

Morocco

A Berber Adventure



We hope you will join us on a great adventure to the white mountain peaks, colourful cities and dramatic Atlantic coastline of Morocco. We will bargain hunt in bustling bazaars and journey deep into the Atlas mountains to spend time with the Berber people, helping out with a community project. We will learn to cook traditional Moroccan tagines in bustling Marrakech, visit the sleepy laid back coastal town of Essaouira and trek along the wild Atlantic coast. This trip is a superb introduction to Arab North Africa and offers an experience that, although only a few hours by plane, is a million miles away from home .



Recommended itinerary:

Culture shock rating: 

Physical rating: 

Day 1: Fly from London to Marrakech, Djenna el Fna.

Fly from the UK to Marrakech and transfer to our hotel. Depending on the time of the flight we will have a late afternoon walk into the markets where we can start to acclimatise to the heat and see that the short flight has brought us to a completely different world.

Day 2: Marrakech, Cooking class, Imlil Atlas Mountains.

The next day we head out and visit the souq and mix with the local Marrakeshi as we buy the ingredients we need for our lunch today; the meat, vegetables, herbs and spices that form the basis of Moroccan cuisine. During our hands-on cookery class, the chef will teach us how to make traditional dishes that are central to Moroccan cuisine. Along the way we'll learn about the key ingredients and techniques needed to make some of the most famous Moroccan dishes, such as couscous, pastilla, tagine, tanjia and harira. For lunch, we get to savour the gastronomic delights of our morning cookery class, so we had better pay close attention! After lunch we journey into the mountains to a small village and hike into the Imlil valley which has great views of Morocco's tallest mountain, Mount Toubkal. We have a short hike this afternoon from the road head to our base for the next few days – a typical Berber mountain village set deep in the Atlas mountains. Life has changed little here over the years and our hosts will take us on a guided tour of the village where we will be spending the next three days, working on a variety of projects. Accommodation whilst in the village will be a simple village house or 'gite'. Sleeping arrangements are likely to be multiple occupancy rooms with mattresses on the floor.

Day 3-5: Project work.

The next three days are set aside as specific project working days – the exact nature of the project will depend on what the local community needs at the time of our visit. There is a village association that will meet to discuss this and put forward suggestions. It is often the case that we won't have exact details of the project work until a month or two before our arrival. Previous groups have built incinerators, repaired footbridges and paths, planted cacti on the hills to prevent soil erosion and laid water pipes and drainage ditches. Whatever we end up doing, these days spent among the villages of the Atlas mountains in the company of local families will be an undoubted highlight of our time in Morocco.

Day 6: High Atlas - Atlantic Coast.

Leaving the High Atlas we drive west to the wild and stunning Atlantic Coast. Arriving at Sidi Kaouki we put on our trekking gear and a day sac whilst our main gear goes on to our camp on the back of a camel. The trek along the coast is spectacular and the sea breeze will help keep the temperature at bay. Three hours walking takes us to our accommodation for the night – a camp at Sidi Mbark.

Day 7: Sidi Mbark - Iftane.

After a good nights sleep in our tents we continue to wind our way along the beautiful and wild Atlantic coast with a full day of trekking from Sidi Mbark to the tiny fishing village of Iftane. Here we set up camp for another night in our tents, within ear shot of the crashing waves of the Atlantic.

Day 8: Iftane - Trekking end - Essaouira.

After a short trek from Iftane of about 1hr 30 minutes we meet our transport at the road head. From here there is a short transfer to the town of Essaouira (45 mins). Essaouira is one of Morocco's most attractive coastal cities. The wild waves of the Atlantic crash remorselessly onto the rocky coastline of this old pirate's hideout. Portuguese, Berber and French battlements encircle the maze of narrow lanes with tiny cafes looking out onto small squares. Two fortresses look out over the ocean and on an offshore island stands another even larger castle. We recommend a stroll around the lively old port that is full of colour and points of interest. The early morning is particularly scenic. There is an expansive beach which we can relax on - the crumbling castle at the end of it is reputedly the inspiration for Jimi Hendrix's 'Castles In The Sand'. The food here is wonderful, especially the sea food! We can see the old traditional methods still used to construct the deep sea fishing boats in the yards next to the harbour.

Day 9: Essaouira, Marrakech.

Use the morning to explore this fantastic city further or take some time for some last minute bargain hunting before heading back to Marrakech where we spend our final night and have a celebratory meal in this vibrant city.

Day 10: Marrakech, UK.

After a final morning in the souk and watching the hustle and bustle of this magical city we enjoy a lunch in the main square, Jemma El Fna, before departing for the airport and our return flight to the UK.

Please note: It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides – he or she will want you to see their country in a good light.



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