MOMENTS on the road

Morocco's Mosaic: Oases, Souks & Sahara (12-14 Days)





ON THE ROAD EXPERIENCES

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

We love road journeys. They are by far our favourite way of traveling. And when curiousity perks and we're in the mood for the more exotic and diverse – yet in the comforts of amazing cuisine and delightful quaint accommodation - no place beats to Morocco!

Ever loved a destination so much, yet not able to articulate why except there is a wonderful mix of the familiar with new adventures just waiting to be discovered that changes your perspective each time. That's Morocco for us. We discover something amazing and new each time we are here!

Few places in the African continent offer as much variety of landscapes, cultures and a friendly people that embrace diversity as Morocco. The lands that make up Morocco – Mediterranean north, High Atlas mountains, Sahara, to name just a few – are a treasure trove of hidden gems best experienced in the comforts of your own car. We therefore take great pleasure in introducing you to our first, carefully crafted Moroccan driving journey itinerary that is without equal. Now turn the page and find out what we've come to love ourselves so much...







Day-by-Day

Optional Extension:

Extension Day1

Arrive in Casablanca (Morocco) to Tamouda Bay – Your 4WD will await you in Casablanca. Get a taste of Moroccos' northern coastline

Extension Day2

Around Tamouda Bay and Tetouan

- Experience art and culture in the artisan town of Tetouan

Extension Day3

To Fes – A day in blue city of Chefchaoen and the Rif mountains, and onward to Fes. Today is also Day 1 of the main itinerary

Day1 🕮

Casablanca to Fes – Leisurely first drive from Casablanca to Fes

Day2

In and around Fes – Discover this culinary capital of Morocco through a Food Tasting Trail

Day3

In Fes – A free day to explore the medinas or relax

Day4

Volubilis to Ifran – Volubilis and all things Roman; then enjoy your alpine lodge in the Middle Atlas

Day5

Ifran to Erfoud – Drive across nomad 'homeland' and toward the Sahara

Day6

Erfoud into the Erg Chebbi – A

Desert Camp experience - sand
dunes, camels and your own luxury
tent

Day7

Erg Chebbi to Gorges du Dades – Stay in the Gorge du Dades and experience the warm hospitality of an amazing home chef & his family

Day8

Gorges du Dades to Skoura – A bit of off-road to the Valley of Roses and then to the Oasis of Skoura

Day9

Skoura to the High Atlas – Head into the High Atlas mountains

Day10

In the High Atlas – A day around the High Atlas Mountains and meet a Berber nomad family

Day11 🚊

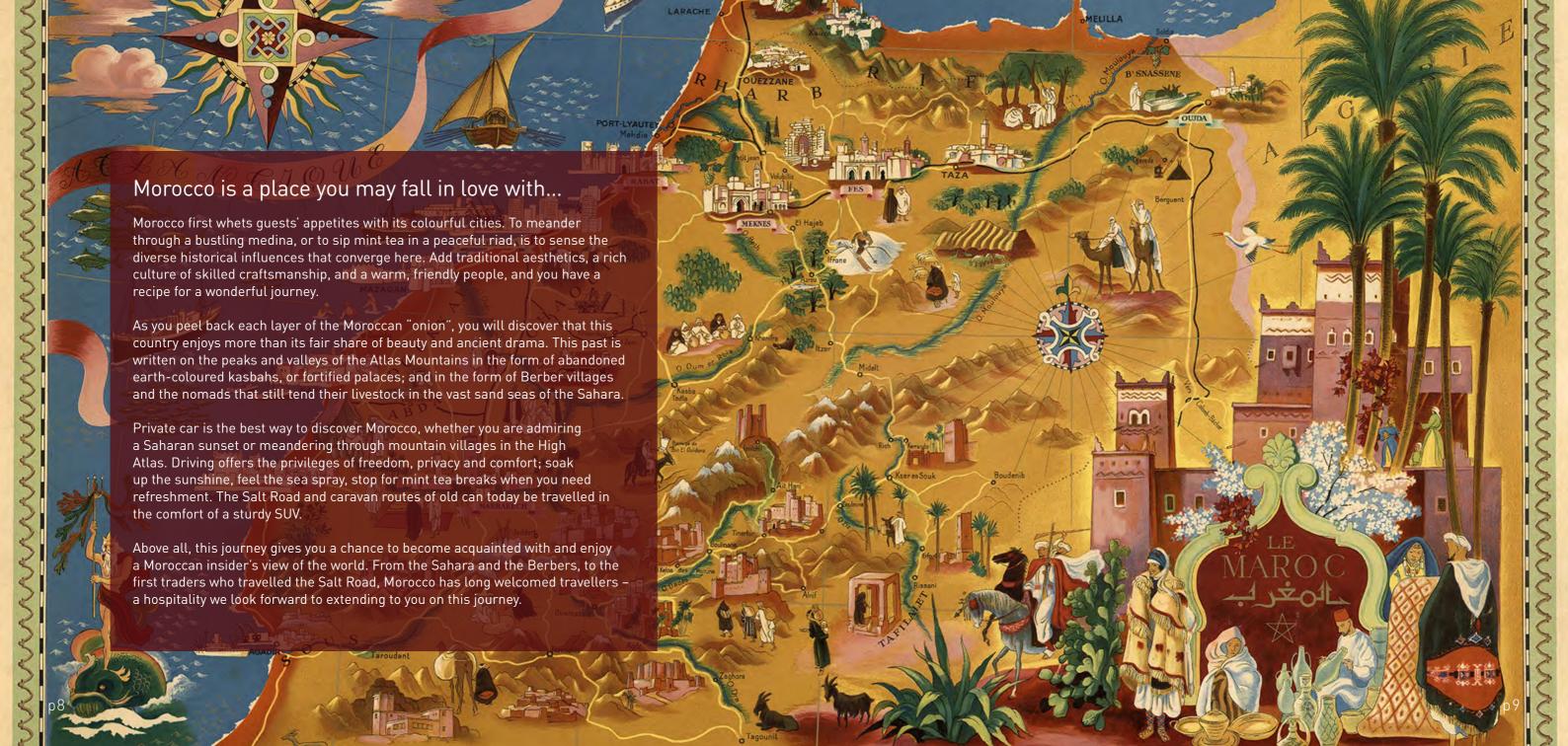
In Marrakech, the red city – Experience local trades in the medina, and a stroll through the beautiful gardens of YSL

Day12

Farewell – Fly home - or - extend your stay in Marrakech

🚊 International Brands Shopping

Local/Handicraft Shopping



discove















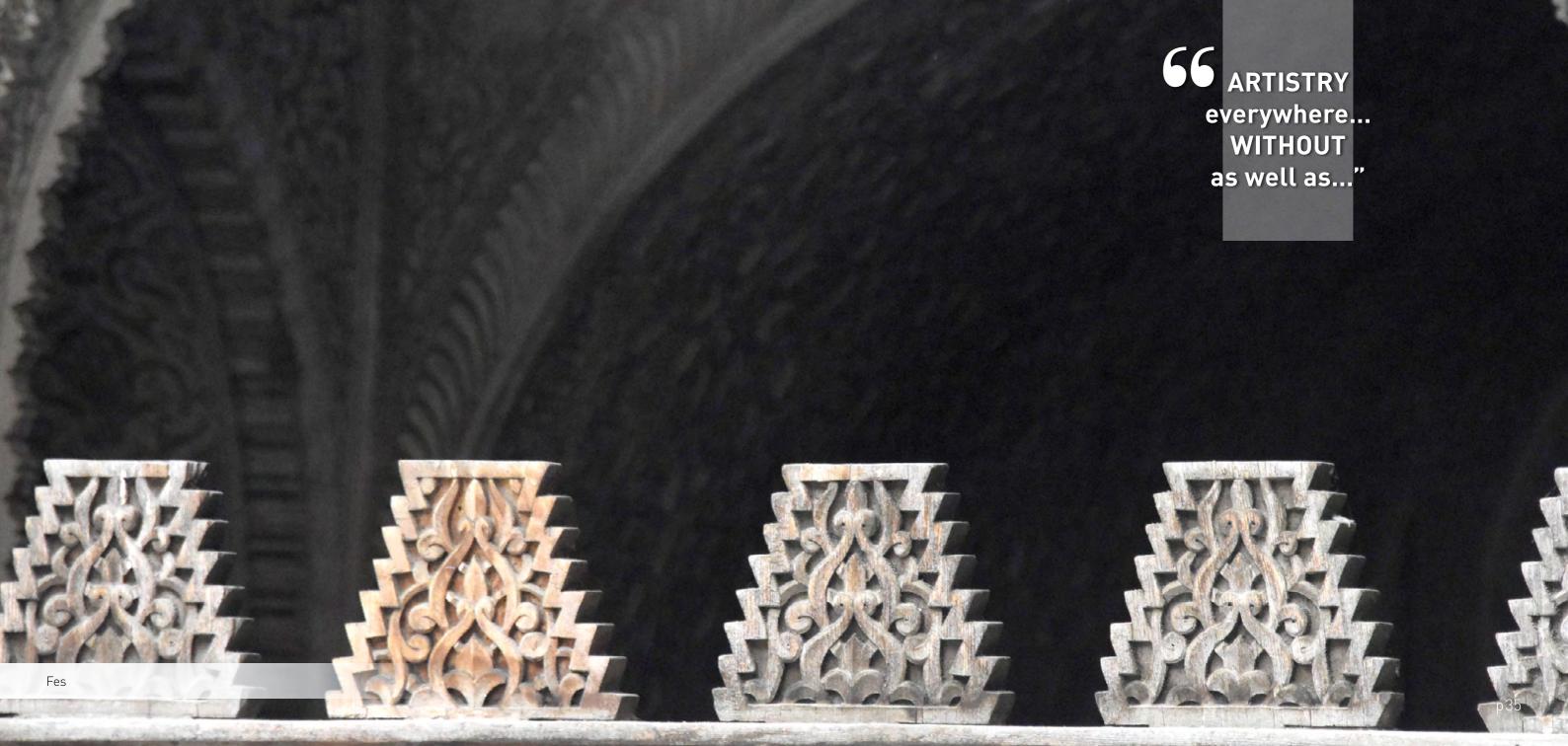






























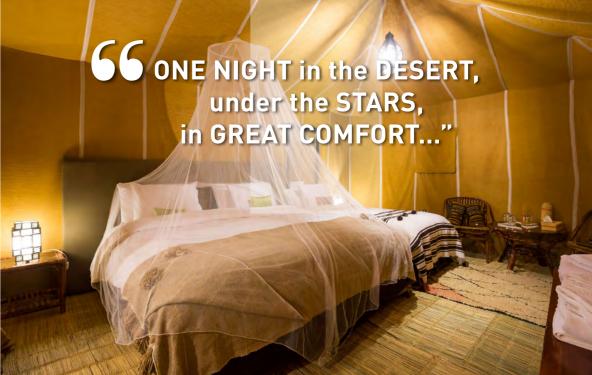








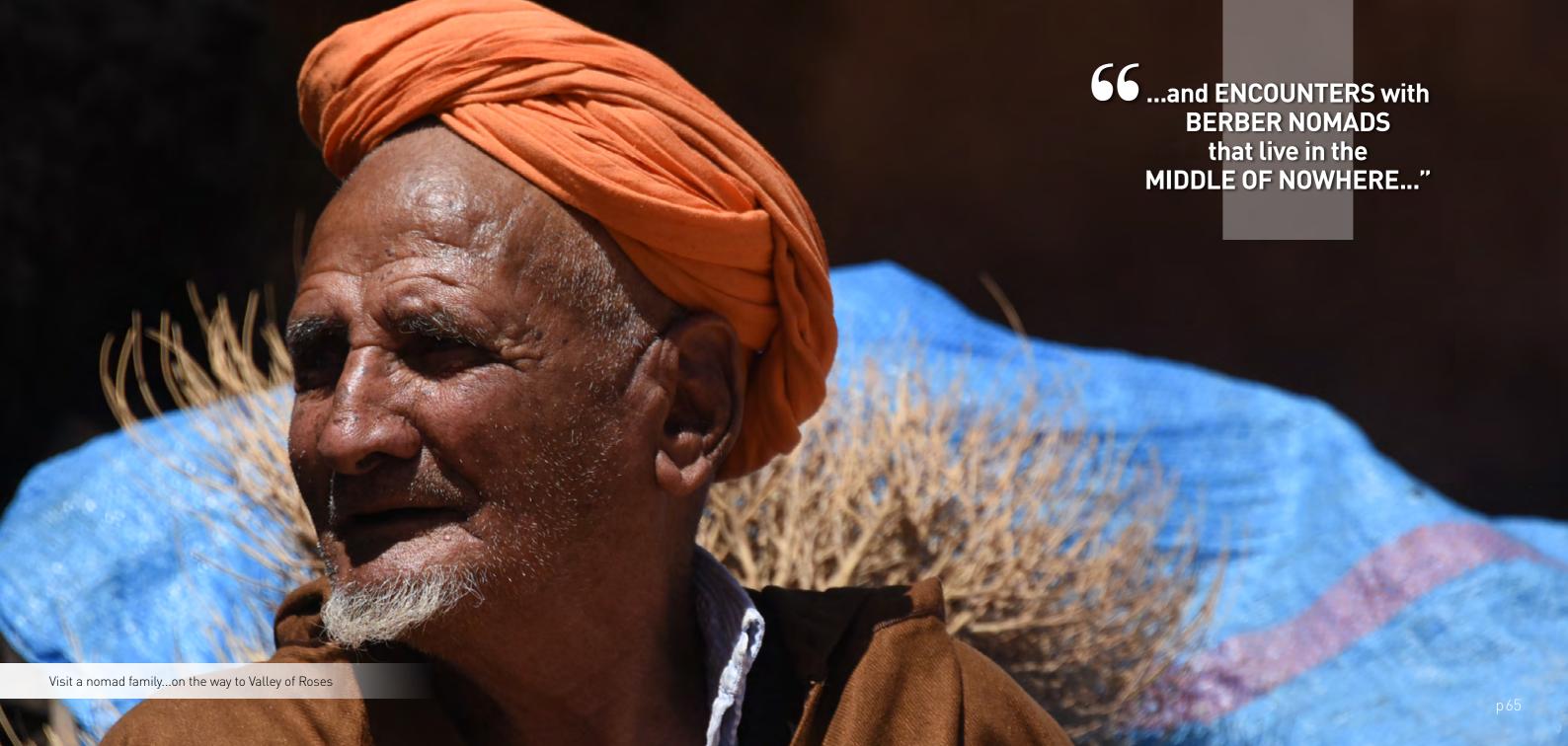


































Extension Day1
Your 4WD will await
you in Casablanca.
Get a taste of Moroccos'
northern coastline

We will meet you at Casablanca airport. Here, you will take possession of the car you've requested. Inside, you will find some *On the Road Experiences* 'goodies' that will make your journey and the time on the road even more enjoyable... prepare for a surprise!

Once you have familiarized yourself with the car that will be yours for the next 14 days, you will head north towards the Atlantic coast. You will first sense that you have arrived in Morocco when you see bilingual road signs in Arabic and French, and pass communities of low-rise whitewashed Moroccan houses with flat roofs.

The easy drive north will take you to the coastal village of Assilah. Assilah is a quaint, small fishing village with a long history that has transformed itself into an important cultural and artistic hub. Assilah is particularly well-known for the quality of its seafood, and it is here that we will stop for lunch. After your meal, a stroll in the laidback medina is an option.

The afternoon's drive will take you through northern landscapes of Morocco with occasional views of the Mediterranean Sea reminding you how close you are to Europe.

You can expect to arrive at your hotel in the late afternoon. Our selected hotel offers spacious rooms, full of Moroccan elegance. A delicious Moroccan dinner will await you in the hotel dining room to celebrate your first day on the road.



Extension Day 2 Experience art and culture in the artisan town of Tetouan

After breakfast, you will drive south to the nearby city of Tetouan.

Tetouan's medina is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Take a slow stroll through the old medina, and discover artisans' workshops producing beautiful, genuine crafts that are not easily found elsewhere. The narrow streets are full of life, and offer a tantalising first glimpse of everyday Moroccan life.

Then, you will visit the School of Arts and Trades. Here you see the craftsmen of the future learning to craft wood, embroidery, silk and tiles with typical Tetouan techniques.

Complete your time in Tetouan with a local lunch in a restaurant that was an Arab palace and Grand Viziers' residence in its former incarnations. You will return to your Tamouda Bay hotel after lunch. There is the option to stop en route at M'Diq to taste freshlycaught sardines.

Spend the rest of the day at leisure, until it's time for sunset drinks and dinner by the Mediterranean Sea.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 56 km **Duration:** 1 hours

Hotel

A luxury boutique hotel by the Mediterranean Sea (*****)



Extension Day 3 A day in blue city of Chefchaoen and the Rif mountains, and onward to Fes

Today is your chance to explore the Rif, a region well known for its cultural and scenic diversity. Geographically, the Rif Mountains that surround the "Blue City" of Chefchaouen are where Africa and Europe meet. Chefchaouen is also known as the "Jewel of the Rif".

Your route will take you south along the Mediterranean coastline and then inland, meandering through fertile farmland to the beautiful bluepainted town of Chefchaouen, nestled within the Rif Mountains.

You will have time to wander around this lovely town. Lunch will be arranged in a friendly, small restaurant owned by a lively chef and his family.

After lunch, you will continue south to Fes where you will stay for the next three nights.

Today is also Day 1 of the main itinerary. Upon arrival in Fes you will meet your fellow travellers who will be arriving directly from Casablanca airport.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration
Distance: 320 km
Duration: 5.5 hours

Hotel

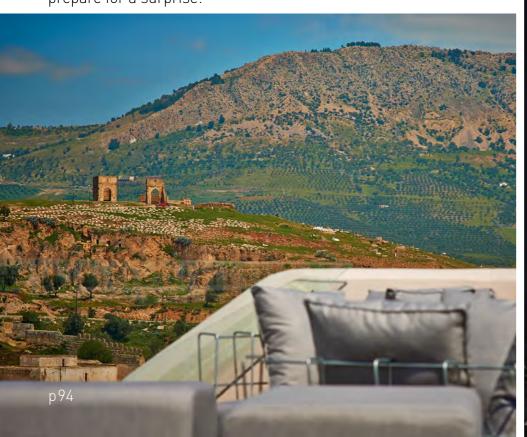
Best boutique *riad* in Fes [*****]



Day 1 Leisurely first drive from Casablanca to Fes

We will meet you at Casablanca airport. Here you will take possession of the car you've requested. In it you will find some *On the Road Experiences* 'goodies' that will make your journey and the time on the road even more enjoyable... prepare for a surprise!

Once you have familiarized yourself with the car which will be yours for the next 12 days, it will be an easy drive to Fes, one of Morocco's oldest imperial cities with well-preserved medina, fascinating regional culture and strong local identity.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 330 km **Duration:** 3.5 hours

Hotel

Best boutique *riad* in Fes

****)



Day 2 Discover this culinary capital of Morocco through a Food Tasting Trail

This morning will be your introduction to the many smells, flavours and textures that make up Moroccan cuisine. You will discover the old medina of Fes – the food capital of Morocco – on a tasting trail. Fes's 9th-century Fes el Bali medina is the largest carfree urban area in the world. Some 160,000

people work in 80,000 shops in almost 10,000 alleys dedicated to food and crafts, both traditional and modern.

- Discover the huge range of local spices and produce on sale, including honey, dates and nuts.
- Try traditional Moroccan street food, including milawi, harsha, briwats, spicy sardines, olives and more.
- Visit a few artisan souks and learn about their traditions, time-honoured skills and family stories.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration Distance: 0 km

Duration: 0 hours

Hotel

Best boutique riad in Fes

(*****)

These experiences will heighten your appreciation of Moroccan foods throughout the remainder of your trip.





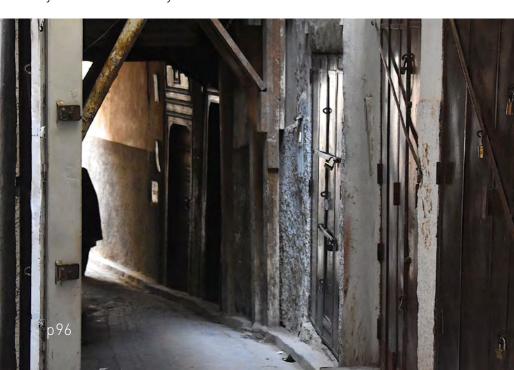
Day 3 A free day to explore the medinas or relax

Aside from having one of the most interesting medinas in Morocco, Fes also plays a central role in the country's spiritual and intellectual life. The city is home to Africa's largest mosque, and oldest university in the world (established 859AD).

The city is the ideal place for a day of rest or sightseeing. Today you will have many choices:

- Pamper yourself within the hotel grounds, enjoy a hammam spa experience, or relax in one of the court-yards or by the pool with a good book.
- If yesterday's experience in the medina left you eager to explore further, there are many more streets and souks to discover...

We will help you make your arrangements and guide you as you like.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration Distance: 0 km

Duration: 0 hours

Hotel

Best boutique riad in Fes

(****)



Day 4 Volubilis and all things Roman; then enjoy your alpine lodge in the Middle Atlas

This morning, you will go back in time and discover what living in this part of Morocco was like when it was part of the Roman Empire. Volubilis (or Walili in Berber) was the capital of the Roman province of Mauretania, and the southernmost city in the Empire. After exploring the archaeological site, you will enjoy lunch on a shaded farmhouse patio, where we have arranged a spread of foods that were eaten during those longago times.

After lunch, you will drive to Ifran. It's hard to imagine a greater contrast between Fes and this spacious, modern town, with its wide tree-lined streets, alpine gardens and chalet-style houses. Also known as Morocco's "little Switzerland", Ifran sits at an altitude of 1650 meters. Surrounded with cedar and oak forests, this is the coldest city in all Africa.

Enjoy an alpine evening in the comfort of a hotel that combines the rustic and the elegant in a most unexpected way – just like Ifran itself!



Details

Driving Distance & Duration
Distance: 180 km to Ifran
Duration: 3 hours

Hotel

Best boutique hotel in Ifran





Day 5 Drive across nomad 'homeland' and toward the Sahara

Today you will set out for the Sahara. Your route soon leaves the lush alpine landscape behind. Vegetation will become sparser and the landscape flattens as you approach the edge of this immense desert.

You will stop for lunch in a simple family-owned local restaurant in Midelt.

After lunch, you will continue towards Errachidia where you will have an afternoon tea break before driving another hour to your hotel.

Upon arrival at your hotel, if the weather is clear, you have the option to take a 20-minute drive to the Borj East for an amazing view from the top of this boulder that looks over both Erfoud and the surrounding oases. The Tizimi palm grove extends as far as the eye can see along the Ziz and Rheris oueds (river channels). In the distance you

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 340 km **Duration:** 5 hours

Hotel

Best kasbah in Erfoud (****)

will see the Sahara's first sand dunes, stained pink by the sunset.

Day 6 A Desert Camp experience - sand dunes, camels and your own luxury tent

Today you will drive on to one of the Sahara's most extraordinary natural wonders, Erg Chebbi.

As you are just 60km from this destination, the first part of the day will be free to enjoy the comforts of your hotel in Frfoud.

Erg Chebbi is one of Morocco's largest Saharan ergs – a sea of dunes formed by windblown sand. Stretching 22km long by 5km wide and reaching 150m high, Erg Chebbi is celebrated for its unique golden-orange that start here and ripple south across Morocco to Timbuktu in Mali.

Tonight, you will sleep under the wide desert sky in a luxury tent. Upon arrival at the desert camp, you will have the option to ride a camel across the dunes at sunset.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration Distance: 60 km

Duration: 1 hours

Hotel

A luxury-in-the-desert camp









Day 7 Stay in the Gorges du Dades and experience the warm hospitality of an amazing home chef & his family

Today's drive, from Erg Chebbi to Tinejdad and on to Gorges du Dades, will be an opportunity to go back in time to the days when nomads were the only people who passed through this rugged country. These caravan tribes arrived loaded with gold at Tinejdad's caravanserai (Tinejdad means 'nomad'

in Berber), quenched their thirst at natural springs, slept peacefully in well-fortified ksour (forts) in Ferkla oasis and conducted business at the town's medieval commercial centre that once housed an mosque and a sizeable Jewish community. Water, shelter, business and baraka (blessings): what more could a nomad need?

Tonight, your hosts will be a very warm, friendly and hospitable Berber family who will serve you the best dinner in the Gorges de Dades!

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 265 km **Duration:** 4 hours

Hotel

A traditional family home converted into a small kasbah with exceptional cuisine (****)



Day 8 A bit of off-road to the Valley of Roses and then to the Oasis of Skoura

This morning, you will do a bit of off-road driving, with the opportunity of seeing nomads, camels and other wildlife en route. This drive will take you through the Valley of Roses where during April and May each year, you will pass hundreds of rose-lined plots

of land. Over three thousand tonnes of rose petals are harvested here each Spring.

You will then drive on to a tiny village outside Skoura and experience traditional Berber hospitality with lunch prepared by a local Berber family, enjoyed in the cool shade of the oasis.

This evening your accommodation will be a lovely bou-tique hotel designed and owned by friendly local family.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration Distance: 111 km

Duration: 2.4 hours

Hotel

Beautiful boutique lodge





Day 9 Head into the High Atlas Mountains

Today will be an earlier start to drive over a mountain pass with beautiful views into the High Atlas Mountains and allow plenty of time to stop. You will arrive at your hotel late in the afternoon, with time to relax and enjoy the beautiful kasbah hotel that will be your home for the next two night.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 243 km **Duration:** 4.4 hours

Hotel

A luxury mountain kasbah

(****)

Day 10 A day around the High Atlas and meet a Berber nomad family

Today you will have the opportunity to explore the High Atlas mountains to whatever extent you wish, from a short two-hour village trip to a full day spent hiking.

You can visit mountain villages to experience the local way of life – sip mint tea, watch pottery being made and meet some local people, meet a Berber nomad family or immerse yourself in the beautiful national parks in the High Atlas.

Your evening meal will be at the hotel.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 0 km **Duration:** 0 hours

Hotel

A luxury mountain kasbah







Day 11
Experience local
trades in the medina,
and a stroll through
the beautiful gardens
of YSL

After breakfast, you will drive to Marrakech and drop off your luggage and car at the gorgeous hotel where you will stay for the last night on this journey.

Then, you will head straight out to experience the magic of Marrakech's souk. Lunch will be in the hidden courtyard of a lovely riad.

In the afternoon, stroll through Yves Saint Laurent's stunning Majorelle Garden, and further explore Marrakech by carriage or on foot.





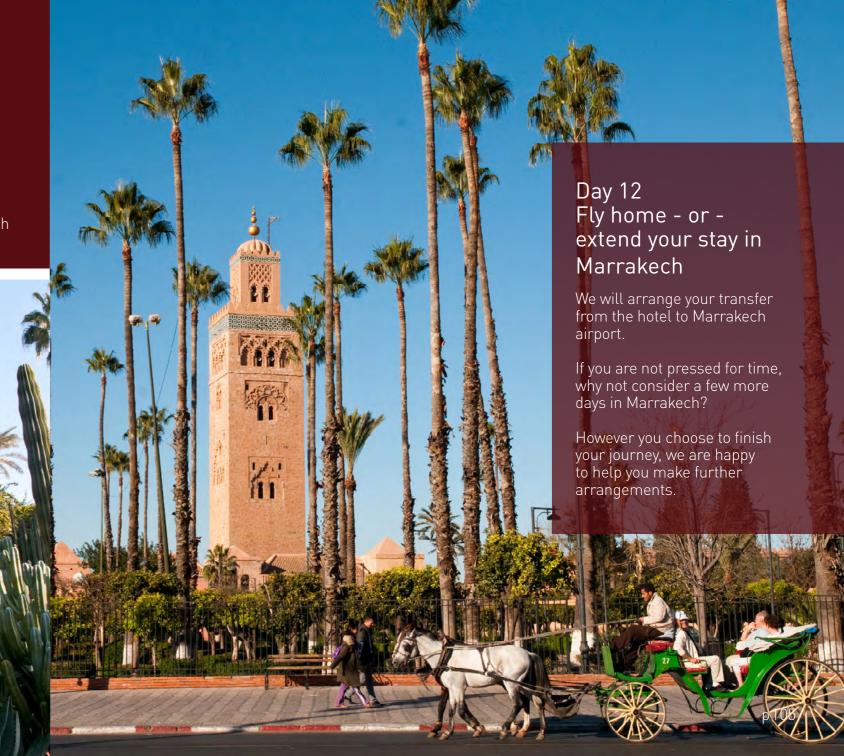
Details

Driving Distance & Duration

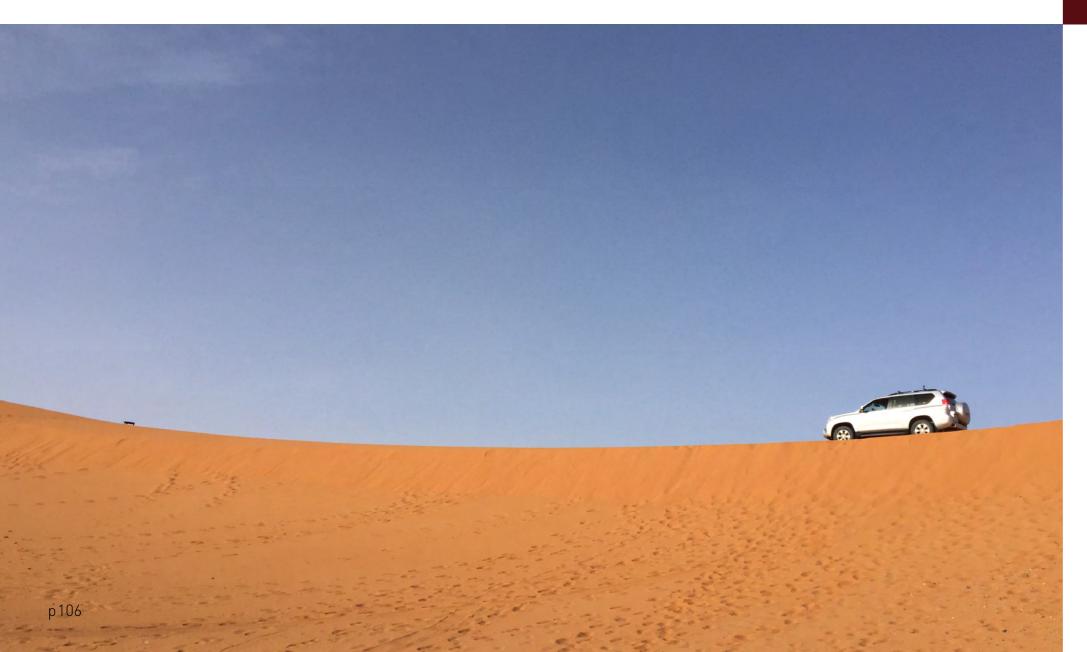
Distance: 40 km **Duration:** 1 hour

Hotel

Best luxury hotel in Marrakech



Choice of Cars



We include in the package price an SUV we procure from Avis or Hertz or another reputable car rental company. Most of the SUVs are Toyotas, but on occasion other brands may also make an appearance.

We wish the car rental markets of Africa would be more developed and we could give you more choice, but this is not so: since we want to provide well-maintained and well- insured cars, the choice is rather limited. That said, a small selection of other cars are available for upgrade.

SUVs are in fact the right choice for driving journeys in this part of the world because they are spacious enough to accommodate a lot of luggage, good-and-bad-weather gear.

Also, they reinforce the feeling of adventure, exploration and discovery...which is, in the end, the mood of journeys in this region, no matter how comfortable or even luxurious the night's hotel may be.

What's more, they offer sufficient clearance when required and thus add a sense of safety and all-round ability.

And so, SUVs from reputable brands are our car of choice!



Adventures and Discoveries in Local Cuisines

While this itinerary is **not** one of our 'Foodie'-themed journeys, we do believe that each one of our journeys should introduce you not only to hidden gems of cultural and scenic beauty, but that sampling local cuisines is also a must.

We will therefore arrange for you 'tasting menus' such that you can try out a variety of specialties during each meal. While alcoholic beverages are not included in the price, on certain occasions, when we believe that a particular dish is best enjoyed when combined with a local drink, we will make it part of the experience!

For private journeys, we can, of course, tailor the meal experience to your taste (and budget).















What's Included / Best Months to Go...



Generally speaking, our journey packages and prices are all-inclusive. Once you've paid and you arrive at the starting point, you really won't have to take out your wallet again except for liquids (alcoholic drinks and petrol) and presents to take home!

 Hand-crafted On the Road in Africa – Back Roads. Hidden Gems. – Itinerary design as described in this Journey
Dossier

- A crew existing of a journey host, subject matter experts/ destination guides in various locations and a lead car driver. Depending on group size, we will add additional crew members.
- All meals in 'tasting menu' (or omakase) style

- All accommodations
- A modern SUV is provided for all driving days, expertly maintained and serviced by reputable car rental companies, and covered by the best insurance available
- All ground transportation and airport transfers
- Pre-programmed GPSs and printed maps

- Walky-talkies to stay in touch with fellow travelers and your crew
- All toll fees and parking fees
- Entrance fees for all attended activities
- Lead car for your crew
- On the Road in Africa service (goodies basket and other treats along the way:

wet towels, daily picnic, basket containing fresh fruit, fruit juice, water, and a mixture of sweets and nibbles)

• All tips

What's Not Included

- Your transport to Casablanca & from Marrakech
- Petrol for your car
- Personal shopping

- Visas (if required)
- Alcoholic drinks (unless explicitly included)
- Activities, Meals, Transport during 'free times' as indicated in this Journey Dossier
- Top-up Collision Damage Waiver insurance

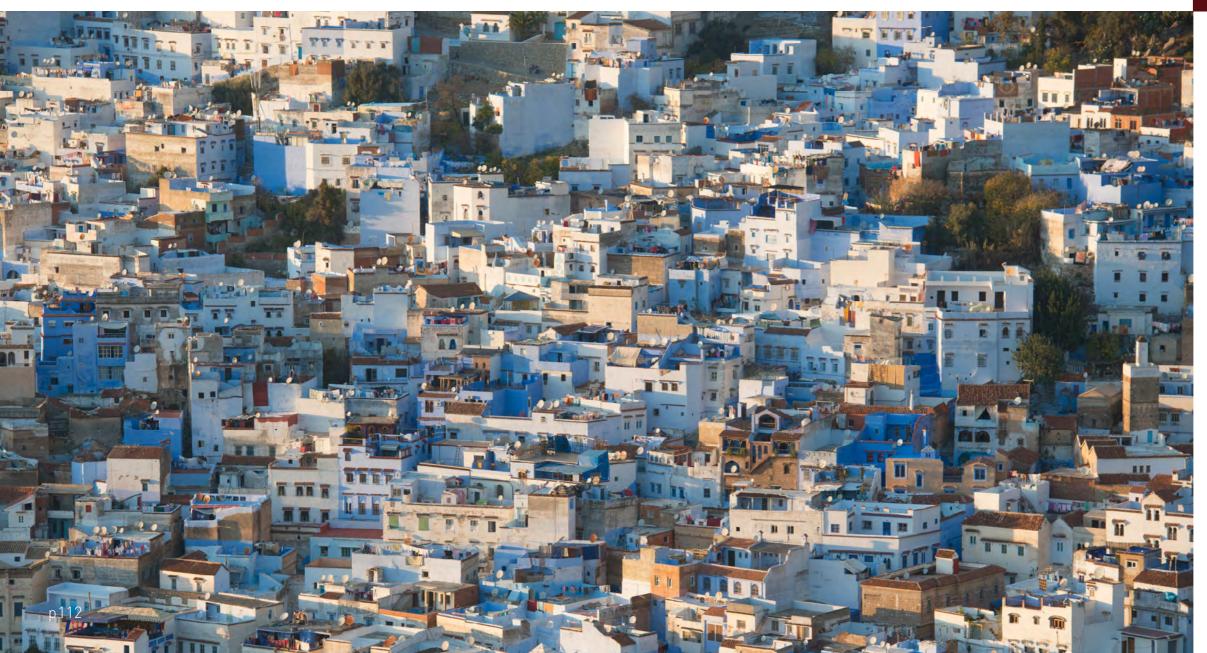


Photo Credits

- © Air France page 8
- © Angie Koong pages 20, 40, 48, 91(bottom), 98(left), 108(top&bottom), 109(top&middle)
- © Banyan Tree Tamouda Bay page 16
- © Dar Ahlam page 110
- © Dar Jnan Tiouira Dades page 60
- © Hôtel Michlifen Ifrane Suite & Spa page 97(top)
- © Kasbah Bab Ourika pages 78, 102(left & middle), 104(top&left bottom)
- © L'Ma Lodge Skoura pages 74, 101
- © Maana Travel pages 56, 80, 97(middle)
- © Marrakech Mamounia page 82
- © Merzouga Luxury Desert Camp pages 58-59, 99(bottom)
- © Morocco Tourism pages 104(right), 105
- © Peter Schindler Front & back cover, pages 10, 12, 22, 30, 32, 34, 38, 50, 52, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 90(bottom), 92, 93(right), 94(right), 95(left), 96(left), 97(bottom), 99(top), 100, 103, 106, 115

Pixabay - Creative Commons

- © Anna Zuc page 108(big image)
- © Beejees page 88
- © Christoph Zimmermann page 54
- © Greg Montani pages 44, 84
- © Hassan Nhiri page 91(top)
- © Hnhiri page 24
- © Kdaubon page 73(top)
- © MAK1950 pages 73(bottom), 108(middle)
- © Malacalac page 46
- © Manolo Franco page 47
- © Monica Volpin page 76
- © Nabil Najem page 18
- © Sarah Loetscher page 28
- © Toubibe page 98(right)
- © Weimer Jessica page 86
- © Riad Fes Relais & Chateaux Hotel pages 36, 93(left), 96(right)
- © Ron Yue pages 2, 4, 14, 26, 42, 93(left), 112 Unknown - pages 41, 72, 95(right), 109(bottom)

Contact Us

E-mail contact@ontheroadexperiences.com

Main office

Telephone: +852 3106 4839 Fax: +852 3012 1251

Overseas

Taiwan: +886 921 162 079
Australia: +61 2 8003 5317
Switzerland: +41 (44) 586 58 43
UK: +44 121 288 6879
Germany: +49 160 9622 2506

A picture is worth a thousand words. True, but when it comes to a road journey, moving images are priceless. Please visit:

http://www.ontheroadexperiences.com/en/video-gallery





BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Ralph Waldo Emersor

