

# Morocco 2019

## A Women's Tour

October 8-20



*Journey with Purpose*



**M**oroccan culture is exciting, vibrant, and extremely hospitable. The country's geographic location makes it multicultural, with a diverse population that blends Berber, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, African, and Andalusian into a great cultural mosaic.

Women in Morocco are making great social and economic strides. but this is still a male-dominated society. Our tour visits women and families in their homes and workplaces. A number of co-ops are being developed to help women learn skills, gain financial security, and keep artisan traditions alive. Morocco is also a Muslim country. This doesn't mean you'll need to be covered head to toe or that you will see women dressed so. Appropriate dress works just about anywhere in the country.

We'll get to know the hospitable Moroccans through their culture, history, religion, language, and food. Join us on our women-only tour.

**Day 1 – Oct 8 – Tuesday** Arrive in Casablanca on any flight. We'll meet our driver and guide, then begin our adventure with a drive to Rabat, about one hour. We will check into our hotel and then visit the ancient Hassan Tower and Mohammed V Mausoleum.

*The Hassan Tower is the minaret of an incomplete mosque, commissioned by Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Caliph of the Almohad Caliphate in 1195. It was intended to be the largest minaret in the world, but when al-Mansur died in 1199, construction on the mosque stopped. The tower reached only 140 ft, about half of its intended height. It remains a quiet memorial.*

*The Mausoleum of Mohammed V is located opposite the Hassan Tower and contains the tombs of the king and his two sons, late King Hassan II and Prince Abdallah. The building is considered a masterpiece of modern Alaouite dynasty architecture, with its white silhouette, topped by a typical green tiled roof, green being the color of Islam. A reader of the Koran is often present. Its construction was completed in 1971, almost 800 years after the Hassan Tower.*

Dinner at our hotel in Rabat. (D)

**Day 2 – Oct 9 – Wednesday** After a good rest, we will depart Rabat for Menkes to visit Morocco's premier winery. We'll begin with a yoga session on the roof of the hotel, overlooking the vineyard, followed by a tour and tasting, and then lunch. Morocco is considered to have the best natural potential for producing quality wines, due to the high mountains and the cooling influence of the Atlantic. An important exporter of wine in the colonial era before 1956, the Moroccan wine industry is experiencing a revival and expansion due to a recent influx of foreign investment.



In the afternoon, we'll drive to Fes, about one hour. Fez was the capital of Morocco until 1912 and

although political power may have moved to Rabat, this still feels like the cultural and spiritual center of the country. It has an energy that is inescapable that comes as much from the architecture as it does the people.

We'll check into our *riad*.

A *riad* is a traditional Moroccan house, normally with two or more levels, built around an Andalusian-style courtyard with a fountain in the center. Riads were the stately city homes of wealthy merchants and courtiers. The walls of the riads are adorned with *tadelakt* (plaster) and *zellige* (tiles) usually with Arabic calligraphy of quotes from the Quran. We will stay mostly in riads while in Morocco.

Overnight in Fes. (B,L,D)

**Day 3 – Oct 10 – Thursday** Discover the historic city of Fes with a guided tour, including a visit to the Royal Palace, or the Dar el-Makhzen, which unfortunately is not open to the public, but the outside is still worth a visit. Then on to a pottery shop, and of course, the old *medina* with the 1,000-year-old tannery, silk weavers, embroiderers, and other handicraft workshops, as well as a myriad of



historic sites hidden in the winding streets.

Overnight in Fes. (B,L,D)

**Day 4 – Oct 11 – Friday** We begin our journey south over the Atlas Mountains; this is a day of travel. We'll drive to Azrou (about 2 hours) and stop to see the

monkeys in the surrounding Cedar forests, and then to Zaida (about 2 hours) for lunch. As you pass over the mountains, be sure to take in the stunning views. Arrive in Merzouga (3-4 hours) in time for dinner at our *riad*. Merzouga is a small Moroccan town in the Sahara Desert, near the Algerian border. It's known as a gateway to Erg Chebbi, a huge expanse of sand dunes north of town. West of Merzouga, Dayet Srji is a seasonal salt lake that's often dry in summer. When full, it attracts a wide range of migratory and desert birds, including desert warblers, Egyptian nightjars and, occasionally, flamingos.



Overnight in Merzouga. (B,L,D)

**Day 5 – Oct 12 – Saturday** Our day begins with yoga in the Sahara Desert to loosen up after the long drive. We'll visit Rissani, (birthplace of the current royal family) to explore the bustling market where you'll meet wandering traders, nomads, Berbers and Arabic desert dwellers who come to sell all kinds of clothing, wares, spices, vegetables, and animals. This is a very local experience. We'll take lunch with a local family in an old neighborhood, and perhaps even get the chance to pick dates on a farm.

Overnight in Merzouga. (B,L,D)

**Day 6 – Oct 13 – Sunday** This should be a magical day, traveling into the Sahara Desert.

When a wealthy family refused hospitality to a poor woman and her son, God was offended and buried them under mounds of sand called Erg Chebbi. So goes the legend of the dunes rising majestically above the twin villages of Merzouga and Hassi Labied, which for many travelers fulfill Morocco's promise as a dream desert destination.

We'll visit the Gnawa village to listen to the hypnotic traditional music, stopping at a nomad's tent for tea. Lunch in the desert will be followed by visit a women's co-op where they hand weave and knot rugs.

In the early evening, we will mount camels and ride into the desert for a night in a luxury camp, with live music around the bonfire after dinner.

Overnight in the Sahara Desert. (B,L,D)



**Day 7 – Oct 14 – Monday** After returning from the Sahara, we travel west to Boumalne Dades, about 3 hours and we'll have lunch at the *riad*, before heading into the Rose Valley for a hike among almond, fig, pomegranate, walnut, and olive trees growing near the stream. We'll hear traditional music after dinner.

Overnight in Boumalne. (B,L,D)

**Day 8 – Oct 15 – Tuesday** This morning we'll start with a yoga session overlooking the gorges of the Dades Valley, formed by the river over thousands of years. Then continue the journey west, making stops in Kalaat M'gouna, famous for producing rose water, and onto Ouarzazate,(1-2 hours) known as the Door of the Desert, for lunch. We'll continue to Taroudant, 3-4 hours. This is another long day of travel.

Overnight in Taroudant. (B,L,D)

**Day 9 – Oct 16 – Wednesday** We'll spend today visiting women's co-ops, starting with Argan oil. The Argan tree is native to Morocco and the oil is traditionally drizzled on couscous and vegetables but there is a growing demand for the oil in the cosmetic industry. Next, we'll visit a saffron co-op. Saffron must be one of the most labor-intensive products and we'll see how it's picked and processed. Finally, we'll visit rug weavers. Based on the practice of fair trade, the main goal of all-female co-ops is the financial empowerment of women from marginalized backgrounds, mostly women from Berber villages.

Overnight in Taroudant. (B,L,D)

**Day 10 – Oct 17 – Thursday** We'll travel north to Marrakech over the Atlas Mountains, about 3.5 hours. This evening, relax or explore the famous Jemaa el Fna Square. Dinner at our *riad*.

Overnight in Marrakech. (B,D)

**Day 11 – Oct 18 – Friday** What a wonderful way to revive after our long journey in the country. Enjoy a *hamman*, the traditional Moroccan spa treatment, and massage (with optional services at additional cost) in the morning, with a free afternoon in the medina.

*The hamman (or public bath) is believed to have originated during Roman times. With the introduction and spread of Islam, bathing rituals took on a spiritual aspect. The importance of purifying one's body before prayers and devoting time to quiet reflection, combined with practical realities like a lack of hot water in private homes, helped hammams flourish. Bathers usually begin in a dry, heated zone to relax and open pores, before entering a steam room. Black olive-oil soap, known as savon beldi, is applied for an intense*



body scrub with a loofah. Much rinsing and scrubbing follow, until you've shed a layer of skin, dirt, and stress.

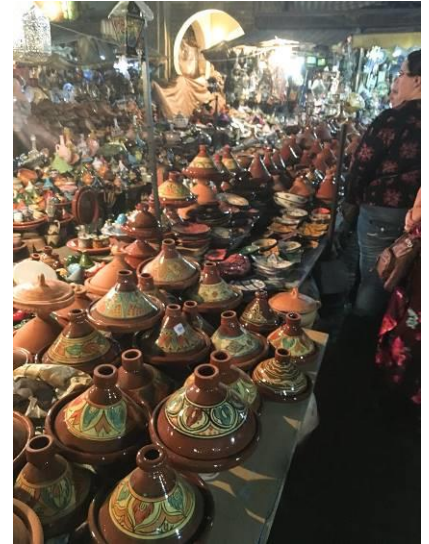
Tonight, learn to make traditional Moroccan dishes with a hands-on cooking class.

Overnight in Marrakech. (B,D)

**Day 12 – Oct 19 – Saturday** Today we'll explore Marrakech with a tour of the historic sites, including the Koutoubia Mosque, completed under the reign of Berber Almohad Caliph Yaqub al-Mansur in the late 1100's and get a glimpse of life among Marrakech's royal elite at the beautifully preserved Bahia Palace, and more. Venture into the famous souks in the bustling **Jemaa el Fna**, where you can kind find everything from spices to hand-carved wooden items to clothing, and much more.

In the afternoon, we will drive to Casablanca for our final night, and enjoy a meal in the home of a local Moroccan family, a great way to end our visit.

Overnight in Casablanca. (B,L,D)



**Day 13 – Oct 20 – Sunday** We will go to the airport about 2.5-3 hours prior to flight. (B)

*Itinerary will be tweaked as we get closer to departure date.*

*Order of activities could change due to weather, traffic, and other circumstances beyond our control.*

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Maximum 14 people, minimum 6 people. Jean Warneke from JB Journeys will escort, along with a local English speaking guide

**Cost** for 2019: \$2,495 per person in double occupancy, based on 14. With 12: \$2,595; with 10: \$2,795. With 8: \$2,995 and with 6: \$3,300. Single supplement \$450. *A single will be either a smaller room for on or a double room at single rate.*

### Included:

- Transportation throughout by van or coach, depending on group size
- 12 nights in riad or hotel with taxes included
- English speaking guide
- Entry fees to areas listed
- Meals as listed
- Basic tips to drivers and for group meals

### Not Included:

- Airfare to/from Casablanca
- Meals not listed
- Gratuities to guides (suggested \$7-10 per person per day)
- Drinks during meals
- Personal Insurance

### Payments & Cancellation Policy:

- A **deposit** of \$500 is required to reserve your spot, along with a completed reservation form. **Final payment is due July 1, 2019.** We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover and by check.
- **Cancellation** up to July 1, 2019, penalty is \$300. Once final payment is made, it is non-refundable. We highly recommend travel insurance with cancellation coverage.