

Byroads
Inspiring Escorted Journeys

MOROCCAN MOSAIC

Discover the many facets of this exotic and alluring destination

17 DAYS - STARTING CASABLANCA 4 March 2020





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 comprehensive journey showcases the best of Morocco. We not only visit the celebrated cities of Tangiers, Rabat, Meknes, Fes and Marrakech but our tour encompasses lesser-known places we have discovered over the years including Sale, Chefchaouen, Tetouan and N’Kob, Merzouga and Ait Benhaddou in the south.

From Casablanca we travel to the capital Rabat and to the former pirate haven of Sale before following the coast to lovely Tangiers on the Strait of Gibraltar. Tangier has for centuries been Europe's gateway to Africa. Turning south we visit Tetouan, nestled between the Rif Mountains and the Mediterranean, and then the blue washed mountain village of Chefchaouen with its stunning Kasbah. Next is the imperial city of Meknes and the stunning Roman ruins of Volubilis and 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.

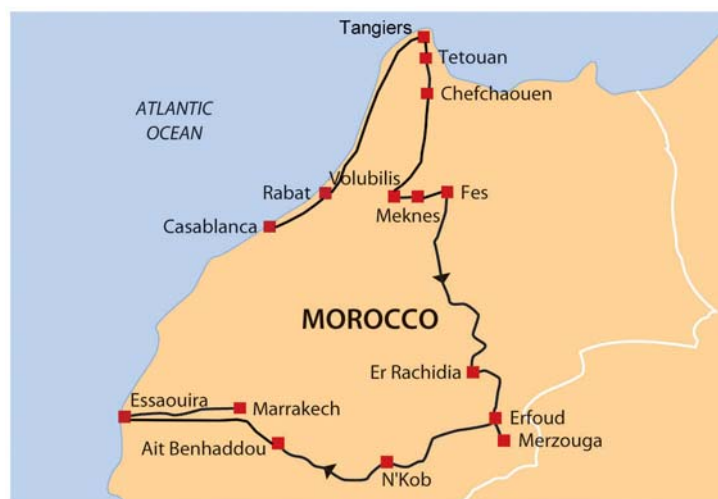
Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



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 speciality.

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 CASABLANCA

WED 4 MAR: CASABLANCA – Upon arrival at Casablanca Airport you are met and transferred to your hotel. Today is simply an arrival day and we will plan to meet up in the evening.

THU 5 MAR: RABAT-SALE-TANGIERS – Having visited Casablanca's giant Hassan II mosque we head to nearby Rabat to view the Hassan Tower and the royal mausoleum. We explore Sale's old medina and slave market and then drive north to Tangiers on the Strait of Gibraltar. (B)

FRI 6 MAR: TANGIERS – Rooted in an enduring eccentricity, Tangier's charm is undeniable. We'll visit the beautiful Kasbah museum with its collection of artefacts dating from Phoenician times and enjoy the great views of the harbour. Later we travel out to visit the Caves of Hercules before enjoying a free afternoon to explore the medina and fantastic cafes of the city. (B)

SAT 7 MAR: TETOUAN-CHEFCHAOUEN – Today we head to the the old town of Tetouan, nestled between the Rif Mountains and the Mediterranean. Once the capital of the Spanish Protectorate the markets of this town are particularly interesting. Turning south we arrive at the charming 'blue' mountain village of Chefchaouen, where the balance of the day is free to explore. (B)

SUN 28 MAR: VOLUBILIS, MOULAY IDRIS, MEKNES – Continuing South we explore the Roman city of Volubilis and stop for coffee in the holy city of Moulay Idriss before arriving in Imperial Meknes. Here we visit the great storerooms of Moulay Ismail, Dar Jamai, Bou Inania Madrasa – and take a walk through the atmospheric medina.

MON 9 MAR: SEFROU-FES – Having finished our discoveries of Meknes we visit the picturesque little town of Sefrou, with its friendly locals and traditional medina including the nearly deserted Jewish quarter. After lunch we drive to Fes and check into our traditional Riad. Later we walk down into the old city (Fes el Bali), visiting the beautiful Bou Inania Madrasa and Funduk Nejjarine. (B)

10 MAR: SEFROU, FES – After breakfast we continue our exploration visiting local artisans creating intricate Zellij tile mosaics and in the eastern end of the old city we visit the copper smiths souk and the celebrated Tanneries. The afternoon is then free to make your own discoveries (B)

WED 11 MAR: 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 12 MAR: 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 13 MAR: 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 14 MAR: N'KOB-AIT BENHADDOU – We drive through the stunning Draa Valley and visit the old ksar at Tamnougalt and nearby Kasbah of Caid Ali. We then continue via Ouarzazate and arrive at our fabulous kasbah-style hotel located in Tachdirt on the outskirts of Ait Benhaddou. (BD)

SUN 15 MAR: AIT BENHADDOU, TELOUET – After breakfast we travel through one of Morocco's most stunning valleys to visit the celebrated Glaoua family kasbah at Telouet. The afternoon is free to relax. In the late afternoon we visit the World Heritage-listed ksar at Ait Benhaddou. (BD)

MON 16 MAR: 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 17 MAR: 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 18 MAR: 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 19 MAR: 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 20 MAR: DEPARTURE – Our journey ends today, after breakfast. Airport transfers can be easily arranged from our Riad. (B)



Prices & Inclusions

17 Day Moroccan Mosaic

Price in Euros: EUR 2895 (per person twin-share)

Single Supplement: EUR 765

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.

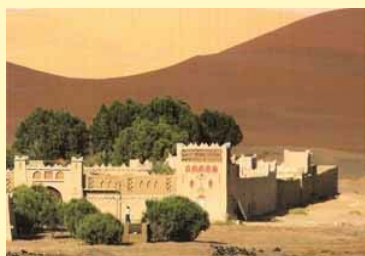
Accommodation: Our accommodation has been carefully selected and it's a highlight of our tour. In Fes and Marrakech we stay in traditional Riads, now converted into boutique hotels. In Chefchaouen we stay in a lovely village hotel. In N'kob we stay in an authentic Kasbah, and our two-night stay at Ait 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)

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 Casablanca 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.

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www.byroads.com.au



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