



Hidden Treasures

MOROCCO



17 days

08 - 25 August 2024

English speaking tour leader

The 'unforgettable' of the trip:

- **All the imperial cities of Morocco**, with their monuments and souks: Rabat, Fez, Meknes, Marrakech
- The **mosque of Casablanca** and the magical **medinas in the north**, Asilah, Tetouan and Chefchaouen
- The **archaeological sites**: from the rock engravings of Ait Ouazik to the Roman town of Volubilis
- The **dunes of the Sahara**, from Erg Chebbi in Merzouga to Erg Chigaga in M'Hamid
- **Mud forts and mountain landscapes**: Todra, Dades, Tamnougalte, Ait Ben Haddou
- **Berber traditions** in Rissani, Tafraoute, Amtoudi and Tiznit
- The **Atlantic Ocean towns** of Sidi Ifni and Essaouira



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Day 1: Thursday 08 August

Outward flight/Marrakech* (RAK)

Flight to Marrakech. Meeting with the Kanaga Africa Tour staff who will arrange the transfer to Riad Palmier or similar. Assistance with the exchange of Euros and the possible purchase of a Moroccan phone card. Overnight stay in a double room with services.

**The arrival in Casablanca (CMN) is also possible.*

Day 2: Friday 09 August

Marrakech/Casablanca/Rabat

Breakfast and departure for EL JADIDA, a town that retains the alleyways and ramparts of an old Portuguese medina. Here we will visit the Portuguese cistern*, an ancient underground vault whose roof and columns are reflected in the water covering the floor, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will reach CASABLANCA, Morocco's largest city and commercial capital. We will enter the Hassan II mosque, inaugurated on 30 August 1993 and built on a rocky platform removed from the ocean. Continuation in the late afternoon towards Rabat. Overnight stay at Riad Dar el Kebira or similar, in a double room with services.

**The Portuguese cistern is at the time of writing closed to the public.*

Day 3: Saturday 10 August

Rabat/Chefchaouen

Breakfast and morning dedicated to visiting RABAT, with the famous mausoleum of Mohammed V, designed by a Vietnamese architect, located in front of the Hassan Tower. We then move to ASILAH, one of Portugal's most elegant ports on the Atlantic, with its square stone ramparts surrounded by palm trees and one of the country's most interesting medinas with pastel colours and characterised by murals created for the International Cultural Festival, an event that attracts artists from all over the world. Continuation to the picturesque coastal town of TETOUAN, situated at the top of a slope in a large valley against a mass of dark rock. We visit the medina, one of the best preserved in Morocco, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its typically Moorish architecture. Continuation towards the 'blue city', Chefchaouen. Overnight stay at Riad Dar Echaouen or similar, in a double room with services.



Bastion in El Jadida



Casablanca Mosque



Murals in Asilah



The white medina of Tetouan



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Day 4: Sunday 10 August

Chefchaouen

Breakfast and a full day dedicated to visiting the blue medina of CHEFCHAOUEN, which reflects a strong Andalusian character, nestled in the beautiful setting of the Rif mountains. Bab el Aïn is the gateway to its interior and a winding road leads to the main square, Plaza Outa el Hammam, with the Great Mosque, and further on to a second, smaller square, Plaza el Makhzen. Inside the medina is the town kasbah, a quiet complex of ruins with shady gardens. Overnight stay in a riad.



Chefchaouen

Day 5: Monday 11 August

Chefchaouen/Fez

Breakfast and transfer to the city of FEZ, the oldest of the four imperial capitals of Morocco. We will delve into the city's souks, which extend for over 1 km and preserve the tradition of urban handicrafts. The medina is divided into two separate parts: *Fez El Bali* (old Fez) and *Fez El Jedid* (new Fez): the former is an intricate maze of alleyways, madrasas and souks, while the latter is dominated by a large area of royal palaces and gardens. We will learn about the tanneries, tanks for dyeing leather whose use has not changed since medieval times. Overnight stay at Riad Tara or similar, in a double room with services.

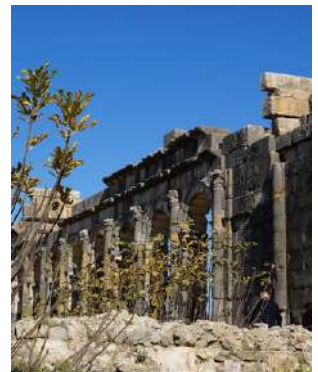


Tanneries of Fez

Day 6: Tuesday 12 August

Fez/Meknes/Fez

Breakfast and excursion around Fez. We visit the Roman ruins of VOLUBILIS, the most important archaeological site in Morocco, and move on to the sacred city of MOULAY IDRIS, spread out at the foot of the Jebel Zerhoun hill. The town is named after its founder, the country's most revered saint, and his mausoleum is a sacred site, a pilgrimage destination. Afterwards, we will move on to the imperial city of MEKNES, to visit the medina's souks and interesting monuments, in particular the extraordinary creations of Sultan Moulay Ismail, a combination that earned the city a place on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Overnight stay in a riad.



Roman site of Volubilis



Imperial Gate in Meknes



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Day 7: Wednesday 13 August

Fez/Erfoud/Merzouga

Breakfast and a day's transfer during which we will stop in the ski resort of IFRANE, an anomalous Moroccan town with its parks, lakes and Alpine-style villas laid out along wide tree-lined streets. We will arrive in MERZOUGA in time to admire the sunset over the ERG CHEBBI dunes, up to 150 metres high, which mark the border with Algeria. Dinner and overnight stay in a fixed tented camp with external toilets.



On the dunes of Erg Chebbi

Day 8: Thursday 14 August

Merzouga/Rissani/Todra/Dades

Breakfast in the tented camp. Possibility to admire the sunrise over the dunes before leaving for RISSANI and immersing ourselves in its famous souk and traditional weekly animal market. Back on the road, we head towards the scenic TODRA GORGes, a spectacular gorge crossing the High Atlas with rock walls that change colour depending on the daylight. Continuation in the direction of the Dades Gorge. Overnight stay at the Hotel Kasbah Amazir or similar, in a double room with services.



Todra Gorge

Day 9: Friday 15 August

Dades/Tamnougalt

Breakfast, followed by a trip to the DADES GORGES, characterised by its steep limestone slopes and eroded rocks. We will then move on to the site of AIT OUAZIK, where we will observe rock engravings made on dozens of stone slabs. This prehistoric art mainly represents the fauna of the time, when the Sahara was a verdant savannah: elephants, antelopes, rhinoceroses, giraffes, felines, ... We continue the day by reaching one of the most beautiful examples of southern architecture, the ksar of TAMNOUGALTE, perched on a hill and one of the oldest in Morocco. This ruined village, made up of ornate buildings with ashlar walls and tapering towers, was the capital of the region and the jema'a, made up of the assembled families, administered the independent republic. Overnight stay at Riad Dar Amazir or similar, in a double room with services.



Engraving at Ait Ouazik



Towards Tamnougalt



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Day 10: Saturday 16 August

Tamnougalte/Zagora/Erg Chigaga

Breakfast and departure for TAMEGROUTE, through the dusty lanes of the village and its 'underground kasbah', where we will learn about the imposing library of the Koranic school, which holds more than 4,000 volumes, including manuscripts dating back to the 11th century, such as precious specimens of the Koran written on gazelle skin. We continue to Zagora, for a stop at the famous 'Tombouctou 52 jours' sign, and to Mhamid, where we will set off on a 4x4 excursion to the dunes of ERG CHIGAGA, among the most impressive in Morocco, from which we will admire the sunset. Dinner and overnight stay in a fixed tented camp with external toilets.

Day 11: Sunday 17 August

Erg Chigaga/Ouarzazate/Ait Ben Haddou

Breakfast in the tented camp. A chance to admire the sunrise over the dunes before setting off for the SKOURA oasis, a large palm grove with a network of paths surrounding the fords and palm trees. Here we will visit the richly decorated Ameridil kasbah, built in the 17th century for the caid of Skoura and featured today on the 50 dirham note. Continue to AIT BEN HADDOU, well known for the films that were shot there, such as David Lean's Lawrence of Arabia, Orson Welles' Sodom and Gomorrah, Franco Zeffirelli's Jesus of Nazareth and Ridley Scott's Gladiator. The kasbah, dating back to the 11th century, sits on a low hill rising above a shallow river with well-preserved, elaborate earthen buildings with towers, battlements and sheer walls. Overnight stay at the Guesthouse Bagdad Café or similar, in a double room with services.



The immensity of the Sahara



The Ameridil kasbah of Skoura



Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



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Day 12: Monday 18 August

Aït Ben Haddou/Telouet/Marrakech

Breakfast and departure for the kasbah of TELOUET, a vast complex of buildings abandoned in 1956 belonging to the legendary Glaoui family, the largest and most ambitious of the tribal chiefs. The buildings are slowly sinking into the red-brown earth, but the site is one of the most scenic monuments in the Atlas range where the finely decorated halls are still clearly visible. We will drive along the scenic hairpin bends of the Tizi n'Tichka pass (N9) which will take us to MARRAKECH where we will immerse ourselves for the first time in the atmosphere of the Jemaa el Fna square, with snake charmers, musicians, street performers and, from sunset, mobile kiosks where we can sample Moroccan cuisine. Overnight stay at Riad Dar Khmissa or similar, in a double room with services.



Kasbah of the Glaoui in Telouet



In the Jemaa el Fna square

Day 13: Tuesday 19 August

Marrakech

Breakfast and full day dedicated to visiting the imperial city of MARRAKECH, which has always been a centre of trade and a meeting place for tribesmen and Berber villagers. Also called the 'red city' because of the natural pigments adorning its buildings, it is divided into two parts: the ancient medina, founded in the Middle Ages by Sultan Youssef Ben Tachfine, and the colonial Ville Nouvelle, built by the French in the mid-20th century. The heart of the medina is the Jemaa el Fna square from which you can see the unmistakable minaret of the Koutubia, a classic example of Almohad architecture. Noteworthy monuments include the Madrasa Ben Youssef, with its stucco, Zellij decorations and cedar wood carvings, the Bahia Palace, the ideal of Arab architecture in a 19th century palace, and the jardin Majorelle, a refined garden with cacti, water lilies and a fine museum of Islamic art. Overnight stay in a riad.



Babouches for sale in the souk



Majorelle Gardens



Jemaa el Fna square



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Day 14: Wednesday 20 August

Marrakech/Tafraoute

Breakfast and transfer to the fortified city of TAROUDANT, nestled in the fertile Souss valley, characteristic for the red-ochre walls surrounding the town. The souks, tanneries (smaller and neater than those in Fes but no less interesting) and the kasbah, now a sort of village within the city, are the main attractions. Continuing south, we make a stop at the kasbah of TIZOURGANE with its 13th-century fortified granary, before reaching the town of TAFRAOUTE via scenic roads that embrace the Anti-Atlas. Overnight stay at Auberge Kasbah Chez Amaliya or similar, in a double room with services.



Tafraoute



Fortified granary of Amtoudi

Day 15: Thursday 21 August

Tafraoute/Sidi Ifni

Breakfast and visit to TAFRAOUTE, a picturesque town made up of several stone villages in the midst of large rock formations of disparate shapes. A scenic route will take us to little AMTOUDI to learn about its agadir, an extraordinary fortified granary with ramparts and towers, which can be reached on foot or on donkeyback via a steep zigzag path. We then head towards the Atlantic coast, to the Spanish colonial town of Sidi Ifni. Overnight stay at the Maison d'hote Logis La Marine or similar, in a double room with services.



Spanish colonial architecture

Day 16: Friday 22 August

Sidi Ifni/Essaouira

Breakfast and walk through the streets of SIDI IFNI, a military outpost built around the 1930s and belonging to the Spanish until 1969, when it was abandoned. Many buildings, some of them decaying, make the town one of the most interesting examples of Art Deco. The heart of the city is Plaza de Espana, today Place Hassan II. Transfer northwards with stops to admire the great rock arch on the LEGZIRA beach (another iconic arch unfortunately collapsed in 2016) and the town of TIZNIT, surrounded by imposing pisé walls. Here we can admire the architecture of the Great Mosque with a distinctive minaret punctuated by wooden poles, reminiscent of the Sudanese architecture of Mali, as well as the souk of jewellers working with silver. Continuation to Essaouira. Overnight stay at Riad Zahra or similar, in a double room with services.



Legzira Arch



Tiznit Mosque



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Day 17: Saturday 23 August

Essaouira/Marrakech* (RAK)

Breakfast and morning entirely spent to visiting the town of ESSAOUIRA, the old Portuguese Mogador, characterised by whitewashed houses with blue shutters and colonnades, art galleries and carpentry workshops, and a picturesque port coloured by the blue boats of fishermen. We visit the ramparts, the medina, and lose ourselves in its alleyways full of quality craft shops. Departure for Marrakech. On the way, we will have the opportunity to meet one of the cooperatives that produce ARGAN OIL. This oil, extracted from a species similar to the olive tree but endemic to this region of Morocco, is used in many Moroccan dishes and salads but is well known in cosmetics for its beneficial properties on the skin. Transfer to Marrakech airport in time for the return flight. End of services.

**Departure from Casablanca (CMN) also possible.*



Town of Essaouira



Essaouira harbour



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Individual participation fee in double room/tent (min. 4/max. 16 pax)

3,090 €/pax

**in promotion at € 2,990
for booking before 08/05/2024**

Supplements:

- Enrollment fee: **free!**
- Single room/tent: **390 €**
- Extra night Marrakech: **100 €/room**
- Out-of-hours transfers: **30 €/pax/transfer**
- RAK-CMN private transfer: **on request**

The fee includes:

- English speaking tour leader (7 to 16 pax);
- French/English speaking local drivers/guides;
- Visits and excursions as scheduled;
- All transfers by minibus, 4x4 Toyota or similar (max 4 clients/car) in the desert, including diesel;
- Dinners in the desert;
- 16 overnight stays with breakfast as mentioned in the itinerary (14 in hotels/riads, 2 in fixed tents with outside beds and private bathrooms).

The fee does not include:

- Possible visa for Morocco (currently not required);
- Cancellation, health, covid, baggage insurance;
- Possible PCR tests;
- Air flights;
- Transfers to/from the airport out of hours;
- Transfers to start/end tour in Casablanca;
- Drinks and mineral water;
- Lunches and dinners in the city;
- Photo and video tips;
- Tips and expenses of a personal nature;
- Everything mentioned in 'supplements';
- Anything not expressly mentioned in 'the fee includes'.