

Atlas & Atlantic Coast

10 days | Starts/Ends: Marrakech



Experience the madness of Marrakech, visit the beautiful Cascades D'Ouzoud and take the road less travelled up into the High Atlas Mountains for a taste of the real Morocco. Top it off with some coastal relaxation in Essaouira.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Marrakech - UNESCO-listed Place Djemaa el Fna, souks and Koutoubia Mosque
- Cascades D'Ouzoud - Beautiful waterfalls
- The Atlas Mountains - Admire the natural beauty of the mountains
- Valley of Ait Bougamez
- Views of Jebel Mgoun and the southern peaks of the High Atlas
- Sidi Moussa - Ancient granary and fortification
- Witness Lake of Bin Ouidane
- Enjoy leisurely time in Essaouira and the Atlantic Coast

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 3 lunches and 3 dinners
- 9 nights SUPERIOR hotels and riads. STANDARD and DELUXE hotel options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes

for details. Note: Deluxe hotels and riads are not available in Ait Bougamez

- Visiting - Marrakech, Cascades D'Ouzoud, Ait Bougamez, Sidi Moussa and Essaouira
- Entrance fees to all included sightseeing
- Services of a licensed English speaking tour guide at all included sites
- Driver, all transfers and transportation in a private modern air-conditioned tourism vehicle
- An airport arrival transfer day 1 and a departure transfer day 10 (Marrakech Airport)
- All road taxes and tolls

What's Not Included

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

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Marrakech

Arrival in Marrakech airport where you will be met by the On the Go guide and transferred to your centrally located hotel or riad. The remainder of the day and evening are free to explore the vibrant Djemaa el Fna square. Full of colour, spicy aromas and traders, it is best seen in the evening when overflowing with people, acrobats, fortune tellers, snake charmers and much more!

Overnight - Marrakech

Day 2 : Bahia Palace & the old medina

This morning enjoy a guided city tour, taking in all the highlights of Marrakech including the Koutoubia mosque and Bahia palace. Spend the afternoon at leisure, perhaps visit to the beautiful Jardins de Majorelle or wander around the souks. **Overnight - Marrakech (B)**

Day 3 : Cascades D'Ouzoud



Marrakech - Ait Bougamez. An early morning departure takes you off into the High Atlas along the route for Fes. After a short drive we turn off south and arrive at the glorious waterfall of the Cascades D'Ouzoud for lunch.

After taking some time to rest and enjoy our magnificent surroundings its time to hit the twisty mountain road past Azilal and reach the heart of the High Atlas – the valley of Ait Bougamez.

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Ait Bougmez is a hidden gem, a valley close to Ighil Mgoun, the highest summit in Morocco apart from the

Toubkal range. The area is popular for trekking, as there is a long, easy trek from the Tessaout Sources/ Tarkeddid plateau, which is reached from the Ait Bougmez valley. Exploring the valley is easily done on foot and it can be preferable to driving, as so many places still have poor roads. The centre of the region is the village of Tabant, and from here, in less than an hours walk, several small villages can be explored - Imelghas, Iskatafene, Ikhf-n-Ighir, Agouti, Ait Imi Iqballioun, Ifrane, and Arous. Three hours walk away is the village of Taghoulit. With incredibly striking scenery and off the beaten track location, Ait Bougmez is still unspoilt. Here you'll spend the next three nights in a Kasbah, exploring the beautiful surrounding area. **Overnight - Ait Bougmez (B, L, D)**

Day 4 : High Atlas



Today you can take a mule ride to the Dinosaur tracks at the head of the valley, the route winding through the fields of grain and the apple and almond orchards. After a picnic in the hills, return to the Kasbah via different route, stopping for a cup of tea in a berber house. **Overnight - Ait Bougmez (B, L, D)**

Day 5 : Sidi Moussa

If you're feeling energetic, a walk up to the pass of Tizi ait Imi is well rewarded with views of Jbel Mgoun and the southern peaks of the High Atlas, otherwise its possible to take a walk around the village, maybe see the feltmakers and carpet makers at work and have a picnic at the side of a stream watching the farmers in the fields. In the afternoon take a walk up to the World heritage site of Sidi

Moussa - an ancient granary and fortification. **Overnight - Ait Bougmez (B, L, D)**

Day 6 : Lake Bin Ouidane



Ait Bougmez - Marrakech. Descending from the mountains today, take the route past the lake of Bin Ouidane, where many richer Moroccans go for water sports, and then descend a sheer road down to the Orange farms of Beni mellal. Taking the road back to Marrakech. Spend the evening at leisure, perhaps wander around the souks, or enjoy a meal in one of the roof top restaurants overlooking Djemaa el Fna. **Overnight - Marrakech (B)**

Day 7 : Essaouira



Marrakech - Essaouira. This morning journey Essaouira, about 2.5 hrs away from Marrakech. Essaouira is a quiet seaside town with a long beach, an interesting little medina with souks and a grand harbour and fortifications. It's the perfect place to relax either on the beach or in a cafe on the square, or just watching the fishing boats coming in and out of the harbour.

Essaouira has avoided becoming a tourist trap and maintains the original charm which made it a firm favourite with many legendary stars, including Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley and Orson Welles who filmed Othello in Essaouira. **Overnight - Essaouira (B)**

Day 8 : Discover the Atlantic - beachside



Enjoy a lazy day at leisure in Essaouira. Perhaps take a camel ride along the beach, try a spot of wind surfing or simply laze about and soak up the sun. If you fancy some retail therapy there are plenty of souks, a jewellery quarter and some good art galleries. Tonight why not try one of the many tasty restaurants in the medina, where seafood is the speciality **Overnight - Essaouira (B)**

Day 9 : Marrakech - your own way

Essaouira - Marrakech. After a morning in Essaouira, you'll be transferred to Marrakech. On the way back its possible to stop at an Argan oil co-operative to see how the argan nuts from all the forests around Essaouira are converted into oils and soaps. Arrive back in time for some last minute souvenir shopping. **Overnight - Marrakech (B)**

Day 10 : Marrakech

Hotel check out and included onward departure transfer to the airport.(B)

Accommodation ratings

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the "included" section on the first page of this document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category, this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the "hotels" tab on our website. Here we rank hotel's in their respective country (REGIONAL CATEGORY) - but we also

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tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY).

STANDARD - Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant.

SUPERIOR - Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre.

DELUXE - Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care.

LUXURY - Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard - the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD\$5 - 6 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we'd recommend USD\$2 - 3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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

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.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book your holiday arrangements.

Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel.

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, per traveller 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.

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.

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

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remote areas. Drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants.

Essential packing & local currency

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

- 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) - we recommend you bring a universal travel adaptor
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- First aid kit including Dioralyte
- 2 spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport and your Travel Voucher
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, torch and money belt
- Either a rucksack or suitcase is suitable
- A towel for swimming
- A torch for your night in the Sahara Desert
- If travelling on our Essential (budget) group tour range, a sleeping bag 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)

GBP, USD and Euro can be exchanged in Morocco at bureau de changes in major cities and towns (please note AUD and NZD Dollars, RSA are often tricky to exchange and often not accepted), and most banks have ATMs. Credit cards are often excepted outside main cities and towns. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended.

How much you spend depends on individual tastes, we recommend Euro 20 - 30pp, per day on top of any optional excursions.

Hotels

The hotels 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 accommodation 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 are often basic.

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) 12 April – 11 May 2021

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

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.

Trouble shooting

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 through their networks rather than people being able to use these free services.

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Here are a few tips to keep your holiday 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 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, 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

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.

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updated on 30-05-2020 11:14:47

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