

The Imperial Cities

This tour is dedicated to the travelers that are fascinated by the history. Visit the imperial cities of Morocco, covering the four historical capitals: Fez, Marrakech, Meknes, and Rabat, the current capital of Morocco. These cities represent capitals at different times and by different monarchs from the Moroccan dynasties.

- Visit Casablanca, the economic capital of Morocco
- Discover Volubilis
- Wander the medieval maze-like streets of Medieval Fes
- Watch acrobats and snake charmers

Day - 1 Casablanca

Welcome arrival- Casablanca (D)

Arrival into Casablanca airport, you will be welcomed by your English speaking driver/guide. Afternoon, sightseeing tour of Casablanca, located on the Atlantic Ocean is the business centre of Morocco. Casablanca was established as a commercial centre by the French. The architecture is a mix of modern, art deco and the traditional. Your highlights of Casablanca include: A visit of the Central Market. The old Mahakma building constructed in marble, stone and wood, with no fewer than sixty rooms. The remarkable Mosque Hassan II (From outside Only), one of only two mosques in Morocco open to non-Islamic believers. Built by the late King Hassan II at the end of his 40-year reign, this astounding edifice is larger than Saint Peter's in Rome and capable of holding 80,000 worshippers. Visit La Corniche on the ocean front. Dinner and overnight at hotel in Casablanca.

Day - 2 Fes

Rabat – Meknes / Volubilis - Fes (B, D)

After breakfast, departure to Rabat, recently granted UNESCO Heritage Site status. Rabat, the administrative capital of Morocco, was founded in 1146 by the Almohads, as a fortress (the name Rabat comes from the Arabic *riba*, meaning 'fortified place') from where to launch attacks on Spain. A few years after the capital of the Empire was moved there by Yaqub al Mansour, under whose reign the Koutoubia in Marrakech had been built. He started to build in Rabat what would be the world's largest mosque at the time, but works stopped when he died; the unfinished minaret known as Hassan Tower – less than half its intended height – bears witness of this attempt. Yaqub al Mansour also erected the city walls and expanded and restored the Kasbah of the Udayas, former stronghold of the Almoravids in the area. In Rabat is located also the Mausoleum of Mohamed V, grandfather of the current King of Morocco. A masterpiece of modern Moroccan architecture. Continue to the Imperial city of Meknes known as the "Moroccan Versailles" and founded in the 17th century by King Moulay Ismail. Meknes is famous for its 25-mile-long walls. There are numerous historic sites to see and here we name but a few; the massive gate of Bab Mansour, The Bassin de L'Agdal a massive 400m x 100m pool dating back some 300 years. The Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail is one of only three Moroccan shrines that non-Muslims can visit. Continuation to Fes. Dinner and overnight at hotel in Fes.

Day - 3 Fes

Fes (B, D)

After breakfast, full day sightseeing tour of Fes, was founded in the 9th century and home to the oldest university in the world, Fez reached its height in the 13th–14th centuries under the Merinids, when it replaced Marrakech as the capital of the kingdom. The urban fabric and the principal monuments in the medina – madrasas, fondouks, palaces, residences, mosques and fountains - date from this period. Although the political capital of Morocco was transferred to Rabat in 1912, Fez has retained its status as the country's cultural and spiritual centre. Your sightseeing tour will include the following: The Medersa This theological college, marked by its green tiled roof, is a prime example of Merinid architecture, and it's the most beautiful of Kairaounie University's residential colleges. Inside, elegant calligraphy graces the ceramic tile walls. The marble floors, sculpted cedar, and carved stucco walls—made with a concoction of plaster and egg white—have held up since this masterpiece Medersa was built in 1350. Since it is still in use, non-Muslims must depart during prayer time. Bab Boujloud Constructed in 1913, this gate is about 1,000 years younger than the buildings behind it. It's proof that age doesn't matter—the relatively youthful structure is the most strikingly beautiful entry point into the old city. Painted flowers and calligraphy embellish its outer blue ceramic tiles and, depending on one's interpretation, the green mosaic interior either represents peace or the official color of Islam. The Splendid fountain at Place Nejjarine The square, with its splendid and unusual fountain, takes its name from the Souk Nejjarine (Carpenter's Souk) which is situated behind a wooden door in a narrow street below the square. The Mellah The Jewish Quarter. The Jews lived here and received protection from the sultan. The main street is especially interesting with its balconies and Art Deco zellij mosaic. Most Jews in Fez (around 300) now live in the Ville Nouvelle. Visit of the Ibn Danan Synagogue, a recently restored 17th century synagogue. Souks The souks of Fez are located in the ancient city center, the medina. Merchants selling the same sort of products are generally grouped together in their own "souk". The tiny alleyways are crowded with the tiny boutiques on both sides. The henna and wood working souks are located in the Nejjarine neighborhood and the scent of cedar is everywhere. The main plaza is planted with trees and provides a shaded haven from the warm sun. Various natural products derived from henna are sold here. Nejjarine is also where the fabric dyers are located. You simply should not miss El Attarine, the spice souk. Without question, this souk is the most colourful in Fez. New Medina The "nouvelle Ville" of Fez, or the new city, provides a startling contrast with Fès el Bali. Wide and elegant avenues are lined with numerous cafés and restaurants. The modern aspect of the new city highlights the economic differences of the suburbs and the city center. Dinner and overnight in Fes.

Day - 4 Marrakech

Fes – Marrakech (B, D)

Departure to Marrakech passing by the Berber village of Immouzer Kandar and Ifrane. Moment of relaxation in Beni-Mellal, one of the agricultural centers of Morocco. Arrival in Marrakech in the late afternoon. Dinner and Overnight in Marrakech.

Day - 5 Marrakech

Marrakech (B, D)

After breakfast, your guide will meet you at the hotel for full day guided tour of Marrakech. Marrakech was founded in 1062 by one of the chieftains of the Almoravid king Youssuf Ibn Tashfin. The Almoravids were desert warriors, very much attached to their Islamic religion; the original garrison developed very quickly into a city where numerous

mosques and madrasas (Koranic schools) were built. Andalusian craftsmen built and decorated several palaces, merging their style with the Saharan and African traditions, which gave the city a distinctive architectural flavour. Nowadays, Marrakech is a vibrant city which exhibits a curious blend of the ancient and the modern, allowing travellers the chance to experience the genuine medieval atmosphere of the old medina, and visit the trendiest bars, art galleries and restaurants in the French Quarter, Guéliz, built at the beginning of the 20th Century, all in one day. Highlights of your visit will include: El Bahia Palace Built in the late 19th Century, and decorated by the best artisans of Morocco at the time, this palace – intended to be the most magnificent of its age – features an exquisite blend of Andalusian and Moorish styles. Specially interesting are the harem apartments, the trapezoidal garden, and a huge tiled courtyard with fountains. The Koutoubia Mosque Built by the Almohads in the late years of 12th Century, the Koutoubia Mosque, and specially its minaret, is the most important landmark of Marrakech, and a symbol of the city itself. The minaret served as model for the Giralda in Sevilla and the unfinished Tour Hassan in Rabat, all three being designed by the same architect. Koutoubia means ‘booksellers’, as the trade of books was concentrated in the neighbourhood during the Middle Ages. The minaret of the Koutoubia, 77 meters high, is visible from almost any point of the city – an old ordinance, still in force, forbids any building of Marrakech to surpass the Koutoubia minaret in height. Djemaa El Fna, the Square Nobody knows for certain of the origin of this square, whose name evokes, in Arabic, the contradictory notions of assembly or gathering, and that of absence. Probably as old as the city itself, it was a place for public executions during the day, and the meeting point of musicians, mystics, food sellers, pickpockets, acrobats, snake charmers, storytellers, dancers, fortune tellers and other exotic characters at night (happily enough, nowadays it only retains its more playful aspect). Watching sunset from one of its terraces when the call to prayer from the Koutoubia minaret fills the air is one of these ‘zen’ moments that Morocco offers – do not miss it! Despite its lack of significant monuments, Djemaa el Fna became an UNESCO Heritage Site in 1985, as one of the last places in the world where old oral narratives are still enacted. The Souks Filling the alleys north of Djmaa el Fna is the souk, or traditional market – the largest one in Morocco. It is, in turn, subdivided in some 18 souks, each one of them devoted to a specific trade or craftsmanship – from spices or ironwork, to the ingredients necessary for casting magic spells. The number of shops – often not much bigger in size than a closet - is overwhelming, and in them Moroccans can indulge in one of the activities that they enjoy most: bargaining. Cunning, patience, sense of humour, and strategy are needed for the game. Try your skills at it! Dinner and Overnight in Marrakech

Day - 6 Marrakech

After breakfast, excursion to Essaouira City (B, D)

Essaouira is a magical fortified coastal town on the Atlantic Ocean. Built by the Portuguese in the 17th C. In total contrast to Marrakech, the pace of life here is relaxed and slow. Essaouira was made famous by Orson Wells, who filmed Othello here and more recently, by residents like Jimmy Hendrix and the Rolling Stones. Unlike Marrakech and Fes, there are no single places of major historical note to visit but Essaouira in itself becomes an historic location and is not to be missed. This small town was once 33% Jewish and had over thirty synagogues. An 18th century synagogue may still be visited. You can visit the tomb of Rabbi Chaim Pinto in the vast Jewish cemetery, built next to the Atlantic Ocean. Rabbi Pinto is the object of an annual pilgrimage in the week preceding Rosh Hashana. Explore the town, its ramparts, and its lovely street of thuya craftsmen, the lively port, the colourful souk, the medina and the Squala. Back to Marrakech late afternoon. Dinner and overnight at hotel in Marrakech.

Day - 7 Marrakech

Marrakech (B)

Depending on your flight departure time, you will be transferred to the airport

Inclusions

- 6 nights in your chosen accommodation
- Meal as specified in itinerary
(B = Breakfast, BR = Brunch, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)
- Activities and excursions according to itinerary

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Visit Casablanca, the economic capital Morocco and explore Hassan II Mosque, piece of art
- Discover Volubilis, the furthest point of the Roman empire into Africa
- Wander the medieval maze-like streets of Medieval Fes
- Watch acrobats and snake charmers entertain in Marrakech's Jemaa el-Fna Square
- Tours and excursions in mini buses/buses or with public transportation according to itinerary with english speaking driver
- Local guides in the Cities
- Admission fees according to itinerary

Exclusions

- International flights
- Meals other than mentioned in itinerary
- Tours and Excursions other than mentioned in itinerary
- Early check-in and late check-out at hotels
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips for driver/guides
- Visa fees

Payment Details:

Group from 6 persons and
more starting from (p.P)

USD 602

Private tour for 2 persons
starting from (p.P.) USD 960

Booking Availabilities

Booking in between : **12th November 2019 & 1st March 2022**

★★★ Star Hotel

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Single Supplement | : USD 131.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 1st + 2nd person | : USD 960.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 3rd + 4th person | : USD 660.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 5th + 6th person | : USD 602.00 |

★★★★ Star Hotel

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|---|---------------|
| Single Supplement | : USD 210.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 1st + 2nd person | : USD 1102.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 3rd + 4th person | : USD 802.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 5th + 6th person | : USD 761.00 |

★★★★★ Star Hotel

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|---|---------------|
| Single Supplement | : USD 270.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 1st + 2nd person | : USD 1239.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 3rd + 4th person | : USD 940.00 |
| Double Room Price(per person)for the 5th + 6th person | : USD 886.00 |