# EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

## Imperial Cities and Desert (MR 2016)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TRIPDURATI
15
DAYS

**Tour Style:** Classic
**Tour Pace:** Moderate

**Tour Type:** Small Groups
**Accommodation Grade:** Standard

**Trip Code:** MR

### Trip Highlights - Imperial Cities and Desert

- ✓ Marrakech - Discover Morocco's vibrant Red City
- ✓ Meknes and Rabat - Explore two fascinating imperial cities
- ✓ Fes - The atmospheric medina also known as Mecca of the West
- ✓ Merzouga Sand Sea - Take an optional camel ride through the impressive sand dunes of the Sahara or an overnight under the stars
- ✓ Todra Gorge - Walk in Morocco's Grand Canyon through spectacular rock formations
- ✓ The Atlas Mountains - Beautiful mountain scenery in the highest mountain range in North Africa
- ✓ Essaouira - Relax in the atmospheric port town on the Atlantic coast

### Trip Essentials

| | |
|---|---|
| **Accommodation:** | 12 nights Standard Hotel<br>2 nights Premium Hotel |
| **Included Meals:** | 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners |
| **Start Point:** | Join trip: Casablanca |
| **End Point:** | Trip ends: Marrakech |
| **Transport:** | 4WD, Bus |
| **Countries:** | Morocco |

# Imperial Cities and Desert

Enter the world of ancient Morocco on this journey through the imperial cities of Rabat, Meknes, Fes and Marrakech. We explore colourful souks, walk through gorges in the towering Atlas Mountains and discover desert oases, with the option of spending a night in the desert. We enjoy time with the locals as we travel through the land of Berbers and to the beautiful Atlantic coast where we relax in the tranquil port town of Essaouira.

## 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: Standard

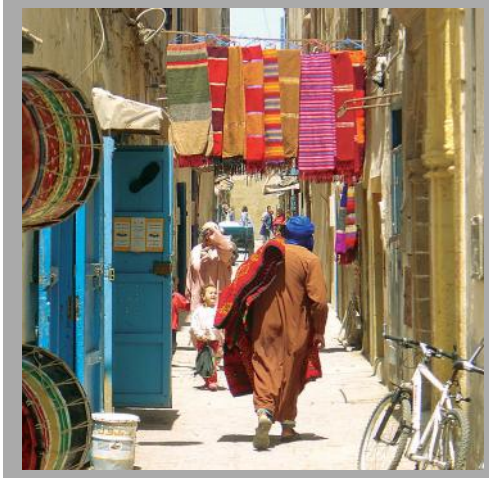
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

### Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

### 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 Casablanca

Join the tour in Casablanca and meet your group and Tour Leader.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 Visit to Hassan II Mosque and Sightseeing in Rabat; continue to Meknes

This morning we visit the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca before we set forth along the coast heading north, towards Rabat, the city that was established as the capital of their protectorate by the French in 1912 and since independence has served as the capital of a modern Morocco. Rabat's history stretches back as far as 8BC, when settlers arrived in what is now the Chellah area, a district that went on to become a prosperous Roman town, before being transformed by the Merinids into a cemetery, On arrival we will have an opportunity to explore something of the city's historic heart, with a guided walking tour of the area around the Hassan Tower and the Mausoleum of Mohammed V, before wandering through the engaging Kasbah des Oudaias, originally a fortified town that is now infused with a distinctly Andalusian flavour. After taking in the sumptuous grandeur of the Royal Palace we will continue our journey to 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 3 Sightseeing in Meknes; drive to Fes via Volubilis

This morning we enjoy a guided tour of the major highlights of Meknes, 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. From here we head next for the nearby ancient site of Volubilis – the capital of the Roman province of Mauritania Tingitana. The detailed mosaics here are still intact and the site gives a good idea of the layout of provincial settlements. The afternoon then sees us taking the road northeast, travelling via Nzala des Beni Ammar to the country's cultural capital, Fes. Probably the oldest of the imperial cities, its fascinating history is rich with wars, murders and political intrigue. It has played an important part in Moroccan trade, culture, religion and politics as well as being the seat of learning for science. The old and new towns are adjacent but totally separate entities and the panoramic views of Fes El Bali (the old city), seen from the North Borj (tower), are very useful to help you orientate yourself for when you are in the narrow alleyways.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 4 Exploring 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 Bori 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 5 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.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
**Single Room Available** **Swimming Pool Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 6 Drive to Merzouga via Rissani; Afternoon optional camel ride & desert camp

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 (optional), to truly appreciate the captivating tranquillity of this desert setting.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available** **Swimming Pool Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 7 Drive to Todra Gorge area

This morning we will leave the southern desert behind and head for the mountains once more. Following an ancient route along the southern slopes of the Atlas, we reach the town of Tinerhir, our base from which to explore the towering vistas of the Todra Gorge. Arriving in the afternoon there is usually time for an initial exploration of the area and perhaps a walk in 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available** **Swimming Pool Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 8 Optional walks in Todra Gorge

The dramatic ochre-coloured cliffs of the Todra Gorge rise vertically to leave just a narrow pass through which our track and the river struggle for right of way. In the morning Berber women drive their goats through the narrow gorge to the better grazing land higher up and we have an opportunity to follow their daily ritual and admire the stunning views, as we spend the morning exploring these deep, narrow mountain chasms on foot. You may choose to join the tour leader on an optional walk to Abdelali viewpoint for some excellent panoramas across to the Jebel Sahro and down into the gorge. The walk generally takes around 5 hours return and is considered as a moderate trek, but be aware that in high temperatures it can be more demanding (walking boots with ankle support essential). Alternatively you may opt to explore the gorge valley floor following the path of the river and take in the local scenery from one of the nearby cafés.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available** **Swimming Pool Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 9 Drive to Ait Benhaddou via El Kelaa des M'Gouna & the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs

This morning we driving westwards, where we make a short stop in El Kelaa des M'Gouna positioned 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. Driving on through the Dades Valley with its fertile oases, we enter the Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs, where each of the oasis towns can boast their own distinctive character, the mud and straw structures becoming more plentiful and more ornate as you progress along the valley. Later this afternoon we make our way towards the small, fortified Berber settlement of Ait Benhaddou, 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available** **Swimming Pool Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 10 Drive to Ouirgane

Heading north, the parched desert sand and stone gives way to the hills and deep gorges of the High Atlas Mountains as we wind our way up and over the Tizi n' Tichka, the highest vehicular pass in Morocco and often snow covered during the winter months. We will then head to the small village of Ouirgane. En route we may have the opportunity of visiting the local market at Tahanoute and the village of Aguersioual, where we will enjoy a mint tea with a Berber family and experience the everyday life of the people of this region. Depending on our arrival time there may be the opportunity for a short hike around Ouirgane, Imlil or alternatively to the Berber village of Matate.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 11 Drive to Essaouira via Marrakesh

Today we head via Marrakesh to take the road west to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. Our destination is the historic port of Essaouira. This afternoon you will have free time to enjoy this charming small seaside town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 13 Drive to Marrakech; Afternoon sightseeing 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 we take a sightseeing tour of Morocco's fascinating Red City. Like many North African towns, Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Gueliz (the modern French-built city) and the Medina (the Old City), 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 Djemma-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 opportnuity to visit a traditional Hammam.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**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. If you are unsure, it is always best to ask.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
**Single Room Available** **Swimming Pool Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 15 Tour ends Marrakech

Our tour ends in Marrakech today after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you might be able to spend some additional time exploring the city independently and buy the last souvenirs in the market.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

# Accommodation and Meals

### Accommodation Notes

Morocco is a developing country and as such, the accommodation standards are not equivalent to those in Europe and can be more basic. We generally choose our properties because of their location, cleanliness, traditional style or for their welcoming atmosphere, as we endeavour to provide an authentic Moroccan experience. However, some of the properties might have some outdated or simple furniture and the level of service may vary depending on the location. You may find that availability of hot water is variable or limited in certain locations. Breakfasts are generally continental style. A swimming pool is often available, especially in the cities.

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 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

Merzouga - The following optional trips are available to enhance the Sahara desert experience: 4WD excursion £20; camel ride (1 hour) £15, Erg Chebbi overnight Berber style camp (including bedding and dinner) £20 to £40 dependant on numbers. Combinations of these excursions are possible, please discuss with your tour leader.
Marrakech - Hammam £5
Marrakech - Cookery class including lunch £20

### Tipping - Tour Leader

You may wish to tip your tour leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you have received whilst on tour.

### 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. £20 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

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

## 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.

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

## 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: Usually warm during the day but 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 in the winter months.
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 sandals and walking boots with good ankle support if planning to do the Abdelali walk in the Todra Gorge.

## 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:** Muslim

## 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 & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one 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.

## Our commitment to the environment

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), Dekamer ( a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

## 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

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

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

## 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 LicenceÂ  granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â 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: 2016 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2016. 2017/18 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2017.

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