

Morocco Family Adventure & Beach 2021

12 days | Starts/Ends: Marrakech



Take your family on an adventure from the Sahara Desert to the beaches of the Atlantic coast visiting ancient Marrakech, Unesco listed Ait Benhaddou, the High Atlas mountains and a night under the stars in a Berber camp before a chance to relax in laid back Essaouira. This tour is designed for children aged 5 and over.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Marrakech - Independently explore the busy souks UNESCO-listed medina watching craftsmen working and trading their goods
- Merzouga - Enjoy free time in the traditional berber village
- Todra Gorge - Walk through the towering 300m high rose red canyon
- N'kob - Admire the Berber Oasis of 45 fortified villages
- High Atlas Mountains - Marvel at the awe-inspiring views from Mt Toubkal, North Africa's highest peak
- The Sahara Desert - Enjoy a leisurely camel trek through the Erg Chebbi dunes at sunset

- Ait Benhaddou - Visit the traditional mud brick kasbah city
- Ouarzazate - Explore the "gateway to the Sahara" and opt to visit the film studios
- Essaouira - Relax on the wind-swept beaches and discover the ancient medina of this quaint fishing village

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 3 lunches and 7 dinners inclusive of a Berber camp dinner
- 10 nights 3 star hotels and 1 night camping at a Berber desert camp in the Sahara
- Guided tour of Ait Benhaddou
- Camel trek into the mesmerising Sahara Desert
- Essaouira - Beachside bliss and free time
- Sightseeing and entrance fees to all included sites
- Escorted by an English speaking tour leader
- Specialist local guides at some sites
- Arrival transfer from Marrakech Airport on day 1
- All transportation and transfers in private 4x4 or mini van/touring vehicle
- All road taxes and tolls

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$60 per adult, paid in USD or local currency
- International flights and visa

- Note: Children under 12 years of age are not required to pay the *Tipping Kitty*
- Gratuity for your tour leader. We recommend USD\$25 – 35 per adult for the entire tour. Tipping your tour guide is an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Marrakech

Saturday. Welcome to Morocco! Following your transfer from the airport to our joining hotel, you can relax by the hotel pool before the pre-departure meeting at 18:00 hrs where you will meet your guide and fellow travellers.

Overnight - Marrakech (D)

Day 2 : UNESCO World Heritage - Ait Benhaddou



Marrakech - Ait Benhaddou. Straight after breakfast, we head off through the road of The Roses Valley, famous in Morocco for roses. We will have a stop if you want to see a variety of different rose products. On arrival in Ait

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 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

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Benhaddou, we travel back through history as we have a guided tour of the village. Ait Benhaddou is one of the oldest villages in the south of Morocco and used as a backdrop for many international movies like Gladiator. Probably most famous of all are its old and splendid Kasbahs.

Journey Time: Approx 4 hours **Overnight - Ait Benhaddou** (B, L, D)

Day 3 : Berber Oasis of Nkob



Ait Benhaddou - N'kob. Our journey today takes us to the Berber Oasis of N'kob, one of Morocco's best kept secrets, nestled amongst the exotic Palmeries and sat at the foot of the Jebel Saghro mountains.

We will have time today to explore some of N'kob's 45 mudbrick ksour's (fortified village) and learn about Ait Atta Nomad's and their way of life. There will be some time to walk through the Palmerie and soak up the stunning views around or head back to the hotel to relax for the afternoon. For those that fancy a cooking lesson, we will have an option to do this today to prepare and cook your own Moroccan lunch.

Journey Time: Approx 2.5 hours **Overnight - Nkob** (B, D)

Day 4 : Sahara camel trek & camp under the Saharan stars



N'kob - Merzouga. Today, we are driving through the Anti Atlas ranges to cross The Draa Valley which is one of the most famous places in Morocco for dates; we can stop and try some fresh ones if you like.

Excitement is in the air as we head towards the mighty Saharan Dunes. En-route we stop off for an optional lunch and in the summer. It is then time to head towards the great desert dunes of Erg Chebbi in Merzouga where we transfer to our camels and trek into the vast Sahara Desert in time for sunset. We then return to our authentic Berber Camp on the edge of the desert to spend the night enjoying local food, music and an amazing night out under the Saharan stars.

Journey Time: Approx 4 hours **Overnight - Berber Camp - Sahara Desert** (B, L, D)

Day 5 : Todra Gorge

Merzouga - Todra Gorge. Leaving the desert, we continue our journey to Todra Gorge. This 1000ft gorge is hemmed in on all sides by vertical limestone cliffs and is known as Morocco's Grand Canyon. From its plunging depths to dizzying heights, the charm of Todra lies in its changing colours as the sun slowly moves from east to west. The afternoon is free to relax by the pool, go for a swim or a stroll.

Journey Time: Approx 4 hours **Overnight - Todra Gorge** (B, D)

Day 6 : Ouarzazate



Todra Gorge - Ouarzazate. We will have time this morning to explore the Gorge with lunch today at a very traditional Berber cooperative for Berber carpets owned by local people. We will learn how the Berbers make their carpets; you will have chance to try your bargaining skills if you are interested in buying one.? We drive on to Ouarzazate (the Hollywood of

North Africa), which African traders once used on their journeys up to Europe. We can make an optional visit to the famous film studios which have been used for films such as The Kingdom of Heaven, Alexander the Great, The Last Temptation of Christ and The Living Daylights.

Journey Time: Approx 3 hours **Overnight - Ouarzazate** (B, L, D)

Day 7 : Famous Djemaa el Fna Square

Ouarzazate - Marrakech. Today, we will drive back to Marrakech crossing the High Atlas Mountains and enjoying its' magnificent views en-route. After checking in at our Marrakech hotel for a free afternoon by the pool. This evening is a chance to enjoy the exotic ambience of dinner in the famous square of Djemaa El Fna.

Journey Time: Approx 4.5 hours **Overnight - Marrakech** (B, D)

Day 8 : Marrakech city tour



This morning, why not book our optional guided city tour of Marrakech which includes the Koutoubia Mosque, Bahia palace, and the Jewish quarter?

In the afternoon, there will be time to explore the city independently. Within the rose-coloured walls of the medina you find a reality that is not that far removed from a film set and ancient history; winding streets that open onto lush gardens and dark alleyways that lead to bustling souks. The focal point is the central square, the Djemaa el Fna, an extraordinary gathering point and marketplace. Full of colour, spicy aromas and traders, it is best seen in the evening when overflowing with food stalls, dancers, acrobats, fortune tellers, musicians and henna artists.

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Overnight - Marrakech (B)

Day 9 : Coastal town of Essaouira



Marrakech - Essaouira. This morning we take a public bus to Essaouira (private transfer for larger groups). With a laid-back feel Essaouira is Morocco's hippest coastal town. The windswept fishing port, broad beaches and ancient walled medina with ramparts built into the cliff have long been a favourite refuge for artists, sculptors, food lovers, surfers and backpackers. The medina surrounded by a fortress with 5 main gates you can navigate by, has retained its traditional styles and is laden with quirky shops, coffee houses, antiques, art studios, calligraphers, t-shirt designers and souvenir curios.

There's a relaxed feel to the place and shopping here is a real delight. Locals and visitors alike enjoy strolling along the ramparts as the sun sets. The port is a hive of activity with fishing boats hauling in their daily catch.

Opt for a swim in the Atlantic, a game of football on the beach with the locals, an afternoon at the hammam, wind surfing or kite surfing (very cool to watch, even if you'd rather not participate yourself). The beach is also great for a stroll and since it runs for about 6 miles (10km) there's plenty of it. By nightfall sit back and relax at any one of the many al fresco cafes, pubs or bars serving cold beer and the freshest seafood. Free time to explore Essaouira, try a hammam and practice your bargaining skills in the souks. **Overnight - Essaouira (B)**

Day 10 : Explore your way



Enjoy a free day relaxing on the beach, topping up your tan, shopping in the quaint village souk or choose from a number of exciting optional activities such as quad biking, horse riding, surfing or wind surfing available about town. **Overnight - Essaouira (B)**

Day 11 : One last swim in the Atlantic



Essaouira - Marrakech. This morning offers free time for you relax before we leave mid-morning for our return to delightful Marrakech (by public bus for small groups) for the final night. Take the opportunity for a final spot of shopping in Djemaa el Fna or head out with the group for a final dinner.

Journey Time: Approx 3 hours **Overnight - Marrakech (B)**

Day 12 : Farewell...

Our Moroccan adventure finishes after breakfast, goodbyes and farewells to new found friends.(B)

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your **Tour Voucher** for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

El Andalous Hotel & Spa

Just 10 minutes from the airport, the El Andalous Hotel and Spa offers a welcome respite from the hub of the city. Evoking the golden age of Arab-Andalusian culture; exotic and romantically rich. Guest rooms are well furnished with excellent en suite facilities as well as private balconies. The hotel pool is great place to relax by and enjoy a tasty beverage or two. The medina is just a 20 minute walk from here or a cab can get you there in a few minutes!



La Rose Du Sable

La Rose Du Sable is a Kasbah-style property located within minutes of the fortified town of Air Benhaddou. Each traditionally decorated guestroom is ensuite and boasts spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. Guests can relax by the pool or on the Berber lounge terrace, while enjoying delicious local specialties such as tagine and couscous.



Kasbah Amazir

Nestled in a small oasis surrounded by palm trees, the traditional-style Kasbah Amazir is the perfect haven for those looking to relax. Guestrooms feature Berber carpets and bamboo furniture, with some also offering a private terrace. Enjoy a dip in the swimming pool or take a stroll in the gardens. For those looking to fill their holiday with a spot of adrenaline, hikes and climbs can be arranged nearby. After a long day you

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can enjoy a drink and traditional Moroccan dishes in the on-site restaurant.



Hotel Miramar

Enjoying an enviable location just a 15-minute walk from the beach and some of the city's key sights, Hotel Miramar combines 4-star comfort with local convenience. Each of the 45 guest rooms benefit from a separate sitting area, room service and satellite television, there's also free WiFi throughout the property. After a day of sightseeing guests can unwind in the on-site spa, which offers a variety of treatments, or those that prefer to relax during the day can opt to head to the hotel's private sand beach.



Our partners in Morocco

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers who booked through different operators, not solely On The Go.

Tipping kitty and departure transfer

At the start of your tour we will collect a Tip Kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document) from all tour participants to cover tips throughout your holiday. This saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip. It will be collected by your tour leader at the Welcome Meeting on day 1 and is payable in Moroccan Dirhams (USD, Euro or GBP is also accepted at the current exchange rate). The Tipping Kitty is distributed throughout your tour to hotel porters, hotel waiters, local guides for city tours, airport transfer drivers, Berber camel herders and local restaurant tips.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour leader. For a job well done, we suggest USD\$2-3 per day, per traveller for your tour leader. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Departure transfers are not included. A taxi to the airport will cost approx MAD100 and can be booked locally.

Optional activities

During free time you can head out and independently explore, relax or take part in one or more optional activities. The optional activities are booked locally and are subject to availability, prices are indicative.

If your tour includes the optional ballooning. The half day hot air ballooning excursion from Marrakech includes: Land rover transportation, a traditional breakfast, a 1 hour hot air balloon flight in front of the High Atlas Mountains, a visit to a local Berber house and a camel ride in the palmerie of Marrakech.

The rock climbing at Todra Gorge is weather dependant and not offered if it is raining or very windy. Please also note that rock climbing is not suitable for travellers under the age of 16.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Morocco Country Guide

Welcome to Morocco - Arrival transfer

We provide a complimentary airport arrival transfer on day 1 of your tour or if you arrive early and have booked pre tour accommodation with us. Please proceed to the arrivals hall and look for our representative holding an On The Go Tours sign. Pre and post tour accommodation can be arranged upon request, please contact us for rates.

If you are arriving earlier and you have booked your accommodation independently, you will need to make your own way to our start hotel, which will be centrally located. The hotel name and address can be found on your Tour Voucher.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight to Morocco is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Morocco.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/Morocco/Visas

Shopping

Morocco is a shoppers' paradise. The souks of Fes, Marrakech and Meknes are full of pottery, carpets and kilims, leather goods, spices and cloth. Keep space in your backpack for your purchases! Best buys are: carpets – from the High Atlas mountains or a woven and embroidered Kilim; the burnoose, an elegant hooded cape; spices; or traditional pottery and leathers from Fes.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

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Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

Health requirements & water

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling. While tap water in Morocco is generally considered safe to drink in main cities, it is not advisable in smaller towns and remote areas. Drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants.

Essential packing

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- Lightweight cotton garments in summer, warm clothing for winter (temperatures can get quite low at night)
- Comfortable walking shoes or hiking shoes
- Universal travel adaptor
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- First aid kit including Dioralyte
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, torch and money belt
- Either a rucksack or suitcase is suitable. A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- A towel for swimming
- A torch for your night in the Sahara Desert
- If travelling on our Essential (Budget) group tour range, a sleeping bag for the Sahara Desert camp is required if travelling between Oct - Apr, a cotton sleep sheet will be adequate if travelling from May to September (Signature group tour travellers do not need this, as bedding is provided)

Drones are not permitted

It is forbidden to bring drones into Morocco (even small ones that might fit in hand

luggage), a special permit has to be arranged with the appropriate department in Rabat and this can take months to arrange.

Hotels

The hotels in Morocco are simple, clean, comfortable and centrally located. We try to utilise local and traditional hotels with plenty of character wherever possible. In smaller towns, the choice of accommodation is often limited, but we will always book the best accommodation available for our travellers. Please be aware that hotels in Morocco are not of the same standard as Western hotels and facilities can be more basic.

It's not like home, what to expect & Ramadan

Travel to far-flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/Morocco/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, etiquette, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare for your holiday.

RAMADAN

Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world and adherents of the Muslim faith fast during daylight hours and break their fast with lavish meals and lively celebrations in the evening. Ramadan culminates a month later in a 3 day celebration called Eid al - Fitr. Many shops (excluding those which cater mainly to tourists) and attractions close earlier during Ramadan. As such we will start our tour earlier during this period to make the best use of time and itineraries will be slightly altered to ensure we visit all attractions, leisure time will be offered in the late afternoon. Non-Muslims are

not expected to fast over Ramadan, but it is considered impolite to eat food or drink on the street. NOTE: Traffic is exceptionally heavy during Ramadan, especially toward the time of breaking the fast. Forthcoming Ramadan dates are as follows, (approximate) 12 April – 11 May 2021

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