

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE TAGINE

Day 1: Arrive Fes

Our cultural tour of Morocco commences this evening in Morocco's cultural and spiritual centre Fes. After our welcome meeting we will head to one of our favourite restaurants where you will be introduced to the delicious flavours of North African cuisine.

Day 2: Fes

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 3: Fes - Casablanca

After breakfast there is an opportunity to visit a pottery factory to learn about the famous Zellij tiles that are cut piece by piece to form intricate Moroccan patterns. Continue to Casablanca. Enjoy dinner at the famous Rick's Café – Play it again Sam!!!

Day 4: Casablanca - Essaouira

Before making our way to the chilled out city of Essaouira visit one of the only mosques in Morocco open to non-Muslims: the Hassan II Mosque. A relatively new-comer (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. Continue to Essaouira for the evening

Day 5: Essaouira

The destination of choice for musos for decades (Jimi Hendrix was a big fan!), Essaouira oozes seaside cool with a laid-back charm that is echoed by a relaxed live music scene and trendy boutiques with local clothing and homeware labels. 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 souk. 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 6: Essaouira - Taroudant

After a leisurely breakfast we'll make our way to the "Grandmother of Marrakech" Taroudant but first a stop at one of our favourite wineries where you will sample a selection of their wines whilst enjoying lunch overlooking the vineyards. After lunch you have the opportunity to visit an argan co-operative where you will learn how argan oil is produced. Taroudant doesn't get a lot of 'love' on the typical Moroccan tourist circuits of the Imperial cities, desert and coast but as a gateway to the Souss and Anti Atlas it is a great base. If you are interested in hiking or learning about Berber culture Taroudant is the place to be. There is enough to see and do in this city but the best thing about Taroudant is its' location in the fertile Souss valley. With golden brown walls and imposing gates, this elegant but small town offers a unique look at Moroccan and Berber cultures. Visitors love Taroudant for its' laidback lifestyle, hospitable locals and the nearby opportunity to explore the foothills of the Anti-Atlas Mountains, which are teeming with Berber culture including ancient granaries, age old Koranic schools and lush green agricultural terraces.

Day 7: Taroudant - Ait Ben Haddou

Our journey continues this morning as we say goodbye to Taroudant and head to Ait Ben Haddou but If you didn't get your fix of carpets, jewellery and crafts now is the time as Taroudant is best known for it.

Day 8: Ait Ben Haddou - Draa Valley - Zagora

After breakfast we'll take a stroll through this giant fortified city with its' empowering walls and beautiful backdrop; it is considered to be one of Morocco's greatest examples of earthen clay architecture. Lunch will be enjoyed in the cool shade of date palms in the Draa Valley and then continue through the valley into Zagora spending the rest of the day in the tranquil surrounds of your beautiful riad.

Day 9: Zagora - Desert Encampment

This morning we'll visit the spectacular limestone cliffs of Todra Gorge before making our way towards the desert. Your adventure begins in 4 x 4's as your route passes different features of the desert: erg (sand dunes), reg (rocky desert), hammada (stony desert). There will be plenty of time to stop along the way to photograph the landscape. You will feel the overwhelming tranquillity and expanse of the desert. We'll chase the light and colour of the sand as we trek across the desert to capture a stunning Sahara sunset. Pure Magic! Dinner under the stars

Day 10: Desert Encampment - Agdz

Wake up early this morning to take in the perfect Sahara sunrise over the rolling hills of the desert. Enjoy breakfast then we'll make our way to the classical caravanserai oasis of Agdz but first stopping in the village of Tamegroute which in Berber means "last place before the desert". Famous for its' green ceramics it was one of the last stops for the trade caravans travelling across the desert. We'll visit the 700 year old Quaranic Library attached to a little madrassa. After lunch we will continue to your oasis in Agdz.

Day 11: Agdz - Marrakech

After breakfast there is still time wander around this classic caravanserai oasis before we head to the chaotic city Marrakech. Make no mistake your senses will be overloaded but you will feel totally alive!! Late afternoon we will attend our cooking class where you will discover the secrets of traditional Moroccan cuisine. When you have finished you will be able to say "compliments to the chef" (you) and mean it.

Day 12: Marrakech

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

Day 13: Marrakech

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. After lunch we'll meander through the media to the "Secret Garden". Behind high walls and in the heart of the Medina lies this beautiful complex. The complex of gardens, fountains, tower, buildings and Islamic mosaics date back to the Saadian Dynasty, (more than four hundred years ago). The gardens are exquisite with trees, shrubs, flowers, ferns and potted plants laid out in geometrical symmetry, laced with watercourses and bubbling fountains. Intricate carvings and mosaics in the pavilions complement the green lushness of the greenery. Tonight we will enjoy our final dinner together.

Day 14: Marrakech

After a leisurely breakfast there is still plenty of time to wander this chaotic city before private transfer to Marrakech airport.