



something for  
**LADIES**

# Morocco

September 2019

## ARRIVE CASABLANCA

(D)

### DAY 2

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Welcome to Morocco! On arrival at Casablanca Airport, you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel.

If you arrive with time to spare, then a great option for your limited time in Casablanca is to visit the art deco Villa des Arts. This gorgeous gallery dates back to 1930s and holds numerous exhibitions of contemporary Moroccan and international art. If you are looking for a different type of cultural experience, then you can discover a unique and fascinating part of Moroccan history at the Museum of Judaism.

This evening enjoy Moroccan cuisine at a local restaurant: La Scala.

**Accommodation: 2 nights at Hotel Kenzi Basma or similar**

### DAY 3

## CASABLANCA

(B)

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This morning you will visit one of the most impressive sites in Casablanca – the massive edifice of the Mosque of Hassan II. Opened in 1993, and second only in size to the great mosque at Mecca, the huge building is part on land and part on sea, and in one area water can be seen through a glass floor. It can accommodate 25,000 worshippers and the main roof is retractable to create an open courtyard. It is one of the only religious sites open to non-Muslims. Later, you will leave Casablanca and drive north along the coast to Rabat (approximately 1.5 hours), the elegant capital of Morocco and its first Imperial city. It contains numerous fine Arab monuments, some dating from the 10th to 15th century Almohad and Merenid dynasties, and others that are far older. The earliest known settlement is Sala, occupying an area now known as the Chellah, where you will visit the remains of the citadel. You will also see the vast minaret of the Hassan Mosque and explore the lovely walled quarter known as the Kasbah des Oudaias. In the late afternoon, continue on to Meknes, the sixth largest city in the kingdom, and former capital of Morocco.

### DAY 4

## CASABLANCA – CHEFCHOUEN

(B)

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This morning you will discover the charming streets of Meknes' medina – the old walled section of the city. Enter via the northern gate, Bab Berdaine, and walk to the shrine of Moulay Ismail who, in the 17th century, turned Meknes from a provincial town to a spectacular Imperial city. You will explore the elaborately decorated public buildings hidden in these winding streets.

Later on, travel to the isolated town of Chefchaouen. Chefchaouen, or the 'blue city', is arguably one of the prettiest places in Morocco. Set against a wide valley and nestled between two peaks in the stunning Rif Mountains, Chefchaouen may take you by surprise. Its medina has been lovingly cared for with striking blue and whitewashed houses, red-tiled roofs and artistic doorways. Much of Chefchaouen was recreated by Andalusian refugees escaping the Reconquista, so you might feel like you're in the hills of Spain while exploring its streets. Ease into the relaxed pace of life in this rural retreat. Take a stroll through the ancient medina and shop for handicrafts, go hiking in the Rif mountains or simply sit at a cafe and enjoy the pleasure of time passing by. If you're feeling peckish, the goats' cheese on offer is a popular treat enjoyed by many visitors.

**Accommodation: 2 nights at Riad Hicham or similar**

### DAY 5

## CHEFCHOUEN

(B,D)

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Today explore Chefchaouen and take a morning guided tour of the sights, sounds, and smells of the medina. Enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

This evening enjoy a home-cooked dinner with a local family.

### DAY 6

## CHEFCHOUEN - FES

(B,D)

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Today drive to the ruins of Volubilis. Volubilis was once a provincial Roman capital, a distant outpost of the empire, and the remains make an undeniably impressive sight. Volubilis is the foremost Roman site in Morocco and was declared a World Heritage Site in 1997. Upon arrival you will take a tour around the ruins with a local guide. Please remember to pack drinking water, hat, sunglasses and sun cream for this tour as it may get hot and you will be exposed to the sun. And, of course, don't forget to take your camera as the town is filled with fantastic mosaics along the Decumanus Maximus, many of which remain intact. After time spent imagining Volubilis as the bustling city it once was, continue on to the living museum of Fes for the night.

After checking in your hotel in late afternoon, enjoy a memorable dinner of one of the city's signature dishes, the salty and sweet pastille.

**Accommodation: 3 nights at Riad Dar Bensouda or similar**

**DAY 7**

**FES**

**(B)**

Fes is the spiritual and cultural heart of Morocco; vibrant, noisy, fascinating and overwhelming – a visual and pungent feast for the senses. It is made up of three distinct 'cities', or quarters, and you will stay in elegant, riad-style accommodation on the edge of the huge, well-preserved medieval old city – the mother of all medinas. Today head into the old city, known locally as Fes el Bali, arguably the world's most fascinating and confounding old city. Medieval Fes was one of the world's great centres of education and culture, both Islamic and Jewish. Its religious institutions and libraries are legendary, its mosques of great renown. Walk through the twisting streets and alleyways, passing donkeys piled high with goods, and explore the specialty sections that divide the souk. Filled with historic khans, medresses and dye-pits, stalls loaded with fruits, herbs and soups, and where the squawk of chickens, smell of spice and sound of hammering of copper fills the air, it's not hard to imagine yourself back in the Middle Ages. Spend the day exploring the old city, visiting, Mederassa attarine, the tanneries and the splendid Funduk Nejjarine, a beautifully restored 18th century inn. Return to your hotel in the late afternoon and free time.



**DAY 8**

**FES**

**(B)**

Today is at leisure.

**DAY 9**

**FES - MERZOUGA**

**(B,L,D)**

Today, leave the intensity of the city behind for the simplicity of the High Atlas Mountains. Drive south, inland through a variety of spectacular scenery – fertile valleys, cedar and pine forests and barren, rocky landscapes – to the small town of Midelt. Midelt is a market town, originally built as a base for mining in the area, and is nestled in the high plains surrounding the Moulouya River, between the Middle and High Atlas mountain ranges at an elevation of just over 1,500 meters. It's a perfect spot to break up the journey to the Sahara.

After an included lunch in Midelt, embark on a 4WD journey through changing scenery, from barren mountainsides to fertile valleys, on the journey to Merzouga. With a backdrop of the orange-colored Erg Chebbi sand dunes, the charming Saharan village of

Merzouga feels wonderfully isolated, like the modern world has left it behind. The Erg Chebbi dunes are the most stunning in the country and an essential part of any visit to Morocco. An erg is a vast sea of shifting wind-swept sand that's formed into picturesque, undulating crests and valleys. The Erg Chebbi is one of the world's iconic landscapes, with towering dunes up to 150 meters in height. Located at the end of a sealed road and just 20 kilometres from the Algerian border this really feels like frontier country. You will leave your gear at a simple auberge and then ride camels into the edge of the Sahara Desert, enjoying a spectacular sunset along the way. The dunes are stunning, especially as the evening light plays across them and sets off the colors.

Enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight.

**Accommodation: 2 nights at Hotel Kasbah Tomboctou or similar**



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**DAY 10****MERZOUGA****(B,L,D)**

After breakfast, we travel to a nearby village by 4WD to enjoy the local Gnaoua music and lunch at the traditional artists' town of Tissardmine.  
Enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight.

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**DAY 11****MERZOUGA - SKOURA****(B,D)**

Today travel to Skoura Oasis, home to several privately owned kasbahs.  
Balance of the day is at leisure.  
Dinner at hotel tonight.

**Accommodation: 2 nights at L'MA Lodge or similar**

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**DAY 12****SKOURA****(B,D)**

Today visit the Kasbah Ameridhl, with its extravagant decorations and mud-brick fortifications. Later you will take tea with a local family.  
Balance of the day is at leisure.

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**DAY 13****SKOURA - MARRAKECH****(B)**

Today, continue your journey to Ouarzazate, where productions such as Lawrence of Arabia, The Sheltering Sky and Black Hawk Down were filmed. visit Kasbat Taourirt.  
Continue to Ait Benhaddou. Perched on a hilltop and almost unchanged since the 11th century, Ait Benhaddou is one of Morocco's most iconic sites. Its grand kasbah is one of the most beautiful in Morocco and the fortified village is a fine example of clay architecture. If you think you recognise the place, you probably do, as the town has a long list of film and TV credits, including Lawrence of Arabia, Game of Thrones and Gladiator. Enjoy a walk through the winding streets of old town, making your way to the top of the hill, from where you can enjoy the views across the surrounding plains. After optional lunch, drive for several hours through the winding roads of the Atlas Mountains for Marrakech, an ancient, exotic city wrapped in European modernity. There's no rush as the scenery through the High Atlas Mountain passes is magnificent, and there will surely be calls for several photo stops along the way.



This evening, why not head to the great square of Jemaa el Fna, one of the largest public spaces in the world and unique to Marrakech. When night falls it transforms into a hive of activity. Henna-painters, performers and storytellers share the square with a street food bazaar, packed with stalls loaded with Moroccan delicacies.

Perhaps Enjoy a bite of famous Moroccan pastries with a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice, and then finish your day with a cup of tea on one of the roof-top restaurants overlooking the square.

**Accommodation: 3 nights at Hotel Opera Plaza or similar**

## DAY 14

## MARRAKECH

(B)

After breakfast today, meet your local guide and set off on a morning tour of the old medina, through the bustling souks that are the lifeblood flowing through the city. Explore tranquil courtyards filled with the scent of orange blossom, and the many salons and chambers that make up Bahia Palace. This splendid mansion was built in 1866 for a former slave who rose to power within the government. Continue to the Saadien tombs Stop by the Koutoubia Mosque; its famous minaret is the prototype for others of its kind around the world, including La Giralda in Seville. Then walk back through the streets of the old medina to the Djemaa el-Fna. after optional lunch visit the tropical gardens of the French painter Jacques Majorelle. Balance of the day is at leisure.

## DAY 15

## MARRAKECH

(B,L)

This morning, join your local expert for a cooking class at La Maison Arabe. Since opening in 1946, La Maison Arabe has achieved a legendary status in Marrakech. Ideally situated in the medina, La Maison Arabe today offers cooking workshops by a dada (traditional Moroccan cook) or a chef of their Moroccan restaurant. Balance of the day is at leisure.

## DAY 16

## MARRAKECH - ESSAOUIRA

(B)

After breakfast leave for Essaouira, a city where the medina brushes up against the Atlantic Ocean and where you will spend the next two nights. On route stop at an Argan oil cooperative and a family-owned vineyard. Argan oil is highly-prized for its culinary and cosmetic uses and is only produced in Morocco. Discover the strenuous process behind its production (one litre can take 20 hours to produce). on arrival to Essaouira, join a local guide for a walking tour through the old medina, Jewish mellah, port and skala (sea wall). Balance of the day is at leisure.

**Accommodation: 2 nights at Le Médina Essaouira Hotel Thalassa sea & spa-MGallery by Sofitel or similar**

## DAY 17

## ESSAOUIRA

(B)

Today is at leisure.

**DAY 18****ESSAOUIRA - CASABLANCA****(B,D)**

Today travel to Casablanca for your final night in Morocco via Oualidia and el Jadida. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at Ricks café.

**Accommodation: 1 night at Hotel Kenzi Basma or similar**

**DAY 19****DEPART CASABLANCA****(B)**

There are no activities planned for the final day and you are able to depart the accommodation at any time. You will have a private transfer to Casablanca airport at the appropriate time

**DAY 20****ARRIVE ADELAIDE****(B)**