

Morocco Morocco Encompassed & Surf 18 days



Morocco has so much to offer, and this 18 day adventure tour makes the most of it. Starting in majestic Marrakech, travel north to the Atlantic coast and the cities of Rabat and Meknes, before heading over to beautiful Chefchaouen and the Roman ruins of Volubilis. Moving on to Fes with its incredible medina, the tour heads south again for a camel trek in the Sahara Desert and an overnight stay in a Berber camp. Then, travelling west, visit the Todra Gorge, pass through the Atlas mountains and wind up at Essaouira back on the Atlantic coast. Then it's on to Taghazoute on the Atlantic coast for some surf action! This hotel based tour includes stays at 3* hotels and surf lodge along with a night camping in a traditional Berber camp in the Desert and . Transport is by minivan, 4x4 Landcruiser and public transport.



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TOUR OVERVIEW

Tour operates:	March - January
Tour type:	Group
Transport:	Minivan / 4x4 / Public transport
Tour rating:	Moderate
Start - Finish:	Marrakech - Marrakech
Minimum group size:	2
Maximum group size:	16
Minimum age:	15

HIGHLIGHTS

Chefchaouen – picturesque Moroccan town;
Rif Mountains - beautiful mountain vistas;
Volubilis – UNESCO-listed Roman ruins;
Fes – ancient imperial city; Merzouga & Sahara Desert - camel trek;
Todra Gorge - towering red canyon;
Marrakech – UNESCO-listed medina, mosques, palaces and souks;
Essaouira – UNESCO-listed medina, great beaches; Casablanca - largest mosque in Morocco;
Rabat - current capital of Morocco; Meknes - laid back Imperial city
Enjoy the surf Mecca of Taghazoute!

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ITINERARY

Day 1 - Marrakech:

Welcome to Morocco! Be sure to arrive in time for your pre-departure meeting at 6:00pm, an arrival transfer from Marrakech airport is included on day

1. Your first night will be spent at our joining hotel where we also enjoy a traditional dinner. Overnight Marrakech (D)

Day 1 - Essaouira:

Day 11 - 12 Today's drive is truly stunning as we traverse the high Atlas Mountains on our way to Essaouira. A colourful fishing town situated within 15th century Portuguese fortifications, where great beaches and surf beckon. Relax on the beach or alternatively explore the UNESCO-listed medina with its various souks and woodcarving workshops. Any city gate leads to the Medina, so you're unlikely to get lost. The beach is in front of the Medina and there are plenty of cafés with terraces, both ideal for relaxing for a few hours. Blue doors and window frames abound as do the artists shops – buy a carpet or Thuya wood carving or sit on the beach sipping a mint tea as the sun sets, an antidote to the bustle of the Imperial cities. (Optional horse trekking, quad biking). (Overnight in Essaouira (2) – Breakfast (2))

Day 2 - Casablanca:

En-route this morning we travel up to Casablanca, made famous by Humphrey Bogart in the film "Casablanca". We will have the option of visiting the stunning Hassan II mosque, which has the tallest minaret and the third largest mosque in the world, it can hold 25,000 worshippers at any one time. Overnight Casablanca (B)

Day 3 - Meknes:

After breakfast we head straight to Rabat, Morocco's capital city where we will spend the morning to visit Oudaia Kasbah, Hassan tower, the Royal palace and Chellah. After lunch we will move on to the third of our Imperial cities, Meknes, to enjoy some free time. Overnight Meknes (B)

Day 4 - Chefchaouen:

After breakfast, we'll embark on a tour of the Roman ruins at Volubilis, the largest ancient site of Morocco. UNESCO-listed, the site dates back to AD40 and once ruled the entire Roman province of Mauritania. We'll then head on to Chefchaouen for a guided tour this afternoon. High up in the Rif mountains, Chefchaouen boasts a beautiful blue door and white-walled medina that was originally a Berber post. The main square is the heart of Chefchaouen, with the Kasbah (built back in the 18th century), central mosque and cafes with authentic menus. The busy market is a mix of traditional Moroccan and tourist fare. Overnight Chefchaouen (B)

Day 5 - Fes:

Enjoy some free time in Chefchaouen this morning - spend your time exploring this beautiful city or relax at the hotel. We'll then enjoy a leisurely lunch in Chefchaouen before moving on to Fes in the afternoon. Fes is the oldest and largest medieval city in the world, and its medina is a heady mix of aromas, sounds and sights. To navigate, follow one of the five, themed tourist circuits. There are plenty of mosques and palaces to visit, but be aware that only Muslims can enter Mosques in Morocco. Overnight Fes (B,)

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Day 6 - Fes:

Today we embark on a fully guided tour of the city of Fes. Explore the tanneries, souks, potteries, and the Medina, and learn the fascinating history of the city. We'll later return to the hotel to get ready for an optional night of Moroccan entertainment and food at a restaurant in town. (Full day city tour included) Overnight Fes (B)

Day 7 - Midelt:

This morning we journey over the Moyen Atlas to stop at Midelt. This is a beautiful alpine area. Surrounded by huge pine trees and a tranquil mountain setting, this is a great spot to cool down and relax after the hustle and bustle of Fes. We will enjoy a small hike in the afternoon. We spend the night in this mountain location. Overnight Midelt (B, L, D)

Day 8 - Sahara Desert:

Today we enjoy a stunning drive rewarded by a fantastic Moroccan lunch and an afternoon relaxing and swimming. It is now time to head towards the desert and Merzouga, where we transfer to camels for a trek into the desert for a night at our Berber Camp. We enjoy local food, music and an amazing night out under the Saharan stars. (Camel trek included) Overnight Berber camp (B, L, D)

Day 9 - Todra Gorge:

Leaving the desert, we move on to Todra Gorge. This 1000ft gorge is hemmed in on all sides by vertical limestone cliffs and is also called Morocco's Grand Canyon. We will have an early lunch at the Berber co-operative where you can see and buy authentic, Berber handmade rugs, kilims and carpets. The afternoon can be spent exploring the Gorge, walking through the Palmerie or trying our optional activity of Rock Climbing. The charm of Todra lies in its changing colours as the sun slowly moves from east to west. (Optional rock climbing). Overnight Todra Gorge (B,L,D)

Day 10 - Ait Benhaddou:

We bid fond farewell to Todra this morning en-route to Ait Benhaddou via Ouarzazate. We will stop for lunch along the way and have a chance for an optional tour of the Film studios in Ouarzazate, famous for films such as Gladiators, The Last Temptation of Christ and the Living daylights. On a hill along the Ouarzazate River we find Ait Benhaddou, a UNESCO World Heritage site, that boasts great examples of Kasbahs, some of which remain inhabited. This afternoon we have a guided tour of the famous Kasbah and village. This is where Lawrence of Arabia was once filmed. (Tour included) Overnight Ait Benhaddou (B, D)

Day 11 - Essaouira:

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ITINERARY

Day 13 - Marrakech:

Day 13 - 14 We take a supratours public bus from Essaouira back to Marrakech this morning, to explore the final one of Morocco's four Imperial cities we visit on this tour. Marrakech set against the snow-capped Atlas Mountains. Its great pride and landmark is the Koutoubia Tower, sister to the Tower of Hassan in Rabat and the Giralda Tower in Seville. It is said that after the third of these was completed, the sultan had the eyes of his architect put out, lest he should build another more beautiful tower elsewhere. No visit to the city is complete without a visit to the city's UNESCO-listed medina & Djemâa-el-Fna, an extraordinary gathering and market place. Overnight Marrakech x2 (2B)

Day 15 - Taghazoute:

After breakfast in Marrakech, you will be escorted to the bus station by your guide, where he will help you onto the bus to Agadir. You will be met at Agadir bus station and transported to Taghazout. After lunch in Taghazout, you'll spend the rest of the afternoon surfing and having a professional surf session. Overnight Taghazoute (B, D)

Day 16 - Taghazoute:

After breakfast on the camp terrace, you'll have an action-packed day of surfing, including another surf lesson in the afternoon. Overnight Taghazoute (B, L, D)

Day 17 - Marrakech:

Choose from one of our optional activities of surfing or horse riding, or just chill out on the beach this morning. Then you'll take the bus back to Marrakech and spend your last night in the city! Overnight Marrakech (B, L)

Day 18 - Marrakech:

Your adventure tour ends after breakfast at the hotel in Marrakech. (B)

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WHAT YOU GET

Included

- *Arrival transfer from airport (if travelling to and staying in joining hotel)
- *All transport (N.B. you will not be accompanied on the public bus transfer to / from Marrakech)
- *Full Board: 17 breakfasts, 5 Lunches, 7 Dinners including a Berber camp dinner
- *Set time transfer from Agadir bus station to Taghazoute
- *Set time transfer from Taghazoute to Agadir bus station
- *Guided tours Chefchaouen, Volubilis, Fez, Ait Benhaddou and Rabat.
- *Camel trek and Berber camp in the Sahara Desert
- *1 1/2 days of surf lessons
- *All surfing equipment

Excluded

- Drinks
- Lunch x 11 & Dinner x 10
- Flights
- Tipping kitty \$90 (used for hotel porters, hotel waiters, local guides used for city tours, airport drivers, Berber camel herders, restaurant tips)
- Optional activities
- Entrance to Casablanca Mosque (120 DH)
- Transfer to the hotel in Marrakech on the final night
- TIP for Nomadic Guide is not included in the tipping kitty. If you are happy with the Guide's service we recommend 2-3 \$US Dollars per day, or local currency equivalent.

OPTIONAL UPGRADES

- Single Supplement: £219
- Pre/Post accommodation: SGL £45: DBL/TWN £60: TPL £80

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Guided city tour of Marrakech (approx. 3 hours = 100 DH)
- Dinner and an evening's entertainment in Fes (250 DH)
- Rock climbing in Todra Gorge (1 hour = 250 DH, 2 hours = 390 DH)
- Hamman in Marrakech (prices from 150DH)
- Horse riding in Essaouira (1 hour = 250 DH, 2 hours = 300DH, 3 hours = 390DH)
- Quadbiking in Essaouira (2 hours = 590DH, 2 hours for 2 pax = 690DH)
- Movie studio visit in Ouarzazate (30 minutes = 50 DH)
- Windsurfing in Essaouira (2 hours = 600 DH)
- Surfing in Essaouira (2 hours = 350 DH)
- Kayaking in Essaouira (2 hours = approx. 350 DH)
- Kite surfing in Essaouira (2 hours = approx. 700 DH)
- Hot air balloon ride over the High Atlas Mountains (2000 DH)

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(DH = MOROCCAN DIRHAM)

USEFUL INFORMATION

Before you go

Visas & permits

Visas are NOT required for British, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, US and other EU nationals for a stay of up to 3 months. Please ensure your passport is valid up to the end date of your tour and that you get your passport stamped upon entry into Morocco. All other nationalities should contact the Moroccan embassy for details. Visas are your responsibility. Don't forget to check!

Travel insurance

All our passengers must be fully insured for travel in Morocco. It is essential that you get the correct level of cover and it is advised that you speak to your travel insurance provider for advice. Please ensure that the policy provides adequate cover for hospital treatment, repatriation flights home in the event of you being too ill to continue the tour, personal accident, personal baggage and associated valuables. Please note that some optional activities may require additional cover as well. In addition you must bring the policy with you as it is obligatory for joining any tour.

Vaccinations

It's recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio if you haven't had a booster in the last 10 years. Food and water born diseases are also quite common so we recommend vaccinations for Typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies) as well. Finally, Morocco is not a high risk Malaria area but if in any doubt please consult a physician or travel clinic for further information.

On location

Currency

GBP£1.00 = MAD13 USD\$1.00 = MAD9 EUR 1.00 = MAD11 MAD = Moroccan Dirham, rates are subject to fluctuation. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes in major towns and most banks have ATMs. How much spending money is needed, depends largely on the individual. However we currently recommend an average of USD \$20 - \$30 per day though. We can't specify every sundry cost however and you'll need to allow for expenses such as drinks, snacks and the odd souvenir. Travellers Cheques can be difficult to change en route so we recommend you have cash for convenience and bring a card to use in the ATM's, most accept Visa, MasterCard, Electron, Cirrus and Maestro. There are ATM's at Marrakech airport, which you can use upon arrival as well.

Climate

Temperatures in Morocco are generally high, particularly during the summer months from May to September, so take sunscreen. However in Winter temperatures can drop right down in the evenings, but as long as you bring some warm clothing and sleeping bag if spending a night in the Sahara or doing a trek then you will be more than comfortable.

Altitude

For most tours you do not exceed any altitude that would cause ill effects. However for the Berber Migration in the High Atlas which has an altitude of over 3,000 and is therefore defined as a high altitude area then there are different guidelines as exposure to these heights can cause the onset of altitude sickness. This form of sickness

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which is the biggest health risk for trekkers can cause people to experience differing degrees of symptoms, which include, headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue and shortness of breath. However our treks are designed to ensure there is plenty of time for adequate acclimatisation and cases of mountain sickness are rare. If you do suffer though symptoms will usually decrease in severity during acclimatisation. Throughout the trek it is therefore important to drink plenty of fluids and eat lots of carbohydrate food as well to keep the body properly hydrated and finally and most critically please report any symptoms of altitude sickness immediately to your guide.

Packing

Luggage

Pack all your gear in a rucksack/backpack for these type of trips. Also bring a day pack, to keep personal items such as your wallet, camera and water bottle. Your rucksack/back pack must not have an exterior frames. Only the soft, flexible variety is permitted. Leave your suitcase at home, they're simply not practical. Don't overdo it as well! Pack sensibly and take garments that are comfortable and cool. Morocco can be very hot in summer but after the sun sets and at high altitudes, the temperatures can drop, so pack accordingly. In terms of sleeping bags, although we provide blankets, on tours from November–April we do recommend a 3/4 season sleeping bag for the night spend in the desert.

What to bring

Detailed checklists are available but below is a list of the essential items to bring with you on your tour: • Towel • Torch and batteries • Camera and spare memory card/film • Mosquito repellent • Water bottle • Personal first aid kit, antiseptic gel and wipes • Waterproof/wind proof jacket • A photo-copy of your passport * Finally, if bringing your smart phone with you, please make sure that you turn your data roaming off, to avoid heavy increases to your bill!

Responsible travel

Cultural awareness

We cannot emphasise enough that we are travellers and therefore guests. So it is our duty to respect and adjust where possible to the people of the region, their customs and views. Your Tour Leader can let you know more, as well as brief you on all environmental matters.

Religious awareness

Morocco is predominantly Muslim and, as such, we would ask all of our customers to respect and adhere to (when appropriate) the dress codes of the Islamic faith. This entails covering of shoulders and knees whenever possible.

Security

There are currently no travel restrictions in place in the case of Morocco. However travellers should always be vigilant and aware when travelling.

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DATES & PRICES

Prices shown are based on twin or triple sharing with the same sex. Where an optional single upgrade is available, it will be detailed in the Excluded information in the 'What you get' section and bookable in MyNomadic.

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