



THE ART OF EXPLORING MOROCCO

CULTURAL TRIP TO MOROCCO

JUNE 1-15, 2024

TRIP LEADER



Addi Ouadderrou is a certified as National Guide by the Moroccan National Office of Tourism. Addi is a native Moroccan from the desert region, and an expert on Moroccan culture, with more than 25-years of experience in directing deep-dive and personalized cultural tours into Moroccan history, life, arts, languages, food, dance, music, and more. Addi is the owner of Moroccan Caravan, LLC, and is the tour leader and manager. addi@moroccancaravan.com

TOUR OVERVIEW

Morocco's unique geographical location in North Africa, with shorelines on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, between Europe, the Middle East, and the rest of Africa, makes it one of the oldest and most vibrant trading posts in the world. For Romans, Arabs, Imazighen, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and sub-Saharan Africans, it has long been a crossroads for the exchange of food, arts, ideas, and people. It is also a land of intricately designed cities, colorful villages, and stunning landscapes.

With expert guidance and exclusive access, participants will delve into this exotic nation to soak up its natural beauty and vibrant culture. Trip highlights include hands-on cooking lessons and demonstrations, behind-the-scenes exploration of cultural antiquities unique to Morocco, camel trekking through the Sahara Desert, exclusive entry into private venues and musical performances, enhanced tours of sites, public parks, and many surprises!

ITINERARY

Day 1 JUNE 1 Depart USA to Casablanca/Morocco

Begin your travels today June 1 with a flight across the Atlantic to arrive in Casablanca, Morocco around 8:30 am and no later than 10:30am on June 2. Participants book their own flights. Suggest nonstop flights from the US to Casablanca, Morocco on Royal Air Maroc:

- From New York (JFK)
- From Washington DC, Dulles international airport (IAD)
- From Miami (MIA)

Day 2 JUNE 2 Casablanca/Fes

Arrive at Mohammed V Airport in Casablanca, meet your tour guide, and transfer to our luxury van for a beautiful drive through diverse landscapes to the ancient city of Fes. (L,D)

Day 3 JUNE 3 Fes

Morning departure for a guided tour to explore one of Morocco's most historic and important cities - Fes. The visit will take us to various areas including the Royal Palace, the Mellah (Jewish quarters), a panoramic view of the city, then into the medina ("old city") to see some of its many sections. Each section specializes certain types of foods, wares, and handmade arts and crafts, such as embroidery, weaving, and ceramics. We will have an opportunity to see artisans making exquisite items using centuries-old traditional techniques. Of special interest are the ancient leather dyeing vats in the heart of the city. We will sample a wide variety of local cuisines.

Tonight, we have a special group dinner at a local restaurant specializing in authentic Moroccan cuisine with a show featuring a variety of musicians and dancers representing different areas and ethnic groups. As a special treat, we will enjoy a theatrical presentation of a Moroccan wedding ceremony with our group members participating to get very close to the culture, including dancing for all. (B,L,D)

Day 4 JUNE 4 Fes - Midelt

After breakfast we will visit the beautiful public gardens of Jnan Sbil for a stroll through this former Royal Garden. We will then go to a family home and experience a special spiritual Sufi ceremony in the Fes medina. Afterward, we continue to Midelt, crossing the Cedar Forest. Overnight in Midelt. (B,L,D)

Day 5 JUNE 5 Midelt - Erfoud - Mezguida

Drive south through the Ziz Valley to the Tafilalet Oasis/ Palm grove. We will make a stop in Erfoud to see and learn about fossils that this area is known for. Overnight at a family guest house. This evening you should pack a small bag (backpack or small soft bag) including bathing suit and change of clothes for one-night overnight the next day (B, L, D)

Day 6 JUNE 6 Thursday : Rissani - Desert camp

Explore this area, including a visit to an adobe village then go to the nearby town of Rissani, a former hub for trans-Saharan trade to learn about spices, enjoy a presentation on different types of Amazigh (Berber) textiles and how they are used by locals. We will also learn about the meaning of motifs on these hand-woven and or embroidered textiles.

In the afternoon, we drive out into the desert until we reach the golden sand dunes. We go on a magical camel ride across the sand dunes for an overnight with dinner. Be prepared to join the drumming and dancing circle at our Saharan camp! (B, L, D)

Day 7 JUNE 7 Return from camp - Saharan Oasis - Mezguida

After returning from our camel excursion, we will enjoy downtime by the pool. We will have a demonstration and learn how to make a local specialty of stuffed bread baked in the sand, as the nomads have done for centuries. The afternoon will be spent exploring the desert region

including a Saharan oasis and gardens, witnessing how locals extract water from the dunes for drinking and irrigation using an ancient underground system called *khuttaras*. Our day will be topped with a visit to a local community to sip mint tea and experience their unique spiritual music and chanting. Overnight in Mezguida. (B,L,D)

Day 8 JUNE 8 Todra Gorge - Kalat M’Gouna

Today’s ride is full of unique scenes, such as the *khuttaras*, an ancient underground system of irrigation. Lunch en route. We will see the Todra Gorge (canyon) and a beautiful valley dotted with many villages, make stops to enjoy the views through this spectacular ride. We will notice the change in architecture and even the way people dress in this area. We will reach the mountain town of Kalat M’Gouna in the rose valley. Dinner & overnight. (B, L, D)

Day 9 JUNE 9 Ouarzazate

Today, we will have a treat and an amazing experience overlooking the lush valley and kasbahs. We will be introduced to a totally different style of music and dance unique to this region. Participants will have a chance to join the dance. Overnight in Ouarzazate (B, L, D)

Day 10 JUNE 10 Ouarzazate - Kasbah Ait Ben Haddou - Marrakech

Ouarzazate is a town known for film production. Today we will cross the amazing High Atlas Mountains. The scenery in the mountains is striking and unique, as dozens of Amazigh (Berber) villages accented with terrace gardens can be seen. One of the highlights for today is the world heritage site Kasbah Ait Ben Haddou. We will visit a women’s cooperative that specializes in making famous Argan Oil. Overnight in Marrakech. (B,L,D)

Day 11 JUNE 11 Explore Marrakech

We will explore Marrakech, including a lush hidden garden (“Le Jardins Secret”), created on the grounds of a historical site. We will visit the 19th century Bahia Palace, and the 11th century Koutoubia Mosque and gardens. We will then enter the lively souks (“markets”) to experience its colors and its smells. (B,L,D)

Day 12 JUNE 12 Further Explore Marrakech

We visit more of Marrakech, including a visit to the beautiful Jardin Secret located inside the medina. We will also enjoy a walk around the traditional markets. Our day ends with cocktails and sunset watching on roof tops of our Riad followed by dinner and an exclusive music and dance performance (B,L,D)

Day 13 JUNE 13 Anima Gardens - Essaouira

Today, we leave Marrakech and visit Anima gardens before continuing to Essaouira. Essaouira is an historic small town on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, dating back to the middle ages. Originally named Mogador in the 1500’s. it has been occupied by the Portuguese, Spanish, French. The present day city of Essaouira was built during the mid-18th century by king Mohammed III. (B, D)

Day 14 JUNE 14 Further exploration of Essaouira

We will explore Essaouira markets within the ancient walls of the Essaouira Medina, streets, visit its fishing port, overlooks, watch artists make creative arts, and a possible optional session of hammam & massage (Moroccan bath) experience to end the trip with. (B,L,D)

Day 15 JUNE 15 Transfer to Casablanca Airport

Transfer to Casablanca Mohammed V Airport to fly home. (B) **Bon Voyage!!**

LODGING

Tour participants will stay either in locally owned charming hotels, family homes, or riads. Riads are guesthouses or small hotels featuring a collection of rooms set around an internal courtyard or garden. Each hotel or riad is carefully selected for its comfort and artful beauty. In the desert, tour participants will stay in a beautiful Adobe guest house with a suite of bathrooms and showers.

FEES

June 1-15, 2024

\$4000/person, shared accommodation minimum 10 participants.

Single Optional Supplement : + \$350 additional to be paid by any participant rooming solo.

Single rooming applies where possible.

What is required to book a space on this trip?

1. **Fill out our online** registration form available at www.moroccancaravantours.com/registration
2. Mail in your \$1000 deposit or full payment at once. *
3. Balance or full payments are due no later than **March 1st, 2024***

*Payments made out to *Moroccan Caravan, LLC* and mailed to:

Moroccan Caravan, LLC
53 Perkins Avenue
Malden, MA 02148 USA

Space is subject to cancellation if full payment is not received by the date noted. Notification of participant cancellation must be made to Moroccan Caravan, LLC in writing. Refunds for services that are booked and are not used by the participant cannot be made.

Note: On the registration form, provide the name of the person you will want to room with. Otherwise we will match roommates based on gender. If we end up with an odd number, the last person to sign up will have to pay the extra supplement if no one to room with, another reason why signing up early is good. **Also signing up early helps us better organize so please don't wait :)**

For questions, please contact, Addi addi@moroccancaravan.com or WhatsApp + 617-833-1503

Included in the Tour Price

In addition to the items listed in the detailed itinerary above:

- Lodging throughout the tour. Lodging will be of charming locally owned hotels, Riads, and family homes. Nomadic (adobe) tents for the overnight in the Sahara desert.
- Cultural activities, local speakers and performances by visiting/guest artists
- All meals except for the one lunch on day 13 of the itinerary (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)
- English speaking local guides for scheduled group visits of Fes, Volubilis, and Marrakech
- Camel ride into the dazzling sand dunes of the Sahara Desert
- Transfer as group to the Airport at the end of the trip
- Private first class vehicle with driver throughout the tour
- And many unique surprises!

Not Included in the Tour Price

- Flight reservations and airfare are the responsibility of each participant, and Moroccan Caravan, LLC is not responsible for any part of reservations or travel other than described in the information above.
- Travel Insurance plan that can cover you for overseas **is required** for the tour and is the responsibility of each participant to purchase prior to the trip and must include full tour dates (Available through World Nomads, American Express Travel, and other similar programs). World Nomads or other insurance programs are not affiliated with Moroccan Caravan, LLC so shop around.
- Passport fees and related paperwork
- Excess baggage charges, telephone, laundry, room service, any personal medical expenses.
- Any activities outside of the program, any pre-tour arrangements, any personal expenses, meals not indicated in the program, alcoholic beverages & drinks, any private transfers, etc.
- Tips for guides, drivers, porters, restaurants and others behind the scenes. Tips are distributed fairly by the tour manager/leader from start and throughout the trip. At the end of the tour, each traveler will hand their tips to the tour manager during the last night of the trip. As a guide, typically, participants plan for around \$20 per day x the number of days in the trip.

All Participants:

All participants must check if they need a visa to travel to Morocco. To find out if you need a visa to go to Morocco or not check out this link:

<http://www.moroccanconsulate.com/visa.cfm> USA Citizens **do not** need a visa to enter Morocco.

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Fitness and Health:

This journey to Morocco is not physically strenuous but participants should be in reasonably good health to participate. There is a good amount of walking throughout, and sometimes surfaces can be uneven. Please be aware that in some remote areas emergency medical care, physicians, and medication November not be readily available. Please bring all necessary medications with you.

Each participant must be covered by medical insurance that is valid overseas. Each participant must have trip cancellation and interruption insurance.

REVIEWS

from *Trip Advisor*

What an incredible adventure! Addi was the perfect tour guide to experience this beautiful country. No other tour will give you a true cultural immersion to this diverse and beautiful country. Highly recommend!

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Without question, one of the best cultural specific tours I have ever taken. Our guide Addi, is a multilingual local who I can only describe as the best ambassador a country could ever have. You will do and see things that other people and groups will not experience, with lots of hands on involvement. From sites and time with the locals, to shops that are co-op specific and helping to support their communities. Can't recommend highly enough.

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If you want to truly learn about Morocco, this is the trip. From sun up to sun down, we were part of the culture of this country. No tourist stuff here; we stayed with family, we dined with locals, we met the artisans, we supported the local enterprises, and we learned, learned, learned.

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There is no better way to see Morocco than with Moroccan Caravan. What makes them so good is their passion for the country and all it has to offer. Their enthusiasm is infectious. At the end of the tour, I wanted to do the whole thing all over again and maybe I will--next year!

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For more reviews, visit www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g41818-d8434233-Reviews-Moroccan_Caravan-Somerville_Massachusetts.html