



Ultimate Morocco

15 Days



Day 1 | Casablanca

As-salamu 'alaikum

Upon arrival at the international airport in Casablanca (CMN), you will be greeted and transported on a 40-minute ride to the hotel. *As-salamu 'alaikum* or السلام عليكم is “hello” in Arabic. Plan to arrive mid or late afternoon—this will give you some time to take a disco nap or revive with some energizing mint tea in the lobby.

Later, meet your fellow Wild Women and guide at the rendezvous point (in the lobby of the hotel). There will be a trip debriefing followed by an authentic Moroccan dinner prepared and hosted by a local family.

Included Meals

Dinner

Accommodations

Hotel Idou Anfa or similar



Day 2 | Chefchaouen

The True Blue City

In the morning we visit the magnificent Hassan II Mosque, the largest mosque and tallest structure in Morocco. Part of the mosque floor is glass, allowing worshippers to kneel and pray directly over the sea.

It's a five-hour drive to Chefchaouen. Here, we check into our hotel in the pounding heart of the medina (old quarter) and have the rest of the afternoon to immerse ourselves in the otherworldly atmosphere of the blue palette and terracotta-tiled houses.

We can linger over tea in the central square or grab a fresh fruit shake, hop for a take-home bronze teapot or wander around the maze-like streets peppered with vendors selling hand-woven rugs and pottery.

This area is perfumed with spices arising from rooftop restaurants and terraces. Cardamom, turmeric, clove, cumin—most of these will be found in our dinner tonight!

Included Meals

Breakfast and lunch

Accommodations

Riad Dar Echaouen or similar



Day 3 | Exploring the Blue City

A Walking Education

We meet our local guide for a guided walking tour of the Blue City to learn more about the local kasbahs, mosques, weaving workshops and local history. The walk will follow a trail that leads to a magnificent panorama of the town—it's difficult to determine where the sky begins and ends!

We have the entire afternoon to explore the town independently and when evening comes, our guide will escort us to a local family's home where we will enjoy a traditional home-cooked meal and share stories with our hosts.

Included Meals

Breakfast and dinner

Accommodations

Riad Dar Echaouen or similar



Day 4 | Volubilis, Meknes and Fes

Mosaics and Medinas

We will drive three hours to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Volubilis for a guided tour of the fertile plain and Roman ruins. Here, we learn about the partially excavated walled Berber city and the elaborate mosaics, marble and bronze statues.

Next, we head to Meknes and the historical medina known for its ancient gate, triumphal arches and mosaic tiling. Lunch will be at a local family-owned restaurant before we carry on to Fes to our classic *riad*. Originating from the Arabic term for “garden,” a riad is a traditional Moroccan house that is two or more stories high and built around an inner courtyard with a garden and a fountain.

For dinner, we are treated to a signature Fes dish: the sweet and salty chicken pastilla. This Moroccan skillet pie is filled with shredded chicken and aromatic spices wrapped in crisp layers of pastry.

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Palais Amani or similar

Travel

5 hours driving (with several stops)



Day 5 | Magical, Mystical Medinas

A Musical Interlude

This morning, we take a tour of the old medina of Fes. The snaking maze of streets will lead us past working artisans and what was formerly one of the world's great centers of education and Islamic and Jewish culture.

We spend the day exploring the old city and Fes's famous tanneries and ceramic arts studio. The stunning architecture of Medressa el Attarine and Fondouk Nejjarine stops everyone in their tracks. We will see the oldest university in the world (recognized by UNESCO), founded by a Moroccan Muslim woman, Fatima al-Fihria. Entrance to the university is only permitted to locals, but the property and architecture can easily be appreciated from outside.

Tonight we have a sensory dinner complete with live Moroccan musical entertainment at a local restaurant near our riad.

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Palais Amani or similar



Day 6 | Cedar Canopies

Monkeys and Mint Tea

We head south from Fes and take a short walk under the canopy of the renowned cedar forests of Reserve Naturelle de Cèdres near Azrou. More than 200 species of birds are found in this area but it's the Barbary macaques that get all the attention—the world's largest population of macaques is found here. They are the only macaque species found outside of Asia and the only primate species found north of the Sahara.

Continuing on through Ziz Valley, we cut through stands of forest and landscapes that move from barren to rocky. On the way, we stop in the high plains and orchards of Midelt before reaching Ksar Essouk, the capital of the Ziz Valley (and one of Morocco's largest date production areas).

We check into our traditional guest house with its superb view of the red rock formations, *palmeraie* (palm forest) and river. Relax and reflect on the rooftop terrace with some mint tea!

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Maison d'Hotes Sahara or similar

Travel

6 hours driving



Day 7 | The Ziz Valley

Dates and Dunes

This morning we'll explore the rich *palmeraie* on foot. We also tour the ancient *ksar* (fortified village) of Zaouiet Amelkis and cross several fields to learn the secrets behind growing dates, grains, legumes and olives using traditional irrigation systems.

Afterwards, we visit a local Berber family to share traditional tea, lunch and stories of family life in the valley.

After lunch, we stop in Erfoud, a small town known for its fossils and Risaani, an area known for its lively souk and leather and goatskin trading. We then continue on to the golden dunes of Merzouga, situated about 12 miles (20 km) from the Algerian border. Moroccans come to Erg Chebbi for the healing sands and “sand saunas” believed to relieve rheumatism and other conditions.

We check into our riad, relax, have dinner and dream about tomorrow’s adventure into the dunes of the Sahara!

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Riad Madu, Merzouga or similar

Travel

2 hours driving



Day 8 | Into the Sahara

Camping in the Dunes

Today we explore the world's largest hot desert. Its vastness is overwhelming—split by the Atlas mountain range, the Sahara is a jaw-dropping 5.6 million square miles (9 million square km).

We visit the local villages of Hassilabiad and Khemlia in the Merzouga desert and enjoy a performance of local music and dance.

We also try a local specialty for lunch: *Madfouna* or “Berber pizza,” a local dish, bread with stuffed veggies, meat and herbs (a vegetarian option is available).

Later in the afternoon, we drive to our secluded desert dunes camp for a sunset camel ride (it will be approximately one hour).

At the camps, we enjoy a sweet welcoming tea and settle into our glamping tents (yes, they have private bathrooms!). Later, there will be an impressive desert feast, a campfire and live drumming by local musicians. The stars of this show are the constellations above!

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Jaimas Madu desert camp or similar



Day 9 | Todras Gorges

Gorges and Gardens

After a sensational Sahara sunrise, we travel by 4WD across the desert to Todra Gorges. This series of carved limestone canyons (or “*wadi*”) are sculpted by the force of the Todra and Dades Rivers as they split through the mountains.

We then continue to Skoura, one of the few palm groves that are still inhabited and cultivated in Morocco. This is our remote oasis for the next two nights.

Sawadi Ecolodge is a traditional kasbah located on a verdant palm grove sandwiched between the desert and Atlas Mountains. The hotel’s tempting menu can be traced directly to the on-site organic farm and surrounding orchards—the jams and juices are squeezed steps away! We meet the goats, donkeys, cows, lambs and rabbits that live on the farm too. The ancient architecture, outdoor swimming pool and elegant garden of palm, apple, olive and pomegranate trees make for a peaceful embrace at day’s end.

Included Meals

Breakfast and dinner

Accommodations

Sawadi Ecolodge, Skoura or similar

Travel

5 hours driving



Day 10 | Cycling the Palm Grove

Spinning through Time

After breakfast, we meet our local guide for a cycling tour of the palm groves of Skoura. This village is home to several privately-owned kasbahs. Built (or rebuilt) with walls made of mud and straw, the style and quality is diverse. We expect someone in the group to belt out “Rock the Casbah” by The Clash!

We also visit the Kasbah Ameridhl—it was previously featured on the Moroccan 50 dirham note and appeared in the 1962 film *Lawrence of Arabia*. We continue our bike ride through narrow city alleys and along trails and gravel roads. There will be several breaks under the shade of palm trees of the oasis and a picnic-style lunch.

In the early afternoon, we return to Sawadi Ecolodge in Skoura and have the rest of the day for pure leisure.

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Sawadi Ecolodge or similar



Day 11 | The Atlas Mountains

And, *take!*

We depart Skoura this morning and make our way to Ourzazate, Morocco’s “Little Hollywood.” This area has been featured in several films like *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* and *The Mummy* and in scenes from *Game of Thrones*.

We dig into the surprising charms of the small mountain town of Imlil. Alpinists with titanium quads set off from here to bag the five-hour climb to snow-capped Jebel Toubkal, the highest peak in the Atlas Mountains, Morocco and North Africa at 13,671 feet (4,167 m).

Upon arrival in High Atlas, our luggage will be transported by mule. Our walk to the riad is a five-minute uphill trail to the peaceful village, which is only accessible by foot or mule hooves.

Please note: Women are asked to dress modestly with a one-piece swimsuit in the hotel pool.

Included Meals

Breakfast and dinner

Accommodations

Riad Jnane Imlil

Travel

6 hours driving



Day 12 | Choose Your Own Adventure

Elevation and Elation

Today, we rise and greet the mighty mountains from an uninterrupted kasbah view. After breakfast, we strike off on a challenging mountain hike. Expect some elevation gain and terrain as we follow the single track trail shared by mules and other hikers.

Alternatively, you may opt to spend the day exploring the village of Imlil or enjoying time poolside. In Imlil, the roads twist and offer a sylvan site: walnut trees, a snaking river and tiny Berber villages.

For foodies, Imlil is revered for its barbecued goat and lamb ribs. Depending on the time of year we visit, there will be a bounty of cherries in June and walnuts in the fall (September/October).

In the afternoon, it's all about reclining by the pool and sharing stories and laughs.

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Riad Jnane Imlil

The Hike

7.5 miles (12 km), with a 1,312 foot (400 m) gain and 1,312 foot (400 m) loss on return



Day 13 | Marrakech

Morocco in our Palms

We drive to Marrakech, an ancient city with a small fingerprint of European modernity. After lunch, we check into our riad and meet our local guide for an orientation walk around the medina.

Jemaa el-Fnaa is a buzzy hub for locals and tourists alike. Impromptu entertainment erupts in performances by storytellers, poets, snake-charmers and enthusiastic Berber musicians. Throughout the day and well into the night everything is offered from fortune-telling to dental care. Vocal fruit and veggie vendors add to the feverish pace of the square.

We also visit the Jewish quarter and share an authentic Moroccan dinner with a local family. Our host will serve simple salads and fresh, home-baked bread while we await the tempting main course.

A *Hennaya* (Henna tattoo artist) will give our group the ultimate souvenir—a henna on our palms or feet. This is one of the oldest professions for Moroccan women!

Included Meals

Breakfast and dinner

Accommodations

Riad La Cle D'or or similar

Travel

3 hours driving



Day 14 | Amal Women's Training Center

A Recipe for Success

Today, we have a cooking class at Amal Women's Training Center and Moroccan Restaurant. Established in 2012, the center trains local women, allowing them to gain work experience in the preparation of traditional and international food. Annually, 30–40 women graduate from the four to six-month training program and find employment in the restaurant industry.

At Amal, we are introduced to the subtle secrets of Moroccan cuisine under the expertise of *Dadas* (chef). It would be unfair to return home without a recipe up our sleeve to transport us back to North Africa! We might be instructed in preparing a tagine, couscous or Moroccan bread—regardless, everyone will want seconds!

After class, it's recess! We'll have free time to explore or relax as we wish before dinner. Our last dinner together will be at a rooftop medina restaurant. It will be a nostalgic night, swapping trip memories, stories, hugs and pictures!

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Riad La Cle D'or or similar



Day 15 | Farewell, Morocco

Ma'assalama

A 30-minute group transfer will be provided to the Marrakech Airport (RAK).

Say “*ma'assalama*” (“goodbye” in Arabic) to your newest Wild Women friends until next time—and what a time it was! You rocked the kasbah!

Included Meals

Breakfast



Trip Details

Know Before You Go

For all of the logistical details you'll need to know prior to departure—including the packing list, arrival and departure details and suggested tipping information, click [HERE](#).

Itinerary version as of March 21, 2024.