

**MOROCCAN ITINERARY - THE FOOD OF MOROCCO
A CULINARY ADVENTURE WITH MEREDITH MORSCHEL
9-21 OCTOBER 2020**



Day 1 Friday, 9 October

Arrivals

Various airport transfers, ideally from Casablanca or Rabat airports, but arrivals at Marrakech or Fes airports are fine also.

You will be staying at Dar Shaân, a beautifully restored Andalusian riad in the medina that opened late 2017. Antoine your charming French host will ensure you have the best time there.

Meredith will host an informal welcome dinner at your accommodation tonight.

Overnight: Dar Shaân, Deluxe rooms

Meals included: Dinner

Day 2 Saturday, 10 October Rabat

After breakfast, your local guide will join you to visit the charming Oudayas where the young artists hang out together, the Tour Hassan II and the Mausoleum of Mohamed V, and then you lunch will be at a local seafood restaurant at Rabat's Marina. Rest of the afternoon at leisure, and dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Dar Shaân, Deluxe rooms

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 3 Sunday, 11 October Fes via Meknes and Volubilis

Leaving Rabat behind, you will travel to the thousand-year-old imperial city of Meknes, founded at the end of the 17th century, for a short tour. Sightseeing in Meknes, once the capital of Morocco during the reign of the reverent tyrant Moulay Ismail, will include the Bab El Mansour gate and the old Medina. Next you will travel the 33km to Moulay Idriss for a very special lunch at the private house Scorpion House, owned by Mike Richardson, a foodie and mad collector of beautiful art. After lunch, visit of the amazing Roman ruins of Volubilis, dating back to the 1st and 2nd centuries. It is the best-preserved archaeological site in Morocco, and was declared a Unesco World Heritage site in 1997. Its most amazing features are its many preserved beautiful mosaics. Then onto Fes, the spiritual capital of Morocco. You will be staying in a private riad, Ryad Salama, which is owned by Michel Trezzy, a Frenchman who is a fine cook and connoisseur of wines. The aristocrat Mohammed Chergui built this Ryad at the beginning of the last century and it since has been restored in the traditional way, using craftsmen from the Medina. It is fairly unique because every room and suite overlooks the garden, either by private balcony or simply at garden's level. Michel, a professional in the hotel industry, has tastefully arranged all the rooms to offer the best comfort. After the long journey today, a light dinner with a Moroccan theme will be served in the garden.

Overnight: Ryad Salama

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 4 Monday, 12 October Fes

This morning, your tour escort and local English-speaking guide will collect you for a Historical tour of Fes with a visit of the beautiful doors of the Royal Palace, the Mellah (Jewish quarter), followed by a walk through the Unesco World Heritage, mind boggling ancient medina and Fes El-Bali. Fes has various claims to nobility as one of the most prestigious cities in the Muslim world and is also the oldest of the imperial cities and the capital of the first Arab dynasty of Morocco. You will pass the Medersas and the Al Karaouiye University, which has existed for the past thousand years and see craftsmen working in the narrow lanes much as they had done for centuries. A short visit to the Tanneries is included too, holding your bunches of mint to keep the smells at bay! The guide will take you to some hidden Art Galleries so you can see the amazing craftsmanship that Fes is famous for. You will also see the water clock, the most colourful Souk el-Attarine, Fondouk el-Nejjarine and the Medersa Bouanania, a dazzling example of architectural refinement. A light lunch will be in the garden of the beautifully restored Palais Amani, where you can relax before continuing your tour. Return to the riad to relax before dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Ryad Salama

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 5 Tuesday, 13 October Fes

This morning Meredith and the 'dada' (Ryad Salama's cook) will be taking you to the food markets to buy the ingredients for a special cooking class later in the day. You will then go to visit the potteries, seeing craftsmen and -women at work, creating beautiful mosaics and ceramics. The rest of the day is for you to relax. You could take lunch at Café Clock, only a short walk from the riad, and famous for its camel burgers. The cooking class will begin at 4pm, and you will be preparing typical Fesian dishes for your dinner tonight!

Overnight: Ryad Salama

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Day 6 Wednesday, 14 October To the Atlas Mountains

Leave after an early breakfast for the drive to the Ouirgane Valley. You will stop en route for breaks, and lunch at a roadside grill house that the locals favour. Today is a long drive, but the scenery is well worth it, and changing as you head further and further south. Arrive late afternoon at the boutique hotel Domaine Malika, and enjoy dinner at their restaurant, prepared with fresh fruit and vegetable from their orchard and garden or from the local souk. The guesthouse offers modern rooms boasting a beautiful, eclectic décor, and a warm atmosphere.

Overnight: Domaine Malika, Premium rooms

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 7 Thursday, 15 October Atlas Mountains

Your mountain guide will collect you at the Domaine with mules and muleteers at 10am, to start the gentle climb in the National Park, walking or riding. It will take a couple of hours to reach a small Berber village situated at the foothills, where you will have a specially prepared tagine lunch in a traditional Berber house, surrounded by the glorious Atlas Mountains. The village is self-sufficient and you see how everything works –a very special experience. After lunch you can either walk or ride your mule back down, via a small road that offers views over a dam and small villages. Return to Domaine Malika mid-afternoon and enjoy some time at leisure by the pool before dinner.

Overnight: Domaine Malika, Premium rooms

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 8 Friday, 16 October To Essaouira

Leave after breakfast for Essaouira, a charming port on the Atlantic coast. Stop en route to visit *Jarjeer mule and donkey sanctuary*, and see the amazing work done by the volunteers. You will have encountered many donkeys around the medinas and countryside of Morocco, and this is a fabulous rescue centre for old and injured animals, founded and run by retired expat solicitor Charles Hantom, and barrister Susanne Machin. Continue on to Essaouira, arriving around lunchtime. The afternoon is at leisure. So you can choose to have some lunch at your accommodation L'Heure Bleue, or head out in the easy-to-navigate medina for a casual lunch at one of the stalls or a seafood restaurant overlooking the beach. Meet at L'Heure Bleue's fine restaurant for dinner. The decor is influenced by colonial nuances from the Orient, Africa, Portugal and Britain. L'Heure Bleue is a testimony to Essaouira's glorious past at the crossroads of African, European and Arab civilisations. The hotel offers everything a sophisticated traveller expects of a luxury hotel, yet it still conserves the architecture of a traditional Moroccan riad: the public areas, restaurant and rooms open onto a courtyard with an ornate fountain; in true Moroccan tradition, this is the heart of the riad.

Overnight: L'Heure Bleue, mix of Classic and Deluxe rooms

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Day 9 Saturday, 17 October Essaouira

Enjoy a morning guided walk in Essaouira with a local guide. Abandoned by the Portuguese in 1541, it was not until 1765 when the Alaouite Sultan Sidi Mohammad Ibn Abdullah transformed Mogador into a fortified city. The ramparts were never that effective in keeping out the marauding tribesmen but now a charming artist's town with its old port and cannons overlooking the fishing fleet, Essaouira invites you to wander through the narrow alleyways which make up the Medina to witness artisans at work making their wooden tables, boxes and sundry items in lemon or Thuya wood inlaid with mother of pearl. Lunch is at own arrangements today. The afternoon cooking class is at 3.30pm. It is a Moroccan pastry class,

think gazelle horns, briouates, and other delicacies, and runs for two hours. You will be coming home with a little box of the delicacies you have prepared. Dinner tonight at a local restaurant.

Overnight: L'Heure Bleue, mix of Classic and Deluxe rooms

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Day 10 Sunday, 18 October

To Marrakech

Depart for Marrakech late morning. You will stop on the way for lunch at a local vineyard, sampling the various wines produced there and supplied to the major hotels and riads around Morocco. Continue onto Marrakech arriving mid-afternoon. Check-in at Dar Les Cigognes, a really well located riad that faces the gates of the Royal Palace, in the heart of the historic medina. The guide will meet you there for a late afternoon stroll to Djemaa El Fna Square, via the souks, to see the jugglers, storytellers, snake charmers, acrobats and vendors performing at sunset much as they have done for centuries. Dinner at your accommodation after the evening tour.

Overnight: Dar Les Cigognes, Deluxe rooms

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 11 Monday 19 October

Marrakech

Your calèche (horse-drawn carriage) will arrive at 7.30am, before breakfast, to take you to the spectacular Jardin Majorelle, with its abundance of giant bamboo, yucca, papyrus, palm, cypress and banana trees, philodendrons and bougainvilleas and amazing cacti with natural colours that contrast vividly with the bright blue façade of the villa, which was lovingly restored by the late Yves St Laurent and where he spent much of his leisure time. We highly recommend this early start to avoid the huge crowds that descend on the gardens at 9am. Being there by 8am enables you to have a lone tour of the gardens, and then a coffee and continental breakfast will be included at a café across the street. Enjoy a wander in the fabulous boutiques by the garden until 10am, when you will be first into the Yves Saint Laurent museum, which is just a stone's throw away from Majorelle; It is a stunning 4000m2 building hosting a permanent exhibition devoted to the work and heritage of the couturier. After the museum continue your historical tour. Some of the most interesting places to visit are the Saadian Tombs in the Kasbah, the Bahia Palace located in the Jewish quarter known as the Mellah, and Dar El Pacha museum. Dinner at a local restaurant tonight.

Overnight: Dar Les Cigognes, Deluxe rooms

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 12 Tuesday 20 October

Marrakech

The driver will collect you at 9.30am to drive to a cooking school, for another insight into the Moroccan kitchen. After lunch, made with the dishes you have prepared, enjoy your last afternoon at leisure. The farewell dinner is at a beautiful local restaurant tonight.

Overnight: Dar Les Cigognes, Deluxe rooms

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 13 Wednesday, 21 October

Marrakech

Various departure transfers.

Inclusions:

- Personal hosting by Meredith Morschel
- Accommodation for 12 nights
- Meals included as per itinerary
- Transportation throughout in a luxury air conditioned vehicle
- Bottled mineral water in the vehicle daily
- Professional experienced English-speaking driver and escort throughout, including related expenses
- English-speaking Historical local guides with all entrance fees included
- Calèche and entrance to Jardin Majorelle, the Berber and YSL museums
- Atlas Mountains excursion including mules and muleteers, and English-speaking mountain guide
- Three Cooking Classes
- Local Tourist Taxes
- Porterage
- Guides, drivers, and restaurant gratuities (where meals are included)
- Bank transfer and currency fluctuation fees

Exclusions:

- Arrival and departure airport transfers (we will await to have everybody's flight details to bundle transfers wherever possible and thus reduce costs to each)
- Meals other than those specified in itinerary
- All items of a personal nature, telephone, laundry, extra gratuities for guide and driver
- Any alcoholic drinks and soft drinks apart from water, and restaurant gratuity on alcohol
- International air arrangements and all applicable taxes
- Tourist Visa if you do not have an Australian passport
- Camera fees at some Historical sights and museums
- Massages, hammams, activities other than those listed in Inclusions
- Restaurant gratuities where meals are not included

By Prior Arrangement has the right to change the accommodation and aspects of your itinerary, if necessary, due to unforeseen circumstances.

All pricing and itinerary content is subject to change due to currency fluctuation, availability and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of our company.

AUD\$8450 PER PERSON TWIN OR DOUBLE ROOM
AUD\$9850 PER PERSON SINGLE ROOM

RECEIVE \$500 DISCOUNT PER PERSON FOR TRIPS BOOKED BEFORE MARCH 31ST

20% deposit is due at the time of booking, and the balance is due August 26th, 2020.

Pre- and post-tour arrangements are of course possible –do you wish to arrive a day early to relax from the long haul? Would a visit to the Sahara desert at the end of the tour maybe take your fancy? Just let us know and we will make it happen!