



Al-Maghrib Al-Aqsa: Islamic Civilisation in Morocco

30 MAR – 17 APR 2016

Code: 21603

Tour Leaders **Dr Alex McKay**

Physical Ratings 

Explore Morocco's rich culture in art, architecture, craft, custom & ritual in medieval cities with old palaces & teaming souks, on high mountain ranges & in pre-Saharan desert villages & fortresses.

Overview

Tour Highlights

- Dr Alex McKay introduces the distinctive history and cultural landscapes of Morocco
- Experience Morocco's fascinating mix of Iberian, Arab, Berber and sub-Saharan cultures
- Wander through Fes, the world's most perfectly preserved medieval city, and Chefchaouen, tomb city forbidden to foreigners until 1956
- Delight all your senses in Marrakesh's teeming, colourful souqs, with their textiles, jewellery, carpets, carved woodwork, and acrobats, snake charmers, letter writers and fortunetellers
- Journey across the pre-Sahara and through huge date palm plantations of verdant oasis river valleys
- Encounter the rich urban architecture of Andalucian mosques and madrasas, and desert mud-brick kasbahs and villages whose form has not changed markedly since the time of Christ
- Cross Morocco's majestic Middle, High and Anti Atlas mountain ranges, past small Berber mountain villages
- Eat fine local food in old palaces whilst listening to exquisite Andalucian music
- Visit Essaouira, arguably the world's most colourful fishing port
- In Fes and Marrakesh, stay in charming traditional riads - El Yacout and Ksar Anika - both restored by local artisans and located in the medina; and in Erfoud and Tineghir, stay in desert fortresses converted to hotels.

19 days in Morocco

Overnight Rabat (3 nights) • Tangier (1 night) • Chefchaouen (1 night) • Fes (4 nights) • Erfoud (1 night) • Tineghir (1 night) • Ait Ben Haddou (3 nights) • Marrakesh (4 nights)

Overview

Morocco possesses a rich artistic and cultural heritage which displays a remarkable continuity with the past. This tour, led by Alex McKay, a former research fellow and lecturer in history at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, explores the dynamics of this continuity and the Mediterranean, African and Arab influences that have contributed to Morocco's unique identity. Our tour travels from Rabat to Marrakesh in a huge arc through Morocco's breathtakingly beautiful and varied landscapes, from the mountainous Mediterranean north to the pre-Sahara. Snaking valleys of green date palms stand out against an austere pink, grey and yellow backdrop of mountain and desert. We visit the Mediterranean-influenced towns of Tangier and Chefchaouen before exploring the ruins of Roman Volubilis and the nearby imperial Islamic cities of Meknes and Fes. We head south through the Atlas Mountains to the pre-Saharan oasis valleys of the Ziz, Toudgha and Dra'a rivers. Their mudbrick towns and villages - Sijilmasa, Tinghir, Ouarzazate and Tamgrut - served as staging posts in the medieval trans-Saharan trade. They boast traditional Berber architecture. We return across the dramatic High Atlas Mountains to Marrakesh, Morocco's southern capital, and the port town of Essaouira. This tour offers powerful contrasts. We negotiate Fes' crowded souqs, where diverse sounds and smells assault your senses. We pass from teeming narrow streets into the quietude of beautiful Marinid madrasas. The vast, open vistas of the pre-Sahara and Atlas Mountains seem completely unpopulated until you enter a verdant oasis in which every inch of arable ground is cultivated, where children play noisily, adults tend luxuriant plots and donkeys carry huge loads of hay, dates, grain or wood. Urbanites of Fes whose families have inhabited its old medina for centuries likewise contrast to sub-Saharan Africans whose forebears were brought to oases like Erfoud as slaves. Special features of this tour are stays in the Riad El Yacout in Fes's medina which features ceramic tiles (*zelliges*), plaster and sculpted wood; and the Riad Ksar Anika, located in the Mellah area of Marrakesh's souq.

Leaders



Dr Alex McKay

Seasoned traveler & well-published scholar from London's School of Oriental & African Studies, Alex enriches ASA Bhutan, Silk Road, North India & Moroccan tours with profound experience & insights.

Dr Alex McKay is a former research fellow and lecturer in history at London University School of Oriental and African Studies, University College London, and the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden (The Netherlands). He has a BA (hons.) in Religious Studies and a doctorate in history. Now retired and living in the Manning Valley (NSW), he has a particular interest in the encounters between different societies, religions, and cultures, and he continues to publish and to attend international conferences in these areas. While most of his publications concern Asia, Alex first visited Morocco in 1974 and he has travelled there around a dozen times over the last 20 years. He considers the variety that the land offers, the bustling souks, spectacular Kasbahs, desert horizons, majestic Islamic public and private architecture, along with Morocco's fresh cuisine and its traditions of hospitality, make it the ideal holiday destination. Alex has previously led ASA tours along the Silk Road (2011 & 2013), Bhutan (2009, 2010 & 2011), China and Tibet (2010) and Morocco (2014) and will lead tours to Bhutan (2014) and the foothills of north India (2015).



Itinerary

The detailed itinerary provides an outline of the proposed daily program. Participants should note that the daily activities described in this itinerary may be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate changes in opening hours, road conditions, flight schedules etc. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents. The tour includes breakfast, lunch and evening meals each day. Meals included in the tour price are indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B= breakfast, L= lunch and D=evening meal. Bottled water will also be provided daily during site excursions.

Rabat - 3 nights

Day 1: Wednesday 30 March, Arrive Casablanca – Rabat

- Archaeological Museum

Upon arrival we shall transfer directly from the airport to Rabat, the capital of Morocco. In the afternoon (time-permitting) we shall visit Rabat's Archaeological Museum, which contains artifacts from Morocco's prehistoric, Phoenician and Roman periods, and watch the sunset from the Udaya Café while enjoying a glass of Moroccan mint tea. (Overnight Rabat) D

Day 2: Thursday 31 March, Rabat

- Hassan Tower
- Mausoleum of Muhammad V
- Marinid Necropolis of Chellah
- Royal Palace

- Medina of Rabat
- Qasba of the Udaya (Gardens & Museum)
- Welcome Dinner at Restaurant Le Ziryab

Rabat is situated on the southern bank of the Bu Regreg River, across from the town of Salé. A Roman town existed in the vicinity but modern Rabat is a Muslim foundation. The name 'Rabat' comes from the Arabic word *ribat* which means a fort on the Islamic frontier, usually manned by Muslims as a religious duty. Such a fort existed on the site of modern Rabat by the tenth century. Rabat's earliest monuments, however, date from the Almohad period (1147 – 1248). The Almohads expanded the settlement by building a *qasba*, or fortress, during the reign of 'Abd al-Mu'min, the second leader of the Almohad movement. 'Abd al-Mu'min's grandson, Ya'qub al-Mansur, transformed Rabat into his capital by constructing an extensive defensive wall around the town, and initiating the construction of the huge Hassan Mosque, the sister to the Almohad mosques in Seville and Marrakesh.

The three-mile Almohad walls and *qasba* boast six fine monumental gateways including the Bab al-Udaya and the Bab al-Ruwah. Foremost among these is the Bab al-Udaya, the gateway to the Qasba of the Udaya, which possesses extremely fine sculptural proportions. This gateway served a symbolical rather than military purpose: it acted as a triumphal arch leading into the *qasba*, a fortress and palace in one. The gateway contains three domed chambers which served as anterooms for those wishing to enter the *qasba*, and created an angled entrance, a common feature in later Islamic palaces such as the Alhambra. The Bab al-Ruwah on the southern side of Rabat was equally ornate. The gateway was flanked by two huge square turrets which were intended to be massive but simple frames for the portal façade rather than defenses. Both gateways are decorated with characteristic Almohad blind cusped arches and scallops carved in stone, a motif which influenced many church portals on the pilgrim route to Santiago.

Rabat's other Almohad monument, the Hassan Mosque, was never finished and all that remains are a series of huge columns from its hypostyle prayer hall, and the Hassan Tower, originally the mosque's minaret. The size of the Hassan Mosque gives a measure of the ambition of its founder; its length of 1,800 feet and width of 1,377 feet, would have made it one of the largest mosques in the Islamic world. Only the Great Mosque of Samarra in Iraq, no longer in use by the time of Ya'qub al-Mansur, surpassed these dimensions. The minaret (1195-1196), stands to the north of the mosque's forecourt on an axis with its mihrab in order to emphasize the mosque's orientation. It was meant to be one of the largest minarets in the world, although its upper section was either never built, or collapsed in an earthquake. The structure and decoration of the Hassan Tower, including the blind arches and beautiful decorative screen-work on its upper façade, provided the prototype for the Giralda of Seville, and the minaret of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh. The mausoleum of Muhammad V, an example of modern Moroccan architecture, is located at the south end of the Hassan Mosque site.

The dynasty which succeeded the Almohads, the Marinids (1248 – 1540), also contributed to Rabat's cultural heritage. The Marinids gave the city a new great mosque and constructed the royal necropolis of Chellah (1310-1339) outside the city walls on the site of the Roman port of Sala Colonia. Chellah was a true 'city of the dead' with its own ramparts and funerary buildings which centred around a mosque/mausoleum and a later *zawiya* or retreat for mystics. The complex also includes a well dating to the Roman period and the mausoleums of later holy men. Nowadays Chellah's tall ramparts enclose a verdant garden within which the tombs of members of the Marinid lineage, the ruins of the funerary mosque and *zawiya*, and other shrines nestle. The complex is also home to numerous storks, considered by Moroccans to be sacred birds as a result of their predilection for nesting in religious buildings.

On our second day in Rabat we shall start with a tour of the Almohad walls and gateways. We shall then visit the Tour Hassan, the Mausoleum of Muhammad V, and the nearby necropolis of Chellah. In the afternoon,

we shall visit the contemporary royal palace complex and take a walk through the old town of Rabat, finishing with a visit to the Qasba of the Udaya with its gardens, café and museum.

Our day concludes with an evening meal at Restaurant Le Ziryab serving traditional Moroccan gastronomy in the wonderful surroundings of a fine Moroccan residence. (Overnight Rabat) BLD

Day 3: Friday 1 April, Rabat – Salé – Rabat

- Wulja
- Bab Mrisa, Salé
- Marinid Madrasa, Salé

We shall begin today with a drive across the Bu Regreg river which separates Rabat from its sister town of Salé. En route we will stop at Wulja, a local centre for artisanal production of ceramics and wickerwork. We shall then continue to Salé to see the Almohad fortifications of the town, including the Bab Mrisa which originally stood over the canal which allowed ships access to the heart of Salé. We shall also visit the fourteenth-century madrasa or theological college constructed in Salé by the Marinid dynasty, a sister to the Marinid madrasas of Meknes, Fes and Marrakesh. (Overnight Rabat) BLD

Tangier - 1 night

Day 4: Saturday 2 April, Rabat – Tangier

- Medina of Tangier
- Qasba and Dar al-Makhzan Museum, Tangier

Today we shall leave Rabat and drive north to Tangier where we shall spend the night. Tangier is one of the oldest continuously inhabited urban sites in Morocco. A port called Tingi was founded by the Phoenicians around 1100 BC and then subsequently incorporated into the Roman Empire as Tingis, capital of the province of Mauretania Tingitania. In its heyday, Tingis rivalled the inland Roman city of Volubilis and by the fourth century it was the only significant Roman town in Morocco. Temporarily lost during the Vandal invasions, Tingis was re-captured by the Byzantines in the sixth century.

In the late seventh century, Tingis was captured by Arabo-Berber Muslim armies coming from Qayrawan in modern Tunisia and transformed into the Muslim garrison and port of Tangier. Along with Tétouan, Tangier served as a stepping-stone for Muslim armies travelling into the Iberian peninsula. Tariq ibn Ziyad crossed the straits from Tangier in 711 as did Yusuf ibn Tashfin in the late eleventh century, although the next dynasty, the Almohads, preferred Rabat to Tangier as their main port on the route to the Iberia.

As the Castilians advanced southwards in Spain, and Fes and Marrakesh became Morocco's main commercial and cultural centres, Tangier and Tétouan on the northern coast went into decline. Tangier was a regular victim of Portuguese raids throughout the fifteenth century and was finally captured late in the century. After a brief period as a Spanish enclave in the sixteenth century whilst Spain ruled Portugal, Tangier was returned to Portuguese hands. It was ceded to the British in the seventeenth century as part of the dowry of Catharine of Braganza.

The expense of retaining Tangier in the face of constant 'Alawi attacks persuaded the British to withdraw in 1684. After two centuries of European rule, Tangier again became a Muslim city, peopled in part by earlier Muslim migrants from Spain. New defences and an 'Alawi qasba were added to the city which soon took its place alongside Tétouan, Larache and Rabat-Salé as a small port trading with Cadiz and other Spanish

ports, as well as North European traders.

In the nineteenth century, Tangier was transformed into the 'City of the Consuls', the residence of diplomats from the European nations represented in Morocco who presented their complaints and requests to the governor of Tangier who doubled as Morocco's foreign minister. Tangier's pivotal role in Moroccan foreign relations in the nineteenth century paved the way for her designation as an international zone in the early twentieth century during the Protectorate. It is to this period that Tangier's shady reputation for espionage, prostitution and drug-smuggling dates. Since 1956 the city has been gradually re-integrated into the Moroccan cultural mainstream.

On arrival in Tangier we shall take a tour through the old town where traces of Tangier's intimate relations with Europe abound. Many consular buildings, such as the American Legation, dot its narrow streets and architectural styles bear witness to ongoing northern Mediterranean influence. While in the old town we shall visit the seventeenth century 'Alawi citadel which was constructed above the sea defences of the town and visit the Dar al-Makhzan museum, located in the 'Alawi governor's residence. (Overnight Tangier) BLD

Chefchaouen - 1 night

Day 5: Sunday 3 April, Tangier – Chefchaouen

- Anglican Church of St Andrew
- Lunch at Auberge Dardara Restaurant
- Old Town of Chefchaouen
- Qasba Museum
- Ruined Mosque of Chefchaouen

This morning we shall walk a short way from our hotel to the Anglican Church of St Andrew where many of the colourful British characters who resided in Tangier are buried. Foremost among them was Harry Maclean, a Scotsman who trained and commanded generations of Moroccan soldiers in the late nineteenth century. Afterwards, we shall travel along the beautiful mountain road from Tangier to Chefchaouen, a small town nestling on the steep slopes at the western end of the Rif mountains, where we shall spend the night.

Just outside Chefchaouen we stop for lunch at the Auberge Dardara. Considered 'the best kitchen in the area', it serves food using traditional farm products.

Chefchaouen is a Berber name, meaning 'two horns' which refers to the two rocky peaks which dominate the town. The town was founded in the fifteenth century by a descendant of the Prophet, called Mawlay 'Ali ibn Rashid, and refugees from Muslim Spain who sought to create a mountain stronghold where they would be safe at last from the Christians. Until this century, Chefchaouen was completely closed to Europeans, who risked their life if they tried to enter its gates.

The Hispanic origin of the inhabitants of Chefchaouen is, however, clearly evident in the architecture of this little town which has much in common with the rural architecture of southern Spain. Small, whitewashed houses with blue-painted doors pile up upon one another; windows are covered by ornate metal grilles; and the stone-built mosque resembles rural Spanish churches. The focus of town life is the central plaza where the inhabitants promenade for hours in the balmy dusk air. We shall spend a leisurely day exploring the old town of Chefchaouen, visit the Qasba Museum and will walk up a nearby hill through an ancient cemetery to a ruined mosque which gives a panoramic view of Chefchaouen and its environs. (Overnight Chefchaouen) BLD

Fes - 4 nights

Day 6: Monday 4 April, Chefchaouen – Volubilis – Mawlay Idris – Fes

- Roman Site of Volubilis
- Town and Shrine of Mawlay Idris

Today we travel south from Chefchaouen to Fes via the Roman city of Volubilis and the shrine town of Mawlay Idris, founder of the Idrisi dynasty. The Roman city of Volubilis was built in the first century BC on the site of earlier prehistoric and Phoenician settlements when Morocco and Algeria were incorporated into the Roman Empire as the client kingdom of Mauretania. The kingdom was ruled by Juba II, the Roman-educated son of its vanquished Berber ruler. Juba II was a class-mate of both Octavian and Cleopatra Selene, daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. When Octavian became Augustus, he married Juba II and Cleopatra Selene, and made them client rulers of Mauretania. They founded two capitals: Iol Caesarea in Eastern Algeria and Volubilis in Morocco. The wealth of Volubilis was based on local production of grain, olive oil and copper which were exported to the rest of the empire.

In AD 40 Caligula had Juba's son, Ptolemy, assassinated. Mauretania went into revolt only to be formally annexed to Rome and made into the directly-governed province of Mauretania Tingitania. Although Volubilis became politically second to Tangier for a time, the wealth of its agricultural hinterland ensured its ongoing importance to Roman Morocco. Despite the shrinking Roman presence in Morocco from the third century onwards, Volubilis probably remained partly Romanised until the seventh century. This reflected the fact that Morocco was spared the invasion of barbarian peoples which undermined Roman society in Iberia and other parts of North Africa and was therefore a functioning late antique society when the first Arabs arrived in Morocco. Nonetheless, the increased precariousness of life had persuaded local urban populations to move from the plain to the nearby Jabal Zarhun massif, where a small fortified hill town emerged.

When Idris, founder of the Idrisi dynasty, allied with the Berbers of the Volubilis area, he made this fortified hill town his base before initiating the construction of Fes. When Idris I (788-791) died he was buried in the hill town which soon became known as Mawlay Idris. His son, Idris II, continued the construction of Fes which became the Idrisi capital of Morocco. In the Marinid period the body of Mawlay Idris I was 'discovered' and a mausoleum constructed. In subsequent centuries, Mawlay Idris became a shrine town of considerable importance to Moroccans, in their view possessing the status of a holy city like Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. As such, pilgrimage to Mawlay Idris is popularly believed to be an acceptable alternative for those financially or physically unable to make the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

On arrival in the Jabal Zarhun area we visit the ruins of Volubilis. The majority date to the second and third centuries AD when the city was under direct Roman rule: these ruins include the Capitol, Basilica and Arch of Caracalla. Many fine works found at Volubilis have been removed from the site to museums, but the site boasts a magnificent collection of Roman mosaic floors which includes scenes of Diana surprised by Actaeon while bathing with her nymphs, and Hylas captured by nymphs. These are among the most important antique mosaics in the world. Monuments to be explored in addition to the Capitol, Basilica and Arch of Caracalla, are the House of Orpheus, the Baths of Gallienus, the Forum, the Temple of Saturn and a number of houses which, like those at Pompeii, are named after decorations or objects found in them.

After lunch we shall visit the town of Mawlay Idris which has an atmosphere of isolation from the world annually mitigated when the city is transformed by the mawlid, or festival, commemorating Mawlay Idris in August-September. Large areas of the town, including the shrine, are closed to tourists, but we shall be able to explore the narrow, winding streets around the shrine precinct, and look down from a hilltop vantage point upon the town which possesses an unusual twentieth century mosque with a round tiled minaret. From Mawlay Idris we shall travel southeast into the Sais plain to the city of Fes where we shall

spend the night. (Overnight Fes) BLD

Introduction to Fes

Fes is the oldest of Morocco's imperial cities and although Rabat has been the political capital since 1912, Fes remains its historic religious and cultural centre. The contemporary city of Fes is actually three discrete entities: Fes al-Bali (old Fes), wedged into the narrow valley of the Wad Fes (River Fes); Fes al-Jadid (New Fes), originally a royal complex; and the Ville Nouvelle (New Town), the modern French-built section of the city.

The oldest section of the city, Fes al-Bali, was founded by Idris I around 799. During the reign of his son, Idris II, Fes, previously a small Berber town, took on a new character. Idris II made Fes his capital in 809 and in subsequent years the population was swelled by immigrants from other Arabo-Islamic lands. In 818 hundreds of Hispano-Muslims, who had rebelled unsuccessfully against Umayyad authority, arrived from Córdoba and founded the al-Andalus quarter of Fes. They were followed by migrants from Qayrawan in Tunisia, also unsuccessful rebels seeking refuge, who founded the Qarawiyyin quarter on the other side of the Wad Fes. Although the Qarawiyyin quarter was slightly larger than the al-Andalus quarter, the Andalusian connection was of greater significance in the long term due to the proximity of Muslim Spain.

Under Idris II's successors, Fes became an important centre for religious scholarship, commerce and artisanship. Scholars from Córdoba, other Hispano-Muslim cities, and Qayrawan established themselves in the great mosques of the al-Andalus and Qarawiyyin quarters making Fes a regional centre for scholarship. Commercially, Fes benefited from her position at the juncture of land trade routes to and from al-Andalus, sub-Saharan Africa and the Islamic east. As the Idrisi dynasty weakened, local Berber tribes gained control of Fes's hinterland and the city entered a lean period. Nonetheless contact with Umayyad Córdoba remained strong and Fes, along with much of North Morocco, became a dependant of Córdoba.

The eleventh-twelfth century Almoravid dynasty restored order to North Morocco and then incorporated Muslim Spain into their empire. This created greater cultural and commercial exchange between Spain and Morocco which benefited cities like Fes. Although the Almoravids founded Marrakesh as their capital in 1070, they also sponsored many buildings in Fes: mosques; baths; funduqs (multi-storey lodging houses for merchants and their wares); and fountains. The al-Andalus and Qarawiyyin quarters were amalgamated into a single city, and many Hispano-Muslim artisans moved to Fes to work on Almoravid buildings which were renowned for their stuccowork decoration.

In 1154 Fes was captured by the Almohad leader 'Abd al-Mu'min, already ruler of south Morocco and much of Islamic Spain. The Almohads disparaged the luxury of the later Almoravid period and destroyed much of the stucco decoration which graced their buildings in Fes. They did, however, give the city extensive new walls which have defined the limits of Fes al-Bali to the present day. Although not an Almohad capital, Fes benefited from the creation of a stable empire incorporating most of North Africa and Spain. In addition, many who fell foul of the Almohads in Spain, moved to Fes either permanently or as a prelude to travelling further east. By the thirteenth century Fes was one of the largest and richest cities in the empire.

During these centuries the original Idrisi great mosque was gradually supplanted by the Qarawiyyin mosque, built by immigrants from Qayrawan in the ninth century. The Umayyads, Almoravids and Almohads steadily enlarged the mosque creating a vast ritual space with the capacity to hold approximately 20,000 worshippers. It rapidly became a centre of learning second only to Córdoba, and after the fall of Muslim Spain the Qarawiyyin preserved the tradition lost in al-Andalus. Nonetheless the Qarawiyyin is quite different to Hispano-Muslim mosques and medieval European cathedral architecture. Despite its vast size it hides within the narrow streets of the city and has no defined exterior or monumental façade: its glory lay in

its interior and its prestige as a centre of learning.

In the 1240s the Almohad Empire crumbled and the dynasty was replaced by the Banu Marin, or Marinid dynasty. The Banu Marin, who were not leaders of a religious movement as the Almoravids and Almohads had been, prepared their bid for power by fighting against the Christians in Spain. The southward movement of the frontier in Spain made it henceforth imperative for Moroccan rulers to show dedication to holy war, *Ar. jihad*, to preserve Muslim territory. In order to improve their credentials further, the Marinids decided to identify themselves with the Idrisids and make Fes their capital. After an interlude of several centuries Fes again became a capital and much of the material culture which we shall see dates from the thirteenth to fifteenth-century Marinid period.

The Marinids used the services of the rising numbers of Hispano-Muslim craftsmen migrating to Morocco from Spain. Their architecture therefore amalgamated Moroccan and Hispanic elements in a style subsequently known as 'Andalusian'. This style has remained dominant in Fes and other Moroccan cities to this day. Marinid construction altered Fes in several ways. Firstly, they built the royal complex of Fes al-Jadid which included palaces, mosques and residential quarters for the sultan's troops. Secondly, they commissioned a series of palaces and *funduqs* or caravanserais in Fes al-Bali.

Thirdly and most importantly, they introduced the institution of the *madrassa* or theological college to Morocco and constructed a series of these buildings in Fes to house students studying at the Qarawiyyin mosque, and to provide supplementary teaching. The Marinid *madrassas* of Fes and other Moroccan cities are all formed of a central courtyard, a prayer hall located along one side of the courtyard, and several storeys of student rooms wrapped around the courtyard and prayer hall, insulating them from the world outside. They are all decorated in the distinctive registers of carved cedarwood, stuccowork, and mosaic tile which came to be the hallmark of the Moroccan Andalusian style.

The Marinids also converted the Mosque of the Shurafa (descendants of the Prophet), located near the Qarawiyyin, into the shrine of Mawlay Idris II as part of their policy of self-identification with the ninth-century Idrisi dynasty. During restoration of the mosque in 1438 a body was found in the walls. The Marinids claimed that it was the body of Idris II and turned the mosque into his mausoleum. Idris II was already considered the patron saint of Fes and his new mausoleum soon became a centre for pilgrimage and a *hurm* or sanctuary. Marinid patronage of this shrine was an attempt to channel popular piety and belief in holy men into state-controlled channels. Subsequent dynasties embellished and restored the shrine which is a rich example of Andalusian architectural styles employed in a purely indigenous structure, a mausoleum.

In the fifteenth century Morocco entered a turbulent period in which the Portuguese and Spanish established enclaves along the coast. Although Fes remained nominal capital, the country broke into small principalities ruled by anyone who could offer resistance to the Spanish and Portuguese aggressors. At the same time Jewish and Hispano-Muslim migrants flooded into Morocco in increasing numbers. Fes's cultural and commercial life was enriched by these newcomers, despite her politically straitened circumstances. This guaranteed Fes's importance as a religious and cultural centre, despite the new sixteenth century Sa'di dynasty's choice of Marrakesh as their capital. In recognition of the importance of Fes, the Sa'diyyin restored the Qarawiyyin courtyard in Andalusian style, substituting marble for stucco as they did in other buildings. Under the 'Alawi dynasty Fes became joint capital along with Marrakesh and the lesser capitals of Rabat and Meknes. The 'Alawi sultans recognised the importance of Fes and added palaces and fortifications. They also sponsored the development of the Jewish quarter, or Mellah, which is adjacent to Fes al-Jadid.

Day 7: Tuesday 5 April, Fes

- Jewish Cemetery & Mellah
- Fes al-Jadid and the Mashwar
- Bu Jallud Gardens
- Bu 'Inaniyya Madrasa (subject to reopening)
- Burj al-Shamal & Weaponry Museum
- Qarawiyyin Mosque (exterior)
- Shrine of Mawlay Idris II (exterior)
- Batha Museum
- Dinner at La Maison Bleue Restaurant

On our first day in Fes we shall visit the Mellah, the Jewish cemetery and the adjacent royal complex of Fes al-Jadid. We shall also visit the 'Alawi Burj al-Shamal, or Northern Tower, to get a panoramic view of the city and see the weaponry museum. We shall then cross the tranquil Bu Jallud gardens which separate Fes al-Jadid from Fes al-Bali and enter the latter through the vividly decorated Bu Jallud gate. Fes al-Bali is unique in its maintenance of an urban plan dating to the ninth century. The narrowness of its steep, winding streets means that motor vehicles may not enter the city and donkeys, mules and handcarts still transport food and merchandise around the city. Many of the religious, domestic and commercial structures lining the streets date to the fourteenth century, providing a unique insight into the physical experience of living in a medieval city.

In Fes al-Bali, we shall visit the fourteenth century Bu 'Inaniyya Madrasa (subject to being reopened after renovation works); the Qarawiyyin Mosque and the shrine of Mawlay Idris II which are located at the heart of Fes al-Bali. The two latter buildings form the sacred core of the city, and the prestigious markets for perfumes, spices and silk garments are located nearby adding pungency and fragrance to the air. Although non-Muslims may not enter these buildings we can view their interiors through their gateways. We shall finish with a visit to the Batha Museum, a collection of antique Moroccan woodwork, marblwork and other craftwork housed in a converted 'Alawi palace in Fes al-Bali. This museum contains the original carved wood doors of some of Fes' madrasas and a marble doorway from the Sa'di palace in Marrakesh, along with many other artefacts which demonstrate Moroccan adaptation of Hispano-Muslim styles. Dinner tonight will be at La Maison Bleue restaurant, a traditional Moroccan residence built in 1915 by Sidi Mohammed El Abbadi, a judge and astronomer. (Overnight Fes) BLD

Day 8: Wednesday 6 April, Fes

- Burj al-Janub
- The al-Andalus Mosque
- Sahrij Madrasa
- The Dyers' Street
- The Tanneries
- The Zawiya of Ahmad al-Tijani
- Marinid Funduq
- 'Attarin Madrasa (closed for restoration)
- Sharratin Madrasa
- Suqs of Fes

We shall start today with a visit to the Burj al-Janub, or South Tower, which gives a panoramic view of Fes from the alternate side to the North Tower. We shall then spend a second day in Fes al-Bali visiting the al-Andalus quarter; other Marinid madrasas in the city; areas of artisanal production; a Marinid funduq; and the suqs, or markets. The al-Andalus quarter lies on the eastern side of the Wad Fes, and has its own great mosque with a dramatic monumental gateway with a horseshoe arch. One of the most beautiful Marinid

madrasas in Morocco, the Sahrij Madrasa, is located close by. The small, perfectly proportioned courtyard of the madrasa is tiled with turquoise-tinted tiles whose colour is picked up and reflected by the large central pool. This intimate space is enclosed by carved wood screens.

From the Sahrij we shall descend to the river and cross to the Qarawiyyin quarter of the city to see the street of the dyers and the tanneries, the mausoleum or zawiya of Ahmad al-Tijani, an eighteenth-century Algerian mystic and founder of an important religious brotherhood, and a Marinid funduq decorated in a similar style to the Marinid madrasas. Other madrasas we shall see today are the 'Attarin Madrasa (if restoration work permits entry), built around 1325, and the Sharratin. The 'Attarin and Sharratin, like the Sahrij, are relatively small and intimate madrasas decorated with rich tilework. All three served as residences for students at the great mosques of Fes rather than as teaching centres. (Overnight Fes) BLD

Day 9: Thursday 7 April, Fes – Meknes – Fes

- The City Walls of Meknes & Bab al-Khamis
- The Granaries & Pool of Mawlay Isma'il
- Bab Mansur
- • Mausoleum of Mawlay Isma'il
- Qubbat al-Khayyatin
- Dar al-Kabira
- Bu 'Inaniyya Madrasa
- Dar Jami'i Museum

This morning we depart Fes and travel west on a day's excursion to the city of Meknes located on the edge of the Jabal Zarhun massif. Meknes was founded in the tenth century by the Maknasa Berbers as a market centre for the rich agricultural area around it. During the Almoravid (1062-1147), Almohad (1147-1248) and Marinid (1248-1540) periods, Meknes remained a provincial market town and was therefore less touched by Hispanic-North African interaction than Fes and Rabat. The city briefly became a capital during the reign of the 'Alawi sultan, Mawlay Isma'il (1672-1727) but subsequently shared imperial status with Fes, Marrakesh and Rabat. Meknes acts as a counterpoint to Moroccan cities more deeply influenced by Andalusian culture and shows a different juxtaposition of Hispanic and indigenous elements.

Few monuments remain from Almoravid, Almohad and Marinid Meknes. The few that do remain include an Almohad gate, the Bab al-Khamis, embellished with blue and green tiles by Mawlay Isma'il, and the magnificent Marinid Bu 'Inaniyya Madrasa. The Bu 'Inaniyya was commissioned by Abu-l-Hassan (1331-1350) and completed by Abu 'Inan (1350-1358). Like other Marinid madrasas its decoration was inspired by the architectural styles of Islamic Spain. The carved wood screens which separate the central court from its portico, the stucco and tilework, and the mihrab are especially admirable examples of Hispano-Moroccan craftsmanship.

In the mid-seventeenth century, Meknes was made into an imperial capital by Mawlay Isma'il, the first important sultan of the 'Alawi dynasty, and Meknes is above all his city. His choice of capital reflected his desire to distance himself from the existing capitals of Fes and Marrakesh, and his need for a secure food supply for his army. During the 1670s Mawlay Isma'il slowly constructed a huge new royal city adjacent to the existing town to house his black slave army. Black slaves and Christian prisoners of war toiled together on the project, and contemporaries wryly noted that Mawlay Isma'il's passion for building was only matched by his passion for destruction.

The royal quarter was planned as a monumental expression of dynastic power and it drew on a range of styles: classical, Andalusian, African and even European elements mingled to create a unique palatial vision

of power. Mawlay Isma'il's city is notable for its massive size: four concentric sets of walls punctuated with grandiose gateways stretch for 25km and, despite modern urban expansion, tracts of land within the walls remain unoccupied. These walls and ramparts were designed for architectural effect and were almost worthless as defences.

The main gateway was the spectacular Bab Mansur which was started by Mawlay Isma'il and completed by his son, Mawlay 'Abd Allah in 1732. Bab Mansur, which conflates classical form with Andalusian tilework, is one of the most splendid and well-proportioned monumental gateways in the Islamic world. Bab Mansur leads into the reception court of the palace complex which included a small pavilion, the Qubbat al-Khayyatin where foreign ambassadors were probably received by the sultan. Beyond lay the private palace of Mawlay Isma'il, decorated in an eclectic combination of Muslim and European styles, now his mausoleum, and the residential quarters of his slave army.

Whilst in Meknes we shall tour the city walls including the Bab al-Khamis. We shall then visit various parts of Mawlay Isma'il's palace complex: the granaries and neighbouring reservoir; Bab Mansur; the Qubbat al-Khayyatin; Mawlay Isma'il's mausoleum; and the Dar al-Kabira quarter. We shall also visit the Marinid Bu 'Inaniyya Madrasa and the Dar Jami'i Museum located in the nineteenth-century palace of the Jami'i family who served as ministers to the 'Alawi sultans. The museum has fine cedar wood ceilings and a beautiful salon with the master's chair and chairs for his four wives. The museum contains an interesting collection of ironwork, Meknes pottery, Berber jewellery, Andalusian tiles, traditional kaftans, and a large collection of embroidery. (Overnight Fes) BLD

Erfoud - 1 night

Day 10: Friday 8 April, Fes – Ifrane – Midelt – Erfoud

- Ifrane
- Midelt

Today we travel from Fes to Erfoud, on the edge of the Sahara, via the Middle Atlas mountains. We shall pass through Ifrane, a small town built by the French as a summer resort. The small, steep-roofed houses of Ifrane recall the architecture of the Alps, and the town is famous for its gardens and population of storks. From Ifrane we will travel on through the mountains towards Midelt along one of the loveliest roads in Morocco.

En route we shall pass through Azrou, arriving at Midelt for lunch. Midelt marks the start of one of the main routes through the eastern High Atlas mountain range to the Sahara. This route, which we shall take to Erfoud, was carved through the mountains by the Wad Ziz, a river which snakes south alongside the road. As we travel south the cedars and oaks of the north gradually give way to barren rock, clusters of date palms marking water sources, and finally the sand of the desert. (Overnight Erfoud) BLD

Tineghir - 1 night

Day 11: Saturday 9 April, Erfoud – Rissani – Tineghir

- Dawn Excursion to Merzouga (Optional)
- Ruins of Sijilmasa
- Shrine of Mawlay 'Ali al-Sharif, Rissani

After an optional dawn excursion to the sand dunes of Merzouga to watch the sunrise, we depart for Rissani 20km to the south, the capital of the province of Tafilalt, and the ancestral home of the 'Alawi dynasty.

Rissani lies alongside the ruins of the early Islamic town of Sijilmasa which controlled Moroccan trade with sub-Saharan Africa from the early eighth century until the fourteenth century. Sijilmasa was founded by a Berber lineage called the Banu Midrar. In time it became part of the Almoravid, Almohad and the Marinid states. The vast area covered by Sijilmasa's ruins, currently being excavated by archaeologists, indicates the wealth of the medieval city. Its commercial role was, however, dependent on its monopoly of access to West African gold producers. As centres of political power in West Africa shifted and trans-Saharan routes to the east and west emerged, Sijilmasa lost its commercial dominance and shrank in size.

By the sixteenth century Sijilmasa was no more than one of the fortified mud-brick villages, qsars, of the Tafilalt area, a remarkable example of de-urbanisation. These mud-brick villages are made up of several small houses wedged together whose outer walls form a continuous outer rampart around the village. A single ornate portal provides access to the village. The modern town of Rissani, constructed this century, itself grew out of the largest set of qsars in the vicinity, which were dependants of the 'Alawiyyin, a lineage descended from the Prophet which moved to Tafilalt in the twelfth century. In the fifteenth century the 'Alawi shurafa entered history as a result of their eponymous ancestor, Mawlay 'Ali al-Sharif's, participation in war against the Portuguese in North Morocco. Mawlay 'Ali died a hero and his tomb in Tafilalt became a local shrine. In the seventeenth century, the 'Alawiyyin transformed local religious prestige into political power and went on to create the 'Alawi sultanate (1669 –). Their descendants still rule Morocco.

We shall visit the ruins of Sijilmasa which lie amid the date palms, irrigation canals and brilliant green gardens of the qsars which replaced the city. We shall also visit the mausoleum of Mawlay 'Ali al-Sharif and a restored eighteenth-century 'Alawi qasba or fortified house. After lunch in Erfoud, we shall take the Tinjdad road west to the town of Tineghir at the mouth of the Tudgha Gorge. This road marks the start of the Route of the Qasbas, so-called because of the many fortified houses, or qasbas, which line its edges. (Overnight Tineghir) BLD

Ait Ben Haddu - 3 nights

Day 12: Sunday 10 April, Tineghir – Tudgha Gorge - Ait Ben Haddu

- Qsars of Tineghir
- Tudgha Gorge

In the vicinity of Tineghir, the High Atlas meets the Jabal Saghru, a small massif which is part of the Anti-Atlas. The deep gorges of Tudgha and Dades mark the fault line between these two mountain ranges. Both gorges were carved out of the rock by torrents of melt water from the peaks above them. At the head of the gorges waterfalls cascade down. As the gorges widen, small terraces of crops line the watercourse and villages cling to the sides, placed above the line of the torrential meltwaters which can close the gorges in spring. Here the mud-brick is the same brilliant red as the soil, creating a striking contrast to the green crops.

Today we shall visit the qsars of Tineghir and then head up the Tudgha Gorge. En route we shall take a leisurely walk through one of the cultivated areas nestling on the banks of the Wad Tudgha. After lunching in the Tudgha Gorge, we shall return to the Route of the Qasbas and continue west to Ait Ben Haddu. (Overnight Ait Ben Haddu) BLD

Day 13: Monday 11 April, Ait Ben Haddu, the Glawi Qasbas & Ouarzazate

- Ait Ben Haddu
- Tiffeltout

- Tawrirt (Taourirt)
- Time at leisure in Ouarzazate
- Dinner at La Kasbah des Sables Restaurant, Ouarzazate

Today we explore Ait Ben Haddou, Tiffeltout, and Tawrirt, the fortified villages and fortresses under Glawi control in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Qasba of Tawrirt is located in Ouarzazate itself while Tiffeltout and Ait Ben Haddou lie outside the town. The beauty of all three, and their dramatic settings, means that they are regularly used as settings for films. The historical significance of these qasbas resides, however, in their connections to the Glawi tribal chiefs, an example of tribal notables from the periphery making a bid for power over the fertile heartlands of Morocco.

The Glawi, a lineage from the southern High Atlas, usurped power in the Ouarzazate region in the late nineteenth century. In 1893, the Glawi chief, al-Madani al-Glawi, hosted the sultan and was given a cannon in return which he then used to exert Glawi control over the High Atlas and Ouarzazate. As European penetration destabilised the Moroccan sultanate in the early twentieth century, al-Madani and his brother al-Tuhami further extended their power. They became the most powerful regional lords in Morocco, and in return for their loyalty the French granted them almost total control of the south. The fortunes of the Glawi became so closely tied to the French that al-Tuhami al-Glawi opposed Muhammad V's calls for Moroccan independence and conspired to have him exiled. When Morocco became independent in 1956 and Muhammad V returned in triumph, al-Glawi was forced to beg forgiveness. He died soon afterwards.

Ouarzazate nestles at the southern foot of the High Atlas, on the slim plain which divides the High and Anti-Atlas ranges. In the pre-colonial period, Ouarzazate was no more than a village resting in the shelter of the Glawi Qasba of Tawrirt. In the late 1920s, however, the French made Ouarzazate into their provincial military headquarters to control the south. Since Moroccan independence it has become a major tourist destination and a centre of the Moroccan film industry.

Following some time at leisure in Ouarzazate for you to explore the various Coopératives and handicraft stores, we shall dine at La Kasbah des Sables, mixing traditional Moroccan and nouvelle cuisine in a South Moroccan Kasbah. We return to Ait Ben Haddou in the early evening. (Overnight Ait Ben Haddou) BLD

Day 14: Tuesday 12 April, Ait Ben Haddou - Tamgrut - Ait Ben Haddou

- Nasiriyya Library and Shrine, Tamgrut (to be confirmed)

Today we travel south across the Anti-Atlas mountain range in order to visit Tamgrut in the Dra'a valley. The Dra'a valley follows the course of the Wad Dra'a from the Atlas mountains down into the Sahara where it loses itself in the sands, only to rise again and empty into the Atlantic. Like the Wad Ziz which ends at Tafilalet, the Wad Dra'a was an important route in the trans-Saharan caravan trade. In the sixteenth century, a holy man established a religious retreat at Tamgrut, one of the small, fortified villages along the banks of the Wad Dra'a. One of the disciples at this retreat, Muhammad al-Nasir, codified the teachings of his master and transformed Tamgrut into the mother lodge (zawiya) of a religious brotherhood. This brotherhood, known as the Nasiriyya, spread all over Morocco. The Nasiriyya of Tamgrut used their religious prestige to protect caravans travelling to sub-Saharan Africa and grew rich on the contributions of the pious. Their wealth was partly used to buy books to stock the library of the zawiya. In Tamgrut we will see the mausoleum of Muhammad al-Nasir and the library of the zawiya which possesses an amazing collection of illuminated manuscripts, Qur'ans, and works on medicine and the sciences from all over the Islamic world. (Overnight Ait Ben Haddou) BLD

Marrakesh - 3 nights

Day 15: Wednesday 13 April, Ait Ben Haddu - Marrakesh

- Tiz n'Tishka Pass

This morning we cross the High Atlas by way of the Tiz n'Tishka Pass and travel down to Marrakesh, leaving behind the landscapes of the pre-Sahara; pisé qasbas and qsars; the verdant palm groves of the Ziz and Dra'a valleys, and the rocky drama of the gorges. (Overnight Marrakesh) BLD

Introduction to Marrakesh

Marrakesh is the fourth Moroccan imperial city we visit. It was founded in 1070 by the Almoravid Abu Bakr but constructed and transformed into a capital by Abu Bakr's cousin and successor Yusuf ibn Tashfin. They chose the site because it was well watered and flat: perfect as a camping ground for the Almoravid army, mostly nomads from the Sahara. Marrakesh began as the perfect springboard for the Almoravid conquest of North Morocco, but it soon became the Almoravid capital by virtue of its location on the trans-Saharan trade route which came up through the Dra'a valley and the Tiz n'Tishka to the Moroccan plains.

After incorporating North Morocco into his empire, Yusuf ibn Tashfin pushed northwards into the Iberian peninsula where the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba had fragmented into small, mutually antagonistic Muslim principalities, ruled by the Muluk al-Tawa'if or Party Kings. The Castilians and Aragonese exploited Muslim differences to push forwards. When Toledo fell in 1085, the Muluk al-Tawa'if asked for Almoravid help against the Christians, and in 1089 Yusuf ibn Tashfin crossed into Spain. Muslim Spain rapidly became part of the Almoravid Empire, much to the chagrin of the Muluk al-Tawa'if.

A period of cultural and artistic exchange ensued during which the reformist religious orthodoxy of the Almoravids mixed with the sophisticated urban culture of al-Andalus. The Almoravids offered political stability and patronage and received the philosophical and artistic heritage of al-Andalus, enabling Marrakesh to act as the junction between Andalusian and Saharan culture. All that remains of Almoravid Marrakesh is an exquisite qubba, or domed chamber, which may indicate the site of the Almoravid great mosque of Marrakesh.

In 1147 Marrakesh fell to the Almohads who went on to capture North Morocco, Muslim Spain, and eventually North Africa as far as Tunis. The most famous Almohad ruler, Ya'qub al-Mansur, builder of the Qasba of the Udaya and Hassan Tower in Rabat and the Giralda of Seville, showed a similar passion for construction in Marrakesh, the third of his capitals. The Almohads had already razed the Almoravid qasba to the ground and Ya'qub al-Mansur constructed a spectacular Almohad great mosque, sister to the great mosques of Rabat and Seville, on its site. The great mosque and its minaret, which still dominates the skyline of Marrakesh, were completed in 1190. The mosque soon became known as the Kutubiyya, or Booksellers' Mosque, as a result of the book market which grew up in its shadow.

The minaret of the Kutubiyya is one of the most important extant Almohad buildings as the only Almohad minaret which has survived intact. Like the Hassan Tower, the minaret's façades are decorated with intricate screenwork, punctuated on the upper levels with small windows. The minaret is crowned with a small domed pavilion surmounted with a gold spike holding three gold balls and a crescent, and gives an impression of how the Hassan Tower would have looked. Ya'qub al-Mansur also enclosed the city in a new set of walls punctuated by gateways, of which the most important is the Bab Agnaou, a massive gateway reminiscent of Almohad gateways in Rabat. The Almohads also constructed the suburban Menara Gardens with their huge central tank and olive groves as a place for recreation and physical training of the Almohad religio-military cohorts.

The Almohads were followed by the Marinids who showed little interest in Marrakesh. They nevertheless commissioned the Bin Yusuf or Yusufiyya Madrasa which became Marrakesh's foremost centre of religious learning. Like Morocco's other Marinid madrasas, the Yusufiyya has a central courtyard leading to a prayer hall flanked by students' cells. The madrasa was originally decorated in Marinid styles. Its current rich decoration, which incorporates carved marble panels and stepped cedar arches, however, dates to the sixteenth century when the Sa'di dynasty renovated the madrasa as part of their project to beautify Marrakesh which they chose as their capital after 1525.

The Sa'di dynasty added palaces, shrines and mosques to Marrakesh. The greatest Sa'di sultan, Ahmad al-Mansur al-Dhahabi, embellished the Sa'di tomb complex, renovated the Yusufiyya Madrasa and constructed the spectacular Badi' palace. Much of this work entered into a dialectic with early Andalusian architecture and decoration. The hallmark of Sa'di style was the re-interpretation of Andalusian stuccowork in marble, frequently imported from Italy, and use of carved and stepped cedarwood arches. Little remains of the Badi' palace which was sacked by Mawlay Isma'il in the 1670s, but its huge forecourt, pools and gardens hint at its former glory.

Mawlay Isma'il's sack of the Badi' marked the end of Marrakesh's last period as sole capital of Morocco. The 'Alawiyyin recognised that Morocco had many imperial cities, and Fes, Meknes, Rabat and Marrakesh all became 'Alawi capitals. Nonetheless, many 'Alawi sultans loved Marrakesh and built palaces and gardens here: Mawlay 'Abd al-Rahman (1822-1859) restored the Agdal gardens, his son, Sidi Muhammad sponsored agricultural projects in the area, and ministers of his grandson, Mawlay al-Hassan (1873-1894), built the Bahia and Dar Si Sa'id palaces.

Day 16: Thursday 14 April, Marrakesh

- Almohad Walls
- Kutubiyya Mosque
- Bab Agnaou
- Sa'di Necropolis
- Badi' Palace
- Bahia Palace
- Dar Si Sa'id Museum
- Jama' al-Fana'

We shall spend our first day in Marrakesh visiting the Kutubiyya Mosque, and the Bab Agnaou. We shall then see the Sa'di necropolis and Badi' palace. In the afternoon we shall visit the nineteenth-century Bahia Palace and Dar Si Sa'id Museum, previously the homes of Ba Ahmad, chief minister to the 'Alawi sultan, Mawlay al-Hassan, and his brother Si Sa'id. Both houses are examples of vernacular Andalusian-style architecture, and the Dar Si Sa'id is also a museum containing an impressive collection of Berber jewellery, bejewelled daggers and rifles, copper and brass utensils, silk garments and children's toys.

We shall finish with a walk through the old city to its commercial and recreational heart, the Jama' al-Fana', an extraordinary public arena lined with booths selling fresh orange and grapefruit juice, nuts and sweets. In the centre a number of stalls offer snacks and meals of infinite variety, and numerous people provide public services and entertainments. Dentists, preachers, acrobats, black musicians from the Gnawa religious brotherhood, snake charmers and story tellers all mingle in the Jama' al-Fana' from dusk late into the night. This square is very dear to the people of Marrakesh, a place to meet, to promenade, and also to reiterate communal identity – when Moroccans were fighting for independence from France, demonstrations in Marrakesh were held at the Jama' al-Fana'. (Overnight Marrakesh) BLD

Day 17: Friday 15 April, Marrakesh

- Almoravid Qubba
- Yusufiyya Madrasa
- Mawwasin Quarter
- Jardin Majorelle and Musée d'Art Islamique

This morning we shall visit the religious heart of old Marrakesh where the Almoravid Qubba, the Yusufiyya Madrasa and Yusufiyya Mosque stand, probably on the site of the original great mosque of Marrakesh. We shall also walk through the adjacent Mawwasin quarter where the Sa'di dynasty constructed their great mosque, and the suqs or markets of Marrakesh. The suqs of Marrakesh are renowned for their size, the quality of craftsmanship and the variety of goods on sale. As in other Moroccan cities, each craft can be found in a particular street or alley: we shall see streets dedicated to gold jewellery; silver; cedar work carvings; silk robes; cloth; leather slippers; copper utensils; ceramics; rugs and carpets. The market area is covered by reed lattices whose dappled shade cools the streets and shelters them from the hot southern sun.

This afternoon we visit the Jardin Majorelle, created by the French painter Jacques Majorelle (1886-1962). The gardens Islamic Art Museum displays ceramics and pottery of great value, weapons and magnificent jewellery, textiles, carpets, woodwork and other treasures. (Overnight Marrakesh) BLD

Day 18: Saturday 16 April, Marrakesh – Essaouira – Marrakesh

- Old Town, Essaouira
- Harbour, Essaouira
- Fortification, Essaouira
- Farewell Dinner at Dar Moha Restaurant, Marrakesh

Today we drive to Essaouira, the port of Marrakesh, on the Atlantic coast. This port was constructed in the eighteenth century on the site of a Phoenician settlement. It was built on the orders of the 'Alawi sultan Sidi Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah in the 1760s. The sultan intended the town to become Morocco's foremost port. He was partially successful: Essaouira became an important centre for Moroccan trade with Europe, but could not fully usurp the position of the northern port of Tangier.

Essaouira was known to Europeans as Mogador, from the Berber name of an earlier village, Amujdul. The town was built on a grid pattern within square outer walls. The houses within are tall and whitewashed with blue painted doors and Hispanic metal grilles over the windows. Essaouira had a very large Jewish mercantile population and this is reflected in the use of the Star of David as a decorative motif above many doorways. The town also has a fascinating harbour and coastal fortifications, put in place to defend the town against European naval attack.

The plains behind Essaouira are the home for the argan tree whose oil was traditionally used for lighting and the thuya tree. Craftsmen in Essaouira are famous for their thuya wood products, marquetry and mother-of-pearl inlay, and we shall see their workshops, nestling below the fortifications. In the afternoon, after lunch at one of the fish restaurants on the seashore we shall return to Marrakesh.

In the evening there will be a special farewell dinner at the Dar Moha restaurant, renowned for its Moroccan nouvelle cuisine. (Overnight Marrakesh) BLD

Day 19: Sunday 17 April, Depart Marrakesh

This morning we shall transfer to the Marrakesh airport in order to board our domestic flight to Casablanca. Upon arrival in Casablanca the tour ends. **B**

Accommodation

19 Days in Morocco

All hotels are rated 3-5-star locally and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms have shower or bath and w.c. Several hotels have swimming pools. Single rooms may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the single supplement. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

- Rabat (3 nights): 5-star Golden Tulip Farah Rabat Hotel - a modern hotel situated on the sea front overlooking the Atlantic ocean and the famous Bouregreg Mouth, next to the Hassan tower and the Mohamed V. Mausoleum. www.goldentulipfarahrabat.com
- Tangier (1 night): 5-star El Minzah Hotel by Le Royal Hotels & Resorts - built in a pure Hispano-Moorish style is located in the city centre of Tangier, on the Straits of Gibraltar. www.leroyal.com
- Chefchaouen (1 night): Riad Dar Echchaouen - a traditional guest house featuring a terrace with views over the old medina of Chefchaouen, the mountains and river of Ras El Ma. www.luxury-riads.com
- Fes (4 nights): Riad El Yacout - this charming heritage building, has been lovingly restored by local artisans and features ceramic (zelliges), plaster and sculpted wood. Located in the medina, close to the main entrance Bab Boujeloud, facilities include a Moroccan restaurant, winter garden with central fountain, Moroccan living room, hammam, sculpted cedar doors and terrace with views over the medina. www.riadyacout.com
- Erfoud (1 night): 3/4-star Hotel Ksar Assalassil - located in the Tafilalet palmary approximately one kilometre from the centre of Erfoud; this intimate Kasbah-style hotel offers 14 air-conditioned rooms equipped with en-suite bathroom, television, telephone and minibar. hotelksarassalassil.e-monsite.com
- Tineghir (1 night): Hotel Tomboctou - a charming hotel housed in an old Qasbah located in the centre of town. www.hoteltomboctou.com
- Ait Ben Haddu (3 nights): Hotel Riad Ksar Ighnda - located on the edge of the desert, near the UNESCO World-Heritage listed Ksar Ait Ben Haddu. www.ksar.ighnda.net
- Marrakesh (4 nights): Riad Ksar Anika - located in the Mellah area of the souq. This charming riad offers 17 rooms all beautifully decorated in contemporary Moroccan style. It features an exquisite 'marble carpet' central courtyard, heated swimming pool, hammam and a restaurant located on the roof terrace. www.ksaranika.com

Note: Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Room Accommodation

Single rooms will be apportioned to those who book first. We cannot nevertheless guarantee you a single room throughout the tour. This applies particularly to Chefchaouen, Erfoud and Tineghir where accommodation is limited to a total of 14 rooms for the group. Approximately one month prior to departure, rooming lists will be confirmed. If you have booked a single supplement but must forego a single room in some places the single supplement for those hotels will be refunded to you.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only - Early-Bird Special: book before 30 May 2015

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$TBA Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares and/or group airfares please contact ASA for further information.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 3-5-star hotels.
- All meals indicated in the tour itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=evening meal
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included
- Bottled water during excursions
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage at hotels and airports
- Internal airfare Day 19: Marrakesh - Casablanca
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour Handbook
- Entrance fees to museums and monuments (excl. optional dawn visit to Merzouga)
- Local guide in Morocco
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia - Casablanca, Casablanca - Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20 kg (44 lbs)
- Costs for taking photographs (a supplement at some sites may be required in Morocco)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, six to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 19-day tour involves:

- Extensive walking through narrow streets and busy markets, and some walking on rough ground on archaeological sites
- Travelling long distances by coach through steep and winding mountain roads and deserts
- Regular early-morning starts (8 or 8.30am)

Other considerations:

- 3 to 5-star hotels with seven hotel changes
- You must be able to carry your own hand-luggage. Hotel portage includes 1 piece of luggage per person.
- Risk of gastric ailments (you should consult your doctor about medication before departure)
- 1 internal flight: Marrakesh – Casablanca.

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you

have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the Booking Conditions on the last page of this tour itinerary.

Practical Information

Tour members will receive prior to departure practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers see: www.smartraveller.gov.au

Clothing

It is important that women dress modestly, for example long skirts or dresses (below the knee) with long sleeves. Tight fitting clothes must be avoided and although this is not strictly followed by Westerners, it is far better to adopt this practice and avoid causing offence. Shorts should never be worn in public and beachwear is prohibited for anywhere except the beach and hotel facilities (note: please do remember to bring your swimsuits as there will be a number of occasions where you will have the opportunity to swim). During visits to mosques women will also be required to wear a head-scarf.

Visa Requirements

A visa is not required for travel into Morocco if you hold an Australian or New Zealand passport and it has a least 6 months validity from the date you depart Morocco. If you plan to travel on another passport please contact your ASA Travel Consultant for advice as to your visa requirements.

Visiting Mosques

Morocco has not experienced the problems created by militant Islamic movements in neighbouring Algeria and is one of the most politically stable countries in the Arabo-Islamic world. Nonetheless, it is a very devout country that wishes to protect its religious places from the ravages of tourism in order to preserve the quality of its religious life. We shall, therefore, have little access to the mosques of Morocco which are living religious spaces. However, we will visit a few mosques which have been opened to the non-Muslim public, in addition to a rich array of other monuments, including *madrasas* (theological colleges), palaces, *qasbas* (fortresses), *qsars* (fortified villages), and the traditional *suqs*, or markets, of Morocco's imperial cities.

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD\$100.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD\$400.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of \$500.00 AUD is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities without assistance or support:-

- walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Single Supplement

Payment of the single supplement will ensure accommodation in a single room throughout the tour. The number of single rooms available is extremely limited. People wishing to take the Single Supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME

TOUR DATES

Booking before the tour price is available

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OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other

FIRST NAME

Preferred FIRST NAME

MIDDLE NAME

SURNAME

POSTAL ADDRESS

CITY STATE COUNTRY POSTCODE

TEL. (AH) () TEL. (BH) () Mobile Tel:

EMAIL address

Date of birth / / GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products

☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts

☐ Other

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address

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- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature

Dated

Tour / Course Name

I have enclosed an Intention to Travel Fee of \$ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): ☐ Cheque ☐ Direct Debit (see below) ☐ Credit Card (see below)

By Cheque

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No.

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, American Express & Visa 1.95%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Visa

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date

Security Code (CVC)

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ)

Cardholders Name

Cardholders Billing Address

State

Postcode

Country

Phone

Email

Cardholders Signature

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