

Trip Name:	Morocco:	Destination:	Essaouira/Volubilis/Fez
	City Extension		
Date:	April 29-May 3, 2010	Itinerary Phase:	Final

PRICE: \$850-\$1000, due February 15, 2010.

EXTENSION OVERVIEW:

After immersing yourself in opulent Marrakesh and the simple mountain life of Morocco stay a few more days and experience three of Morocco's UNESCO World Heritage Sites; the Essaouira medina, roman ruins of Volubilis and Fez's medina - the largest remaining medieval city in the world.

Your English speaking Berber guide will travel with us from Marrakesh to the old Portuguese port town of Essaouira. You will spend two nights in a restored riad in the medina of Essaouira. During the day, Essaouira will captivate you with its historic medina and ramparts, immaculate beach, tranquility and sea breeze. There will be time to discover the town at your own pace, shop, eat freshly caught seafood and rejuvenate after the previous week's rigorous mountain adventure.

After a relaxing couple of days in Essaouira we will depart in the morning and travel north along the coast past Casablanca and inland towards Fez. We will spend the afternoon and sunset at Volubilis, an open-air treasure and Morocco's largest Roman archeological site. Volubilis is a testament to a forgotten era of North Africa's history. The intricate mosaics, triumphal arch and capitol building testify to this city's splendor and economic and political weight of its time. Another two hours of travel and we will arrive at the doorstep of the middle ages, the medina of Fez.

The inhabitants of Fez have adapted to modern life without losing their traditions and live almost as they did in the 13th century. Fez's medina is a medieval maze that will overwhelm your senses with its innumerable alleyways, souks (markets) and ancient architectural treasures. You will be charmed by the daily life of the Fassis, the call to prayer echoing from the city's hundred plus mosques, and the mysterious doorways leading to private homes and prominent buildings alike. We will visit Fez's revered spiritual and architectural attractions, including the zawiya of Moulay Idriss, el Attarine Medersa, the Karaouiyyine Mosque and en Nejjarine Foundouk, home of the must-see Museum of Wooden Arts and Crafts.

You will end the trip replenishing yourself with a multi-course meal of Fez's famed cuisine at a palace restaurant, falling asleep to the day's final call to prayer and relishing your Moroccan adventure.

ITINERARY:

Day 1: Marrakesh/Essaouira (B)

- Travel by private van or 4x4 (2 hours) from Marrakesh to the port town of Essaouira.
- Afternoon on own.
- Stay in a riad, historic courtyard house.

Day 2: Essaouira (B)

- Spend day relaxing, walking the beach, exploring the town and shopping.
- Stay in a riad, historic courtyard house.

Day 3: Volubilis/Fez (B,L)

- Early departure, travel along coast past Casablanca and inland to Volubilis (6 hours).
- Sack lunch during drive.
- Afternoon and sunset at the Roman ruins of Volubilis.
- Travel to Fez (1.5 hours).
- Traditional Moroccan dinner and stay in riad in the heart of medieval Fez.

Day 4: Fez (B)

- Full-day guided tour through Fez's medina.
- Shop for souvenirs in the souks (markets) and for antiques and carpets at Les Mysteres de Fes.
- Farewell dinner. Experience the mouth watering delights of Fez's culinary traditions at a Palace Restaurant.

Day 5: Fez/USA (B)

- Private transfer to airport.
- Home!

INCLUDED IN THE LAND COSTS:

- ✓ Private transfer to airport in Fez.
- ✓ 3 star riad, traditional courtyard house, in the old city (*medina*) of Essaouira and Fez. Double occupancy with private bath.
- ✓ Breakfast.
- ✓ Authorized and official English speaking Berber guide 24/7.
- ✓ Driver and modern 4x4 or minivan transport. Marrakesh to Essaouira, Essaouira to Volubilis, Volubilis to Fez.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Medical insurance.
- Museum or cultural site entrance fees.
- Gratuities to staff.
- Beverages including bottled water and alcoholic drinks, laundry and any other personal expenses.
- Lunches, dinners and personal snacks.
- Air travel.

Prices (approximate)

N° people	4	6-8
Land Cost/person	\$1000	\$850
Single Room	n/a	n/a

Trip Highlights

- Fresh seafood meals and shopping in the quaint port town of Essaouira.
- Staying in *riads*, traditional courtyard houses, in local neighborhoods of the old city of Essaouira and Fez.
- Afternoon exploring the intact tile mosaics of the roman ruins of Volubilis.
- Guided tour of Fez's medieval markets.

Packing List

- See packing list for Morocco: Mountain Architecture and Culture.

Cultural Awareness

Clothing

Out of cultural respect men should not show their shoulders and knees and women should not show their elbows and knees. This means NO shorts. Capris or long pants/skirts only. No tank tops for men and no short sleeve shirts for women (3/4 length or long sleeve only). Nothing tight fitting for women; please do not expose your feminine figure. All clothes should be light weight because it will be warm. Button up shirts are better than t-shirts. Also remember that everything you bring will be used and abused, so don't bring your most favorite and expensive items.

You will see other foreigners wearing less culturally aware clothing both in Marrakesh and the mountains. However, they are 'tourists' rather than guests of the locals. Please be conscious of this while packing.

Health & Safety

Morocco welcomes many visitors with a good case of intestinal problems. This is not because the bacteria is bad, it is just different than what our bodies are used to. Traveling with acidophilus and grapefruit seed extract, both found at the health food store is a good idea. These are great ways to combat bacteria on a natural level. If it worsens we have antibiotics to administer.

Zawiya Ahansal is a day's travel from the nearest medical facility. There are NO doctors in the mountain region. This is important to keep in mind while recreating in the area. Be careful at all times; do not take extreme risks to your physical health and safety. Compare the remoteness to being on a backpacking trip in the wilderness; help is hours away. We will have a satellite phone for emergency contact. Please visit the Center for Disease Control for suggested vaccinations and current health advisories. <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/morocco.aspx>

Food and Water

Don't drink that water! Water purification of some kind is necessary. Bottled water is available and will be provided to you in Marrakesh. The houses where you will be staying in the mountains serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. However the food lacks in protein and variety so bringing your favorite protein bar or jerky from home is recommended (remember this adds weight to your luggage).

Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol is forbidden in Islam and Morocco is a Muslim monarchy. In addition, drinking alcohol in front of locals and their families is considered disgraceful. Out of respect for the locals that we will be traveling with our trip is an alcohol free trip (wine will be available at dinner in the cities). In addition, Morocco may be famous for its marijuana and hash but it is still illegal. It is also considered extremely disrespectful to do this in front of locals.

Language

Arabic is the official language of Morocco. French is widespread in metropolitan areas and with men and teenagers in rural regions. Berber is the language of the mountains. English is very rare, with the exception of Marrakesh where it is more and more apparent, but still not everywhere. A little Arabic goes a long way; an Arabic phrasebook is priceless.

Money

Morocco's official currency is the dirham. ATM machines and money exchange houses are plentiful in the cities. However, credit cards are rarely accepted, even at prominent tourist hotels and markets. Do not count on these services outside of the city. If you plan to shop, exchange money or withdraw it before leaving Marrakesh. VISA is the recommended credit card for an emergency; MasterCard, Discover and American Express are rarely accepted.

Suggested Reading

Islam:

Armstrong, Karen. Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time.

Armstrong, Karen. Islam.

Moroccan Culture:

Brett, Michael, and Elizabeth Fentress. The Berbers. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Shah, Tahir. The Caliph's House.

Shah, Tahir. In Arabian Nights.

Clammer, Paul et al. Lonely Planet: Morocco 9th edition, February 2009

Canetti, Elias. Voices of Marrakesh

Zawiya Ahansal:

Erickson, Cloe. "New Nomads of the High Atlas." Saudi Aramco World. March/April 2008: 24-29.

<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200802/new.nomads.of.the.high.atlas.htm>