

10-Day Morocco Discovery: Imperial Cities, Sahara Desert & Atlas Mountains



Embark on an immersive 10-day journey through Morocco's most captivating landscapes and historical treasures. This comprehensive tour takes you from cosmopolitan Casablanca through the spiritual heart of Fes, across the golden Sahara dunes, into peaceful desert oases, and finally to the soaring High Atlas Mountains before concluding in vibrant Marrakech.

Your adventure begins in the imperial cities, where centuries of history come alive in ancient medinas and architectural masterpieces. Experience the magic of the Sahara with camel treks across endless dunes and nights under star-filled skies in luxury desert camps. Discover the tranquility of Skoura's palm groves, walk through UNESCO-listed kasbahs, and immerse yourself in Berber mountain culture at an exclusive High Atlas retreat. From sunrise over the desert to mountain walks with local families, each day reveals a different facet of Morocco's extraordinary diversity.

Tour Facts

Group Size:
12

Duration:
10

Language:
English

Tour Type:
continuous

Tour Itinerary

Day 1: : Arrival in Casablanca - Journey to the Imperial City of Fes

Your Moroccan adventure begins upon arrival at Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport, where your private driver welcomes you for the scenic journey to Fes. The drive takes approximately four hours, passing through rolling countryside and small towns that offer glimpses of daily Moroccan life. Fes awaits as Morocco's oldest and most complete medieval city, a spiritual and intellectual capital where ancient traditions continue unchanged for centuries.

Upon arrival in Fes during the afternoon, you'll check into your traditional riad tucked within the medina's labyrinthine streets. These restored merchant houses feature ornate tilework, carved cedar ceilings, and peaceful courtyards that provide a serene sanctuary from the bustling city outside. After settling in, take some time to relax and refresh from your journey. Your evening is free to explore the neighborhood surrounding your riad or simply unwind on a rooftop terrace, listening to the call to prayer echo across the ancient city.

Day 2: : Full-Day Guided Exploration of Fes Medina and Landmarks

After breakfast at your riad, embark on a comprehensive guided tour through Fes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the world's best-preserved medieval cities. Your exploration begins at the Royal Palace, where you'll admire the magnificent golden doors and intricate brass work from outside. Continue to the historic Jewish Quarter, once home to one of Morocco's largest Jewish communities, where you'll learn about the rich multicultural heritage that has shaped Fes.

The morning continues with a visit to the world's oldest continuously operating university, Al Quaraouiyine, founded in 859 CE. While entry is restricted to Muslims, you'll view this architectural

masterpiece from key vantage points. Navigate through the maze-like medina, stopping at the famous Chouara Tanneries, where leather has been dyed using traditional methods for centuries. The colorful vats create a photographer's paradise, though the strong smell of natural dyes provides an authentic sensory experience. Visit a ceramic workshop to witness master artisans creating Fes's distinctive blue pottery. Return to your riad in the late afternoon with time to relax before dinner.

Day 3: : Journey Through Middle Atlas Mountains to Merzouga Sahara

Today brings one of Morocco's most spectacular journeys as you depart early for the Sahara Desert. Your route winds through the stunning Middle Atlas Mountains, stopping first in Ifrane, known as "Little Switzerland" for its Alpine-style architecture, manicured gardens, and cool climate. Continue through the cedar forests near Azrou, home to wild Barbary macaque monkeys that often approach vehicles. Your driver will stop for photos and the chance to observe these playful creatures in their natural habitat.

After lunch in Midelt, a town nestled between the Middle and High Atlas ranges, the landscape gradually transforms from green mountains to arid desert. The route follows the dramatic Ziz Valley, where thousands of date palms create ribbons of green against red rock cliffs. By late afternoon, you'll reach Merzouga, the gateway to the Sahara's towering Erg Chebbi dunes. Your camels await for a sunset trek across the golden sands. As the sun dips toward the horizon, painting the dunes in shades of gold and orange, you'll arrive at your luxury desert camp for a magical evening under countless stars.

Day 4: : Desert to Oasis - Relaxation in Skoura's Palm Groves

Wake to the Sahara sunrise before enjoying breakfast at your desert camp, then begin your journey westward toward Skoura, a lush oasis town in the Ouarzazate region. The drive takes you through dramatically changing landscapes, from the rocky desert plains to the beginning of the Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs, where ancient fortified villages dot the hillsides. These earthen structures blend so seamlessly with the landscape that they appear to grow from the very soil.

Arriving in Skoura by early afternoon, you'll check into a charming boutique lodge or guesthouse surrounded by verdant palm groves and traditional rose gardens. This tranquil oasis offers a perfect respite after yesterday's long desert journey. The afternoon is yours to unwind completely—perhaps lounging by the pool, strolling through the palm groves where local farmers tend their gardens using ancient irrigation systems, or simply relaxing with a book in the peaceful garden setting. The pace here is deliberately slow, allowing you to reconnect with nature and absorb the serene atmosphere of this hidden gem.

Day 5: : UNESCO Kasbah and Mountain Journey to Ourika Valley

After a leisurely breakfast surrounded by palm trees, depart Skoura and head toward the High Atlas Mountains with an essential stop at Ait Ben Haddou. This UNESCO World Heritage Site ranks among Morocco's most photographed locations, serving as a filming location for countless Hollywood productions including *Gladiator*, *Game of Thrones*, and *Lawrence of Arabia*. The ancient ksar rises dramatically from the valley floor, its earthen towers and fortified walls creating a stunning example of southern Moroccan architecture.

Take time to explore the winding passages, climb to the granary at the summit for panoramic views, and

photograph this remarkable fortified village. Continuing through the High Atlas, your route ascends the famous Tizi n'Tichka Pass, reaching 2,260 meters altitude with breathtaking mountain vistas at every turn. The road winds through Berber villages clinging to mountainsides before descending into the Ourika Valley. Arrive at Bab Ourika, your peaceful mountain retreat, by late afternoon. This luxury property offers spectacular views of snow-capped peaks and provides an ideal base for tomorrow's mountain adventures.

Day 6: : Berber Villages and Luxury Lunch at Kasbah Tamadot

Begin your day with a gentle morning walk through a nearby Berber village, where traditional mud-brick homes cling to the mountainside and terraced gardens produce vegetables and herbs. Your local guide shares insights into mountain life as you meet welcoming villagers going about their daily routines. Children may run alongside offering greetings, while women work at outdoor ovens baking fresh bread. The crystal-clear mountain air and stunning vistas provide a perfect backdrop for this authentic cultural encounter.

Mid-morning, journey to one of Morocco's most exclusive properties—Kasbah Tamadot, Sir Richard Branson's luxury mountain retreat. Upon arrival at this stunning kasbah perched on a hillside, you're welcomed for a memorable lunch featuring refined Moroccan cuisine served with panoramic views across the Atlas peaks. After your meal, you may explore the beautifully maintained gardens and terraces before returning to your accommodation in the Ourika Valley. Alternatively, opt to visit the Ourika Valley waterfalls for a walking tour along the river with lunch at a traditional riverside restaurant. Your afternoon back at the lodge is free for relaxation, perhaps enjoying spa treatments or simply savoring the mountain serenity.

Day 7: : Mountain Departure and Marrakech Introduction

Enjoy a final breakfast surrounded by mountain peaks before departing the tranquil Ourika Valley for the vibrant energy of Marrakech. The journey takes approximately one hour, descending from the mountains into the flat Haouz Plain where Marrakech spreads beneath the Atlas backdrop. Upon arrival, check into your riad in the medina and take some time to settle in and refresh.

In the afternoon, embark on an orientation tour designed to introduce you to Marrakech's essential sights and help you navigate the medina. Visit the Koutoubia Mosque, whose 77-meter minaret serves as the city's most recognizable landmark and can be seen from miles away. Wander through portions of the old medina, discovering hidden treasures around every corner and learning about the historic neighborhoods that form this UNESCO World Heritage Site. As evening approaches, your guide leads you to Jemaa el-Fnaa square, which transforms into one of the world's greatest street spectacles. Snake charmers, storytellers, acrobats, and countless food stalls create an intoxicating atmosphere. Watch the square come alive while experiencing the lively heartbeat of Marrakech.

Day 8: : Marrakech at Your Own Pace - Museums, Gardens & Souks

Today belongs entirely to you for exploring Marrakech according to your interests and pace. Begin with a visit to Dar El Bacha Museum, a recently restored palace that showcases exquisite Moroccan craftsmanship through its ornate stucco work, painted ceilings, and zellige tilework. The museum also houses a charming café where you can enjoy morning coffee in a serene courtyard setting, far from the medina's bustle.

Continue to the famous Jardin Majorelle, created by French painter Jacques Majorelle in the 1920s and later restored by fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent. The garden's striking cobalt blue architecture contrasts beautifully with exotic plants from five continents, creating an almost otherworldly atmosphere. Next door, the Yves Saint Laurent Museum displays the designer's North African-inspired creations. Spend the afternoon wandering the souks at your leisure, shopping for textiles, leather goods, ceramics, and spices. In the evening, consider tea or dinner at La Mamounia, one of the world's most legendary hotels, where you can stroll through its magnificent gardens and appreciate the height of Moroccan luxury and design.

Day 9: : Marrakech Departure to Casablanca via Scenic Highway

Depending on your preference, you have two options for today's journey to Casablanca. The first option involves departing Marrakech after breakfast for the three-hour drive to Casablanca, Morocco's largest city and economic capital. Upon arrival, visit the magnificent Hassan II Mosque, one of the few Moroccan mosques open to non-Muslims. This architectural masterpiece sits partially over the Atlantic Ocean and features the world's tallest minaret at 210 meters. The interior showcases extraordinary Moroccan craftsmanship with intricate carved marble, magnificent chandeliers, and detailed mosaics.

After touring the mosque, spend the afternoon relaxing along the Corniche, Casablanca's oceanfront boulevard lined with cafes, restaurants, and beach clubs. Take in the Atlantic views while absorbing the cosmopolitan atmosphere that distinguishes Casablanca from Morocco's more traditional cities. The evening brings a farewell dinner at one of the city's fine-dining Moroccan restaurants, celebrating your journey through this diverse country. The second option allows you a leisurely final morning in Marrakech, perhaps for last-minute shopping or a hammam experience, before departing for Casablanca after lunch to arrive in the evening.

Day 10: : Casablanca Departure - Farewell to Morocco

Enjoy a final Moroccan breakfast at your hotel before preparing for departure. Depending on your flight schedule, you may have time for some last-minute exploration of Casablanca's medina or a final stroll along the Corniche. The hotel staff can assist with any final shopping recommendations or currency exchange needs. Your driver will arrive at the appropriate time for your private transfer to Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport, located approximately 30 minutes from the city center.

As you depart, reflect on ten remarkable days exploring Morocco's incredible diversity—from imperial cities steeped in history to golden Sahara dunes, from peaceful desert oases to soaring mountain peaks. You've experienced authentic Berber hospitality, navigated medieval medinas, slept under desert stars, and walked through ancient kasbahs. The memories, photographs, and treasures you've collected tell the story of a Morocco both timeless and ever-changing, a country that remains long in the heart of all who visit.