

11 Days from Casablanca to Marrakech

Tour from Casablanca to Marrakech, featuring Imperial Cities, the Desert, and Essaouira

This 11-day tour in Morocco begins on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean (Casablanca) and ends very close to it (in Marrakech, after an excursion to Essaouira). In between lies an exciting journey that will introduce you to the country's must-see destinations. Without a doubt, this is an ideal option for "all-terrain" travelers who wish to combine culture and nature, big cities and countryside, desert and sea within a single program.

A tour with the essentials, but with an expanded route

The program of this 11-day tour follows the main lines of other itineraries starting in Casablanca and ending in Marrakech: it covers the country's main cities and World Heritage sites (Rabat, Meknes, Volubilis, Ait Ben Haddou...), but it also adds lesser-known destinations that, due to lack of time, are not included in other shorter tours.

This is the case with Essaouira, the pearl of the Atlantic located two hours from Marrakech. Or experiences in the heart of the desert, in small villages where folklore and semi-nomadic life are still very much alive. The "village of black people" (Khamlia) or the villages of the pre-Saharan valleys are just a few examples that will surprise you with their originality... and the quality of service offered to the traveler.

Marrakech Airport

Day 1: Casablanca - Rabat

Upon your arrival at Casablanca airport, our staff will welcome you at the terminal to begin this 11-day tour. It is precisely in this city, considered the financial capital of Morocco, where the first scheduled visit is located: the Hassan II Mosque. This temple is of great interest, not only for its imposing architecture but also because it is one of the few in the country and the Muslim world that allows entry to people of other faiths.

Next, we will head to the political and administrative capital, Rabat. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it boasts emblematic and magnificent monuments, such as the Mausoleum of Mohammed V or the Hassan Tower, which illustrate the splendor of the city's past and present. At nightfall, you will rest in a charming riad located in the center.

Day 2: Rabat - Chefchaouen

Both Casablanca and Rabat are cities bathed by the Atlantic Ocean, but on this second day of the tour, we leave the coast to head inland. Specifically, to the northern Rif region, home to one of the most picturesque villages in Morocco: Chefchaouen, also known as the "Blue Pearl," as this color tints all the houses in the medina.

The visit to this suggestive destination is free-form so that you can savor its narrow streets and viewpoints at your own pace. However, your steps will surely lead you to Uta el-Hammam square or the Kasbah, now an ethnographic museum. The riad where you will rest for the night is, of course, in the medina to complete a charming day.

Day 3: Chefchaouen - Volubilis - Meknes - Fes

The third day of the tour takes us from Chefchaouen to the eternal city of Fes. But between the two destinations, we will visit two places of great interest that have been declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

The first is Volubilis, an archaeological site dating back to Roman times, showing the importance of this territory during the Roman era. It is the most spectacular pre-Islamic site in the country, featuring imposing monumental remains such as the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter and the Arch of Caracalla. Entry to the site is included, but a guided tour of the site is optional.

After visiting Volubilis, we will drive about 20 km to the city of Meknes, which was the capital of the kingdom during the time of Sultan Moulay Ismail. Significant remains from this period still exist, notably his mausoleum (which we will visit), as well as monumental parts of the wall, such as the spectacular Bab el-Mansour gate.

In the final part of the day, we will arrive in Fes. However, on this day, you will only have a first contact with the city, leaving the in-depth visit of the medina (the largest in the country) for the following day. This is also where the charming riad where you will rest is located.

Day 4: Fes

Fes is an essential city, especially for culture and art lovers. It is a fascinating city, capital of the kingdom during different eras and still the spiritual capital of the country today, earning it a UNESCO World Heritage listing. The list of places of interest is vast, so the services of an official guide are necessary for a guided tour in the morning.

Among the most interesting places that may be part of the visit are Fes el Bali (the ancient medina), home to the main Quranic schools or madrasas (Bou Inania, Attarine) and the Al-Qarawiyyin Mosque, which houses what many consider to be the world's first university. The new medina, or Fes el Jedid, also offers interesting attractions, notably the Royal Palace (though visible only from the outside). The Mellah (Jewish quarter) and the numerous souks are other points of interest that may be part of the day, either during the guided tour or during your free time in the afternoon before returning to the riad.

Day 5: Fes - Ifrane National Park - Erfoud - Merzouga Desert

If the fourth day of this tour was marked by culture, history, and art, the fifth day changes completely to enjoy Morocco's wildest nature. Nature, as we will see, is full of contrasts.

Shortly after leaving Fes, we will stop in Ifrane, which surprises us with its skyline of gabled roofs, more typical of other latitudes like the Alps. Between this city and Azrou lies what is known as the Monkey Forest, a national park filled with cedar trees and Barbary macaques, which we will likely see during our stop.

Then, we cross the Middle Atlas and begin a long descent through the Ziz Valley to Erfoud. This small town is one of the most interesting for geology enthusiasts due to its wide variety of marbles and fossils, some from species that lived during the time of the dinosaurs.

Erfoud will be the last stop before arriving in Merzouga, where we will transfer: at this point, we will mount camels to make the next journey across the Erg Chebbi dunes until we reach the tent camp. There, we will be welcomed with Berber tea, as tradition dictates, and then sleep under the starry desert sky.

Day 6: Merzouga Desert - Visit to Nomads - Khamlia - Merzouga Desert

During this sixth day of our trip to Morocco, we will discover firsthand the harsh living conditions

of the inhabitants of this land, but also their resilience and inexhaustible kindness. To do this, we will leave the tent camp (but not before having breakfast and admiring the sunrise in this location), take a shower in Merzouga, and begin a 4x4 route through the desert dirt tracks.

Khamlia will be a very special stop: known as the "village of black people," its inhabitants of sub-Saharan origin are descendants of former slaves and are admired today for their mastery of folk music, where percussion is a distinctive element.

After a concert of this music, protected by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, we will continue our route on tracks that were part of the legendary Paris-Dakar Rally. Abandoned French villages from the Protectorate era will be part of the route, leading us to another enriching experience: meeting semi-nomadic families, who will welcome us with hospitality and show us their way of life based on wandering and pastoralism.

On the way back to Merzouga, and after a stop on a sand hill with a privileged panoramic view, we will spend the night in a spectacular hotel that blends perfectly into the desert.

Day 7: Merzouga Desert - Rissani - Todra Gorges - Dades Valley - Ouarzazate

After spending two nights in the Merzouga desert, we leave this unique destination to explore other equally fascinating places in southern Morocco. This is the region of the pre-Saharan valleys, which we will reach shortly after a brief stop in Rissani, known for the traditional scenes of its charming medina.

The day will be spent mostly on the road, with landscapes on both sides featuring rocky hills, palm groves, and the ruins of ancient Berber kasbahs. We will stop at the incredible Todra Gorges, a canyon carved over thousands of years by the course of this humble seasonal river. We will travel up the Dades Valley to the beginning, where we will find the city of Ouarzazate, where the hotel awaits us for the night.

Day 8: Ouarzazate - Ait Ben Haddou - Marrakech

On the eighth day of the tour, we will retrace ancient caravan routes, which were so important centuries ago not only for the country's economy but for all of Africa. Kasbahs (Berber fortresses) were built along this route; a good example is Taourirt, which was also the castle-residence of the Pasha of Marrakech in the early 20th century, as we will see during the visit.

But the great representative of this military, commercial, and folk architecture is the Ksar of Ait Ben Haddou, which we will visit properly. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this fortified village seems frozen in time, allowing us to admire its adobe structures and picturesque urban layout on the side of a hill, at the foot of a defensive kasbah.

With the image of this fortified village still in mind, we resume our journey and cross the High Atlas via the Tizi n'Tichka pass, to then begin a pleasant descent towards Marrakech. Upon arrival, you will have some free time before resting in the riad in the medina.

Day 9: Marrakech

If Casablanca is the financial capital, Rabat the administrative capital, and Fes the spiritual capital, Marrakech is undoubtedly the tourist capital of Morocco. It is the most visited, and not by chance: its splendid past has bequeathed us monuments of great interest, which we will get to know through a guided tour with a professional licensed by the Ministry of Tourism.

The Koutoubia Mosque, Jemaa el-Fna Square, artisan souks, and other sites—some open to visitors like the Bahia Palace and the Saadian Tombs—will appear before our eyes. The afternoon is free and is the perfect time to visit one of the many local museums, go shopping, or

get lost in the palm groves and gardens that add a touch of freshness to the center. In the evening, some more rest at the riad.

Day 10: Marrakech - Essaouira - Marrakech

On this tenth day of the trip comes the differentiating element of this tour compared to shorter ones: the excursion to Essaouira. This beautiful city on the Atlantic coast, also a World Heritage Site, holds interesting surprises that you can enjoy at your leisure throughout the day.

Its Skala, or maritime fortress, is one of the best examples of Portuguese architecture in the country. During the 15th and 16th centuries, this city (then called Mogador) and others nearby were essential for the European country's trade voyages. The interior of the medina is very picturesque, with notable mosques and synagogues bearing witness to the city's rich and multicultural past.

On the way there and back by road, we will have the opportunity to pass through fields of Argan trees, the country's emblematic tree, where cooperatives extract its oil in the traditional way. Seeing up close how it works can be a very enriching experience. At the end of the day, you will spend the third and final night in the riad in Marrakech.

Day 11: Marrakech - Marrakech Airport

The eleventh day of the tour is the last day, and we will organize it according to the departure time of the flight taking you home. Breakfast will be served at the riad, as usual during the trip, and our driver will pick you up at the agreed time to ensure you arrive at the airport in due time. This is where we will say goodbye, with all our thanks and best wishes for future meetings.

Services included in this 11-day tour from Casablanca:

The services included in this tour will make your travel experience much more complete and comfortable. They are listed here:

- Transfers from Casablanca airport to Marrakech airport and vice versa.
- Driver with private vehicle for the entire duration of the excursion.
- One night in a riad in Rabat, bed and breakfast basis.
- One night in a riad in Chefchaouen, bed and breakfast basis.
- Two nights in a riad in Fes, bed and breakfast basis.
- Night in a tent camp in the dunes of the Merzouga desert, half board (dinner and breakfast).
- One night in a hotel in the Merzouga desert, half board (dinner and breakfast).
- One night in a hotel in Ouarzazate, half board (dinner and breakfast).
- Three nights in a riad in Marrakech, bed and breakfast basis.
- Camel treks in the sand dunes of Erg Chebbi.
- Official local guide for visits to Fes and Marrakech.

Services not included:

Despite the comprehensiveness and variety of the offer, the following services are excluded from the offer and must be paid separately by the client:

- International flights to and from the country.

- Dinners in Rabat, Fes, Marrakech, and Chefchaouen. In return, advice will be given on interesting restaurants for each case.
- Lunches.
- Drinks.
- Entrance fees to museums and monuments.
- Free day activities.
- Tips.