

# Morocco: Kasbahs, Palaces & the Sahara

**Duration** • 12 Days & 11 Nights  
**Category** • Standard

**Expert-led group tour** • From £2,625  
**Art** • Architecture

## Tour overview

Morocco, with its majestic medieval mosques and citadels, is truly the jewel of North Africa and exudes a sense of living history. This fascinating destination, set amid the backdrop of the stunning Atlas mountains features remains and reminders of numerous civilisations. Venture off the beaten track into the mountains and Sahara desert, visiting Morocco's most renowned historical attractions and many lesser-known gems with expert Diana Driscoll.

## C&K Signature experiences

- ❖ Tea at a former Vizir's Palace in Fez
- ❖ Meeting with a representative of the Conservation Centre for Heritage Rehabilitation at Kasbah Taourirt
- ❖ Stay in a luxury tented camp in the Sahara desert
- ❖ Private visit to the last brocade weavers still using traditional Jacquard looms

## Expert lecturer

**Diana Driscoll** read ancient Middle East and Islamic studies at SOAS. Her area of expertise is the Islamic world: religion, history, culture and languages. She has travelled extensively in Central Asia, North Africa, the Middle East, south Asia and China.



## Area map



Ait Benhaddou

### Day 1: Fly to Casablanca • Rabat

Fly from London (regional connections available) to Casablanca with Royal Air Maroc. Drive to Rabat and spend 2 nights at Riad dar el Kebira (or similar). Evening welcome dinner at Villa Sbihi, the house of a former governor (subject to confirmation). (D)

### Day 2: Rabat • Salé

On a tour of Rabat, visit the Kasbah of the Oudayas, built under the Berber Almohad dynasty in the 12th century, and the Hassan Tower minaret. Over the Bou Regreg river is the more relaxed city of Salé, infamous in the 17th century for its Barbary pirates and now known for its craftsmen. (B)

### Day 3: Chefchaouen

Travel by road to the blue-walled town of Chefchaouen perched beneath the rugged Rif mountains. Take a walking tour to discover the kasbah with its charming garden, Ethnographic Museum and art gallery. Continue to the cobbled main square, Plaza Uta el Hammam, shaded by trees. The 15th-century Grand Mosque has a distinctive octagonal minaret and the town offers handicrafts not available elsewhere. Stay overnight at Riad Dar Baibou (or similar). (B)

### Day 4: Volubilis • Meknes • Fez

Drive to the Unesco site of ancient Roman Volubilis and see the ruins and mosaics. Continue to Meknes, tour the winding streets and visit the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail, a tribute to the sultan who made Meknes his capital in the 17th

century. Walk through Place Hedim, originally used for royal announcements and public executions. Continue to Fez and stay 2 nights at the Riad Palais D'hotels (or similar). (B)

### Day 5: Fez

Spend the day exploring Fez. Start with a tour of the city's ramparts and Old Fez. Visit the local communal bakeries and enter artisan workshops to discover the secrets of their ancestral arts. Continue for a private visit to the last brocade weaver still using traditional Jacquard looms. Inside the 14th-century Medersa Attarine discover the intricate architecture and enjoy a tea ceremony in a palace which was once the home of the Vizir of the king of Morocco. In the afternoon, visit the Medersa Bouanania and Dar Batha, the late 19th-century palace of King Hassan I, which is now a museum of traditional art. (B)

### Day 6: Erfoud

Drive south through the Berber town of Ifrane in the Middle Atlas to Erfoud. This oasis town is known as 'the Gate to the Sahara desert' and is often used as a filming location. Overnight at Palais du Desert (or similar). (B, D)

### Day 7: Rissani • Merzouga

This morning visit the city of Rissani, with its 18th-century ksar, a virtually impenetrable warren of alleys, then continue on to the ruins of Sijilmasa. In the afternoon, set off for the desert dunes of Merzouga by four-wheel drive, stopping for mint tea with nomads. Continue the journey with a camel ride at sunset. After a traditional dinner accompanied by local entertainment, overnight at Merzouga Luxury Desert Camp (or similar) with en suite bathrooms. (B, D)

### Day 8: Todra gorge • Skoura

Drive along the 'Road of a Thousand Kasbahs' which follows the southern slopes of the High Atlas mountains, stopping at Tinerhir to walk in the Todra gorge. Continue to Skoura, an oasis town surrounded by palm groves, and spend 2 nights in Auberge Chez Talout (or similar). Dinner with cookery demonstration. (B, D)

### Day 9: Skoura • Kasbahs

Today take a 4x4 guided tour of the Palmeraie, known for its local pottery, and meet with potters to learn about the traditional process. Continue to see 17th-century Kasbah Amerhidil, one of the grandest in the region, Kasbah Dar Ait Sidi el-Mati and Kasbah Ait Abou. (B)

### Day 10: Ouarzazate • Ait Benhaddou • Marrakech

Morning drive to Ouarzazate and visit Kasbah Taourirt, where a meeting with a representative of the Conservation Centre for Heritage



Koutoubia mosque, Marrakech

Rehabilitation (CERKAS) has been arranged (subject to availability). Continue to the fortified village of Ait Benhaddou and visit its kasbah, a Unesco world heritage site. In the afternoon, continue to Marrakech. Stay at Les Borjs de la Kasbah (or similar) for 2 nights. (B)

#### Day 11: Marrakech

Discover the hidden side of Marrakech including its Quranic school, foundouk, old bakery and city furnace, before visiting Bahia Palace and Baddi Palace or 'the incomparable palace'. Continue to the Saadian tombs. Farewell dinner in the 16th-century riad Dar Sherifa. (B, D)

#### Day 12: Fly to London via Casablanca

Transfer to the airport. Fly to London via Casablanca. (B)

**Meal basis:** As per itinerary – B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner, N: No meals.

#### Extensions

##### Tour + Marrakech

3 Days & 2 Nights from £375  
Extension starts on day 12 of tour

Extend your stay at Les Borjs de la Kasbah for a further 2 nights (bed and breakfast) to explore the souks or soak up the lively atmosphere. Alternatively, visit Yves Saint Laurent's Majorelle

gardens, or take a caliche ride to the Menara gardens. A private transfer to the airport is included.

##### Tour + Essaouira

3 Days & 2 Nights from £345  
Extension starts on day 12 of tour

Unwind by the Atlantic coast, staying in the Atlas Essaouira hotel in the delightful fishing town of Essaouira on a bed and breakfast basis. Includes private road transfers.

#### Important information

**Standard tour:** This tour is based in 3- or 4-star accommodation. Please visit our website to see details of the hotels included.

**Expert-led tour:** This tour is fully escorted throughout by the lecturer, as well as an experienced local tour manager.

**Accessibility:** This tour involves some long walks over uneven ground and therefore requires a good level of fitness. It also includes some long road journeys and is therefore better suited to the hardier traveller.

**Private visits:** Please note that the exclusive and individual nature of private visits means that they are subject to confirmation nearer the time of departure. Also mosques, private houses and other buildings often have fluid opening times. If any visits have to be re-arranged, please be assured that we will seek alternatives of equal interest.

#### Dates & guideline prices for 2018-19

Tour code: RAK

23 Mar – 03 Apr 2018	with Diana Driscoll	from £2,625	single supp from £560
29 Mar – 09 Apr 2019	with Diana Driscoll	from £2,730	single supp from £575

**Royal Air Maroc flight upgrades**  
Business Class from £895 return

**Regional air connections**  
Please speak to your consultant for details.

The guideline tour prices are all per person in UK pounds, based on two people sharing a twin / double room. For current prices for all departure dates, including special offers when applicable, please call 020 3930 5254, email [Info@CoxandKings.co.uk](mailto:Info@CoxandKings.co.uk) or visit [CoxandKings.co.uk](http://CoxandKings.co.uk). All prices are subject to availability.