

A Custom Designed Itinerary to

Morocco

by

IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS

IQOTC REF: F604138

Day 1: CASABLANCA. When you arrive at the airport in Casablanca, you will be met as you exit Customs by an English-speaking driver, assisted to a waiting private car and taken to your hotel, **Le Royal Mansour Meridien**, where you will check in for two nights. Le Royal Mansour Meridien is considered the most prestigious hotel in Casablanca, an oasis of calm in the heart of the economic capital of the Kingdom of Morocco. It offers a palatial blend of traditional Moroccan architecture with contemporary comfort and modern technology, surrounded by deep-cushioned luxury. The hotel prides itself on its elegance, style and warmth of service, combined with luxurious amenities and excellent cuisine.

Day 2: CASABLANCA. Tour the fascinating city of Casablanca today with your private car, driver and a top English-speaking local guide. Please be ready at 9.00 AM in the hotel lobby. Casablanca is home to the largest Jewish community in Morocco and has numerous congregations, active communal institutions, and many highly recommended kosher restaurants. You will visit the Mellah (Jewish Quarter) with its temples and synagogues such as Beth-El, Em Habanim and Neve Shalom.



Day 3: FEZ. Today your driver will collect you at 9.00 AM from the hotel lobby and take you to Fez, with a full day of sightseeing along the way. First you will stop in Rabat, the capital of modern Morocco. Rabat elegantly combines an ancient history with a modern culture. A local guide here. Continue to Meknes, the Moroccan end of the 17th century by Moulay Ismail. Jewish here by Hebraic epitaphs dating from the Christian inscriptions that still appear in local Synagogues and where the tomb of Rabbi David Benmidan, “The Patron of Meknes” is located. You won’t want to miss the crowded old Mellah, known for its historic Jewish street names. There is also a new Mellah, which harbors 11 Synagogues. You will see Bab El Mansour, the Hedim square and the mosque of Moulay Ismail. A local guide here. Then continue on to Fez, where you will check in for two nights at **La Maison Bleue**, a wonderful old house in a good location just inside the walls of the old city.



Day 4: FEZ. Spend the day sightseeing in the city. A local guide is included and will met you at 9.00 AM in the hotel lobby. Visit the medina, a maze of tiny lanes and covered bazaars. See monuments of nearly perfect construction at the Gates of Bab Boujeloud and the Sultan’s Palace. Fez is among the best-known cities in medieval Jewish history as it was of the most influential Talmudic scholars of all times, well as of Maimonides in the years 1160 to 1165. Highlights will also include the Mellah with all its Synagogues.



You can also visit Bhalil and the cemetery of Safroud, where Rabbi Lahou Harroch and Rabbi Raphael Moshe Elbaz are buried.

Day 5: ERFOUD. Depart at 9.00 AM and travel through Midelt to Erfoud (270 miles). Erfoud, with its dusty red buildings, has a ghost town atmosphere but is surrounded by some of the best scenery in Morocco. Your route will take you past some of the most spectacular scenery in the country, with ancient Berber fortresses set in palm groves as far as the eye can see. Check in to the Hotel Belere Erfoud is built like a Kasbah and offers 140 bungalow style guest rooms tastefully decorated and well equipped with modern amenities. Onsite restaurants serve Asian, Italian and international cuisine in a desert atmosphere. Recreational facilities include a solarium, swimming pool and whirlpool.



Day 6: OUARZAZATE. Depart the hotel at 9.00 AM for an excursion by Land Rover to the amazing Rissani and Erg Chebbi sand dunes and Todrga gorge, the Grand Canyon of the Sahara. A local guide here. Then on to Ouarzazate (195 miles) to check in to the Berbere Palace for the night. At the gateway to the stylish hotel takes its inspiration from the local Kasbah architecture. The 222 beautifully furnished and decorated rooms and suites are separated by fragrant, flower-filled alleyways dotted with jasmine and rose bushes. The Berbère Palace will captivate you with its magical décor, first-rate hospitality and service.



Day 7: MARRAKECH. Drive to Marrakech. Framed by the snowy heights of the Atlas, with rose-colored ramparts and a thousand year old palm grove, Marrakech casts a magic spell. Marrakech is a feverish dreamscape of honeycombed alleys and minarets. The Djemaa el Fna, Marrakech's pulsating main square is one of the world's great theaters. The Djemaa is a spectacular pageant of singers, tumblers, sorcerers, herbalists, impostors, preachers and snake charmers, all competing for your eye. Check in here for two nights at **Rhiad Dar Rhizlane**. A cross between a charming palace and a mansion of character, Dar Ghizlane stands in the heart of the Hivernage, the residential district of Marrakech. Here you will find luxury and refinement just a few steps away from the Jemaa El Fna Square and the medina. The cool and calm of a landscaped garden will welcome you as a privileged guest into a style of living now almost forgotten.



Day 8: MARRAKECH. Enjoy Marrakech city sightseeing today. A local guide will meet you at 9.00 AM in the hotel lobby. You will see the Koutoubia Mosque's minaret. Marrakech's crowning centerpiece is the very synthesis of Moslem architecture. Other sights to visit are the Saadian tombs dating from 1557; the Mellah, once the largest Jewish quarter in Morocco; the



Agdal, Majorelle (Yves St.Laurent Gardens) and Menara Gardens, located near the edge of the Medina where it is both cool and still in contrast to the bustling city streets; the Bahia and dar Si-Said, the latter housing a museum of Moroccan arts. In the Medina you will find the masterpieces of Marrakechi art. Each craft in the Medina has its own special quarter in one of the interminable passages. There are two or three main thoroughfares in the Medina, off which branch most of the individual markets with alleys and squares devoted to specific crafts where you can watch part of the production process in dyeing, brass and copper beating, apothecary stalls, cosmetics, herbs, jewelers, leather workers, carpenters, sieve-makers, perfumes, spices and slipper makers.

Day 9: ESSAOUIRA. You will depart at 9.00 AM and travel today to Essaouira (200 miles), a town that has never really become a tourist trap. The narrow streets discourage cars, making Essaouira look much as it did in the days of sea pirates. The magic of Essaouira comes from its artistic influence. The tranquility and inspired artists. Essaouira miles of superb sandy beach and east. The medina with its mystique to the town. Probably Moroco, Essaouira is nevertheless called the windy city and is more of a town on the coast than a beach resort. The fortified harbor is a hive of activity with fishing nets laid out on the quayside, boats unloading their catches, fish auctions and stalls serving seafood sizzling on grills.



Here you will spend two nights relaxing at **Palais Heure Bleue**, a Relais and Chateaux property. Tastefully restored, this former palace has been turned into a charming family residence whose décor pays tribute to the Portuguese, English Oriental and African influences. From the terrace on the roof you can enjoy a panoramic view of the port of Essaouira. Facilities include a swimming pool, beauty center, and spa. Sailing, horseback riding, hiking and fishing can all be arranged.

Day 10: ESSAOUIRA. A full day of sightseeing with a local guide around Essaouira, a laid back town with a sort of “hippy” feel. The word Essaouira means image. Observed from any angle, Essaouira is a perfect photograph. Please be ready at 9.00 AM in the hotel lobby.

Behind its purple ramparts and inside its whitewashed medina with blue doors lies a city that has been influenced by various cultures (Berber, Carthaginian, Portuguese, English, Bambara and others). It was the population and it Morocco's most creative nature of located in recesses street orators into of its craftsmen create marquetry and sculptured wood from the roots of the Thuya tree.



Day 11: CASABLANCA. Morning at leisure in Essaouira. 2.00 PM departure by road to Casablanca. Overnight in Casablanca at **Le Royal Mansour Meridien**.

Day 12: DEPART. A transfer to the airport.