

Geminids Meteor Shower

15 Days | Starts/Ends: Marrakech



Become starstruck! Camel trek into the Sahara for an unforgettable night of stargazing at the peak of the spectacular Geminids Meteor Shower. In fifteen action packed days, you'll also get to Wander through the labyrinthine souks of Fes and Marrakech, explore legendary Casablanca, relax by the Atlantic coast in Essaouira and chart Roman ruins at Volubilis.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Experience the amazing Geminids Meteor Shower in the heart of the Sahara Desert
- Marrakech – UNESCO-listed medina, mosques, palaces and souks (explored independently)
- Casablanca and its incredible Hassan II mosque
- Rabat - Morocco's lively capital
- Meknes - Amazing Imperial city
- Rif Mountains
- Chefchaouen – overlooked by the Goat Horns mountains
- Volubilis – UNESCO-listed Roman ruins
- Fes – the world's oldest medieval city
- Erg Chebbi/Merzouga sand dunes - beginning of the Sahara

- Todra Gorge – Morocco's Grand Canyon
- Essaouira – UNESCO-listed medina, great beaches and surf
- Valley and waterfalls in the Atlas Mountains

What's Included

- 14 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 5 dinners including Berber camp dinner
- 13 nights 3 star hotel, 1 night camping - Berber camp in the Sahara
- Guided sighting in Chefchaouen, Volubilis, Fes and Ait Benhaddou
- Specialist local guides at some sites
- Arrival transfer from Marrakech airport - on day 1
- Camel trek into the Sahara
- Escorted by an English speaking tour leader
- Transportation and transfers in private 4x4 or mini van/touring vehicle, public bus Essaouira - Marrakech day 13
- All entrance fees to included sights
- All road taxes and tolls

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$65pp, 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

ITINERARY

Day 1 : Marrakech

6th December 2019. Welcome to Morocco! You'll be met at Marrakech Airport and transferred to your hotel. Be sure to arrive in time for our welcome meeting and dinner at 18:00. **Overnight - Marrakech (D)**

Day 2 : Casablanca

Marrakech - Casablanca. En-route this morning we travel up to Casablanca. Made famous by Humphrey Bogart in the film "Casablanca". We then have the option of visiting the stunning Hassan II mosque, which has the tallest minaret and the third largest mosque in the world, it can hold 25,000 worshippers at any one time.

Overnight - Casablanca (B)

Day 3 : Rabat & Meknes

Casablanca - Rabat - Meknes. This morning we head straight to Rabat, Morocco's capital city. We will spend the morning visiting Oudaia Kasbah, Hassan tower, the Royal Palace and Chellah. After lunch we will move on to the third of our Imperial cities Meknes to enjoy some free time. **Overnight - Meknes (B)**

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Day 4 : Chefchaouen



Meknes - Chefchaouen. After breakfast, we'll embark on a tour of the Roman ruins at Volubilis, the largest ancient site of Morocco. UNESCO-listed, the site dates back to AD40 and once ruled the entire Roman province of Mauritania. We'll then head on to Chefchaouen for a guided tour this afternoon. High up in the Rif mountains, Chefchaouen boasts a beautiful blue door and white-walled medina that was originally a Berber post. The main square is the heart of Chefchaouen, with the Kasbah (built back in the 18th century), central mosque and cafes with authentic menus. The busy market is a mix of traditional Moroccan and tourist fare. **Overnight - Chefchaouen (B)**

Days 5-6 : Fes



Chefchaouen - Fes. Enjoy some free time in Chefchaouen this morning - relax at the hotel or spend your time exploring this beautiful city. We travel on to Fes in the afternoon. Fes is the oldest and largest medieval city in the world, and its medina is a heady mix of aromas, sounds and sights. To navigate, follow one of the five, themed tourist circuits. There are plenty of mosques and palaces to visit, but be aware that only Muslims can enter Mosques in Morocco.

On day 6 we embark on a fully guided tour of the city of Fes. Explore the tanneries,

souks, potteries, and the Medina, and learn the fascinating history of the city. 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:2)**

Day 7 : Midelt

Fes - Midelt. This morning we journey over the Moyen Atlas to stop at Midelt. This is a beautiful alpine area. Surrounded by huge pine trees and a tranquil mountain setting, this is a great spot to cool down and relax after the hustle and bustle of Fes. We will enjoy a small hike in the afternoon. We spend the night in this mountain location.

Overnight - Midelt (B, L, D)

Day 8 : Geminids Meteor Shower



Midelt - Erg Chebbi. Today we embark on a scenic drive followed by an optional tasty Moroccan lunch (not included) and an afternoon relaxing and swimming. Then we head out to towards the Erg Chebbi dunes located near the remote frontier town of Merzouga. The dunes are renowned for their incredible height and size. In parts the vast sand pile reaches skyward to heights of 150 metres! Transferring to our camels we trek into the Sahara for a night at our Berber Camp. Tonight, we enjoy a local meal, music and an amazing night out under the Saharan stars.

The stars in the Sahara are fantastic at the best of times - however tonight they should be extraordinary as we hope to witness the peak of the Geminids Meteor Shower. This annual event has been observed for over 500 years and gets its names from the constellation Gemini, because it is said to emanate from here. The shower is one of the world's brightest, has been known to produce

fire balls and can create 100-150 meteors an hour at its peak. **Overnight - Merzouga (B, D)**

Day 9 : Todra Gorge

Erg Chebbi - Todra Gorge. Leaving the desert, we move on to Todra Gorge. This 1000ft gorge is hemmed in on all sides by vertical limestone cliffs and is also called Morocco's Grand Canyon. We will have an early lunch at the village co-operative where you can see and buy authentic, Berber, handmade rugs, kilims and carpets. The afternoon can be spent exploring the Gorge, walking through the palmerie or if you're feeling adventurous, there is the option to rock climb.

Overnight - Todra Gorge (B, L, D)

Day 10 : Ait Benhaddou



Todra Gorge - Ait Benhaddou. Leaving the impressive Todra Gorge we continue our journey to Ait Benhaddou, stopping en route in Quarzazate for lunch and the opportunity to tour its famous film studio (book/pay locally). After lunch we tour the famous Ait Benhaddou Kasbah, where Lawrence of Arabia was once filmed. **Overnight - Ait Benhaddou (B, D)**

Days 11-12 : Essaouira



Ait Benhaddou - Essaouira. Today's drive offers panoramic views as we traverse the high Atlas Mountains on our way to Essaouira. A colourful old city and fishing village is located within 15th century Portuguese

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fortifications. Just outside the town great beaches and an Atlantic surf beckon.

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, an antidote to the bustle of the Imperial Cities. During our time here there's the option to take part in horse trekking or quad biking. **Overnight - Essaouira (B:2)**

Days 13-14 : Djemaa el Fna



Essaouira - Marrakech - breakfast. We take a supratours public bus from Essaouira back to Marrakech this morning, to explore the last of Morocco's four Imperial cities we visit on this tour. Marrakech set against the snow-capped Atlas Mountains. Its great pride and landmark is the Koutoubia Tower, sister to the Tower of Hassan in Rabat and the Giralda Tower in Seville. It is said that after the third of these was completed, the sultan had the eyes of his architect put out, lest he should build another more beautiful tower elsewhere. No visit to the city is complete without a visit to the city's UNESCO-listed medina & Djemaa-el-Fna, an extraordinary gathering and market place. An optional guided tour of Marrakech is offered with a local payment of 100 Dirhams, alternatively you can explore the city yourself or relax by the pool. **Overnight - Marrakech (B:2)**

Day 15 : Marrakech

20th December 2019. Marrakech - Breakfast. Spend the morning relaxing or picking up a

few last minute souvenirs. Our tour concludes upon hotel check out at 12 noon.(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.

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 Akouas

The Akouas is a comfortable and modern hotel, with traditional Moroccan architecture and comfortable rooms.



Hotel Madrid

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



Hotel Sofia

Situated in the heart of Fes, Hotel Sofia offers comfortable, air-conditioned guestrooms just a stone's throw from the city's most popular landmarks. The rooms are also equipped with a satellite TV and WiFi, as well as a balcony to soak up the sun. Guests can cool off by the pool or relax on the sun terrace after a long day of exploring, with tasty local meals available at the on-site restaurant.



Kasbah Asmaa

The Kasbah Asmaa Midelt is a traditional style hotel with spacious and comfortable rooms. The hotel is surrounded by gardens and mountains.

Desert Camp

Set amongst the towering dunes of Erg Chebbi, the Berber camp is designed with a traditional Moroccan theme. The permanent tents include multiple beds and electricity (after night fall) Camping out in the desert is a wonderful experience, due to the lack of light pollution, the stars come out in abundance and really are a sight to behold.



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Kasbah Amazir

Nestled in a small oasis surrounded by palm trees, the traditional-style Kasbah Amazir is the perfect haven for those looking to relax. Guestrooms feature Berber carpets and bamboo furniture, with some also offering a private terrace. Enjoy a dip in the swimming pool or take a stroll in the gardens. For those looking to fill their holiday with a spot of adrenaline, hikes and climbs can be arranged nearby. After a long day you can enjoy a drink and traditional Moroccan dishes in the on-site restaurant.



La Rose Du Sable

La Rose Du Sable is a Kasbah-style property located within minutes of the fortified town of Air Benhaddou. Each traditionally decorated guestroom is ensuite and boasts spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. Guests can relax by the pool or on the Berber lounge terrace, while enjoying delicious local specialties such as tagine and couscous.



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.



El Andalous Hotel & Spa

Just 10 minutes from the airport, the El Andalous Hotel and Spa offers a welcome respite from the hubbub 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!



PRICES / DATES INFO

Departure dates noted with a 'G' are guaranteed to operate. All other departure dates are guaranteed with a minimum of 2 persons. Prices shown are per person when there are 2 persons sharing a room. The 'Single supplement' applies for single travellers who require their own room and needs to be added to the per person price. If you are happy to be paired up with another single traveller of the same gender on your tour, this can be arranged provided there is another single traveller booked on the tour date of your choosing. If a roommate cannot be found the single room supplement will apply.

PRICES / DATES 2019

| Date | Twin Share | Single |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| 06 Dec | GBP 1,025 | GBP 1,255 |

PRICES / DATES 2020

| Date | Twin Share | Single |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| 06 Dec | GBP 1,025 | GBP 1,255 |

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