

Morocco Adventure

- Atlas Mountains, Royal Cities
and the Ait Khozema Project



Tour dates in Morocco: 11 May - 26 May 2012 (16 days & 15 nights)
Tour price: \$6300 (land content)
Single Supplement: \$950
Airfare: Available through Harvey World Travel, Garden City, Booragoon
Type of touring: Long distance coach travel and modern four wheel drive vehicles in the Atlas Mountains.
Fitness level required: See back page.
Type of accommodation: Good quality 3 and 4 star hotels, two simple auberges and three nights in Ait Khozema village house, 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: Hassan II Mosque, Casablanca, Rabat/Sale, Hassan Tower, Chellah Gardens, Oudaya Kasbah, Meknes, Madersa Bou Inania, Fes, Atlas Mountains, Berber nomadic camps, Midelt, Cirque de Jaffar, Dades Canyon, Ait Benhaddou, Ait Khozema project, Berber village of Amassine, Toubkal National Park, Marrakech, Jemaa el Fna, 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 and Pam 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.

itinerary

Overnight Stays: Casablanca (1 night), Rabat/Sale (2 nights), Fes (3 nights), Midelt (1 night), Imilchil (1 night), Dades Canyon (1 night), Ait Khozema Project house in Amassine (3 nights), Marrakech (3 nights)

Day 1: Friday 11 May

Arrive Casablanca

Those travelling with Emirates arrive in Casablanca in the afternoon where you will be met and transferred to our hotel in the city.

o/n Casablanca

Day 2: Saturday 12 May

Hassan 11 Mosque, 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 said to be the second largest religious building 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 will drive north to the capital Rabat and check into our hotel across the river in the sister city of Sale.

o/n Sale/Rabat

Day 3: Sunday 13 May

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 where we will have lunch within the walls of the 13th century Andalusian style quarter. In the afternoon we will return to our hotel where we can relax by the pool before dinner.

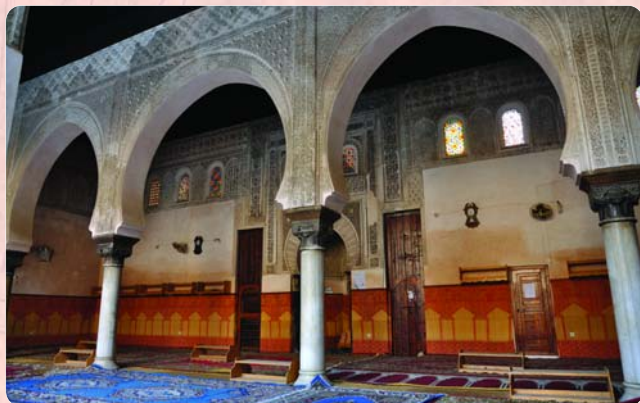
o/n Sale

Day 4: Monday 14 May

Meknes, Dar el-Ma, Madersa Bou Inania, Fes

We drive to Meknes (170 km) where we visit the 17th century Dar el-Ma (Water House), subterranean granaries and the medina of the old city, then on to the Madersa Bou Inania, a koranic school from the 14th century. In the afternoon we drive past the holy city of Moulay Idriss to our lovely hotel overlooking Morocco's oldest Imperial city, Fes.

o/n Fes



Madersa Bou Inania

Day 5: Tuesday 15 May

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

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 fascinating tanneries. Lunch is in an old noble palace in the medina. In the afternoon we will go to our 5* hotel where the pool looks straight out over the old city. Later, we will enjoy a grand dinner with Andalusian musicians.

o/n Fes

Day 6: Wednesday 16 May

Fes, ceramic workshop and free time

Today we will have free time to revisit the souk, other places of interest or just relax and enjoy the hotel's excellent facilities. We will also visit one of the most famous ceramic workshops in Fes to see, first hand, the skill of the artisans who practise this ancient craft.

o/n Fes

Day 7: Thursday 17 May

Middle Atlas Mountains, cedar forests, Midelt, Cirque de Jaffar

Today we start our journey into the Atlas Mountains in our four wheel drive vehicles, first driving through a flowering landscape, then later crossing the cedar forests of the Middle Atlas arriving at our Kasbah hotel in Midelt where we will have lunch. In the afternoon we will visit the fantastic Cirque de Jaffar. We enter the High Atlas through a wild canyon, arriving at a high plateau with nomad tents, and walk through the majestic limestone gorge.

o/n Midelt

Day 8: Friday 18 May

Villages, kasbahs, Imilchil

Passing the Cirque de Jaffar in the shadow of 3700 metre high Mount Ayachi, and travelling through unique rock formations, thuya trees and isolated Berber villages we stop for lunch by a clear river in a cedar forest. Later we see villages with castle-like kasbahs at 2200 metres, and continue on the eastern side of the High Atlas chain, where it descends as if it had been crushed, forming a desert plateau surrounded by rolling mountains. We arrive at a simple auberge in Imilchil, where the famous Berber marriage market happens in September.

o/n Imilchil

Day 9: Saturday 19 May

Dades Canyon

Today we cross the High Atlas at 2900 metres where camels and donkeys graze. We lunch at the beginning of the 100km long Dades Canyon, which we first see from above then later drive inside. The landscape changes and we are in an arid area with green oases alongside the river. It is one of the most spectacular areas of Africa, changing its view completely every 20kms. We arrive at a simple hotel among some wonderful volcanic stone creations in the late afternoon. Dinner is accompanied by the sound of nightingales and local drummers.

o/n hotel in Dades Canyon (near Boumalne)

Day 10: Sunday 20 May

Kala Mgouna, Ait Benhaddou, Amassine (Ait Khozema project)

After breakfast we walk in the green irrigated area looking at the fantastic natural stone sculptures. Forty-five minutes later the cars will arrive and we will drive the last 20kms of that green valley surrounded by naked red stone hills. Then we follow the Dades Valley with its famous kasbahs (four floor high mud buildings with towers in each corner) in date palm oases and the damasciner rose valley of Kala Mgouna. Passing the city of Ouazerzate we arrive at the kasbah complex of Ait Benhaddou, which became known worldwide through the Orson Wells film "Sodom and Gomorrah" and also "Lawrence of Arabia". Next to the swimming pool with the wonderful view to the kasbahs we will have lunch, and later, a short visit to those buildings. Then we set out for Amassine village and the Ait Khozema project.

Nearly in the shadow of the High Atlas range we have the highest peak of the Anti-Atlas (3305 metres above sea level), the volcanic Jebel Siroua. The Berber village of Amassine is at 2000 metres and has 1800 inhabitants. Up to 450 women are earning an extra income thanks to the project. We will stay in the house of the project which has good lodgings with a small Turkish hamam instead of a shower. The night sky is ablaze with millions of stars.

o/n Amassine (project house)

Day 11: Monday 21 May

Amassine village, dyeing demonstration

We spend the day in the village, first watching a demonstration of dyeing (sheep's) wool with plant dyes. (It was with this process that Dr Harald Boehmer of the DOBAG project was the key advisor). Then we walk through the village, visiting some houses to see the specialty of this project which involves the separation of the 'upper' wool from the 'under' wool using two combs as it was done in former times. The long fibred silky 'upper' wool is used for the carpets giving them a natural shine without the use of chemicals. In the afternoon we visit the traditional storehouse (agadir), one of the nicest in the country that is still in use.

o/n Amassine (project house)

Day 12: Tuesday 22 May

Toubkal National Park

With the landcruisers we climb higher to the summer village of Amassine (all villagers spend the summer here) and from there we ride on mules (optional) up to 2800 metres to have a wonderful view on one side to the highest mountains of the High Atlas (4165 metres in the Toubkal National Park) and to be in the volcanic centre of the area. We enter the "world creation valley", a volcanic stone creation, where scattered everywhere are stones resembling animals and trolls, and wildflowers. Here we will have a picnic lunch and later in the afternoon return to the Amassine village house.

o/n Amassine (project house)

Day 13: Wednesday 23 May

Walks, Tizi n Tichka Pass, Marrakech

This morning after breakfast we leave the village of Amassine and take the road to Marrakech. The High Atlas draws closer and after lunch we cross the mountains at 2260 metres via Tizi n Tichka (the highest pass road in Morocco) then descend into the valleys with Berber villages painted pink with oleander. In the evening we arrive at Marrakech and our hotel in the medina in the old part of the city.

o/n Marrakech

Day 14: Thursday 24 May

Explore city, souks, 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.

o/n Marrakech

Day 15: Friday 25 May

Free time, Majorrel's garden, Azilal Province

We'll have free time before lunch for shopping, relaxing or further sightseeing. Mid afternoon we visit the famous garden of the Art Deco painter Majorrel. Later, drinks on the terrace of Jemaa el Fna now occupied by musicians, artists and snake charmers and a big open air restaurant. After watching the sun set over the square we visit an old Palace (Dar el-Hamra) to have our farewell dinner with Gnaoui music – the music of the black people of Morocco, well known for their drummers.

o/n Marrakech

Day 16: Saturday 26 May

This morning we drive to the airport at Casablanca for the return flight to Perth.



Walking in the Atlas Mountains

the detail

"Once again we have experienced a fantastic tour with Terry and Pam, this time in Morocco. Our tour guide, Wilfried Stanzer was exceptional and the sights in the Atlas Mountains breathtaking. The Ait Khozema project was a highlight and staying in Wilfried's house in Amassine a memorable experience"

Shayne and Paul Carter
(Cottesloe)



The old tanneries - Fes



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.
3. Transportation in four wheel drive vehicles and coach.
4. Airport hotel transfers if travelling on group flights.
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 travelling on group flight
5. Beverages with meals.

FITNESS LEVEL REQUIRED: This tour is on the adventurous side. Seven days involve travel in four wheel drive vehicles, much of it in the Atlas Mountains up to 2900metres. Two nights we stay in simple auberges and three 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. Some days involve extensive outdoor walking, steps and rocky ground. At certain places in the mountains you can walk as much or as little as you please, as the vehicles will follow and pick you up. 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:

Attention Mr Russell Jahn, Harvey World Travel (Booragoon - Garden City) Lic. No. 9TA00696

Shop 18 Garden City Shopping Centre, Riseley Street, Booragoon, WA 6154

Phone: (61-8) 9364 6044 Fax: (61-8) 9316 2942

Please note that cheques should be made payable to Harvey World Travel Booragoon. 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 Harvey World Travel Booragoon 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 may change with currency fluctuations. We will, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

It is a condition of travel that you are covered by international travel insurance. Insurance can be arranged through Russell Jahn and Harvey World Travel Booragoon at very competitive rates.