



The Art of Exploring Morocco

## MOROCCO: A FUSION OF ART & CULTURE + OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO ESSAOUIRA

### TRIP LEADERS



**Addi Ouadderrou** is a native Moroccan from the desert region, and an expert on Moroccan culture, with nearly 25-years of experience in directing deep-dive and personalized cultural tours into Moroccan history, life, arts, languages, food, dance, music, and more. He is well connected to so many wonderful people throughout Morocco, allowing for special opportunities for those who travel with us. Addi is the owner of Moroccan Caravan, LLC, the tour manager, and the co-leader for this tour. [addi@moroccancaravan.com](mailto:addi@moroccancaravan.com)



**Sandra Youssef Clinton, FASLA**, founder of CLINTON+RIES Landscape Architects, is a landscape architect, horticulturist, and mixed-media artist from the Washington, DC region. She co-leads cultural, art, yoga, and garden tours with Addi, and has traveled extensively in Morocco and throughout the world. Sandy will lead the art retreat portion of this tour and will enhance participants' experiences of each landscape, garden, and park as she shares her design and plant expertise throughout. [syc@clinton-la.com](mailto:syc@clinton-la.com)

### TOUR OVERVIEW

This unique trip will fuse broad and diverse cultural explorations of Morocco with hands-on artwork, utilizing natural, locally sourced materials. Art studio experience will include designing tie-die book covers, eco printing with local flora, glazing handmade tiles, bookbinding, and rug and basket demonstrations. NO previous experience or talent necessary – just a desire to participate and create!

With expert guidance and exclusive access, participants will delve into this exotic nation to soak up its natural beauty, vibrant culture, and decorative symbolism. Throughout the trip we will focus on patterns and symbols, and their meanings, utilizing them in our own art pieces. Trip highlights include behind-the-scenes exploration of cultural antiquities unique to Morocco, camel trekking through the Sahara Desert, Sufi chanting, enhanced tours of parks and gardens, music, dance, and many surprises!

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Depart USA to Casablanca/Morocco

Begin your travels today with a flight across the Atlantic to arrive in Casablanca, Morocco no later than 10:30am on April 18. Participants book their own flights. Suggest nonstop flights from the US to Casablanca, Morocco on Royal Air Maroc:

- From New York (JFK)
- From Washington DC, Dulles international airport (IAD)
- From Miami (MIA)

## **Day 2: Casablanca to Fes**

Arrive at Mohammed V Airport in Casablanca, meet your tour guides, and transfer to our luxury van to drive into the heart of Casablanca to view the elaborate and beautiful exterior of Hassan II Mosque. Following lunch, we will depart for a beautiful drive through vast and diverse landscapes to the ancient city of Fes. Dinner and overnight in Fes. (L,D)

## **Day 3: Fes**

Morning departure for a guided tour to explore the art and handicraft capitol of Morocco - Fes. We begin the tour visiting the decorative gates of the Royal Palace followed by a panoramic view of the city. Then we stop at a traditional ceramics and mosaics coop where everything is hand crafted. A great place to note beautiful designs and craftsmanship, as well a purchase one-of-a kind pieces directly from the artists.

We then enter the medina (old city) where each section specializes in certain types of foods, wares, and handmade arts and crafts, such as embroidery, weaving, metal work, woodwork, and more. We will have an opportunity to see artisans making exquisite items using centuries-old traditional techniques. Of special interest are the ancient leather dyeing vats in the heart of the city. We will also sample a wide variety of local cuisines.

Tonight, we have a special group dinner at a local restaurant specializing in authentic Moroccan cuisine with a show featuring a variety of musicians and dancers representing different areas and ethnic groups. As a special treat, we will enjoy a theatrical presentation of a Moroccan wedding ceremony with our group members participating to get very close to the culture, including dancing for all. (B,L,D)

## **Day 4: Fes to Midelt**

After breakfast we visit the former Royal Gardens called Jnan Sbil, with its focus on many types of moving water, reflections, and garden rooms of different types. After our walk, we enter the Fes medina again for a very special Sufi ceremony in a family home built in the 1400's. Following lunch, we continue our drive south to Midelt, crossing the Cedar Forest and picturesque landscapes along the way. Dinner and overnight in Midelt.

## **Day 5: Midelt to Tafilalet Oasis to Mezguida**

Today we drive south through the Ziz Valley to the Tafilalet Oasis/ Palm grove. We will stop in Erfoud to see and learn about fossils that this area is known for. We will continue to Mezguida where we will spend the next few days exploring this important area of Morocco and where we create art of many kinds. Overnight in Mezguida. (B,L,D)

## **Day 6: Mezguida and Rissani**

Today we head to nearby Rissani, a former hub for trans-Saharan trade, where we will have the opportunity to enjoy a presentation about textiles and jewelry. We will learn more about Amazigh (Berber) textiles, motifs, and techniques, and their uses in local culture – a great opportunity to shop for rugs, jewelry, and other unique gifts, if desired.

This afternoon we begin to prepare for making our own art. First, we will collect local plant materials and soak them for printing on papers tomorrow. We will also prepare our fabrics for indigo and henna dyeing. If time permits, we will experience sunset from a vantage point overlooking the oasis. Overnight in Mezguida. (B,L,D)

## **Day 7: Mezguida Art Studio**

Today will be a full-immersion studio art day preparing materials for the creation of art/writing journals. Our first experience is eco printing on paper, which will become the pages of your book, using all local natural materials collected on or near the property. Then we will complete design techniques on cloth before dyeing using natural henna and indigo. You will be creating your own books and book covers as well as scarf/turban for yourself. Overnight in Mezguida. (B,L,D)

### **Day 8: Mezguida Art Studio**

An exciting day where we take the fruits of our creative labor and put them all together into a journal/book, using bookbinding techniques common in ancient Egypt and Morocco. If time permits, hosts may demonstrate various techniques of rug and basket weaving, utilizing recycled materials and local palm fronds. Tonight, you will pack a simple overnight bag for our Sahara camp adventure tomorrow. Overnight in Mezguida. (B,L,D)

### **Day 9: Mezguida – Sahara Desert**

This morning we will complete any incomplete journal making and photograph everyone's creative creations! We will then take a walking tour of the Village of Mezguida, a nearby seventeenth century adobe village. This afternoon we will drive deeper into the desert until we reach the golden sand dunes of the Sahara Desert. In the late afternoon, we go on a magical camel ride across the dunes for an overnight stay in our luxury camp, and enjoy a festive dinner followed by live music, singing, and dancing - all under a stunning starry sky. (B,L,D)

### **Day 10: Exploration of the Desert Region**

After breakfast at our camp, we return to Riad Yasmina where we will relax at the swimming pool and have some downtime. A demonstration of a special stuffed bread baked in the sand will lead us to lunch. Later we will explore this desert region including a Saharan oasis and gardens where we witness how locals extract water from the dunes for drinking and irrigation using an ancient underground system called *khuttaras*. Our day will be topped with a visit to a local community to sip mint tea and experience their unique spiritual music and chanting, before returning to Mezguida, where we will spend the night. (B,L,D)

### **Day 11: Todra Gorge and Ouarzazate**

Today we leave the Sahara region for a ride full of unique scenes. We will stop for lunch, and along the way will wander through the Todra Gorge (canyon) after passing through a lush valley surrounded by many villages and filled with date palm trees. Then we continue our spectacular ride to spend the night in Ouarzazate. (B, L, D)

### **Day 12: Ouarzazate - Kasbah Ait Ben Haddou - Marrakech**

Ouarzazate is a town known for film production. Today we will cross the amazing High Atlas Mountains. The scenery in the mountains is striking and unique, as dozens of Amazigh (Berber) villages accented with terrace gardens can be seen. One of the highlights for today is the world heritage site Kasbah Ait Ben Haddou. We will visit a women's cooperative that specializes in making famous Argan Oil. Overnight in Marrakech. (B,L,D)

### **Day 13: Explore Marrakech**

This morning we will explore Marrakech including Ben Youssef Madrasa followed by an enhanced tour of the lush hidden, Le Jardins Secret, created on the grounds of a historic site. We will visit the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bahia Palace, and the 11<sup>th</sup> century Koutoubia Mosque and gardens. We will then enter the lively souks ("markets") to experience its colors and its smells. We will have the opportunity to have our hands or feet tattooed with natural henna in some of the graphic patterns we have witnessed throughout Morocco. (B, L, D)

### **Day 14: Further Explore Marrakech**

Today we will visit the unique Anima Sculpture Garden located south of Marrakech. Lunch on your own at the Garden Cafe. In the late afternoon we will have time to wander through the souks for last minute shopping. Our day ends with a beautiful farewell dinner at our Riad. (B,D)

### **Day 15: Transfer to Casablanca airport for those leaving for home.**

For those departing today, private transport will be arranged for transfer to Mohammed V Airport in Casablanca, arriving at least 3 hours prior to departure. Participants are required to book flights no earlier than 3pm on this day. (Breakfast included. All other meals on your own.)

**Bon Voyage!!**

## **OPTIONAL EXTENSION TOUR**

### **Day 15: Marrakech - Essaouira**

For those staying for the extension to Essaouira, After a leisurely breakfast, we leave Marrakech and head west to Essaouira, also called the ancient Mogador, on the Atlantic Ocean. (Breakfast included, all other meals on your own.)

### **Day 16: Explore Essaouira**

Explore this blue and white fortified town that has a long history. Due to its strategic location, Essaouira has a beautiful and charming port, established by the Moroccan Sultan, Sidi Mohammed Ibn Abdellah in 1746, to handle European trade with Morocco. Essaouira is also known for its woodcarving artists and has an artistic center and numerous galleries throughout its narrow streets. It is easy to wander on your own in this quaint medina, where you can see musical instruments and various forms of art being made. (Breakfast included, all other meals on your own.)

### **Day 17: Transfer to Casablanca Airport**

Today we will have an early departure from Essaouira to transfer to the airport in Casablanca for your return to the US. Participants are required to book their air flights for no earlier than 3pm this day. (Breakfast included, all other meals on your own.)

### **Bon Voyage!!!**

\*Schedule subject to change based on availability, market days, and elements out of our control.