

HIKING THE ATLAS

plus SOUKS and THE SAHARA



HIKING THE ATLAS

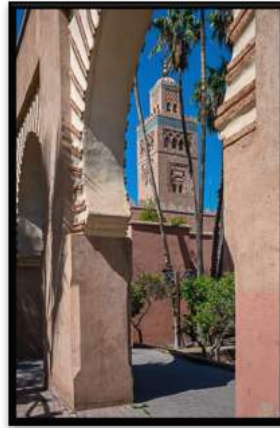
plus SOUKS and THE SAHARA

16 days/15 nights, including a six-day trek to the summit of Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in north Africa

Optional extension to northern Morocco

HIGHLIGHTS

- Welcome dinner at Rick's Café, a replica of the famous café in the movie, Casablanca
- Tour of the Hassan II Mosque, one of the largest mosques in the world
- Trek to the summit of Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa, on a fully supported trek
- Experience the way of life in Berber villages of the High Atlas Mountains, unchanged for centuries
- Relax in a luxury Sahara desert camp, ride a camel and eat dinner under the stars
- Visit the ancient kasbah of Ait Benhaddou, location of the Gladiator movie
- Optional half-day hike in Todra Gorge
- Sample a range of Moroccan delicacies on an evening food tour in Marrakech
- Shop for textiles, jewellery and other handicrafts in the many souks of Marrakech



Inclusions

- *All land-based travel in Morocco*
- *Tour Hassan II Mosque*
- *8 nights accommodation in carefully chosen riads and hotels*
- *5 nights camping on the trek – tents or local family homes*
- *Local trekking guide and chef to accompany the trek*
- *Fully supported six-day trek, all camping gear provided*
- *2 nights in a luxury Sahara desert camp*
- *15 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 11 dinners*
- *Evening food tour in Marrakech*
- *Transport in an air-conditioned minibus, including airport pick up and drop off on scheduled arrival and departure dates*
- *Transfers to and from desert camp by camel or 4x4*
- *Local English-speaking guide/driver*
- *Escorted by Heather*

Exclusions

- *International flights*
- *Transfers to and from your home airport*
- *Travel insurance – mandatory*
- *Any meals not specified in the itinerary*
- *Personal items such as drinks, laundry*
- *Tips (widely expected in Morocco)*
- *Optional 7 day/6 night extension to northern Morocco – see separate itinerary*

Hiking the Atlas Itinerary – Casablanca – Marrakech – Imlil – Mount Toubkal – Marrakech – Ouarzazate – Todra Gorge – Merzouga (Sahara) – Skoura – Marrakech

Day 1: Casablanca

Arrive into Casablanca international airport early afternoon, where you will be met by our local guide and driver. Transfer to hotel in central Casablanca. If there is time this afternoon, we will visit the Hassan II Mosque, one of the few mosques it is possible to visit as a non-Muslim. Tonight, we will have a welcome dinner at Rick's Café, a replica of the famous café in the movie, Casablanca. (D)



Day 2: Casablanca – Marrakech

If there are any unexpected delays on our arrival day, we will visit the Hassan II Mosque this morning before leaving Casablanca. It's a three-hour drive east to Marrakech, the bustling heart of Morocco. This afternoon is free to explore Marrakech medina. An evening visit to the main square, Jemaa el Fnaa, is a must, with its snake charmers, musicians and entertainers - it truly comes alive after dusk. (B)

Day 3: Marrakech

There is so much to see and do in Marrakech: visit the souks (markets), the beautiful Jardin Majorelle, stunning Moroccan architecture or relax in a traditional Moroccan hammam (bath). This evening we have a food tour with a Marrakech local, sampling many Moroccan specialities – a fun and informative evening that takes care of dinner. Back at the hotel we will organise our gear for the trek. (B, D)



Day 4: Imlil – start trek

We will be picked up this morning after breakfast for the 1.5 hour drive to the village of Imlil in the Atlas Mountains. Here we meet our mules and trek crew, who will load our trek luggage on to the mules. We start the trek, hiking towards Fousarou (2000m) via Tizi Tamaterterte (2279m). Today's hike will be about 5 hours and tonight we will be camping in the mountains. (B,L,D)

Day 5: Fousarou – Tizi Likmete (3900m) – Azib Likemete (2,500m)

After a hearty breakfast, prepared by our camp chef, we set off for a day in the mountains, hiking about 6.5 hours. with lunch prepared for us along the way. (B,L,D)

Day 6: Azib Likemete – Tizi n'ourai (3109m) – Amsouzarte village (1750m)

Today's hike will be about 5.5 hours and after crossing a pass at 3109m, we'll come to the village of Amsouzarte, where we'll spend the night, either in our tents or in a family home. (B,L,D)

Day 7: Amsouzarte – Lake Ifni (2300m) via Berber villages

Five hours of hiking today takes us through several Berber villages where the way of life has changed little in hundreds of years. We'll camp tonight near the lake. (B,L,D)



Day 8: Lake Ifni – Tizi Ouanoums (3700m) – Toubkal Refuge (3200m)

From Lake Ifni, we have 6 hours of hiking to the Toubkal refuge. We'll spend the night either in the refuge or in our tents. (B,L,D)

Hiking the Atlas Itinerary – Casablanca – Marrakech – Imlil – Mount Toubkal – Marrakech – Ouarzazate – Todra Gorge – Merzouga (Sahara) – Skoura – Marrakech

Day 9: Toubkal summit - Imlil

This morning we start early for the final hike to the summit of Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in Morocco (and North Africa), 4,167m. After taking photographs at the summit, we hike down to Imlil where we say goodbye to our crew and return to Marrakech to celebrate (1.5hr drive). (B,L)

Day 10: Marrakech – Ouarzazate

We'll be picked up after breakfast this morning for a 3.5 hour drive to Ait Benhaddou, an 11th century Berber ksar (fortified village), UNESCO world heritage site and filming location for many famous movies, including *Gladiator* and *Games of Thrones*. After lunch, we'll spend the afternoon exploring the kasbah, with its cute shops and cafes and viewpoint at the top, overlooking the valley and mountains beyond. We continue another 30 minutes to Ouarzazate for dinner and our hotel for the night. (B)



Day 11: Ouarzazate – Todra Gorge

From Ouarzazate, we drive to Todra Gorge, one of the stunning gorges that run between the High Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains. There is an optional hike through a side gorge, with the chance of coming across some of the nomads who live in this valley. (B, D)

Day 12: Todra Gorge - Sahara Luxury Camp

Today's drive takes us to Merzouga, a small town on the edge of the Sahara Desert. Here we will meet our camels for a one-hour transfer to our desert camp, our home for the next two nights. Relax and enjoy an evening under the stars. (Photo of the camp is on next page) (B,L,D)

Day 13: Sahara Luxury Camp

Today is a day to relax in the camp or walk in the dunes. For an extra cost you can rent quad-bikes or take an optional trip to visit some desert nomads who live nearby. (B,L,D)



Day 14: Merzouga – Skoura

We set off this morning after breakfast at the camp, by camel or 4x4, back to Merzouga. From Merzouga, we will drive to Skoura, via Dades Gorge. There are viewpoints along the side of the gorge, affording spectacular views up the valley and several Berber artisan shops, selling carpets, jewellery and other handicrafts. (B,D)

Day 15: Skoura – Marrakech

From Skoura, we will return to Marrakech via the spectacular scenery of the High Atlas mountains (4.5 hrs). The afternoon is free in Marrakech to relax or do any last-minute shopping. Tonight is our last night together to enjoy a farewell dinner and share highlights of the trip. (B,D)



Day 16: Transfer to Casablanca

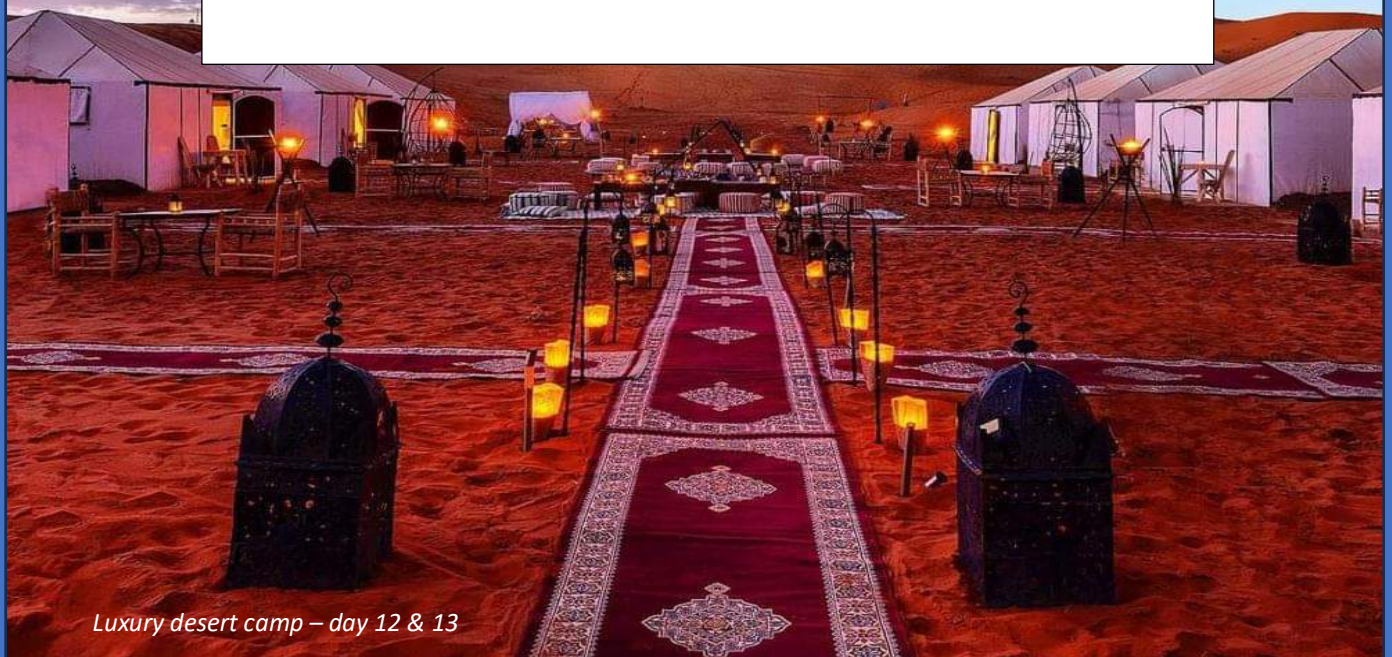
If you are leaving us today, it is a three-hour drive back to Casablanca for the flight home.

HIKING THE ATLAS

plus SOUKS and THE SAHARA

What to expect on the trek

- The trek is fully supported so you carry only a day pack with water bottles, extra clothes, sunscreen, medications etc
- All luggage is transported on mules and will be available to you at the end of the trekking day
- All meals are freshly prepared by the camp chef
- Tents, sleeping bags and other camping gear is provided and the camp will be set up each afternoon and dismantled in the morning by the trek crew
- A full packing list will be provided



Luxury desert camp – day 12 & 13



HIKING THE ATLAS

NORTHERN MOROCCO EXTENSION



HIKING THE ATLAS

NORTHERN MOROCCO EXTENSION

You've gone all the way to Morocco:
why not extend your trip by 7 days/6 nights to explore northern Morocco -
Rabat, Tangier, Chefchaouen and Fes

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Rabat, the capital of Morocco
- Explore Tangier, where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic Ocean
- Spend two nights in laid back Chefchaouen, in the Rif Mountains, with its blue painted buildings
- Check out the Roman ruins of Volubilis
- Spend two nights in Fes, visiting the famous medina and Chouara Tannery
- Time for a cooking class and shopping for last minute souvenirs in Fes medina



Inclusions

- *All land-based travel in Morocco*
- *6 nights accommodation in carefully chosen riads and hotels*
- *6 breakfasts, 2 dinners*
- *Transport in an air-conditioned minibus, including airport drop off on the scheduled departure date*
- *Local English-speaking driver*
- *Escorted by Heather*

Exclusions

- *International flights*
- *Transfers to and from your home airport in Australia*
- *Travel insurance – mandatory*
- *Any meals not specified as included in the itinerary*
- *Personal items such as drinks, laundry*
- *Tips (widely expected in Morocco)*

Hiking the Atlas Extension – Northern Morocco
Casablanca – Rabat – Tangier – Chefchaouen – Fes – Casablanca

Day 16: Casablanca - Rabat

From Marrakech we'll drive three hours to Casablanca airport, for anyone returning on a mid-afternoon flight to Australia. From there, it's about an hour's drive to Rabat, the capital of Morocco. The afternoon is free to wander through the city at your leisure or join us to see some of Rabat's key sights. (B)



Day 18: Tangier - Chefchaouen

After breakfast, we drive through the Rif Mountains to Chefchaouen. Known as 'The Blue Pearl' it is one of Morocco's most relaxed and prettiest towns. Enjoy wandering through the narrow streets of the medina or perhaps have a hammam (traditional Moroccan bath). (B)



Day 17: Rabat - Tangier

We leave Rabat this morning for the drive north along the Atlantic coast, stopping to explore the small coastal town of Asilah, known for its street art and pretty medina. We'll have lunch in Asilah, before continuing to Tangier, on the north west corner of Morocco, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean Sea. Spend the rest of the day exploring the ancient kasbah or relax on the beach. Dinner tonight at a local restaurant is included.

(B, D)



Day 19: Chefchaouen

Today is a free day to explore Chefchaouen, visit the main square, the old kasbah and the many shops and cafes. Or, for anyone who wants to hike to a waterfall, it's about an hour's drive from town to the village of Akchour for a three / four hour hike to its famous waterfall. A cooking class can also be arranged.

This evening, before dinner, there is an optional 30 minute walk to the Spanish mosque on a small hill outside the town. There are great sunset views from here, over the blue buildings of Chefchaouen's old medina. (B)



***Hiking the Atlas Extension – Northern Morocco
Casablanca – Rabat – Tangier – Chefchaouen – Fes– Casablanca***

Day 20: Chefchaouen - Fes

We leave Chefchaouen to drive to Fes, via the Roman ruins of Volubilis where a local guide will explain some of the highlights of the site. We'll have lunch in one of the nearby towns before continuing to Fes and our riad for the last two nights of the trip. (B)



Day 21: Fes

Fes medina, a UNESCO world heritage site, is the largest car-free urban area in the world. Spend the morning exploring the thousands of alleyways and key historical sites with a local guide. Or, if you prefer to explore on your own, you are free to do so. Make sure to see the famous Chouara Tannery where leather has been dyed in stone vats for hundreds of years.



Tonight, we have a short 15 minute drive to the Merenid Tombs lookout above the city for sunset views, before a final dinner in a medina restaurant. (B,D)



Day 22: Transfer to Casablanca airport

After breakfast, it's time to check out and say farewell to Morocco. From Fes, it's a three hours drive to Casablanca for the flight home.

~