

## Morocco Adventure

- Atlas Mountains, Royal Cities  
and the Ait Khozema Project



**Tour dates in Morocco:** 20th April – 6th May 2018 (17 days & 16 nights)

**Tour price:** \$7850 (land content)

**Single Supplement:** \$700

**Airfare:** Available from Kathy Millett at TravelManagers Australia.

**Type of touring:** Long distance coach travel, mini bus and four wheel drive vehicles in the Atlas Mountains.

**Fitness level required:** See back page.

**Type of accommodation:** We stay in good quality hotels, beautiful riads and two nights in the Ait Khozema Project home in the mountain village of Amassine.

### MOROCCO

'Morocco is like a tree whose roots lie in Africa but whose leaves breathe in European air.' This is the metaphor that King Hassan II (1929-99) used to describe a country that is both profoundly traditional and strongly drawn to the modern world. It is this double-sided, seemingly contradictory disposition that gives Morocco its cultural richness.' (Quoted from the Eyewitness Guide: Morocco) This tour explores the full range of historical, geographical and cultural aspects that make Morocco a fascinating destination.

**Visits include:** Casablanca, Hassan II Mosque, Rabat/Sale, Hassan Tower, Chellah Gardens, Oudaya Kasbah, Meknes, Fes, Atlas Mountains, Bin El Ouidane, Azilal, Ait Benhaddou, Ait Khozema project, Berber village of Amassine, Toubkal National Park, Marrakech, Jemaa el Fna, Essaouira, Oualidia, souks, palaces and riads.

#### The Ait Khozema Project

In 1997 at the 15th Anniversary DOBAG\* Conference in Istanbul we met Austrian Professor Wilfried Stanzer (a former president of ICOC – International Conference on Oriental Carpets) and in talking to him became fascinated by a project he was embarking upon to revive the carpet weaving traditions of the Berber people of the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco.

As with the nomadic tribes of many countries the Berbers had lost their traditional methods due to the gradual decimation of their culture. Professor Stanzer employed

the expertise of Dr Harald Boehmer, founder of the DOBAG\* project, to help with the rediscovery of the natural dyes of the area in the Atlas Mountains where the Berber tribes still lived. Subsequently, the unique Ait Khozema project has developed whereby Berber women weavers are now benefiting from their own work, producing a few hundred traditional-design, natural-dyed carpets per year. Very few people visit the project (which is not a tourist destination) and through our contact with Professor Stanzer we are the only Australian groups to do so.

**We hope you can join us for a memorable Moroccan experience.**

*Terry Hoyne*

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\*DOBAG is an acronym, in English meaning 'Natural Dye Research and Development Project'. It operates in selected villages in Western Turkey and we are the Australian representatives for the internationally acclaimed project.

**Overnight Stays:** Casablanca (1 night), Rabat (2 nights), Fes (2 nights), Bin El Ouidane (1 night), Marrakech (3 nights), Ait Benhaddou (1 night), Amassine (2 nights), Taroudant (1 night), Essaouira (2 nights), Casablanca (1 night)

## Day 1: Friday 20 April

**Arrive Casablanca. Dinner at Rick's Café (optional)**

Those travelling with Emirates arrive in Casablanca in the afternoon where you will be met and transferred to our hotel overlooking the Atlantic. Tonight we offer an optional dinner at Rick's Café a restaurant in the style of the original made famous in the movie Casablanca.

o/n Casablanca

## Day 2: Saturday 21 April

**Hassan 11 Mosque, La Sqala Restaurant, Rabat/Sale**

After a leisurely morning in the hotel we will visit the amazing Hassan 11 Mosque. This massive structure and its vast Medersa complex is one of the largest religious buildings in the world.

The site covers nine hectares and the main prayer hall can accommodate twenty five thousand worshippers. After our visit we will have lunch in one of Casablanca's most popular restaurants on the harbour. Later we drive north to the capital Rabat and check into our riad in the old medina for two nights. There will be free time to explore some of the old medina of Rabat

BLD

o/n Sale/Rabat

## Day 3: Sunday 22 April

**Rabat, Chellah Gardens, Hassan Tower, Oudaya Kasbah**

In the morning we will visit the Chellah Gardens (14th century Merinid necropolis), Hassan Tower and Oudaya Kasbah which is within the walls of the 13th century Andalusian style quarter. Later we will have lunch in a restaurant overlooking the Atlantic. In the late afternoon we will take a leisurely walk through the old souk of Sale and then return to our hotel for dinner overlooking the river Bou Regreg and the capital Rabat.

BLD

o/n Rabat

## Day 4: Monday 23 April

**Meknes, Dar el-Ma, Volubilis, Fes**

We drive to Meknes where we visit the 17th century Dar el-Ma (Water House), subterranean granaries and the medina of the old city, where we will see the ornately decorated gate of Bab Mansour built in 1732. Later we drive to the famous Roman ruins and World Heritage site of Volubilis. Lunch will be in a spectacular location overlooking the ruins. In the afternoon we drive to the ancient and exotic city of Fes where we will arrive at our beautiful riad in the heart of the old medina.

BLD

o/n Fes

## Day 5: Tuesday 24 April

**Fes, old city, Mausoleum of Moulay Idriss II, Nejjarine fountain, old tannery, ceramic workshop**

Walking through the amazing souk in the old city medina you can believe you are still in the 15th century, visiting medersas, Nejjarine fountain and the fascinating tanneries. Lunch will be at a restaurant in the old medina. In the afternoon we will visit one of the leading ceramic workshops where we will be able to observe the ancient craft of Zellij tile work and the making of beautiful pottery.

BLD

o/n Fes

## Day 6: Wednesday 25 April

**Middle Atlas Mountains, cedar forests, Beni Mellal, Bin El Ouidane**

Today we start our journey into the Atlas Mountains first driving through a flowering landscape that leads us to the town of Ifrane. Developed by the French, the ski resort town has the feeling of an alpine village. Later in the morning we drive through the magnificent cedar forests of the Middle Atlas. In the afternoon we drive further south to Beni Mellal where we climb the steep first stage of the High Atlas. In the late afternoon we arrive at Bin El Ouidane, the largest man-made reservoir in Morocco, where we spend the night in our hotel overlooking the lake and with time for a swim in the pool.

BLD

o/n Bin El Ouidane

## Day 7: Thursday 26 April

**Le Maroc Blanc, Cascade d' Ouzoud, Marrakech**

After breakfast we are invited to visit the family home of acclaimed Berber rug designer Mustapha Hansali who with Wilfried Stanzer developed the celebrated contemporary collection Le Maroc Blanc. In 2009 and 2011 the beautiful long piled wool rugs from this project were awarded "best tribal Carpets" at the prestigious Domotex Carpet Fair in Hanover Germany. Later we drive to the Cascade d' Ouzoud where we will have lunch overlooking the highest waterfall in Morocco. In the afternoon we make our way out of the mountains down to Marrakech where we will arrive at our riad in the old medina.

BLD

o/n Marrakech

## Day 8: Friday 27 April

**The souk of Marrakech, Jemaa el Fna, Madersa Ben Youssef**

Firstly we walk through the souk (market place or bazaar) of the city. The word 'souk' is derived from the country people's words for 'magic box'. At the end of the souk is the old koranic school Ben Youssef built in the fascinating Andalusian style. We walk slowly back through the souk, visiting all the handicraft areas: leather, bronze, wood, textiles and silversmith. Lunch will be on a shady terrace above the Jemaa el Fna. After lunch we are free to relax in the hotel or take another visit to the souk. Towards sunset we walk in the Jemaa el Fna now occupied by musicians, artists and snake charmers. After watching the sunset over the square we visit an old palace (Dar el-Hamra) to have dinner.

BLD

o/n Marrakech

## Day 9: Saturday 28 April

**Majorrel Garden, Mellah (Jewish quarter), free time**

This morning we take a horse and carriage ride to the very colourful garden of the famous Art Deco painter Jaques Majorelle. Later we arrive in the Mellah where we will see the old Jewish quarter with its unique style of architecture and many shops selling spices. Here we will also have lunch overlooking the palace walls where storks make their nests. In the afternoon there will be free time to further explore the souk or relax in the riad. This evening we will have dinner on the terrace of the riad

BLD

o/n Marrakech

## Day 10: Sunday 29 April

### Tizi n'Tichka Pass, Ait Benhaddou, Tamdaght

Today we leave Marrakech and drive back into the High Atlas Mountains climbing through the Tizi n'Tichka the highest mountain pass in Morocco. After lunch we make our way to the most famous Kasbah in Morocco Ait Benhaddou, which has been used as the backdrop in many well known movies including 'Lawrence of Arabia'. After a visit to this fascinating UNESCO World Heritage site we will check into our own Kasbah hotel.

BLD o/n Tamdaght

## Day 11: Monday 30 April

### Amassine village and the Ait Khozema project

Today we drive into the mountains once more and in the shadow of the volcanic peak Jebel Siroua (3305m) we arrive at the village of Amassine where we will spend two nights in the Ait Khozema project house. After lunch Wilfried Stanzer and his assistants will give us a first hand look at the process of rug making including combing and spinning the lustrous mountain wool, weaving, and the art of natural dyeing. We will also have the opportunity to walk through the village visiting weavers in their homes and finally reaching the important village storehouse known as an Agadir. The project house has a small Turkish hamam (bath) and a wonderful view out over the valley. The night sky is ablaze with millions of stars.

BLD o/n Amassine

## Day 12: Tuesday 1 May

### Amassine summer village, 'World Creation Valley', Ait Khozema carpets

With the landcruisers we climb higher to the summer village of Amassine where all villagers spend the summer months allowing their flocks to graze on the greener pastures. From there we will have a spectacular view to the highest mountains of the High Atlas (4165 metres) in the Toubkal National Park. Here we have the chance for a lovely walk into what Wilfried calls the 'world creation valley' a volcanic stone creation where scattered everywhere are rocks resembling animals and trolls. We will have a simple picnic lunch and later in the afternoon return to the Amassine village house.

BLD o/n Amassine

## Day 13: Wednesday 2 May

### Sous Valley, Taroudant

This morning we say goodbye to the village of Amassine and continue our journey entering the Sous Valley in the south east on our way to the walled market town of Taroudant. Situated east of Agadir on the road to Ouarzazate and the Sahara desert the town is known as 'Little Marrakech' because it looks like a smaller Marrakech with its surrounding ramparts. Our hotel is located inside the city walls and there will be the chance to explore the old medina before dinner.

BLD o/n Taroudant

## Day 14: Thursday 3 May

### Argan Oil Co-op, Essaouira

After breakfast we leave Taroudant and head at first west towards Agadir and the Atlantic coast before turning north and on to the colourful and historic seaside port of Essaouira (old Mogador). The Berber name means 'the wall', a reference to the fortress walls that originally enclosed the city. The old medina is a UNESCO World Heritage site and the narrow stone streets are home to many artisans displaying and selling their numerous handicrafts. As this is within the area where the highly prized Argan tree grows there are also many women's co-ops producing the oil and related products from these native Moroccan trees. We will visit one of the co-ops before arriving at our wonderful riad in the medina.

BLD o/n Essaouira

## Day 15: Friday 4 May

### Essaouira

Today we will have the opportunity to further explore the fascinating port city of Essaouira at our leisure. As there are no cars in the old medina it is easy to walk through the souk and down to the famous fishing harbour on the Atlantic Ocean.

BLD o/n Essaouira

## Day 16: Saturday 5 May

### Essaouira, Qualidia, Casablanca

After breakfast we leave Essaouira and drive north along the Atlantic coast to the picturesque seaside village of Qualidia. Located on the southern edge of a large tidal seawater lagoon Qualidia is popular with beach lovers and nature enthusiasts who come here to observe the many species of birdlife that live in and migrate to this peaceful setting. The lagoon has very calm waters compared with the Atlantic Ocean which lies beyond the bar. Flamingos, marbled duck and many other species can be seen for much of the year in the placid waters. We will have lunch overlooking the lagoon and later drive further north returning to our hotel in Casablanca. Tonight we will have our farewell dinner.

BLD o/n Casablanca

## Day 17: Sunday 6 May

This morning our tour ends and those taking the afternoon Emirates flight will be transferred to the Mohammed V International Airport for the journey home.

B



Visiting Le Maroc Blanc

# the detail

"Thankyou once again for a wonderful, exciting trip to another part of the world. Since returning my days and nights have been a "Kaleidoscope" of colour, visions and wonder at what I have seen and experienced. Your thoughtful planning and choice of accommodation and experiences have given me new perspectives and heightened interest of both Turkey and Morocco. Which country do I think is the best? How can I choose... each with its own mystique.

My fellow travellers were such fun and the Moroccans who looked after us were wonderful."

Lyn Tinsley (Murdoch WA)  
Morocco Tour 2016



## TOUR PRICE INCLUDES:

1. All meals and bottled water in Morocco (except first night in Casablanca).
2. Accommodation in twin share rooms with private facilities (except Amassine).
3. Transportation in four wheel drive vehicles and coach.
4. Airport hotel transfers if arriving Day 1 on Emirates EK751.
5. All entrance fees to sites indicated in the itinerary.
6. Guide, Professor Wilfried Stanzer (founder of the Ait Khozema project).
7. All tips in hotels and restaurants.
8. Tips for drivers and assistants.

## TOUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

1. Air fare Australia/Morocco return.
2. Travel insurance.
3. Personal spending money.
4. Airport transfers if not departing Day 17 on Emirates EK 752.
5. Beverages with meals.

**FITNESS LEVEL REQUIRED:** This tour is on the adventurous side. Four days involve travel in four wheel drive vehicles, much of it in the Atlas Mountains up to 2900metres. Two nights we spend in basic accommodation belonging to the Ait Khozema project at Amassine in the Atlas Mountains. The rest of the nights are spent in good quality hotels and riads. Some days involve extensive outdoor walking, steps and rocky ground. Toilet and washing facilities in some places will be rudimentary. The tour should not present any problem to active people who can manage day to day walking, squatting and stair climbing. If you have any doubts about your ability to manage the tour please contact us to discuss your situation.

## TO MAKE A RESERVATION:

Please complete the attached reservation form and send it together with your non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person to: Kathy Millett, Personal Travel Manager, TravelManagers Australia Lic. No. 9TA1394  
PO Box 406 Cottesloe WA 6911  
Phone: 9286 1336 Mobile: 0407 997 313 Email: kathym@travelmanagers.com.au

Please note that cheques should be made payable to TravelManagers Australia. Payment by Credit Card will incur the following service fees: MasterCard and Visa Card, 1.50%. Diners and American Express, 3.0%.

## PAYING THE BALANCE:

The balance of your tour price (less \$500 deposit) must be paid to TravelManagers Australia, on / before 75 days prior to departure.

## CANCELLATION FEES:

Prior to 60 days, full refund less \$500; 60-31 days forfeit 25% of total fare; 30-16 days forfeit 50% of total fare; 15 days or non-appearance forfeit 100% of total fare.

## CHANGES IN TOUR PRICE:

The price of the tour is shown in Australian dollars and is subject to change without prior notice until full payment is made. We will, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE : AIR BOOKINGS : VISA ASSISTANCE : TRANSFERS :

It is a condition of travel that you are covered by international Travel Insurance for this trip. For any assistance with Travel Insurance, Airfares or other travel matters related to this trip, please contact Kathy – your Personal Travel Manager.

