

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Marrakech Express (QMR 2018)



TRIPDURATION
9
DAYS



Tour Style: Simply
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: QMR

Trip Highlights - Marrakech Express

- ✓ Travel with the locals - An exhilarating journey by train and bus to discover the highlights of Morocco.
- ✓ Tangier - Morocco's bustling port where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic Ocean.
- ✓ Fes - The atmospheric Medina also known as Mecca of the West.
- ✓ Rabat - Morocco's historic capital and the intriguing Kasbah des Ouidas.
- ✓ Marrakech - The enchanting 'Red City' and the vibrant Djemma-el-Fna Square.

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 3 nights Simple Hotel
5 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 8 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Tangier

End Point: Trip ends: Marrakech

Transport: Bus, Train, Public Bus, Taxi

Countries: Morocco

Marrakech Express

On this journey through northern Morocco we visit the great historic cities of Fes and Marrakech. We explore the maze of backstreets and alleyways and discover snake charmers, acrobats, musicians and storytellers in the lively Djemma-el-Fna square, in Marrakech. We also travel to the less-visited Rif Mountains, and to the Andalucian walled town of Chefchaouen.

Why Book this trip

This tour is perfect for travellers who want to experience Morocco like a local - on public transport. Many feel that this is the real way to get to grips with culture of the country and on this journey you will see how Moroccans live their lives. This a fantastic tour for the adventurous or those travelling on a budget.

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: Simply

If your idea of adventure travel is to experience everyday local life in a country then try one of our Simply Explore tours. These grassroots adventures are flexible, affordable and fun

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 Tangier

Our tour starts today in the vibrant city of Tangier. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to start exploring the city independently, before meeting your group and Tour Leader at the hotel.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Optional guided tour of Tangier; bus to Chefchouan

Colonised by the Romans and Phoenicians, fought over by the Byzantines and the Visigoths and finally taken by the Arabs in the 8th century, Tangier has at heart always been Berber. Its turbulent history saw it become a pawn in the conflicts between the Portuguese, the British and the despotic Moulay Ismail, who finally saw it returned to Moroccan control at the end of the 17th century. This morning there will be an opportunity to explore something of the city with an optional tour of the Medina in the company of a local guide, before we board a public bus south, towards the dramatic setting of Chefchouan. A historical town known for Andalusian influenced Medina with its red tiled roofs and buildings that are painted pure whitewash or an electric blue. Upon arrival we will explore the Medina, scramble up the battlements of the 15th century Kasbah and spend some time browsing the market in the Uta Lhmam square, which is the centre of the town. As well as the historical interest and aesthetic beauty of the architecture, one of the best parts of walking around Chefchaouen is the views over the fertile plains of the Rif Mountains.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Walks in the mountains and visit an abandoned mosque

Today in Chefchaouen there is some free time to explore or tour leader will lead a guided walk to the source of the Ras El Ma - the river that supplies the town with its crystal clear waters. To get there we will walk to the north west of Chefchaouen and join a trail that snakes gently uphill for a couple of miles before reaching the source. From here we walk downhill to get to the Spanish Mosque, built in the 1920's but never used, the mosque has become famous due to being ignored by the local residents. The reason people visit the site is the incredible views over the valleys and mountains from the top of the minaret. This walk should take a 2 -3 hours including the mosque visit.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Bus to Fes

Boarding another public bus this morning we continue our journey south, crossing through the Djebala Mountains and across what was once the old border separating the governed territories from the untamed wilderness. Our journey today takes us into Morocco's cultural heartland to the city of Fes, probably the oldest of the imperial cities, whose fascinating history is rich with wars, murders and political intrigue. At the centre of Moroccan life for countless generations, Fes has played an important part in the country's trade, culture, religion and politics, as well as being an important seat of scientific thought, for centuries. The nightlife is centred mainly around the Avenues Hassan II and Mohammed V in the new town, and with two nights here we have ample chance to experience the whole range of the city's cultural attractions - both ancient and modern. There may be an opportunity today to enjoy a traditional Hammam visit (optional).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 In Fes

Taking in the mosques and souks of the Fes el Bali (Old Fes) on foot affords the ideal opportunity to explore the souks that line the backstreets of the town, wandering past aromatic 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. One of the city's most impressive monuments is the spectacular Medersa Bou Inania, the 14th century Merenid structure built by the Sultan Abou Inan, whose exquisite carvings and tile work is considered amongst the most exceptional examples of its kind anywhere in Morocco. The afternoon is then free to enjoy at your leisure what is in essence one of the most engaging, and certainly one of the most undiminished, medieval cities anywhere in the Arab world.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Train to Rabat; optional city tour

Transferring to the railway station this morning we catch the morning train west towards the Atlantic Coast and the city of Rabat. The 3-hour journey should get us in to the city around lunchtime and, after we have transferred to the hotel and had a chance to freshen

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up, the afternoon affords an opportunity to join an optional guided tour of the city. Rabat was established as the capital of the French protectorate 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. The tour will take in something of the city's historic heart, exploring the area around the Hassan Tower and the Mausoleum of Mohammed V, before wandering through the engaging Kasbah des Oudaïas, originally a fortified town that is now infused with a distinctly Andalusian flavour.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Train to Marrakech; free afternoon

A morning train takes us south to Marrakech today, 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. Marrakech is a city like no other, boasting a staggering array of spectacular architecture and wonderful facades, a place where trade and barter amongst the colourful souks still renders its ancient heart a glittering cacophony of noise and colour. Founded by the Almoravids, the city began life as a fortified ksour, before a comprehensive building programme under Ali Ben Youssef saw the city blossom into an imperial capital. It was during the 12th century though that Marrakech enjoyed its golden age, when the Almohad dynasty took control and the city saw an influx of poets and scholars and its streets took on some of the grandeur that we see before us today. It was during this period that the great Koutoubia Mosque was built, but then centuries of war and turmoil followed and the city lost some of its imperial glamour. Since independence though the city has revived some of its old fortunes and today it is a vital trading centre and remains one of the country's most popular tourist attractions.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Morning optional walking tour; Afternoon free

This morning there will be an opportunity to explore something of the rich heritage of Morocco's fascinating Red City with an optional sightseeing tour of the city's old quarter. 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) and journeying into this vibrant centre 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, where you will find the streets and alleys alive with storytellers and musicians, jugglers and acrobats, snake charmers and clowns. The dominating Koutoubia Minaret, the oldest of the Almohad towers, rises some 70 metres above the surrounding city and presents us with one of the blueprints for future Moroccan architectural design. After the tour the rest of the day is free to continue exploring this amazing city at your leisure. You can wander past vendors selling doughnuts and fried grasshoppers, enjoy the sounds and the smells of the exotic and meander through native markets where Muslim women, their hands and feet dyed with henna, call out to sell their wares.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Tour ends Marrakech

Our tour ends today in Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to spend additional time exploring Marrakech independantly and to 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: 8 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.

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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

Tangier - Walking tour of the Medina MAD400 per group.

Chefchuan - Cookery Class MAD200 per person, plus MAD50-100 per person for lunch options.

Fes - Guided tour of Old Fes MAD500 per group.

Rabat - Guided tour of Kasbah MAD400 per group.

Marrakech - Walking tour of Old City MAD500 per group (for guide plus entrance fees); Hammam MAD150-300 per person.

In addition to the above, you should allow approximately MAD120 for other optional sites and entrance fees in the Imperial Cities.

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. £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.

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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.

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

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.

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 days are 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.

Equipment

A 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 good comfortable trainers or lightweight walking shoes.

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: 2018 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2018. 2019/20 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2019.

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