

11-Day Majestic Morocco Small-Group Tour

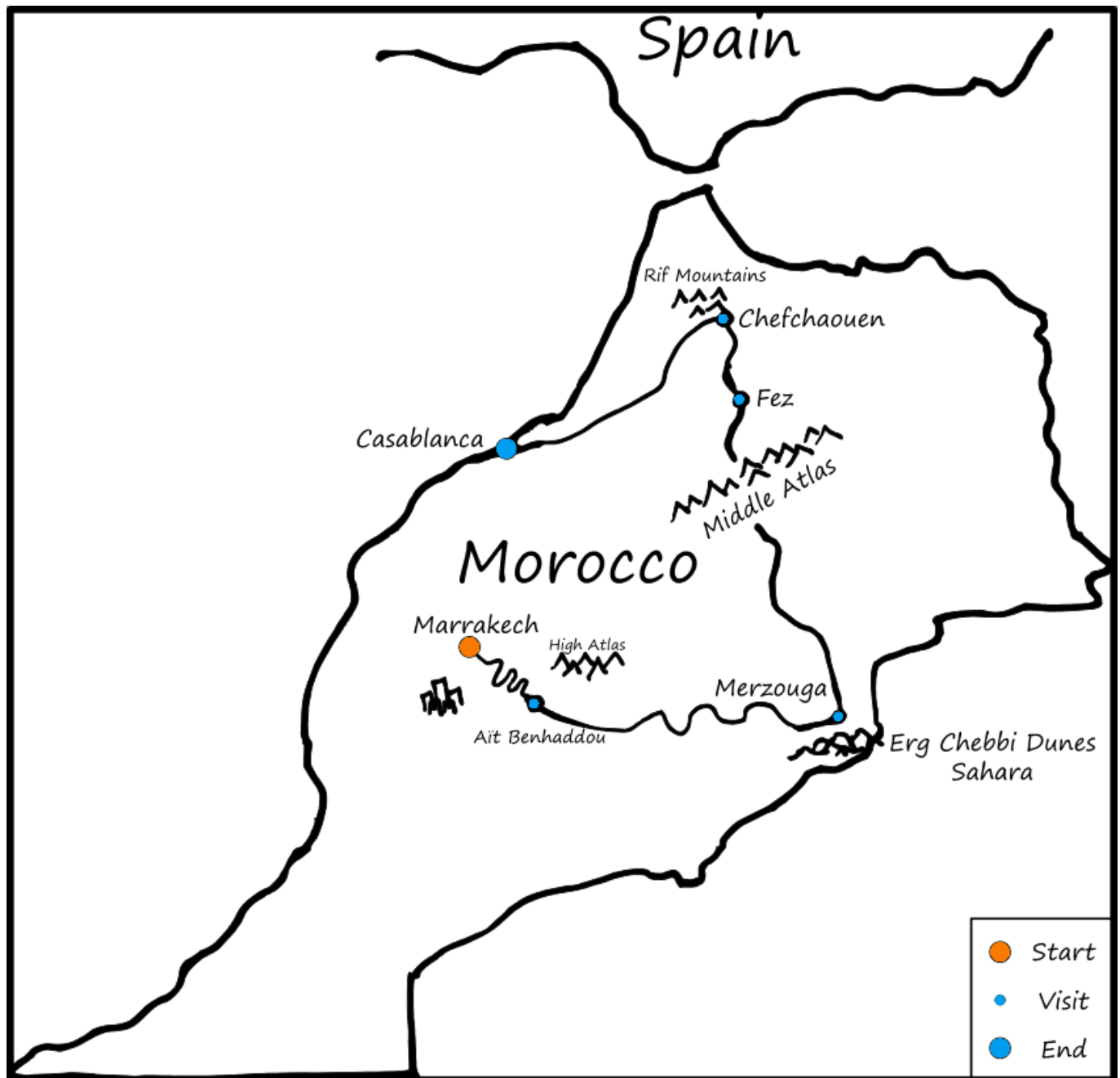
Detailed Itinerary

Come as a traveler, leave as a local

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 **Djemaa 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**. Stay in a comfortable traditional Berber camp under the stars in this dramatic and wild landscape. We stay in Berber tents with modern-beds.
- Bargain for Bedouin-made jewelry, spices and ceramics amongst the blue-washed buildings of **Chefchaouen's** medina.
- Discover Moroccan cuisine at local mom and pop restaurants during our **Marrakech Food Tour**.
- Explore Morocco on this **small-group tour**. Limited to 10 adventurous travelers.



Day 1: Arrive in Marrakech

Arrive in Marrakech. You will be met at the airport by a member of our team 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. At 5pm meet the Tour Leader/Main Guide and the tour group for an orientation and to prepare for tomorrow's exciting day exploring

Morocco's Red City, Marrakech. After this meeting, the group will enjoy a welcome dinner overlooking the Djemaa el-Fna square.

Note: If you are arriving to Marrakech on Day 1 your flight needs to land by 1pm to make the 5pm tour orientation.

Hotel: Stay in a historic riad in the heart of Marrakech's ancient medina.

(Included: Dinner)



Day 2: Marrakech, Morocco's Red City

We begin our first day in **Marrakech** with a morning **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 scholars at the **Ali ben Youssef Medersa**, 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 and food on our fun and immersive **Marrakech Food Tour**. Explore Marrakech at night and dine on classic Moroccan food at local eateries while learning about local customs, tradition and history.

Hotel: Stay in a historic riad in the heart of Marrakech’s ancient medina.

(Included: Breakfast/Dinner)



Day 3: Telouet Kasbah, the High Atlas Mountains and Ait Ben Haddou

We check out of our hotel early and begin the drive across the **High Atlas Mountains** enroute toward 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. After lunch, explore the once opulent **Telouet Kasbah**, many rooms still retaining their gorgeous mosaic work and craftsmanship. In the afternoon, visit the stunning, ancient, excellently preserved Almoravid kasbah of **Ait Ben Haddou**. Climb to the top of the fortress for sweeping views of the ancient kasbah, palm groves and rugged, flat-top mountains. In the evening, we will stay at a modern kasbah turned guesthouse and enjoy **traditional homecooked Berber-style meal**.

Hotel: Cozy family-run hotel inspired by the ancient kasbah's of the region.

(Included: B/D)



Day 4: The Road of a Thousand Kasbahs and The Sahara Desert

In the morning, we depart early for our full days drive to Merzouga and the Sahara desert. We then 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 navigate the '**Road of a Thousand Kasbahs**' – a twisting, turning mountain road that winds its way through the high desert, lined with crumbling ancient forts. Enjoy lunch and a short walk in Todra Gorge. In the evening, we arrive at Merzouga and the massive **Erg Chebbi dunes**, where the rocky western desert meets the sand of the **Sahara**. We spend the evening at a desert lodge on the dunelines.

Note: This is a full day of driving. Morocco is a large country – the distances are great and sometimes driving can be slow due to winding mountain roads, trucks and construction. The tour will stop at a number of places to break up the drive, but it still will be a full day of driving to reach the Sahara.

Hotel: Berber-styled lodge located on the Sahara dunelines.

(Included: B/D)



Day 5: Camel trek in the Sahara, Overnight in Berber-style tents in the Erg Chebbi dunes

After breakfast, we head out on our **camel trek and overnight in the Sahara dunes**. Camels have been the primary mode of transport in the desert for a millennium. Our destination is a small desert oasis where we will have lunch below towering Sahara dunes. Explore the surrounding dunes in the afternoon. Then we will take a short camel trek to our comfortable desert camp. Sleep in comfortable Berber tents outfitted with modern beds and basic toilets (there are no showers). Climb a dune near camp to watch a spectacular sunset over the Sahara. 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 **night time 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).

Hotel: Overnight in the dunes of the Sahara desert under the stars

(Included: B/L/D)



Day 6: Travel to Fez

We wake before dawn to watch the **sunrise over the Sahara**, trekking with the camels back to our cozy hotel on the duneline. After breakfast, we **head north to Fez**. With almost 500 km to travel, the journey from the Sahara to Fez in the northern region of Morocco involves a full day of travel. Enjoy dramatic views and vistas as we drive through the **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**. After a full day of driving, we arrive at Fez in the evening and enjoy classic Fesi dishes for dinner at our lovely riad. We will be **staying in a beautifully restored 14th century riad**.

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Hotel: Beautifully restored 14th century riad in the heart of Fez's historic medina.

(Included: B/D)



Day 7: Fez, Morocco's Yellow City

Fez, Morocco's Yellow city, is one of the oldest walled cities in world. Explore **Fez's ancient medina**, getting lost in the maze of small laneways many of which date back 1200 years. In the morning, we will explore the historic medina with a local guide from Fez. Learn how **Morocco's crafts** are made, discover daily life in this important cultural center, learn why Fesi's proudly say that their city is the culinary capital of Morocco, see the **famous tanneries**, and explore a thousand yeas of history on the ancient laneways of Fez. After our morning walking tour, enjoy 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. In the evening, we will dine on more classic Fesi cuisine at our riad.

Hotel: Beautifully restored 14th century riad in the heart of Fez's historic medina.

(Included: B/D)



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

Departing Fez, we visit a ceramics studio to see how the famous blue and white pottery of Fez is made. If you are interested in purchasing a few ceramic gifts, this is a good place. 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 textiles 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. You will have the evening free in Chefchaouen to relax and explore the town.

Hotel: Quaint, rustic family-run historic riad in the blue medina of Chefchaouen.

(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 local craftsman shops, relax at a hammam (spa), explore the medina or just enjoy the stunning view from one of the many hillside cafes. In the evening, the tour group will dine on a home-cooked meal at a local family-run guesthouse restaurant.

Hotel: Quaint, rustic family-run historic riad in the blue medina of Chefchaouen.

(Included: B/D)



Day 10: Casablanca, Morocco's White City

We wrap up our time in Morocco with **Casablanca, the White City**. We have an early departure, leaving at 5:30am from Chefchaouen to reach Hassan II Mosque in time for its limited opening hours. We will have breakfast and lunch enroute to Casablanca. Enjoy **Casablanca's cosmopolitan core**, shops, wide French-inspired boulevards and waterfront promenade. We will arrive in Casablanca in early afternoon, where we will marvel at the modern architectural wonder of the colossal **Hassan II Mosque** with the tallest minaret in the world. After checking into our hotel, we'll head to our farewell dinner and reminisce about our adventures. After an amazing time in Morocco, it is time to depart for home with a suitcase full of memories...and maybe a few mementos.

Hotel: Comfortable hotel in the historic district of Casablanca.

(Included: B/L/D)

**Day 11: Casablanca**

Transfer to the Mohammed V International Airport for your flight home.

(Included: B)

Disclaimer: We do our best to follow the laidout itinerary, but sometimes unforeseeable situations arise. The itinerary is subject to change. Itineraries, transportation and hotels re subject to change due to weather, road conditions, operating conditions, government decisions or numerous other reasons beyond our control. The Tour Leader retains the right to change the itinerary for safety and convenience of the travelers.

What's Included In The Tour:

- **Small group of 6-10** travelers. Minimum 6 travelers, maximum 10 travelers. A

quarter of the size of most tour groups. This small-group tour provides an intimate and personal experience in Morocco.

- Knowledgeable, engaging professional **local expert female Principal Guide/Tour Leader** 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. Our local guides will help us experience Morocco as locals. Come as a traveler and leave as a local. *[Note: Only a few women guide groups around the entire country. If our female guide has to cancel for an emergency we may need to substitute a male guide due to the shortage of female guides in this role.]*
- **Local expert female City Guides in Marrakech and Fez.**
- **Guided half- day walking tours of Marrakech and Fez medinas.**
- **All site entrance fees, tours and admissions - at no extra cost.** This includes admission fees to the **Bahia Palace, 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.)*
- **Camel trek in the Sahara desert.**
- **Overnight in the Sahara at a Berber-style camp** with traditional Berber tents and modern beds.
- **Overnight at a modern-day kasbah guesthouse with Berber influences.**
- **Marrakech evening Food and Culture Tour.** *[Note: This food tour is led by a wonderful male local guide. We work with the company Marrakech Food Tours, which is co-owned by a woman, but all their guides are male.]*
- **Breakfasts, and select lunches and dinners.** See itinerary for which lunches and dinners are included in the tour. A few lunches and dinners are not included to give 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 stay in comfortable Berber tents with modern beds.**
- **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. **(Note we begin the tour in Marrakech and end in Casablanca.)**
- Beverage purchases at included meals beyond tea, coffee, water. At included meals tea, coffee and water are complimentary. 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, Fez and Chefchaouen.
- Lunches and dinners not included in the tour. See the Detailed Itinerary for which lunches and dinners are not included. We recommended budgeting \$15-\$20 for lunches and \$20-25 for dinners.
- Tips for day guides, main guide/tour leader, driver, camel guide, camp staff, restaurants not included in the tour, transfer drivers. See the tipping guidelines on the Morocco Tour Details page.
- Bathroom tips. Bathrooms in small cafes and rest stops during long drives are often maintained by a bathroom attendant. It is customary to tip 1-5 dirham depending on the restroom. Usually a little sign is posted stating the amount.
- Visa costs if a visa is required for you to enter Morocco. Check with your state department to see if a visa is required.
- 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.

Add-ons detailed itinerary

Two Day / 3 Night Essaouira Tour

Travel to the Atlantic Coast and visit the old fishing town of Essaouira, a city where the

medina brushes up against the Atlantic Ocean. Sandstone walkways contrast with whitewashed houses, bright blue sky and the sand of the surrounding beaches and dunes.

Day 1: Marrakech

Arrive in Marrakech and rest after your journey traveling to Morocco.

- Arrival at Marrakech Airport
- Transferred to hotel. Included.
- Meals included: None
- Hotel: Comfortable hotel located outside the medina in the modern part of town. This hotel and location have been chosen to provide a comfortable experience and a location that allows for quickly leaving the city on Day 2 with minimal traffic.



Day 2: Marrakech to Essaouira

Travel to Essaouira and enjoy exploring this quaint, historic sea-side town.

- After breakfast today travel to the Atlantic Coast and the old fishing town of Essaouira
- Arrive in time for lunch
- Drive time is approximate 2.5 hours
- Meals included: breakfast
- English-speaking drive and airconditioned car for transfer to Essaouira included.
- Free time once arrive at Essaouira
- Hotel: Classic comfortable riad located in the heart of the medina.



Day 3: Essaouira to Marrakech

Have the entire morning and lunch time to explore Essaouira.

- Free time in the morning to explore Essaouira.
- After lunch the drive will pick you up at the riad and drive you back to Marrakech. You will have free time in the evening to explore Marrakech.
- Meals included: breakfast
- Hotel: Same beautiful riad as the tour uses for Marrakech.

[Tour riad/hotel is subject to availability. If the tour riad/hotel is booked out this night we will arrange a similar riad nearby the tour hotel so it would be a very short transfer the next day to join the tour riad. The earlier this add on is booked the greater probability we are able to book the same Marrakech riad as the one of the tour stays in.]



Day 4: Marrakech

- Meals: breakfast
- This day the tour begins in the evening.

Note: This Essaouira add on provides enough time to enjoy Essaouira and a little extra time in Marrakech to explore before the tour begins. This can be a great way to begin your time in Morocco and also to give you time to overcome jet lag and rest up after the flights before the Majestic Morocco Tour gets into full swing.



Single Supplement: This add on has a 200 USD single supplement for travelers wishing to room by themselves. This small additional costs covers the extra room costs for traveler's to have their own private room.