

Trip Dossier for Morocco – Morocco Highlights

Trip Code: FMGT Issue date: 30 July 2009 Valid from: 29 March 2010

Just across the Straits of Gibraltar Morocco will absorb your family with exotic sights, sounds and smells. We have chosen some of the highlights of this exciting country from the Imperial Cities with their palaces and sprawling souks to the emptiness of the Saharan desert where you can head off into the dunes on your camel. Contrasting with a night under the desert stars you can walk through some of the dramatic Atlas gorges, explore a kasbah of “Gladiator” fame and cross the High Atlas mountains to see Marrakech and one of the world’s great spectacles as the Djemma el Fna comes alive at dusk!

Day 1 Fly to Fez

Take a flight from London to Fez arriving mid afternoon or evening where you will be met and transferred to your hotel which is located in the heart of historic Fez. Following a meeting with your tour leader the rest of the afternoon is free to explore Fez and relax.

Hotel with swimming pool – 3 nights (breakfast)

Day 2 Fez

This morning your guide will pick you up for a full day of sightseeing. Fez is the oldest of Morocco’s four imperial cities and is still seen as the symbolic heart of Morocco, and the centre of Islamic Morocco and culture. UNESCO has contributed to saving many of its glorious buildings and so it is now one of the most fascinating medieval cities in the world. The Medina, known as Fez el Bali where you are staying, is surrounded by eight kilometres of fortified walls. Its labyrinthine streets are forbidden to motor traffic but beware being squashed flat by a donkey’s pannier! Your guide will steer you through the souks and alleyways, taking in the mosques and palaces, gardens and fountains. From the outside the houses seem unprepossessing but try and peek inside and you’ll be amazed by the richly decorated courtyards embellished with traditional Arabic plasterwork. Everywhere there is the hubbub of traders and craftspeople selling everything you can imagine. You’ll see the Karaouyine Mosque and in the afternoon see the outside of the Royal Palace and the old Jewish Quarter, the Mellah. To get a complete overview of the city you’ll be driven up to the Borj for panoramic views. If you wish your guide can take you to visit a pottery/ceramic factory.

Day 3 Meknes and Volubilis

This morning we set off early and drive to Meknes (1.5hr driving time) for a full day sightseeing tour of Meknes and Volubilis. Meknes is the home to the tomb of Sultan Moulay Ismail, one of Morocco’s most stunning monuments while the city of Volubilis is one of the best preserved Roman ruins in all of North Africa. Meknes is one of the four imperial cities, situated on the edge of the Middle Atlas Mountains at 522m, with the river Oued Boufekrane dividing the city, the fertile land and ideal climate is perfect for growing vines, olives and citrus fruits in the surrounding area. Meknes dates back to the late 17th Century and early 18th Century on your tour you will visit the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail, passing through the medina to Place el Hedim, this was remodelled in 1990’s into a pedestrianised area with fountains, decorated arcades, shops and market stalls. Then through the Bab Mansour, one of the famous and best preserved gates in Morocco with tiny green and white ceramics glinting in the sunlight. We recommend you purchase picnic items while in Meknes and have this at Volubilis. From Meknes we drive to Volubilis (45 mins) situated on a ledge of a long high plateau, with views across the valley of Moulay Idriss and the Zerhoun Mountains. Your guide will walk you around this ancient Roman city pointing out the Forum, shops and homes of the ancient Romans. Mid to late afternoon we make our way back to Fez (2hrs), time to sit back and relax on the bus. The rest of the evening is at leisure.

Day 4 Drive to Ifrane and Azrou; walk in the woods

We depart from Fez mid-morning, allowing time for you to purchase items for a picnic while in Fez before we set off on the road to Ifrane (1hr 30 minutes). Stopping en route to stretch our legs and take a walk through the woods. Keep a look out for cheeky Berber monkeys playing in the trees and coming down to the lake for a drink. On our walk, we find a suitable resting place by the lake to stop for lunch. In the afternoon we continue our journey and drive to the hotel in Azrou (approx. 45 min. drive). Once checked-in the rest of the afternoon is free to relax by the pool. Dinner is at your own expense. **Hotel with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 5 Drive to Midelt (3 hours)

The morning is free to explore the town of Azrou, with the opportunity to purchase a picnic lunch from the local shops/market and spend some time around the swimming pool. Azrou is an attractive town, with glazed green roof tiles and green painted doors and windows. Once packed up we travel across the scenic Col du Zad traversing the Middle Atlas to reach our destination of Midelt, situated in a plain between the Middle and High Atlas. There is also a very small souk – Souk Djedid - and it is interesting to see the carpets sellers competing for the best position to display their wares. The carpets are mostly locally produced with geometric designs from

tribes in the Middle Atlas. Or you may wish to enjoy relaxing by the hotel pool and enjoy the superb views of the mountains. While driving through the countryside look out for the Barbary apes playing close by. **Hotel with swimming pool (breakfast and dinner)**

Day 6 Drive to Merzouga and take a camel trek to our Bedouin Desert Camp

Today is a rather long day driving to the Sahara Desert. Following breakfast, please remember to collect your picnic lunch before you'll set off this morning across the Tizi n'Talhreht, crossing the High Atlas to the Ziz Gorge and to the 'Source Bleue' of Meski. The first part of the journey takes approximately 2 ½ hours. We make our way to the palm grove of Meski, an oasis created by the natural spring water pool – the Source Bleue, and an ideal place to stop and enjoy a swim amongst the palm groves. Following your picnic lunch we drive for approximately 2 hours to Erg Chebbi via the typical desert towns of Erfoud and Rissani. Rissani is an interesting town, known as the 'last stop' on the great caravan route across the desert, which once of historical importance with thriving gold and slave auctions. On three days a week the quiet town of Rissani springs into action for the market. There will be time to stop and browse in the souk too.

We travel west to the Erg Chebbi, where we meet our 'ships of the desert' the camel. It is a little bit awkward to get on to the camel but once comfortable you'll soon relax into the swaying side to side motion as we set off across the Sahara Desert. The ride is approximately 1½ hours to our desert camp, you will be riding through a flat stony landscape, but look out for the dunes as they begin to rise higher and higher. Approx. one hundred meters at their highest, constantly shifting and growing, the dunes here are the largest in Morocco. These provide endless entertainment for the children in the largest sandpit you can imagine. On your ride, look out for sand lizards, sand fish and scarabs.

Enjoy playing in the sand dunes and marvel at the scale of this incredible landscape. Please do not wander far away from the camp without your local guide or a member of the staff as it is easy to get disorientated in the dunes and lose your way. You can help your camelteer bake bread in the sand and be amazed at how he makes the fire, spreads it out and places the dough straight on to the ashes before covering it up with sand. When cooked he will carefully pick off the last grain and speck of ash and you can be sure nothing will ever taste more delicious. At nightfall be amazed at the amount of stars, pick out shooting stars as they dart across the sky. **Desert Camp (breakfast and dinner)**

Day 7 Explore the dunes and drive to Tinerhir

The following morning we recommend you make arrangements with the tour leader to wake you up early to watch the sunrise across the sand dunes; an unforgettable sight. This is the best time to see the dunes so be prepared for an early start; it's worth it for the magnificence of the early morning light on the dunes, their crests stretching into the distance. The rest of the morning is spent playing in the sand dunes and going for a walk with your guide. We drive from the dunes in local taxis to Merzouga, where we stop for lunch (not included) at a family house. After lunch, we drive through Erfoud and towards Tinerhir (3 – 4 hours) stopping en route to stretch our legs before reaching Tinerhir. Tinerhir is a lovely city that lies between the High Atlas Mountains in the north and Jebel Sahro in the south, Tinerhir is known by its beautiful palm grove and close proximity to the famous Todra Gorge, the most spectacular gorges of Morocco. The rest of the afternoon is free to spend chilling out by the pool. The Kasbah is a comfortable hotel with a swimming pool and a choice of two restaurants, choose between a range of local Moroccan dishes and international flavours.

Hotel with swimming pool (breakfast)

Day 8 Visit to Todra and Dades Gorge

This morning we set off for a relatively short 45 minute drive to the Todra Gorge, passing by ribbons of palm trees and pink-grey coloured buildings, constructed using the local rock, abandoned Kasbahs and ksours. This deep trench through the Atlas Mountains is an amazing geological spectacle, over the course of the day you can see the changing colour of the rock. After a hike at Todra gorge we return to Tinerhir en route to the Dades Gorge, the drive takes 2½ hours. The route takes you into the Dades river valley set between the High Atlas and Jebel Sahro mountains, with rough red rocks rising above refreshing verdant oases and ornate kasbahs. You will also have an opportunity to take a walk, perhaps amongst the fruit, olive and almond trees interspersed with irrigation channels. At Boumaine the road becomes like a switchback as you travel through the gorge with stunning views on either side down to the very bottom. Ksour and kasbahs cluster along the route as it opens out. The gorge narrows at Ait Oudinar where you will spend the night.

Auberge (breakfast and dinner)

Day 9 Explore Kasbahs and Ait Benhaddou (Total driving time 4 ½ hours)

After breakfast, we travel back through the Dades Gorge to Boumalne, then on the road of the Kasbahs via El Kelaa Mgouna to Ouarzazate, approximately 3 hours drive. El Kelaa Mgouna is known for its rose water, the bushes in spring break up the palm groves with a bright splash of colour. You will visit one of the Kasbahs enroute including Kasbah Taourirt located in Ouarzazate. Set amidst the stunning mountain scenery and the Sahara Desert, the Kasbah Taourirt is these days a museum and one of the most beautiful Kasbahs in Morocco. In past, it was a strategic location controlled by the Glaoui for the Saharan Caravan Route to West Africa. Nowadays visitors can explore the myriad of mysterious stairwells, courtyards and rooms and learn about it's strategic historical importance. From here we drive for a further 1 ½ hour to Ait Ben Haddou and visit the spectacular Kasbah featured in movies such 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. The deep red sun-baked kasbahs are elaborately decorated and crenulated, perched one above another hugging the mountain slope. Our hotel for the night, with pool, overlooks the Kasbah. **Hotel with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 10 Drive to Marrakech (4hrs drive)

This morning you will have a spectacular crossing over the High Atlas via the Tizi-n-Tichka pass at 2260m and make your way to Marrakech. In the afternoon you have free time to relax by the pool or explore the souk. Marrakech is renowned for its 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. Early evening is a great time to visit the great open square of Djemma el-Fna that attracts story-tellers, 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 with pool – 2 nights (breakfast)**

Day 11 Marrakech City Tour

This morning we include a tour of the city. Marvel at the culture and history of this imperial 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. Your tour will include a visit to the Saadien Tombs, go through the old city walls into a myriad of alleyways. Your city guide will tell you stories of the Marrakech imperial past. The rest of the day is free to enjoy the hustle and bustle of the 'red city' Marrakech. The lively bazaars infused with spices, oranges and mint will absorb you. Search through the souks for your magic carpet and Aladdin's lamp and venture into the Djemma el Fna at sunset to watch it come alive; a carnival of entertainment.

Day 12 Depart for London

Sadly, it is time to depart and you'll be transferred to Marrakech airport in time for the morning departure of the return international flight to London. However, you may wish to venture into the former pirate's liar and visit one of the prettiest coastal towns, Essaouira.

Extension to Essaouira

For those people taking our extension to Essaouira the itinerary varies from the above as follows:

Days 12 & 13 Transfer to Marrakech and drive to Essaouira (3 hours)

Following breakfast, you will be collect from the hotel and travel by road to the coast and Essaouira. It's not a terribly interesting drive, so bring along reading material and games for the children. On arrival in Essaouira, vehicles cannot enter the narrow alley of the medina, where our hotel is situated, so agree a price with a local barrow-man (10-20 dirhams) and ask for your hotel. This hotel is built around a tranquil central courtyard, is well-situated in the heart of the town.

You have plenty of free time to relax and unwind in Essaouira, a former pirates' lair on the balmy Atlantic coast. It has a wide sandy beach, and it's possible to hire a camel at the far end of the beach, go for a long walk or even go kite-surfing. It's an easy place to while away a relaxing few days at the end of your trip. The town itself is a delight – its' pleasantly 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. The fishing port is colourful and fascinating so, needless to say, Essaouira is also a great place to eat fish and there are countless stalls and cafes close by offering fresh fish at reasonable prices. **Hotel 2 nights - (2 breakfasts)**

Day 14 Free time in Essaouira and drive back to Marrakech

Free time in Essaouira to relax and explore. Mid afternoon transfer back to Marrakech (approximately 3 hrs) please re-confirm your transfer time with your driver. The rest of the evening is free in Marrakech. **Hotel (breakfast)**

Day 15 Fly to London

Depending on the departure time of your flight, the morning is free until your departure to Marrakech International Airport for your return international flight to London.

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.

Climate In general Morocco experiences hot, dry summers and mild winters. In the area of this trip you can expect rather good to hot daytime temperatures at either end of the season (October and April), temperatures at Christmas can be rather cool, so remember your thermals! Temperatures rarely drop below freezing, but you must be prepared for cold conditions at nights. Rain is very unlikely but nevertheless you must be suitably equipped as it does occur from time to time and can be very impressive when it happens. Dust/sand storms can also occur without warning and it is best to be equipped with a 'shesh' (Moroccan headscarf), as worn by the desert people.

Average monthly temperatures in Ouarzazate.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Max °C	18	20	22	25	28	33	37	36	33	27	22	17
Min °C	5	8	9	11	14	17	20	19	19	15	9	7
Rainfall (mm)	29	30	31	33	20	7	2	2	10	17	27	33

Is this right for your family? Suitable for children from ages seven and up. There are a few long driving days to get between these highlights. Most of the roads are paved making travelling a lot faster and more comfortable. However, to get to the 'real desert' of Merzouga is a camel ride into the sand dunes. Facilities in the desert camp will be basic.

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 riads/hotels/auberge. 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. While in the desert the facilities are basic and we recommend you pack a dry anti-bacterial handwash and wet wipes. You'll sleep over night in a nomad tents where mattresses and blankets will be provided but it can get a little bit chilly at night despite being wrapped up in your sleeping bag you may wish to wear a sweater, socks and a scarf or 'shesh' (Moroccan headscarf) to bed. The camp staff will erect a toilet tent as well.

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. During the camel trek, large quantities of fresh fruit and vegetables are used to produce hearty meals, mostly tagines and couscous, but you can also expect some pasta based dishes. Bread is always available and will be baked over open fires at the



FAMILIES

WORLDWIDE
Experiencing your World Together

overnight camps. We provide tea, coffee, mint tea and hot chocolate, at the beginning and end of each day, but not boiled water, as only a limited amount of bottled gas can be carried. 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.

Bottled mineral water is readily available in the cities and towns. Soft fizzy drinks are very common in Morocco. As Morocco is a Muslim country you will only be able to buy beer in the main tourist centres. We recommend you drink plenty of bottled mineral water during your trip.

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 UK £1 = 12.3 MAD (July 2009). ATMs (cash machine dispensers) are widespread in the larger cities and provide a convenient means of obtaining cash. Credit cards are accepted in banks and larger hotels and some souvenir shops.

Please note when departing Morocco you are not allowed to leave the country with large amount of Moroccan Dirhams and you maybe 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 Dhs1200 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.

Glossary

agadir	granary
ait	tribe
dar	house
djellabah	long, hooded garment
erg	sand dune
jbel	mountain
jorf	cliff
kasbah	castle/fortified residence
ksar (pl. ksour)	fortified village/town
medina	town
oued	river
pise	river mud-clay mixed with straw or rubble for buildings
riad	traditional courtyard garden home/many have been converted into hotels
souk	market/stall
shesh	Moroccan headscarf – mainly worn in the desert
tizi	mountain pass

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.

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 – Morocco Highlights

Trip Code: FMHM **Issue date:** 30 July 2009 **Valid from:** 29 March 2010

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 950-80 litres)	
Trainers or strong sandals	1 pair – all purpose wear		Lightweight daypack (25 litres)	
Warm jacket	1		Sleeping bag (Nov-Feb) or sleeping sheet	
Waterproof jacket	1 lightweight		Sunscreen – lots of it	
Waterproof trousers	Recommended from autumn to spring		Sunglasses	
T-Shirts	3+		Personal First Aid Kit	
Thermal underwear	Recommended from autumn to spring		Insect Repellent (with high DEET content)	
Long walking trousers or skirt	2+		Torch and batteries	
*Shorts / short trousers	2			
Long sleeve shirt	2+		Camera, memory card & accessories	
Track Suit Bottoms or Similar	Optional		Water purifying tablets -*as a reserve, but can buy bottled mineral water all around the tour	
Thick Fleece	Recommended from autumn to spring		Washing kit wet wipes & anti-bacterial dry handwash is recommended	
Thin fleece or sweatshirt	1		Binoculars (optional)	
Sunhat / baseball cap or Shesh (locally made scarf)	Essential		Loo kit (in small bag) loo paper / tissues	
Warm hat & gloves	Recommended in winter		Ear Plugs	
Swimwear	1		Towel or sarong	

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

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.