

Classical Morocco

14 days | Starts/Ends: Marrakech



The ultimate Moroccan adventure - Wander through the souks of Fes and Marrakech, soak up the sun on the beach in Essaouira and explore Casablanca, Chefchaouen and the capital, Rabat. Enjoy 14 colourful days of culture, beaches and bustling bazaars!

- Guided tours of Fes and Marrakech
- Driver, all transfers and transportation in private modern A/C tourism vehicles
- All road taxes and tolls
- Entrance fees to all included sightseeing

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

Day 3 : New Marrakech

Spend the day at leisure in Marrakech. Perhaps visit the Jardin majorelle or maybe take a caleche ride out into the new town to see the Gueliz district and the Mohamed VI avenue with its luxury cafes and theatre.

Overnight - Marrakech (B)

Day 4 : Essaouira



Marrakech - Essaouira. Leaving this morning for the 2.5 hour transfer across the plains surrounding Marrakech to the Argan orchards and scrub maquis-type vegetation around Essaouira. The colourful fishing town of Essaouira is perfect for some beachside fun and relaxation. Spend the afternoon exploring the charming medina or simply lazing on the beach. **Overnight - Essaouira (B)**

Days 5-6 : Essaouira

The coming two days are spent at leisure. Relax by the beach or discover the old medina and the ramparts of the town. We recommend the tasty sea food restaurants

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Marrakech - UNESCO-listed Place Djemaa el Fna, souks and Koutoubia Mosque
- Essaouira and the Atlantic coast
- Casablanca - largest city in Morocco
- Rabat - imperial city
- Hercules Caves
- Tangiers and the Mediterranean coast
- Chefchaouen – 'the blue city' overlooked by the Goat Horns mountains
- Fez - the oldest medieval city in the world

What's Included

- 13 breakfasts
- 13 nights Superior (4 star) hotels and riads (Standard and Deluxe hotel options are also available)
- Marrakech Airport arrival and departure transfers
- Services of a licensed English speaking tour guide at all included sites

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Marrakech

Arrive Marrakech, transfer to your centrally located hotel or riad where you will be briefed about tour. This evening consider heading to Djemaa el Fna - the cities UNESCO listed bustling medina. Best seen at night, this central square is an absolute feast for the senses, overflowing with stalls, fortune tellers, snake charmers and musicians. It's like stepping into another world! **Overnight - Marrakech**

Day 2 : Medieval souks & ancient medinas

This morning enjoy a guided tour of Marrakech, taking in all of the main attractions including the palace and Koutoubia mosque. This afternoon is free for you to wander around the bustling souks or simply relax. **Overnight - Marrakech (B)**

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Classical Morocco

around the harbour for a spot of evening dining in beautiful surroundings. **Overnight - Essaouira (B:2)**

Day 7 : Casablanca



Essaouira - Casablanca. This morning you'll be transferred to Casablanca along the Atlantic coast, passing long beaches, small fishing villages, Safi and Al Jadida. Upon arrival in Casablanca there is a chance to see the Hassan II mosque and explore the city in the evening. **Overnight - Casablanca (B)**

Day 8 : Rabat

Casablanca - Rabat. The sightseeing continues today – taking the short journey to Rabat, the Capital of Morocco and the second largest city after Casablanca. Spend the afternoon exploring this peaceful city and the ancient medina, with its pretty white and stone washed buildings. **Overnight - Rabat (B)**

Day 9 : The Hercules Caves



Rabat - Tangiers. Travelling up the coast in the morning, the road goes past some of the newer developments along the coast, and veers inland through the forests of Eucalyptus. En route to Tangier visit the famous Hercules Caves which are dug into a cliff - according to legend Hercules rested in these caves after having dug the straights between Europe and Africa with his club! The Hercules caves were used for shelter by Neolithic man and in the 20th century they became the setting

for sumptuous parties by Tangiers jettsetting crowd. The caves offer splendid views of the ocean. **Overnight - Tangier (B)**

Day 10 : Chefchaouen

Tangiers - Chefchaouen. Spend the morning in Tangiers, exploring the souks and beaches. In the afternoon, head off along the Mediterranean coast to Chefchaouen, the "blue" city in the Rif Mountains - a haven of tranquility and peace. Chefchaouen is a beautiful blue door and white walled medina that was originally a Berber post. **Overnight - Chefchaouen (B)**

Day 11 : Fes



Chefchaouen - Fes. This morning take the road through the mountains, to UNESCO listed Fes - the world's oldest medieval city. Enjoy a guided tour around the fascinating old city, visiting the ancient medina, tanneries, palaces, gardens and bustling souks. **Overnight - Fes (B)**

Day 12 : Fes

Spend a day at leisure in Fes to see the souks and sights of the city. There are plenty of mosques and palaces to visit and looking down on the old quarter from the surrounding hills is quite an experience. **Overnight - Fes (B)**

Day 13 : Djemaa el Fna by night



Fes - Marrakech. This morning depart Fes and transfer back to Marrakech, arriving late afternoon. Time for some last minute souvenir shopping in the bustling souks! **Overnight - Marrakech (B)**

Day 14 : Marrakech

Your holiday concludes after breakfast and included onward departure transfer to the airport.(B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Essential Packing

- A sleeping bag for the Sahara Desert camp if travelling between Oct - Apr. From May - Sep a cotton sleep sheet will be adequate. If booking our 'Sahara Hotel Upgrade' (available on our Totally Morocco, Road to Casablanca, Best of Morocco & Casablanca to Essaouira tours) you will not need to bring either of these.
- Lightweight cotton garments in summer, warm clothing for winter (temperatures can get quite low at night)
- Comfortable walking shoes or hiking shoes
- Electrical adapter. Standard voltage is 220V, 50Hz AC. Sockets require a Continental or European style plug (two round pins)
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- Personal first aid kit including Dioralyte
- 2 spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, torch, money belt
- Either a rucksack or suitcase is suitable
- A towel for swimming

Group tour Tip Kitty & Entrance Fees

A tipping kitty (the amount is noted under 'what is not included' on page one of this document), will be collected by your guide at the welcome meeting on day 1. This is payable in Moroccan Dirhams. USD, Euro or GBP can also be accepted, at the current exchange rate. The tipping kitty is used for the following; hotel porters, hotel waiters, local guides for city tours, airport transfer drivers,

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Berber camel herders and local restaurant tips.

The tipping kitty does not include a tip for your tour leader or driver and as a guideline we recommend you budget approx USD\$2-3 per day for the tour guide and USD\$1-2 for the driver for a job well done (payable in local currency). Naturally the amount is up to you though, this is simply a suggestion.

Entrance fees are not included on our Signature tours. On all other group tours they are included. If Entrance fees are payable locally on your tour, the amount will be noted under 'what is not included' and this amount will also be collected by your guide at the welcome meeting on day 1. This is payable in Moroccan Dirhams. Again USD, Euro or GBP are accepted at the current exchange rate.

Morocco Country Guide

Morocco Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Morocco. UK, EU, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and USA nationals do not require a visa at present to enter Morocco. Please check if you are from another country.

RSA (South African) passport holders need to obtain visas in advance of arrival. Please check your personal visa requirements with the embassy.

Tipping in Morocco

In Morocco it is customary to tip and on our group tours a tipping kitty (the amount is noted under 'what is not included' on page one of this document) will be collected by your guide at the welcome meeting on the day you arrive. This is payable in Moroccan Dirhams. USD, Euro or GBP can also be accepted, at the current exchange rate. The tipping kitty is used for the following; hotel porters, hotel waiters, local guides for city tours, airport transfer drivers, Berber camel herders and local restaurant tips.

The tipping kitty does not include a tip for your Moroccan tour leader or driver and as a guideline we recommend you budget approx

Euro 2-3 per day for your tour guide and Euro 1-2 for the driver for a job well done (payable in Moroccan Dirhams. Naturally the amount is up to you though, this is simply a suggestion.

Climate

Morocco is a great year round destination, blessed with lots of sunshine and a temperate climate. It can become incredibly hot in the summer months with temperatures 38°C or higher, particularly in July and August so use plenty of sun screen, cover up and drink plenty of water. The nights can be cooler especially in the mountains or in the desert and it is windy along the coast throughout the year.

During the winter months (November to February), temperatures usually remain pleasant in the cities, averaging around 20°C, but it is very cold at nights, in the desert and in the Atlas Mountains. There is often snow in the Atlas Mountains from November through until March and temperatures can drop to below freezing - so take plenty of warm clothes including jacket, long-sleeved tops, jumper, gloves and trousers.

Sleeping bag & torch

A lightweight sleeping bag is required for the Sahara Desert camp or a cotton sleep sheet will be adequate if travelling from May to September. You will also need to bring a torch for your night in the Sahara.

Please note that the sleeping bag/sleep sheet and torch are only required if you are camping and will not be needed if you have booked our Sahara Hotel Upgrade.

Time & Voltage

Morocco is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Daylight Savings is currently being observed; however, it changes frequently and is not observed during the holy month of Ramadan. Standard voltage is 220 volts. Primary sockets require the European, 2 pronged variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

Currency & Holiday Money

The currency of Morocco is the Moroccan Dirham.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars and Euro can be exchanged in Morocco at various bureau de changes in major cities and towns (please note Australian and New Zealand Dollars as well as South African Rand are often tricky to exchange and often not accepted so we advise against bringing them for exchange), and most banks have ATMs. Credit cards are virtually useless outside main cities and towns. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

How much you spend depends largely on individual tastes and often how much you eat, drink or shop. We currently recommend an average of Euro 20 - 30 per day on top of optional excursions.

Shopping

Morocco is a shoppers' paradise. The souks of Fes, Marrakech and Meknes are full of pottery, carpets and kilims, leather goods, spices and cloth. Keep space in your backpack for your purchases! Our best buys are: carpets – from the High Atlas mountains or a woven and embroidered Kilim; the burnoose, an elegant hooded cape; spices; or traditional pottery and leather from Fes.

IMPORTANT: Set your budget and don't be swayed, remember the caveat – 'Let the buyer beware'. Any purchases made whilst on holiday with us, irrespective of whether the store is recommended by us or other, are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with the product you are purchasing and the delivery arrangements (we would recommend you take away with you any purchases rather than rely on shipping services). On The Go cannot be held responsible or accountable for items bought in country or shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

Hotels in Morocco

The hotels on our group tours in Morocco are simple, clean, comfortable and centrally located. We try to use local and traditional hotels with plenty of character wherever possible. In smaller towns, the choice of

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accommodation may be limited, but we will always book the best accommodation available for our groups. Please be aware that hotels in Morocco are not of the same standard as Western hotels and facilities are often basic.

It's not like home

Travel to far-flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

Mosques & Religion

Although freedom of religious faith is permitted by the Moroccan law, about 99% of people are Sunni Muslim. About 1% of the population is Christian, and less than 0.2 percent is Jewish. With the exception of the Hassan II mosque in Casablanca, it is not permitted for non-Muslims to enter mosques in Morocco. If you are entering the Hassan II mosque, please remember to dress conservatively. Ensure limbs are covered and shoes removed when entering any mosque. Men must refrain from wearing shorts, as must women.

RAMADAN

Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world and adherents of the Muslim faith fast during daylight hours and break their fast with lavish meals and lively celebrations in the evening. Ramadan culminates a month later in a 3 day celebration called Eid al - Fitr. Many shops (excluding those which cater mainly to tourists) and attractions close earlier during Ramadan. As such we will start our tour earlier during this period to make the best use of time and itineraries will be slightly altered to ensure we visit all attractions, leisure time will be offered in the late afternoon. Non-Muslims are not expected to fast over Ramadan, but it is

considered impolite to eat food or drink on the street.

Note: Traffic is exceptionally heavy during Ramadan, especially toward the time of breaking the fast. Forthcoming Ramadan dates are as follows, (approximate) -

05 May – 04 June 2019

24 April – 23 May 2020

14 April – 13 May 2020

Etiquette

Despite the inevitable ups and downs of travelling abroad, you will generally be shown great hospitality in Morocco. In return, please demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the local customs. Morocco is a Muslim country; so care should be taken to dress respectfully in local towns or villages.

- Ladies should avoid wearing 'clingy, tight or suggestive' attire, and stick to cool, flowing, cottons in small towns, local villages and in rural areas
- Take care to dress conservatively and ensure that limbs are covered and remove footwear prior to entering a mosque
- Ex-military style clothing should not be worn
- Ask permission before taking photographs of people
- The standard form of greeting is a handshake. Men and women do not kiss at any time as a form of greeting

Calling home from Morocco

It is currently not always possible to use VoIP (voice over internet protocol) services like Whatsapp, Viber, Skype and Facebook Messenger in Morocco. The text options on these services are still fine to use but the calling functions might not always work. It is understood that the Moroccan telecom providers have done this in order to push as much voice calls onto their networks rather than people being able to use these free services.

Troubleshooting

These things will most likely never happen, but it's good to be prepared if they ever do. Here are a few tips to keep your trip hassle-free. Morocco is no worse than anywhere else when it comes to crime. The biggest problem seems to be petty theft, including

pick-pocketing and bag snatching. Minimise your chances of being robbed with these tips:

- Leave valuables in the hotel safe deposit or better still, at home
- Carry your passport on your person or a photocopy as ID
- Carry your bag close to your person rather than over your shoulder
- Travel in a group or pair, especially if you are female
- Don't catch cabs late at night on your own
- Never drink anything offered to you in the street, unless you opened it yourself

Please note On The Go Tours will not be held liable for loss or damage to personal property under any circumstances

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Morocco from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide, Tetanus and Hepatitis A are strongly recommended. While tap water in Morocco is generally considered safe to drink in main cities, it is not advisable in smaller towns and remote areas. It's recommended to only drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants.

Drones Not Permitted

It is forbidden to bring drones into Morocco (even small ones that might fit in hand luggage), a special permit has to be arranged with the appropriate department in Rabat and this can take months to arrange.

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