

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Comfort Itinerary Version (TMMR1)



TRIP DURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Type: Tailormade

Trip Code: TMMR1

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 3 nights Comfortable Riad
2 nights Premium Riad
1 night Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 3 dinners

Transport:

Countries: Morocco

Tailormade Morocco's Mountains and Medinas

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.

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.

DAY 1 Fly to Casablanca

Arrive in Casablanca and transfer to your hotel.



 **Included Meals:** None

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

This morning you visit the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca before you 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 you 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 you will continue your 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: **Comfortable Riad**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Sightseeing in Meknes; drive to Fes via Volubilis

This morning you 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. You'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 you can try your bartering skills in the busy markets. From here you 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: **Premium Riad**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Exploring Fes

You have a full day today to take in the artisan capital of Morocco and during the morning's sightseeing you 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 your 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: **Premium Riad**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Drive over the Middle Atlas to Erfoud

Turning south today you 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 you 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 you traverse a broad plateau past Meski Oasis, the so-called 'Blue Spring' bordering the arid desert plains, from where your journey brings you at last to the on to the desert settlement of Erfoud.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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

Your 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 you'll have an opportunity to visit the founder's Mausoleum and explore something of the local ksour (fortified villages). After lunch, you 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.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7 Drive to Todra Gorge area

This morning you will leave the southern desert behind and head for the mountains once more. Following an ancient route along the southern slopes of the Atlas, you reach the town of Tinerhir, your 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.

 **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 your 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 you have an opportunity to follow their daily ritual and admire the stunning views, as you spend the morning exploring these deep, narrow mountain chasms on foot. You may choose take 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.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

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

Driving westwards, you 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, you 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 you make your 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**

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 you wind your way up and over the Tizi n' Tichka, the highest vehicular pass in Morocco and often snow covered during the winter months. You will then head to the small village of Ouirgane. En route you may have the opportunity of visiting the local market at Tahanoute and the village of Aguersioual, where you will enjoy a mint tea with a Berber family and experience the everyday life of the people of this region. Depending on your arrival time there may be the opportunity for a short hike around Ouirgane, Imlil or alternatively to the Berber village of Matate.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY **11** Drive to Essaouira via Marrakech

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

 **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. You 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.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **13** Drive to Marrakech; Afternoon sightseeing tour

A morning drive takes you east to Marrakech, where you'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 you 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 opportunity to visit a traditional Hammam.

Overnight: **Comfortable Riad**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **14** Free day 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: **Comfortable Riad**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **15** Depart Marrakech

Time to depart Morocco

Overnight:

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 3 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

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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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 Introducing 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.

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.

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: 1 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 1. 2/ itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2.

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