

Morocco Private Journey

IMPERIAL CITIES, THE GREAT SAHARA, AND MARRAKESH





Morocco Private Journey

WHEN TO GO

January to May
September to December

For our Private Journey trips, you choose your own group and your preferred dates—there are no set departure dates. Private Journeys are available to groups as few as four people or as large as you like. While many guests choose to book this tour exactly as is, our Area Specialists can work with you to customize it to your wishes. Contact us for availability, questions, or to book your adventure!

Morocco's sensuous beauty is legendary, from imperial cities with labyrinthine souks to the awesome grandeur of the Sahara. Our Private Journey discovers this graceful land in Fes—a walled city suspended in a medieval dream—and in the storied casbahs of Marrakesh, in the red-rock canyons of the High Atlas, and in a stunning desert oasis where dunes stretch to the horizon. You have a private guide with you from Day 1 through the afternoon of Day 8, and your accommodations are in hotels as well as riads, traditional mansions that have been converted into boutique hotels of character, with charming Moorish and Andalusian architecture, tiled central courtyards open to the sky, and peaceful rooftop gardens. Each riad is unique and has its own special personality and decor. At journey's end, you can extend your travels to the enchanting walled town of Essaouira on the edge of the sea.

Itinerary

DAY 1

CASABLANCA / RABAT

Morning arrival in Casablanca, where you are met by your guide and escorted for a visit to the huge Hassan II Mosque, with its exquisite Moorish architecture of traditional hand-crafted decorative tiles and marble. Massive in scale, it was designed by the French architect Michel Pinseau as a modern rendition of classical Moorish architecture. Every inch of it is exquisitely detailed, hand crafted in tile, marble, metal, and wood by traditional Moroccan artists. It is open to all and you can explore the interior, where as many as 20,000 people can worship at once.

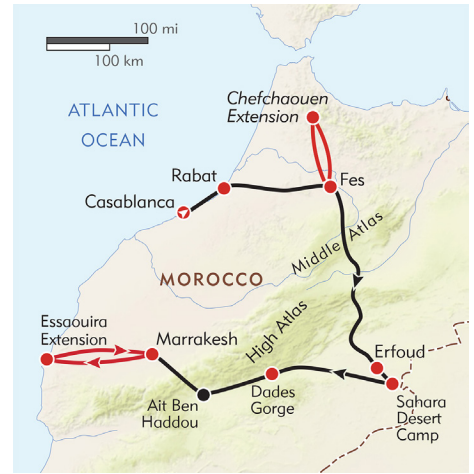
Drive north along the coast to Rabat, the capital, facing the Atlantic. After lunch in the city, head out to explore this very walkable capital full of historic sites. Stroll through the picturesque Oudaia Kasbah, partly enclosed in ramparts, and visit the Mausoleum of Mohammed V (the current king's grandfather), with its costumed royal guards and brilliant marble surface. Explore the Chellah, one of the most beautiful ruins in all of Morocco, a walled and towered royal necropolis atop the ancient Roman town of Sala Colonia. The spectacular Chellah is the legacy of Abou El Hassan (1331-1351), the great Marenid sultan and prolific builder. Overnight at the Villa Mandarine...
LD

The Berbers: Two thirds of Moroccans are Berbers (or Imazighen, as they call themselves), a group with a mixed origin that includes European and Saharan peoples. Not a homogeneous group, the Berbers arrived in Morocco (and other regions of North Africa) at different times. Morocco's Berbers found refuge in the High Atlas and Middle Atlas, thus surviving various invasions by Mediterranean civilizations. Today they retain a distinctive tribal culture that breaks into three major groups: the Sanhaja live in the central and eastern High Atlas, the Middle Atlas, and the Rif and speak the Tamazight dialect. The Masmouda are settled people who live mostly in the western High Atlas and speak the Chleuh dialect; it was a Masmoudian tribe that in the 12th century founded the Almohad Empire, a dynasty strong enough to have controlled Spain along with much of northwest Africa. The Zenets, the herders of eastern Morocco, speak the Znatiya dialect. They founded the Marinid Dynasty in the 13th century. The blue-robed Tuaregs of the Sahara are also a branch of the Berber family. Berbers are Muslims, but their conversion to Islam took centuries and in many areas was not dominant until the 16th century. Berber Islam tends to incorporate traditional beliefs of former religious practice.

DAY 2

MOULAY IDRIS / VOLUBILIS / FES

Depart Rabat and travel inland through countryside dotted with wheat fields, vineyards, and olive groves to Moulay Idriss, a rural hill town named for Morocco's most famous saint, Moulay Idriss, great-grandson of the Prophet Muhammed. He is buried here, and thus the town is a revered pilgrimage site year round. Enjoy lunch in town, then stroll the hilly lanes and walk through the small souk. Later head to nearby Volubilis, a romantic Roman



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 9 days
Arrive: Casablanca, Morocco
Depart: Marrakesh, Morocco
Lodging: 8 nights in hotels (or optional upgrades to traditional riad-style hotels)
Meals: All meals included except 4 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity: Cultural Adventures, Walking
Trip Level: 1 ② 3 4 5 6
Easy to moderate cultural exploration, city and village walks, optional camel ride

HIGHLIGHTS

- Roam the labyrinthine medina of medieval Fes and the bustling bazaars of Marrakesh
- Experience the magic of the Sahara's golden dunes from your private desert camp
- Enjoy authentic riads, perfectly-located boutique hotels, and a private guide throughout your trip
- Tailor your activities to your interests: Jewish history, architecture, cooking, hiking

Itinerary (cont'd)

ruin surrounded by rolling farmlands. Volubilis was Rome's provincial capital in Morocco, with structures dating to the second and third centuries AD and an impressive array of stunning mosaics. Continue to Fes and transfer to the Riad Fes or Riad Maison Bleue...BL

DAY 3 FES

The most evocative of Morocco's imperial capitals, ancient Fes is nestled in a high valley and resplendent with minarets and domes. Its evocative medina is one of the most perfectly preserved medieval cities in the world, hauntingly beautiful and full of infinite visual delights. Enter the dazzling 12th century medina through one of its four medieval gates and discover a mile-long network of souks, open-air cafes, courtyards, hammams (traditional steam baths), and gardens. Explore on foot in a honeycomb of twisting alleys of Arabic-Moorish architecture, visit the nearby mellah (Jewish quarters), savor the scent of spices, orange blossoms, sizzling lamb kabobs, and sweet honey cakes, and watch scenes unchanged in centuries, from donkeys laden with leathers bound for tanneries to children carrying boards of bread dough to communal ovens. Visit Kairouine Mosque, established in 859 and considered the world's oldest university (only possible to see outside), Attarine Medersa, a Madrasa (school) built in 1325 with magnificent tile work, Nejarine Square and the Fondouq Museum in the old caravanserai, and Henna Souq, one of the medina's most picturesque squares. Time permitting visit the Dar Batha or Musee de Batha (Museum of Moroccan Art) in the upper medina, with its beautiful examples of woodcarving, zellige tilework and tadelakt (limestone waterproof plaster and Fez pottery, some almost seven centuries old. The walking tour can be customized to suit your special interests. Some of the finest Berber carpets in Morocco are found in this medina. Overnight at Riad Fes or Riad Maison Bleue...BL



“We can't say enough good things about our guide's knowledge, personal skills, warmth—and most of all his patience. He dealt with five different people with different needs, who often asked questions that had already been answered—and never did he show anything but the utmost care and good will. He is a treasure—Wilderness Travel should be very proud.”

Marty and Paul S., Falls Church, VA

Medinas, Souks, Casbahs, and Ksour: The word medina means “town” in Arabic. It refers to Morocco's old pre-20th century cities, many of them enclosed within defensive walls. A medina has several monumental gates through which it can be entered and a mosque at its heart. Medinas are separated into quarters according to social and commercial hierarchies. Each quarter usually has its own communal oven, hammam, and grocery shop within its network of streets and alleys. Craftsmen work in the area of the medina known as the souk (market), often with separate souks for separate crafts. A casbah is a fortress-style building with crenelated towers. In rural Morocco, representatives of the ruler lived in and governed from casbahs; a casbah can be inside a ksar. A ksar is a fortified rural village surrounded by solid walls.

DAY 4 ERFOUD

Today, drive through cedar forest and deep valleys of the craggy Middle Atlas Mountains. En route, visit the old French hill station of Ifrane, built in the

early 1930s by French colonials and now a university town. Along the way, you may see some of the “Barbary apes” (actually macaque monkeys) that inhabit the cedar forests of the Middle Atlas. After lunch, cross the High Atlas and 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, with a stop at Tafilalt, the largest oasis in the world. Total driving time is about six and a half hours—a long journey but a beautiful one. Overnight at Kasbah Xaluca or L’Hotel by Chateau de Sable...BLD

DAY 5 SAHARA DESERT

Switching to 4WD Land Cruisers, head off road to a secluded region in the Sahara. You’ll avoid the Erg Chebbi desert camp area, which has become crowded and noisy, and head to a more secluded region where your private Sahara camp features spacious, walk-in canvas tents with comfortable 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. Explore the desert by camel, on foot, or by 4WD (the choice is yours) to take in the Moroccan desert in its varied forms, from immense dunes and high mesas to dry washes fringed by tamarisk. You have the option to enjoy a cooking demonstration of traditional Moroccan fare. This evening brings a glowing sunset and festive dinner, with a performance by Gnaoua musicians. You’re more than welcome to join in, dancing and drumming along with the musicians! Overnight at camp...BLD

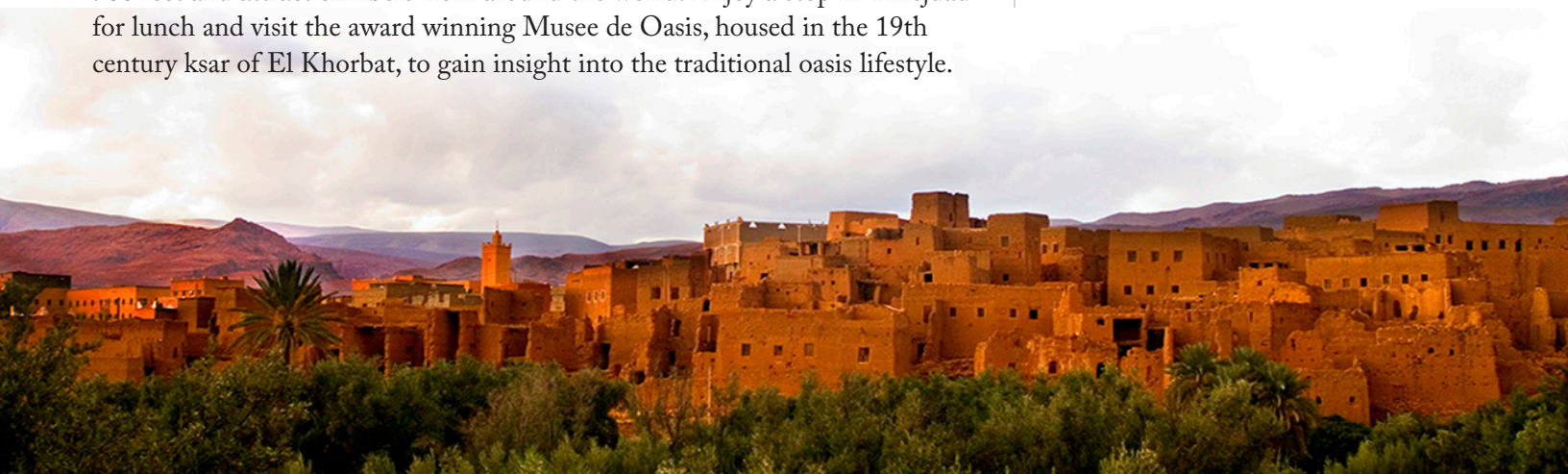
DAY 6 TODRA GORGE / DADES GORGE

After enjoying a desert sunrise across the dunes of the Sahara and another chance to take in this “sea of sand,” bid farewell to your Tuareg cameleers. Depart for the spectacular Dades Gorge, famed for its scenery of limestone cliffs, lush fig orchards, and eroded rock formations reminiscent of the red-rock canyons of the American Southwest. The whole region is a paradise for photographers. En route, visit the Todra Gorge, a narrow canyon with tiny villages and fertile fields set along a river. The rock walls of this gorge rise to 900 feet and attract climbers from around the world. Enjoy a stop in Tinejdad for lunch and visit the award winning Musee de Oasis, housed in the 19th century ksar of El Khorbat, to gain insight into the traditional oasis lifestyle.



“This was truly one of the best travel experiences I have ever had. No need was overlooked. Every detail was planned and executed effortlessly.”

D. Gauthier, Miami, FL



Itinerary (cont'd)



“We loved the way you tailored the personal trip to suit our time frame, which was shorter than the usual trip in Morocco. It was a wonderful experience to see so much in such a short time; we really felt we got to know the country much more than if we had tried to figure it out ourselves!”

Therese O., Berkeley, CA

In the late afternoon, arrive in Boumalne, a small town at the entrance to the Dades Gorge and check in at the Hotel Xaluca Dades or Dar Jnan Tiouira... BLD

DAY 7

DADES GORGE / AIT-BEN-HADDOU / MARRAKESH

After enjoying vistas of the Dades Gorge, visit Ouarzazate, nicknamed the “door of the desert,” as it was a trading point for centuries, later becoming known as “Ouallywood” since the 1950s, providing backdrops for movies set in places such as Tibet, ancient Rome, Somalia and Egypt. Continue to Ait-Ben-Haddou, a citadel-like village where scenes from *Lawrence of Arabia*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, and *Gladiator* were filmed. Enjoy a walk through this picturesque casbah before continuing to Marrakesh, known as the “red city” for its rose-tinted buildings. The city has Berber rather than Arab origins and for centuries has been the central marketplace for Berber tribes. At its heart is an 11th century medina and the Djemaa el Fna, the central square and colorful gathering ground for acrobats, musicians, and snake charmers. Overnight at La Maison Arabe (or upgrade to Villa des Orangers or La Mamounia)...BL

DAY 8

MARRAKESH

With the High Atlas providing a beautiful backdrop, Marrakesh remains a city of immense charm. Enjoy a full-day tour of the city, including a visit to 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, which you will also visit. The rest of the day can be customized to suit your special interests. You can take an urban hike 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. You may visit the Ben Youssef Madrasa, built in the 14th century and once the largest school in North Africa. Another option is the lovely Jardin Secret, a garden complex that dates back to the Saadian Dynasty more than four hundred years ago. Rebuilt in the 19th century, it has been the home of some of Morocco and Marrakesh’s most important political figures, and is an excellent example of Islamic art and culture, with beautiful gardens and buildings. You will also have a chance to stroll through the medina and various souks, and a labyrinth of side streets, or take a cooking class (additional cost). Overnight at La Maison Arabe (or upgrade to Villa des Orangers or La Mamounia)...BL

Optional add-on: 3-hour cooking class (additional cost)

DAY 9

MARRAKESH / DEPART (OR JOIN ESSAOUIRA EXTENSION)

Transfer to Marrakesh airport for departing flights...B only

Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2025

\$5,395 (5-8 members)

\$5,895 (4 members)

Single supplement: \$1,245

Prices are based on double occupancy and not guaranteed until services are confirmed.

Make it Your Trip!

The prices above are for the ready-to-book adventure outlined in this Detailed Itinerary, a popular option that has been handcrafted by our Area Specialists to include the best of every destination. While many travelers choose to book this tour as is, our Area Specialists are also happy to work with you to customize this Private Journey to suit your specific interests and style of travel. We can arrange for longer or shorter stays, offer hotel upgrades (see below for sample costs), or add an extension to additional places of interest. We can even add special activities or customize excursions depending on your interests. We invite you to contact us to discuss your options!

Optional Hotel Upgrades

All upgrade pricing is per person per night, based on double occupancy. Please call for single occupancy pricing.

Marrakesh: La Villa des Orangers, from \$220

Marrakesh: La Mamounia, from \$365

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Accommodations in riads, hotels, and Sahara desert camp
- Meals as indicated in Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner). Non-alcoholic drinks are provided with all included meals
- Sightseeing as described, with a private English-speaking guide/driver throughout
- Airport transfers, land transportation, and entrance fees as noted
- One three-hour camel ride (or walk if you prefer) in the Sahara
- All tipping and gratuities except for your main guide and driver

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals or beverages not specified after each itinerary day, any activities described as optional, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to main guide and driver, additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors, pre-trip expenses such as medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature: laundry, alcoholic beverages (with the exception of open bar at the Sahara desert camp).

SIGNING UP FOR A TRIP

Early reservations are recommended since accommodations often sell out far in advance. Please call 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Africa Manager or email africa@wildernesstravel.com with any questions that you may have about this trip. To reserve your Private Journey, we will need to know your preferred dates of travel. We will then check availability and send you a proposed itinerary with exact pricing for your adventure. We accept Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a letter of confirmation, Detailed Itinerary, Trip Application, Medical Form, and Pre-Departure Information Booklet with information to help you prepare for your adventure. Please see our Cancellations and Transfer Fee Schedule for specific payment information.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$1000

90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee: \$1000 per person

90 days or less: 100% of trip cost

*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

Optional Extension: Chefchaouen

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, either at the hotel or at the Casablanca Airport. 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...BL

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
- Sightseeing as noted
- Private transport with driver, bottled water for drives
- 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.



Optional Extension: Essaouira

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 will begin and end in Marrakesh.

DAY 9 ESSAOUIRA

From Marrakesh, a morning drive brings you to Essaouira, a charming seaside town enclosed within 18th century ramparts. After checking in at your hotel, enjoy a typical seafood lunch at the fishermen's market hall at Essaouira's small port. Fishermen sell their catch here—just-caught fish on display range from fresh scampi to sardines—and you can have it cooked in small stands nearby. After lunch, enjoy a guided tour that includes the waterfront, where wooden fishing boats are still built the traditional way, and the old 16th century Portuguese fort, with its cannons and battlements. Much of the town you see today was laid out in the 17th century by a French architect at the request of Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Abdallah. Orson Welles filmed scenes for *Othello* in Essaouira in 1949, and on your explorations you may see a small bust of him in a tiny garden square. Jimi Hendrix spent time in Essaouira in the 1960s—Essaouira is said to have inspired his song “Castles Made of Sand.” Overnight at hotel...BL

Riad Mimouna: This traditional riad, set on the town ramparts right above the beach, has 33 guest rooms and suites decorated in Moroccan design. Start the day with breakfast on the rooftop terrace—with its 360-degree views of the sea and town—and end it with a massage at the hotel's spa center.

L'Heure Bleue Palais (Optional Upgrade): A member of the Relais & Chateaux group, this hotel nestled within the walls of the medina is a converted 19th century palatial

residence with 35 rooms and suites. The rooftop pool and terrace offer panoramic views of the medina and port.

Upgrade supplement: \$275-\$575. Confirmation of optional upgrade is based on availability. We suggest you book well in advance to ensure your choice of accommodation.

DAY 10 ESSAOUIRA / MARRAKESH

Transfer to Marrakesh, with the rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at hotel...B

DAY 11 DEPART

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

2025 EXTENSION COST

\$1,195 (3-6 members)

\$1,395 (2 members)

Solo Traveler: \$1,895

Single supplement: \$285

Optional hotel upgrades are available at supplementary pricing, as indicated in the itinerary. Discount for groups of 4 or more. Please call for details.

Trip Cost Includes: Accommodations, meals, afternoon tour as noted, private transfer Marrakesh-Essaouira and return. Not Included: Meals as noted, drinks, any activities described as optional, optional gratuities.



Arrival & Departure

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.

Casablanca is the starting point of the trip. You will be met and escorted for a sightseeing excursion of Casablanca before continuing to Rabat. At the end of the trip on Day 9 you will be transferred to the airport in Marrakesh for departure. Those on the Essaouira Extension will be transferred to the airport in Marrakesh for departure.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Trip members are responsible for making their own arrangements for air transportation. Please do not purchase your airline tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office. 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.

Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so that we can send it on to the local guide (make sure to include your trip name and trip dates on it). Note: The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly; otherwise you may be denied boarding. Please remember this when reserving your flights. In addition, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US (in most cases).

Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. Once your Private Journey is confirmed, we will confirm the name of your private guide. The Trip Leaders scheduled for this journey are listed below (please note that leader assignments are subject to change). *Morocco Private Journey* webpage: www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/morocco/morocco-private-journey



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.

Accommodations

DAY 1 (1 NIGHT): RABAT, MOROCCO



VILLA MANDARINE

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.

DAYS 2 TO 3 (2 NIGHTS): FES, MOROCCO

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.

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 Private Journey* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

DAY 4 (1 NIGHT): ERFOUD, MOROCCO

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



KASBAH XALUCA

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.



L'HOTEL BY CHATEAU DE SABLE

This oasis is a great place to stay on our way to the desert. It's like entering a casbah, but with a modern twist. Amenities include an onsite restaurant, four swimming pools, a cozy lounge-bar, panoramic terraces, and a spa offering traditional Moroccan treatments.

DAY 5 (1 NIGHT): SAHARA DESERT, MOROCCO



PRIVATE SAHARA DESERT CAMP

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.

DAY 6 (1 NIGHT): DADES VALLEY, MOROCCO

In Dades Valley, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



HOTEL XALUCA DADES

This 110-room hotel is situated between the Todra and Dades Gorges at an altitude of 5,290 feet. Spacious guest rooms feature a unique African decor, while the hotel terrace overlooks the beautiful Dades Valley. An outdoor swimming pool, Jacuzzi, hammam, spa, and fitness room are among the hotel's amenities.



DAR JNAN TIOUIRA

Set in the heart of the Dades Valley, this family-operated guesthouse is built in pure Berber architectural style and exudes a warm welcome. Twelve rooms and suites offer double or king size beds, en suite bathrooms, and a terrace with views of the mountains or gardens. And the onsite restaurant receives great reviews!

Accommodations (cont'd)

DAYS 7 TO 8 (2 NIGHTS): MARRAKESH, MOROCCO

In Marrakesh, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



LA MAISON ARABE

This elegant riad is situated in the heart of the medina, just minutes from the Jemaa el-Fna, mosque, and souks. It features 26 guest rooms, most with private terraces and fireplaces, a new spa and hammam, and a swimming pool in a patio filled with olive trees and rose bushes. The riad has a fine restaurant and popular cooking school.



LA VILLA DES ORANGERS (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

This classic hotel, a member of the prestigious Relais & Chateaux hotel group since 2001, is a secluded retreat from the outside world. Twenty-seven guest rooms overlook the interior garden patios, and there is a rooftop terrace, two pools (one on the sun terrace and one in the courtyard), traditional Moroccan hammam, and restaurant serving fine food. The staff is warm, friendly, and efficient.



LA MAMOUNIA (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

This exclusive hotel is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World. Acknowledged as Morocco's "Grand Dame" and Winston Churchill's favorite, it recently underwent an extensive three-year renovation. Its more than 200 bedrooms (and three private riads, complete with their own pools) are decorated in a French/Moroccan style. The hotel grounds include an outdoor swimming pool and a 20-acre garden, an oasis of green in the heart of the city, with fruit trees, vibrant flowers, and 100-year-old olive trees.

Trip Details

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is Level 2, Easy to Moderate, according to the Wilderness Travel trip rating system. It is an overland touring trip with optional hikes of two to four hours on some days and can be enjoyed by anyone in good health who has no mobility restrictions.

WEATHER

Morocco has wide range of climatic variations. In the Atlas Mountains, temperatures can drop below zero and mountain peaks are snow-capped throughout most of the year. On the Mediterranean coastal plains, temperatures are moderate and subtropical. January through May and September through December are the best seasons for travel; Marrakesh daytime temperatures average in the 70s and 80s during these months, and quite a bit cooler at night. Winters (November to February) are generally very mild, although temperatures at night in the desert and High Atlas can get down to the 40s and be rainy (especially along the coast).

SPECIAL NOTE

Ramadan, the Islamic month of daytime fasting, occurs from approximately February 28 to March 30, 2025, and February 17 to March 18, 2026. During Ramadan, there may be reduced restaurant/bar facilities in hotels, but this will not make an impact on the trip overall.

PRIVATE JOURNEY GUIDED SERVICES

You will have an English-speaking Moroccan guide and driver from Day 1 to the afternoon of Day 8.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Africa Manager or email us at africa@wildernesstravel.com.

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.

ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel's escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions, yet still enjoy a guided adventure.

TOUCAN CLUB

Please note that Toucan Club discounts do not apply for our Private Journeys. However, your participation on these trips will count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular expeditions. For more information regarding our Toucan Club bonus program, please visit our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club/

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.



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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