

Moroccan Exploration

Wondrous Escape
into the Heart of the Maghreb
October 11th - 26th, 2023



Slumber in the Desert



Hospitality, Moroccan Tea



Culture, Souks of Fez

Highlights

Luxury Camp & Camel Ride

Few places on Earth compare to the Sahara desert. Venture out into coppercoloured sand with dunes rolling on the horizon. Travel by 4x4 through the soft sand to an enchanting, tented camp, indulge in a sunset camel ride and celebrate with a traditional Berber feast and live entertainment before falling asleep under the star-filled sky. Morocco's desert is an adventure of a lifetime.

Souks

A spellbinding maze of alleyways, discover the most amazing Moroccan markets in Fez and Marrakesh. Alive with vibrant energy, make way through passages filled with sensationally crafted merchandise as the vendors call-out. Between the smell of the aromatic spices and the feel of the hand-woven carpets, visiting a souk is a full sensory experience.

The Ancient Medinas

The beating heart of Moroccan urban life, ancient medinas are the old towns of Moroccan cities. Surrounded by towering walls, around which the rest of the city was built, is a maze of cobblestoned lanes. Treasures lurk behind the tall walls of the culturally rich old towns of Marrakesh, Fez, Essaouira and Chefchaouen. A glimpse into the way things used to be, this is the 'real Morocco' in all its charm and glory.

The Coast

Running along the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Mediterranean Sea, the Moroccan coast is dotted with charming harbours, fishing ports and beautiful beach towns. Feel like a local while ambling through the streets of Casablanca or enjoy the peaceful relaxation of the quieter beach towns of Rabat, Moulay Bouselham and M'Diq. Morocco's leisurely coast is just as appealing as its bustling interior.

Limited Spaces. Reserve today!

Your 16-Day Journey

Day 1 **Depart for Casablanca, Morocco**

Start your Journey with us by enjoying a private car pick up service from your home. Upon arrival at the airport, guests departing from the Toronto airport are assisted with their check-in. Meet your Journey Manager and fellow guests, and board your flights to Morocco. Our Journey Manager travels with you to take care of all the details, allowing you to embrace your Journey.

Overnight: Flight

Meals: ---

Day 2 **Casablanca**

On arrival in Casablanca, we meet our friendly local guide. Following a morning drive around the coastal city, we visit the Hassan II Mosque, whose minaret soars 175 metres above the city. After a light lunch, a scenic drive takes us to Rabat, where we enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Enjoy dinner at our hotel and take the time to settle-in and meet fellow travellers.

Overnight: Rabat, Tour Hassan

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Day 3 **Rabat**

The “Fortified Place,” the literal meaning of Rabat is the capital city of Morocco. Its wide boulevards are filled with out-of-the-ordinary 7th-century historical monuments. Today we explore the administrative capital of Rabat and witness the marble Mohammed V Mausoleum decorated with exquisite zellige (geometric mosaic tiles) and the unfinished but ever striking Hassan Tower, which was meant to be the largest minaret in the world. Then we pay a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kasbah of the Udayas. It is within these historical walls that the city of Rabat began in the 12th century. After lunch, enjoy an afternoon of free time before joining us for dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Rabat, Tour Hassan

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 4 Moulay Idriss & Volubilis

After breakfast, we head to the imperial walled city of Fez, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site that will transport you back to medieval times; upon arrival, we explore the holy town of Moulay Idriss. Spread over two hills at the base of Mount Zerhoun, it holds a special place in the hearts of the Moroccan people. A new dynasty began here with Moulay Idriss bringing the religion of Islam and starting the construction of this marvelous city. At the archaeological site of Volubilis, our guided tour exhibits the partly excavated Roman city commonly considered the ancient capital of the Roman-Berber kingdom of Mauretania. Savour lunch in Meknes, followed by a visit to the old imperial capital. Enjoy the famous Bab Mansour Gate, the Jewish Quarter, and the vast El Hedim Square before settling into your hotel in Fez later this afternoon.

Overnight: Fez, Marriott Jnan Palace

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5 Fez: Imperial City

An exhilarating day in the religious capital of Morocco awaits. Cradle of a thousand-year-old monarchy, Fez shares her memories of 12 centuries of history and shows us the refinement of Hispano-Moorish culture. After a visit of the Medina, a UNESCO World Heritage site, we continue to the Bou Inania Madrasa and the Nejjarine fountain. Following lunch the afternoon is yours to continue exploring or maybe treat yourself to a Hammam. This evening we enjoy dinner at our hotel.

Overnight: Fez, Marriott Jnan Palace

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 Fez

This morning we continue exploring Fez. Our first visit is to see the exteriors of the Royal Palace and the Bab Bou Jeloud gate. Following a visit to a tannery in the heart of the bustling souk, we enjoy lunch at the beautiful Palace restaurant. We continue our exploration with a visit to the pottery district to discover the art of Moroccan ceramics and tilework before some free time in the afternoon to do as much or a little as you please. Dinner this evening is at our hotel.

Overnight: Fez, Marriott Jnan Palace

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 7 Ifrane, Midelt, Erfoud

Today we travel an idyllic route to the Sahara Desert. Along the way, admire the parade of mountains, valleys, forests, and desert. We stop in the city of Ifrane which is unlike any other town in Morocco. Located at an altitude of 5,460 feet above sea level in the Middle Atlas region, this small hill town has a Swiss alpine feel to it. With neat red-roofed houses, blooming flower beds, lake-studded parks and snowbound winters, this remarkable European styled town is often referred to as “Morocco’s Switzerland.” Next, we visit Azrou, which translates literally to “rock” in the local Amazigh language and is named for the large, black volcanic outcrop in the centre of town. Lunch is near the town of Midelt in the plains of the Middle Atlas. Our drive continues to Erfoud for a relaxing evening and dinner at our hotel.

Overnight: Erfoud, Kasbah Hôtel Xaluca Arfoud

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 Merzouga

Merzouga lies on the edge of Erg Chebbi, a monumental series of sand dunes that reach heights of 160 metres, larger than many skyscrapers. It’s an amazing sight, especially as the dunes change colour in the setting sun from shades of gold to orange, pink and purple. Here our desert adventure by 4x4 begins as we climb to the top of a hill for spectacular views of the rolling sand dunes. Enjoy a tea ceremony with a local nomad family, before continuing into the dunes for a picnic lunch. After you have settled in your luxury tented camp, we set off on a camel ride to bask in the golden sunset over the dunes. We return to the camp to enjoy a Berber feast and entertainment under the star-filled sky!

Overnight: Merzouga, Sahara SkySahara Sky

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 Boumalne Dades & Ouarzazate

We depart for the Todra Gorge, situated on the east side of the High Atlas Mountains. It is recognized around the world as one of the most spectacular canyons – a 300-metre-deep fault of limestone that offers just enough space for a crystal-clear river and a small path for hikers. After lunch, we head towards Boumalne Dades along the “Route of 1,000 Kasbahs,” famous for its beautiful and charming landscapes, as well as its idyllic gorges. Our senses then come alive as we visit the Valley of Roses, home to Morocco’s largest rose water and rose oil manufacturers. In the evening, we arrive in Ouarzazate and enjoy dinner at our hotel.

Overnight: Ouarzazate, Le Berbere Palace

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 10 Ouarzazate, Aït Ben Haddou, Marrakesh

A city of palm trees, sandy streets and fort-like buildings, Ouarzazate has stood at the edge of the Sahara Desert for hundreds of years. After a visit of the Ouarzazate film studios, we head to the ancient village of Aït Ben Haddou. This fortified city is full of towering kasbahs and crumbling walls with only five families still living inside the fortress of Kasbah of Ait Ben Haddou.

We enjoy lunch before travelling along the famous camel caravan route and over Tizi n'Tichka to Marrakesh. We settle into our riad in the heart of the city for a relaxing dinner and evening.

Overnight: Marrakesh, Hotel Radisson Blu

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11 Marrakesh

Originating from the Amazigh (Berber) words, “amur kush,” Marrakesh means “Land of God.” One of the Imperial cities of Morocco, its location and contrasting landscape make it an enviable destination in Morocco. Our exploration is vast and includes a visit of the Menara Gardens, one of the oldest gardens in Marrakesh with an immense olive grove dotted with palm and cypress trees. Next, we visit the Mellah (Jewish Quarter) and the Bahia Palace, one of Marrakesh’s most imposing buildings. A visit to Marrakesh would not be complete without seeing the well-known Koutoubia Mosque. Following lunch, we explore the souks and the famous Jemaa el-Fna Square. Dinner this evening is sure to delight.

Overnight: Marrakesh, Hotel Radisson Blu

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 Marrakesh

This morning we visit the Majorelle Garden, made in the 1920s by the French painter Jacques Majorelle, with marble pools, raised pathways, banana trees, groves of bamboo, coconut palms and bougainvilleas. Perhaps unsurprisingly as the garden was designed by a painter, the garden is composed and coloured like a painting. Many of the built features were painted in a dark blue ('Majorelle Blue') which works very well with the soil, climate and plants. Next we visit the Yves Saint Laurent Museum which is entirely devoted to the work of the legendary fashion designer. Following lunch in a local restaurant the afternoon is at your leisure. This evening dinner is at our hotel.

Overnight: Marrakesh, Hotel Radisson Blu

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 13 Marrakesh & Essaouira

This morning we travel to Essaouira, known as Morocco's "windy city." A combination of spectacular beaches, great sea and the almost constant tropical trade winds has changed this city from a hardworking port into one of the world's greatest sites for windsurfing, kiteboarding and other exhilarating watersports. The city has a dual heritage, and this can be seen in the mighty walls that surround this old Moroccan trade centre. Once a Portuguese fortress, rusting cannons between the ramparts still point out to sea. There is a certain European feel to the construction of the city once known as Mogador. Following lunch and a wine tasting at a local vineyard, we visit an Argan Oil Women's Cooperative before checking into our hotel and enjoy the afternoon at leisure. Dinner this evening is at our hotel.

Overnight: Essaouira, MGallery by Sofitel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14 Essaouira

A day dedicated to relaxation, exploration, or quiet time. This endearing seaside resort and fishing port extends on a narrow peninsula, ensuring rapturing views from all angles. Your lunch and afternoon are free for you to explore on your own. This evening, we dine in a lovely Caravane Café restaurant.

Overnight: Essaouira, MGallery by Sofitel

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 15 Safi, El Jadida, Casablanca

In Safi, discover this hidden gem, nestled on the shores of the Atlantic. Safi has two beating hearts; one in the old town, lined with shops offering the beautiful blue Safi ceramics, all lying in the shadows of the gorgeous Portuguese Citadel, and the new, bustling with modern energy. In El Jadida, discover the famous Portuguese fortified city of Mazagan built at the start of the 16th century. The UNESCO-listed site is often considered to be one of the country's best examples of military design. This afternoon, we arrive in Casablanca with free time to relax at your leisure.

Overnight: Casablanca, Hyatt Regency

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 16 Home

Today, we bid “wadaeean” to our new friends and make our way to the airport for our flights home. Guests arriving at the Toronto airport are greeted and assisted to their private car home.

Overnight: Home

Meals: Breakfast

All information contained in this itinerary is correct at time of printing and is subject to the terms and conditions as listed on our web site at www.jerryvandyke.com or available from our office on request. We must reserve the ability to make improvements.

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Your Journey Includes

First Class Accommodation

Rabat	Tour Hassan	2 nights
Fez	Marriott Jnan Palace	3 nights
Erfoud	Kasbah Hôtel Xaluca Arfoud	1 night
Merzouga	Sahara Sky	1 night
Ouarzazate	Le Berbere Palace	1 night
Marrakesh	Radisson Blu	3 nights
Essaouira	MGallery by Sofitel	2 nights
Casablanca	Hyatt Regency	1 night

Included International Flights

Airline:	Air Canada
Outbound:	Toronto (YYZ) – Casablanca (CMN)
Inbound:	Casablanca (CMN) – Toronto (YYZ)
Class of Service:	Economy <i>Premium Economy and Business are available on request</i>
Note:	Fly from select Canadian gateways for only \$100 <i>For additional gateways and information, contact us for details.</i>

Journeys by Van Dyke Inclusions

Journey Manager	Services of a professional Journey Manager throughout the journey
Home-Pickup Service	Private car home pick-up & return service (where available) or a credit or
Hotel Overnight	Hotel overnight near Toronto Pearson International Airport
Gratuities	Tips included for all intermediaries: all ship staff, Journey Managers, local sightseeing guides, coach drivers, porters, etc.
Porterage	Porterage for one piece of baggage
Visas & Fees	All fees, visas, port & service charges
Gift with Every Journey	Branded overnight carry-on bag or backpack
Taxes	All taxes incl. HST, PST, VAT

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Journey Specific Inclusions & Experiences

- Complete pre-trip information & assistance
- 14 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 14 dinners
- All sightseeing & entrance fees as listed
- Exploring Casablanca with Welcome Lunch
- Rabat – Archaeological Masterpiece
- Fez – 2,000-year-old Imperial City
- Holy Town of Moulay Idriss
- Archaeological Site of Volubilis
- Midelt, Merzouga & Bivouacs in the Desert
- Camels to the Dunes at Sunset
- Todra Gorge
- Village of Boumalne Dades
- Ouarzazate – Impressive Valley of Roses
- Aït Ben Haddou
- Tizi n'Tichka – Highest Mountain Pass in Morocco
- Magnificent Marrakesh
- Phoenician Trading Post, Mogador
- Two Beating Hearts of Safi
- Portuguese Fortified City of Mazagan

Fares

	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy
Main Itinerary	\$8,490 CAD	\$10,240 CAD

Fuel Surcharges - These journey fares include the current known fuel surcharges. Additional supplier fuel charges and or government fees may apply at final payment date.

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Outstanding Accommodation

Rabat

2 nights

Tour Hassan

A tribute to the splendour of Moorish architecture, which combines elegance and an atmosphere filled with unique majesty. Those who don't know may pass by without realization, but those who enter are transformed into another world of history, culture, and comfort.



Fez

3 nights

Marriott Jnan Palace

Set in the heart of Fez, in the city's new quarter, Fes Marriott Hotel Jnan Palace offers air-conditioned rooms and an outdoor swimming pool, a gym and a sauna. Guest rooms at Fes Marriott Hotel Jnan Palace each feature a balcony and some rooms have views of the surrounding gardens or the pool.



Erfoud

1 night

Kasbah Hôtel Xaluca Arfoud

The Kasbah is listed as unique in Morocco due to its distinctive characteristics. Built with adobes, the traditional Moroccan building bricks, its 137 spacious rooms are decorated with regional materials and combine tradition with modern amenities.



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Merzouga Sahara Sky

1 night

Few experiences can beat an overnight desert camp, Sahara Sky Luxury Camp takes this to an unexpected level of luxury in a secluded setting, far from mass tourism in Merzouga. Dine under the stars, sleep in the desert winds and enjoy the romance of it all, large white tents furnished with a rustic chandelier.



Ouarzazate Le Berbère Palace

1 night

Le Berbère Palace opens the doors to the desert and its spellbinding landscapes. In a sumptuous and colorful decor inspired by the local architecture of Ksour and Kasbahs, it proudly displays its exterior walls covered with compressed earth evoking the buildings of the region.



Marrakesh Hotel Radisson Blu

3 nights

Set in the heart of Marrakech, the Radisson Blu welcomes visitors to the vibrant Gueliz quarter. This modern hotel features a beautiful lobby, patio and restaurant. The hotel's leisure facilities include a spa, a fitness center and an aquarium swimming pool surrounded by a spacious patio with sunbeds.



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Essaouira

2 nights

MGallery by Sofitel

Inspired by the magnificent Moroccan riads, the MGallery by Sofitel is decorated in the traditional red of Mogador. Close to the sea, the medina and the port, this luxury 5-star hotel blends modernity with Moroccan style for a sophisticated stay.



Casablanca

1 night

Hyatt Regency

Designed for both business and leisure travel, Hyatt Regency is ideally situated in Fonciere, one of the city's most popular locales. A haven of rest and relaxation, the hotel offers total renewal just steps away from the lively city's numerous attractions.



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Personal Notes & Questions