

# Morocco Meteor Shower

9 days | Starts/Ends: Marrakech



*Gaze up to the night's sky and witness the incredible Geminids Meteor shower as it peaks over the Moroccan desert. Explore the highlights of Morocco on this 9 day tour led by an expert local guide. Starting in Marrakech we travel to Ait Benhaddou and Ouarzazate before we begin our camel trek into the Sahara. Visit the Imperial Cities of Fes, Rabat and Meknes.*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Geminids Meteor Shower - Witness one of the brightest Meteor Showers in the world from the heart of the Sahara Desert
- Marrakech – UNESCO-listed medina, mosque, palaces and souks. Majorelle Gardens - Yves Saint Laurent's famous blue gardens
- Casablanca - Morocco's largest city
- Rabat - the lively capital city
- Meknes - a great Imperial city
- Volubilis – UNESCO-listed Roman ruins
- Fes – the oldest medieval city in the world, medina dye pits and tanneries
- Erg Chebbi sand dunes - beginning of the Sahara
- Todra Gorge - Towering red canyon

- Ait Benhaddou - UNESCO Listed ancient kasbah

### What's Included

- Joined by a local Astronomer guide to provide information about the Geminids Meteor Shower
- 8 Breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners including a traditional Berber meal our Sahara camp
- 7 nights 3 - 4 star hotels and riad, 1 night camping - Berber desert camp in the Sahara Desert (Hotel upgrade available)
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 9
- Guided sightseeing of Casablanca, Rabat, Volubilis, Fes, Merzouga, Todra Gorge, Ait Benhaddou and Marrakech
- Escorted by a licensed English speaking Moroccan tour guide
- Specialist local guides at some sites
- Camel trek into the Sahara
- All transportation and transfers in private air-conditioned tourism vehicles
- All road taxes and tolls

### What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$40-50pp, paid in local currency
- Entrance Fees: USD\$70-90pp, paid in local currency
- International flights and visa

- Gratuity for your tour guide & driver. Budget approx USD\$2 - 3 per person per day. Tipping your tour guide and driver is an entirely personal gesture

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Marrakech



Tuesday 10 Dec 2019. Upon arrival at Marrakech airport you'll be met and transferred to our hotel in the centre of town. The remainder of the day is at leisure for you to explore Marrakech - you might want to explore some of the highlights of Marrakech, such as the medina or Djemaa el Fna, the exuberant market place. Later on there will be a Welcome Meeting at the hotel at 19:30hrs.

### Overnight - Marrakech

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## Day 2 : Majorelle Gardens & Marrakech City Tour



After breakfast we head over to the beautiful Majorelle Gardens just a short drive from the hotel. These botanical gardens were designed by the French Artist Jacques Majorelle in the 1920s and 1930s. He used a distinctive shade of cobalt blue for the majority of the garden and although a lot of his other work has largely been forgotten – this garden is seen as his greatest master piece. The garden has been owned by Yves Saint Laurent since 1980 and his ashes were scattered here after his death in 2008. The garden contains an extensive collection of exotic plants and trees and is home to 15 species of bird. There is also a Berber Museum representing the various indigenous tribes of Morocco including over 600 artefacts. The newly opened Yves Saint Laurent museum nearby is also well worth a visit - this museum was opened in 2017 and is dedicated to the life and works of Yves Saint Laurent himself. Please note entrance into the YSL museum is not included and costs 100 MAD per person if you would like to go in.

This afternoon you will meet up with the rest of the group who are coming in from Casablanca before embarking on a guided tour of Marrakech. Inside the rose coloured medina walls is a tangle of winding streets and alleys that open onto verdant gardens and bustling souks. At the heart of the medina is Djemaa El Fna, the city's exuberant market place and towering over it, is the famous Koutoubia Mosque, the tallest building in the city.

This evening you'll be met by your specialist astronomy guide, who will give you a short presentation after dinner about the sky above

you and what you can hope to see in the next couple of evenings.

**Overnight - Marrakech (B, D)**

## Day 3 : Ait Benhaddou



Marrakech - Ait Benhaddou - Ouarzazate. Departing the city this morning we travel across the plains of haouz and reach the great High Atlas mountains. Climbing over the pass of Tizi n Tichka, we stop for lunch and then continue onwards with great views over the Mountains and valleys to Ait Benhaddou. This incredible ancient fortified Kasbah was built for defence purposes high on a hill and is a stunningly well preserved medieval city which has famously featured in many blockbuster movies, including Gladiator and Laurence of Arabia as its beauty is unequal to any other fortified kasbah in south Morocco. Carrying on we continue south to the Hollywood of North Africa – Ouarzazate (pronounced war-zazat). Ouarzazate is famous for being the filming location for many other Hollywood blockbusters and famous TV shows including James Bond – The Living Daylights, The Mummy and more recently Game of Thrones.

After dinner we will head outside and look up to the sky, your astronomy guide will explain the constellations and stars that shine bright in the nights sky.

**Overnight - Ouarzazate (B, L, D)**

## Day 4 : Geminids Meteor Shower



Ouarzazate - Todra Gorge - Merzouga (Sahara). This morning we begin our journey into the Sahara with a medley of palm trees, rose fields and magnificent gorges. Travelling from Ouarzazate, there is a possibility of visiting the kasbah Amherdhil in Skoura before seeing the rose fields and reaching scenic Todra Gorge. Surrounded by towering vertical limestone cliffs reaching heights of 1000ft, it is known as Morocco's Grand Canyon. The charm of Todra lies in its changing colours as the sun slowly moves from east to west. After time to wander through Todra we hit the road again for Merzouga – our base before we head into the Sahara. Depending on the time of year, spend the afternoon relaxing and swimming before climbing aboard our camels for an incredible trek into the Sahara Desert to watch a beautiful sunset and spend the night at our remote Berber Camp, nestled amongst the towering dunes of Erg Chebbi. We enjoy local food, music and an amazing night camping in the Sahara.

The stars above Morocco are impressive all year long, however, every year on the 13th of December the Geminids Meteor Shower peaks with amazing effect. Having been observed for over 500 years, it is believed the meteor shower emanates from the Gemini constellation and hence this is where it gets its name. Your local astronomer will guide you through the science behind what you'll hopefully get to see, the incredible display of ones the worlds brightest meteor showers.

If you would prefer the comfort of a hotel with en-suite facilities this evening, opt for our complimentary Sahara hotel alternative.

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Please do let us know your preferred option at the time of booking. **Overnight - Berber Camp** (B, L, D)

## Day 5 : Fes



Merzouga (Sahara) - Fes. Departing early, we climb back on our camels disembarking for a truly stunning sunrise. After freshening up and breakfast in Merzouga we're back on the road heading for Fes. It's a long drive today however there is a lot to see on the way. We'll pass through cedar forests full of Barbary Macaque monkeys on our way through the Moyen Atlas mountains. Just before Fes we stop at Ifrane – a beautiful town often likened to a Swiss Alpine resort. Along the way we also start to see our first glimpse of Morocco's nomadic Berbers – travelling across the mountains and often staying in make shift tents as they head to their next destination. We arrive into Fes in the early evening. **Overnight - Fes** (B, L)

## Day 6 : Fes

Fes is the oldest and largest medieval city in the world and its medina is a cacophony of aromas, sights and sounds. This morning we enjoy a guided tour of Fes el Bali - the old walled city. This fascinating medina is a veritable rabbit warren of 9400 alleys that often finish with dead ends – so be sure to stay close to the group! We also visit the dye-pits and tanneries before lunch in the medina. The remainder of the day is at leisure – why not take part in an optional Tagine Making Class or a night of Moroccan entertainment and food at a restaurant in town (both payable locally). **Overnight - Fes** (B)

## Day 7 : Volubilis & Meknes



Fes - Volubilis - Meknes - Rabat. Departing Fes this morning we visit the fascinating UNESCO listed Roman ruins of Volubilis, which date back to AD40. Continuing on we stop at the Imperial City of Meknes, which became known as the Versailles of Morocco due to its impressive buildings and elaborate monuments. After lunch and some free time our final stop of the day is Rabat – Morocco's capital where we overnight. **Overnight - Rabat** (B)

## Day 8 : Rabat & Casablanca



Rabat - Casablanca - Marrakech. This morning we take a guided tour of Rabat and visit some of the capital's highlights, including the impressive Chellah - a necropolis and complex of ancient, medieval ruins, the Royal Palace and the Mausoleum of Mohammed V. After lunch we continue to Casablanca where we visit the Hassan II Mosque, which has the tallest minaret and is the third largest mosque in the world - it can hold 25,000 worshippers at any one time. After our visit to the mosque we say goodbye to our fellow passengers leaving us in Casablanca and continue onto Marrakech for the night. **Overnight - Marrakech** (B)

## Day 9 : Marrakech



Wednesday 18 Dec 2019. Our amazing tour of Morocco ends today after hotel check out. (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.**

### Adam Park Hotel & Spa

Guests can expect a very comfortable stay at the Adam Park Hotel & Spa. Each of the elegant rooms feature a patio or balcony with views of the surrounding area. Guests are spoilt for choice when it comes to dining. Several restaurants offer a variety of options including Italian specialities, Moroccan favourites and international cuisine. There are also plenty of ways to unwind after a day exploring Marrakech, with an outdoor pool, fitness centre and a spa offering rejuvenating massage treatments.



### Riad Imilchil

Traditional and stylish, the Riad Imilchil is a beautiful example of boutique Moroccan accommodation. The 6 rooms and 1 suite are beautifully decorated with colourful interiors and gorgeous en suites. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout and there is a

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stunning rooftop terrace where guests can view the whole of the city whilst enjoying a refreshing drink. At night you can view the famous Djemma El Fna pulsating in the distance. Well located just 10 minute walk into the centre of the Medina.



## Riad dar Chamaa

In the classic kasbah style, Riad dar Chamaa is set within the Ouarzazate palm grove with fantastic views of the surrounding Atlas mountains. All guest rooms are air conditioned with en suite facilities. They are designed in a classic Moroccan riad style with marble floors. The riad boasts a beautiful central courtyard and a refreshing outdoor pool complete with sun loungers for relaxing. The riad also boasts a tea lounge, restaurant and pool bar.



## 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.



## Riad Al Makan

Situated inside the Fes medina, Riad Al Makan is designed in a beautiful Moroccan

style. All of the en suite guest rooms are individually designed with beautiful mosaic patterns and marble floors. The riad also benefits from complimentary wi-fi, an onsite restaurant, 24 hour front desk assistance and a gift shop. There is also an outside terrace perfect for enjoying a cup of Moroccan tea on.



## Hotel des Oudaias

On the edge of the medina in Rabat, Hotel des Oudaias is a beautiful riad style property. Guest rooms are spacious and beautifully furnished in a typical Moroccan style with wooden furnishings, marble floors and en-suite bathrooms. Rooms are air-conditioned and have flat screen TVs. The property also boasts complimentary wi-fi throughout and an on site restaurant.



## 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
10 Dec	USD 1,545	USD 1,925

### PRICES / DATES 2020

Date	Twin Share	Single
10 Dec	USD 1,545	USD 1,925

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