

# OH SO MOORISH 2019

## Day 1: Arrival Casablanca (D)

Our cultural tour of Morocco commences this evening in Morocco's largest city, Casablanca. This evening we'll have dinner and "play it again, Sam" at the iconic "Rick's Café".

## Day 2: Casablanca – Rabat – Chefchaouen (B) (D)

A trip to Casablanca wouldn't be complete without visiting one of the only mosques in Morocco open to non-Muslims: the Hassan II Mosque. A relative newcomer (it was completed in 1993) this mosque is amongst the largest mosques in the world (the sheer scale of the courtyard is jaw-dropping) and the finest artisans from across the country were commissioned to carry out the intricate detailing on everything from glass to woodwork and marble. We'll make a brief stop in Rabat for lunch by the Ocean before making our way to the blue-washed town of Chefchaouen.

## Day 3: Chefchaouen (B)

Located beneath the raw peaks of the Rif Mountains it is here in Chefchaouen that you will notice an unmistakably Spanish influence. This morning we will explore the delightful medina with its' blue-white walls and terracotta tiles, small and un-crowded it is easy to explore. There's the option this afternoon to go for a fairly easy walk to the springs of Ras el-Maa and the ruined Spanish Mosque where you will find some of the most spectacular views of the town below.

## Day 4: Chefchaouen – Volubilis – Fes (B)

This morning we'll head to the cultural and spiritual centre of Morocco, Fes. Enroute, we'll stop at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Volubilis which are considered to be the best-preserved Roman ruins in Morocco and home to a number of stunning mosaics. This afternoon we'll arrive in the imperial city of Fes.

## Day 5: Fes (B) (D)

The city of Fes is, in our opinion, like no other city on earth. The medina is the largest living Islamic medieval city in the world and as you step through Bab Bou J'loud (the main gate into the old city) you'll feel as though you've stepped back in time. Amongst the more than 10,000 streets you'll find all you could ever want and more: silver- and coppersmiths, weavers, dyers, artisans and food stalls.

### Day 6: Fes – Midelt (B) (D)

A late start this morning and the chance for some last minute shopping in Fes. After lunch we'll drive to Midelt, our half-way point on the road to the desert. On the way we'll stop in the alpine-style village of Ifrane and you'd be forgiven for thinking you are in Switzerland and not North Africa!

### Day 7 Midelt – Sahara (B) (L) (D)

An early start this morning as we make our way to the desert. Before reaching the shifting sands we'll jump in 4WDs for our jeep safari through the dunes. The dunes of Erg Chebbi certainly look divine, rising up to 160m and glowing rose-gold, then orange and finally pink-and-purple as the light changes. Our camels await us at our luxury desert encampment, ready to bear us across the shifting sand to watch as the final rays of the afternoon sun sink below the horizon. After a traditional dinner we'll fall asleep beneath a blanket of stars.

### Day 8: Desert Encampment – Todra Gorge – Boulmalne Du Dades (B) (D)

This morning we'll bid farewell to the mighty Sahara and instead view the spectacular limestone cliffs of Todra Gorge. Our accommodation tonight is a delightful family-owned kasbah ideally situated in the Dadès Valley.

### Day 9: Boulmalne Du Dades – Ait Ben Hadou – Skoura (B) (D)

This morning we'll visit Ouarzazate, the film capital of Morocco and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ait Ben Haddou. Explore the narrow streets of this ancient fortified city, climbing steadily to reach the top for magnificent views of the surrounding palmeraie and the unforgiving hammada (stony desert). After lunch, there's the opportunity to shop for authentic Berber carpets and antiques before heading to beautiful Les Jardins de Skoura our home for the next two nights.

### Day 10: Skoura (B) (D)

After a leisurely breakfast there is the option to visit Kasbah Amridil, a 17<sup>th</sup> century fortress that has been wonderfully restored. This afternoon, relax by the pool or perhaps find your own private nook in the gardens and curl up with a good book.

### Day 11: Skoura – Marrakech (B)

A bit of a 'vehicle day' today as we begin our journey through North Africa's highest mountain range, known locally by Berbers as 'Idraren Draren' or 'Mountains of Mountains'. This is some of the most spectacular scenery in Morocco and the pure mountain air will leave you breathless. Tonight the chaotic city of Marrakech awaits you.

### Day 12: Marrakech (B) (D)

Our first full day in Marrakech! This morning we will begin to explore the myriad treasures of the Marrakech medina including the Saadian Tombs and the Ali ben Youssef Medersa. This afternoon get lost amongst the snake charmers, musicians, street performers and henna artists in this quintessential Moroccan city.

### Day 13: Marrakech – Imlil – Marrakech (B) (L)

Today we will visit the beautiful village of Imlil, and the Kasbah du Toubkal. There is the option today to go on an included trek of the surrounding foothills and villages where we'll enjoy a picnic lunch in one of the verdant valleys. If you're not feeling particularly energetic you can enjoy lunch on the terrace of the Kasbah, surrounded by views of the spectacular Atlas Mountains.

### Day 14: Marrakech (B) (L)

This morning we'll escape the intensity of the medina for the serenity of the Jardin Majorelle. The designer Yves Saint Laurent spent 40 years designing these lush gardens and these days they are one of the most visited sites in the city. From Jardin Majorelle we'll take a drive just outside of Marrakech to the Amizmiz valley where you'll meet a special chef with a passion for local produce and authentic Moroccan cuisine. This is not your ordinary cooking class, it is a demonstration of ecotourism, community enrichment, organic farming and true hospitality.

### Day 15: Marrakech – Essaouira (B) (L)

After a leisurely breakfast we'll make our way to Essaouira but first a stop at a local winery where we will sample a selection of their wine before enjoying our lunch overlooking the vineyards. After lunch we'll visit an argan co-operative where you'll learn how argan oil is produced (yes, the same argan oil that is used in "Moroccan Oil!"), before arriving in the chilled out city of Essaouira, our home for the next two nights.

### Day 16: Essaouira (B)

Originally an 18th century port town, Essaouira's waterfront locale and laid back attitude make it the perfect place to spend a day soaking up the atmosphere and strolling the picture-postcard ramparts and shopping for souvenirs in the laid-back souq. This afternoon why not enjoy a stroll along the soft sandy beach before settling in for cocktails from the rooftop bar with the best view in town as the sun sets into the Atlantic Ocean.

### Day 17: Essaouira - Oualidia – Casablanca (B) (L) (D)

This morning we will head north to the stunning seaside town of Oualidia where the golden sands and crescent-shaped lagoon make the perfect backdrop for a light seafood lunch. Tonight we will enjoy our final dinner together as we head to one of our favourite restaurants in Casablanca.

### Day 18: Departure Day (B)

This morning we will bid farewell to new friends as our cultural tour of Morocco concludes after breakfast.