

Trip Dossier for Morocco – Sahara Dune Adventure

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

Drive to the fringe of the Sahara Desert and ride your camels to some of the highest sand dunes in Morocco. Enjoy the emptiness of the desert and marvel at the sunset across the dunes, be amazed at the millions of stars and huddle around the campfire joining in with the Berbers song. Travel to see the beautiful Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah and spend a day at the end exploring the souks in Marrakech.

Day 1 Fly to Ouarzazate

You depart from London on the flight to Ouarzazate, via Casablanca. You will be met at the airport and taken to your hotel in Ouarzazate. **Hotel with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 2 Drive to Ouled Driss via Draa Valley and Zagora (4½-5 hrs drive)

After breakfast you set off on the 3-hour drive to Zagora, via Agdz. After a lunch stop in Agdz, an attractive market town with great carpets, you'll continue through the Draa Valley. There is barely any space left that is not cultivated along the valley floor, with almond, date, orange, lemon and olive trees in abundance. Simple red and ochre coloured houses sit above the fertile ground. En route we take the Tizi n'Tiniffit pass overlooking the gorge, the Draa Valley and across to Zagora. Arriving in Zagora you'll find yourself in a typical oasis, once an important stopping point for camel caravans and now a gateway to the desert. You'll continue on until you reach Ouled Driss and tonight you will dine and stay in Bedouin-style auberge at Chez la Pacha. **Tented Auberge with swimming pool (breakfast, lunch & dinner)**

Days 3 to 4 Camel Trekking in the Desert (4 hrs walking/riding)

For the next two days you will be surrounded by typical desert scenery - dunes, dunes and more dunes. As well as providing stunning scenery, it supplies endless entertainment for the children in the largest sandpit in the world! We start our camel trek and for those who wish to may walk along side the camels toward M'hamid. Following the route along the Oued Draa to the well at Oued Naam. Once settled in the camp you will have a free afternoon to climb the dunes and play in the sand. The following day we go for a walk and camel ride at Erg Sedrat (4 hours walking/riding). We return to the camp in the afternoon where you'll learn to bake bread in the sand. **2 nights Desert Camp (breakfast, lunch & dinner)**

Day 5 Return to the Ouled Driss

For another memorable experience you should get up early today, climb to the top on one of the larger dunes, and see the sunrise – guaranteed to be unforgettable! After breakfast the camp will be packed up and we make our way with the camels along the (dry) Draa River passing by Oued Naam and back to the delightful tented auberge of 'Chez le Pacha', situated in the palmerie not far from the Draa River, just a few kilometres from M'hamid. After two nights out in the desert this really feels like paradise where the water (if a little salty) flows relatively freely, vegetables grow and you can relax in your private 'Bedouin style' tent on a real bed! **Tented Auberge with swimming pool (breakfast, lunch & dinner)**

Day 6 Drive to Ait Ben Haddou (4 hrs drive)

After breakfast it's time to drive to Ait Ben Haddou. We stop at Tamegroute to visit the pottery and then carry on via Zagora to the Tizi n'Tiniffit pass. Just before arriving at the highest point of the pass you'll leave the main road for a picnic lunch stop. From the pass descend to Ait Saoun and Tiffoutoute and reach Ait Ben Haddou mid afternoon. It is easy to see why film producers pick Ait Ben Haddou for such movies as *Gladiator*, *Lawrence of Arabia* and *The Mummy and The Mummy Returns*. 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. You'll visit the Kasbah at Ait Ben Haddou. **Hotel with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 7 Drive to Marrakech (4hrs drive)

This morning you will cross over the High Atlas via the Tizi-n-Tichka pass at 2260m and wend your way back to Marrakech. If there is time you should 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 delve 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. 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 (breakfast)**

Day 8 Fly to London

The flight back to London leaves Marrakech in the morning, arriving mid afternoon.

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.

Is this right for your family? This trip is designed for kids from the age of five and up. The terrain is arid (desert) and washing facilities limited. Camels will be available for riding as required. Sand dunes provide hours of entertainment for kids and adults alike! There is an opportunity to visit Marrakech at the end of your visit. There is a lot of driving but this enables you to cover a lot of ground from the desert to Marrakech.

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

Climate In general Morocco experiences hot, dry summers and mild winters. In the area of this trip you can expect rather hot daytime temperatures at either end of the season (October and April), but pleasant temperatures at Christmas. 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', as worn by the desert people; these are available for sale cheaply in Zagora.

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

Accommodation In Ouarzazate and Marrakech we use three star hotel where accommodation is on a share twin basis, and children will be expected to share with their parents. During the camel trek, you will sleep in 2-person tents, but many clients choose to sleep out under the stars. While in the desert, the facilities are basic and we recommend you pack a dry anti-bacterial handwash and wet wipes. You'll sleep in two person tents with foam mattresses and as 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 head scarf) to bed. The camp staff will erect a toilet tent as well. At the end of your adventure you will be accommodated at 'Chez le Pacha', an auberge where the bedrooms are private 'bedouin style' tents. There is a separate toilet and shower unit equipped with modern western style fittings. The mention of a swimming pool at a hotel should not be taken as a guarantee but rather an indication, please be aware that swimming pools at the hotels are often unheated and so can be cold in the winter months or even closed.

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. Moroccan food is excellent. First class fresh produce, with the subtle addition of herbs and spices, is used to produce innumerable tagines (stews), meschoui (roast lamb), couscous and pastilla (pigeon pie). The fresh fruit is delicious, and so are Moroccan cakes and pastries.



FAMILIES

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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 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. Bottled mineral water is readily available in the cities and towns, but will not be available on trek. Water purifying tablets are recommended for drinking water in the desert. 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 Moroccan unit of currency is the Dirham (MAD). At the time of writing (July 2009) £1 = 12.30 MAD You will need to change all the money that you will need for the trek at the start in Ouarzazate or at the airport.

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. As a guideline, each person should allow £2-£3 per day to cover the tips for the Moroccan staff, (approximately MAD1100 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.

Language The official language of Morocco is Moroccan Arabic. There are also three separate Berber languages, Tashalhait - is the traditional language of High Atlas and Sous Valley Berbers. French is widely spoken, but little English.

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 Moroccan time 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 – Sahara Dune Adventure

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A set of light casual clothes will be useful on this holiday. In the desert you must not worry about how you look: comfort and protection against bad weather and the sun are of prime importance. Because desert weather is so very variable, we recommend a number of thin layers rather than a few thick ones. Take old, well-worn clothes rather than rushing out to buy new ones, since they will probably get rough treatment in the desert, and they can be left as gifts for the local staff at the end of the trip. The following list of clothing and equipment is intended to be fairly comprehensive and experienced trekkers may well take a good deal less luggage than we recommend.

Luggage Due to the nature of transport, please take soft-sided duffel-style bag. Weight limit 15kgs per person

CLOTHING	NUMBER	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Walking Boots	1 pair		Soft sided duffel-style bag -15kgs	
Trainers or Strong Sandals	1 pair – all purpose wear		Day pack / small rucksack	
Waterproof Jacket	1 lightweight		Sleeping Bag (3 seasons) and/or sleeping bag liner (cotton or silk)	
Waterproof Trousers	Optional in summer		Sleeping Bag Liner	
			Sunglasses	
Thermal Underwear	Not essential in summer		Personal First Aid Kit	
T-Shirts	3 +		Sunscreen – Lots of it	
Walking Trousers or Skirt	2 +		Insect Repellent	
**Shorts/Short Trousers	2		Guide Book & map	
Long Sleeve Shirt	2+		Torch and Batteries	
Thick Fleece	Not essential in summer		Camera, memory card and accessories	
Warm jacket	1		Washing Kit – “dry” anti-bacterial hand-wash & wet wipes	
Thin Fleece or Sweatshirt	1		Loo Kit (in small bag) toilet paper/tissues	
Sunhat / Baseball cap /Shesh* (*nomad bandana)	1		Towel	
Warm Hat and gloves	Woolly or fleece (not essential in summer)		Water purifying tablets are required when in the desert	
Swim Wear	Optional		Sarong	

**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 (if required)		Small Sewing Kit & Safety Pins	
Air Tickets		Universal travelling adapter	
Cash / Debit Cards/Visa		Ear plugs	
Insurance Documents		Sweets and Snacks for journey	
Trip Information And Itinerary		Notebook/Diary/Pen	
Money Security Belt/Pouch		Bicycle Helmet – recommended for kids riding on camels (option)	

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.