

MOROCCO: COLOURS AND FLAVOURS

2 – 15 SEPTEMBER 2024

FROM
£6,780
PER PERSON

Tour Leader: Chris Caldicott


The Ultimate
TRAVEL COMPANY



This delightful tour explores the lesser-known regions of Morocco. The itinerary has been designed by Chris Caldicott, combining stays at handpicked hotels with an exploration of the outstanding historic cultural sites, spectacular scenery and countless culinary delights of this area.

Starting in the Red City of Marrakech, you will visit the ancient Jewish Quarter and explore the famous Jemaa El Fna square where throngs of people weave between tightly packed stalls exhibiting pyramids of brightly coloured spices, richly woven rugs and a thousand other exotic goods. We drive north to explore the more tranquil coastal capital of Rabat which sits at the mouth of the Bou Regreg River and dates to the Phoenician expansion over 3,000 years ago.

We will then head inland to the city of Fez, often referred to as the country's cultural capital and spiritual heart due to its strong ties to religious schools and Islamic scholars. The city is also known for its labyrinth of a Medina, a UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and vibrant craft scene including the famous leather goods which have been produced in the tanneries of Fez since the 16th century.

After stopping in the historic towns of Moulay Idriss and Volubilis, we stay in the unique town of Chefchaouen in the Rif Mountains, known as the 'Blue Pearl of Morocco' because of its blue-washed streets and buildings. We continue to Tangier, which guards the strait of Gibraltar and for centuries has been Europe's gateway to Africa which is very much reflected in its multicultural heritage.

We have a brief stop in the city of Casablanca, the economic centre of Morocco which was made famous by the 1942 film with Humphrey Bogart. Finally, we end the tour with a relaxing stay in the seaside town of Oualidia, known for its golden sands and excellent fish restaurants.



14-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 2 SEPTEMBER 2024

2 September London / Marrakech

Suggested flights (not included in the cost of the tour) with British Airways departing London Heathrow at 10.25 hrs and arriving in Marrakech at 14.05 hrs.

Lunch under own arrangements. On arrival, transfer to the Riad El Arsat, where two nights are spent. Located in the heart of the ancient medina and only a short walk from the Jemaa el Fna Square, this charming 19th century palace has a swimming pool, terrace and large garden. Remainder of the afternoon at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.

3 September Marrakech

Explore the medina on foot. Starting at one of the historical gates of the Medina, you will walk through some of the oldest districts of Marrakech. Visit the 16th century Ben Youssef theological school and sumptuous palace. Next you will see the archaeological site of the Almoravid dynasty dome and the historical caravanserai (called Fondouks), once used as inns for the caravan traders.

Lunch at the Maison de la Photographie. Guided walking tour of Mellah Quarter, the Jewish quarter of Marrakech. The second oldest of its kind in Morocco, the Mellah of Marrakech was created by decree of the Sultan Abdallah al-Ghalib of the Saadian dynasty in 1558 after Jews started to arrive in

great numbers after the Reconquista and expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. Visit the Marche Aux Epices de la place des Ferblantiers, the bustling market in the heart of the old Jewish quarter. Evening visit to the UNESCO world heritage site, Jemaa El Fna square, to explore the souk and hear some of the local folklore traditions such as the Berber musicians, Gnaoua drummers, story tellers and snake charmers. Dinner under own arrangements.

4 September Marrakech / Rabat

Depart for Rabat and check into the Dar Shaan where two nights are spent. A former Andalusian house with stone columns, carved archways, heavy wooden doors and marble tiles, this family-owned riad has a rooftop terrace and pool with impressive views over the Rabat medina and the neighbouring town of Salé across the river.

Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon walking tour of the Kasbah Led Oudaïas, located on a hill at the mouth of the Bou Regreg River. The kasbah dates back to the 12th century and has been home to Andalusian immigrants, Arab tribes and some of the most powerful Moroccan sultans. You enter the ancient city within the city through the imposing horse-shoe Bab Oudaya gate with its rich floral motifs and verses from the Qur'an. Inside, there are Andalusian

gardens, the National Museum of Jewellery housed in the former residence of Sultan Mulay Ismail, and the Jama' al-Atiqah Mosque, the oldest mosque in Rabat. Tea at the Café Maure in the Kasbah. Return to the hotel for dinner.

5 September Rabat

Morning tour of Rabat including the Hassan Tower, the minaret of an incomplete mosque which was commissioned by Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur near the end of the 12th century. Explore Chellah, a medieval fortified necropolis which is thought to have been first occupied as early as the first millennium BC when the Phoenicians established a trading emporium. Continue to the marble Mausoleum of Mohammed V and his two sons which was designed by a Vietnamese architect and built by local artisans.

Seafood lunch at Borj Eddar Restaurant in Rabat. See the exterior of the Royal Palace which is the primary and official residence of the King of Morocco. Remainder of the afternoon at leisure. Dinner under own arrangements.

6 September Rabat / Fez

Morning departure for the imperial city of Meknes which was founded in the 11th century by the Almoravids as a military settlement. Tour of Meknes including the UNESCO



ancient medina and the imposing Bab el Mansour gate with its original green and white zellij tiles and marble columns.

Lunch in a local restaurant. Continue to Fez and check into the Palais Amani, where three nights are spent. The former home of a prominent Fez family, Palais Amani is a beautifully restored 17th century palace situated on the edge of Fes el Bali, Fez's main medina, with an Art Deco rooftop bar and a pretty courtyard surrounded by orange trees. Dinner at the hotel.

7 September Fez

Morning tour of medieval Fes, the true cradle of Moorish culture. Visit Karouiyine University, the world's oldest university and first to be established by a woman. It was founded as a mosque by Fatima al-Fihri in 857–859 and subsequently became one of the leading spiritual and educational centres of the Islamic Golden Age. Visit the Nejjarine Museum, a beautifully restored early 18th century funduq (inn used by caravans) which now contains displays of fine woodwork from across Morocco, including doors, prayer beads and musical instruments. Continue to the Medersa Bouananie, a theological college built by the Merinid Sultan Bou Inan between 1351 and 1357. With a full mosque adjoining the college, the mihrab niche, visible across the prayer hall, has onyx columns, a style that echoes the

Great Mosque of Córdoba. End the morning with a visit to the world-famous leather tanneries located in the oldest quarter of the medina.

Lunch in a local restaurant. Afternoon exploring Fez including the Old Jewish Museum and the Royal Palace, formerly the main residence of the sultan, which is still used by the King of Morocco when he is in the city of Fez. End the day at a viewpoint with impressive panoramic views over the Medina of Fez. Dinner under own arrangements.

8 September Fez

Morning cooking experience at Fez Cooking School. Spend the morning with a local chef buying ingredients in the souk before returning to the cooking school to cook local specialities.

Enjoy lunch at the cooking school to taste what you have just cooked. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.

9 September Fez / Chefchaouen

Drive to Moulay Idriss, a town spread over two hills at the base of Mount Zerhoun known for being the site of the tomb of Idris I, the first major Islamic ruler of Morocco and a descendent of the prophet Muhammad, making it one of the country's most important pilgrimage sites. After visiting the mausoleum, depart for the evocative site of Volubilis, a remote outpost of the

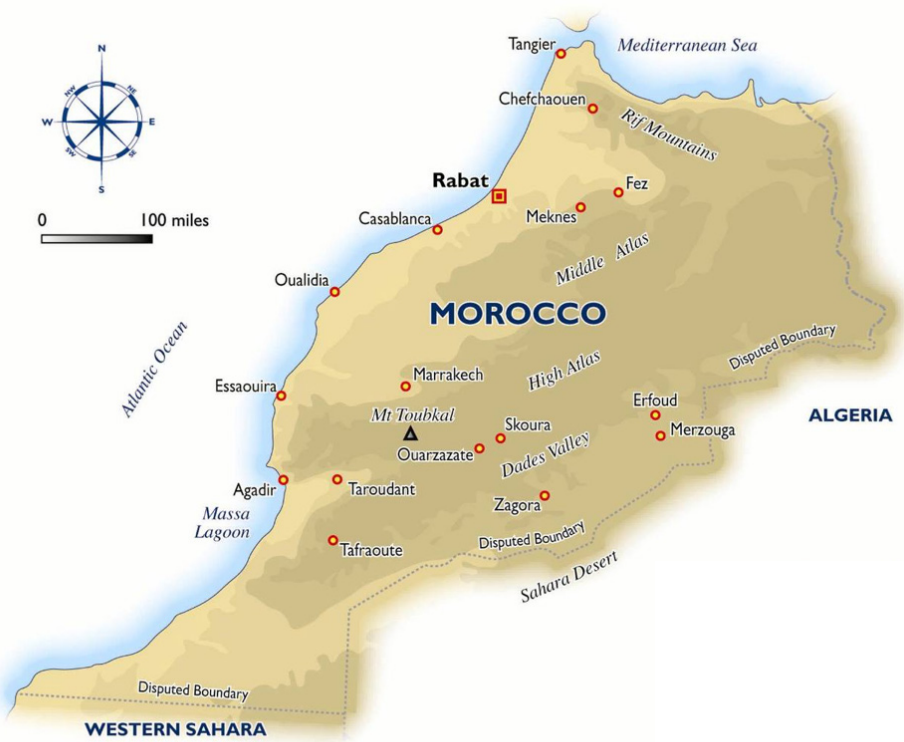
Roman Empire with a well-preserved basilica and a complete triumphal arch, along with remarkable mosaic floors dating from 25 BC. It is considered the finest archaeological site in Morocco.

Lunch at the Volubilis Inn. Enjoy a panoramic drive to the blue-wash mountain village of Chefchaouen, beautifully situated beneath the raw peaks of the Rif. Check into the Lina Ryad, a peaceful retreat in the middle of the bustling medina, where one night is spent. Visit the old medina with its mix of Moroccan and Andalucian influences with red-tiled roofs, bright blue buildings and narrow lanes. See the restored 18th century kasbah of Chefchaouen, which was built by the legendary ruler Moulay Ismail. It is fairly simple however it is surrounded by stunning gardens. Inside the Kasbah, you can visit the ethnographic museum containing antique weapons, musical instruments, and photographs of the old town. Dinner at the hotel.

10 September Chefchaouen / Tangier

Morning at leisure to shop the souks of the 'blue pearl' of Morocco.

Lunch under own arrangements. Depart for Tangier and check into Hotel El Minzah in the centre of Tangier, where three nights are spent. Set in exotic gardens in the heart of the city, the hotel dates from 1930 and was built in Spanish-



Moorish style by the 4th Marquess of Bute. For decades it was a celebrated rendezvous for the many international ex-patriots who flocked to the city. Dinner at the hotel.

11 September Tangier

Morning walking tour of the souk and Kasbah of Tangier, a former citadel which dates from around the 10th century. Visit the American Legation, located in the medina, which formerly housed the United States diplomatic mission to Morocco. See the Grand Mosque, located in the old medina. The site of the mosque is believed to have originally been the site of a Roman temple dedicated to Hercules. The design of the current mosque dates from the Alaouite period in the early 19th century, Visit the nearby Petit Socco, a small square in the medina which is the traditional focal point of the medina.

Lunch on the terrace at Art et Gourmet Restaurant. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner under own arrangements.

12 September Tangier / Casablanca

Depart for Asilah, a fortified seaside town on the north-west tip of the Atlantic Coast of Morocco, for a walking tour of the ramparts and medina. Continue to Moulay Bouselham, a laidback fishing village bordered, on one side by the Atlantic façade, and on the other by the Laguna de Merja Zerga. Moulay Bouselham bears the name of his saint buried between the coast and the lagoon, and whose tomb is visited by thousands of Moroccans every year.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Continue

to Casablanca and check into the Hotel Le Doge (or similar), a Relais & Chateaux property located in the heart of the Art Deco district where one night is spent. Optional early evening drinks (under own arrangements) at Ricks Café, designed to recreate the bar made famous by Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman in the movie classic Casablanca. Dinner under own arrangements.

13 September Casablanca / Qualidia

Morning tour of Casablanca, the largest city and major port in Morocco located on the Atlantic Coast on the Chaouia Plain. Visit the Hassan II Mosque, the largest functioning mosque in Africa. Completed in 1993, the mosque was designed by Michel Pinseau under the guidance of King Hassan II and built by Moroccan artisans from all over the kingdom. Its minaret is the world's second tallest minaret at 210 metres high and is topped by a laser, the light from which is directed towards Mecca. Continue to el Jadida, a fortified city built by the Portuguese in the 16th century which was taken over by the Moroccans in 1769. The fortification with its bastions and ramparts is an early example of Renaissance military design. El Jadida was one of the early settlements of the Portuguese explorers in West Africa on the route to India and is an outstanding example of the interchange of influences between European and Moroccan cultures.

Lunch in a local restaurant. Continue to Qualidia, the seaside town spread around a gorgeous crescent-shaped lagoon fringed with golden sands and

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

Tour Price	£6,780
Single Supplement	£1,589

Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 10 lunches; 8 dinners
- All entrance fees, visits and excursions as per the itinerary
- All transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- Local English-speaking guide/s
- Gratuities to driver/s; gratuities to guide/s; gratuities in restaurants; portage
- The services of your tour leader throughout

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Visa fees
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 16/05/2023

protected from the wild surf by a rocky breakwater. Famous for its oysters, it's a popular weekend retreat for people from Marrakech or Casablanca. Check into the Hotel L'Hippodrome, where two nights are spent. Originally founded in 1939 as a saw-mill to manufacture fishing boats, this family-run beach hotel has 21 rooms, extensive gardens and a restaurant which serves excellent fresh seafood. Dinner at the hotel.

14 September Qualidia

Day at leisure to relax at the hotel. Lunch and dinner under own arrangements.

15 September Qualidia / Marrakech / London

Transfer to Marrakech Airport for suggested (not included) British Airways flight departing Marrakech at 15.35 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 19.10 hrs.



YOUR TOUR LEADER



CHRIS CALDICOTT

Since travelling to some of the most remote parts of the world as Photographer-in-Residence to the Royal Geographical Society, Chris Caldicott has continued his globetrotting lifestyle as a freelance photographer, writer and lecturer specialising in food and travel. He has had several books published about food, travel and the spice trade and visited 118 countries on assignments to capture evocative images and write about memorable experiences for publications such as Vanity Fair, Condé Nast Traveller, The Sunday Times, Harpers Bazaar, Tatler, House and Garden and The Telegraph. Chris will offer an initial workshop at the beginning of the trip on how to take better travel photographs and get the best out of your camera covering exposure, focus and composition illustrated with examples of his own work. He will also be offering one to one tutorials on photography and individual cameras and curating opportunities to capture creative images of the journey.



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