

Deserts & Mountains of Morocco

Tour Style: Worldwide Multi-Centre

Destination: Walking holidays in Morocco

Trip code: MRWHW

Trip Walking Grade: 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

From Marrakech to Fes, Morocco's ancient cities offer many charms. Explore the exotic delights of the medinas as you wander through the maze of alleys and take in the wonderful sights and smells of the many souks. Follow the trail of the nomads to the peaks of the High and Middle Atlas Mountains in the company of experienced Berber guides who will introduce us to the hidden valleys, Kasbahs, oases and villages of this starkly beautiful part of North Africa. Stay in the Sahara and experience the delights of a sunrise over the magnificent Erg Chebbi dunes.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 13 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms, including 2 nights camping with en-suite facilities
- Half board from breakfast on day 2 to breakfast on departure, plus 4 lunches and less 1 dinner
- A full holiday programme of guided walks and sightseeing with a specialist local guide
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- Travel by air-conditioned coach or minibus
- Tips

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the charming 'blue' city of **Chefchaouen**
- Explore the cultural capital of Fes and its ancient medina maze
- Walk in the cedar forests of the Middle Atlas Mountains
- Stay at a luxury camp in the Sahara Desert and see the sun rise over the Erg Chebbi dunes
- Discover the imperial city of Marrakech with its colourful souks



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive In Casablanca

We arrive in Casablanca. The guide and transport will meet you just outside the Airport concourse and you will be transported to your hotel in Casablanca.

Day 2: Volubilis And Fes

Our second day begins with a walk around the Hassan Tower and nearby mausoleum before visiting the Roman city of Volubilis. Volubilis dates from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD and continued to be inhabited right up to the 18th century, when some of the marble was used for palaces in Meknes. Explore the site on foot, where there is still a well-preserved forum and many mosaics to be seen, as well as various houses, arches and an olive press. We then continue to the Imperial city of Fes, where we stay for 2 nights. The following day we enjoy a walking tour of the ancient medina of Fes and see the architectural gems and palaces of medina. The souks are a colourful and noisy arena of bartering and beautifully laid out stalls

Day 4 - 5: Rif Mountains And Chefchaouen

Travel north to the 'blue' city of Chefchaouen (2 nights). Nestled in the Rif mountains with its medieval alleyways and small blue-wash houses, Chefchaouen is the perfect base from which to explore this region. Walk in Talassemtane National Park with its vast cave systems and cork oak forests. Look out for wildlife including barbary apes and wild boar.

Day 6: Ifrane And The Middle Atlas Mountains

Enjoy walks in the cedar forests of the Middle Atlas Mountains before continuing our journey to Ifrane (1 night). With its pitched roofs and wooden houses this charming town is often referred to as the 'Switzerland of Morocco'.

Day 7 - 8: Sahara Desert

We leave the Middle Atlas Mountains for the Sahara Desert at Merzouga (2 nights). Journey through the plains between the two big mountain ranges of the Middle and High Atlas and the gorges of Ziz with opportunities to see nomads and meet a Berber family for tea. Walk into the desert to camp in the middle of the Erg Chebbi dunes.

Walk or climb the spectacular Erg Chebbi dunes and trek through the Sahara with camels. Visit the local village of Khamlia to see the gnaoua musicians and fossil museum. There's also the option to have a go at sand surfing! (Payable locally)

Day 9: Valley Of The Roses And Ouarzazate

Wake early to see the sun rise over the dunes. Travel through the foothills of the High Atlas along the Valley of the Roses. Walk through the Todra gorge with its towering walls of rock before heading onwards to Ouarzazate (1 night).

Day 10: To Marrakech

Drive to the UNESCO Ksar (Berber castle) of Ait Ben-Haddou. Walk to the top of the Kasbah and see the traditional pre-Saharan habitat. We continue our journey through the high passes of the Atlas Mountains to discover the Palace of the Glaoui at Telouet. The wonderful zellige carvings and tiles have been preserved as a marvel of Moroccan craftsmanship in the middle of the mountains. Continue to Marrakech (2 nights).

Day 11: Marrakech

A walking tour of Marrakech introduces us to the souks and stalls of this imperial city and the magical hub-bub of the Djemma el Fna. Take an afternoon at leisure to explore a little further: perhaps visit one of the traditional hammams, take a tour of the tanneries, visit the palace or the explore the relaxing haven of Majorelle gardens. The evening is then also at leisure for you to explore the many delicious delights of this incredible city.

Day 12: To Essaouira

Take a scenic drive past the plains of Marrakech to the verdant coast near Essaouira (1 night) see the Argan forests en route including a visit to a women's cooperative which processes the Argan. Explore Essaouira in the afternoon, see the beach and harbour with its blue boats and walk the ramparts

Day 13: To Casablanca

A free morning to explore the alleyways and medina of this 18th century UNESCO town before heading up the coast and returning to the city of Casablanca (1 night).

Day 14: Return To UK

After breakfast transfer to the airport for our return flight to the UK

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Anfa Barcelo Casablanca - Morocco

Situated in the Centre of Casablanca, this hotel is of Art Deco design, and together with a number of comfortable bedrooms, also has a spa, a fitness centre and several restaurants. Outside there is a big terrace overlooking an outdoor swimming pool. The rooms all have air conditioning, satellite TV and there is a free WiFi service available.

Riad Salam Fes - Morocco

This traditional riad is centred in the old medina of Fes and comprises of a number of different suites and rooms decorated with Moroccan mosaics and cedar wood ceilings. It also has an authentic Hamman and spa on the premises, and 2 swimming pools available. The property has free WiFi in the rooms.

Riad Cherifa, Chefchaouen - Morocco

Located in the heart of the city's medina, and built out of two traditional Chefchaouen houses this riad has traditional Andalusian- Moroccan architecture. With all amenities including air conditioning and Wi Fi available, the property also has a number of terraces and some small gardens to relax in.

Hotel Michlifen, Ifrane - Morocco

This charming alpine chalet-style 5* hotel is situated amidst the wondrous Middle Atlas Mountains. During winter, snow falls over the resort – the hotel's name means 'snow flake' – and in the summer it enjoys a cool mountain climate.

Luxury Desert Camp, Merzouga - Morocco

A truly unique and magical place to stay, the luxury desert camp is sure to be a highlight of your trip. Blending traditional Berber design with modern comforts, the handmade Bedouin tents all offer proper beds and solar-powered showers in the ensuite facilities.

Dar Chamaa - Morocco

Built in the same way as the local kasbahs (buildings made with pise construction and with local skills), this hotel is based on a central courtyard, riad style to keep it cooler in the summer months. The hotel is situated in the Ouarzazate palmeries and has a swimming pool and garden. The water is all heated by solar panels and all bedrooms and rooms have air conditioning and free WiFi.

Riad Palais Sebban, Marrakech - Morocco

Situated at the heart of this vibrant city's medina, and only a short walk from the famous souks of Djemma el Fna, this luxurious 4* riad offers you a truly authentic Moroccan experience.

Atlas Essaouira Spa, Essaouira - Morocco

Occupying an enviable beach front position on Morocco's coast, this 5* hotel features contemporary, well-appointed guest rooms with views of Andalusian-style gardens or beach panoramas.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Weather & Seasonality

Morocco enjoys a generally warm, dry climate throughout the year. Some areas we visit in the north of the country have mild summers and cold winters; others, like in the desert, can be hot during the day with temperatures dropping at night.

Joining Instructions (With Flights)

On arrival, please proceed to the arrivals hall once you have passed through passport control, customs and baggage reclaim. Continue walking out of the airport until you see the HF Holidays sign

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives.

If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group.

If your flight arrives before the group flight and you would like to join the transfer to the first hotel, please contact our Abroad Administration team on (0)20 8732 1261 to enquire about availability and make arrangements.

Essential Information

Suggested Kit List

As you'll be carrying your own luggage at airports and between your transport and hotels we recommend you try to keep your luggage to a minimum. These items are a general suggestion of what to pack for an active outdoor and walking holiday; depending on your destination, you may need more of some things and less – or none! – of others. You'll know best what you prefer to wear when out walking or while taking part in other outdoor activities.

- Walking boots (worn in), with good ankle support and spare bootlaces
- Walking socks
- Walking sandals
- Lightweight fleece, waterproof trousers and jacket
- Shorts and short-sleeved t-shirts
- Long trousers and long-sleeved light coloured shirts with collars to protect from the sun.

Your clothing should ideally be pre-treated with insect repellent and in-built sun protection (available from specialist clothing stores such as Rohan, Cotswold Outdoor).

- Warm fleece, scarf/buff hat and gloves
- Torch
- Comfortable clothes and shoes for evenings and sightseeing
- Sun protection – sun hat, sunglasses, high factor sunscreen and lip protection
- Water bottle – at least 2-litre capacity
- Lightweight survival bag
- Small/medium rucksack (30 litre) and a liner or cover to keep contents dry
- Insect repellent
- Universal travel plug

Personal first aid kit including: personal medication, tissues, plasters, blister kit, painkillers, antiseptic wipes, Imodium, rehydration sachets

Essential Equipment

- Passport (and copies)
- booking confirmation
- insurance cover note
- HF Holidays' registration form

Please ensure you have access to emergency funds should you need them; carrying a credit card is probably the most convenient method.

Optional Equipment

- walking ('approach') trainers
- trekking poles
- camera
- umbrella
- binoculars

Please note that your HF Holidays' leader reserves the right to refuse to take any guest on a walk should they consider that a lack of suitable clothing/footwear may affect safety.

Dietary Requirements

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements. We will do our best to accommodate you.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Vaccinations & Health

This information is subject to change. In all cases, we highly recommend you consult your GP both for up to date details and for more information on what is appropriate to your situation.

As a rule, travellers should be up to date with their routine vaccinations and boosters as recommended in the UK - including, for example, the MMR and diphtheria, tetanus, polio vaccines. Hepatitis A & Tetanus vaccinations are recommended. Diphtheria, Typhoid and rabies are sometimes recommended too.

Passports & Visas

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; no additional period of validity beyond this is required but it's recommended to have at least 6 months additional validity beyond your date of entry.

Visa

British nationals don't need a visa to enter Morocco for tourism for up to 3 months. Make sure your passport is

stamped on arrival – some tourists have experienced difficulty when leaving because they don't have an entry stamp.

Useful Information

Arabic is the official language in Morocco, and it is used throughout the country as the everyday spoken language. This is Moroccan Arabic, and it differs quite widely from standard Arabic.

Berber is spoken in the Rif and Atlas Mountains, and French is still regularly used in the cities. Many in tourist sites speak at least some English but some simple pleasantries will go a long way. Your local guide can help you with this, but a few basics include:

'Es salaam alaykum' – Hello (formal)

'Wa alaykum salaam' – response to greeting

'Shukran' – Thank you

'Afak/'afik/'afakum' – Please (said to M/F/Pl)

'Bessalama/M'a ssalama' – Goodbye

You will be in Berber country a lot, and some useful words in Berber are:

'Emen' – Water

'Yella!' – Let's go!

'Tighmi' – House

'T'ish!' – Eat!

'Munchk?' – How much?

'Oho' - No

'Iya' – Yes

Morocco is a Muslim country. Whilst many places we visit are generally accepting of Western attire (you will see Moroccans wearing all styles!), traditional views are still held in smaller villages and in the medinas of the cities.

To remain respectful of the culture and avoid any difficulties, we recommend in more conservative areas both men and women dress modestly and cover their shoulders. Above-the-knee shorts or skirts may be considered inappropriate and low-cut tops should be avoided.

Once you have made your booking, you will receive a pre-holiday questionnaire where we ask for details of next of kin, and insurance details. You must complete and return this to us- we need to have this from you at least 10 weeks before travel. Please also inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders have to consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you:

- Please listen to any safety instructions from the leader
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you.

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol,

antihistamines, and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit.

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services on 19 or 177 (police, either city or suburban) or 15 (ambulance). Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

Insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We have negotiated special holiday insurance and full details of this cover can be found in our brochure or at www.hfholidays.co.uk. There is no extra charge for pre-existing illnesses

If you would like to purchase insurance from us, please call us on 020 8732 1220 or email holidayservices@hfholidays.co.uk.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

If you are arranging your own travel insurance, please ensure it is adequate for your specific itinerary. Generally, this should include cover for walking at altitudes over 2,000m, and this will cover you for a range of our holidays. On this holiday we will on one occasion be walking at an altitude over 3,000m.

Luggage

Luggage Allowance

Please check details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

Lost Or Damaged Luggage

If your bag or its contents are damaged or lost while in the airline's care, this should be reported to the baggage service agents at the airport on arrival. They will assess the damage; in some cases, the airline may decide to settle your claim immediately.

You will be given a reference to quote to your insurance company if an immediate settlement is not possible - in many cases, baggage claims can only be accepted in writing. A baggage claim form must be obtained from the airport.

Local Currency

The unit of currency is the Moroccan Dirham (dh). We recommend taking some hard currency (Sterling, Euros or US Dollars), credit / debit cards, in order to give you a few options. Your guide will be able to advise on where to change money. Exchange rates do not vary significantly between banks .

Local Time

GMT/UTC +1

Electricity

Electricity is 220V/50Hz; plugs are Europeanstyle, so make sure to bring an adaptor for any UK appliances.

ATM Availability

Moroccan Dirhams can only be obtained in Morocco. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in larger towns, although service in smaller towns can be erratic. Most major hotels now have more reliable ATMs. Most major

credit cards are accepted in larger restaurants, hotels, guest houses and the occasional shop in the souks, with Visa and MasterCard being accepted most widely. Traveller's cheques are not advised

Tipping

For 2020 departures tips have been included in the holiday price for key services such as local guides/ driver/ restaurants.

Any additional tips are at your own discretion.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them

on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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