

General Trip info

Map

Trip Code: IXMFM

Trip Length: 8

Trip starts in: Ouarzazate

Trip ends in: Marrakech

Meals: 7 Breakfasts included

1 Lunches included

3 Dinners included

Accommodation: Camping (with basic facilities) (1 nt), Hotel (4 nts)

Transport: Camel, Minibus, Taxi

Daily Itinerary

Day 1

Ouarzazate

Salaam Aleikum! Welcome to Morocco. Your trip begins in Ouarzazate, which is situated at the confluence of three valleys and on the threshold of the Sahara Desert. Settle into your hotel and perhaps take a stroll to acquaint yourself with the town. This place was originally a staging point for trans-Saharan caravans and later became garrison for the French Foreign Legion. If you arrive early and have time, perhaps pay a visit to Atlas Studios, a major Hollywood outpost in Morocco, located just a few kilometres from town. There will be a group meeting at 6pm this evening.

Day 2

Tazzarine

This morning you will explore the town of Ouarzazate and visit the hundred-year-old Taourirt Kasbah. A potent symbol of the Glaoui clan's power, the kasbah gives a glimpse of how these feudal lords lived. You will then have the chance to buy an essential piece of desert kit – a shesh. This is a long piece of cloth, a bit like a scarf, that's wrapped around the head to keep the sun off. The loose end can be pulled across the face to keep the sand out. Continue your drive across the Tizi-n-Tiniffit pass and through the Draa Valley, following the southern slopes of the Djebel Sahro to Nkob and on to the Oasis of Tazzarine (approximately 3 hours).

Day 3

Sahara Camel Trek

In the morning, travel to Iferd (approximately 30 minutes). Here you will meet your camel caravan and the camelteers who will journey with you into the desert. Then ride your camel all the way to camp (approximately 2 hours). Each person will be on their own camel, forming a typical desert caravan. There will be additional animals to carry your baggage, camping equipment and most importantly your water. The gait of the camels soon lulls you into a strange rhythm – one that's been the same for centuries. Time seems to dissolve as you are surrounded by the soft haze of the desert. Arrive at your Bedouin camp, set up, and no doubt enjoy a glass of sweet mint tea. Watch as the scenery around you changes colour with the setting sun. After dinner, if you are lucky, your camel drivers may decide to play drums and invite you to join them for an evening of traditional songs.

Day 4

Sahara Camel Trek

Early risers will be treated to another amazing display of changing colour and light. Cross your fingers for clear weather! After breakfast you will have a short walk through the dunes to make the most of the views on offer. How far you walk will depend on the ability of the group as well as the conditions. Walking through sand can be tough, and makes you realise how hard life here would be without the camels! Remounting your camel, make your way slowly out of the desert, back towards the hills and valleys of the Atlas (approximately 2 hours). Bid farewell to your travel companions and camels and rejoin the vehicle for the return trip to Tazzarine (approximately 1.5 hours).

Day 5

Ait Benhaddou

Head towards Agdz, through the Draa Valley, and eventually to Ait Benhaddou (approximately 4 hours). The Draa Valley area is very fertile and its terraced farmlands are fed by an intricate system of irrigation channels. Continuing via Ouarzazate, you will reach Ait Benhaddou, one of the best-preserved fortified kasbahs in the country. With its dramatic red-earth walls and slit windows, this is a magnificent example of a stronghold. The surrounding villages are well worth exploring too. Not far away there are the film studios of Ouarzazate which have been used for many epic films, from classics such as 'Lawrence of Arabia' and 'Jewel of the Nile' to the more recent 'Hidalgo' and 'Alexander'. Consider an optional visit to these studios.

Day 6

Marrakech

In the morning, cross the riverbed to visit Ait Benhaddou. Take the opportunity to explore some of the ruined buildings. Climb to the top of the hill where the agadir (grain store) offers spectacular views down over the village and the surrounding countryside. You can also enter one of the houses and share a glass of mint tea with some of the residents to gain a better understanding of how they live their lives. In the afternoon, drive north across the High Atlas mountains en route to Marrakech (approximately 4 hours). The road, completed by the Foreign Legion in 1936, winds up over the Tizi-n-Tichka pass (2,260 m) and offers stunning views of the mountains before descending past Berber villages to the plain surrounding Marrakech. Arrive in Marrakech and settle in.

Day 7

Marrakech

Enjoy a walking tour of the city centre, taking in the main sights on your way to the sprawling souq and main square. The souq is a great place to sharpen your bargaining skills, and you are almost certain to be tempted by some of the extraordinary variety of merchandise on display – perhaps a pair of traditional Moroccan slippers or some exotic spices. The adjacent main square has the atmosphere of a medieval fair. Snake charmers and jugglers are among those who vie to entertain you. In the evening, wonderful smells waft by as food stalls cook up their local delicacies. In the afternoon you will have time to wander and make your own discoveries. If you'd like to take a traditional bath, ask your leader where the nearest hamman is. Alternatively, the tanneries around Bab Debbagh are great to visit.

Additional Information

Included Activities

Ouarzazate - Taourirt Kasbah visit

Ait Benhaddou - Kasbah

Marrakech - Guided walking tour

Marrakech - Palais Bahia

Optional Activities

Atlas Movie Studios

Notes for Morocco

From the vast emptiness of the Sahara Desert to the teeming bustle of colourful souks and markets, Morocco is a land of contrasts. Ride a camel across red dunes that stretch as far as the eye can see, and camp in a Berber tent beneath a canopy of stars. Sample a mint tea in the Djemaa el Fna in Marrakech, as you watch the performance of acrobats and story tellers, snake charmers and drummers. From the charming seaside town of Essaouira to the tiny villages of the High Atlas, from the ancient Fes Medina or the bustling town of Casablanca, to the silence of the desert, Morocco will captivate you.

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries will not need a visa to enter Morocco as a tourist for up to 90 days. Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it in advance.

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited as described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, and information about kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

These notes are updated regularly, so please ensure you have an up-to-date version of these trip notes.

The planned route and itinerary is the intention, but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed. It occasionally happens that there must be a change to our planned itinerary - this may be for a variety of reasons, such as climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions. By their very nature, adventure travel needs to be approached flexibly and some regions can be unpredictable. Some Imaginative Traveller journeys go through off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure and less stringent safety standards than we are used to at home.

Our Groups

Our groups are made up of people from around the world and are usually an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that adventure travel should be open to as many people as possible and so although some trips have a minimum age limit, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you. One of the highlights of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

The maximum group size depends on the operator and the style of transport, but will usually be a maximum of 15-16 or up to 21-22 on our overland journeys.

Accommodation

Imaginative Traveller trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether staying in hotels, hostels, homestays or campsites, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip and those that book together will usually be able to share accommodation.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary greatly depending on what options are available in the region you are travelling; hotels can vary from very basic rooms without electricity or running water to high standard hotels with good facilities! Generally in hotels most rooms will be twin-share. Hostels, gers and yurts are nearly always multi-share.

Many trips will feature a stay in a local homestay or community tourism initiative, allowing us to experience a slice of local life in the areas we travel through. On our overland trips, we will sometimes camp in campsites ranging from rather basic or even wild camps to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your leader at your welcome meeting. Our crew will try to cater for any particular dietary requirement or food intolerance whenever possible.

Health

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip

please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope with the style of travel on that trip. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. Please note that if, in the opinion of our leader, you are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to yourself and/or the rest of the group, Imaginative Traveller or our partner operators reserve the right to exclude you from all or part of the trip.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. We also advise you to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase.

Altitude

Imaginative Traveller offers some trips that travel to above 2,800m altitude above sea level - it is imperative at high altitudes to drink lots of water to stay hydrated, be careful not to get burned by the sun, and try not to exert yourself too much. Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude; please discuss these options with your doctor.

Yellow Fever

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries. You may need to present this on arrival at the airport or border crossing. Some countries will refuse entry if you are unable to present your certificate - please see each country's note above for details. It's also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home.

It is your responsibility to check with your doctor well in advance of leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you'll be visiting.

Malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases

Some areas we travel to have the risk of contracting malaria. If this applies to your trip, please get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your GP / travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements and to find the right option for you. If advised by your doctor to take a course of anti-malarial tablets, please complete the course as instructed as malaria can often manifest itself upon your return home if the course is not followed.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue Fever, Chikungunya and Zika are continuing to spread and becoming a bigger problem around the world. Bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available. Health professionals have issued warnings for pregnant women travelling to areas affected by the Zika virus.

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists, can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, use a mosquito net where possible and use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing.

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel.

We also recommend you check out any specific health advice for the country you are travelling to either via your GP or the following websites: www.nathnac.org or www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

In the UK, we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive,

up-to-date vaccination and health information. You will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

Activities

Included activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary, all other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not necessarily be refunded; this is something you will need to check with your leader.

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Please note that certain activities may not be available on your particular visit if they are overbooked, underbooked, out of season, or for any other reason - the list of activities is made according to our latest information and in the best faith, but please be aware that things may change between our last visit and your arrival. Please also note that it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, and it is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there.

If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip. This can be arranged by Imaginative Traveller through our website or by contacting our team of travel consultants.

If you prefer to arrange your insurance independently, it should have a minimum medical (including repatriation) cover of £2,000,000. We recommend that any policy also has a minimum level of cover for Personal Liability of £2,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000. Cover for loss of baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice although please bear in mind that personal effects are more likely to go missing whilst travelling and you should ensure that your policy is adequate to cover the value of your personal effects e.g. cameras, tablets, phones etc. Please note that Imaginative Traveller and our partner operators are not responsible for your personal effects and are not insured for their loss.

If you prefer to arrange your insurance independently, it should cover you for any activities that you may wish to participate in, such as white-water rafting, trekking, horse-riding, etc. and the 24-hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries if applicable (e.g. they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or trekking in the Andes). If you are travelling to high altitude (such as embarking on a trek to the summit of Kilimanjaro), please make sure that this is also covered.

Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not suitable with adventure travel to remote areas. Many credit card medical insurance policies are not valid for travelling outside your country of residence or outside the EU.

Please also check the age limits on any policy you wish to take out and make sure that you thoroughly inform the insurance company of any pre-existing conditions.

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or emergency passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Transfers

At Imaginative Traveller we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay? We can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk-in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival; however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer, as not all hotels offer this service.

Responsible Tourism

Imaginative Traveller is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We recognise that we are guests of local communities and strive to make them benefit directly from our visit. You can find full details of Imaginative Traveller's responsible tourism policy on our website.

Issues on the trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on

customer-relations@imtrav.net

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better, and it allows us to make improvements for future travellers.