

Imperial Cities of Morocco



TRIP OVERVIEW

Uncover Morocco's colourful cultural offerings as you explore ancient medinas, spice-filled souks and dramatic Moorish architecture. Indulge your senses on this 8-day tour which incorporates the historic sights of Casablanca, breath-taking views of the Atlas Mountains and the palaces, tombs and souks of Fez and Marrakech.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Morocco. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Marrakech D

Depart London on your scheduled flight to Marrakech. On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel, arriving in time for your first dinner in Morocco's atmospheric capital city.

DAY 2: Marrakech to Casablanca B/D

After breakfast, journey north to Morocco's largest city, Casablanca, and uncover this modern metropolis with a distinctive European feel, which stretches along the Atlantic coastline. On arrival, wander through a verdant area dotted with swaying palm trees in the League of Arab States Park, continuing past the Notre Dame de Lourdes Church famed for its exquisite stained-glass windows. Continue through the busy shopping area of the Habous Quarter, where a beautiful fusion of architecture rubs shoulders with boutique markets stalls retailing unique souvenirs, clothing and local handicraft goods; a fragrant aroma fills the air here, with a wide ranging collection of vibrant olives, herbs, spices and oils to feast your eyes upon in the Olive Souk of Habous Quarter. Later today, witness an architectural masterpiece at the third largest mosque in the world which proudly stands before the glistening waters of the Atlantic. Adorned with intricately decorative tiles, admire an exhibition of Moroccan craftsmanship at the esplanade of the magnificent Hassan II Mosque which boasts the world's tallest minaret. Check into your hotel for dinner and your overnight stay.

DAY 3: Casablanca to Fez B/D

After breakfast, travel to Rabat for a half-day city tour of Morocco's colourful capital city. Visit the Hassan Tower, a 12th century unfinished minaret built from distinctive red sandstone and one of the few parts remaining from the original Hassan Mosque, then explore the nearby mausoleum of Mohammed V with its stunning mahogany domes and intricate gold leaf decorations. Travel onward to the ancient Roman town of Volubilis, the country's best-preserved archaeological site. Wander past crumbling pillars and intricately laid mosaics then delve deeper into Morocco's historical fabric on a visit to Meknes. There, explore the settlement of the ruthless tyrant Sultan Moulay Ismail who founded this imperial city for his harem of 500 wives and 12,000 horses. View the Sultan's resting place, which boasts some of Morocco's best craftsmanship, mosaics and stucco, then journey to Fez, arriving in time for dinner.

DAY 4: Fez B/D

Brimming with history, numerous civilisations have settled or passed through Fez, leaving a legacy of palaces, mosques and museums filled with precious treasures. Begin your full-day city tour at the ancient medina of Fez, home to the architecturally rich Andalusian Quarter. Traverse some of the 9,000 streets of this maze-like district, passing some of the city's oldest and most esteemed mosques and religious schools, including the 1,200-year-old Al Kairouyne university and grandiose El Qaraoyin Mosque, renowned as one of the largest Islamic monuments in North Africa. The city is alive with traditional crafts which are produced locally, and a visit to a local tannery provides a fascinating insight into the sights and smells of a craft that has remained relatively unchanged since the 16th century. Awash with copious quarries containing a kaleidoscope of colourful dye, witness a remarkably medieval sight before returning to your hotel this evening.

DAY 5: Fez to Beni Mellal B/D

Bidding farewell to Fez this morning, journey past the small town of Azrou, enjoying fantastic views of the area's shimmering lakes and dense cedar forests on a spectacularly scenic drive. Arrive in Beni Mellal, tucked away in the Middle Atlas Mountains, in time for dinner at your hotel.

DAY 6: Beni Mellal to Marrakech B/D

Depart for Marrakech this morning, stopping first at one of Morocco's breath-taking natural wonders, Ouzoud Falls, set within the friendly Berber village of Tanaghmeilt. A multi-sensory experience awaits, as a cascading torrent which leaps off the towering cliffside produces a plume of mist; marvel at this 3-tiered waterfall and its surrounding valleys, caves and gorges, whilst keeping an eye out for resident apes who drink from these waters. Check into your hotel in the ochre-coloured city of Marrakech and enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Abounding old-world charm, a plethora of highlights within the 'Red City' will keep you entertained; immerse yourself in some of the world's finest examples of Islamic architecture, savour the authentic delights of traditional North African cuisine, or test your bargaining skills in the bustling medina. Later this evening, visit the world-famous Djemaa El Fnaa Square and witness the vast esplanade transform from a day market to an immense show of dancers, musicians, soothsayers, snake charmers and dancing monkeys.

DAY 7: Marrakech B/D

Today's tour takes you to the El Bahia Palace and tombs of the Saadian princes, then on to Dar El Basha Quarter. Peruse the basketwork, dried fruit, spices and fabrics of Kessabine and Smarine souks (markets) and explore the ancient, former slave market of Rahba Kedima Square, where locals arrive in droves to buy potions for magic spells and ingredients ranging from bark to chameleons. While dinner is provided at the hotel, an optional evening of belly dancing and folklore is also available (at a fee).

DAY 8: Marrakech to the UK or extension B

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP



Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to leisure hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Morocco. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Marrakech you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Sahara Tours**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Sahara Tours representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries. However, if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

Sahara Tours

27-29 Complexe Agador,
Boulevard 20 Août, Agadir, Morocco
Contact number: 00212 528 840421 / 528 840611
Email: ihsane.stirak@gmail.com or reservation@stimaroc.com



Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **Sahara Tours**:
Mobile: 00212 661 38 08 82
Email: ihsane.stirak@gmail.com or reservation@stimaroc.com

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required for your trip to Morocco. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Tour Guides - Local Guide

This is a fully escorted tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory and is at your discretion. We would recommend approximately 150DHS (£11.00) per person which is split between the driver and guide. Should you wish to tip, this will be collected by your guide at the end of your tour for your convenience. It is asked that if you do not tip in the local currency, please do not give coins as these are difficult to exchange.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Imperial Cities of Morocco is intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with

regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 35. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Morocco is the Moroccan Dirham (DH) and it is a closed currency. This means it is not possible to buy Moroccan money in the UK before you travel. It is important to budget carefully as you should not take any Dirham out of Morocco when you depart. There are foreign exchange offices and cash machines available in most places during your tour. Your tour guide will assist you at the start of your tour with currency exchange. Credit and debit cards are accepted in most hotels and some shops and restaurants; a charge is sometimes added for using them.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £200- £300 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases. Please note AMEX is not accepted in Morocco.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card, you may be asked for a cash deposit. MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Ramadan

Ramadan is estimated to begin on the 10th March 2024 to 8th April 2024 and 28th February 2025-29th March 2025. Ramadan is the most important month in the Muslim Calendar, and it is a time for people to be with their loved ones, self-reflect and renew their faith. During this time Muslims fast from dawn until dusk and abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and chewing gum. If you are a tourist visiting Jordan, you will not be expected to fast. While eating, drinking and smoking is strictly prohibited in public places, hotels will offer meals and non-alcoholic drinks at many of their restaurants and bars. If you wish to consume alcohol during your trip, you may do so in your hotel room during the day, and some bars will be open as normal after sunset. Your guide during your tour will be on hand to give you any additional information that you require. When packing for your trip, it's important you include a couple of different outfit options, so you're prepared for all the activities you wish to take part in. When you're relaxing by the hotel pool or sunbathing on the resort beach it's fine to wear swim wear and beach clothes. However, when out in public during the day, it is advisable to be more covered up to show respect to the local customs. We would recommend that women cover their shoulders and knees and men should wear knee length shorts or trousers when out in public areas.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen, insect repellent and hat
- Waterproof lightweight jacket
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger

- A plug adaptor - the electricity in Morocco is 220 V. You will need a 2 round pin plug adaptor
- Leave plenty of space in your case for shopping
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

FLIGHT INFORMATION

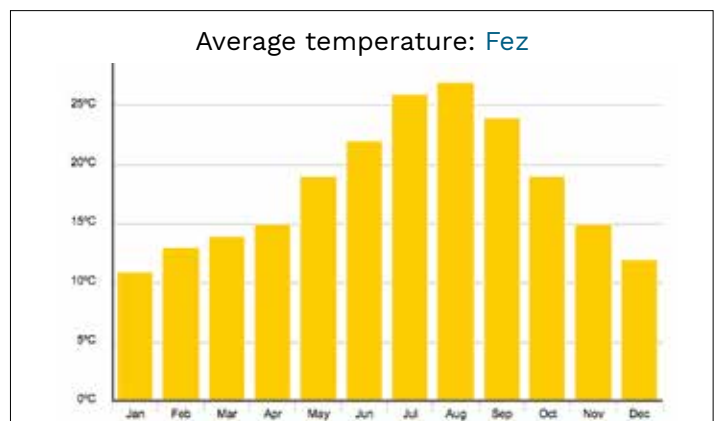
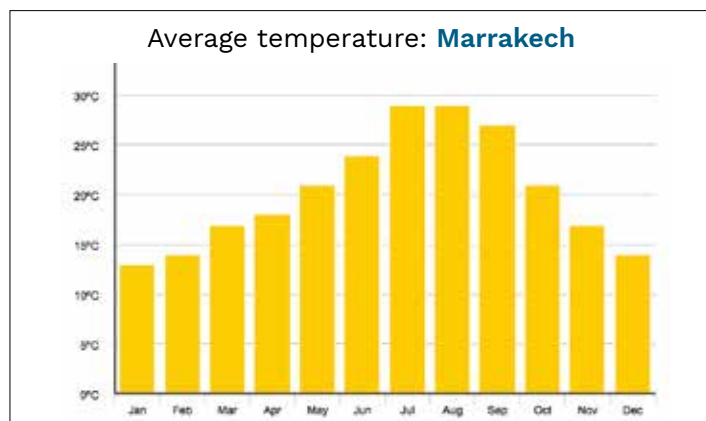
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport and boarding pass to the staff at the desk.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Agadir Beach Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

A country of contrasts with year-round sunshine and golden beaches, it is no wonder that Agadir, situated on the southern part of the Atlantic coastline, is Morocco's number one tourist resort. Put your feet up and unwind amongst these expansive shores, enjoying a wealth of entertainment.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Agadir.

Hotel Information

Agadir (4 nights on Half Board)

Your stay in Agadir will take place at the following hotel;

4★ Allegro Agadir Hotel - Located in the seaside area of Agadir, this hotel offers access to a private beach (via a footpath) and a wealth of amenities. Guests can relax by the outdoor swimming pool, complete with sun loungers to soak up the sun, as well as the hotel's indoor pool. Contemporary Superior Rooms are air-conditioned with a terrace or balcony. All are equipped with a shower, a mini-bar (empty), TV and hairdryer.

Hotel address: Boulevard du 20 Aout, Agadir 80000, Morocco
Contact number: 00212 5288-40233

Any alternative hotels or board basis, plus duration will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Final confirmation of your hotel will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.

Tour guides

Your stay in Morocco is not escorted by a tour guide. Your time here will be free to do as you wish. Details of your departure transfer to your beach stay will be confirmed by your guide at the end of your tour.

Personal Expenses

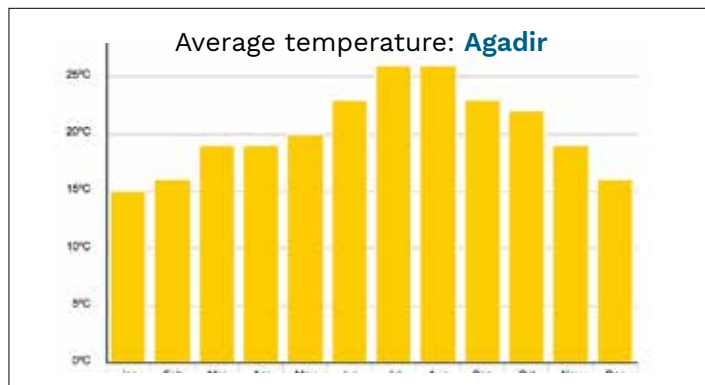
You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry and any additional meals, snacks or drinks you may wish to have.

Please note

This extension stay in Morocco will take place at the end of your main tour.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Atlas Mountains Mini-Tour Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Add on a 3 night mini tour and be transported to the mighty vistas of the Atlas Mountains. Wind through roads carved through the rugged landscape, passing Berber villages and Kasbahs showcasing the rich history of rural Morocco. Arrive in the Sahara Desert and enjoy a camel ride across the vast sand dunes before returning to Marrakech via the ancient Ounila Valley.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension on the Atlas Mountains Mini Tour.

Guide to meals included:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 8: Marrakech to M'hamid Elghizlane B/D

Check out of your hotel early this morning and start your trip into the Atlas Mountains (approx. a 10 hour drive). Journeying through the Tichka Pass, the highest road pass in Morocco, you will be able to enjoy spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and valleys dotted with Berber villages and Kasbahs. Stopping for lunch at Agdz you will continue into the palm-lined Draa Valley, passing by the towns of Zagora and Tamegroute. Exiting the valley in the late afternoon, you will stop to meet the camels who will be carrying you onward to your luxury tented camp, arriving in the evening for dinner after watching the sunset over the desert from the top of a sand dune.

DAY 9: M'hamid Elghizlane to Ait Benhaddou B/D

Today you have the option of an early start with a stroll before breakfast to enjoy the sun rising amongst the sand dunes. Following breakfast back at camp you will ride your camel back to M'hamid and meet your vehicle for the start of your journey to Ait Benhaddou, a fortified village and UNESCO World Heritage Site along the former caravan route between the Sahara and Marrakech. Arriving in the afternoon and checking in to your riad, you will have time to visit the stunning stronghold of Ait Benhaddou, used as a backdrop for many a Hollywood blockbuster. Return to your riad in the evening for dinner.

DAY 10: Ait Benhaddou to Marrakech B/D

After a late breakfast at your riad, you will travel through the Ounila Valley along an ancient caravan trail to Telouet, a Kasbah also known as the Pasha's Palace. Take in this age-old structure famed for its intricately decorated walls. Leaving Telouet, you will head back to Marrakech via the National Road which winds its way past valleys and mountain peaks as it descends into Marrakech. Arrive into the city in the late afternoon in time for dinner at your hotel.

DAY 11: Marrakech to the UK B

You will be picked up at your hotel for your return flight to the UK.

Hotel Information

Sahara Desert (1 night): 3★ Erg Lihoudi Services Camp

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Address: Rue Hassan II, Immeuble Koutoubia Center 2, Buro
Contact number: 00212 (0) 524 42 06 73

Ait Benhaddou (1 night): 4★ Riad Tamdakhte

Address: Douar Tamdakhte à 5 km d'Ait Ben Haddou, Ait Benhaddou, Morocco
Contact number: 00212 691-649096

Marrakech (1 night) 4★ Red Hotel Marrakech

Address: Avenue Hassan II (en face de la Gare), Avenue Hassan II, Marrakesh, Morocco
Contact number: 00212 5243-51500

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Final confirmation of your hotel will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any meals not included, drinks and personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, and any extra snacks.

Tour Guides

This is an escorted mini tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the places that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 1, and the maximum will be 35.

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **Sahara Tours**:

Mobile: 00212 661 38 08 82
Office: 00212 528 840421 / 528 840611

Please note

This extension will take place at the end of your main tour.