

Marrakech Express

5 Days | Starts/Ends: Marrakech



Head to Morocco for a long weekend with a difference. Explore magical Marrakech, camel trek into the Sahara Desert and spend an incredible night at a Berber camp amongst the dunes and relax by the beach in enchanting Essaouira on the Atlantic Coast.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Essaouira – Enjoy free time in this ancient medina with its wind swept beaches and current day fishing village
- Marrakech – Discover the UNESCO-listed medina, mosques, palaces and souks (explored independently)
- Zagora – Take a camel trek into the Sahara desert and spend a night under the stars in a traditional Berber style camp

What's Included

- Breakfast daily and 2 dinners inclusive of a Berber camp dinner
- 3 nights 3-4 star hotels and 1 night camping in the Sahara
- Sahara camel trek and night in a Berber camp

- Essaouira – Beachside bliss and free time
- Escorted by an English speaking tour leader
- Sightseeing and entrance fees to all included sites
- Arrival transfer from Marrakech Airport on day 1
- Transportation and transfers in private 4x4 or mini van/touring vehicle

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$30pp, paid in USD or local currency
- International flights and visa
- Tip for your tour leader. We recommend you allow USD\$2-3 per day, per traveller. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Marrakech



Welcome to Morocco! Following your transfer from the airport to our joining hotel you can relax by the hotel pool before the pre-departure meeting at 18.00 where you will meet your fellow travellers. **Overnight – Marrakech (D)**

Day 2 : Sahara Camel Trek



Today we enjoy a stunning drive over the High Atlas en-route to Zagora. We pass through the Draa Valley a green and lush land of palmeries and amazing vistas. It is then time to head towards the great desert, where we transfer to camels for a trek into the Sahara Desert for a night at our Berber Camp. We enjoy local food, music and an amazing night out under the Saharan stars.

Journey Time: approx 7.5 hours

Camel Trek: approx 1.5 hours **Overnight – Berber Camp – Zagora (B, D)**

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 NZ 0800 44 77 69

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Day 3 : Marrakech



Leaving the desert, we travel back to Marrakech stopping. We arrive back in Marrakech where we have dinner in Djemaa El Fna (at own cost).

Journey Time: approx 7.5 hours
Overnight - Marrakech (B)

Day 4 : Coastal Relaxation



We leave Marrakech after breakfast and take a leisurely drive to Essaouira; a colourful fishing town situated within 15th century Portuguese fortifications, where great beaches and surf beckon. You have the day to relax on the beach or alternatively explore the UNESCO-listed medina with its various souks and woodcarving workshops. Any city gate leads to the medina, so you're unlikely to get lost. The beach is in front of the Medina and there are plenty of cafés with terraces, both ideal for relaxing for a few hours. Blue doors and window frames abound as do the artists shops – buy a carpet or Thuya wood carving or sit on the beach sipping a mint tea as the sun sets. There is the opportunity to do some optional activities, such as quad biking, surfing, horse trekking and wind surfing. Enjoy a great night out in Essaouira.

Journey Time: approx 3 hours
Overnight - Essaouira (B)

Day 5 : Essaouira to Marrakech



After breakfast this morning overlooking the Atlantic, the day offers free time for you to independently explore. Mid morning we check out and travel back to Marrakech where your holiday concludes.

Journey Time: approx 5 hours(B)

ACCOMMODATION

Highlighted below are some of the accommodation/ hotels which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these stays to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel or start point and further arrival information.

El Andalous Hotel & Spa

Just 10 minutes from the airport, the El Andalous Hotel and Spa offers a welcome respite from the hubub of the city. Evoking the golden age of Arab-Andalusian culture; exotic and romantically rich. Guest rooms are well furnished with excellent en suite facilities as well as private balconies. The hotel pool is great place to relax by and enjoy a tasty beverage or two. The medina is just a 20 minute walk from here or a cab can get you there in a few minutes!



Desert camp

Camping out in the Sahara Desert is an incredible experience! You can climb to the top of a desert dune to watch the setting sun, relax around a camp fire for dinner and even sleep outside under the desert stars at night.



Hotel Miramar

Enjoying an enviable location just a 15-minute walk from the beach and some of the city's key sights, Hotel Miramar combines 4-star comfort with local convenience. Each of the 45 guest rooms benefit from a separate sitting area, room service and satellite television, there's also free WiFi throughout the property. After a day of sightseeing guests can unwind in the on-site spa, which offers a variety of treatments, or those that prefer to relax during the day can opt to head to the hotel's private sand beach.



BEFORE YOU GO

Our partners in Morocco

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers who booked through different operators, not solely On The Go.

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Tipping kitty and departure transfer

At the start of your tour we will collect a Tip Kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document) from all tour participants to cover tips throughout your holiday. This saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip. It will be collected by your tour leader at the Welcome Meeting on day 1 and is payable in Moroccan Dirhams (USD, Euro or GBP is also accepted at the current exchange rate). The Tipping Kitty is distributed throughout your tour to hotel porters, hotel waiters, local guides for city tours, airport transfer drivers, Berber camel herders and local restaurant tips.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour leader. For a job well done, we suggest USD\$2-3 per day, per traveller for your tour leader. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Departure transfers are not included. A taxi to the airport will cost approx MAD100 and can be booked locally.

Guides & groups

Some of our group tours are sectors of a larger tour. Some travellers on your tour may only travel with you for part of your tour. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through a longer tour and others in the group continue on. As such, you may have more than one guide during your holiday.

In order that we show the best of Morocco in a non-hurried fashion to you, it is imperative you are ready for departure each day. Please do not delay and inconvenience fellow travellers. It is your responsibility to be at the proposed meeting point for the group in time. We will depart at our specified times.

Optional activities

During free time you can head out and independently explore, relax or take

part in one or more optional activities. The optional activities are booked locally and are subject to availability, prices are indicative.

If your tour includes the optional ballooning. The half day hot air ballooning excursion from Marrakech includes: Land rover transportation, a traditional breakfast, a 1 hour hot air balloon flight in front of the High Atlas Mountains, a visit to a local Berber house and a camel ride in the palmerie of Marrakech.

The rock climbing at Todra Gorge is weather dependant and not offered if it is raining or very windy. Please also note that rock climbing is not suitable for travellers under the age of 16.

Morocco Country Guide

Welcome to Morocco – Arrival transfer

We provide a complimentary airport arrival transfer on day 1 of your tour or if you arrive early and have booked pre tour accommodation with us. Please proceed to the arrivals hall and look for our representative holding an On The Go Tours sign. Pre and post tour accommodation can be arranged upon request, please contact us for rates.

If you are arriving earlier and you have booked your accommodation independently, you will need to make your own way to our start hotel, which will be centrally located. The hotel name and address can be found on your Tour Voucher.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight to Morocco is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and 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.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/Morocco/Visas

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! 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 leathers from Fes.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

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Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

Health requirements & water

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling. While tap water in Morocco is generally considered safe to drink in main cities, it is not advisable in smaller towns and remote areas. Drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants.

Packing List

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- Lightweight cotton garments in summer, warm clothing for winter (temperatures can get quite low at night)
- Comfortable walking shoes or hiking shoes
- Universal travel adaptor
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- First aid kit including Dioralyte
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, torch and money belt
- Either a rucksack or suitcase is suitable. A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- A towel for swimming
- A torch for your night in the Sahara Desert
- If travelling on our Handpicked Morocco tours a sleeping bag is required for the Sahara Desert camp is

required if travelling between Oct - Apr, a cotton sleep sheet will be adequate if travelling from May to September (Signature group tour travellers do not need this, as bedding is provided)

Drones are 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.

Note: If you are travelling on our **Mount Toubkal Trek** please refer to the Trekking Packing List.

Hotels

The hotels in Morocco are clean, comfortable and centrally located. We try to utilise local and traditional hotels with plenty of character wherever possible. In smaller towns, the choice of accommodation is often limited, but we will always book the best accommodation available for our travellers. Please be aware that hotels in Morocco are not of the same standard as Western hotels and facilities can be more basic.

It's not like home, what to expect & Ramadan

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.

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/Morocco/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, etiquette, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare for your holiday.

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) 22 Mar - 20 Apr 2023 & 10 Mar - 08 Apr 2024.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Morocco

- Essaouira - cooking class 250DH
- Essaouira - horse riding 1 hr 250DH
- Essaouira - horse riding 2 hrs 300DH
- Essaouira - horse riding 3 hrs 390DH
- Essaouira - kayaking 350DH
- Essaouira - kitesurfing 700DH
- Marrakech - hammam 150DH

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