



*Women-Powered Tours to the Middle East and North Africa for the Adventurous Traveler*

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*Travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on - deep and permanent - in the ideas of living. ~ Mary Ritter Beard ~*

## **Detailed Itinerary**

### **10-Day Boutique Majestic Morocco Small-Group Tour**

Mountains, Medinas and the Mediterranean. Sahara, Souqs, Surfing. Camels, Crafts, Couscous. There are too many words to describe Morocco to boil it down to just a simple phrase. Morocco is a rich mix of Berber, Arab and French culture. A land as much defined by its geographic as by its people. Morocco is bordered in the east by the vast and desolate Sahara desert. On the west is the Mediterranean and in the north and center are a series of rugged mountain ranges. Whether an outdoor enthusiast, a foodie, or excited to learn about a place through its history — Morocco has something for every traveler.

### **Highlights:**

- Enjoy **Marrakech's** wild, crazy and highly entertaining **Jemaa El FNA**. By day acrobats, snake charmers, dancers and musicians wow the crowds and by night local restaurants have a cook off.
- Explore the twisting medieval labyrinths connecting **Fez's** ancient souks, mosques, and medina — the most complete medieval city in the Arab World.
- Travel through the **High Atlas Mountains** amongst snow-capped peaks and **Berber tribes** — the roof of North Africa.
- Take a **camel trek** in the massive, rolling **Erg Chebbi dunes in the Sahara desert**, and camp under the stars in this dramatic and wild landscape.
- Bargain for Bedouin-made jewelry, spices and ceramics amongst the blue-washed buildings of **Chefchaouen's medina**.
- Explore Morocco with a small-group tour of like-minded travelers. **Limited to 6 adventurous travelers.**

### **Detailed Itinerary:**

#### **Day 1: Arrive in Marrakech**

Arrive in Marrakech. You will be met at the airport by a member of our staff and driven to our beautiful riad near the famous **Djemaa el-Fna square** in the heart of **Marrakech's historic medina**. Rest after your flight. Evening meeting at the riad for a quick orientation and to prepare for tomorrow's exciting day exploring **Morocco's Red City, Marrakech**.

#### **Day 2: Marrakech, Morocco's Red City**

We begin our first day in **Marrakech** with a **walking tour of the Red City's famous medina**. Explore the maze of colorful souqs, see the impressive **Koutoubia Mosque** with its imposing minaret, learn about Morocco's history of education and



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scholars at the **Ali ben Youssef Medersa**, visit some of Marrakech's most important kings at the **Saadian Tombs**, and enjoy the opulence of the stunning **Bahia Palace**. Experience the excitement and energy of the street performers at **Marrakech's Djemaa el Fna** square – including Morocco's legendary storytellers. In the afternoon, enjoy free time to explore the Medina on your own, practice your bargaining skills shopping for lovely gifts to take home with you, or relax in one of Marrakech's many **luxurious hammams** (spa). In the evening, learn about Moroccan culture from savvy and fun Moroccan ladies at **'Kech Download.'** Now's the chance to ask everything you've ever wanted to know about Moroccan culture and life. We will enjoy our welcome dinner after this educational and fascinating presentation..

**(Included: Breakfast/Dinner)**

### **Day 3: Ait Benhaddou, Berber Village, the High Atlas Mountains**

We check out of our hotel early and begin the drive across the **High Atlas Mountains** enroute to the famous Sahara desert. Termed the 'Mountains of Mountains' by Moroccan Berbers, the High Atlas mountains are the tallest mountain range in North Africa. A series of jagged, impressive peaks that split the country east to west; we travel through this impressive scenery to the high plains around Skoura. On our drive, we visit the stunning, ancient, excellently preserved Almoravid kasbah of **Ait Benhaddou**. Then we spend the afternoon learning about local life at a Berber village, including enjoying tea with a family. In the evening, we stay at a traditional Berber guesthouse run by one of the local families.

**(Included: B/D)**

### **Day 4: Road of a Thousand Kasbahs, The Sahara Desert**

After saying goodbye to our Berber hosts, we head back on the road to the Sahara. We pass through Skoura as we begin the Road of a Thousand Kasbahs. Located on a key trade route, with blue-robed Tuareg desert traders bringing through caravans of gold and spices in ancient times, **Skoura** is now famous for its ancient kasbahs and forests of palm groves. We will pass through the '**Road of a Thousand Kasbahs**' – a twisting, turning mountain road that winds its way through the high desert, lined with crumbling ancient forts. Our two-day roadtrip will end at the massive **Erg Chebbi dunes**, where the rocky western desert meets the sand of the **Sahara**. We spend the evening in desert cottages on the dunelines.

**(Included: B/D)**

### **Day 5: Camel trek in the Sahara, Camp in the Erg Chebbi dunes**

Join our trip leader for an **optional sunrise trek into the dunes**. This a great excursion to photograph **Erg Chebbi's dunes** in the soft glow of the morning sun or to enjoy the sunrise in the endless curving golden desert of the Sahara stretched out as far as the eye can see. Then it's back to camp for breakfast before heading out on our mid-day **camel trek**. Camels have been the primary mode of transport in the desert for a millennium. In the afternoon, explore the surrounding dunes. For dinner, we will again enjoy wonderful Berber cuisine prepared over the open fire. Without much light pollution, the skies in the Sahara are a swarth of stars. See if you can spot the southern constellations. It is also a great opportunity for **nighttime photography enthusiasts**. For those who are interested, try your hand at star photography and long night exposures (we recommend bringing a tripod or small gorilla pod if you're interested in night photography).

**(Included: B/L/D)**



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**Day 6: Travel to Fez**

We will wake up at dawn to watch the sunrise over the Sahara, then trek with the camels back to our cozy hotel on the duneline. After breakfast, we pack up and head north to Fez. Enjoy dramatic views and vistas as we drive through the **High Atlas and Middle Atlas mountain ranges** traveling from the **Sahara Desert to the ancient city of Fez**. Along the way we will stop in the Middle Atlas to spot the endangered **Barbary macaque monkeys**.

**(Included: B/D)**

**Day 7: Fez, Morocco's Yellow City**

**Fez, Morocco's Yellow city**, is one of the oldest cities in world. Explore **Fez's ancient medina**, getting lost in the maze of small laneways many of which date back 1200 years. Learn how **Morocco's crafts** are made on our walking tour of Fez. There will be opportunities to take photographs of artisans at work. Listen to the melodious Call to Prayer echo off the ancient minarets and thick medina walls, while sipping **Berber mint tea** from one of the many café terraces overlooking the old city. In the morning, we will explore Fez with a local guide. Then after lunch, enjoy some free time to explore Fez on your own, shop for local crafts, photograph the ancient city, or relax in one of Fez' many excellent hammams.

**(Included: B/D)**

**Day 8: Rif Mountains and Chefchaouen, Morocco's Blue City**

Today, we drive from Fez to the Rif Mountains and the quaint village of Chefchaouen. Located in a nook of the Rif Mountains, the tiny mountain town of **Chefchaouen is Morocco's Blue City**. Bargain for Bedouin-made jewelry, spices and ceramics amongst the bluewashed buildings of **Chefchaouen's medina**. Enjoy sweet and savory chicken or vegetable pastilles, a famous local dish. Watch the sunset from the **Spanish Mosque**, high over Chefchaouen. The twinkling lights of the village illuminating the pastel blue buildings. There will be an **optional late afternoon hike to the Spanish Mosque for sunset**. You will have the afternoon and evening free in Chefchaouen to relax and explore the town.

**(Included: B/L)**

**Day 9: Chefchaouen, Morocco's Blue City**

**Chefchaouen**, with its **picturesque pastel blue medina and quaint little mountain town**, is a wonderful place to linger. And linger we do. Enjoy a free day to explore this **Moroccan-Andalusian town** – poke your head into the high-quality boutique shops, relax at a hammam (spa), take a hike through the surrounding mountains or just enjoy the stunning view from one of the many hillside cafes. Reminisce about our adventures at our **farewell dinner** at one of the very best Moroccan restaurants in Chefchaouen.

**(Included: B/D)**



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**Day 10: Casablanca, Morocco's White City**

We wrap up our time in Morocco with **Casablanca, the White City**. Enjoy **Casablanca's cosmopolitan core**, shops, wide French-inspired boulevards and waterfront promenade. After an amazing time in Morocco, it is time to depart for home with a suitcase full of memories...and maybe a few mementos. We will arrive in Casablanca in the late afternoon, where this tour will end. We can either take you directly to the airport if you have an evening flight or bring you to your hotel if you wish to stay longer in Morocco's White City.

**(Included: B/L)**

**Optional: We can help you arrange your hotel in Casablanca if you wish to stay an extra day in the city. Ask about this service when booking your tour.**

**Additional Excursions: Interested in lengthening your trip? Would you like to explore Essaouira, Tangiers, Rabat, spend more time in Marrakech, or see other parts of Morocco? We'd be thrilled to help you plan additional days on your trip.**

**NOTE:** *We do our best to follow this itinerary, but sites can close unexpectedly and without prior notice according to the discretion of the Moroccan government. Morocco is completing much needed restoration work, and at times this may affect access to sites or parts of towns. In case of unexpected need to alter hotels, restaurants, treks or other in-country operators, we will substitute a company or experience of equal to greater value.*

## **Trip Details**

### **What's Included:**

- **Small group of 4-6** like-minded, adventurous travelers.
- Knowledgeable, engaging **local female expert guides** who will bring to life Morocco's rich, complex and important history, as well as, help you understand Morocco and its culture from a female perspective. *[Note: For Morocco, our city guides are wonderful and knowledgeable local women. Our country guide who travels with us the entire time is a male guide. Women do not work as country guides because the work is nomadic with long stretches of time away from home. Women in Morocco would rather be city guides, software engineers or doctors, than live a nomadic lifestyle.]*
- Experienced, knowledgeable, Morocco-expert **ArchaeoAdventures' Tour Director** who will help facilitate a wonderful time in Morocco.
- **Overnight camel trek in the Sahara desert.**
- **Tea with a Berber family. Overnight at Berber guesthouse.**
- **Site entrance fees.** This includes admission fees to the **Bahia Palace, Saadian Tombs, Ait Benhaddou, Marrakech's Medersa, Fez' Tanneries.** *(Sites may be subject to change. We do our best to follow this itinerary, but sites can close unexpectedly and without prior notice according to the discretion of the Moroccan government.)*
- **Moroccan cultural evening in Marrakech.**
- **All guide tips are included in the tour rate.** We like to treat our guides as staff. We provide our guides with good, fair wages rather than making them rely on tips.



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- **Breakfasts, and many lunches and dinners.** See itinerary for which lunches and dinners are not included in the cost. A few lunches and dinners are not included to give our travelers more freedom to try a wider range of Morocco's wonderful cuisine and have free time to explore.
- **All Tour in-country transportation** including all ground transportation while on tour, transportation to and from the airport, and all camel treks.
- **Historic, comfortable, boutique hotels and riads** each with their own story and place in history. While in the Sahara we will camp in Berber tents.
- **No in-country cash payment.** Many tour companies require in-country cash payments. This is a way to keep the initial tour price appearing low, while you actually pay a much higher price for the tour. We believe in the costs being upfront and no hidden fees. We include all tour costs in the listed price.
- **Optional single supplement.** Looking to bunk by yourself in your own room? We've included a number of single rooms for an additional fee.
- **Free time.** We know how important it can be to have a little time built in for you to explore on your own or simply take a moment to relax. We've carefully planned our tours to provide you a balance between structured travel and free time. We offer free time in Marrakech, Fez and Chefchaouen, as well as, some time to explore the dunes around our Sahara camp.

#### **Travelers Are Responsible For:**

- Flights to and from Morocco.
- Any days additional days travelers wish to stay in Marrakech or Casablanca.
- Beverage purchases at meals. Water, tea and coffee will be provided complimentary at meals. Travelers are responsible for additional beverages.
- Any alcoholic beverage purchases.
- Bottled water and snacks. We recommended budgeting \$5 per day for bottled water and snacks.
- Activities and events during free time in Marrakech and Fez – including opportunities to explore the medinas, visit additional sites, relax at the hammams (Moroccan spa), and shop for local handcrafts.
- Selected lunches and dinners. See the Detailed Itinerary for which lunches and dinners are not included. We recommended budgeting \$15-\$20 for lunches and \$20-25 for dinners.
- Meals on arrival day and dinner on departure day.
- Visa (purchased at the airport when you arrive in Morocco).
- Traveler's Insurances. Plans usually start at \$80 and can cost as much as \$500 depending on the extent of the coverage you wish to have. Check with your health insurance company regarding if they cover illness overseas and how to file a claim if you are sick overseas. Not all insurance companies cover overseas illness. We require all travelers to be fully covered for medical coverage and trip cancellation.

#### **Extend Your Time in Morocco:**

Interested in spending a few extra days in Morocco? Spend an extra day in Marrakech at the beginning of the tour or spend the night in Casablanca after our tour ends. Explore Tangiers – the bridge between Morocco and Europe. Relaxing on the Mediterranean in the tiny coastal hamlet of Essaouira. We can make all arrangements to help you customize your Moroccan experience.



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**Is This Trip Right for You?:**

Can you enjoy traveling in a developing nation? Morocco is a developing nation that has been steadily moving through a fast period of growth and change. It's an exciting and fascinating time to experience Morocco. As a developing nation many services, systems and levels of environmental cleanliness are not the same as they are in Europe and the States. While exploring the country you will see pollution, poverty, overcrowded cities, and sadly malnourished people and animals. You will also see a Morocco working hard toward finding its way to a progressive democracy and finding solution for its economic, social and political challenges. You will experience the stunning ancient Berber culture and traditions, learn about Morocco's fascinating Islamic, Moorish and French history, meet friendly locals, enjoy the warmth and hospitality of Moroccans, and enjoy the stunning natural beauty of the Sahara Desert, High Atlas Mountains and Moroccan coastline.

This trip requires moderate activity level – sustained walking for 2-3 hours over rough terrain, cobblestone, hills, sand dunes and in the heat unassisted. Some days you may be on your feet for the majority of the day with only short breaks. A few days there will be up to 8 hours of driving. This trip is not appropriate for travelers using walkers, wheelchairs, other mobility aids, or who cannot stand on their feet for 2-3 hours while visiting sites and walking around museums. This tour is also not suitable for travelers with back problems. Our tours often involve a number of hours outside in hot temperatures (70 – 85F, some trips as high as 90s Fahrenheit).

In the Sahara, we ride camels 1.5 hours to our Bedouin camps. There we sleep on mattresses (with clean bedding) on the ground (the ground is carpeted). These beds are not suitable for traveler's with bad backs or severe back problems. **NOTE: We stay overnight at a wild camp under the stars in Berber tents in the Sahara. For this 1 night there is no running water or toilet facilities. The Bedouins call this wild camping and the experience of spending the night deep in the Sahara far from civilization is an extraordinary experience!**

If you do not think you'll be able to meet this level of activity requirement, or you have any questions or concerns please email our helpful staff at [tours@archaeoadventures.com](mailto:tours@archaeoadventures.com).

**Contact Details:**

Genevieve Hathaway - founder, owner and Chief Adventurista of ArchaeoAdventures - can be reached at all times while on tour at [genevieve@archaeoadventures.com](mailto:genevieve@archaeoadventures.com) or +001 (425) 243-9357.