

WONDERS OF MOROCCO - 13 NIGHTS/14 DAYS

ITINERARY

Part I -Imperial cities -Casa-Rabat-Fez

Day 1-Casablanca

Reception and transfer from the airport of Casablanca to your hotel. “Casa” on the move, bursting with energy and exemplifying the many facets of modern Morocco, lives alongside the remains of a city with a very rich past.

In the middle of the 18th century, the Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Abdallah decided to rebuild ancient Anfa (the hill), a small Berber 7th century town. Later, Casablanca became the showcase of Art Deco architecture in the 1930’s.

Day 2: Casablanca-Rabat-a 1 hour drive

In the morning, you will meet your private driver and head to **the great mosque of Hassan II**. Visible from land and ocean, it was inaugurated in August 1993. The prayer hall can accommodate 25,000 pilgrims and its esplanade had room for another 80,000. Its 663 foot high minaret is the highest religious building in the world.

Next you will go to **Rabat**, the administrative capital of the kingdom of Morocco. This fortress still has its old cannons in the fortress. Its beautiful massive gate is richly covered with carved figures. One of its towers houses three art galleries. Its blue and white walls are in the classic Mediterranean style. Further on, the **Oudayas Palace**, which now houses the National Museum, has kept its markedly simple and balanced original decoration. Below, the **Andalusian Gardens** are a peaceful haven with fruit trees, rose-laurels, and cascades of bougainvilleas. Do not forget to visit **the Hassan Tower**.

Day 3-Rabat-Meknès-Fez- a 2 ½ hour drive

Start the day with a walk on the beach. After breakfast, join your driver for a visit to the other Imperial cities. We suggest a lunch at **Meknès**. This beautiful area was designated Unesco World Heritage of Humanity Site for its medina and the remains of the royal palace.

You will truly appreciate its beauty from a view from the tower on the ramparts. The Alawite sultan Moulay Ismaël decided in the 17th century to make Meknès the most beautiful and the most powerful of the Moroccan imperial cities. If time permits, you can stop at **Volubilis or Moulay Idriss**.

Day 4-Fez

Fez is divided in two main parts, **Fez el Jdid and Fes el Bali**.

The medina in Fez is an authentic journey back in time where you can discover traditional Moroccan crafts and arts. It dates from the 12th century and is listed as a World Heritage Site by Unesco. Your exploration of the incredible medina could last several days. You will discover many beautiful crafts including saddlery, marquetry, and brocade in the labyrinth of small streets.

In the afternoon, you will visit the **Dar Bartha museum**, the **Bou Inania médersa**, the **Nejarine Museum**, the **tanner’s quarter** and have a tea in the roof top terrase enjoying the panoramic view. Your day concludes with the visits to the **Royal Palace and the blue pottery factory**. **You will spend a second night in a charming fassi riad.**

Part II -Atlas and Sahara

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Day 5-Fez-Erfoud- a 7 hour drive

During this day-long traverse of the Middle Atlas Mountains, you will encounter spectacular views. Your first stop is **Ifrane's national park** which contains one of the largest cedar plantations in the world. The park is home to monkeys who are tame and will greet you when you arrive. Next, you will head south to **Midelt** and close by is the **Cirque of Jaffar**, where the views of the **High Atlas Mountains** are breathtaking. In Midelt, you are at the edge of the **Ziz valley**, which you will follow all the way to **Erfoud**. There you will be on the edge of the barren and awe-inspiring Saharan Desert.

Day 6-Erfoud-Merzouga- a 1 hour drive

This is the **Moroccan Sahara Desert** with sand dunes, oases and majestic rock formations. You stand on the roof of your 4-wheel drive and experience the vast expanse of seas of desert sand and the wonder of the largest desert on the planet. At night, you will sleep in a traditional **Kasbah**.

Day 7-Merzouga-Boulmane du Dadès- a 3 ½ hour drive

Wake up very early to enjoy the sunrise and if you are lucky you will still see a full moon. Return to your kasbah and rest close to the swimming pool or go for a **camelback tour**. Lunch time will be at the *oasis of Tinejdad*, where you will visit the **ksar El Korbati**. El Khorbat for Patrimony and Sustainable Development has been created to sustain conservation of the life in the Ksar and aid in developing **ecotourism**. The last stop of the day is **the Todra gorge**. The rock walls of the gorge narrow as they climb to close to 1,000 feet (300 meters) above you.

Day 8-Boulmane Ouarzazate a 2 hour drive

The route of the 1000 Kasbahs is an incredible sight. You will encounter the **Sahro djebel** (mountain) situated south of **Boumalne**. There you can observe many of the 150 varieties of birds in the **Valley of the Birds**. Your first stop of the day is the **Dadès Gorge** where the morning light creates perfect photo opportunities. By continuing your trip along the **Dadès river**, you will pass through the rose country. **El Kelaât M'Gouna** is where rose water, used in cosmetic preparations, is made. This area is lined with kasbahs, unique fortified villages, and traditional Berber adobe houses. Take a cool break at the **Skoura palm grove**. During the day, depending on the light, the rocks change from red to pink to mauve.

Day 9-Ouarzazate-Marrakech- a 4 hour drive

Ever since **Lawrence of Arabia** was filmed there in 1962, Ouarzazate has been a popular spot for movie making. In the morning, you will visit the old medina of Ouarzazate and the impressive **Aït Benhaddou ksar**, a Unesco World Heritage of Humanity Site. The day concludes with a magnificent panorama of the palm grove and the **High Atlas mountain** through the **Tizi n'Tichka pass** as you complete one of the most beautiful drives in Morocco. That night you will rest in your riad of Marrakech!

Part III-Marrakech and Essaouira

Day 10-Marrakech

Marrakech, also called **the red city**, is a pearl polished by history and has a long standing tradition of hospitality. In the old medina and the Jemaa El Fna, the past suddenly appears in the form of storytellers, street performers, snake charmers and magicians dispensing secret potions and medicines. You must absolutely visit the **Souks**, the **Majorelle Gardens**, the

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medersas Ben Youcef, the Menara Gardens, and the Koutoubia. At the end of the afternoon, have a fresh-squeezed orange juice on a roof top terrace and listen to the calling for the fifth Muslim prayer of the day.

Day 11-Marrakech-Essaouira : a 2 ½ hour drive

Free time in Marrakech. You can treat yourself to a **massage with argan oil and traditional body scrub.** Other options include shopping at **Gueliz**, a modern neighborhood of the city, or a **cooking class.** On the road to Essaouira, you will see **argan trees** and traditional villages.

Day 12-Essaouira

Spending your day in Mogador

The seaside ambiance of **Essaouira** is an invitation to rest and let go. You can enjoy the beach on horseback or camelback. You can also tour the ramparts with their rows of cannons. At the workshop of a **cabinetmaker** or **inlayer**, you will be surprised by the number of different kinds of wood used by these skilful craftsmen. At Essaouira, you can tour a number of art galleries where a unique collection of contemporary art blends a multitude of traditions (Arab, Berber, Jewish, African and European).

Day 13-Essaouira-Casablanca- a 5 ½ hour drive

For your last day of vacation we chose a beautiful coastal road drive. You will visit **Safi, Oualidia, and El Jadida.**

Safi: This ancient Portuguese fortified city is famous for its ceramics museum and its potters' quarter. Food lovers come here to sample oysters in Oualidia. There is excellent surfing at **Sidi Bouzid**, one of the most famous surfing sites in the world.

El Jadida was built in 1514 by the Portuguese. This underground chamber may have been used as an arsenal before being transformed into a cistern to be used during sieges. The Gothic architecture of this large squarely shaped room supported by five rows of columns and a vaulted ceiling will amaze you. This room has served as the set for many films, including the **Othello** by **Orson Welles.**

Day 14-Bye bye Morocco !

Transfer from your hotel to the airport.

DETAILS

- ❖ **Tour duration:** 14 days
- ❖ **Group Size:** 4 to 5 persons maximum per vehicle
- ❖ **Start on:** all year long
- ❖ **Country visited:** Morocco
- ❖ **Comfort:** Medium to high

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- ❖ **Level of difficulty:** easy
- ❖ **Transport:** 4 by 4 vehicle with English speaking private driver
- ❖ **Accommodation:** Private double room; 3 or 4 person accommodation available

- ❖ **Additional Information:** Passport needed at the time of booking

- ❖ **What's Included:**
 - Private English speaking guide for Fez, Marrakech.
 - Private English speaking driver for 12 days.
 - 13 nights in riads, guesthouses, kasbahs or luxury hotels
 - Meals :*
 - Breakfast included for Casablanca, Rabat, Fez, Marrakech, Essaouira
 - Half board (breakfast & dinner) for Erfoud, Merzouga, Boulmane, Ouarzazate
 - Private transfer to the hotel the first day and private transfer back the last day airport/hotel/airport
- ❖ **What's not included:**
 - Flights from your country of origin
 - Meals not mentioned in the program
 - Tips
 - Museums and attractions entrance fees
- ❖ **Tours on request:**
 - Hot air balloon at Marrakech
 - Cooking class at Fez
 - Hamman and massage at Marrakech
 - Bivouac in the Sahara

Tips from Zuzulu team :

- Mosques are not accessible to non-muslims except the Mosque Hassan II in Casablanca
- The food is excellent but the service can be slow ...but this is Africa. Relax and enjoy your vacation !
- Friday is the day of prayer for muslims; stores may be closed or have shorter hours.

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