

For tours departing beyond 2010, itineraries may be subject to change. This will be confirmed by the publication of the 2011 brochure (issued in Oct 10).

2010
Tour Dossier

EXPLORE!

SPAIN • MOROCCO Dossier Ref. RMO

Moorish Spain to Marrakech

Issued 07 Aug 2009. Valid from
01 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2010

As our itineraries may be amended from time to time, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers, please ensure you have the most up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel. You can download the dossier from our website, www.explore.co.uk. Of course we will notify you of any significant changes, but sometimes minor changes may simply be added to the tour dossier.

JOINING TOUR ABROAD

10 days/9 nights Land Only
Malaga to Marrakech

Join Malaga (day 1)

End Marrakech (day 10)

Clients booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point in Malaga. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for details of time and place of rendezvous with tour leader.

GROUP TRAVEL FROM LONDON

10 days/9 nights Tour including
Connecting Group Flights
London-Malaga & Marrakech-London

Depart from London Heathrow Airport to join tour in Malaga (day 1 of Land Only itinerary).

Return from Marrakech (day 10 of Land Only itinerary) and arrive London Heathrow the same day.

Passengers with non-group flights booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

All visitors to Spain from non-Schengen Treaty countries (including UK) are required, as stipulated by the Spanish Authorities to submit Advance Passenger Information (API) to their Tour Operator or Airline in order to be allowed boarding at their airport of origin. All passengers who have booked flights through Explore will now need to provide us with their Date of Birth, Nationality and Passport Number at the time of booking. Passengers booking Land Only should ensure they submit this information to their travel agent or airline at the time of booking.

Earth Matters

- In Morocco, we use local guides in the medinas of the cities that we stay in. These local guides provide us with intimate local knowledge about their culture and lifestyles otherwise unnoticed unless pointed out. This affords us the chance to really see and experience real Moroccan life.
- Travelling by public transport for part of our journey reduces our impact on the environment.
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Among the many highlights on this tour, we particularly mention:

- * **RONDA** Notorious El Tajo gorge & oldest bullring in Spain.
- * **WHITE VILLAGES** Zahara de la Sierra, Explore Grazalema and Setenil.
- * **ANDALUCIA EXPRESS** Train to Algeciras.
- * **TANGIER** Atmospheric and vibrant medina.
- * **FES** Walk through twisted alleys of 'Old Fes'.
- * **VOLUBILIS** Chance to visit ancient Roman site.
- * **RABAT** Walk through Kasbah des Oudaias.
- * **MARRAKECH** Djemaa-el-Fna Square.

For many people, Andalusia is the quintessential Spain, although the majority of visitors scarcely travel beyond the narrow coastal strip of the Costa del Sol. We sample the diversity of inland Andalusia, where wild mountains and the magnificent landscape chequered with olive groves and vineyards is also home to the famous white villages – or *pueblos blancos*. Compact whitewashed towns and villages cling to precipitous hillsides, often capped by the ramparts of a medieval castle. The history of Andalusia is complex and bloody, and its culture is enriched by centuries of Moorish occupation. Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar from Andalusia to Morocco, we discover fascinating similarities between their architecture, language and their way of life. Journeying south through Morocco by train, we explore Tangier, Fes and the Imperial splendour of Rabat before arriving at Marrakech – a real highlight on which to end the journey.

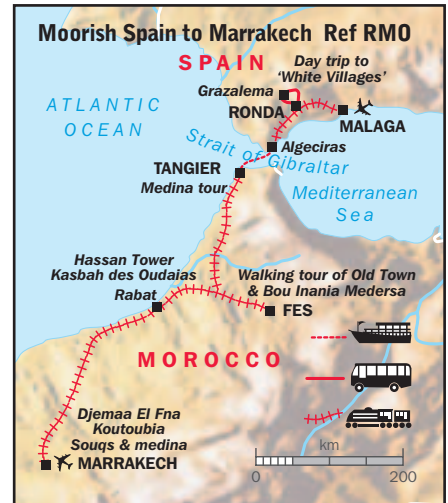
Trains: In Spain we use a variety of trains, travelling in clean and comfortable second class carriages. Our journey on the Andalusia Express from Ronda through lovely rolling countryside to Algeciras should be a highlight. In Morocco the trains are generally reliable and take us through a wide variety of landscapes between Tangier and Marrakech. We travel mainly in comfortable first class carriages but may use second class on occasions.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

Be Prepared: To make the most of the day, some of the sightseeing takes place immediately after disembarking the trains. Sightseeing will mainly be done on foot. Please note luggage on these occasions will be stored. Pack lightly as porter's cannot be guaranteed at stations and hotels and trains in both Spain and Morocco require luggage to be stored in overhead compartments. In Spain breakfast may be taken outside of the hotels. While our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day route printed below, a degree of informality and flexibility is built into the

Carbon Offsets Included

As part of our responsible tourism policy we offset carbon emissions from all customer and staff flights booked by Explore. Our carbon offset partner is Climate Care. If you are making independent flight arrangements to join one of our tours, may we urge you to offset your carbon emissions through Climate Care, or a similar offsetting scheme.



itinerary. For excellent additional information about rail travel worldwide including detailed descriptions of different trains and journeys we recommend the website www.seat61.com.

Accommodation and Included Meals: please find the key to our accommodation ratings overleaf, and note that included meals are indicated in the itinerary below and are shown on the day they are provided (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner).

Day 1. Join tour in Malaga Overnight hotel H+.

Day 2. Train to Ronda

This morning we travel by train along a spectacular route to Ronda, changing at Bobadilla en route. On arrival in Ronda we transfer to our hotel and enjoy an afternoon in one of southern Spain's most attractive towns. Ronda is one of the original *pueblos blancos* (white towns). There will be time to wander the streets and marvel at the El Tajo gorge and visit the oldest bullring in Spain. Please note breakfast may be taken outside of the hotel. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 3. Visit Zahara de la Sierra, Setenil and Grazalema

We spend the day exploring by bus, the beautiful rolling landscapes west of Ronda. Arriving at the fortified Moorish hill village of Zahara is like stepping back in time. Its whitewashed terraces are dominated by an impressive Moorish tower and a Baroque church lies at the heart of the village. We also plan to visit Grazalema, nestled beneath the limestone peak of San Cristobel and the tiny pueblo of Setenil de las Bodegas, a wine producing village whose houses are built into the overhanging cliff. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 4. Andalusia Express to Algeciras and ferry to Tangier

We travel the attractive Andalusia Express route south from Ronda towards the coast through rolling countryside via the painted villages of San Roque, Castellar de la Frontera and Gaucin. On arrival at Algeciras, we transfer to the ferry port and catch an early afternoon ferry across the Straits of Gibraltar to Tangier in Morocco. We immediately immerse ourselves in the vibrancy and heady

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atmosphere of a Moroccan medina - a network of market squares and backstreets - with a guided walking tour. The contrast between the calm streets and squares of Ronda and the more energetic atmosphere of Tangier is quite incredible. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 5. Morning train to Fes; afternoon in Fes

A journey by train takes us from Tangier to Fes, the cultural capital of Morocco. Its colourful history is full of wars, murders, intrigue and "cloak-and-dagger" politics. Fes has also played an important part in Moroccan trade, culture, religion and politics as well as having been the seat of learning and science. The old and new towns are adjacent but totally separate entities. Panoramic views of Fes El Bali (the old city), seen from the South Borj (tower), are very useful to help you orientate yourself for when you are in the narrow alleyways. Fes also has quite an active nightlife, centred around Avenues Hassan II and Mohammed V. We enjoy two nights here to take in all the city has to offer. **2 nights H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 6. Guided walking tour of Fes; optional visit to Volubilis or cooking lessons in afternoon

This morning we take a guided walking tour of the Medina. We will explore the souks in the backstreets and wander through the craft areas, past the spice stalls, through the brass and copperware areas and look in on the tanners. Beautiful buildings include the Sanctuary of Moulay Idriss 2nd, the Kairaouine Mosque and the Al Andalus Mosque (viewed from the outside only). Spectacular made and sold in Fes medina is considered to be some of the best in Morocco. In the afternoon you have a chance to visit ancient Volubilis. The optional trip takes us into the hills and to the ancient site of Volubilis - the capital of the Roman province Mauritania Tingitana. The detailed mosaics here are still intact and the site gives a good idea of the layout of provincial settlements. If time allows we will stop off at the viewpoint overlooking the Holy City of Moulay Idriss, named after Morocco's most revered saint and creator of the Arab dynasty, it is a great place of pilgrimage before returning to Fes. It may also be possible to have a cooking class, this would include shopping for ingredients in the medina, being taught to prepare traditional Moroccan food - possibly a tagine - with the opportunity to eat it all at the end. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 7. Train to Marrakech via Rabat

We catch the morning train to the modern capital, Rabat for a sightseeing tour. Although it was only established as the capital in 1912 by the French, Rabat's history stretches back to a settlement in the 8th century BC. We take a guided tour around the Hassan Tower and the

Mausoleum of Mohammed V. We wander through the Kasbah des Oudaïas, originally a fortified town now with a distinctly Andalucian influence and also hope to visit the historical Chellah. This evening we board the train bound for Marrakech, the spiritual heart of Morocco, where we will spend the final 3 nights of the tour. **3 nights H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 8. Walking tour of Marrakech; PM free

Marrakech is a feast for the senses. Like many North African towns, Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Civeliz (or modern French built city) and the Medina (the old city). It has always been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the South and the colourful souks perfectly illustrate this fact. This morning a local guide will take us for a walking tour of the old city. Taking a closer look at the maze of narrow streets filled with the sounds, colours and smells of the exotic and an opportunity to visit the Ben Youssef Medersa. The afternoon is left free for you to further explore the city. Well worth visiting are the Saadian Tomb, the Dar Si Said Palace (now Museum of Moroccan Art), the Menara Gardens or the Majorelle Gardens including the Museum of Islamic Art a short taxi ride away. No visit to the city of Marrakech is complete without a visit to the celebrated Djemaa El Fna Square and a spectacle not to be missed at dusk are the many street performers presenting a scene straight out of the pages of Arabian Knights. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 9. Free in Marrakech; optional visit to High Atlas

For a complete change of scenery, you may choose to go on an optional visit to a nearby High Atlas village today. The High Atlas is North Africa's greatest mountain range. Populated by Berber tribesmen, it has always been an area culturally removed from the rest of Morocco, a barrier between the northern plains and the pre-Sahara. **(Included meals: B).**

Booking a Single Room

All of our tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. On this particular tour we are pleased to be able to offer customers the option of pre-booking a guaranteed single room for each night of the tour, except in Malaga and Ronda.

Day 10. Tour ends Marrakech (Included meals: B).

PERSONAL EXPENSES

You'll also need some extra money to cover meals not included in the tour price, other sightseeing, souvenirs, and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Foreign Exchange

Local Currency: Spain: Euros. **Morocco:** Moroccan Dirham.

Recommended Currency for Exchange:

Euros are best but both GBP and USD are readily exchangeable. We recommend you take cash and a credit card.

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in main towns/cities in both countries, though in Morocco can be unreliable.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques can be difficult to exchange and are not recommended.

Foreign Exchange Receipts: Please keep your foreign exchange receipts. You can change any excess local currency into either Euros or GBP at Marrakech airport before immigration.

Additional Information: Scottish Pounds and Australian dollar bank notes are NOT normally accepted in Morocco.

Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currency-express.com/explore/>

EDUCATION FOR ALL

Very few girls from the rural communities in the High Atlas get the chance to continue their education after primary school. The colleges are not accessible to them for three main reasons:

1. Their parents cannot afford to pay for lodgings.
2. Their parents do not have the confidence in any of the facilities to entrust their daughters to be away from their rural communities.
3. The colleges are inaccessible - far away from the rural villages.

To help tackle this, Education for All has constructed the first girls' boarding house for 24 girls which was opened at Asni, 45Km from Marrakech, in April 2008. The girls are looked after by a House Mother and provided with food, some clothing and school materials. Explore are sponsoring two of the girls through school and you can read about them on our website.

What you can do

Approximately 24,000 Euros are needed each year for the running costs of this house. More funds are needed to build others and give more girls the opportunity for education.

www.educationforallmorocco.org

EXPLORE ACCOMMODATION RATINGS : An important feature of many Explore tours is the wide range of accommodation used, and since the beginning our philosophy has been to select accommodation to suit the itinerary - not the other way round.

To help gauge the comfort level on your chosen tour, we have graded the accommodation standards at all night-stops using the rating guide below. Please keep in mind however that standards can vary from one trip to the next, and occasionally we may need to change a night-stop without advance warning.

Hotels / lodges / guesthouses - or similar

H++ : Comfortable hotels, lodges or guesthouses with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. With air-conditioning/heating where appropriate and with reliable hot and cold water. Generally good levels of service and often with added amenities such as restaurant, bar, gardens or swimming pool.

H+ : Standard hotels, lodges or guesthouses, usually with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. These are generally standard, no-frills hotels with adequate amenities and service standards. Whilst comfort levels are perfectly acceptable to most, please don't expect too much! These are often small, family run establishments.

H : Basic hotels, lodges or guesthouses (also village houses, mountain huts, hotels etc often come into this category). Accommodation may be communal or dorm-style, and WC / washing facilities are usually shared. Running hot and cold water may be unreliable or even unavailable. These can be the most rewarding and memorable places to stay, but comfort levels are low.

Camping

C++ : Comfortable, full service camping generally in permanent, fixed camps with walk-in tents, proper beds and often with en-suite facilities and other amenities such as dining area, bar, gardens and a swimming pool. Your bed-linen is provided.

C+ : Standard camping in private or public campsites, usually with WC and washing / showering facilities in a shared ablutions building. Typically in two person tents, and some level of participation is often required. Generally bed linen or sleeping bags are not provided.

C : Basic camping in wild camps where facilities / amenities may be limited or non-existent. Generally there is no running water, and we dig a temporary bush toilet. Two person tents are often used, but occasionally we sleep under the stars. Participation normally required and sleeping bags usually not provided.

Note: other accommodation, for example, aboard boats or on overnight sleeper trains is described individually at the appropriate point in the tour itinerary above.

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Meal Plan

Local Food and Drink: 9 breakfasts are included on this trip; please be prepared to pay for all other meals. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location and the prices below are given as an average guide only. Exchange rate used for Morocco £1 = 12MAD. For up to date rates of exchange please visit www.xe.com

	UK	Spain	Morocco
Coffee/tea	£1.20	€1.25	£0.85
Soft drink	0.80	1.75	0.85
Bottle of Beer	2.50	2.00	2.90
Bottle water	0.80	1.50	0.85
2 Course Meal*	10.00	14.00	12.50
3 Course Meal**	18.00	20.00	20.00
Bottle wine	10.00	12.00	15.00

*Cheap local fare in a small cafe or restaurant.

**Typical food in a simple, reasonably comfortable mid-range restaurant.

Tipping

Local Staff: In Morocco tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approx 20 Euros for tips for the guides, drivers and other local staff. In Spain tipping is discretionary.

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your tour leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Other Sightseeing

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

FES Cooking lessons €60; Half day visit to Volubilis by bus, with specialist guide including ents approx €25 (depending on group size).

MARRAKECH Full day excursion (from Marrakech) to village in Atlas Mountains, with Berber lunch approx €40.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Seasonal Climate

The climate in Andalucia is generally mild in winter and hot and dry in summer. The sierras can, on occasions, be cold in March and early April. In summer, temperatures can rise to 30°C in the sierra, although it is cooler on the coast. In Morocco the climate is both Mediterranean and Atlantic. The dry, hot season is from May to October when summer temperatures can reach 38°C and over (we will vary our sightseeing times to avoid the heat during this period). Temperatures may drop sharply during the night as the day's heat rapidly diminishes. In winter, day temperatures will probably be around 18-25°C, dropping at night to perhaps 0-5°C.

Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/> weather. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Visa Requirements

Entry visas for Spain and Morocco are NOT required by UK, AUS, NZ, USA, CAN. citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended.

Special Note: Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

The above is not an exhaustive list.

Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Electric Supply and Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in the countries visited, follow the relevant link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. You must take your policy document with you on tour, as your tour leader will ask to see this at the start of the trip. Your documentation must state in writing that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for your period of travel. Your policy document must also indicate that you have medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover and a 24-hour contact telephone number for your Insurance Company must be shown on your documentation in case of emergency.

If you are unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip you will not be allowed to join the trip. If you have purchased Explore Insurance you should carry the Master Certificate leaflet with you, which outlines the conditions of the policy together with a copy of your Confirmation Invoice, which is your proof of purchase of insurance. Explore Worldwide are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority.

Know Before You Go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs, including advice re: the legality of and local attitudes towards same-sex relationships. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

A complete list of clothing and personal gear is contained in Explore's '**General Information Booklet**', available only after a booking has been accepted. Here we make a few specific recommendations with regard to your tour.

Luggage: One main piece of baggage and daysac. Total allowance: **44lbs/20kgs**.

Please note: we advise you pack light as porters can't always be guaranteed at train station or hotels. Luggage with wheels or a rucksack is most suitable for train travel.

Clothing: Pack essentially for '**All Tours**' plus '**Hot Conditions**'. **Summer:** Clothing should be lightweight. However, a sweater or fleece is also advisable for the evenings, as temperatures can drop sharply. Lightweight, wind/water proof clothing is advisable.

Winter: Warm days but much thicker clothing is essential for potentially cold days and nights (Nov-Apr). A waterproof and windproof jacket is strongly recommended during the winter period. Please note that the High Atlas mountains can be cold and windy all year round.

Footwear: Trainers or lightweight walking shoes with a good tread are ideal for exploring cities on foot, plus sandals for relaxing. If you intend on visiting the Atlas Mountains, we recommend walking boots with good ankle support.

Equipment: Personal water bottle and torch.

Trek Kit Bag: For an exclusively designed Explore Trek Bag, follow the relevant link at www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore

Personal First Aid Kit: For an exclusively designed Explore Medical Kit, visit www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore

Need help on clothing or equipment?

Then we suggest you contact Nomad Travel, our equipment partner, who specialise in kitting people out for adventurous travel. You receive a special 10% discount in-store or online. Visit one of their stores, phone 0845 260 0044, or visit their website www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore for further information.

RAMADAN 2010

11th August – 9th September

Please note that Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world, during which time the followers of Islam should not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. There may be some restrictions to services and minor amendments to the itinerary. Restaurants may have limited supplies of fresh food available during this period.

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