

Morocco: Camels to Casbahs

IMPERIAL CITIES, ATLAS MOUNTAINS, AND THE GOLDEN DUNES
OF THE SAHARA



Wilderness Travel



Morocco: Camels to Casbahs

A world of legendary souks, golden Sahara dunes, and red-rock canyons, Morocco has a mystique all of its own. We roam the bazaars of Fes, cross the High Atlas to walk in the Todra canyon, and meet Berbers in their villages. The highlight for many is our stunning private camp nestled in remote Sahara dunes, where we'll savor the silence and the sunsets. Along the way, our expert Trip Leaders introduce you to Morocco's welcoming people, sumptuous flavors, and astonishing natural beauty. Optional trip extensions to the seaside artist town of Essaouira and the dramatic "blue" city of Chefchaouen are available.

TRIP DATES

2025

January 19-30, 2025
 February 2-13, 2025
 February 16-27, 2025
 April 6-17, 2025
 April 20-May 1, 2025
 May 4-15, 2025
 September 14-25, 2025
 October 26-November 6, 2025
 November 16-27, 2025
 November 30-December 11, 2025

2026

January 24-February 4, 2026
 February 7-18, 2026
 March 21-April 1, 2026
 April 4-15, 2026
 April 25-May 6, 2026
 September 26-October 7, 2026
 October 10-21, 2026
 October 24-November 4, 2026
 October 31-November 11, 2026
 November 7-18, 2026

What Makes WT's Morocco Trips Special?



THE MOST DIVERSE MOROCCO ITINERARY

You'll explore Morocco's remarkable contrasts, from its minaret-studded imperial cities to the exotic, bustling bazaars of Marrakesh, and from the beauty of the Todra Gorge to the singular silence of the Sahara. Roam the labyrinthine medina of medieval Fes, meet nomads of the High Atlas Mountains, and walk through the ancient red-brick settlement of Ait Ben Haddou. Our itinerary brings you to the renowned highlights of Morocco, with insider connections for a full experience of this fascinating land. All our tours and activities are included—there are no hidden costs!

EXCLUSIVE LUXURY SAHARA CAMP

Step into another world in our luxury desert camp with spacious walk-in tents, white tablecloth-service, colorful Moroccan carpets, and cozy beds. Secluded from the noise and crowds of other camps, we've created an exclusive hideaway from which we explore the desert by camel, 4WD, and on foot before relaxing with sundowners on the dunes. Then watch as delicious tagines are prepared over an open fire—we even get a cooking demonstration from our phenomenal camp chef. In the evening, Gnaouan musicians enchant us with a private performance.



SUPERB TRIP LEADERS

Wilderness Travel has brought travelers to Morocco for over two decades. We work with Trip Leaders who are the most knowledgeable and experienced guides in the country, with a gift for bringing its history and culture to life. Their language skills (they all speak the indigenous Imazighen language), long-term friendships with locals, and deep knowledge and insights give you the privilege of authentic cultural exchange as they introduce you to the welcoming people, natural beauty, and rich cultural history of this magical country.



A WIDE VARIETY OF CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

We'll encounter nomads from the hill tribes of Morocco, explore an oasis as we visit with farmers who explain their water conservation techniques, sip mint tea with a family in their home, ride a camel with Tuaregs, visit five UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and hear live Gnaouan music in our exclusive Sahara camp.



STAY IN A LUXURIOUS RIAD IN FES

You'll enjoy two nights of magical ambience at a wonderful riad in Fes. This superb boutique hotel features a combination of modern and traditional decor, beautiful tilework, and intricate Moorish wood and plaster designs, with elegant rooms.



Highlights of WT's Morocco: Camels to Casbahs

AN EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE SAHARA DESERT

We've created a secret hideaway in a quiet part of the immense Sahara—a camp for our group alone, where you'll be immersed in the beauty of this vast sea of rolling sand. This unique experience is the highlight of the trip for many—you'll have the opportunity to watch the sunrise over rippling dunes, ride camels, savor delicious Moroccan dishes and learn cooking techniques from our phenomenal chef, hear live Gnawa music, and stargaze under a brilliant nighttime sky.



WANDER THROUGH THE ANCIENT ARAB QUARTER OF MARRAKESH

Marrakesh's fabled 11th century medina and Djemaa el Fna Square are brimming with historical and visual delights. We bring you deep into souks—where everything from pottery and fabrics to silver and spices are on display—and explore the hauntingly beautiful Saadian Tombs, ornate Bahia Palace, and enchanting Majorelle Garden, a diverse botanical landscape restored by Yves Saint Laurent, who later added a museum dedicated to the rich culture of the indigenous Berber people.



THE INCOMPARABLE FLAVORS OF MOROCCO

We give you an experience of Morocco's renowned cuisine every step of the way, including a private cooking demonstration for our group alone. The country's rich spices—red paprika, vibrant yellow turmeric, delicate bay and hearty cumin—flavor the delightful dishes we'll sample, from melt-in-your-mouth tagines to delectable eggplant and the famously flavorful chicken bastilla.





VISIT THE ANCIENT ROMAN CITY OF VOLUBILIS

History comes to life beneath our feet at Volubilis, once a prosperous Roman city of 20,000 set in a fertile green valley, and just one of the five UNESCO sites we visit on this trip. We stroll among the ruins—grand arches, bronze and marble statuary, an aqueduct, a basilica, and beautifully restored mosaic floors. Keep an eye out for storks that nest atop the towering marble columns.

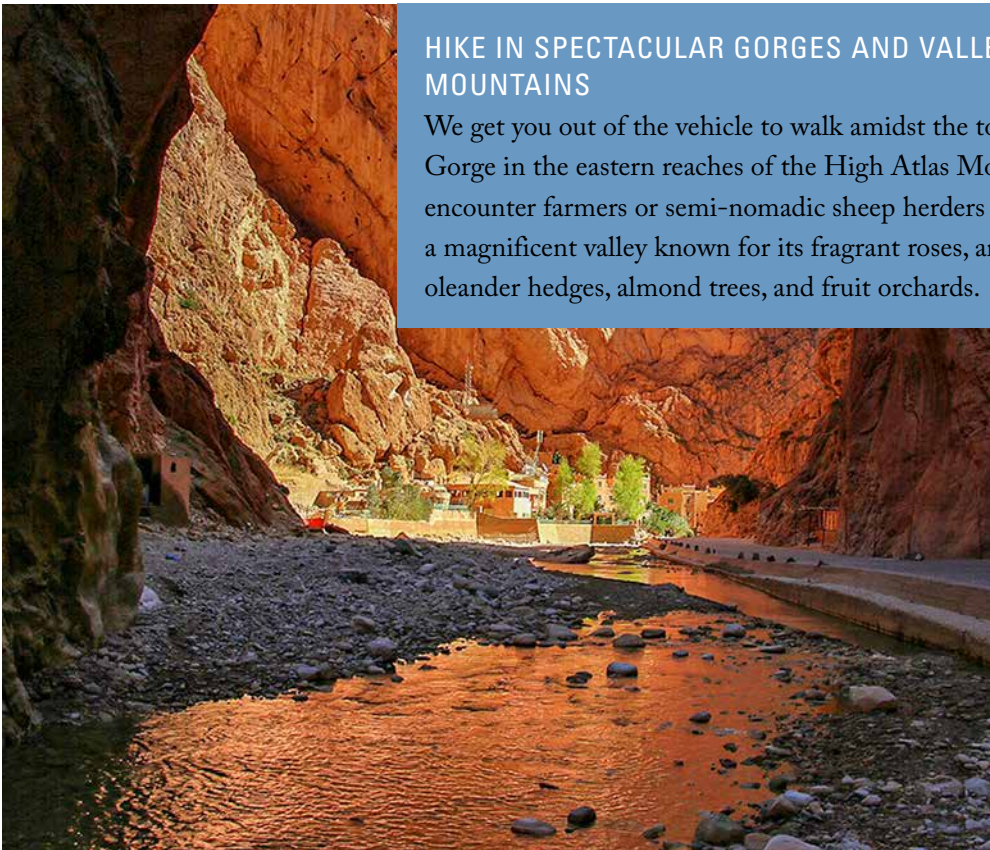
EXPERIENCE A 5-STAR RIAD IN THE HEART OF AN ANCIENT SOUK

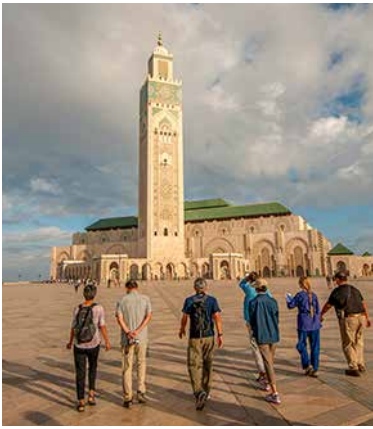
Staying in a riad—a restored traditional estate with many rooms centered around a courtyard—is one of the iconic experiences of a visit to Morocco. We've chosen some of the very best to immerse you in the country's history and heritage. At your relaxing retreat—just steps away from the excitement of the souks—you can pamper yourself at the riad's spa or wander up to the rooftop terrace with its spectacular views of the medina.



HIKE IN SPECTACULAR GORGES AND VALLEYS OF THE HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS

We get you out of the vehicle to walk amidst the towering canyon walls of the Todra Gorge in the eastern reaches of the High Atlas Mountains. Follow trails where we may encounter farmers or semi-nomadic sheep herders tending their goats. We roam through a magnificent valley known for its fragrant roses, and meander along trails flanked by oleander hedges, almond trees, and fruit orchards.





Itinerary

TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 12 days
- Arrive:** Casablanca, Morocco
- Depart:** Marrakesh, Morocco
- Lodging:** 9 nights first-class hotels and riads, 2 nights luxury tented camp
- Meals:** All meals included except 1 lunch and 1 dinner (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Activity:** Cultural Adventures, Walking
- Trip Level:** 1 2 3 4 5 6
Cultural exploration, village and walking tours, optional camel rides and day hikes from desert camp, travel by 4WD vehicle

DAY 1 CASABLANCA / HASSAN II MOSQUE / ROMAN RUINS OF SALA COLONIA

Arrive in Casablanca and meet with your Trip Leader at 9:00 am in the lobby of the Four Seasons Casablanca. After a brief orientation, we'll head out to explore a most remarkable site, the Hassan II Mosque, dramatically set along the waterfront. A blend of ancient craftsmanship and modern technology, every inch of the mosque is exquisitely detailed—the tiles, marble, metal, and woodworking were all handcrafted by traditional Moroccan artisans. Boasting the world's tallest minaret, the mosque is unique in Morocco because it allows visitors of all faiths to come in and appreciate its wonders. Heading north along the coast we reach Rabat—in contrast, a delightfully low-key, walkable city that is the country's capital. After lunch on the waterfront, we visit the intriguing Chellah, a walled and towered necropolis built atop the ancient Roman town of Sala Colonia. Its elaborate brickwork and royal tombs make this one of the most beautiful ruins in all of Morocco. We'll also stroll through the picturesque Oudaya Kasbah, a 12th century fortress partly enclosed in ramparts, and visit the Mausoleum of Mohammed V, with its brilliant white marble surface and red-costumed royal guards. Our Welcome Dinner and overnight are at Villa Mandarine, an enchanting oasis set in a small orange grove and run by a French family who have lived here for generations...LD
Driving Details: Approximately 1.5 hours (Casablanca to Rabat)
Note: You must arrive in Casablanca the night before Day 1 of the trip to meet the group on the morning of Day 1.

DAY 2 A PILGRIMAGE SITE / ROMAN RUINS AND MOSAICS / FES

Departing the coast, we travel to Morocco's inland valleys of gently rolling terrain dotted with wheat fields, vineyards, and olive groves. Our first stop is the hill town



THE BERBERS / IMAZIGHEN / AMAZIGH

Two-thirds of Moroccans are Imazighen (the singular is Amazigh), a word that translates roughly to “free people.” Often referred to by outsiders as Berbers, the Imazighen have a mixed origin that includes European and Saharan peoples. Today they retain a distinctive tribal culture consisting of three major groups: the Sanhaja, the Masmouda, and the Zenets. The blue-robed Tuaregs of the Sahara are also a branch of the Imazighen family.



of Moulay Idriss, named for Morocco’s most famous saint, a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. Until 2005, non-Muslims were not allowed to stay in the city, and even today it is largely untouched by Western influence. After

exploring on foot, we head to Volubilis, a massive and magnificent Roman ruin surrounded by farmlands, olive groves, and cacti. A walking tour of this World Heritage Site, which was Rome’s largest city in North Africa and its provincial capital in Morocco, takes us by structures dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries, as well as an impressive array of stunning, well preserved mosaics. We stroll among the towering Corinthian columns and 30-foot porticoes, with views back to the whitewashed buildings of Moulay Idriss as they glow in the late afternoon sun. We continue to Fes and check in at the hotel. This evening we savor a dinner of traditional Moroccan cuisine...BLD

Driving Details: 2.5 hours (Rabat to Moulay Idriss); 1.5 hours (Volubilis to Fes)

DAY 3 EXPLORING FES, AN ANCIENT IMPERIAL CAPITAL

The most evocative of Morocco’s imperial capitals, Fes is nestled in a high valley and resplendent with soaring minarets

and dazzling domes. We’ll enjoy a full day tour, beginning at the seven stunning brass gates of the royal palace, Dar al-Makhzen. We visit the mellah—the old Jewish Quarter—and continue to the South Borj Overlook for a lovely panoramic view of the city. We also visit a pottery workshop before entering Fes’ 12th century medina—one of the most perfectly preserved medieval cities in the world—with its mile-long network of souks, open-air cafes, courtyards, hammams, and gardens. After lunch our guide takes us through a honeycomb of twisting alleys of Arabic-Moorish architecture with blue-tiled facades. We savor the scent of spices, orange blossoms, sizzling lamb kabobs, and sweet honey cakes, and see scenes

unchanged for centuries, from donkeys laden with leathers to children carrying boards of bread dough to communal ovens. Some of the finest Berber carpets in Morocco are found in

“I knew this trip would be great but it was beyond my wildest dreams! What an exciting, exotic, beautiful, and diverse country. I loved the High Atlas Mountains, so exceptionally scenic, the cities, medinas, and the sights, sounds, and aromas. The people were very friendly and gracious. Marrakesh is a happening, fun city. I loved it all!”

Jan J., Gilford, NH

these lively souks. We visit Fes' famous tannery, where men process leather in an open-air courtyard lined with knee-deep vats of dye in every shade of red, blue, and gold; a madrasa (Koranic school); and the Qaraouiyine Mosque, formerly home to one of the first universities in the world, predating both Oxford and Cambridge. Walking along the narrow lanes, we peer into the medieval foundouks—roadside inns built around open courtyards. Most are worn with age, but one 18th century foundouk has been beautifully restored and is now the Nejjarine Museum of Wood and Carpentry, with displays of everything from tools and musical instruments to decorative woodworking.

Dinner is at our hotel; this evening we're offered international cuisine as a change of pace from Moroccan dishes. Overnight at hotel...BLD

DAY 4 THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS / A DESERT FRONTIER TOWN

This morning we drive through the cedar forests and deep valleys of the Middle Atlas Mountains, stopping to visit the old hill station of Ifrane, built as Morocco's "Little Switzerland" and now a university town. Along the way, we may see some of the rare "Barbary apes"—actually endangered macaque monkeys—that inhabit the area. (Legend has it that the macaques are descended from a disrespectful family who threw couscous

at each other during a meal, and, as punishment, were turned into monkeys and forced to live forever as wild animals.) Our lunch stop is in the remote town of Midelt, with its wonderful views of the High Atlas. Crossing the mountains, we descend a winding road through the stunning canyon of the Ziz Gorge, passing by dramatic stratified cliffs curving and pushing into the river's ancient channel. We follow the gorge through an oasis of date palms to the desert frontier town of Erfoud, whose dates are renowned as the sweetest in all of Morocco. Dinner and overnight at Kasbah Xaluca hotel...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 6.5 hours (Fes to Erfoud)

DAY 5 CAMEL TREK IN THE SAHARA

Switching to 4WD Land Cruisers, we head off road into the Sahara for a rendezvous with our Berber crew—a picturesque caravan of blue-robed Tuareg men and their herd of camels

in the golden desert. Continuing by camel, on foot, or by 4WD (the choice is yours), we take in the Moroccan desert in its varied forms, from immense dunes and high mesas to dry washes fringed by tamarisk. We avoid the Erg Chebbi desert camp area, which has become crowded and noisy, and head to a more secluded region where our private Sahara camp features spacious, walk-in canvas tents with comfortable

"This trip was well thought out with an itinerary that captures the spirit of the country. It was everything I had hoped for, and Morocco had been on my list for years!"

Cindy B., St. Louis, MO

RIADS AND HAMMAMS

No visit to Morocco is complete without a stay at one of its riads—traditionally the estates of the country's wealthiest citizens, merchants, and courtiers. Centered around an open-air courtyard, they contained numerous rooms and showcased exquisite Moorish tiles, architecture, and woodwork. These days, many have been converted to boutique hotels where visitors are warmly welcomed as family guests; we've chosen some of the finest in Morocco.

Hammams are traditional baths that originated in the Roman Empire. They've been enjoyed here ever since by people from all social classes, who go for a body scrub and massage—or just to relax in the steam.



beds covered by cozy duvets. The tent floors are layered with a mosaic of colorful Berber carpets, and meals are served in a large, airy dining tent. This comfortable Sahara desert camp is exclusive to just our group, and tonight we'll feel as if we have the whole desert to ourselves as we savor the silence, watch the sunset, and gaze at stars blazing in the night sky. Overnight in camp...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 2.5 hours 4WD (Erfoud to Sahara desert camp crew)

Camel Trekking Details: Approximately 1.5 hours to our Sahara desert campsite in the morning and approximately 1.5 hours exploring the dunes in the afternoon.

DAY 6 LUXURY SAHARA CAMP / EXPLORE THE DESERT / GNAOUA MUSICIANS

From our camp, we head out to experience the breathtaking beauty of the Moroccan Sahara, with its ochre dunes, cobalt sky, and jagged volcanic peaks. We'll appreciate why the Arabs called the Sahara "bahr bila maa," an "ocean without water." In the morning, we explore our surroundings by camel, with options to walk or ride by 4WD vehicle. On our return to camp in the afternoon we can learn to play rouda, Morocco's most popular card game; have a cooking demonstration of traditional Moroccan fare; or relax with a refreshing beverage

and enjoy the vast desert expanses. Evening brings a glowing sunset and festive dinner, with Gnaoua musicians performing for us. It's incredible music, and we're more than welcome to join in, dancing and drumming along with the musicians! Overnight in camp...BLD

"This was the most fascinating trip we have been on with WT. The Sahara, the gorges, and the mountains were my favorites, also the visit with the nomad family."

Margaret J., Charlottesville, VA

DAY 7 DESERT SUNRISE / WALK IN TODRA GORGE OASIS / SKOURA

After enjoying a desert sunrise across the dunes of the Sahara and another chance to walk on this "sea of sand," we bid farewell to our Tuareg camelers. Meeting up with our 4WD vehicles, we set out for Tinghir, a palm-fringed oasis at the entrance to the Todra Gorge. Time permitting, we'll stop again in Erfoud to visit a

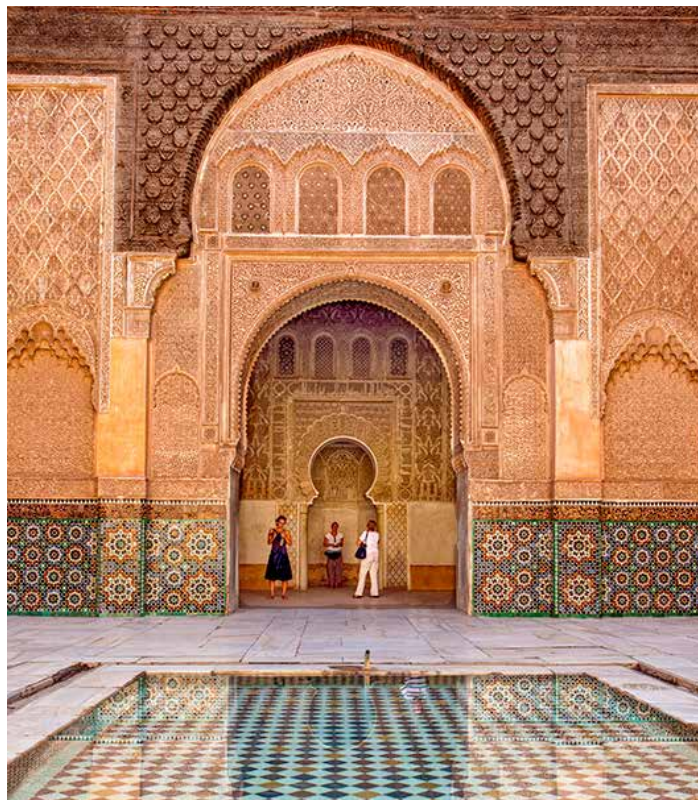
local workshop where marble and limestone with trilobites, ammonites, and other fossil inclusions are made into plates and decorative objects. Todra Gorge is one of the most impressive canyons in the world; in some places its steep walls are more than 1,300 feet high. In a palmeraie, or palm grove oasis, we hike along serene trails that wind through fields, learning about water-distribution techniques that have been utilized for centuries. Before heading to our hotel in Skoura, we pass through the Dades Gorge, a magnificent landscape of limestone cliffs, lush citrus orchards, and sculpted red-rock



MEDINAS, SOUKS, CASBAHS, AND KSOUR:

A medina (the word means “town” in Arabic) was a pre-20th century city—often enclosed within defensive walls—with a mosque at its heart. Craftsmen work in the areas of the medina known as souks, which were laid out according to the commodities being made and sold, with the most valuable products (such as gold and manuscripts) in the center and lesser goods radiating outwards. Today, little has changed, with each souk still named after its products.

A casbah is a fortress-style building with crenellated defensive towers. In rural Morocco, representatives of the ruler lived in and governed from casbahs; a casbah can be inside a ksar (the plural is “ksour”), which is a fortified rural village surrounded by walls. Ait Ben Haddou, which we explore on Day 9, is a spectacular example of a ksar.



formations, with mud-built casbahs sitting high above on both sides of the valley. We arrive at our hotel in Skoura in the late afternoon for our dinner and overnight...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 4.5 hours

Hiking Details: Approximately 1.5 hours

DAY 8 SKOURA / HIKE IN THE VALLEY OF THE ROSES

We board 4WD vehicles for a short drive to Aguerd, the starting point for our hike in the Valley of the Roses, carved by the Assif M'Goun River. In this rugged wilderness in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, fields of roses bloom in a gorgeous setting of red rock walls contrasting with the green valley floor. In April and May, up to a million pounds of roses are gathered for processing into rose oil. After our hike, we continue to the village of Alemdoun

in the upper part of the valley, where we visit Kasbah El Hot and take another hike along cultivated fields to the Berber settlement of Bou Thaghrar with its ruined kasbah. Along the way, we'll have the chance to visit a local Berber family for a mint tea stop for a complete experience of the life of the Berbers. On our return drive to the hotel in Skoura, we'll visit Kalaat M'Gouna, known for its annual rose festival in May... BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 3-4 hours

Hiking Details: Approximately 1-2 hours

DAY 9 THE RED CITADEL OF AIT BEN HADDOU / SOUKS OF MARRAKESH

A morning drive brings us to the clay-brick hillside citadel of Ait Ben Haddou, the famously picturesque UNESCO World Heritage Site that's been used as a setting for *Lawrence of*

Arabia, *Gladiator*, and many other films.

After walking through the citadel, we return to our vehicles and cross the High Atlas Mountains and head for legendary Marrakesh, founded in 1070 and once known as the “red city” for its rose-tinted buildings. With Berber rather than Arab origins, it has been the central marketplace for Berber tribes for centuries. After a late lunch in the city's 11th century medina we wander its fascinating souks, taking in the

scents of lemon and mint, brightly colored cones of spices, and the sounds of donkeys and merchants calling out their offers. We end the day at the heart of Marrakesh in the Djemaa el Fna, the legendary central square, replete with musicians, snake charmers, fire-eaters, and fortune-tellers. Dinner and overnight in Marrakesh...BLD

Driving Details: Approximately 1-1.5 hours (Skoura to Ait Ben Haddou) and 3 hours (Ait Ben Haddou to Marrakesh)

“This was my first group ‘adventure travel’ trip and it exceeded all my expectations. I could not have enjoyed so many aspects of Moroccan life and culture had I been traveling on my own.”

Catherine F., Brooklyn, NY



DAY 10 MARRAKESH: SECRET TOMBS / A PALACE

We discover more of the secrets of Marrakesh this morning. Our urban hike takes us to the Saadian Tombs, a hauntingly beautiful royal necropolis dating from the 16th to 18th century that was purposely sealed off and hidden for over two hundred years, and only rediscovered in 1917. We visit the Bahia Palace, a masterpiece of Moroccan architecture built in the late 19th century and intended to be the largest and most luxurious palace ever built. After lunch in the medina, we have several options: choose a Moroccan cooking class or go shopping in the medina with a local guide, who can help you find brass, leather goods, textiles, and other crafts. Or take a guided walk through Jewish history, with visits to a cemetery, a 15th century synagogue and its small museum, and an opportunity to meet people who live and work in the Jewish Quarter. Dinner is on your own this evening. There is a wonderful variety of options—from Moroccan to international cuisine—and your Trip Leader is happy to make recommendations to suit your interest. Overnight at our hotel...BL

"An amazing range of sites, landscape, activities: the desert trek was a really unique experience that I'll remember always; the mountain landscape was gorgeous; everything was well organized but allowed flexibility."

Heather J., Washington, DC

DAY 11 MARRAKESH / MAJORELLE GARDEN

This morning we visit the enchanting Majorelle Garden—a diverse botanical landscape punctuated by wildly vibrant architecture and ceramics, with pools, fountains, and burbling waters that welcome songbirds.

Designed by a French painter in 1923 and built over a period of nearly 40 years, the garden was later restored by Yves Saint Laurent, who added a fascinating museum dedicated to the rich culture of the indigenous Berber people. The afternoon is free to explore on your own and enjoy lunch at a restaurant of your choosing. We'll have a festive Farewell Dinner in the medina this evening. Overnight at our hotel... BD

DAY 12 DEPART

Transfer to the Marrakesh airport for homeward flights, or continue to Essaouira to join our Essaouira extension...B

Trip Details

DATE AND PRICING INFORMATION

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2025

\$6,995 (11-15 members)

\$7,295 (4-10 members)

Single supplement: \$1,795

Please contact us for future years' pricing

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guide(s)
- Accommodations: from a 5-star riad to our luxury Sahara desert camp to first-rate hotels
- All meals included except 1 lunch and 1 dinner
- Activities, guiding, and sightseeing as scheduled
- Full-day tours in Rabat, Fes, and Marrakesh with local guides
- Sahara desert camp crew (camel handlers, cooks, etc.)
- All tips (luggage handling, hotel staff, waiters, desert staff, etc.) except Trip Leader and bus/4WD vehicle drivers
- Entries, taxes, and fees
- Airport transfers

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare to Casablanca and from Marrakesh, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights that may be necessary due to airline schedule changes or other factors, cost of medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details: www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance

Our Guides

MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Our Morocco Trip Leaders are the best and most experienced guides in the country, with a gift for bringing history and culture to life. Their language skills—they all speak the indigenous Berber language, long-term friendships with locals, and deep knowledge and insights give you the privilege of authentic cultural exchange as they introduce you to the welcoming people, natural beauty, rich cultural history of this magical country.



ALI AIT ICHOU

Ali Ait Ichou was born in the heart of Morocco's High Atlas and spent his childhood in the high mountains of Amazigh country. Descending to the urban side of the Moroccan kingdom, he attended high school in Marrakesh, and majored in English at the University of Marrakesh. Ali began working in tourism when he was 18 years old, serving as a trekking guide in the High Atlas of his Amazigh homeland during summer holidays from school. He has guided for Wilderness Travel throughout Morocco and says, "It was always my dream and is still my passion to share everything I have learned about my culture with travelers." Ali is an extremely knowledgeable guide and a fun Trip Leader. He lives in Marrakesh; in addition to English he speaks French, Amazigh, and Arabic, and is currently learning Spanish.



MOHAMED HJIRA

Mohamed Hjira was born in the classic Amazigh town of Azilal in Morocco's High Atlas. His hometown, the gateway to the Central High Atlas, was often visited by travelers because of its proximity to the spectacular Ouzoud Waterfalls, so during his childhood he met people from all around the world, which led him to want to make a career as a guide. Mohamed moved to Marrakesh and graduated from the University of Marrakesh with a degree in economics, then obtained his guide license. He has guided for us in the High Atlas as well as many other regions of Morocco since 2010, and has a wide knowledge of and an infectious passion for the ancient cultures and natural beauty of his home country. He speaks fluent English as well as French, Amazigh, and Arabic.



Wilderness Travel's Exclusive Luxury Desert Camp

The Wilderness Travel experience that sets your journey apart is our private luxury camp in the Sahara. Spacious tents are hung with richly-hued Moroccan fabrics, and there's a comfortable outdoor sitting area where we can watch the sunset and stargaze beneath a spectacular nighttime sky. Far from the noise and crowds of other camps, we'll feel as if we have the desert all to ourselves.

DESERT LUXURY—CAMP IN COMFORT

Our exclusive camp will immerse you in the Sahara in absolute comfort: mouthwatering meals arrive with whitetablecloth service, and walk-in tents feature real beds covered by cozy, handwoven hill tribe textiles. There is a private washstand, a shower and a toilet within your tent, which is separated from the sleeping room by traditional white curtains, and the tent floors are layered with an exuberant mosaic of Berber carpets. This is Sahara Desert camping, WT style!

"The Sahara camel trek/camping was definitely the highlight! Waking at sunrise on the dunes was absolutely beautiful."

TREK THE DESERT ON YOUR OWN CAMEL

Feel like a caravansary traveler of yore as we journey through the breathtaking beauty of the Moroccan Sahara, with its ochre dunes, cobalt sky, and jagged volcanic peaks. We have the flexibility to explore by camel, on foot, or in 4WD vehicles as we step back in time and lose ourselves in the mystical desert.

WELCOMING CAMP STAFF

Our top-notch camp staff are personable and professional, and will make your stay unforgettable. They'll teach you to play rouda, Morocco's most popular card game, and you can savor aromatic spices as you participate in a tagine cooking demonstration with the head chef. Then enjoy a magical Gnaouan musical performance—drumming and dancing are encouraged! The cultural connections and fun you'll have with these folks are a highlight of the trip.

Accommodations



VILLA MANDARINE

Rabat, Morocco

Day 1 (1 night)

Set in three acres of beautifully landscaped gardens laced by walking paths, this 36-room riad, a former private home, is an oasis in Rabat's residential district. Rooms are spacious and furnished in traditional decor, and each has its own terrace or private garden. The heated swimming pool is a great place to cool off after a day of exploring, and there is also a spa, fitness center, and bar.



HOTELS IN FES

Fes, Morocco, Days 2 to 3 (2 nights)

In Fes, we stay at one of the following properties:

RIAD FES

A member of the Relais & Chateaux hotel group, the 26-room Riad Fes is tucked away behind the medina and close to one of its main gates. The common areas are comfortable and inviting and feature traditional Moroccan tile work, carved wooden screens, and intricate plasterwork. Like most riads, it has its own hammam where you can get a relaxing massage.

RIAD MAISON BLEUE

Located in a historic quarter of the medina, the riad's main courtyard with its swimming pool and gardens is a tranquil place to relax after exploring the medina. The riad features 13 tastefully decorated guest rooms, each with private bath, and three terraces offering views over the medina. There is also a spa and gym.



KASBAH XALUCA

Erfoud, Morocco

Day 4 (1 night)

Surrounded by desert sands on the edge of the Moroccan Sahara, this newly built kasbah-style hotel is very atmospheric, with its numerous adobe courtyards and stylish guest rooms decorated to resemble nomads' tents. The main interior courtyard centers around a lovely swimming pool and bar shaded by palms. Breakfast and dinner are buffet style.

Accommodations (cont'd)



PRIVATE SAHARA DESERT CAMP

Sahara Desert, Morocco

Days 5 to 6 (2 nights)

Our luxury tented camp, exclusive to our group, is set in the majestic dunes of the Sahara. The canvas interiors are hung with bright fabrics and carpeted with richly-hued Moroccan rugs (you'll forget you're in a tent—this is more like a sheik's hideaway). Comfortable beds are covered by cozy duvets—perfect for cold nights in the desert—and you'll have a private washstand, a shower and a toilet within your tent, but separated from the sleeping room by traditional white curtains. Meals are served in a large dining tent, complete with tables with white tablecloths, china, silver, and wine glasses, and there is also a comfortable sitting area outside. Our camp is quiet and you'll appreciate the tranquil solitude of the desert.



HOTELS IN SKOURA

Days 7 to 8 (2 nights)

In Skoura, we stay at one of the following properties:

KSAR EL KABBABA

This atmospheric kasbah, a magical oasis with old-world charms and historic architecture, has a stunning setting amid palm groves and ancient olive trees. At the end of the day (and if there's time!), treat yourself to soothing experience—hammam, Jacuzzi, or massage—at the “Sparadise!” There's also a gorgeous outdoor pool.



LES JARDINS DE SKOURA

A haven of tranquility, this small hotel has just five rooms and three suites, and features lovely gardens and a rooftop terrace, a great place to relax and watch the sunset. Guest rooms are clean and well appointed, and the staff is friendly and welcoming.



PALAIS SEBBAN

Marrakesh, Morocco

Days 9 to 11 (3 nights)

The Palais Sebban enjoys a truly superb location, right in the heart of the medina and just a five-minute walk from Djemaa el Fna. This elegant, traditional riad dates from the mid-19th century, and the original woodwork, ceilings, walls, and doors remain perfectly intact. It's like diving into *The Thousand and One Nights!*

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our Morocco: Camels to Casbahs webpage and click on “Accommodations.”

Pre-Trip Chefchaouen Extension

Inside the ancient gated medina of this dramatic “blue city,” nearly every building is whitewashed or painted some shade of azure, contrasting with the terracotta rooftops and red-walled casbah. Leather and textile workshops line the city’s twisting cobblestone streets, and the souks are filled with colorful wares. The Berbers who live in the surrounding villages are also known for their ironwork and textiles. This Chefchaouen extension can be added either before or after the main trip. Below is a description of this extension when done pre-trip. If you would like to do it post-trip, please contact us for details.

DAY 1 CASABLANCA

Meet your private guide and driver this morning at the hotel. A scenic five-hour drive brings you to the dramatic “blue” village of Chefchaouen (pronounced shef-SHA-wen). Arrive in the late afternoon and check into the Lina Ryad or Riad Cherifa. The city is filled with atmospheric restaurants offering both international cuisine and delicious Moroccan dishes. Many offer al fresco seating with views of the grand mosque, the medina, and the majestic Atlas Mountains. Dinner is on your own this evening...L

DAY 2 CHEFCHAOUEN

After breakfast, enjoy a walk up to the Spanish mosque by way of the Ras el-Maa springs for a panoramic view across the mountains. Your guided tour of the medina includes the casbah, Outa el Hammam square, and several souks, with an optional visit at a local weaving workshop. Enjoy lunch with a local family, with the rest of the day at leisure so you can absorb the sights and sounds of Morocco’s “Blue Pearl” city. Overnight at Lina Ryad or Riad Cherifa...BLD

DAY 3 CHEFCHAOUEN

This morning we take a side trip to the natural wonder of Akchour Falls in the wild, rugged Rif Mountains, with an optional challenging hike to God’s Bridge—a natural red rock formation high above a series of sapphire pools and sparkling waterfalls. We may return to Chefchaouen in early to mid-afternoon, giving you another opportunity to soak up the atmosphere of this artistic, laid-back retreat. Overnight at Lina Ryad or Riad Cherifa. Dinner is on your own...BL

DAY 4 CASABLANCA

After breakfast, drive back to Casablanca through the Rif Mountains and the Berber town of Ouezzane (a spiritual

capital for Sufis and Moroccan Jews), then cross the fertile plains of the Loukkos valley to arrive back in Casablanca. Your guide is happy to share his knowledge and insights as you chat with him on the return drive of approximately five hours. You’ll return to Casablanca in the late afternoon and join your group trip the following morning...BL

Note: An overnight will be needed in Casablanca on this night (at additional cost). This can be booked on your own or through Wilderness Travel.

2025 EXTENSION COST

\$1,595 (3-6 members)

\$1,895 (2 members)

\$2,595 (1 member)

Single supplement: \$385

Prices are not guaranteed until services are confirmed.

EXTENSION COST INCLUDES

- English-speaking tour leader for 4 days
- English-speaking city guide in Chefchaouen
- Accommodations (except Day 4)
- Sightseeing as noted
- Private transport with driver
- Meals as indicated
- Airport transfers
- Tips for luggage handling and local city guides

EXTENSION COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

Optional activities, meals not specified (BLD), hotel accommodation on Day 4, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, items of personal nature such as laundry, telephone, and optional gratuities to tour leader.



Post-Trip Essaouira Extension

Discover tiny Essaouira, an 18th century gem set on the Atlantic coast. With its ancient ramparts above the sea, Essaouira has a decidedly medieval atmosphere. The extension begins and ends in Marrakesh.

DAY 1 MAGICAL ESSAOUIRA, AN ARTISTS' RETREAT

From Marrakesh, a scenic drive through farmland brings us to Essaouira (pronounced essa-weera), a charming city on the Atlantic Coast that's been occupied since prehistoric times. The Portuguese built a fort here in the 16th century, and much of the city we see today was laid out by a French architect in the mid-1700s, at the request of Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Abdallah. Essaouira's whitewashed houses, with their blue shutters and ornate doors, give it an enchanting Mediterranean atmosphere. After a seafood lunch we head out on foot to explore the bustling fish market and the port, where bright blue boats bob in the harbor. We walk up to the old fort—with its ancient ramparts, cannons, and battlements—and discover quirky little artisan shops lining narrow lanes. Now known as an artist's colony, the city has cast its spell on many creative souls over the years; Orson Welles filmed scenes for "Othello" here, and musicians from Eric Clapton to Jimi Hendrix were inspired by their stays in the 1960s and 1970s. Dinner tonight is on your own. Overnight at a traditional riad...BL

Driving Details: Approximately 3 hours (Marrakesh to Essaouira)

DAY 2 ESSAOUIRA / MARRAKESH

Morning transfer to Marrakesh, with the afternoon at leisure. Lunch and dinner on your own. Overnight at hotel in Marrakesh...B

DAY 3 DEPART

Transfer to the airport and depart on homeward-bound flight...B

2025 EXTENSION COST

\$1,195 (3-6 members)

\$1,395 (2 members)

\$1,895 (1 member)

Single supplement: \$285

Prices are not guaranteed until services are confirmed.

EXTENSION COST INCLUDES

- English-speaking tour leader for 3 days
- English-speaking city guide in Essaouira
- Accommodations
- Sightseeing as noted
- Private transport with driver
- Meals as indicated
- Airport transfers
- Tips for luggage handling and local city guides

EXTENSION COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

Optional activities, meals not specified (BLD), soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, items of personal nature such as laundry, telephone, and optional gratuities to tour leader.

What the Trip is Like

TRIP LEVEL

This trip is rated Level 2+, Moderate. It combines overland travel and cultural exploration with a two-day camel trek. Each participant should be in good physical condition, since most days include light/leisurely walking, especially when we're exploring the souks. In addition to "urban hiking" in the cities there is also light hiking, mostly on small paths that are a mix of dirt and rocky terrain; the trails are not steep or exposed. On Days 7 and 8 we hike for a total of about 2 hours.

CAMEL TREK

On the camel trek, we enjoy two days of exploring the desert landscape around us. On the first day, we drive into the desert to meet our camels and Tuareg cameleers, then begin the walk, with a picnic lunch en route. You can walk or ride camels, or you can opt to ride to camp by 4WD vehicle. The next day, several options are available, with lunch at camp. You can explore a small mountain called M'ifis and the dunes of Erg Znagui by camel, enjoy a walk and visit a nomad family, or simply stay in camp and enjoy the surroundings. At camp, meals are served to us around a table in our dinner tent, and breakfast is often served out on the dunes. The desert walking is not difficult but covers a variety of terrain with no trails, from hard-packed desert to vast sand dunes. Our camels are roped together in groups of two or three and led by a cameleer. Most people alternately ride and walk, as camel riding for long periods can be uncomfortable. You can walk if you don't want to ride a camel at all, or relax in the camp instead. Please note: Camels can be unpredictable animals. It is possible for the camel to stumble on rough terrain or make a sudden erratic movement. Since camels cannot be saddled as securely as horses, the possibility of a fall is increased. It's important to follow the instruction and guidance of your Trip Leader, and to stay alert while riding. Anyone participating in this optional activity must acknowledge the inherent risks in

riding and perhaps falling from the saddle, and agree to accept responsibility.

GETTING IN SHAPE

Each participant should be in good health, since most days include light/leisurely walking on mostly flat paths that are a mix of dirt and rocky terrain; the trails are not steep or exposed.

Being in good physical condition is important for your enjoyment of the trip. The best way to get accustomed to walking and being on your feet throughout the day is by incorporating exercise into your schedule leading up to your departure. We recommend walking, hiking, and engaging in physical activities; stair-climbing machines are excellent preparation for walking uphill.

WEATHER

Morocco has climatic variations but the weather is largely moderate, with a cooling influence from the Mediterranean and Atlantic. In the summer months, daytime temperatures are in the 90Fs in the valleys, but cool down to the 70Fs as we gain elevation. Highs in the coastal cities are in the high 70Fs and low 80Fs. In the spring, average daytime temperatures in coastal cities range from the mid-60Fs to the low 80Fs. The Dades and Todra areas are typically in vibrant bloom in early spring, from late February through March, and has cooler average highs in the 40Fs, dropping to lows in the 30Fs at night. In the north, light rains may stretch to mid-March. During the fall months, Morocco's weather is mild and dry—highs range from the 60Fs to the high 80Fs. In the north, light rains begin in November.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We enjoy first-class hotels and high-end riads in the cities and smaller, quainter lodges in the more remote areas. We spend

Average Daily Max/Min °F												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fes	61/43	64/45	66/46	70/48	77/54	84/59	93/64	93/66	88/63	77/55	68/48	63/43
Erfoud	59/37	64/41	70/48	75/52	82/59	93/68	100/75	99/73	90/66	79/55	68/46	59/37
Marrakesh	64/43	68/46	72/48	75/52	81/57	88/61	97/68	97/68	90/64	81/59	72/50	66/45
Rainfall - Inches												
Fes	2.4	2.8	2.7	1.4	1.5	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.5	1.7	2.6	2.6
Erfoud	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.5
Marrakesh	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.9	1.5	1.4



two nights at a private Sahara desert camp while on the camel trek, where we provide all the comforts you would want in a luxury tented camp. Canvas interiors are hung with bright fabrics and carpeted with Moroccan rugs. Comfortable beds are covered by cozy duvets. You'll have a washstand, shower, and toilet within your tent, separated from the sleeping room by traditional white curtains. Meals are served in a large dining tent with a comfortable lounging area outside.

CUISINE

Meals will be a mix of à la carte and family style at local restaurants, cafés and hotels. Tajine (a slow-cooked meat stew often made with chicken, seafood, vegetables, olives, prunes, or almonds) is an important staple of Moroccan cuisine, as is couscous, kebab, and harira, a rich, spiced bean soup. We will also be eating dishes with a more French influence as well as seafood.

TRANSPORTATION

The majority of your transportation is provided in a comfortable air-conditioned minibus. On some of the smaller, more remote roads where larger vehicles cannot easily access, we use Toyota 4WD Land Cruisers. Filtered water is carried on board our vehicles at all times for your use.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Casablanca, Morocco

Suggested Airport: Mohammed V International Airport (CMN)

Suggested Date & Time: Anytime prior to Day 1

Meeting Place: A complimentary transfer is provided from the Casablanca airport to your hotel of choice in Casablanca for all trip members, no matter when you arrive. A Wilderness Travel representative will meet you at the airport and will be holding a Wilderness Travel sign. On Day 1, all trip members will meet your Trip Leader at 9:00 am in the lobby of the Four Seasons Casablanca.

For pre-trip extra nights, Wilderness Travel can book rooms at the Four Seasons Casablanca on request. If you choose to stay at another property in Casablanca (booked on your own), Wilderness Travel will provide a transfer to the Four Seasons Casablanca the morning of Day 1 for the group meet up. If you have booked pre-trip extra nights through WT, an Extra Services Confirmation for your extra hotel nights will be sent with your Final Documents.

DEPARTURE

Marrakesh, Morocco

Suggested Airport: Ras Al Khaimah International Airport (RAK)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 12, anytime

No matter when you depart, a complimentary transfer will be provided to the Marrakesh airport for your departing flight. Please note that the hotel check-out time is 12:00 pm.

Note: If you decide to depart from Casablanca instead of Marrakesh, we can book a private land transfer from your Marrakesh hotel to the Casablanca airport. The transfer takes approximately 3 hours. Please see your Extra Services Request Form for pricing.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Morocco. Airlines with the most convenient schedules for this trip include:

Delta Airlines (www.delta.com)

Air France (www.airfrance.com)

Air Canada (www.aircanada.com)

Tap Air Portugal (www.flytap.com)

Royal Air Maroc (www.royalairmaroc.com)

Easy Jet (www.easyjet.com)

Easy Jet is a British airline offering cheap fares from Europe to Morocco (Milan, Madrid, and Paris to/from Casablanca and Marrakesh).

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 970-818-8459 in the US or Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so we can reserve your airport transfers.

EXTRA HOTEL NIGHTS

We are happy to arrange additional hotel nights for you at the hotels in Casablanca or Marrakesh. Please see the Extra Hotel Services Request Form included in your Welcome Packet to book these reservations.

Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts



T-SHIRT FRONT



T-SHIRT BACK



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST
PLUS INSULATED CAMELBAK WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan.

Here's how it works:

YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel insulated stainless steel water bottle by CamelBak and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$130 value).

YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$140 value).

YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.

Travel Notes



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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