



## Adventurebug Worldwide Ltd

Bespoke adventure travel & events since 2000

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Apto. Correos 1031, 29680 Estepona, Malaga, SPAIN TEL (34) 635 817 819



# Hiking South Morocco

## Atlas & Sahara Desert Explorer

10 Nights / 11 Day Hiking Adventure

### INTRODUCTION

*This is a wonderful introduction to Morocco's core highlights for the active and bespoke traveller. You will visit **Marrakech** city; the **Atlas Mountains** and the **Sahara Desert** – including the illustrious **Erg Chebbi Dunes** and the exotic **Ouarzazate** desert city. From the perspective of the adventure traveller that still desires comfort, this is an insightful journey with a wide-range of experiences. The focus is on solid **day hikes** of the Atlas and Sahara regions, with thoughtfully planned days around diverse routes and comfortable lodgings throughout. Rated as **HIKING** tour – **longer days of driving are required** (over 5 hours on occasion), and the scenery is always changing, and each day offers a new experience in itself! As a private group, we have freedom to tailor make the activities and distances to suit your needs.*



### IS THIS TOUR FOR ME?

*This is Hiking Tour, which means each day is structured around walking / hiking in both nature and village settings. Morocco is a mountainous country but we're not here to summit peaks – our aim is to find a balance between beautiful landscapes and local culture, tying this into great day hikes!*

*Distances will range from 6 km (4 miles), to perhaps 12 km (9 mile) days. Don't worry, there's always time to enjoy the surroundings of our village stays and of course the comforts of our hotels!*

*Trail conditions vary from village to village paths, shared by mules and sheep at times and perhaps children and farmers en route. We also will explore canyons, verdant oasis settings and the vastness of the Sahara Desert!*

## Itinerary



### DAY 1 Arrival to Marrakech / Airport Transfer to Hotel

*Arrival to Marrakech – a driver from a local transfer company will meet you for the airport shuttle to our hotel in the **Hivernage Quarter** of the city. Your guides for the tour will meet you later this afternoon. Our hotel is located in a leafy neighbourhood and has large open spaces and a pool. Orientation meeting and a welcome dinner is provided. This is our day to settle into Morocco and acclimate. Welcome dinner included tonight / Hotel Kennedy Hospitality Resort 4 stars (or similar)*

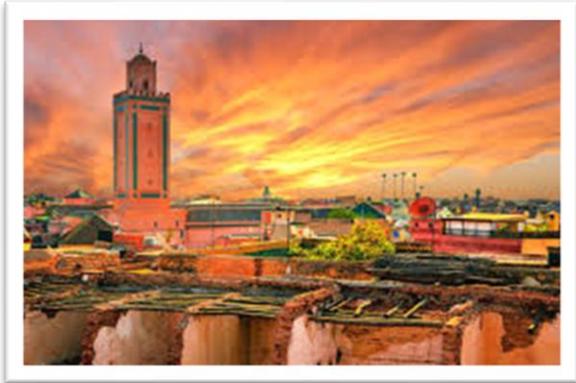
<https://www.kennedyhospitalityresort.com/>



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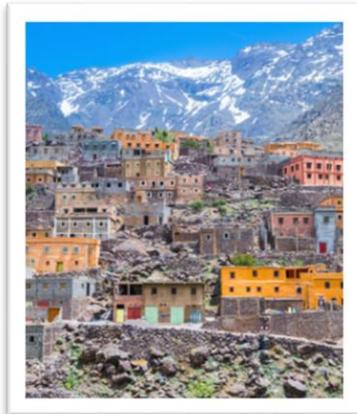
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### DAY 2 Marrakech tour day / Afternoon free exploration

This morning after breakfast we have a guided visit of the famous **Marrakech Medina** and a chance to familiarize ourselves with Morocco's Berber (**Amazigh**) culture. Our official local guide will introduce you to all aspects of the historic quarter over approximately 3 hours and take in aspects of the souk that are often missed by the average tourist. For the rest of the afternoon the group is free to take lunch at their own leisure, explore the vast market or catch up on rest before we set off on our hiking tour the following day. Breakfast & dinner in hotel included.



### DAY 3 Atlas Mountains / Imlil

Morning departure from Marrakech for the Atlas Mountain region (2 hour private transfer). Our base will be the famous hiking region of Imlil. This hamlet is most famous for its assortment of international hiking groups, craft stalls, mountaineers and a sense of Himalayan-esque mountain energy! We will base ourselves in a traditional Berber Riad for two nights.

Riads are more simple and rustic than hotels yet they are clean and welcoming for international visitors – adding to an authentic Atlas Mountain experience. Today we will have a 4-6 mile hike (up to 1000 feet gain) in the surrounding basin of Imlil where we'll visit traditional Berber villages and pass ancient agricultural farmsteads. All meals included.

### EXPLORING THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

We have plenty of scope to make beautiful and highly interesting discovery circuits in the Atlas range. The pace will be gentle and focus on sightseeing; flora and fauna and getting to know the local Berber Mountain people. Expect our hikes to be a combination of ancient 'drover' trails (cobble), narrow switch backs and at times, some hillier foot paths. Pending our trails, 1 or 2 mules may accompany us to carry supplies or lunch! Weather wise we can expect conditions to be mild and dry with plenty of sun - but bear in mind we may be above 9000 feet in some areas and wind, fog and mist can occur. When dry and sunny, temperatures in the High Atlas in the spring can reach 70-80 F. Sturdy walking shoes are necessary. Bring a layer of light rain / wind protection.



### DAY 4 Hiking Day 2 / Atlas Mountains

Today we do a morning hiking circuit of distance and intensity based on your choice (generally 4-6 miles and up to or over 1000 feet gain). Hopefully we'll be within view of Mt. Toubkal – over 14,000 feet and the highest peak in North Africa. Later this afternoon you can enjoy exploring the street markets and / or sipping a mint tea on the terrace watching the vibrancy of this enigmatic mountain culture! This evening, there is an optional visit to a traditional Berber HAMMAM bath house for a massage, scrub and exfoliation session! Accommodation in the same guest house. All meals included.



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### DAY 5 Transfer to the Sahara Region / Ait Benhaddou Visit

*This morning we depart Imlil and make our way by private mini bus up over the High Atlas pass of Tizi-n-Tichka. From here we descend south into Morocco's stone desert base to the famous village of Ait Benhaddou (Lawrence of Arabia fame). On route we see the famous Telouet Kasbah where spice traders from Timbuktu were received. In this region we take a 3-5 mile hike (750 feet elevation gain), through the striking Telouet Valley. At Ait Benhaddou we stay in a local Kasbah style hotel. Today is largely travel but we break the journey with scenic stops and our hiking program on route. Hotel La Rose de Sable or similar Breakfast and Dinner included.*



### DAY 6 Valley of the Thousand Kasbahs and Scoura

**Palmeries** *This morning after exploring the unique village of Ait Benhadou (on foot – 2 miles), we set off through the Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs travelling over stone 'Hamada' desert through an oasis-like valley containing ancient 'Palmeries' fed from the Anti Atlas. Our destination, Tinerhir is a bustling trading town built at the foot of the awesome Todra Gorge. Today we have a scenic hike and discovery of the palmeries culture at Skoura (3 miles / flat), including a visit to the Valley of the Roses before arriving to Tinerhir and the comfortable Kasbah Tombukto hotel or similar / Breakfast and Dinner included.*



### DAY 7 Todra gorge hike and the Merzouga Desert Journey

*This morning we transfer to the gorge of Todra (25 minute drive), a geological spectacle! From here we have a beautiful hike through the terracing of the Palmeries until lunch (4-5 miles / 700 feet gain). After lunch, we sit back and enjoy the 4 hour minibus journey deep into the heart of Moroccan Sahara to the famous Erb Chebbi dunes of Merzouga. These dunes are the most sought after to be visited in all of Morocco. Not only are they extremely remote but they typify the kind of dune we associate with the Sahara desert and many blockbuster films were made here. Upon arrival to the dunes, we'll mount camels (led by the local*

*Indigo Berbers) taking us (1.5 hours) into the heart of the dunes where a special camp will be our home for the night! A highlight is hiking up the dune peaks at sunset or under the moonlight! Accommodation is in traditional berber tents (wind and waterproof) with bedding and simple shared toilet facilities. A charming communal tent is provided for our meals and celebrations! Breakfast and Dinner Included.*



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### DAY 8 Tazzarine, N-kob and Ouarzazate

*This morning after breakfast we vacate the dunes again on camel – offering the chance to catch the beautiful light on the sand as we return to our vehicle. We then continue by private mini bus on the scenic route along the southern desert highway towards Tazzarine and N’kob. Today with good fortune we may witness Nomad Berbers moving to their mountain camps with camels and sheep. A hike will also be conducted today in the region of N’kob where we can stretch our legs for at least 3 miles / 2-300 feet gain. We can also have a look at Berber handicrafts, gems, figs & dates today at a cooperative marketplace. Our destination today is Ouarzazate,*

*the market center for desert traders and a fascinating place where Hollywood has produced many films. A comfortable 3 star tourist-class hotel with a pool welcomes us tonight after a long days travel. Breakfast and Dinner included. Note – **today is our longest vehicle transfer day.** The scenery is spectacular, but hiking is more limited due to travel / time constraints.*



### DAY 9 Ouarzazate and Fint Oasis hike and visit

*This morning we’ll visit the wonderful Fint Oasis (25 min drive from Ouarzazate). Here we’ll make an exploratory hike of 4 to 6 miles (500 feet gain) through this colourful desert oasis – admiring exotic giant rock features, date palms and perhaps cooling off in the fresh river waters. After a visit to the local community for lunch & tea, we’ll make our way back to Ouarzazate for some free exploration time. Same hotel as last night. All meals included.*



### DAY 10 Return to Marrakech

*This morning after an early breakfast we transfer back to Marrakech to complete our Southern Morocco Adventure.*

*An optional hike in the Tichka Pass region (weather pending) is offered (3 miles / 500 feet gain), Arriving to Marrakech by late afternoon we provide a final night’s accommodation & farewell dinner before your departure the following day.*

*Same hotel in Marrakech as first night(s). Breakfast & Dinner included.*



### DAY 11 Departure from Marrakech (or optional onward travel in Morocco)

*This morning after breakfast the tour is completed and you can easily make your way to the airport by taxi (15 min), or perhaps continue to other parts of Morocco such as Essouira, the coastal resort or Casablanca and Fes, the Royal cities.*



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### ABOUT YOUR TOUR, WE INCLUDE:

**Lodgings** – We provide 10 tour nights' in Tour Class hotels located in specially selected regions. Pre and post tour nights can easily be arranged directly with the hotel or via booking.com. Rooms are based on double bed or twin bed scenarios with limited single supplements available. All hotels have WIFI connections and most have swimming pools. One night of course is in a desert dune camp where all bedding is supplied, and bathroom / shower facilities are more basic than hotels.

**Meals & Clean Water** – Meals are generally taken within your hotel (and in village cafes for lunch stops). Moroccan food is very healthy and cooked well with plenty of flavor. Gastro bugs are not

common in Morocco when food is prepared in venues used by tour groups. Wine or beer, etc. is not readily available in restaurants and participants to 'stock up' where available from licensed stores selling alcohol. Morocco is a tolerant Muslim country, and they produce their own wine and beer, however drinking licenses are not common for public restaurants. **Vegetarian** needs can be met however **specialist diets** such as gluten free, vegan, etc. may be difficult to manage – so flexibility on your part is advised, as this is Africa. No beverages, with the exception of mineral water is provided at the included meals. There are a limited number of lunches included (mostly for the trail and carry-in style), allowing you to select from many options during our travel days. Budget for no more than \$8-10 a lunch while travelling. Lighter options are always available too such as an omelet and Moroccan soup(s) rather than large set lunch menus. On the principal tour days, we provide **daily mineral water** (large bottles) so please have a refillable bottle for this.

**Transport** – During the tour days, we have a private airconditioned minibus for our use. Arrival transfers (from airport) in Marrakech are included and departure transfers are not but reliable and inexpensive taxi transfers of 15 min can be reserved at our final night's hotel.

**Personal Money** - Outside of the meals not included in your tour, you may wish to have some *Dirhams* for other purposes such as purchasing snacks, visiting small local enterprises (cooperatives), and/or local souvenirs and for tips (see below).

**Exchanging money between your currency and the Moroccan Dirham is easy. Some options are:**

- *Bring Dollars from home for exchange (we are accredited with reliable money changers)*
- *Use your bankcard here in Moroccan ATM bank machines (good rates of exchange and low fees – pending your bank card arrangements from home)*
- *Pay with your credit card (still limited in Morocco except for higher end purchases and better hotels/restaurants)*

### TELEPHONE AND INTERNET SERVICES IN MOROCCO

Credit Cards may be used for International calls or a Moroccan SIM Card can be purchased upon arrival (Inwi & Meditel are leading companies). INTERNET WIFI is available in most hotels - including café stops throughout the region. Please note, hotel wifi connection functions in the common areas but not always guaranteed in rooms and power outages may impact connectivity – another reminder that we're in Africa.

### INSURANCE

Please ensure, as a condition of travelling with Adventure Bug Travel LTD. that you have taken out **personal travel insurance** which covers you for *accident, injury, evacuation and general health insurance* for Morocco travel. Additionally, we strongly recommend *cancellation insurance* for any delays or disruptions you may encounter. Please note, although quality private medical facilities can be found in the regions of travel on this trip – particularly around the larger population centres, we will also be in some very remote locations where health care is basic.



## TIPPING

Tipping in the developing world is critical for the local people. Tips for your Moroccan local guide & our group driver can be contributed to at the END of the trip. Tips should be made in cash (Euros, Dollars or Dirhams). Tips for all others along the way is taken care of by a universal kitty contribution and this is done at the START of the trip and is managed by our MOROCCAN GUIDE directly. The kitty is a blanket cover for tips at all lodgings, housekeeping, restaurants, baggage handlers, etc. on route.

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT MOROCCAN TRAVEL

Morocco has few annoyances or serious health problems. Society is non-violent and harassment to buy items in the marketplace is minimal these days – especially with guides present. It is Africa though and poverty is the norm – despite the enormous distribution of wealth that you'll also witness, this is not the norm for 98% of the population. Like everywhere, common sense with money, personal handbags, cameras, etc. is advised.

For up to date **Health Information** about Morocco, consult the website:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/morocco> and the British based one,

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/morocco.aspx> and also speak to a medical specialist that deals with travel to this region. Malaria nor any serious tropical diseases are not a problem in this region. There are no cases of Ebola reported to this date in Morocco and the recent Covid pandemic has been handled with great care throughout. We recommend you carry all your prescriptions from home and don't always expect to find the same items in a local pharmacy. Also include an extra pair of glasses.

For up-to-date **Security Information and VISA information** for Morocco. Have a look here:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Morocco.html> Morocco sits at LEVEL 2 security, which is equal to nearly all major cities in the EU.

## HERE'S A FEW MORE TIPS!

- *Visas (at time of print) are not required for US, Canadian, Australian (all Commonwealth nations), British or European nationals. It is normal to receive a 3 month tourist visa upon entry with a passport containing a minimum of **6 months validity**.*
- *Transport on this tour will be in the form of a private minibus. Our driving pace is careful so that we can enjoy the views and not feel anxious on the roads.*
- *Refrain from drinking local water and use bottled water as it is widely sold. They cost about 75 cents to 1 dollar max per 1.5 litre bottle. This includes brushing your teeth with bottled water, just to be safe. Showering is fine of course.*
- *Restaurant prepared food in our experience is tasty, clean and well cooked. Gastro bugs are generally not a problem if precautions are taken.*
- *Please respect dress code of locals - shorts / t-shirts (for ladies) are fine in the mountains and in the desert but not usually around mosques or holy centers / town centers and urban market places. We'll advise on this as we travel.*
- *You can feel safe walking the streets day or night in Morocco – particularly in the areas of this trip. They are accustomed to many foreign visitors and in fact, many live and own property in Morocco. We only ask that you explore areas in the evening with a fellow traveller.*
- *Our hotels are very clean, modern and designed for international clientele*
- *Remember to practice good personal hygiene and wash hands throughout the day.*
- *Be prepared to carry tissue / toilet paper for bathroom stops (hotels have toilet paper)*
- *Morocco toilets range from traditional 'hole in the floor' to sit down models. Our hotels have modern toilets.*
- *Having small change is handy for 'paid toilets' in some areas.*
- *Being 'stared at' is common in the developing world. Don't take offense, it's very normal.*
- *Tipping is a new expectation in restaurants, cafes and for special services, 10% is the norm.*
- *Moroccan markets always require a little haggling, it's normal. Just ask yourself what your truly ready to pay first.*
- *Be sensitive about photographing Muslim woman and children, in their religion reproducing one's image is not normal. They are also concerned about their images spread around social media.*