- WELCOME TO MOROCCO -

TRAVEL EXPLORATION 11-DAY
THE BEST OF MOROCCO
CULTURAL TOUR

CASABLANCA - FES - MEKNES - MARRAKECH - OUARZAZATE

**Travel Exploration** specializes in tailor-made Tours to Morocco with a distinctly authentic Moroccan flavor. Travel Exploration Morocco provides unique itineraries that offer an unparalleled diversity of travel and terraine through a people that are naturally hospitable, warm and friendly. You can count on Travel Exploration’s benefits of an Anglo-Moroccan partnership: On this tour you will visit **Casablanca**, then head to **Fes, Meknes, Volubilis, Marrakech, Ouarzazate and Zagora**.

At Travel Exploration we guarantee you will discover the best of Morocco on this music and cultural tour. **WELCOME - MARHABA**
DAY 1: CASSABLANCA

🔺 Pick up from Casablanca airport and transport to Fes.

🔺 Check in your 4 star hotel which has a spa, gym and wireless internet. Relax for a couple hours.

🔺 Have a relaxing lunch at the Corniche- Casa by the sea.

🔺 Spend the rest of the afternoon exploring Casbalanca.

🔺 Visit the Hassan II Mosque.

🔺 Visit the famous residential blocks: the Glaoui, the Bessonヌeau and the Asayag. The Boulevard links Place des Nationes with the railway station and is the gateway to the central market. With the help of your

🔺 End the day with a visit to The Parc de la Ligue Arabe (formally called Lyautey) which is the city's largest public park. On its edge is situated the Cathedrale du Sacre Coeur, which is disused, but is a splendid example of Mauresque architecture.

🔺 Have dinner by at Rick’s Cafe, a famous piano bar and place to dine. The owner is American and was inspired to created Rick’s Cafe from the film “Casablanca.”

🔺 Have dinner and return to your hotel for the evening.

🔺 Spend the night in Casablanca.

EXPLORE

ANCIENT KASBAHS

BERBER VILLAGES

MOROCCAN CUISINE

SPICE MARKETS
DAY 2: CASSABLANCA - FES
▶ Rise early, breakfast at your hotel and take the road to Fes.
▶ Arrive in Fes, check in at your riad and relax until dinner.
▶ Dinner at your riad or Palais D Medina, a traditional Fassis restaurant.
▶ Spend the night in Fes at a traditional Moroccan 3 Star Riad that boasts beautiful zellij tile and views of the old city medina.

DAY 3: FES (Guided Tour)
▶ Start your tour by visiting the Merenid Tombs of Fès. Continue along the old curtain wall of the medina and make a stop at the Musée des Armes, a fortress that once protected Fès.
▶ Next, enter the Fès el- Bali through the symmetrical horse shoe arches at Bab Boujeloud (The Blue Gate).
▶ Visit the Kisseria in the old medina and witness the colorful Tanneries., Berber Weaving, Wood working and Metalsmiths.
▶ Stop for lunch within the medina at one of the fine Moroccan palace-restaurants that serves an extravaganza of mezas: Choukchouka salad, Zaalouk salad, Carrots with Cumin Seed, raisin and orange salad, Cold radish, and Fennel Salad. The mezas are traditionally followed by the main meal which will include a: Lamb and Prune or Chicken Tagine with Olives and Preserved Lemons. For desert you will be served with fruit/or local Moroccan pastries along with Mint Tea.
▶ Within the medina, we will the following historical sites:
▶ Medersa Bou Inania: An (Islamic school) founded by Abu Inan Faris that is highly decorated from floor to ceiling. The medersa is one of the few religious places in Morocco that is accessible to non-Islamic tourists.
▶ Kairauine Mosque: Morocco's second largest mosque. The Kairauine Mosque became the home of the West's first university and the world's foremost center of learning at the beginning of the second millennium.
▶ University of Al-Karaouine: Founded in 859, this university is one of the leading spiritual and educational centers of the Muslim world.
▶ Zaouia Moulay Idriss II: Azaouia (shrine) dedicated to and the tomb of Moulay Idriss II, who ruled Morocco from 807 to 828 and founded the city of Fès for the second time in 810.
▶ Dar Batha: A Hispano-Moorish palace dating from the end of the 19th century that houses admirable collections of traditional art from Fès
▶ Have dinner and Spend the night in Fès at a traditional Moroccan 3 Star Riad.
DAY 4: FES - VOLUBILIS- MEKNES (Guided Tour)

► Rise early, have breakfast and take the road for a one day excursion to Volubilis and Meknes. **Volubilis** also referred to by Moroccans as **Walili** (Arabic) is considered one of the most important archaeological sites in Morocco.

► Once occupied by the Romans, Volubilis has been recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site and gained international acclaim when Martin Scorsese made it a feature location for his film, *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

► Begin your visit by discovering the fascinating Roman ruins adorned with beautiful mosaics and colorful tiles depicting Roman mythology. You can view how the Roman Empire transformed the original Carthaginian settlement into a typical Roman city. Volubilis once functioned as a final stop of the Roman imperial roads that went across France, Spain, down Morocco's northern city of Tangier and into Volubilis.

► Depart Volubilis and take the road to Meknes.

► Lunch in Meknes.

► Often referred to as the **Versailles of Morocco**, Meknès is located between the fertile plain of Rharb and the **Middle Atlas**. The historical importance of Meknes is reflected in its grand Moorish buildings and in Meknes’ close relationship with Volubilis, a nearby city known as the most important archeological site in Morocco. Meknès is the fifth largest city in Morocco and has a dynamic economic center that thrives on olives, wine and mint tea.

► We will stop and visit the main city center, **Square Le Hadkim** and then visit the palaces and mosques located within the heart of **Ksar Dar el-Kebira**, the heart of the Imperial city.

► Next, we will visit the well known **Haras de Meknès**, the largest national stud that can accommodate up to two-hundred and thirty one horses. It's the home of noble Arabian and Berber Horses. Created in 1912, Haras de Meknès promotes the best breeds of horses to be used during a fantasia or competitive horse races.

► Visit the grand gate named after the architect, **El-Mansour**, a Christian renegade who converted to Islam.

► Return to Fes,

► Dinner at your riad and Spend the night in Fes.
DAY 5: FES - MARRAKECH
▶ Rise early, have breakfast and begin your journey to Marrakech. Stop for lunch on the road to Marrakech.

▶ Arrive in Marrakech, check in at your traditional Moroccan 3 star riad and visit Djema El Fna Square.

▶ Dinner in Djema El Fna Square - Beneath the foothills of the Atlas Mountains in the city center of Marrakesh lies Djemaa el Fna, a famous UNESCO recognized city square, where you will discover a world of mysterious bazaars and a set amidst the ancient city walls of Marrakech's medina. Djemaa El Fna is a unique L- shaped square best described as a labyrinth of mazes. In the evening, snake charmers, fortune tellers, monkeys & musicians transform this city Center into a medieval circus.

▶ Return to your riad for the evening. Spend the night in Marrakech.

DAY 6: MARRAKECH (Guided Tour)
▶ Rise early, have breakfast at your riad and begin your one-day tour of Marrakech.

▶ First we will travel to the new city, French, Gueliz also referred to as the garden district and the home of Morocco’s Majorelle Gardens. The Majorelle Gardens are a lush, garden estate designed by Jacque Majorelle and maintained by Yves Saint Laurent. The Majorelle Garden is filled with colorful walkways, ponds, cactus and plants as well as a beautiful shop with hand-made goods.

▶ Next we will drive to the Lower Medina to explore more of Marrakech’s secrets: El Mansour mosque, the sixteenth century Saadian Tombs with its stark towers, the ruined 16th century El Badhi palace and the Mosque of Koutoubia.

▶ Pass by the La Mammounia Hotel Garden (where Alfred Hitchcock wrote the famous film The Birds) We will stop at La Mammounia to visit the hotel and gardens that has recently opened since renovation.

▶ Lunch in the heart of Marrakech.

▶ Visit the Artisinale, where crafts are made and sold.

▶ Next we will visit the contemporary Moroccan Art Museum and the Tiskiwin, a private museum in Marrakech that is dedicated to popular arts & crafts, styled as a beautiful Spanish-Moroccan house, next door to Dar Si Said palace, a smaller version of the Bahia.

▶ Return to Marrakech, have dinner at La Marrakeshi which overlooks Djemaa El Fna Square, Le Comptoir with a bellydancing show or at a local restaurants frequented by Marrakeshis.

▶ Spend the night in a 3 star riad in Marrakech.
DAY 7: MARRAKECH - OUARZAZATE

➤ Rise early, take the road to Ouarzazate.

➤ During your journey to Southern Morocco you will also pass the olive groves of the Oued Zat, as you ascend onto the Tizi-N-Tichka Pass Road. Built by the French in the 1920’s, the Tizi-N-Tichka Pass can be described as having mountainous barriers, Mediterranean and oceanic influences and desert borders.

➤ Along the route you will see panoramic views of the High Atlas Mountains as well as sights of fertile valleys, blue and red colored pise villages and other striking mineral environments. The higher up you drive you will notice the mountains becoming more rounded and the crops turning into bare red soil.

➤ For lunch we will stop in the village of Tadart where you will dine in a local restaurant with incredible views and enjoy a tajine made with fresh local olive oil.

➤ Once we arrive in Ouarzazate – the road will take us on a visit to the Kasbah Taorirt was built by the Glaoui. Its location was strategic for trading routes and in the 1930’s when the Glaoui ruled the South it was then one of Morocco’s largest Kasbahs. Explore its nooks and crannies and discover some local female painters who sell their art inside as well as the many quality silver shops just steps outside the Kasbah.

➤ After visiting Kasbah Tourirt, you will settle in at a local riad for a relaxing evening by the pool. You are welcome to explore the local market or visit Spices Maria to receive a local massage with rose, almond or argan oil and a spice experience.

➤ Dinner at your riad. Spend the night at a 3 star Riad in Ouarzazate.

DAY 8: OUARZAZATE - ZAGORA

➤ Rise early, have breakfast and depart for Zagora.

➤ Pass by Skoura and visit the 17th Century Amerhidil Kasbah. This fortified residence once belonged to this most powerful family responsible for protecting the village and its lands called the Glaoui.

➤ Take a camel excursion for 1 hour across the Dunes of Tinfo. At the end of the main road you will find the famous road sign to Timbuktu that reads “52 jours” – 52 hours by camel.

➤ Visit the Tamegroute pottery cooperative and see how the local, forest green, glazed pottery is made and fired using regional henna.

➤ Explore the famous Spiritual Zaouia site and the Koranic Library.

➤ Have dinner, watch the stars and Spend the night in Riad Liamane, which boasts beautiful palms in a secluded location of the Sahara.
DAY 9: ZAGORA -AIT-OUZZINE-OUARZAZATE

► Rise, have breakfast and take the road through the Draa Valley to the Berber Village of Ait Ouzzine.

► Arrive in Ait Ouzzine, have lunch in the village, explore its gardens, its water irrigation system, visit the fields of henna, the village of Ait Ouzzine and see how a local family lives.

► Enjoy having your hands painted with henna or saffron placed in your hair, an ancient Berber tradition.

► Have couscous with a Berber family and partake in their bread baking tradition in an earthen oven.

► Return to Ouarzazate and Spend the night in a 3 Star Riad.

DAY 10: OUARZAZATE - MARRAKECH

► Rise early, have breakfast and take the road to Marrakech.

► Enroute visit the Kasbah of Ait Benhaddou. Located 32 km from Ouarzazate lies the picturesque village. Ait Benhaddou of Ait Benhaddou is situated in Souss-Massa-Draâ on a hill along the Ouarzazate River. Lawrence of Arabia was filmed here and Orson Welles used it as a location for Sodome and Gomorrah; and for Jesus of Nazareth the whole lower part of the village was rebuilt. In recent years more controlled restoration has been carried out under UNESCO auspices. Ait Benhaddou is one of many locations in this region used for shooting Hollywood films.

► Your guide will lead you on a private tour through this Berber village of towered and crenulated Kasbahs that once guarded the lucrative caravan route through the Atlas Mountains. Explore the Kasbahs by foot with the option to ride a donkey across a river. Aït Benhaddou which once served as the former caravan route between the Sahara and Marrakech in present-day Morocco. Most of the town’s inhabitants now live in a more modern village at the other side of the river; ten families however still live within the ksar. Ait Benhaddou was once a significant stop for traders carrying gold, salt and slaves along the famous Southern Caravan route moving through the Sahara.

► After visiting Ait Benhaddou, continue the road to Marrakech.

► Arrive in Marrakech in late afternoon. Evening free.

► Spend the night in a 3 Star Riad in Marrakech.

DAY 11: MARRAKECH

► Departure from Marrakech’s Menara Airport.
In preparation for your Moroccan adventure, the following is a list of things to consider packing that will make your trip as smooth and comfortable as possible.

**Pre-departure Essentials**
- Personal Identification (drivers license)
- Passport and visa if required
- Airline Tickets
- Traveller’s Checks
- Credit Cards
- Travel Insurance
- Health Documentation
- Emergency Information
- Guide books & maps
- Photocopies of Documentation: (passport and tickets). You can also scan these, upload them to the internet and email them to yourself. Internet access is widely available in all major cities and most small ones in Morocco.

**Medicines**
While no shots are required to enter Morocco, it is recommended that you come prepared with a personal medical kit, as you do not to spend time looking for a pharmacy and risk that they do not carry what you need. Morocco does have French pharmaceutical shops widely available throughout the country in all major cities and many villages therefore if basic things such as cold medicine, Imodium, allergy creams or over the counter medicine is needed you can visit one of them. Depending on your health condition, you may want to consult with your doctor before your trip. The climate in Morocco is diverse and different from what travelers are used to, so come prepared with the following:
- Antibiotic for traveler’s diarrhoea
- Antibiotic cream & disinfectant for scrapes and cuts
- Band-Aids
- Disposable antibacterial wipes or cleanser
- Pepto-Bismol or Imodium for traveller’s diarrhoea.
- Insect repellent with DEET 30%
- Iodine purifying tablets
- Re-hydration tablets
- Aspirin, Tylenol or other Pain relievers
- Skin Lotion (especially for Eczema)
- Salt tablets
- Sunscreen (SPF 30)
- Motion sickness medicine
- Cold medicine: Decongestant, antihistamine, cough syrup
- Aspirin, Tylenol or other Pain relievers
- Skin Lotion (especially for Eczema)-Sunglasses (or prescription glasses/ contact lenses, and solution)-Hydrocortisone cream

**Toiletries**
- Feminine hygiene products (tampons, etc.)
- Hairbrush
- Shampoo, Conditioner
- Soap
- Shaving Cream, razor
- Toilet paper/ Mini-Tissues (12 pack)
- Tooth brush, tooth paste

**Travel Clothing**
- Conservative clothing is worn throughout Morocco (clothes should not be tight or too revealing)
- Bathing suit (for beach resorts, hotel)
- Brimmed Hat, Visor, Hat, headscarf
- Long skirts, dresses or pants (for women)
- For summer: light weigh clothing
- Windbreaker or warm sweater for cooler months and desert cool air.
- Travel Footwear: broken in sneakers or hiking shoes, sandals, socks.

**Electronics**
- Camera & Film (Kodak and Fuji is easy to find in Morocco but expensive)
- Video Camera & Tapes
- Extra Camera Batteries
- International Electrical plug adapter and or converter
- Travel Alarm
- Flashlight / extra bulbs