Sahara there is a special vocabulary to describe these different forms. 'Wadi' is the term used for a dry river valley, 'hamada' is a windswept stony plain, 'reg' is a gravel plain, while the classic desert of everyone's imagination - a vast 'sea' of sand rippled with sand dunes - is known as 'erg'. After crossing a dried river, we join a nomad family settling their tent in a Hamada overlooking to Erg Chebbi. Luxury Camp Madu

### Day 11 Lodge to unwind

Rest day at Riad Madu

### Day 12 Merzouga, Draa Valley and Ouarzazate

After breakfast we leave Merzouga to the wonderful and magnificent fertile Draa Valley, the largest palm grove in the country, stretching for more than 100km along the banks of the River Draa with it's amazing palm plantations and splendid ksours. We will pass by a succession of desert plains(Hamada) dotted with Tamarisk trees before reaching Alnif, Tazarin and Nkoub, the land of the famous nomadic tribe of Ait Atta. After Agdez we drive up the volcanic mountains of Jebel Saghro, a mountain range sculpted over millions of years by volcanic activity. It's an area of stark black jagged rocky pinnacles, lunar-like plateau, deep gorges and remote villages with breathtaking views across its arid landscapes. We first reach Ouarzazate the city of cinema for excellence and then Ait Benhadou, the UNESCO world heritage Site of Ait Benhaddou, a well-preserved Kasbah which has been used as a backdrop for many Hollywood blockbusters. Overnight Riad Dar Chamaa

### Day 13 Back to Marrakesh

Riad Les Sources for 3 nights

### Day 14 Free day in town

### Day 15 Transfer to Airport



## What to Expect

### What will the weather be like?

The daytime temperature will be warm and sunny. In November, you can expect high 70's— and 80's (15-20°C), and cooler evenings. Sunscreen is a must during the day, as is a jacket or other layers for the cooler nights. Traditionally it does not rain, but it is recommended to bring some rain gear in case.

### How many hours of hiking a day?

Be prepared to hike between 3 to 5 hours daily. The terrain is sandy and at times a bit more difficult to hike on. Hiking boots are a must, and trekking poles are highly recommended. You will carry also a small backpack with your necessities: jacket, water, camera, maybe a snack. We will walk over some dunes, definitely a highlight of each trip.

### How fit do I need to be?

The fitter the better, and hiking experience is not required. This tour combines touring and hiking. We do this so that you get the most out of this cultural and fascinating journey. We do drive on several days through the country getting from one location to the next.

### What are the hotels like?

We use comfortable accommodations with twin-bedded rooms, all with private facilities. The riads are exotic Moroccan inns, and add to the local flavor.

### What are the campsites like?

This tour has been upgraded to ecolodges and luxury camps.

### What are the meals like?

We serve a combination of Moroccan, Western and vegetarian meals.

## Getting There

There are numerous flights going Casablanca, then connecting to Marrakesh.



## Extra services

One could decide to travel to Essouira for 2 nights from Marrakesh. Known as the 'Wind City of Africa', it attracts plenty of windsurfers between April and November, but the majority of visitors come here in spring and autumn to wander through the spice-scented lanes and palm-lined avenues of the fortified medina, browse the many art galleries and boutiques, relax in some of the country's best hotels and watch fishing nets being mended and traditional boats being constructed in the hugely atmospheric port.

Or spend a day or two in Fez, once an ancient breeding ground for scholars and artisans, imams and gourmards. It's a place where 70,000 people still choose to live in the maelstrom of a medina so dark, dense and dilapidated that it remains the world's largest car-free urban area. Donkeys cart goods down the warren of alleyways as they have done since medieval times.

Fez' medina can seem like it's in a state of perpetual pandemonium; some visitors fall instantly in love and others recoil in horror. But its charms are undeniable.

## How to book your holiday

- Contact our office to make sure there is space available. One of our travel planners will walk you through the entire booking process.
- Download the reservation form from our website and send in the completed form by fax or email. Once this is done, your space is confirmed and a pre-departure packet will be sent immediately.
- A deposit is required immediately, and final payment is due 60 days prior to departure. Terms & conditions are outlined on the back of our Reservation Form.
- Plan your air travel as soon as possible.
- We encourage you to purchase travel insurance, either through us or directly from a travel insurance provider.
- Ensure that you are in proper health for the trip. Contact us for more information on vaccinations, inoculations, and fitness requirements.