

# EXPLORE!

## Tour Notes



### Saharan Escape (SH 2015)



TOUR DURATION  
**5**  
DAYS



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

**Tour Type:** Small Groups  
**Tour Comfort:** Basic

**tour Code:** SH

#### Tour Highlights - Saharan Escape

- ✓ The Great Sahara - A short break in the immense and remote Sahara Desert.
- ✓ Draa Valley - A scenic drive through palm groves, fertile valleys, intriguing souks and kasbahs.
- ✓ Desert Camp - Sleep under the stars and admire the shades of orange and red on the dunes at sunrise.
- ✓ Erg Chegaga - The impressive Saharan dunes by 4WD and an optional exhilarating camel ride.

#### Tour Essentials

**Accommodation:** 2 nights Standard Hotel  
2 nights Basic Camping

**Included Meals:** 4 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners

**Start Point:** Join tour: Ouarzazate

**End Point:** Tour ends: Ouarzazate

**Transport:** 4WD

**Countries:** Morocco

## Saharan Escape

Enjoy a long weekend exploring the great Sahara desert. Travelling past the date palm oases and medieval kasbahs of the Draa Valley, we reach the village of Zagora - the Gateway to the Sahara. In the desert we camp under the stars, enjoy traditional Berber cuisine and explore the vast sand sea of Chegaga, home to the highest dunes in this region of Morocco.

### 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.

### Tour Comfort: Basic

Our basic accommodation can offer the most rewarding and memorable places to stay. These are usually communal or camping style with shared facilities. Running hot and cold water may be unreliable and overall comfort levels are basic.

### 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 tour 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.

### DAY 1 Join tour Ouarzazate

Arrive in the desert outpost of Ouarzazate, at the edge of the Atlas Mountain. Check in at the hotel and meet your group and Tour Leader.

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


**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 Drive to Oasis Camp via Draa Valley

We waste no time this morning and drive through the beautiful and fertile Draa Valley. Our route is lined with palm groves, with many kasbahs and ksours (villages) punctuating the impressive landscape. Tamnougalt ksour is possibly the most impressive and certainly worth a closer look during our journey. We arrive in the large village of Zagora, often referred to as the 'Gate of the Desert' essentially a vast oasis which stretches south for almost 30 km. The last part of today's journey takes us further south where we set up camp near a desert oasis.


Overnight: **Basic Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 3 Desert drive to Chegaga Dunes

Today we aim to get off-the-beaten track in our fully equipped 4WD vehicles and head further into the desert, via Ouled Driss, through Mhamid, close to the Moroccan border with Algeria and ending up near the dunes of Erg Chegaga. We'll spend the day driving through ever changing desert scenery. Here, in this inhospitable wilderness, the burning temperature of the sand causes a quivering of the air, blurring the edges of the landscape and giving rise to a 'mirage'. Keep a close eye out for camels, sometimes forming a caravan trading perhaps in rock salt or dates. The Arabian camel is one of the best-adapted desert mammals and can live for 40 years. Valued greatly by nomadic Tuareg people as a means of transport, almost all parts of their body can be used. Their dung is used as a fuel on cold desert nights and skin makes excellent leather. We'll stop several times during our journey today to explore the finer aspects of desert life and to enjoy magnificent desolation. At Ouled Driss for those interested it is usually possible to arrange a camel ride. Tonight we plan to camp near the dunes at Chegaga, the highest dunes in this part of Morocco. Your leader will take you on a short nature walk after setting up camp to look for trails of desert-dwelling birds, insects and other animal life. The highest diversity of all animal life in the Sahara is displayed by insects and a close inspection under a bush or near stones can reveal much about recent activities. After a hearty Berber-style meal, we enjoy a second night of tranquility sleeping under a blanket of twinkling stars set deep in an African night-sky. Rather than sleeping in tents, many travellers choose simply to sleep out in the open to watch for shooting stars and enjoy the night sky.

Overnight: **Basic Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 4 Drive to Ouarzazate via Tazenakht

We awake this morning in the desert and usually a glorious orange sunrise. Hills of sand stretch out to the horizon like an ever-shifting carpet. Smooth-sided, sharply-crested dunes, each much alike, mimic the regular waves of a sea. The Sahara is vast, awesome and very disorientating yet peaceful and therapeutic to the senses. We continue our desert adventure to Fom-Zguid: the remoteness and stark contrasts of scenery more than make up for the bumpy journey. Later as road conditions improve we turn north towards Tazenakht and cross the Tizi Taguergoust (1640m) into a rugged landscape with a backdrop of high peaks. We arrive back in Ouarzazate in the afternoon for our last night in the relative comfort of a hotel.

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

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 5 Tour ends Ouarzazate

Our tour ends today after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may wish to explore Ouarzazate independently.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Accommodation and Meals

### Accommodation Rating

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.

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## Food & Drink

Included meals: 4 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners included in the price of this tour. 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 Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour 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 £:** 6.00

**Dinner £:** 8-10

### 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

Ouled Driss - Camel ride (1 hour) £10.

### 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. £10 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 Tour

### 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.

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## 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](http://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.

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>.

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

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## 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 joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit [www.explore.co.uk/insurance](http://www.explore.co.uk/insurance). Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website [www.fca.gov.uk](http://www.fca.gov.uk) or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

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### 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.

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### 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 Tour

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### 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.

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## Clothing

Summer (Apr-Oct): Clothing should be lightweight. However, a warm sweater is also advisable, as the desert can sometimes be cold at night, even in the summer.

Winter (Nov-Mar): Mostly warm days but much thicker clothing is essential. It is advisable to take warm clothing (e.g. track suit) to sleep in, as the quality of heating in Moroccan hotel rooms can be variable. Desert nights can be particularly cold with ground frosts in winter. A windproof jacket, trousers and fleece are thus recommended between December and January.

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## Equipment

Bring a 3-season sleeping bag plus water bottle. A small torch and earplugs are highly recommended. You may also consider bringing some wet wipes for washing in the desert as washing facilities are very limited.

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## Footwear

Lightweight walking or desert boots/shoes for general travel and sandals/trainers for relaxing.

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## Luggage: On Tour

One piece of baggage (suitcases not suitable as luggage is stored on the roof-racks of our 4WD vehicles) and a daysac for the walks. Total allowance: 26lb/12kg (due to weight restrictions on our vehicles).

Luggage allowance on tour: 12Kg

# General Information

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## Country details

### Morocco

**Population:** 32,000,000

**Size of Country:** 446,550 sq km

**Major Language:** Arabic, Berber, French.

**Religion:** Muslim

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## Electric Supply & Plugs

### Morocco

2 Pin Round

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# 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, elephant, 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.

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## 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 and traditions, 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.

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## 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.

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## 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](http://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](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)

- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>
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## 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 <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/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 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.

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### 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

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### 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

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### Tour 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: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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