



World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Morocco

October 1-12, 2015

Day 1 : Casablanca (D)

Upon arrival at the Casablanca International Airport you will be met by our representative, who will assist you with the formalities and transfer to our hotel. Relax after your flight before meeting your fellow Ethical Travelers for our **Orientation Meeting**, hosted by our Ethical Traveler Journeys facilitator and Altruvistas in-country guide. **Welcome Dinner at Rick's Café**, a well known restaurant opened by Kathy Kriger—an American living in Casablanca. The interior is stunning, the food is exquisite, and yes, the piano bar will make us feel as if we've just stepped onto the 1942 movie set!

Day 2: Casablanca/Rabat (B, L, D)

After breakfast we will take in the city sights before departing. We'll visit the splendid **Hassan II Mosque**, a breathtaking landmark of Casablanca with the tallest religious minaret in the world (656'). It's the only mosque that allows non-Muslims to enter its prayer hall. Then we'll take in the lively squares of **Place des Nations Unies and Mohammed V** before continuing along to the Ain Diab Corniche for a brief stroll. Then we're off to **Rabat**, with its elegant tree-lined boulevards and famous Medina. We'll visit the Royal Palace, Chella Colonia, Mohammad V Shrine, Hassan Tower and Oudaya Fortress. From there we proceed to our check-in at the Dar Elkbira Riyad. Once settled we continue our visit to the **Medina and local market** as well as the remarkable **Bab Elhad Gate**. In the afternoon we cross the Bourgregue River to reach Sala Colonia, and visit one of the oldest Medreassas in the Islamic World: the **Merinid Medrassa**. A Highlight of the day is a visit to the Musée des Oudaia (**Museum of Moroccan Arts**), and the beautiful Andalusian Gardens near the famous Hassan Tower. Dining with our group at a local eatery.



Day 3– Fes

(B, L)

After breakfast, we are joined by a speaker who will brief us on ***The History of Morocco*** at our hotel . The holy city of Fes is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is Morocco's spiritual and intellectual capital. It's also the site of the largest and oldest Medina in the world. After our talk we are off to explore the **Madrassa Bou Inania**, a beautiful 14th century school that is still a center for education and worship. The Madrasa features an open courtyard with exceptional handcrafted walls of tile, plasterwork and arches. We will wander **the Medina** - a labyrinth of narrow, winding streets, with alleyways crammed full of stalls and workshops selling everything from tambourines to honey. This is the famed commercial center of Fes, and a shopper's paradise. Beautiful goods beckon from this incredible maze: cotton fabric, silk, silver, leather slippers, and infinitely more. Our afternoon concludes with an exchange with women from the **Center for Women and Development**. The Center has three main goals: enhancing women's and gender issues, bridging the gap between the University and civil society, and sharing in global synergy. Dinner is on our own tonight, but we can dine together at a restaurant of our choice.

Day 4- Fes

(B, D)

We begin our day with a briefing by local journalist and author Helen Ranger to learn about ***Contemporary Life in Morocco***. Come afternoon we visit the 2,000-year-old ruins of the **Roman City of Volubilis**, a truly impressive setting selected by UNESCO as a cultural heritage site for humanity. **A walk through the ruins** offers a glimpse of daily life two millennia ago: including olive oil presses, a bakery with the kneading equipment still in place, and the mechanism of an ancient well. The Triumphal Arch, Basilica, and enormous columns of the Capitol are particularly spectacular, as are the impressive houses of Dionysis, Euphebus, and Orpheus. We then move into the afternoon, learning about the culinary arts as we plan for our **Cooking Class**. We'll visit the Fes souks with a local woman (or two) to purchase our ingredients. Back in her kitchen our host will show us how to prepare a number of classic

Moroccan dishes, including a tagine and a pastille, along with several traditional salads and a wonderful dessert. We will then enjoy the fruits of our labor for dinner! Evening is free to lounge at our hotel, discuss the day and ask questions about Moroccan life and culture.



Day 5- Fes (B, D)

Tour the **Oldest university in the world: Jemaa Karaouyne**, once a Mecca for knowledge seekers. The famous Jewish scholar and physician Maimonides taught here, and the philosopher Averroes graduated from this enormous university. It was also a safe refuge for Andalusian & Jewish families who were forced from Spain. We'll visit the the very moving **Jewish Cemetery**, the well-known **Ben Danan Synagogue**, and the glamorous **Jewish Quarter**. We then visit one of the **Cooperatives of Pottery & Mosaic production** where we discover these artistic crafts with a hands-on class. We return to the medina to visit the tanneries, then continue through the souks of the Medina to reach the **Carpet Cooperative, the Quarayeen University, and the Najjarin Funduk for Wooden Tools**. After breaking for lunch we visit a copper workshop, and learn how the Sefardic Jews transmitted a very fascinating art to Moroccans. Before going back to our riyad (located in the heart of the oldest Medina in the Arab World), we enjoy the calm of one of the most gorgeous palaces in Morocco. Following dinner at the hotel, we will offer an option for those who wish to enjoy a traditional show of **Andalusian music**, Moroccan folklore, magic and belly dancing in the Medina.

Day 6, Fes/Berber Community (B, D)

We check out of the hotel and will have a long inland road trip today. Along the way we'll pass through some of the most stunning landscapes in the region, eventually crossing the **Middle Atlas Mountain Range**. Our journey will cover 280 miles (!) and include multiple rest stops and points of interest. The first will be the cities of **Ifrane** and **Azrou**. Ifrane, a winter ski resort with charming European-style homes, could easily be mistaken for a town in Switzerland. Azrou is a Berber village known for its cooperative of fine-looking handicrafts. Continuing on we'll come to **Midelt**, a colorful market town in the high plains where we can buy our lunch. Here we meet and talk with women from two cooperatives, the **Women's Rug Cooperative and Midelt Bread Cooperative**. We'll see beautiful countryside and many Berber towns as we travel along the oasis-dotted valley of the Ziz River en route to Erfoud. On the other side, billions and billions of grains of sand make up the first **rolling dunes of the Sahara**. From here we will transfer into 4 x 4 vehicles and cross the desert, passing through the 8th-century town of Rissani to reach **Merzouga** before sunset. We will check into our luxury **Kasbah**, located on a site boasting the largest and most spectacular dunes in Morocco. The hotel is truly an oasis, with sand as far as the eye can see. A delicious **dinner will be served under the stars** by campfire. Then we'll settle in for the night, heading off to our deluxe Bedouin tents with private bath, to enjoy a good night's sleep in the peace of the desert.

Day 7 -Ouarzazate (B, L)

Daybreak over the desert is not to be missed. We'll mount **camels** before dawn **and ride out onto the golden sand to watch the sunrise** illuminating the dunes, casting magnificent colors all around. When we return to the hotel, a hearty breakfast awaits. Our destination today is **Ouarzazate, a desert city** framed by the snow-capped High Atlas Mountains. The day features one beautiful tableau after another, including the village of **Tinghir**, a stunning mountain oasis rising on a series of riverside terraces lush with palm trees and olive groves. We'll stop for a walk to take in the incredible views. We will also see the spectacular **Todra Gorge**, home to a variety of rare bird and plant species. The gorge cuts into the mountains to create an unforgettable sculpted landscape. We'll buy our lunch in a little restaurant near the entrance to the gorge, then take some time to enjoy a walk inside. Afterwards we make our way to "Morocco's Hollywood," **Ouarzazate**, also known as the "Gateway to the Sahara." The day ends with a facilitated Ethical Traveler discussion.



Day 8 - Ouarzazate (B, D)

Ouarzazate is best known for two magnificent kasbahs. We'll visit them both today. **Taurirt Kasbah**, one of the most beautiful in Morocco, is located in the heart of the city. It was once the home and stronghold of the Pasha Glaoui, chief of a fearless Berber tribe. Though now mostly in ruins, what remains of the painted ceilings, arches, small windows and woodwork has made it a UNESCO World Heritage Site. **Tifoultout Kasbah** is located on a strategic rock outcropping. Thought to be more than 300 years old, the present structure was converted to a hotel in the 1960s for the cast of **Lawrence of Arabia**. We will also visit the **Ait Ben Haddou**, a spectacular fortress village in the south of Morocco. A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987, the old section consists of deep red kasbahs packed together so tightly they appear to be a single unit. After our visit we leave Ait Ben Haddou behind, crossing the High Atlas Mountains via the breathtaking **Tiz-In Tichka Pass** (at more than 7,400') to Imintanoute. An exceptional overnight experience awaits us at the **Berber Cultural Center**, in the Atlas Mountains foothills. The Center was created to preserve, protect and demonstrate the rich Berber heritage of Morocco.

Day 9 -Imintanoute/Marrakech (B, L)

We awake to experience a day in the life of the Berber. We join in the daily activities that support the local population: **drawing water at the well (by donkey), kneading dough to make bread, cooking, helping with a harvest, milking goats, weaving and making tea**. Not only will we learn the correct way to make Moroccan mint tea— we will all take part in a tea-making contest! In the afternoon, we'll take a walk through the village and spend a little more time sharing in the lives of the locals. Later in the day we will depart on our epic overland journey to the remarkable "**Red City**" of **Marrakech**. We'll check into our hotel and

have time to unpack for a few days of rest. Dinner is on our own, but we'll reserve a place for those who wish to enjoy the group love!

Day 10 - Marrakech (B, D)

The imperial city of Marrakech is an alluring oasis with a temperate climate, distinct charm, and fascinating sights. We begin our day meeting an **Imam for a lecture about Islam**. Next, a full-day **city tour** showcases the historical highlights, including the Menara Gardens, the Saadian Tombs, the Andalusian-style El Bahia Palace and the 12th century Koutoubia, a beautifully proportioned mosque with a distinctive 282' minaret that is visible from miles away. In the afternoon we'll take a **walking tour of the Medina**, ending at the famous **Djemaa El Fna** Square, a marvelous sight to behold. This plaza is the heart of Marrakech. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is crowded with snake charmers, entertainers, story tellers, fortune tellers, musicians, barbers, sellers of fruit and spices. The square is symbolic of Marrakech's magical charm. Enjoy a few hours walking and shopping time along the narrow alleys of the old medina. This afternoon we visit the **Association el Amane pour le Développement de la Femme** [The Amane Association for the Development of Woman] which was founded in 2002 by a group of young women in Sidi Youssef Ben Ali. Through a combination of literacy workshops, training and advocacy, the group empowers women to challenge both domestic violence and patriarchal practices that discriminate and limit opportunities for local women.

Day 11 - Marrakech (B, D)

This morning we visit the **Association of Orphans and Abandoned Children**, 20 km north west to Marrakesh. After we return to the city, you will have a bit of free time to shop, reflect, or sip mint tea or fresh orange juice at a terrace overlooking the square. The evening features our **Farewell Dinner, with traditional music**.

Day 12- Marrakech (B)

We check out of the hotel after breakfast and are off to enjoy our last few hours in Morocco. Then we will have a group transfer to Marrakech Menara International Airport, and board our flights home.

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