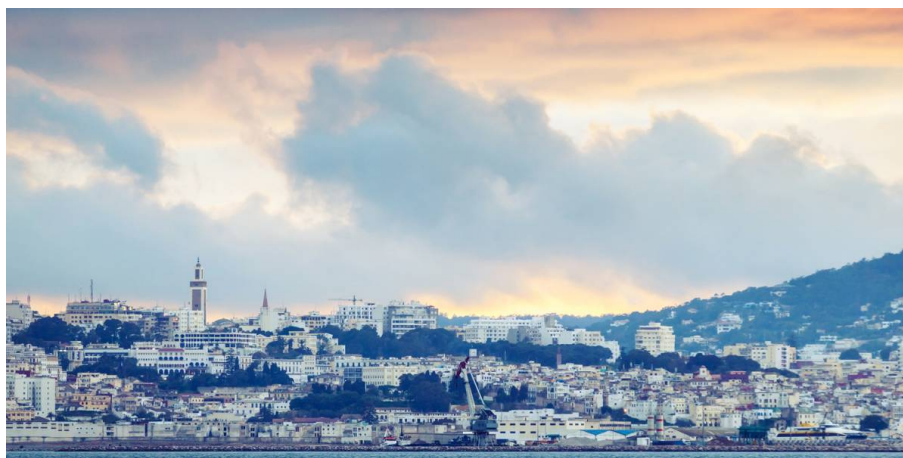


# Northern Morocco Explorer

## 7 Days | Marrakech/Casablanca to Tangier



Explore the highlights of northern Morocco departing from vibrant Marrakech. Take in the Atlantic coast, the famous Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca and discover ancient Roman ruins in Volubilis. Continue to Fes to immerse yourself in the hustle and bustle of the city's souks and tanneries before travelling to Tangier, the gateway between Europe and Africa.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

#### Trip Highlights

- Marrakech - independently explore the UNESCO-listed Medina, mosques, palaces & souks
- Chefchaouen - uncover Morocco's 'blue city' nestled in the Rif mountains
- Volubilis - marvel at the UNESCO listed Roman ruins
- Moulay Idriss - pass through Morocco's holiest city
- Fes - discover the intoxicating mix of aromas, sights and sounds in Morocco's oldest medieval city
- Casablanca - enjoy free time to discover the Moorish style architecture and famous Hassan II Mosque

- Tangier - discover the gateway to Africa

#### What's Included

- Arrival transfer from Marrakech airport - on day 1
- 6 nights 2 - 4 star hotels
- 6 breakfasts and 2 dinners
- Entrance fees for all included sites (excl Hassan II Mosque - budget 120DH)
- Guided sightseeing in Meknes, Volubilis and Fes
- Transportation and transfers in private 4x4 or mini van/touring vehicle
- Escorted by an English speaking tour leader
- All road taxes and tolls

#### What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$45pp, paid in USD or local currency
- Gratuity for your tour guide. Budget approx USD\$2 - 3 per person per day. Tipping your tour guide is an entirely personal gesture
- International flights and visa

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1 : Marrakech

Saturday. Welcome to Morocco! On arrival to Marrakech airport you'll be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure to relax at the hotel pool or explore

the city. This evening, meet your guide and fellow travellers for a welcome meeting and dinner at 18:00.

Should your flight arrive later in the evening, your guide will brief you on arrival.

#### Overnight - Marrakech (D)

#### Day 2 : Casablanca

Marrakech - Casablanca. This morning we journey to Casablanca, famous for the Humphrey Bogart film of the same name. On arrival we have some free time to wander through the old Medina, or perhaps travel beyond the Medina to the quaint new town and stroll down the palm-lined boulevards witnessing the small markets selling food and handicrafts. For those looking to delve into the city's culture, there is the option of visiting the world-renowned Hassan II mosque, the third largest mosque in the world.

#### Journey Time: Approx 3 hours Overnight - Casablanca (B, D)

#### Day 3 : Fes

Casablanca - Fes. Departing early, we continue our journey to Fes, the largest and oldest medieval city in the world. En route, we stop at the imperial city of Meknes where stop for a visit to the 12th Century Grande Mosque and Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail, the final resting place of sultan Moulay Ismail.

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This afternoon, we move on to the Roman settlement of Volubilis, the largest ancient site of Morocco, for a guided tour. This well preserved UNESCO-listed site dates back to AD40 and once ruled the entire Roman province of Mauritania. Onwards to picturesque Moulay Idriss - Morocco's holiest city. This white washed town was opened to non-muslims in 2005, and we have some time to wander around before continuing to Fes, our home for the next two nights.

**Journey Time:** Approx 6 hours **Overnight - Fes (B)**

## Day 4 : Fes

Fes, the oldest and largest of Morocco's imperial cities, is ours to explore today. Home to 400,000 inhabitants, with only bikes and donkeys as a means of transportation, the city is an intoxicating mix of aromas, sights and sounds. We'll learn the fascinating history as we explore the tanneries, dye-pits, souks, potteries and famous Medina - said to be the best preserved Medina in the Arab world. We'll later return to the hotel to get ready for an optional night of Moroccan entertainment and food at a restaurant in town.

**Overnight - Fes (B)**

## Day 5 : Chefchaouen

Fes - Ouazzane - Chefchaouen. After breakfast we depart Fes and continue our journey off-the-beaten track to the small town of Ouazzane, situated on the edge of the Rif mountains. This spiritual capital and famous pilgrimage site attracts Moroccan Jews who come to pay respects to the tombs of several Moroccan saints.

We'll then head high up in the Rif Mountains to Chefchaouen, a former berber post which boasts a beautiful blue door and white-walled medina. The main square is the heart of Chefchaouen, with the Kasbah (built back in the 18th century), central mosque and cafes with authentic menus. Enjoy some free time to explore busy market which is a mix of traditional Moroccan and tourist fare.

**Journey Time:** Approx 3.5 hours **Overnight - Chefchaouen (B)**

## Day 6 : Chefchaouen

Today is ours to explore Chefchaouen at leisure. Spend your time uncovering the city's delights - The Plaza Ura el-Hammam is the perfect spot to sip on mint tea and watch the world go by, or perhaps enjoy a spot of lunch in one of the restaurants or cafes scattered in the Medina. For the more adventurous, leave the city and discover the incredible landscapes of the Rif Mountains on one of the wonderful day hikes.

**Overnight - Chefchaouen (B)**

## Day 7 : Tangier

We enjoy one final breakfast together before leaving the 'Blue City' behind and making our way to our final port of call - Tangier. Located on the Maghred Coast, where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean, is the gateway between Africa and Europe. We have time to explore the beautiful port, where we have the opportunity to visit the Dar el Makhzen, a former sultans palace that is now a museum of Moroccan artefacts, the old and new Medina's or just relax and enjoy some people watching. Our tour concludes after lunch at approximately 1pm at hotel Ramada Encore, 10 mins from the port.

**Journey Time:** Approx 3.5 hours(B)

## HOTELS

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

**Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel 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!



### Moroccan House Hotel

In the centre of Casablanca, Moroccan house is a charming hotel. Designed similar to a traditional Riad, this quirky residence offers delicious Moroccan food as well as getting the chance to prepare it yourself. Guest rooms include comfortable beds, complete with frilly lace canopies and all the modern conveniences you could ask for. Located a few steps away from the port and a short drive to the Hassan II mosque.



### Hotel Arena

Boasting a garden, outdoor pool and mountain views, Hotel Arena offers a great location for visiting the Royal Palace and the bustling medina of Fes. Each of the rooms is fitted with a balcony allowing for city or pool views, alongside modern amenities such as air conditioning and WiFi. Guests can enjoy a continental breakfast in the onsite restaurant and take advantage of the hotel's spa facilities. Alongside a sauna and massage treatments, guests can unwind with a traditional hammam steam bath complete with a facial scrub and body masks.



### Hotel Madrid

Hotel Madrid offers a fantastic location in the centre of Chefchaouen, just 300 metres

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from the blue streets of the old town and a short stroll from the bustling Place Outa el Hammam and Kasbah. Its standout feature is its traditional décor, with the hotel's Moroccan lounges and guestrooms all painted in bright colours and patterns, giving the property a very authentic feel. Some of the rooms also feature four-poster beds and the patio is a great spot to unwind after a day of sightseeing.



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### 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, 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.

### 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.

Please note: if there is only one passenger on the Imperial Morocco & The Blue City tour returning to Marrakech on day 7, then instead of driving, we will arrange a flight from Fes – Marrakech and airport transfers to and from each airport while passengers on the Magical Morocco tour will continue their touring arrangements. For groups of 2+ passengers on the Imperial Morocco & The Blue City sector, we will return to Marrakech in our air-conditioned vehicle.

### Time Keeping

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.

### Essential Packing

- A sleeping bag for the Sahara Desert camp if travelling between Oct - Apr.
- 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

## 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 In Morocco

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

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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 on our budget tour range and will not be needed if you have booked onto our Signature tour range (Totally Morocco, Road to Casablanca, Best of Morocco, Magical Morocco & Casablanca to Essaouira tours) sleeping bags will not be required and bed coverings will be provided.

## 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 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) -

23 April – 23 May 2020

12 April – 11 May 2021

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## 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.

## Trouble Shooting

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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