

# Morocco – Imperial Cities and Desert Kasbah

Tour Code MO

Our itinerary concentrates on the great Imperial cities of the Muslim dynasties, which have since dominated Moroccan history, as well as allowing time to explore the dramatic canyons and charming oases of the "Kasbah Route" on the edge of the vast Sahara Desert. We visit the ancient Royal cities of Rabat, Meknes, Fes and Marrakesh; explore the towering Saharan Sand-Sea of Merzouga and visit the fabled kasbahs of Ait Benhaddou and the Dades Valley. An extension is available to relax in the lovely Atlantic coastal resort of Essaouira

Katoubia Minaret, Marrakech  
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## ITINERARY

### Day 1 Fly to Casablanca

Afternoon departure from London Heathrow with Royal Air Maroc direct to Casablanca. Evening arrival and transfer to the Toubkal hotel with dinner (D)

### Day 2 City tour. Visit Rabat

This morning we visit the world's third-largest religious monument, the vast Hassan II Mosque. We drive the short distance to Rabat and spend the afternoon visiting the Imperial capital, including the Kasbah des Oudaias, the ornate Hassan Tower and the mausoleum of Mohammed V, founder of modern Morocco. We overnight at the Dar Al Batoul hotel. Dinner in a quality local restaurant. (B,D)

### Day 3 Visit Meknes

This morning we visit Meknes, once the heart of the Moroccan sultanate and its impressive buildings reflect this heritage. We have a walking tour of Moulay Ismail's old Imperial city starting from the impressive monumental Bab Mansour gateway. One night at the Hotel Transatlantic with dinner (B,D)

### Day 4 Visit Roman Volubilis, drive to Fes

This morning we visit the extensive Roman city of Volubilis, with its well-preserved mosaic floors and impressive 3rd century AD capitol. After lunch we visit the nearby holy city of Moulay Idriss with its grand mausoleum. We continue to Fez, the oldest Imperial city, founded in the early 9th century and arguably, the finest. Two nights in a Old city Riad. Dinner at a quality local restaurant. (B,D)

### Day 5 In Fes

We spend the day inside the old medina of Fes, one of the world's last remaining medieval cities. Our morning tour includes the Bou-Inania Medersa, a Moorish architectural jewel, the beautiful 18th century Nejjarine Fountain and the famous tanneries and dyers souq. The rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy this wonderful city at your own pace. Dinner in the hotel. (B,D)

### Day 6 Drive to Erfoud via Ifrane and Ziz Gorge

A long but interesting drive this morning to Erfoud, a small town on the edge of the Sahara desert. We stop at the mountain town of Ifrane, located amongst pine and cedar forests. We continue through the dramatic Ziz Valley with palm-fringed villages and ruined *ksars* (granaries). Arriving at Erfoud we transfer to the Riad Salam for two nights with dinner (B,D)

**Patrick Syder Travel**

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### Day 7 Excursion to Erg Chebbi dunes at Merzouga

Today we have a relaxed morning before departing after lunch by 4-wheel drive vehicles into the desert to Merzouga to see the huge, drifting sand dunes and magical landscape at Erg Chebbi. We return to our hotel at Erfoud for dinner. (B,D)

### Day 8 Drive to Tinerhir, visit Todra Gorge

This morning we drive through the romantic empty desert landscape of the south. Arriving at Tinerhir at lunchtime we transfer to our hotel Lamrani, built in a beautiful kasbah style. In the afternoon we visit the spectacular Todra Gorge, 1.000 feet deep in places. Dinner in the hotel. (B,D)

### Day 9 Via the Dades Valley to Ait Benhaddou

Today's drive through palmeries and the valley of Dades is a tour highlight as we view the line of kasbahs that give this route its nickname "Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs". We stop at Ouarzazate to visit Taourirt kasbah before driving the short distance to Ait Benhaddou. Overnight, with dinner, at the Hotel La Kasbah. (B,D)

### Day 10 Visit the desert kasbahs. Drive to Marrakech

The world-famous kasbahs of Morocco are vast fortified villages, mainly built in the 17th century Glaoui dynasty, found in the valleys south of the High Atlas Mountains. We visit Ait Benhaddou, one of the most exotic and best preserved, and now under UNESCO protection. We cross the dramatic Tizi n'Tichka Pass through the Atlas Mountains, before descending to Marrakech, the best known of Morocco's Imperial cities. We stay for three nights at the Hotel Tichka Salam. (B)

### Day 11 Palaces and Souks tour of Marrakech

Today we explore Marrakech, including the 16th century Saadian Tombs, the Palais de la Bahia and the Ali Ben Youssef Medersa. After spending time in the souk we arrive at Jemaa El Fna Square, the focal point of the city, where in the early evening acrobats, snake charmers, musicians and dancers gather. Tonight we have arranged a typical dinner at a quality local restaurant (B,D)

### Day 12 At leisure in Marrakech

Today is set-aside for you to enjoy this wonderful city with its vibrant souks and old medinas at your own pace. You might want to visit one of the beautiful gardens around Marrakech such as the Menara, with the snow capped Atlas mountain backdrop or the colourful Yves St Laurent gardens that houses the Museum of Islamic art. (B)

### Day 13 Fly London

Morning transfer to Marrakech International airport for the return Royal Air Maroc flight via Casablanca to London Heathrow arriving in the mid afternoon (B)

*OPTIONAL Four night extension to the historic port town of Essaouira, famous for its blue and white architecture, fortified medieval walls and traditional medina, is available, please email us for further details*

**Cost £1895.00** per person in a twin room (excludes international flight) Single supplement charge £300.00



#### Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied by Patrick Syder from London
- ▶ Specialist Moroccan guides throughout the tour
- ▶ All transportation - private a/c minibus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Quality local four star hotels on a half board basis
- ▶ Dinners at traditional restaurants as indicated
- ▶ 4WD desert safari into the Sahara at Merzouga
- ▶ All government and departure taxes
- ▶ All airport transfers
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

*PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, applicable visa fees, alcoholic drinks, guide and driver gratuities, Royal Air Maroc international flights are not included in the land tour cost (RAM international flights start from £330.00 through Flight Centre UK) (Included meals denoted by B Breakfast, L Lunch, D Dinner)*