

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Riads and Kasbahs of Morocco (DMR 2017)



TRIPDURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Style: Premium

Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups

Accommodation

Grade: Premium

Trip Code: DMR

Trip Highlights - Riads and Kasbahs of Morocco

- ✓ Riads and Kasbahs - The highlights of Morocco from hand-picked, comfortable accommodation in traditional style.
- ✓ Marrakech - Discover Morocco's vibrant Red City.
- ✓ Meknes and Volubilis - Two remarkable sites, rich in history and culture.
- ✓ Fes - The atmospheric medina also known as Mecca of the West.
- ✓ Merzouga Sand Sea - The impressive sand dunes of the Sahara.
- ✓ Todra Gorge - Walk in Morocco's Grand Canyon through spectacular rock formations.
- ✓ The Atlas Mountains - The highest and most scenic mountain range in North Africa.
- ✓ Essaouira - An atmospheric port town on the Atlantic coast.

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Premium Riad
5 nights Premium Hotel
2 nights Premium Kasbah

Included Meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 2 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Fes

End Point: Trip ends: Marrakech

Transport: 4WD, Bus

Countries: Morocco

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Riads and Kasbahs of Morocco

From the Imperial Cities of Fes, Meknes and Marrakech to the Saharan Sand Sea of Merzouga, we explore many of Morocco's natural and cultural highlights. We visit local Berber communities in the Anti-Atlas Mountains and travel through the vast Dades Gorge. Along the way we unwind in hand-picked hotels and traditional 'riads', which provide an oasis of calm from the bustling cities.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Premium

Our comfortable accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service.

Tour Style: Premium

These tours are perfect if you want to combine an original, off-beat classic adventure with the added comfort of hand-picked accommodation chosen for its character, location or local importance. Revel in adventurous days followed by relaxing nights.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.



Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Fes

Your tour starts in Fes. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may wish to explore the vibrant town independently before meeting your group and Tour Leader at the hotel.

Riad Ghita

Riad Ghita is located within the walls of the medina, and its owners pride themselves on offering a traditional and friendly stay. The whole riad is decorated throughout with Moroccan furnishings and décor, and whether you wish to sit on the rooftop terrace admiring the view, or sit in the central courtyard sipping mint tea it really is your home from home. Traditional Moroccan dishes can be cooked on request, or maybe organise a cooking class instead; heading out firstly to the market to buy fresh ingredients.

Single Room Available

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 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Morning sightseeing, afternoon walk through Old Fes

We have a full day today to take in the artisan capital of Morocco and during the morning's sightseeing we will have a chance to take in the mosques and souks of the Fes el Bali, view the Royal Palace and drive out to North Borj for some great views back across the city. Craftwork made and sold in the Fes medina is considered amongst the finest in Morocco and a wander through its artisan districts reveal weavers and brass workshops, coppersmiths and tanners, producing beautiful pieces much as they have for generations. Beautiful buildings abound in this city as well, including the Sanctuary of Moulay Idriss 2nd, the Karouine Mosque and the Al Andalus Mosque (viewed from the outside only). After lunch our exploration of the city continues with a tour of Fes El Bali (Old Fes), exploring the souks in the backstreets, wandering past the spice stalls and taking in the opulent majesty of the 14th century Attarin Medersa, whose intricate decoration and elegant design makes it one of the city's most captivating medieval colleges.

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Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Visit Meknes, Moulay Idriss and Volubilis

Departing Fes this morning we drive onto the city of Meknes, once the heart of the Moroccan Sultanate, lying amidst the landscapes of the Oued Boufekrane River valley. 'The Sultan loved Meknes, and he would have liked never to leave it' once wrote a chronicler to the tyrannical Sultan Moulay Ismail. Ismail (1672-1727) was a tireless builder, and his greatest efforts were reserved for his capital at Meknes, which at its peak, with over 20 grand gateways and 50 palaces, must have been a sight to inspire any who looked upon it. This morning we enjoy a guided tour of its major highlights, including the old granaries of the Heri es- Souni and the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail himself. In spite of Ismail's seemingly unquenchable blood lust and far from benevolent treatment of his subjects, the sultan still seems to be held in high regard and his tomb is something of a place of reverence even today amongst a people who still see his rule as Morocco's 'Golden Age'. We'll also take in the Bab el Khamis Gate and walk through the city's spectacular centrepiece, the Bab Mansour, en route to the Place el Hedim and the city's Medina, where we can try our bartering skills in the busy markets. Later this afternoon we head into the hills to the north, to visit the holy city of Moulay Idriss, named after Morocco's most revered saint and creator of the country's first Arab dynasty, before then moving on to explore the ancient site of Volubilis, the capital of the Roman province of Mauritania Tingitana. The detailed mosaics here are still intact and the site provides us with a good idea of the layout of Rome's imperial provincial settlements. From here we return back to Fes.

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Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Drive over the Middle Atlas to Erfoud

Turning south today we climb steadily into the dramatic landscapes of the Middle Atlas, heading first towards to Immouzer and Ifrane and passing near the small mountain village of Azrou, which in the Berber tongue translates as 'the rock'. This is the land of the fiercely independent Berbers, the Lords of the Atlas, whose traditions and ways still hold sway up here in their mountain strongholds far away from the cities below. The Berbers present us with a unique view of a way of life lost to the rest of North Africa, where music and dance, even language and religion, are far removed from their Arab neighbours. Continuing into Berber sheep-raising country we head to Timadite and over the Col du Zad, before crossing the Tizi N'Tairhemt Camel Pass and continuing via the Gorge du Ziz to Er Rachidia. Finally we traverse a broad plateau past Meski Oasis, the so-called Blue Spring bordering the arid desert plains, from where our journey brings us at last to the on to the desert settlement of Erfoud.

Kasbah Xalucca

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Drive to Merzouga via Rissani

Our day starts by following the meandering Ziz River towards Rissani, the last sizeable community and the end of the vegetation belt before the dunes of the 'Sand Sea' begin. The settlement is the homeland of the Alaouite dynasty, which reigned in this region for 300 years, and this morning we'll have an opportunity to visit the founder's Mausoleum and explore something of the local ksour (fortified villages). After lunch, we then drive on to the settlement of Merzouga, which lies on the edge of Erg Chebbi, an area of spectacular high dunes that are amongst some of Morocco's most spectacular natural landscapes. The afternoon is then free to simply relax, take a 4WD trip around the dunes to explore the surrounding area, or take a camel ride into the haunting V-shape dunes that seem to creep slowly across the desert floor. Alternatively, you may choose to appreciate their vastness by climbing them. The word erg is Arabic for great sand dune area and although many people imagine the Sahara as an endless sea of rolling golden sand dunes, they actually cover only about one fifth of its surface, the rest being covered by vast rock and gravel plains. Today even affords an opportunity to spend tonight camping out in the desert in a traditional Berber-style tent to truly appreciate the captivating tranquillity of this desert setting. Please note: due to limited daylight hours during the winter months, we will only be able to offer either the 4WD or camel excursion in combination with the overnight camping.

Auberge Tombouctou

Situated on the edge of Erg Chebbi, this kasbah style hotel combines a stunning location with both comfort and character. The dunes of the Sahara are very nearby and a night here is sure to be a truly memorable experience.

Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6 Drive to Boumaine via Tinerhir and the Todra Gorge

Following an ancient route along the southern slopes of the Atlas, we reach the town of Tinerhir, set amongst the dramatic ochre coloured cliffs of the Todra Gorge. There may be time on arrival this afternoon to take a walk amongst the famous lush palmeries that line the banks of the nearby Todra River (optional). Extending some way along the river's course, the gardens are a lush oasis of produce, with date palms and olive groves, fruit orchards and almonds, all littered amongst a fertile landscape of grain and vegetables. From here we then continue west, towards the meandering course of the Dades River and the town of Boumalene, passing into a sparse and dramatic landscape that is home to an array of birdlife that includes buzzards and cream-coloured coursers and even rare Houbara bustards. These harsh lands were once the tribal heartlands of the Ait-Alouane, fierce, seminomadic tribesmen who were the virtual rulers of the Draa and Dades Valleys. Part of a greater confederation of tribes collectively known as the Ait-Atta, these were the last of the Berbers to finally submit to the French during the fierce fighting of the 1930s.

Kasbah Xaluca Dades

Lying some 1600m above the valley floor, amongst the majestic spine of the Atlas Mountains, the Xaluca Dades Hotel affords some breath-taking views of the Dades Valley below. Its lavishly appointed, air-conditioned rooms are stunningly decorated throughout, presenting a sumptuous fusion of African designs and influences. The hotel also boasts an outdoor pool and Jacuzzi, hammam and spa and an array of leisure facilities that include a sauna, fitness suite and tennis court.

Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Walking in the Dades Gorge

The waters of the Dades River feed the Dades Valley as it flows from the slopes of the High Atlas and across the high plateau, carving the great chasms of the Dades Gorge, before it continues to feed the waters of the Ouarzazate Lake and the Draa. Today we will enjoy a walk through this most remarkable of settings, spending some 3 hours taking in a landscape steeped in natural and cultural treasures, where Kasbahs and kours (fortified villages) lie amongst fertile fields of almond and walnut trees and towering limestone cliffs. Beginning in the region of Ait Youl we head towards the small Berber village of Ait Oudinar (1600m), following the trails and fields that lie along the course of the river, from where we will return to Boumaine.

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Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Drive to Ouarzazate via the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs

Known as the Valley of One Thousand Kasbahs, the Dades Valley region can boast some of the most authentic Berber settlements of all the Southern Oasis Valleys, each of the oasis towns benefiting from its own distinctive feel and, whilst many of the original



Kasbahs now lie in ruins, there are still enough to give a real flavour of Morocco's ancient heritage, with some of the valley women still favouring the traditional colourful dress and ornaments worn by their forebears. We'll pass through this fascinating landscape this morning, heading for the town of El Kelaa des M'Gouna, lying at the foot of a rocky outcrop that separates the Dades and Mgoun Valleys. Famed for its roses, the town lies blanketed under a landscape of scented blooms each spring, which are then harvested in May during the famous Festival of the Roses and processed into rosewater to be sold throughout the Islamic world. Later this afternoon we make our way towards the small, fortified Berber settlement of Ait Ben Haddou, which has been classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and is considered by many to be one of Morocco's most picturesque settings. Studded with crenelated towers and richly decorated, the town's Kasbah is quite spectacular and provided an ideal location for filming scenes from Jesus of Nazareth and Lawrence of Arabia. Our final destination for the evening is the town of Ouarzazate.

Dar Kamar

Originally built in the 17th century, and the former courthouse of Pasha Glaoui this beautifully restored Kasbah combines traditional designs with modern comforts. Facilities include a restaurant, tea room and a hammam and there is also a rooftop terrace offering some wonderful views over the Atlas Mountains.

Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY

9 Drive to Taroudant via Tazenakhte

This morning we head through the landscapes of the Anti-Atlas, travelling via the settlements of Tazenakhte and Taliouine, with its magnificent, decaying Kasbah, towards Taroudant stopping to visit some saffron cooperative en route and arriving later this afternoon.

Dar Zitoune

Just outside the town, Dar Zitoune enjoys a peaceful setting in extensive grounds. The bungalows are arranged around a lush garden whose central feature is the large swimming pool, fringed with palms and built in the shape of a traditional Moroccan door. All rooms are decorated in traditional style to a high standard.

Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY

10 Visit Tiout and Taroudant

Today you will make a trip out to the village of Tiout south of Taroudant in the Sous Valley at the foot of the Anti-Atlas Mountains. Here we can walk through the fields and palm groves of this idyllic spot and discover the caid's kasbah once part of the extensive feudal holdings of the Glaoui empire. We enjoy some of the most famous views of the Sous Valley from the kasbah promontory and may be sample the local mint tea. Later we will visit Taroudant known as the 'Pearl of the Sous'. It has lain at the centre of political life of the Sous Valley for generations. Lying before the imposing backdrop of the Anti-Atlas Mountains, amidst a landscape of olive groves and orange orchards, the town lies behind an impressive bastion of fortified towers and some of the best-preserved walls in the country. Strategically important and site of the region's most important market, Taroudant once commanded a network of major trading routes and even today its bustling market lies at the centre of life.

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Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY

11 Drive to Essaouira

This morning we will leave Taroudant and continue north towards the Atlantic coast and the historic port of Essaouira. The town is a delightful haven of whitewashed houses and dramatic medieval walls set before a scene of empty beaches and crashing waves. One of Morocco's most popular resorts it has gained a reputation over recent years as a venue for International wind surfing competitions, the local winds creating perfect conditions amongst the Atlantic rollers. Arriving in Essaouira late this afternoon there should be time for a short orientation tour of the city before dinner.

Riad Mimouna

Overlooking the ocean and close to the medina this riad oozes charm. Riad Mimouna is decorated throughout in a traditional style and provides a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. Each guest room is furnished with Moroccan designs and has an en-suite bathroom. The property also boasts a large terrace offering sea views and a restaurant serving local dishes.

Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

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DAY 12 Free day in Essaouira

The day is free for independent explorations in this colourful coastal fishing town. Situated within 15th century Portuguese fortifications, the town has a relaxed but lively feel and an experience not to be missed is a visit to the old walled Medina. After passing through the narrow, highly decorated arched entrance, it may be hard to resist snapping up last minute gifts such as locally made rustic leather belts, gleaming gold and silver jewellery, or wooden boxes exquisitely inlaid with ebony and mother of pearl by local craftsmen. The lively throng of the Medina, with its local women carrying out their daily routines, veiled in their traditional dress, forms a sharp contrast to the open golden sands of the harbour area where hopeful seabirds can be seen circling above the fisherman as they return from the blue waters with their daily catches. We suggest a stroll around the old town, perhaps taking in the Mellah (the old Jewish Quarter) or maybe a wander along the fine sandy beach and through the harbour.

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Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Drive to Marrakech; Afternoon optional walking tour

A morning drive takes us east to Marrakech, where we'll have the better part of two days to explore a city that has for centuries been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south. This afternoon there will be an opportunity to explore something of its rich heritage with an optional sightseeing tour of Morocco's fascinating Red City. Like many North African towns, Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Gueliz and the Medina, a place where trade and barter amongst the colourful souks still renders its ancient heart a glittering cacophony of noise and colour. Journeying into this vibrant city with a local guide affords a chance to discover some of its most enthralling sites. The city's beating heart is the spectacular Djemaa-el-Fna, a site not to be missed and a scene straight out of the pages of the Arabian Nights. Here you will find the streets and alleys alive with storytellers and musicians, jugglers and acrobats, snake charmers and clowns. Marrakech is a city like no other, boasting a staggering array of spectacular architecture and wonderful facades and not to be missed are the Koutoubia mosque and tower, Saadian tombs, Ben Youssef medersa, the Dar Si Said Palace (now the Museum of Moroccan Art) and the Menara gardens. This evening there is also an opportunity to visit a traditional Hammam.

Hotel Hivernage

With a glorious terrace that affords some matchless panoramic views of the Bab Jdid ramparts, the Agdal Gardens and the distant Atlas Mountains, the Hivernage is ideally located in the fashionable centre of the city. Presenting an exquisite mix of modern comforts and traditional Moorish design, it boasts a superb spa and health centre, an excellent restaurant and a prime location within easy walking distance of the city's medina and bustling souks.

Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 Free in Marrakech

Today has been left free to continue exploring this amazing city at your leisure. You can wander past vendors selling doughnuts and fried grasshoppers, meander through native markets where Muslim women, their hands and feet dyed with henna, call out to sell their wares, and enjoy the sounds and the smells of the exotic. Perhaps you will prefer to take time to enjoy more of the remarkable Medina, haggling for a bargain or two, or simply sitting at one of the local cafés and watching the street tableaux unfold before you. Do remember that many of the mosques will be forbidden to non-Muslims and be careful of photographing women, however photogenic they look, as the Moroccans are very sensitive about such things. If you are unsure, it is always best to ask.

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Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Tour ends Marrakech

Your tour ends in Marrakech after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights you may wish to spend some additional time exploring Marrakech independently or buying the last souvenirs.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Please note that as the riads have individual rooms which can differ quite dramatically in size from one to the other, your tour leader will take this into consideration in an attempt to allocate rooms fairly amongst the group throughout the tour.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 2 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Morocco

Lunch £: 3.00 - 5.00

Dinner £: 5.00 - 8.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Morocco

Bottle of Beer £: 2.50

Water £: 0.60

Other Sightseeing & Activities

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 these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Erg Chebbi - Overnight camp (including bedding) £20.

Merzouga - 4WD excursion £20, camel ride (1 hour) £15.

Marrakech - Guided tour of Old City £6. Hammam £5

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow approx £25 for tipping of crew and local guides used.

Foreign Exchange

Morocco

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

Credit Card Acceptance: Not all places.

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

Local Currency: Moroccan Dirham (MAD).

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars, Sterling and Euros are readily exchangeable. We recommend you take a mixture of cash and credit cards. Scottish bank notes and Australian dollar travellers cheques and cash are NOT normally accepted in Morocco.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

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Travel Aware

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. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Morocco: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection

Morocco

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

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 above (if sight seeing is included we will do our best to avoid the heat of the day during this period). Temperatures may drop significantly at times during the night as the day's heat rapidly diminishes. From December to January snow can be expected on mountain passes and it can be wet. In winter, day temperatures will probably be around 18-25°C, dropping to perhaps 0-5°C.

Clothing

Summer: Clothing should be lightweight. However, a warm sweater is also advisable, as the desert can sometimes get cold at nights, even in the summer.

Winter: Days are usually warm but much thicker clothing is essential for cold nights (Nov-Mar). It is advisable to take warm clothing (eg. track suit or thermal underwear) to sleep in, as the quality of heating in Moroccan hotel rooms can be variable. A waterproof jacket, trousers and fleece are recommended between December and January.

Morocco is a Muslim country and it is important to dress with respect for local customs. People may be offended by shorts or revealing dresses, which can attract unwelcome attention. We advise that in general both men and women should cover shoulders, upper arms and knees. Transparent, plunging, necklines and tightfitting clothes should be avoided. Women should also cover their heads when entering a sanctuary, though in general, mosques are forbidden to non-Muslims. For those clients on a cycling holiday please bear this information in mind for times that you are not on the bikes. While cycling it is no problem for both men and women to wear your regular cycling gear, tight fitting or not.

Equipment

A head torch, water bottle, sunhat and high factor sunscreen are all essential, whilst we recommend swimming costumes and towels.

Footwear

We recommend you bring sandals and strong trainers or lightweight walking shoes (ideally with good grip and ankle support).

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Morocco

Population: 32,000,000

Size of Country: 446,550 sq km

Major Language: Arabic, Berber, French.

Religion: Islam

Electric Supply & Plugs

Morocco

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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