

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different

# Morocco in Detail

Departs  
13th September 2024



Itinerary correct as at 8 Sep 2023, but subject to change. ALL flights to be confirmed. [www.bluedottravel.com.au](http://www.bluedottravel.com.au)



**\$13,490 pp**

Twin-share, excluding  
international flights

Single supp \$2,900

## MOROCCO IN DETAIL

Morocco. Just saying it conjures up the aroma of delicious tagines, images of bustling souks, snow-capped mountains, medinas (ancient walled cities) and camels. It is all of these things and so much more.

The Kingdom of Morocco sits on the North East Atlantic coast of Africa. Its location on the continent, coupled with its resources, meant it received much attention from European powers over the centuries: Portugal, Spain and France have all played their part with the latter claiming Morocco as a protectorate state from 1912 – 1956 (Treaty of Fez). The Western (once Spanish) Sahara remains a highly contentious area in the deep south where the local, mainly indigenous Sahrawians, reject Morocco's sovereignty over this vast desert region.

Many people think Morocco is mostly desert however there are fertile valleys, oasis gorges, vast cedar forests and much of the country is mountainous - the Atlas Range averages over 3,500m and the highest peaks are snow covered for much of the year. Casablanca is the largest city with a population of over 3.5 million and the capital of Rabat has around 1.6 million inhabitants.

Ninety nine percent of the population are Sunni Muslims of Arab, Berber or Arab/Berber ancestry. There is a very small Christian and even smaller Jewish population that have had some influence on the region. Arabic is the official and most widely spoken language, French is used for administration and legal affairs including government business and there are several different Berber dialects including Tachelhit, Tamazight and Tarifit.

Family is the centre of Moroccan life with marriage and children being life goals for most. The marriageable age is officially 18 for a woman and, increasingly, they pick or approve of their husband although in more traditional areas arranged marriages still take place.

Morocco is famous for its arts and crafts – pottery, metalware, leather goods and rugs can be found in almost every souk and shopping always involves haggling over the price.

Our comprehensive tour of Morocco covers off the must-sees along with plenty of lesser travelled destinations.



**Day 1, Friday 13th September  
IN TRANSIT**

Depart Australia for your flight to Casablanca. All flights to be confirmed. *Meals in flight*



**Day 2,  
Saturday  
14th September  
CASABLANCA**

Arrive at Casablanca airport. We will meet with our guide and then

transfer to the hotel to relax. Enjoy an afternoon tour of the city of Casablanca. We will see the famous Hassan II mosque, a landmark of the city, with the tallest minaret in the world (210 metres). Next, we'll visit Ain Diab Corniche, one of the city's most fashionable districts. Complete the city tour with a visit to Mohammed V Square in the city centre. Welcome dinner at a local restaurant. (Ricks Café, made famous by the movie Casablanca", subject to availability). *D*

**Day 3, Sunday 15th September  
CASABLANCA – RABAT – TANGIER**


This morning we will drive to Rabat, the capital of Morocco and one of its imperial cities. We'll visit the Kasbah of the Oudayas, constructed during the realm of the Almohads dynasty (12th century). Next, we explore the Mohammed V Mausoleum, home to the tombs of the current king's father and grandfather. We'll also stop at Hassan Tower, with its minaret built in 1195. Then the group will transfer and overnight in the city of Tangier, Morocco's main entrance to Europe. *B/D*

**Day 4, Monday 16th September  
TANGIER– CHEFCHAOUEN**

This morning, after breakfast, we'll take a city tour of Tangier. The first stop will be in the old town known locally as the Medina. Visit the American Legation (museum), Dar El Oued Makhazen Kasbah, the Mendoubia Gardens plus the Grand and Petit Soccos (Squares). We'll then drive to Cape Spartel where the Atlantic meets the Med – known to the Greeks and Romans as the "Cape of the Vines". Then, the group will transfer to the beautiful city of Chefchaouen, known as the Blue City and one of Morocco's most majestic places. You'll take in a walking city tour to see the cobble-stoned Kazbah built in the early 18th

century by the ruler Moulay Ismail, before checking in to our hotel for two nights. *B/D*



 **Day 5, Tuesday 17th September**  
**CHEFCHAOUEN – AKCHOUR – CHEFCHOUEN**

Today we'll enjoy a day trip to Akchour, a hidden paradise, 35km outside Chefchaouen. After the bustling cities we've enjoyed so far, this is a chance to reconnect with mother nature. We'll enjoy some light hiking along the river, beneath a lush green forest

that feels a world away. (Take your swimmers if you are keen for a swim). Lunch is included at a local restaurant. In the afternoon, we'll return to Chefchaouen for dinner in the hotel. *B/L/D*

**Day 6, Wednesday 18th September**  
**CHEFCHOUEN – FES**

After breakfast and a slow start to the day, we'll transfer to Fez, the spiritual capital of Morocco and one of the country's oldest cities. The drive is around 4 hours plus stops. On arrival, check in to the hotel where you'll stay for four nights and have some free time before dinner at the hotel. *B/D*

 **Day 7, Thursday 19th September**  
**FES**

Today we'll enjoy a full day guided tour of this fascinating city. We'll begin at the entrance to the largest royal palace in Morocco, followed by a panoramic view of the ancient medina. We'll learn about the traditional ceramic crafts that Fes is known for. At Fes El Bali, the medieval Medina has not changed for centuries. We'll visit the famous AlKaraouine mosque, built by Fatima Al Fihria in 857. Al-Karaouine mosque became home to the University of Al-Karaouine, which is said to be the first university in the world. The university was built by Fatima Al Fihria in 859; since then, it has become one of the Muslim world's leading spiritual and educational centres. In the medina, visit a Merdersa, which is a Koranic school. We'll finish our day at the leather Souq, and the oldest Leather Tannery in the world, dating back at least nine centuries. Dinner is at a local restaurant (Palais Medina or similar). *B/D*

 **Day 8, Friday 20th September**  
**FES – MEKNES – VOLUBILIS – FES**

Today, the group will drive to Meknes, the "Moroccan Versailles" and one of the oldest cities in the kingdom. The city was the capital of Morocco under the reign of Moulay Ismail (1672–1727), a contemporary of Louis XIV. Stop at the massive Bab El Mansour gate, the grandest of all Moroccan imperial gateways. Moulay

Ismail's son, Moulay Abdallah, completed Bab El Mansour gate in 1732. Then we'll visit Hri Souani, a complex of three buildings built for granaries and stables. This amazing site has been used as a scene for many films, the most famous of which is probably "The Last Temptation of Christ" in 1988 by Martin Scorsese. We will transfer to the UNESCO-listed Roman ruins of Volubilis, a berber and Roman village partly excavated. This ancient city was the capital of the Kingdom of Mauretania and was thought to be built in the 3rd Century. Later in the afternoon, we'll drive back to Fes for dinner and our final night in this fabulous city. *B/D*

 **Day 9, Saturday 21st September**  
**FES – IFRANE – MIDELT – ERFOUD**

Today we'll travel to the heart of the Sahara desert. The journey takes us first through the Middle Atlas Mountains. We'll stop in Ifrane, a charming town and ski resort famous for its Alpine climate and European-style houses. At 1665 metres, the town

experiences snow during winter and a cool summer climate. Ifrane is also where the lowest temperature was recorded in Africa, -24 °C in 1935. The region is home to animals like the threatened Barbary Macaque and local tree species such as the native Atlas cedar, Scrub oak and the introduced London plane. We'll continue to Midelt, a Berber town in the high plains between the Middle Atlas and the High Atlas mountains ranges. Midelt is one of Morocco's principal cities for mining several minerals. We'll transfer through many Amazigh (Berber) villages along the Ziz valley to reach Erfoud. Dinner in the hotel. *B/D*



 **Day 10, Sunday 22nd September**  
**FES – ERFOUD – RISSANI – MERZOUGA**

Today we'll embark on a 4x4 Jeep tour through magnificent Sahara Desert. Our first stop is at Rissani to visit Moulay Ali chérif mausoleum, the first founder of the Alaouite dynasty. The Tafilalet region is known for its Ksars (fortified villages) and we'll stop to explore their ancient architecture. We'll visit the Rissani souk to meet wandering traders, nomads, Berbers and Arabic desert dwellers. Continue to El Khamlia where we will enjoy a typical lunch, known locally as the Berber Pizza. Enjoy a sunset camel ride to your charming desert camp late in the afternoon (or take a 4WD if the camel ride is not for you). Dinner at the desert camp where you'll stay for just the one night. *B/L/D*

\*Note. We will provide tips and advice about this visit to the desert in your tour update letters. The luxury desert camp is located in the small dunes close to the dune line and consists of bedroom tents

and a dining tent. The bedroom tents are raised off the sand with wood flooring. Each tent contains a quality bed, mirror, rugs and seating. The attached ensuite bathrooms contain a hand-wash basin, shower and flushing toilet.

### Day 11, Monday 23rd September MERZOUGA – TINGHIR – DADES

Wake up to the dawn colours of the desert and enjoy breakfast at our desert camp before our drive to Tinghir. Tinghir is a gorgeous 40km oasis, boasting one of the country's largest palm groves. Stop at the famous Todra Gorge, a 300m wall, carved deep into the High Atlas Mountains. Thanks to its robust rock sides with many uneven surfaces, Todra Gorge is popular among rock climbers. Depart for Dades provides a spectacular drive, winding through stunning desert landscapes and villages with the expansive Jebel Sarhro lunar scape. Dades is known as the valley of figs. Overnight in Dadea for the one night. *B/D*

### Day 12, Tuesday 24th September DADES – OUARZAZATE – AIT BEN HADDOU

We have another spectacular drive ahead, as we travel to Ouarzazate, passing hundreds of Kasbahs along the way. Our first stop is at Kelaat M'Gouna, a town famous for cultivating roses, with many fine, rose-infused products. In Ouarzazate, you'll visit Taourirt Kasbah, considered one of Morocco's most beautiful. Next, visit the film studios where some of the most famous desert landscapes are still filmed. Transfer to the spectacular fortress of Ait Ben Haddou. The village is a great example of earthen clay architecture that has been a UNESCO-Listed World Heritage Site since 1987. Ait Ben Haddou is an iconic landscape immortalised in many films including *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975), *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), and *Gladiator* (2000). You'll overnight here for just the one night. Dinner in the hotel. *B/D*

### Day 13, Wednesday 25th September AIT BEN HADDOU – IMLIL

Today we'll cross the High Atlas mountains along the pass of Tizi-n-Tichka to get to Imlil, a charming village



dominated by Djebel Toubkal, the highest summit in North Africa at 4 167 m. The village of Imlil sits at an altitude of 1500 metres, which makes it an ideal starting point for hiking and trekking

in the High Atlas mountains. In Imlil, one can admire the vast countryside covered with green oaks, cypresses and other typical vegetation of the Atlas. Overnight in Imlil for two nights. *B/D*

### Day 14, Thursday 26th September IMLIL LIGHT TREKKING

Today is an easy trek with a local guide covering the nearby waterfall and the village of Armed, offering you the chance to meet the local people. This will also be a chance to head into a Berber home for a mint tea to experience authentic Berber hospitality. Lunch is included today in the home of a local family. Wander around the village's alleys, before taking a different trail back to Imlil. We'll pass through a forest trail to view the interesting irrigation systems flowing into the fertile valley. *B/L/D*

### Day 15, Friday 27th September IMLIL – MARRAKECH

After a leisurely breakfast, we'll drive to Marrakech's wonderfully colourful and fascinating city and once described by Winston Churchill as the "Paris of the Sahara". We'll stop in town for a lunch before visiting the Majorelle Gardens and Yves Saint Laurent museum. The gardens are truly beautiful and took

French painter Jacques Majorelle (1886-1962) forty years of passion and dedication to create. Dinner is at your leisure tonight. You'll be staying in Marrakech for three nights. *B/L*



### Day 16, Saturday 28th September MARRAKECH

After breakfast, enjoy a guided city tour of Marrakech. Stop first at the Koutoubia Mosque, an old monument built under the reign of the Almohad Caliph Yaqub al-Mansur (1184 to 1199). This monument inspired other buildings such as the Giralda in Seville in Spain and the Hassan Tower in Rabat. Stop next at the Bahia Palace. This Palace was built in the late 19th century and was intended to capture the essence of the Islamic and Moroccan style. Stop next at the Saadian tombs, a site that

dates back to the time of the sultan Ahmad al-Mansur (1578-1603). The tombs were discovered in 1917 and were restored by the Beaux-arts service.



Continue to the world famous Jema El Fna Square and to enjoy the buzz of activity by storytellers, musicians, snake charmers, and peddlers. Our last stop is the bustling souks in the old medina where after a guided tour, you will have time to explore on your own. Consider heading to one of

the bars at the top of the square for an amazing city view. Dinner at a local restaurant. **B/D**

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**Day 17, Sunday 29th September**  
**MARRAKECH**

Today, you'll enjoy a wonderful culinary experience, introducing you some of the most famous Moroccan dishes. Our cooking class is a great way to experience first-hand the secrets of the Moroccan cooking traditions with a remarkable diversity of influences. Enjoy your creation for lunch. In the afternoon, you are free to explore the old medina on your own to see the souks and square and do some shopping at leisure. Alternatively, you can enjoy a traditional hammam (Middle Eastern steam bath and scrub). Your guide will assist you with planning. **B/L/D**



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 **Day 18,**  
**Monday 30th**  
**September**  
**MARRAKECH —**  
**AGADIR**

Today, we'll transfer to Agadir, one of Africa's most charming beach destinations. On

arrival, a tour of the city before heading back for dinner. We'll visit the Souk El Had and the Valley of the Birds to see exotic birdlife in a 2.5-hectare sanctuary. Finally, a visit to the Kasbah Agadir Oufia, a fortress overlooking the city. **B/L**

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 **Day 19, Tuesday 1st October**  
**AGADIR – ESSAOUIRA**

After breakfast, we will transfer to Essaouira with a stop at Taghazoute. Essaouira is the main surfing destination in Morocco, a beautiful and easily navigable seaside port city. It was originally founded by the Romans and inhabited by the Portuguese during the 17th century. The area is also famous for the Argan tree, which only grows on the West coast of Morocco. Argan tree oil is extracted for skin and hair care, salad oil, and amlou (prepared with almonds and honey to make a delicious paste). We can visit a women's argan oil co-operative en-route. Dinner in the hotel. **B/D**


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 **Day 20, Wednesday 2nd October**  
**ESSAOUIRA**

After breakfast, we'll take a guided tour of Essaouira. It is distinguished by its multicultural feel, resulting from the large Portuguese, French, and Jewish populations that once called it home. It is one of the best beach towns thanks to its mild climate and expansive stretches of ocean sand. Essaouira's walled medina was added to UNESCO's World Heritage list in 2001. Its well-preserved, late-18th-century fortified layout is a prime example of European military architecture in North Africa. For the

visitor, the mellow atmosphere, narrow winding streets lined with colourful shops, whitewashed houses and heavy old wooden doors make it a wonderful place to stroll. You'll also have the opportunity to spend time at the port with all of its blue fishing boats. Late in the morning, we will transfer to Les Domaines du Val d'Argan, a beautiful vineyard and lovely setting for lunch. If you can fit it in, dinner is at your leisure tonight. European military architecture in North Africa. For the visitor, the mellow atmosphere, narrow winding streets lined with colourful shops, whitewashed houses and heavy old wooden doors make it a wonderful place to stroll. Late in the morning, we will transfer to Les Domaines du Val d'Argan, a beautiful vineyard and lovely setting for lunch. Dinner is at your leisure tonight. **B/L**

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 **Day 21,**  
**Thursday 3rd**  
**October**  
**ESSAOUIRA – EL**  
**JADIDA –**  
**CASABLANCA**

Today we'll travel to Casablanca via Safi, Oualidia and El

Jadida. Safi was under protectorate by the Portuguese Empire from 1488 to 1541, and during this period, they built a fortress that still stands today. During the Second World War, Safi was one of the landing sites for Operation Torch – the Allied invasion of North Africa in WWII. Safi is the main fishing port for the country's sardine industry and exports phosphates, textiles, and ceramics. After visiting Safi, we'll continue to Oualidia, another charming coastal town. Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on one side and a saltwater lagoon on the other, Oualidia has a certain magic about its constantly changing seascape. It's the ideal place to unwind before we continue to Casablanca for our final night, stopping at El Jadida en route. We'll enjoy a special farewell dinner at a local restaurant tonight. (Le Boudoir or similar). Say goodbye to your guide. **B/D**



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**Day 22, Friday 4th October**  
**CASABLANCA – TRANSIT HOME**

Today is our last day in Morocco. Transfer to Casablanca Airport and depart for home or your next destination. All flights are to be confirmed. If the flight is a late departure, your time in the city is free to explore on your own. **B**

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**Day 23, Saturday 5th October**  
**IN TRANSIT**

Arrive home.



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.