



## Mountains, Desert & Ocean

**Duration:** 9 days

This itinerary gives a taste of Moroccan culture, history and landscape. From the snow capped Atlas Mountains to arid desert and warm coastal breezes, this programme experiences it all.

**Highlights:** Fes, Erfoud, Merzouga, Ouarzazate, Marrakech, Asni, Essaouira.

DAY 1

### Arrive Casablanca/Fes

Upon arrival in Casablanca, your guide will meet you and you will then be transferred to your hotel in Fez approximately 3.5 hours away. On the way you will stop in Rabat for lunch and have the option to go for a city tour which highlights Rabat's cultural influences and the superbly preserved relics of its Moorish past.



Continue your journey to your hotel in Fez where the remainder of your day and evening are at leisure.

**Overnight:** Palais Jamal

**Meal Plan:** B, L

DAY 2

## Fes

Today take a step back in time to the Middle Ages when you visit Fes El Bali, the largest living medieval medina, and the cultural heart of Morocco. Moulay Idriss I founded the city in the 8th Century. The imperial capital was a renowned centre of medieval learning and at its heart you will find the Karaouine, one of the oldest, still functioning universities in the world. In the neighbouring building is the Attarine Medersa (Koranic college), a jewel of Hispano-Moorish architecture,



built in the 14th century. The medieval medina is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Your morning of sightseeing also includes visits to the Nejjarine Square, with its beautiful fountain with elaborate mosaics, and the nearby Fondouq, now converted to a museum of carpentry artifacts.

After lunch, your sightseeing continues with a visit to Dar Batha and the Museum of Moroccan Arts which houses historical and artistic collections of woodcarvings, embroidery, tribal carpets and ceramics. Next visit Fes El Jedid (New Fes), built by the Merinid Dynasty in the 13th century. Here you will see the royal palace, mosques, medersas (schools), souks and the city wall. Most notably, Fes El Jedid is home to the Mellah, the old Jewish quarter, which provides an interesting insight into Jewish architecture.

**Overnight:** Palais Jamal

**Meal Plan:** B,L,D

DAY 3

## Fes - Erfoud

This morning transfer to Fes Airport to board your charter flight to Erfoud. Upon arrival, depart in a 4x4 towards Rissani for a visit and lunch break. You will then continue by 4x4 through the dunes toward your isolated luxury camp, the last part of your journey to the camp can be taken on camel back. Once you've settled in at the camp, walk to the top of the dunes to have a drink and watch the sunset.

Enjoy a relaxing evening with a traditional dinner served by a campfire. Finish off by gazing up at the numerous stars before heading to your luxury traditional tent.

**Overnight:** Exclusive Camp

**Meal Plan:** B,L,D

DAY 4

## Erfoud - Merzouga - Ouarzazate -Skoura

This morning drive through an empty desert to the south of the towering Todra Gorge with impressive canyon walls that rise to 1,200 ft.

After lunch in Tineghir, continue through the southern slopes of the High Atlas range. Follow the Dades Valley to the captivating city of Ouarzazate which was founded by the French in the 1920s as a garrison and regional administrative centre. En route, stop in the heart of the Dades Valley at the oasis of Kelaa Mgouna, famous for its Persian roses and the local perfume essences. Often called the Valley of the Thousand Kasbahs, this area is home to some of Morocco's finest examples of fortresses and citadels.



**Overnight:** Berber Palace

**Meal Plan:** B,L,D

DAY 5

## Ourzazate - Marrakech

Today is a full day transfer to Marrakech with en route sightseeing at the famous UNESCO World Heritage Site Ait Benhaddou.

Ait Benhaddou is a spectacular fortified village with houses piled up around several decorated kasbahs, all seeming to defy the laws of gravity as they perch on the steep slope. Enjoy lunch here before continuing to Marrakech.

**Overnight:** Sofitel Palais Imperial

**Meal Plan:** B,L,D

DAY 6

## Marrakech

Today discover the mysteries of Marrakech with an expert guide. Start your tour with the Ben Youssef Medersa, one of the jewels of Marrakech. The current structure of this Koranic school was built around 1570 and it is the biggest medersa in the whole of Morocco.

Opposite the entrance to the Ben Youssef mosque, lies the Qoubba Almoravides, the ablution centre for believers going to the mosque. The complex was also one of the first fountains of the town and used to ensure the water supply for the inhabitants of Marrakech and their animals.

After lunch in the medina, take a walk through the old medina and labyrinth of souks. This maze of colourful alleys and small squares is home to a bewildering number of stalls and ateliers devoted to specific crafts. Emerging, you find yourself in the famous Djemaa el Fna, the city's main square. No one is really certain how it came into being, but over the years the square has become the beating heart of Marrakech, where fire eaters, mime artists, snake charmers and street musicians perform at every turn.

Right in front of the square you will find the Koutubia Mosque. Built in the 12th century, the Koutoubia minaret is the most perfect Islamic religious structure in North Africa. Koutoubia's minaret went on to inspire the architects of the Giralda of Seville and the Hassan Tower of Rabat. This famous landmark dominates the local skyline and can easily be spotted from anywhere in Marrakech. Take a tour of the famous El-Badi and the Bahia Palaces.

After the hustle and bustle of the busy medina, take a horse drawn carriage to Marrakech's most beautiful gardens, the Marjorelle Gardens.



Pour votre soirée, laissez vous séduire par la tumultueuse place Djemaa El Fna qui constitue un véritable théâtre populaire où la fête est permanente.

**Overnight:** Sofitel Palais Imperial

**Meal Plan:** B,D

DAY 7

## **Marrakech - Asni - Marrakech**

Enjoy a scenic drive to the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. Take a tour around Asni, a small village which is overlooked by Mount Toubkal. See real Berber life in the local mountain villages, these people survive by farming their terraces set high into the hills.

Lunch today will be served at at Sir Richard Branson's Kasbah Tamadot before returning to Marrakech.

**Overnight:** Sofitel Palais Imperial

**Meal Plan:** B,L

DAY 8

## **Marrakech - Essaouira - Marrakech**

Today take a day trip to the warm and scenic Portuguese influenced coastal town of Essaouira, approximately two hours from Marrakech.

Renowned during the Roman Empire for its crimson dye, Essaouira was conquered by the Muslims in the 10th century and invaded by the Portuguese in the 16th. It's a magnificent place to visit any time of the year since the city is blessed with an exceptionally temperate climate. You will be charmed by the splendid medina (old quarter) made up of narrow paths, blue doors and whitewashed houses which alternate with artisan's workshops and small shops.



**Overnight:** Sofitel Palais Imperial

**Meal Plan:** B,L,D

DAY 9

## Depart Marrakech

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your departure flight.

**Overnight:**

**Meal Plan:** B