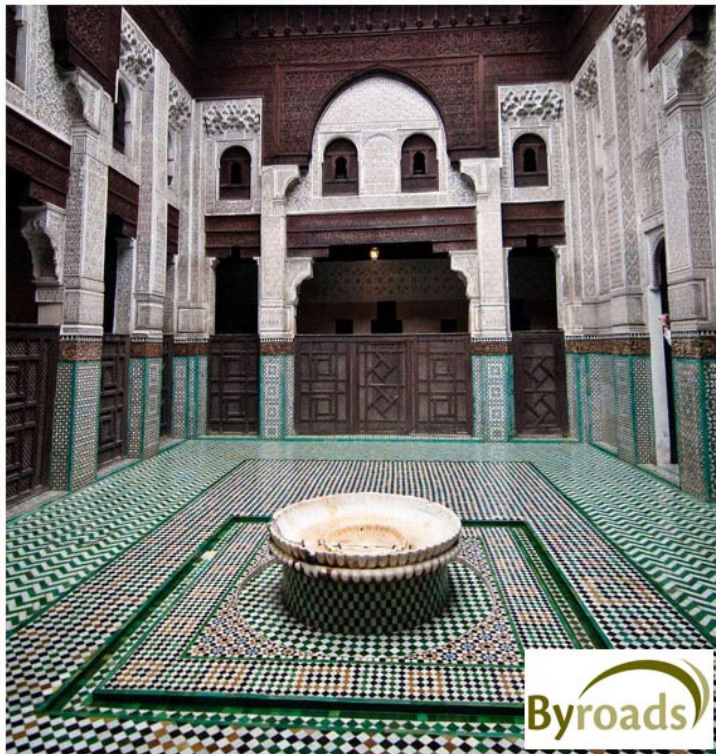


MOROCCAN MOSAIC

Discover the many facets of this exotic and alluring destination

16 DAYS STARTING RABAT
SEPTEMBER 14 - SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

with Steve Mortimer





MOROCCAN MOSAIC

Trip Outline

Morocco has experienced many waves of conquerors including Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans and Arabs, but it is the last of this group that has left the most enduring impression. Morocco is the oldest kingdom in the Muslim world and successive dynasties have left behind a rich culture and a wonderful heritage, including historic towns, ancient cities and spectacular monuments.

This exciting and very comprehensive journey showcases the best of Morocco. We not only visit the celebrated cities of Rabat, Meknes, Fes and Marrakech but our tour encompasses many lesser-known places that we have discovered over the years including Sale (home to the infamous Barbary Pirates); Chefchaouen and Tetouan (in the far north); and N'Kob, Tamnougalt and Tachdirt in the south.

From Rabat we discover the former pirate haven of Sale and then turn eastward to explore the imperial city of Meknes and the stunning Roman ruins of Volubilis. The blue-washed mountain village of Chefchaouen with its stunning Kasbah is sure to delight whilst a short drive away is the World Heritage listed town of Tetouan, nestled between the Rif Mountains and the Mediterranean. In due course we reach the amazing city of Fes, with its maze of medieval souks and there's time for a side-trip to the historical town of Sefrou.

Driving across the dramatic Middle Atlas, we arrive at Merzouga, where we ride camels into the golden sands of the Sahara. We now deviate from the traditional tourist route, travelling first alongside the Jebel Saghro and then into the lovely Draa Valley. We experience stunning landscapes, explore atmospheric towns and villages and enjoy lunch in a historic kasbah at Tamnougalt. This region of Morocco is a particular 'Byroads' specialty, and a major highlight of the trip. Four days allows ample time to experience this incredibly scenic region without hurrying through. Heading to the Atlantic coast, we then spend two nights in the delightful walled medina of Essaouira before driving to Marrakech where we visit all the major sights.

Throughout this tour you will experience some charming and atmospheric accommodation, including historic riads and authentic kasbahs.

Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads Travel and will be your host on this tour. Steve has nearly 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He has worked with a number of well-known Australian adventure travel companies. Most recently he has been involved in researching and developing holidays in several different regions of the world including Latin America and the Middle East where he lived for two years in Egypt.

Steve likes nothing better than getting out and about with like-minded travellers, sharing his knowledge and introducing participants to some of the world's most interesting places. On this trip, there is a focus on the kasbah-studded valleys of Morocco's deep south – a particular Byroads specialty.

With our itinerary you can be confident you'll visit all the 'must see' attractions – and much more, however there are some days when you'll have time to wander and make some of your own discoveries. Throughout the tour local guides are employed to provide a wealth of background information and share their extensive local knowledge.





ITINERARY STARTS IN RABAT

THU 14 SEP: CASABLANCA/RABAT – Upon arrival at Casablanca Airport you are met and transferred to Rabat. Today is simply an arrival day and we will plan to meet up in the evening. Pre-tour accommodation is available if you wish to arrive a day earlier (see back page for details).

FRI 15 SEP: SALE-MEKNES – We see Rabat's Hassan Tower, explore Sale's old medina and slave market and then drive east to Meknes. Here we visit the great storerooms of Moulay Ismail, Dar Jamaï, Bou Inania Madrasa – and take a walk through the atmospheric medina. (B)

SAT 16 SEP: MOULAY IDRIS, VOLUBILIS, CHEFCHAOUEN – Northeast of Meknes is the holy city of Moulay Idriss. We stop here for tea and then continue to the fascinating Roman city of Volubilis. We visit the ruins and drive north to the charming blue and white (but mostly blue!) town of Chefchaouen, where the balance of the day is free to explore. (B)

SUN 17 SEP: DAY TRIP TO TETOUAN – Today we head up through the Rif Mountains to visit the lovely old town of Tetouan, once the capital of the Spanish Protectorate. Alternatively you may prefer to rest up in Chefchaouen and explore further at your leisure. (B)

MON 18 SEP: CHEFCHAOUEN-FES – In the early morning we drive to Fes and after lunch we walk down into the old city (Fes el Bali), visiting the beautiful Bou Inania Madrasa and Funduk Nejjarine. Later we settle into our traditional Riad, with various dinner options available. (B)

TUE 19 SEP: SEFROU, FES – In the morning we visit the picturesque little town of Sefrou, with its friendly locals and traditional medina. Later we return to Fes to see local artisans creating intricate Zellij tile mosaics. In the afternoon we explore the eastern end of the old city, including the coppersmiths souk and the celebrated Tanneries. (B)

WED 20 SEP: FES-ER RACHIDIA – We drive south to the small town of Er Rachidia, passing through a variety of scenery between the Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains. We stop at Ifrane, a winter ski resort with quaint, 'alpine' houses, and visit Azrou with its small medina. We spend the night at a charming, family-run auberge in Er Rachidia. (BD)

THU 21 SEP: MERZOUGA & THE SAHARA – Near Erfoud we explore the ruined Ksar Maadid, and at Rissani we visit the busy Thursday souk. Reaching Merzouga we have time to relax and swim before a fun sunset camel ride into the dunes. (BD)

FRI 22 SEP: JEBEL SAGHRO/N'KOB – We now take a rarely travelled route towards the Jebel Saghro to the gorgeous Kasbah-studded town of N'Kob. In the afternoon we walk through the lush palmery with Ibrahim, a local character, and explore the village further. (BD)

SAT 23 SEP: N'KOB-AIT BENHADDOU – We drive through the stunning Draa Valley and visit the fabulous old ksar at Tamnougalt. We enjoy lunch here on the rooftop, with great views of the nearby Kasbah of Caid Ali. Later we drive to our fabulous kasbah-style hotel located in Tachdirt, on the outskirts of Ait Benhaddou. (BD)

SUN 24 SEP: AIT BENHADDOU, TELOUET – After breakfast we head north along one of the most stunning valleys in Morocco. We visit the celebrated Glaoua family kasbah at Telouet and return to our hotel where the afternoon is free to relax and/or swim. In the late afternoon, when the light is best, we visit the World Heritage-listed ksar at Ait Benhaddou. (BD)

MON 25 SEP: AIT BENHADDOU-ESSAOUIRA – We drive over the High Atlas and down across the hot plains to the lovely coastal town of Essaouira. It's a long day (9 hours) but we can look forward to a delicious dinner in one of the many seafood restaurants! (B)

TUE 26 SEP: ESSAOUIRA – Today is completely free to relax and explore this lovely old town. With its many quaint houses and covered alleyways, it reminds us a bit of Chefchaouen. (B)

WED 27 SEP: MARRAKECH – We drive to Marrakech. In the afternoon there's an optional cooking class or we can explore the amazing Jemaa el Fna and adjacent souks. (B)

THU 28 SEP: MARRAKECH – We enjoy a half day walking tour of Marrakech, including the Saadian Tombs and the Bahia Palace before we stroll through the souks to the superb Photographic Museum. The afternoon is free for a final burst of shopping! (B)

FRI 29 SEP: DEPARTURE – Our journey ends today, after breakfast. Airport transfers can be easily arranged from our Riad. (B)

Prices & Inclusions

16 Day Moroccan Mosaic

Price in Euros: EUR 2550 (per person twin-share)

Single Supplement: EUR 695

Price includes: Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, local tour leader, local guides, arrival transfer, all transportation, 15 nights accommodation, meals as indicated.

Not Included: Visa fees, travel insurance (compulsory), flights, additional meals, drinks, departure transfer, optional tours, spending of a personal nature, laundry and tips.

Transportation: Our transport is in modern and comfortable air-conditioned minibuses.

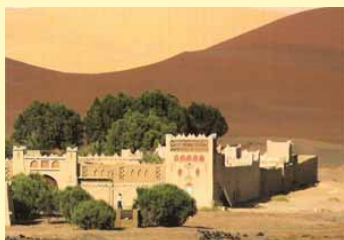
Accommodation: Our accommodation has been carefully selected and it's a highlight of our tour. In Fes and Marrakech we stay in traditional Riads, now converted into boutique hotels. In Chefchaouen we stay in a lovely village hotel. In N'kob we stay in an authentic Kasbah, and our two-night stay at Ait Benhaddou is always a huge hit. In Essaouira we stay in a boutique hotel just a few minutes walk from the main square. Some of our hotels have pools and all exude charm and character.



Village hotel, Chefchaouen



Stunning Riad hotel, Fes



Desert hotel in the Sahara



Authentic Kasbah, N'Kob



Boutique Kasbah, Ait Benhaddou



Boutique Riad, Marrakech

Food and drink: Breakfast is included every day and some other meals are included where there are no other options. Elsewhere, we enjoy the great variety of local food on offer. Soft drinks are widely available, but alcohol can sometimes be hard to find – particularly away from the major cities.

Group size: Maximum 16

Additional Expenses: Food is not expensive in Morocco. Allow around US\$10-\$15 for a light lunch and around US\$20-\$25 for dinner. In addition you should budget for any personal shopping you may wish to do. Please also allow extra funds to tip your local tour leader, driver, local guides and porters (full details will be provided in the pre-trip Field Guide).

Bookings: Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole booking agent for this tour. Please register your interest ASAP in order to secure your place and note there are a limited number of single rooms available. A non-refundable deposit of AUD 750 per person is required, to secure your place, with final payment due 60 days prior to tour commencement.

Travel on Q (Carole Grassby and Tina Briggs)

Level 1/128 Crown Street

Darlinghurst Sydney NSW 2010

Tel: (02) 9357 6800

Email: travel@travelonq.com.au

Currency: Due to the volatility of global currencies the tour price has been quoted in Euros (EUR) however you will pay for your tour in Australian dollars based on the buying rate set by Westpac Banking Corporation on the due date of your final balance.

Flights & Transfers: Emirates, Qatar and Etihad Airlines fly via the Gulf to Casablanca. There are regular flights and you can enjoy a stopover on route, if you wish. Alternatively, there are many other options if you are coming from, or continuing on to Europe. An arrival transfer is included; however the departure transfer is not and can be arranged on request. Travel on Q will be able to assist you with your flights and advise you on your best options.

Extra nights in Rabat and Marrakech: Extra nights can be booked pre and post tour but you must advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

Documentation: Upon receipt of your final payment, a comprehensive field guide will be mailed to you and you will be sent the relevant tour and accommodation vouchers prior to departure.

What next? Contact Travel on Q to discuss your travel plans and to make your booking. Further information is also available at www.byroads.com.au.

Byroads

www.byroads.com.au



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