

Trip Dossier for Morocco – Kasbahs & Camels

Trip Code: FMKC Issue date: 10 August 2009 Valid from: 01 October 2009

Day 1 Fly to Marrakech

Depart from London to fly to Marrakech. On arrival you will be met by our local guide/tour leader and transferred to your hotel in the heart of this bustling city that lies with easy reach of the snow-capped mountains of the High Atlas. Check into your hotel. **Hotel (breakfast)**

Day 2 Marrakech city tour; drive over the Atlas Mountains to Ait Ben Haddou (4 hrs drive)

This morning we include a tour of the city. First you'll visit Palais Bahia, the magnificent nineteenth century palace that was built as the residence for the all-powerful vizier who ruled over the city. It is constructed from the finest materials available: Meknès marble, ceramic tiles from Tetouân and cedar from the Middle Atlas, and it's not difficult to imagine the splendour that must have existed when the court was there. From here your guide will lead you deep into Marrakech's renowned souks or markets - as in the Middle Ages, all the practitioners of a craft are grouped together in a single area: the leather tanners, the dyers, the metal-workers etc. You could spend hours wandering the maze of narrow streets and alleyways, practising your bargaining skills. At midday you'll leave Marrakech and drive over the High Atlas via Tizi-n-Tichka pass at 2260m to Ait Ben Haddou. Stop for a picnic lunch en route. It is easy to see why film producers pick Ait Ben Haddou for such movies as *Gladiator*, *Lawrence of Arabia* and more recent films *The Mummy*, *The Mummy Returns* and *Alexander*. It is also a UNESCO world heritage site. Standing on the ancient caravan route through the Atlas mountains, this fortified city or 'ksar' has grown up over the last five hundred years, its location dominating the landscape for miles around. Deep red sun-baked kasbahs are elaborately decorated and crenulated, perched one above another hugging the mountain slope. **Hotel with swimming pool (breakfast lunch and dinner)**

Day 3 Drive to Freija – Berber village in the Southern Atlas (4 -5hrs drive)

You can spend a bit of time exploring Ait Ben Haddou and leave late morning for the drive via Tizi n'Bachkoum to Tazenakht, and then on to the high plateau of Taliouine at the foot of the Djebel Siroua mountains. Enjoy a picnic lunch on the way. Finally you'll reach Taroudant, the imperial city of the Saadians, which sits behind impressive rose coloured ramparts amidst a landscape of argan trees. These trees, which are unique to Morocco, produce oil somewhat similar to olive oil that is used for both cosmetic and culinary purposes. From here, we head north to Freija a typical Berber village. On arrival at Freija you'll settle in to your rustic riad and get to know the village and our hosts.

2 nights – riad with small pool (breakfast, picnic lunch and dinner)

Day 4 Walk in the Atlas Mountains (4 hrs walking)

From Freija we drive 17km to the oasis at Tioute. Freija is the perfect base for gentle walks into the surrounding countryside. Throughout the day you'll get glimpses of Berber life and develop a real understanding of how these hardy people live in close contact with their environment. Passing through several small villages, you walk through fields in the shade of the walnut and argan trees. The almond trees flower here in Jan and Feb with their beautiful pink and white blossom, and can be seen all throughout the walk during the following few days. The walnut trees come into leaf later than most of the other trees and flowers here, usually at the end of March. Along the dry riverbeds you will see many oleander plants, which flower mainly through the summer months, but can start at the end of April. These red, pink and white flowers certainly brighten the arid surroundings. You have a picnic lunch in the shade of an argan tree, and there is time to rest and enjoy the peace of the mountains, with views of Jebel Awlim and Tinerqwet, before continuing back to Afensou (approx 9km, 4 hrs walking time). You and your kids can improve your cooking skills by learning how to cook a traditional Moroccan *tajine* - something that will stand you in good stead back home!

Day 5 Drive to Essaouira (5 hrs drive)

This morning you'll drive back to Taroudant and stop for a little while before you continue driving along the winding coast road to Essaouira, a former pirates' lair. The first part is almost sub-tropical with sheltered valleys where bananas are cultivated intensively. Much of the higher ground is given over to argan trees, and it's here that you're likely to spot the improbable sight of a tree full of goats - the goats climb into the trees to eat whatever they can. Fortunately argan trees are largely resistant to this kind of assault. On arrival in Essaouira we check in to your hotel. **2 nights - Hotel (breakfast)**

Day 6 In Essaouira

After the travelling it's great to have a free day, so today we leave you free to relax and unwind in the balmy Atlantic climate. The fishing port of Essaouira has expanded over the last few decades to become one of Morocco's premier resorts, with its wide sandy beach, where it's possible to hire a camel, go for a long walk or even go kite-surfing. It's an easy place to relax at the end of your tour. The town itself is a delight – its pleasantly



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uncomplicated layout makes it a pleasure to wander, and lots of fixed price shops seem to have a way of winking out whatever cash you have to spend on the regional speciality: finely carved articles of *thuya* wood. Needless to say, Essaouira is also a great place to eat fish and there are restaurants a-plenty to try out, or you can eat at a stall on the quayside!

Day 7 Morning free in Essaouira; afternoon drive to Marrakech (3 hrs drive)

This morning is at leisure in Essaouira and after lunch (own expense) you will leave the coast and return to Marrakech. Early evening is a great time to visit the great open square of Djemma el-Fna that attracts storytellers, snake-charmers, fire-eaters to entertain the crowds that assemble here. The outdoor food stalls help to guarantee that it's the focus of all life in the ancient *medina* (walled city). **Hotel (breakfast)**

Day 8 Depart for London

You'll be transferred to Marrakech airport in time for the morning departure of the return international flight to London.

To see photos related to this trip, go to our website at www.familiesworldwide.co.uk

This itinerary includes our group flights from London. If you are making other flight arrangements, please refer to your Confirmation Invoice and Joining Instructions for details of the start or end of the trip. Please remember international flights and trip dates do occasionally change, so please always purchase flexible tickets.

Each itinerary is planned many months in advance and although it is our intention to operate the itinerary as printed in the brochure and detailed here, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of alterations to flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors which are beyond our control. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops may vary from those outlined but we will always endeavour to keep you informed of any such changes. Included meals are indicated in the daily itinerary.

Optional Extras

These excursions, if available, can be arranged through your tour leader (per person cost shown below)

Essaouira - camel ride on beach

£10 – £20

Climate The best time of year to visit Morocco is between October and June, when the days vary between warm and hot and the nights are mild or occasionally cold – however it's possible to travel all year round. Humidity is generally low and there is little rain. During the winter months, it can get very cold at night - particularly higher up in the mountains and in the low-lying desert - so warm clothes are essential.

Average monthly temperatures in Marrakech.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Max °C	18	20	22	25	28	33	38	37	33	27	23	19
Min °C	5	8	9	11	14	17	21	20	19	15	10	8
Rainfall (mm)	29	30	31	33	20	8	2	2	10	17	27	33

Is this right for your family? Suitable for children from ages five and up. Accommodation is in local style riads, gites and comfortable hotels. The walk in the mountains is supported by mules who can carry tired children if necessary. There are some long drives, but this enables you to visit Marrakech, the mountains and the coast.

Lone Parents Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries, including the UK, require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the relevant country embassy for further information on exactly what may be required. These details can be found on the Foreign & Commonwealth Website under the appropriate country www.fco.gov.uk/travel

Accommodation The hotels used throughout this trip are a combination of 3 star standard hotels and traditional riad in Freija with a pool. The rooms are generally booked on twin share basis, however there are exceptions where the whole family may share together. The hotels are modern, clean and comfortable and offer friendly service and rooms with private facilities. The mention of a swimming pool at a hotel should not be taken as a guarantee but rather an indication. You should also be aware that swimming pools at the hotels are often unheated and so can be cold in the winter months or even closed.



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Food and Drink Included meals are indicated in the itinerary. Meals in the village are hygienically prepared and we take in most provisions ourselves. Breakfast is usually continental in style - with some local additions - served with tea or coffee, picnic lunches (where applicable) are simple but adequate. A vegetarian option is always available. For meals not included in the itinerary you should allow £12-15 per person day to cover lunch and dinner. It is possible to eat cheaply in Morocco, but if you choose to eat in expensive restaurants you should allow a little more. Your local tour leader/guide will be on hand to make personal recommendations. We recommend you drink plenty of bottled water during your trip.

Moroccan food is excellent. First class fresh produce, with the subtle addition of herbs and spices, is used to produce innumerable *tagines* (stews), *mechoui* (roast lamb), couscous and *pastilla* (pigeon pie). Fresh seasonal fruit is delicious, as are Moroccan cakes and pastries. In Marrakech European - mainly French - food is also available. Bottled mineral water and soft drinks are available almost everywhere. Although you can buy alcohol in Marrakech, our policy is to discourage its use in mountain villages due to local cultural and religious sensitivities. Vegetarians will find that there is generally little difficulty on this tour. However, please make sure that you advise Families Worldwide at the time of booking if you have any special dietary requirements. If necessary please make polite, subtle excuses if we are guests in a village house as it is rude to refuse food that is offered, but it is usually quite easy to 'pretend' to eat with the group.

Local Costs in Morocco *Based on a mid range tourist restaurant.

A small bottle of mineral water (500ml)	£0.60
A large bottle of mineral water (1 litre)	£1.00
A can of coke (soft drinks)	£0.90
A carton or bottle of fruit juice	£1.25
A bottle of beer	£2.25
Tea or coffee	£0.90
A light lunch time snack – sandwich for example	£3.50
A two course meal* - excluding drinks	£6.50
A three course meal* - excluding drinks	£11.00

Currency The unit of currency is the Moroccan Dirham (MAD or Dh). At the time of writing (July 2009) UK £1 = MAD 12.30. ATMs (cash machine dispensers) are widespread in the cities and provide a convenient means of obtaining cash. Credit cards are accepted in banks and larger hotels and some souvenir shops. You will need to change all the money that you will need for the trek at the start in Marrakech or at the airport, as there are no exchange facilities on the trek.

Please note when departing Morocco you are not allowed to leave the country with large amount of Moroccan Dirhams and you may be asked to exchange this back into Pounds Sterling. At the airport, the cafes in the departure lounge accept Dirhams – but the duty free shops are priced in Euros. You can of course pay for goods at the airport with Visa or Mastercard, Euros and Pound Sterling.

Tipping is a recognised part of life and, although at your discretion, you will be expected to reward service. It should be remembered, however, that over-generosity could lead to jealousies in poor countries. Please remember that all tips should be a way for individuals to thank staff for good service. We do not encourage the tipping of snake charmers, animal keepers or the likes. As a guideline each person should allow £2-3 per day to cover tips to local staff (approximately Dhs1000 in total for a family of four). Your tour leader will request the tips kitty at the start of the tour and he will be responsible for distributing this to the local drivers, muleteers, cook, porter etc.

Language Arabic; Berber and French are also widely spoken.

Security Whilst the vast majority of travellers never experience anything untoward it is worth taking precautions particularly in urban areas. You should take sensible precautions in crowded areas such as street markets and airports, where pick-pocketing is common, and keep clear of any street disturbances. Don't wear jewellery, never leave your bags unattended, keep large amounts of money, cameras and mobile phones out of sight when walking in town centres, and avoid walking in city centres after dark. Keep copies of important documents, including passports, in a separate place to the documents themselves, together with details of credit cards. Leave copies at home with a friend too. Safeguard valuables, important documents and cash and deposit them in hotel safes, where practicable.

Time Morocco is GMT.



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Cultural Shock As Morocco is a Muslim country we do ask all participants to consider how they dress in cities and villages. It is expected that women will cover legs and shoulders, although, as Morocco becomes more westernised, even the local people are becoming more relaxed about this. On trek, shorts are accepted for walking, but both men and women should wear trousers or a long skirt when staying in the villages. Please do not simply look at other tourists and feel that what they wear is correct – you will never know what the local people think of them. To gain respect from the Moroccan people you should show that you are trying to respect their culture. If in doubt at any time, please consult your tour leader.

RAMADAN 2010 11th August – 8th September 2010 (dates not fixed but dependent on the lunar calendar): Please note that Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world, during which time the followers of Islam should not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. There may be some limitations to services and disruptions to schedules during Ramadan, but generally our tours still operate effectively during this period and food is available to non-Muslims throughout the day in most countries. Please be aware of the local sensitivities during the day and bear in mind that the evening breaking of the fast is usually an exciting and celebratory period! (1st August to 29th August 2011)

Packing List Please refer to our separate “packing list”.



Clothing & Equipment List for Morocco – Kasbahs & Camels

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Although Western clothing is quite acceptable, Moroccans generally dress more traditionally - especially in rural areas. Out of respect for local culture please dress conservatively i.e. no sleeveless or low cut tops etc. Although shorts are acceptable in main tourist areas, they (like skirts) should be baggy and reach at least to the knee. Women should cover their heads, arms and legs when entering religious buildings. At night in the desert or mountains (especially from October to March) it can get surprisingly cold, so pack warm and windproof clothing.

The following list of clothing and equipment is intended to be fairly comprehensive and experienced travellers may well take a good deal less luggage than we recommend.

CLOTHING	NUMBER PER PERSON	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Walking Boots	1 pair (optional)		Soft-sided bag (50-80 litres)	
Trainers or strong sandals	1 pair – all purpose wear		Lightweight daypack (25 litres)	
Socks	2 thick + 2 thin		Sleeping bag (Nov-Feb) or sleeping sheet	
Waterproof jacket	1 lightweight		Sunscreen – lots of it	
Waterproof trousers	Recommended in winter		Sunglasses	
Underwear	3+		Personal First Aid Kit	
Thermal underwear	Recommended in winter		Insect Repellent (with high DEET content)	
T-Shirts	3+		Torch and batteries	
Long walking trousers or skirt	2+		Camera, memory card and accessories	
*Shorts/Short trousers	2		Reading material	
Long sleeve shirt	2+		Washing kit – inc “dry” handwash & wet wipes	
Track Suit Bottoms or Similar	Optional		Binoculars	
Thick Fleece	Recommended in winter		Towel or sarong	
Warm jacket	1		Bicycle helmet – recommended for children when riding mules	
Thin fleece or sweatshirt	1		Walking pole(s) – optional	
Sunhat / baseball cap	Essential		Loo kit (in small bag) loo paper / tissues	
Warm hat & gloves	Recommended in winter		Ear Plugs	
Swimwear	1			

*shorts/ short trousers: are fine for children, but we recommend adults cover their legs (at least to the knee) and upper arms.

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Passport/ Visa		Small Sewing Kit & Safety Pins	
Air Tickets		Universal Travelling Adapter	
Money/Travellers Cheques		Penknife – not in hand luggage	
Cash Cards/Visa		Small Calculator	
Insurance Documents		Sweets and snacks for the journey	
Trip Information & Itinerary		Guide Book & Map	
Money Security Belt/Pouch		Notebook/Diary/Pen	
Spectacles/Contact Lenses		Small present for local kids – pens, balloons, colouring books, pencils, bubbles, toothbrushes & paste	

For details regarding **hand luggage restrictions**, please visit www.baa.com for details



MAD 110 per sleeping bag and per day of use in camps or gîtes - due limited stock please advise Families Worldwide in advance if you wish to hire sleeping bags. Please pay locally for the hire of the sleeping bags.