

MOROCCO HANDCRAFTS 2.0

ITINERARY 2027

19 April – 6 May

retreat|recreate is delighted to offer this exciting private 18-day handcrafts tour for select previous retreat|recreate Morocco travellers ☺

Highlights include two nights at our favourite authentic Kasbah des Caïds, learning how to make the tiny woven buttons (known as 'lakaad') from women in Sefrou, a silversmithing workshop in Essaouira, and an exciting two day stay in the High Atlas Mountains touring the Atlas Wool Mills then dyeing our own yarn on the first day and weaving it into tiny carpets the following day with artisans from The Anou.

Plus we'll take you to two of our new favourite gardens outside Marrakech, to beautiful Chefchaouen (known as the 'Blue Pearl'), to the seaside village of Essaouira, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of El Jadida on the coast (one of four World Heritage sites on this tour), and give you ample free time in Fes, Chefchaouen, the Kasbah, Marrakech and Essaouira to chill and do your own thing.

**This tour is by invitation only.
Please don't share these documents!**

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Day 1

Monday 19 April

CASABLANCA

Salaam aleikum! Welcome back to Morocco my friends!

You will be collected from Casablanca airport and transferred to Barcelo d'Anfa Hotel. If you want to arrive a couple of days early and explore Habbous, see the amazing Hassan II mosque again, or just chill by the pool and recover from jetlag, let us know and we'll arrange it. We leave Casa first thing tomorrow morning so there's no actual 'tour time' here. (Alternatively, you could take the train to Rabat for a couple of days and thoroughly explore the art gallery, the archaeology museum, the Botanical Gardens etc).

Our tour begins with a briefing meeting at 6pm where we'll run through the itinerary and catch up with each other!

This will be followed by a welcome dinner somewhere special. Are you hanging out for tagine?!

Meals: Dinner



Day 2

Tuesday 20 April

RABAT & CHEFCHAOUEN

Leaving Casablanca, we'll meet our bus and driver and head to Rabat for the morning. It's just over an hour away by road so we'll arrive mid morning. Since most of you last travelled with us to Morocco, the ancient site of the Chellah has reopened after several years of restoration works. The historic site of the Chellah features an Islamic necropolis built alongside ancient Roman ruins. It's a UNESCO World Heritage site, set in pretty garden surrounds and famous for its large stork population.

After exploring this fascinating site, we'll hit the road and head to Chefchaouen, known as the Blue Pearl!

We'll settle in to our accommodation and maybe enjoy an evening stroll. Those of you who know Café Clock in Fes (next door to The Anou) might wish to visit the Chefchaouen version for dinner ☺

Meals: Breakfast



Day 3

Wednesday 21 April

CHEFCHAOUEN

By popular demand (you know who you are), this itinerary includes a couple of nights in pretty Chefchaouen.

Today is a free day so there's plenty of time to wander, photograph the endlessly blue laneways, shop, visit the little Kasbah in the main square, sit in the square at a café and people watch, or hike up to the Spanish fort atop the hill outside town.

If you're in the market for a[nother] Moroccan carpet or two, one of our favourite carpet shops is here. We'll be happy to introduce you if you're keen. Otherwise, the day is yours to explore the delights of this very pretty blue town.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 4 Thursday 22 April



Day 5 Friday 23 April



Day 6 Saturday 24 April



Day 7 Sunday 25 April



Day 8 Monday 26 April

FES

The road beckons! We will bid farewell to the Blue Pearl, and head to Fes. All our Morocco itineraries feature three days in Fes so you've seen most of what it has to offer and accordingly we're not going to spend a great deal of time here.

We'll have some free time this afternoon though, so you could perhaps visit our favourite hammam for a scrub and massage, or perhaps check out the Dar Batha Museum of Islamic Arts which is very close to our beautiful riad. We included this museum on our 2026 itineraries – the garden tour travellers loved it for its peaceful central garden and 300 year old spreading oak tree, and the textile travellers enjoyed its magnificent Islamic handcrafts and textiles. It's set in a palace so the setting itself is very beautiful.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

SEFROU & FES

Today we'll spend the morning in the historic market town of Sefrou which is famous for its *ladaak*, the tiny intricate woven buttons that adorn every caftan and djellaba in Morocco. Originally the work of the town's Jewish women, they taught their skills to their Arab and Amazigh neighbours before leaving Morocco in the 1940s for Israel. Button making is now a major occupation and source of independent income for Sefrou's women. We'll meet the women of a local button cooperative and learn how they make these tiny works of art.

Returning to Fes, the afternoon will be free for you to pursue your own interests, or just relax on the rooftop of our stunning riad.

Meals: Breakfast

BIN EL OUIDANE

Leaving Fes behind we begin our journey to the south of the country.

We'll travel through varying landscapes as we move from the lush green north, through the High Atlas Mountains to the arid south of the country.

Our destination for the night is Bin el Ouidane, a lakeside town in the heart of the High Atlas. Our accommodation here is in a delightful garden setting with beautiful river gorge views.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

AIT BOUGEMEZ

This morning we continue our journey, driving further into the High Atlas to our destination of Ait Bougemez. This small town is the home of The Anou's impressive socially responsible project: Africa's first vertically integrated, solar powered wool mill.

We'll have a tour of the Atlas Wool Mill and learn about the carbon-negative organic yarn production. Then under the guidance of artisans from the local weaving cooperative, we'll choose our colours and dye our own wool in the mill's dye workshop.

We've been excited to visit the Wool Mill ever since we started going to The Anou in Fes for our carpet weaving workshops. We can't wait to experience this adventure with you!

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

AIT BOUGEMEZ

Today our woolly adventures continue as we use the yarn we dyed yesterday to weave our own little carpets.

Those of you who travelled with us in the past couple of years will have experienced this workshop at the studio of The Anou in Fes. We will learn the entire process of creating a traditional Moroccan carpet (in miniature), beginning with warping our own small looms, weaving a starter section, and then alternating rows of weaving with rows of traditional hand knotting, to develop our own Amazigh carpet sample.

It will be extra special to experience this workshop in the studio at the Atlas Wool Mills, having seen the wool being processed, and then having dyed the yarn ourselves. What a privilege.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 9 Tuesday 27 April



Day 10 Wednesday 28 April



Day 11 Thursday 29 April



Day 12 Friday 30 April



Day 13 Saturday 1 May

BOU THARAR

It's a travel day today as we say a fond farewell to the artisans of Ait Bougemez and continue our journey through the High Atlas and towards the Draa Valley.

We'll pass through stunning mountain landscapes today and will spend the night in the town of Bou Tharar.

Wherever possible, we'll find interesting places to stop, whether they be views of awe inspiring mountain vistas, or small cooperatives we discover along the way.

TAMNOUGALT

We'll make our way through the Rose Valley this morning on our way to Tamnougalt. It's Spring so with a bit of luck the roses will be blooming! If timing allows, we may stop at a rose cooperative where they distil and extract rose oil to create beautifully perfumed creams, cosmetics, lotions and oils.

Later in the day we'll arrive in Tamnougalt in the Draa Valley, home to one of the largest oases in the world. We'll spend the next two nights at Kasbah des Caid, a traditional mudbrick Kasbah slowly being restored by the current owner Hassan whose ancestors were the village's original *caids*, or tribal chiefs. If you came on one of our earlier tours and haven't stayed at the Kasbah, you're in for a treat. However please be prepared for a rustic, homestay style experience.

TAMNOUGALT

Enjoy a chill day, soaking up the kasbah life. We'll have lunch in the oasis as per previous years, but instead of palm mat weaving we are hoping to have a calligraphy lesson.

If you're keen to do some more palm mat weaving while we relax in the oasis let us know and we'll ask Hassan to bring the little looms.

The afternoon is free for exploring the village, checking out the little co-operative shop, and maybe enjoying a coffee at the new café behind the shop. Or you can just relax on the rooftop with a book or stitching project. If people are keen, we can organise a henna session.

MARRAKECH

Today we leave the Draa Valley and head towards Marrakech.

We will find something special to visit on the way – we have a couple of options in mind but need to confirm and sometimes it's hard to get confirmation a year in advance!

Even if our plans don't come to fruition, the drive is interesting as we move through the oasis and then the red iron landscape of the High Atlas mountains outside Marrakech.

We'll settle into our favourite Marrakech riad and maybe enjoy a refreshing swim.

MARRAKECH

Enjoy a completely free day in Marrakech! It's time for your own exploration, whether that's checking out the new museums that have sprung up in the past year or two (there's a new private carpet museum and a music museum), or maybe you didn't get to check out the YSL museum, the Perfume museum or the Photography museum last time, or maybe you want to visit the newly renovated and absolutely stunning Ben Youssef Mederssa. Or you could hit the souks. We (re)visited a fabulous antique jewellery shop in 2026 which the jewellery lovers among you might find interesting. Plus there are all your old favourites still in the medina, waiting for you to visit once again.

Or you could relax on the rooftop of your favourite restaurant and enjoy a long slow lunch.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Meals: Breakfast

Meals: Breakfast



Day 14 Sunday 2 May

MARRAKECH

Today we are taking you to two very special gardens outside Marrakech in the Ourika Valley. Firstly we'll head to Anima Garden, a spectacular art and sculpture garden, featuring wandering pathways through beautiful plantings and past sculptures and artworks by all sorts of artists including Keith Haring, Picasso, and even one of Rodin's 'Thinkers'.

Later we'll head to the garden at Nectarome, Morocco's first aromatic and medicinal garden. Featuring a hectare of around fifty different aromatic plants used in botanical cosmetic formulae, the garden is a sensory delight. We'll enjoy lunch here under the trees, as a bit of a treat.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 15 Monday 3 May

ESSAOUIRA

Leaving Marrakech behind we head to the laid back seaside town of Essaouira.

This part of the country between Marrakech and Essaouira is where the argan trees grow. We may stop at an argan oil cooperative to break the journey and stock up ethically on argan oil products if you wish.

We'll arrive in Essaouira in the afternoon and settle into our lovely centrally located riad before heading out to explore the town.

Essaouira (once known as Mogodor) is famous for its beaches, pretty fishing port, its gnaoua music and its Jewish heritage. It was the Jewish artisans who brought their silversmithing skills to Morocco.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 16 Tuesday 4 May

ESSAOUIRA

Silversmithing workshop!

This is the final workshop of our tour and an exciting one. We will each have the opportunity to craft our very own silver ring or pendant under the guidance of one of the town's most well respected *malems* (master artisan) at one of Essaouira's best silversmithing studios.

In the afternoon we could explore the souks, wander the historic port (look out for the Game of Thrones locations), or head to the beach for a dip in the Atlantic Ocean.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 17 Wednesday 5 May

CASABLANCA & EL JADIDA

It's time to return to Casablanca to get ready to leave Morocco, but we have a couple of final treats before we leave.

On the way we will stop at the historic UNESCO World Heritage listed site of El Jadida. Built on the Atlantic coast by the Portugese in the 16th century, its architecture is well preserved and its old medina a delight to wander. With a bit of luck the Portugese Cistern will be reopened in time for our visit, but even if not, the town is a worthy stop for lunch and a little exploration.

We'll continue on to Casablanca, check into our now familiar hotel, and reconvene in the evening for a special farewell dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 18 Thursday 6 May

The end of another great tour in Morocco!

Today is departure day and there are no activities after breakfast.

Check out time is 12 noon.

Additional nights at the hotel can be arranged through us if you wish.

Departure transfers to Casablanca airport can also be arranged through us.

Meals: Breakfast

Price per person

Twin share: AUD \$8050

Single supplement: AUD \$2000

Inclusions:

- 17nights/18 days accommodation (hotels, riads, kasbah homestay)
- Arrival airport transfers
- 17 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 9 dinners
- Transport: private air conditioned vehicle, occasional taxi
- Hands on handcraft experiences
- Handcraft cooperative visits
- Entrance fees to cultural sites
- UNESCO World Heritage sites
- Services of our local English-speaking guide, and a driver
- Tipping of hotel/restaurant staff, porters etc on behalf of the group
- Water in the bus on travel days

Exclusions:

- International airfares
- Travel insurance
- Departure transfers
- Meals not specified in itinerary
- Tips for guide & driver

Notes:

- This is a private tour by invitation only. Please don't share these documents
- The tour is escorted by Susan Rees-Osborne and Khaled Ingroui
- It's high season and accommodation prices have gone up hugely. I've kept the overall price as modest as possible (it's the same price as the general 2027 tour which is only 17 days) but apologies in advance about the single supplement which is unavoidably high this time!