

*Full Itinerary*

## MAGICAL MOROCCO'S IMPERIAL CITIES



TALK TO OUR WELL TRAVELLED TEAM OF EXPERTS

0844 3350 197

Monday to Friday 09:00 - 18:00 GMT



### JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:**

Level 2

**DESTINATION:**

Magical Morocco's Imperial Cities

**DURATION:**

8 days / 7 nights

**FLIGHT INFORMATION:**

Economy flights from London Heathrow Airport [LHR] to Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport [CMN] on Day 1 and returning from Marrakesh Menara Airport [RAK] on Day 8

**PICKUP LOCATION:**

Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport [CMN]

## OVERVIEW

Choose your own departure date for your group

Morocco is a uniquely exotic blend of Berber, Arabic and European cultural influences. Experience this for yourself on this North African exploration of Morocco's Imperial cities.

Morocco is a land of contrasts and diversity. Lapped by the water of the Mediterranean to the north and by the waves of the Atlantic Ocean to the west, it is crisscrossed by the Rif and the Atlas Mountains. As well as the ever-popular Marrakesh, this tour also explores the lesser known cities of Fes, Meknes and Rabat. These are the Imperial Cities - all four have at one time been capital of Morocco and each has played a pivotal role in the country's history.

Fes, Morocco's oldest 'imperial city', has the world's largest UNESCO-listed medieval medina and we also visit the cities of Meknes whose Bab El-Mansour, one of the most beautiful gates in all of Morocco and the traditional entrance to the medina of Rabat and the current capital city on the Atlantic coast. A

We head into the beautiful Atlas Mountains, as well as explore the dunes and gorges of central Morocco and visit many of the smaller towns in the centre of the country, which were the crossroads between southern Africa and Europe to the north.

Marrakesh - the Red City, is possibly the most famous of all Morocco's imperial cities and this is where we end our tour. The minaret of the Koutoubia Mosque dominates the city's skyline, standing at over 70m high and is visible for miles around. The Medina in particular is a sight to behold and is another designated UNESCO World Heritage site on this tour. A fitting end to a spectacular holiday.

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

**DAY 1 - WELCOME TO MOROCCO**

**DAY 2 - CASABLANCA, RABAT & MEKNES**

**DAY 3 - FANTASTIC FEZ & THE ROMAN RUINS OF VOLUBILIS**

**DAY 4 - IRFANE, MIDELT AND ERRACHIDIA**

**DAY 5 - MERZOUGA DUNES & THE DADÈS GORGE**

**DAY 6 - OUTSTANDING OUARZAZATE & MESMERISING MARRAKESH**

**DAY 7 - THE OURIKA VALLEY**

**DAY 8 - GOODBYE MOROCCO AND HOME**

## FULL ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - WELCOME TO MOROCCO

On arrival at Casablanca Airport, we will be met and transferred to our hotel.

After your long flight, the rest of the day is at leisure to relax and discover your surroundings before dinner will be together in the hotel this evening.

**Included meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel Farah, Casablanca

### DAY 2 - CASABLANCA, RABAT & MEKNES

After breakfast we adventure out to experience the romance of Casablanca for ourselves. Today we enjoy a panoramic city tour in the company of an experienced guide. From the bustling Central Market to city squares and the modern city districts, we will gain a real feel for this city. We will also visit the famous Hassan II Mosque, located on the coast. This is the largest mosque in Morocco and its minaret is the tallest in the world!

We then depart Casablanca and make our way to Rabat, Morocco's current capital city and the official residence of King Mohamed VI. After lunch, on our city tour we pass the Royal Palace and the glittering Mausoleum of King Mohamed V, whose opulent tomb chamber is resplendently decorated and also contains the tombs of his two sons. Located next to this is the Hassan Tower with beautiful and intricate motifs and designs covering its façade. This would have been the minaret for the Hassan Mosque which was never completed by the ruler, Yacoub al-Mansour, who died and then construction was abandoned.

The last stop of the day is Meknes, a scenic hilltop city surrounded by the largest and longest walls in Morocco! Here we will visit the famous Bab El-Mansour, the grandest of all imperial Moroccan gateways with arches, marble columns and original green and white tiles. We will also pass the Royal Stables of Meknes, which are a feat of ingenuity as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the past they provided stabling for 12,000 royal horses!

We make our way to our hotel for the night in Fez, where we will enjoy dinner will be together.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel Zalagh Parc Palace, Fez

### DAY 3 - FANTASTIC FEZ & THE ROMAN RUINS OF VOLUBILIS

This morning will be dedicated to exploring and getting to know more about the history and culture of Fez with our experienced guide. We visit the great Medieval Medina, Fes el Bali, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where traditional industries such as tanneries, soap making, textiles, flourmills and oil processing still flourish.

We will visit a couple of the ancient courtyard Madrassas, the al-Attarine Madrasa which stands at the entrance of a spice and perfume market and the Bou Inania Madrasa, the only one in Fez with a minaret. The tour will end back at the hotel where we will have some free time to get some lunch

From here we will continue to the Ruins of Volubilis for a short visit and tour. Excavated by the French in 1915, these Roman ruins date back to the 3rd century AD and are some of the most notable in North Africa.

We continue our journey to our hotel in Irfane, where we enjoy dinner tonight.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel Michlifan Resort & Golf, Irfane

### DAY 4 - IRFANE, MIDELETT AND ERRACHIDIA

Our journey through the ever-changing Moroccan countryside continues today. Starting in Irfane, in the Atlas Mountains, the city is known for its alpine style architecture and nearby cedar forests. The Atlas Mountains chain runs along northern Africa, forming a natural border between the Mediterranean and Atlantic coast and the Sahara Desert.

We will enjoy beautiful landscapes, from walnut, weeping willow and poplar trees, to its mountains and rocks varying in colour from red to

green. The Berbers, the local people of the valley, continue to keep their customs and traditional way of life alive

From here we head to Midelt, which lies in the high plains between the Middle Atlas and High Atlas mountain ranges, where we stop for a visit and lunch.

We continue on via Errachidia, a town which was a historic crossroads between the imperial cities of Morocco and the far south of Africa, to our base for the night in Erfoud, an oasis town in the Sahara desert.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel Belere, Erfoud

## DAY 5 - MERZOUGA DUNES & THE DADÈS GORGE

This morning, we head out early to explore some of the stunning red sands of the Sahara Desert at the Merzouga Dunes in specially adapted 4x4 cars.

From there we head into the famous Dadès Gorge, a series of rugged 'wadi' gorges carved out by the Dadès River before having lunch in Boulmane Dadès, with time to visit the village.

We continue our journey onwards to Ouarzazate, where we stop for the night.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Club Hanane Tirika Hotel, Ouarzazate

## DAY 6 - OUTSTANDING OUARZAZATE & MESMERISING MARRAKESH

Ouarzazate is a city south of Morocco's High Atlas Mountains, known as a gateway to the Sahara Desert. The Taourirt Kasbah, home to a 19th-century palace, has views over the rugged local landscape, and has featured in several movies. Our local guide will show us around Ouarzazate before we make our way to Kasbah Ait Benhaddou.

Ait Benhaddou is a historic fortified village along the former nomadic caravan routes between the Sahara and southern Africa and Marrakesh. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987, it is renowned as a fantastic example of Moroccan clay architecture. We stop here for lunch before we head to the final destination on our journey through Morocco, Marrakesh.

During our visit to Marrakesh, with our experienced guide, we will visit the Zocos (Souks) and the world famous Jemaa el-Fna Square and Market place in the old town for some last-minute souvenir shopping!

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** El Olivar Palace, Marrakesh

## DAY 7 - THE OURIKA VALLEY

Our final excursion will be to the Ourika Valley, a spectacular valley among the Atlas Mountains. Despite it being so close to Marrakesh, this beautiful lush green valley is definitely one of the best preserved valleys in Morocco.

We will get the opportunity to visit a typical Berber house, the families often open their home to visitors who wish to enjoy their surroundings. We will have lunch together in the Ourika Valley before heading back to Marrakesh as tonight we will enjoy traditional Moroccan hospitality at Chez Ali 'Fantasia', the place of 1001 Arabian nights! Enjoy a sumptuous dinner and a memorable show in Berber tents- belly dancers, acrobats, riders, fireworks and folk music are on the menu!

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** El Olivar Palace, Marrakesh

## DAY 8 - GOODBYE MOROCCO AND HOME

Sadly its time to leave Morocco. After breakfast, you will be transferred back to Marrakech Airport for your onward flight home

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** none

© The Big Journey Company 2020 - 2024. All rights reserved.

Holiday tours are operated by The Big Journey Company Limited. Registered in England. Registered office: Marron Bank, Branthwaite, Cumbria, CA14 4SZ. Registered number: 6532140. The Big Journey Company Limited is a member of The Travel Trust Association member number U5675 and holds an Air Travel Organiser's License number T7282.



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ATOL Protection
- Economy flights from London Heathrow Airport [LHR] to Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport [CMN] on Day 1 and returning from Marrakesh Menara Airport [RAK] on Day 8
- Meet & greet on arrival at Casablanca Airport
- Transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- Services of local experienced guide detailed in the itinerary
- Services of a Big Journey Company Tour Director
- All activities, visits, guides and excursions as detailed in the itinerary

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Please arrange your flights into Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport [CMN] on Day 1 and returning from Marrakesh Menara Airport [RAK] on Day 8
- Airport transfers outside the tour dates
- Visas, travel or medical insurance
- Any personal items and anything not mentioned under included in price above
- Any food and beverage not detailed in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to non-stipulated attractions
- Any optional activities offered
- Gratuities
- Any COVID tests or related entry & exit requirements

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2:00 - 3:00 pm and check out is before 10:00am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday. Deposits are non-refundable. Final payments are due 14 weeks prior to departure.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.

## BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

*Choose from the list of dates below*

*Call to Book*

**0844 3350 197**

Monday to Friday 09:00 - 18:00 GMT