



retreat | recreate

Morocco Private Handcrafts & Garden Tour: 3-20 November 2026

Trip Notes (as at August 2026)

Welcome!

Salaam Aleikum! Welcome to your Morocco Handcrafts & Gardens Tour. We hope you enjoy this socially responsible exploration of Morocco, its handcraft and garden traditions, and culture. Please see the itinerary for the daily activities, inclusions and price. These Trip Notes function as a kind of FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) and are an important adjunct to the itinerary.

This itinerary is offered by retreat|recreate as a private tour in conjunction with Experience Morocco, a licensed, registered tour operator based in Marrakech. Our excellent local guide is fully accredited and highly experienced and will escort the tour. Locally based city guides will temporarily accompany the group on some city tours, adding further expertise and targeted local knowledge.

Itinerary disclaimer

Some changes to the itinerary may occur due to inclement weather, unexpected closure of venues or other circumstances beyond our control. While we do our best to prevent this happening, it may be unavoidable and we may make modifications to the itinerary.

Included activities

Included activities are those specifically listed in the itinerary. Activities not outlined in the itinerary are at your own expense and are undertaken at your own risk. If you deviate from the scheduled itinerary the cost of any missed activities will not be refunded. Of course we hope you will fully participate in the itinerary; we've researched and sourced some fabulous botanical experiences, lined up visits to private and public gardens, museums and galleries, and local experiences such as meals with locals. We'll take in important cultural sites, stroll medinas and kasbahs of breathtaking beauty, visit UNESCO World Heritage sites, enjoy sensational food and hospitality, and soak up the local culture. *This itinerary is a full one to ensure value for money* so we recommend you add additional days pre and post tour. There are so many more things to see and do in Marrakech in particular that we simply could not fit into the itinerary. We will have plenty of recommendations for you for your pre-tour days!

Workshops and hands-on activities

Important note: the hands-on handcraft activities and experiences included in this itinerary are not formal classes with trained teachers. They're more about person to person interactions, cultural exchange and experiencing authentic, traditional crafts at local artisans' studios, cooperatives or homes.

Is this trip suitable for you?

This trip is for active, adventurous, women who have a curiosity to delve deep into the Moroccan Arabic and Amazigh (Berber) cultures, exploring them through the lens of their handcraft and garden traditions. You don't need to be an accomplished or experienced craft practitioner or horticulturalist; an interest in and appreciation for these is sufficient. You should be a fit, active traveller (see requirements below) who understands the importance of being a generous and tolerant group member and who believes strongly in socially responsible travel.

Health, Fitness and Mobility

Please carefully and realistically consider your mobility and health when determining if this trip is right for you

This tour requires a good level of fitness and mobility, and applicants will be invited to describe their mobility and fitness levels on their booking application. For your own comfort and in order to not impact the rest of the group, please be realistic in your assessment. This trip is not suitable for those who use mobility aids due to the amount of stairs and walking involved.

Mobility (sitting on the floor) – during at least two meals, an evening of musical entertainment, and one of our handcraft activities, we will sit on the floor. You must be comfortable sitting or kneeling on the ground for the duration of these activities. During some other meals, we sit on low stools and eat at low tables.

Beds - at the kasbah homestay, the beds are simple (but comfortable) mattresses on the floor. We spend two nights there.

Toilets – you will encounter squat toilets occasionally at rest stops on travel days and at two of our handcraft workshops. All our accommodations have western style toilets.

Bathrooms – you must be comfortable using shower-over-bath facilities as we cannot guarantee walk-in showers at our accommodations. At the kasbah homestay, bathrooms are shared between rooms. Some rooms at some of our riads and at the kasbah feature the bathroom on a different level to the bedroom (ie. up/down a couple of stairs).

Walking

- there are extensive walking tours of several hours in each city, often over uneven ground or cobbled surfaces, sometimes in narrow crowded souks, potentially in warm weather. In Fes, the city walking tour comprises most of the day, with a break for lunch. (Fes is the largest medina in the world; it takes all day to get around). We're on our feet a lot.
- a loop walking tour of the Roman archaeological site of Volubilis over rocky, rough, uneven ground. The site is exposed with no shade, and often quite warm. Approximately 1-1.5 hours.
- a loop walking tour of Ait Ben Haddou which is a hilltop fortress featuring many steps to access the top. Approximately 1 – 1.5 hours.
- an optional moderate level hike in Ouirgane along rural roads and paths. Approximately 1 – 2 hours.

Stairs and steps – in addition to the steps required to access the hilltop fortress of Ait Ben Haddou, the majority of our rooms in our accommodations are on second, third or even fourth floors with no elevator access. Breakfast or dinner is often served on the rooftop terraces, again with no elevator access. You must be able to cope with multiple flights of stairs. Stairs in Morocco often have no handrails, and are frequently windy, dimly lit, steep and uneven.

Weather – in November it is expected to be cool to mild with temperatures ranging anywhere from 15-20C during the day, and cold at night. However late autumn temperatures vary greatly between the coastal towns and the desert, and from north to south. Be prepared for all kinds of weather; from quite cold to warm days. Make sure you bring warm layers! There may even be snow on the mountain passes.

Motion sickness

- we travel by camel in the Sahara for approx. 45 minutes. If you don't wish to ride a camel you can travel by jeep.
- there are several long travel days by private air conditioned coach (punctuated by regular rest stops of course) including through winding mountain terrain. Please bring your own medication to alleviate motion sickness.

Luggage management - you will be required to negotiate your arrival and departure airports without personalised assistance, and manage your own luggage.

Personal health – you must carry with you at all times a personal first aid kit (pain relief, bandaids, anti-nausea/diarrhoea meds, etc) in addition to any personal medications or other requirements such as spare spectacles. Ensure you have sufficient supplies of personal medications, ie. do not assume you can get prescriptions easily filled in Morocco. For legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from

dispensing *any* type of drugs including antibiotics and pain relief tablets. Please ensure that you are personally and adequately prepared as flights, windy mountain roads, walking, extreme weather and unfamiliar food can take their toll. If you suffer from asthma, please ensure you have your medication with you as the desert sand and dust can trigger asthma attacks. Consult your doctor for any personal recommended medications and vaccinations in addition to ensuring regular vaccinations such as tetanus, flu, whooping cough, etc are up to date. In 2026 there is no longer a requirement for our travellers in Morocco to be vaccinated against Covid-19, however we strongly recommend all our travellers are up to date with both Covid and flu vaccination schedules.

If you exhibit flu-like or Covid-like symptoms while on tour, you will be required to take precautionary measures to reduce the risk of transmission, including wearing a mask when around others.

Transport

Private air-conditioned coach (with more seats than guests), the occasional taxi, camel, four wheel drive jeep.

Meals

While travelling with us you'll experience an array of wonderful foods. Many of the lunches and dinners are included, particularly in the rural part of the trip where dinner is usually included as part of our accommodations. At other times meals are not included, giving guests flexibility to set their own budget. However we will frequently eat together as a group particularly at lunch, as we move from a morning activity to an afternoon activity.

In Morocco you can eat well on a modest budget, or dine as finely as you wish in the major cities. Food is typically flavoured with fragrant spices, dried fruits and nuts, and tangy lemons. The cuisine is gently spiced rather than spicy hot. Vegetarians are catered for in Morocco but choices are limited, particularly in the rural parts of the itinerary. Vegan and gluten-free travellers will find dining in Morocco challenging and we recommend these guests supplement meals with their own supplies. As Morocco is an Islamic country, some of the restaurants we visit will not offer alcohol. Please be aware of local laws and beliefs and be extra sensitive and respectful when consuming alcohol, particularly on Fridays.

Water

Tap water in Morocco is not safe to drink; use filtered or bottled water only for drinking and brushing your teeth. Please keep a refillable drink bottle with you. You may wish to bring water purification tablets or invest in a self filtering bottle so you can use tap water and further reduce your plastic consumption.

Big containers of bottled water will be provided in the bus on travel days.

Accommodation

Accommodation on this trip is on a twin share basis. Our understanding is that everyone in your group is electing to share twin rooms. If at any stage before departure anyone requests a single room, we will endeavour to secure a single room, however this is subject to availability, and the single supplement will apply. Note, in the desert camp all tents are twin share; all travellers will be paired up.

Room Sharing – Your group has been allocated five twin rooms at each hotel. Room mates are: Megan and Nicole; Jo and Anna; Susie and Trudy; Femke and Anne-Marie; Belinda and Brigita. You may wish to rotate room partners later at your discretion, but please keep to the registered partnerships at the first accommodation. See our room sharing tips [HERE](#).

The accommodations on this trip range from a homestay to 5 stars. You'll stay at:

- traditional *riads* (Moroccan houses featuring rooms arranged around a central open air courtyard, ie rooms do not have external windows) in Marrakech and Fes;
- a couple of comfortable but not plush accommodations in rural towns where choice is limited;
- a simple kasbah homestay in the Draa Valley. The kasbah has few mod cons. Beds are mattresses on the floor, most rooms have no windows, and the mudbrick building is dark and dusty with many narrow, windy, steep and uneven staircases. Bathrooms are shared. Lighting is low, the floors (and walls) are packed earth and there is limited water. We spend two nights here;
- a 'glamping' camp site in the Sahara. The luxury tents have proper beds, air conditioning/heating, and ensuite bathrooms;
- a modern 5 star hotel with a pool, as an end-of-tour treat tour in Casablanca.

On rare occasions, alternative accommodation may need to be made due to circumstances beyond our control. Alternative accommodation will be arranged at a similar standard.

Note: In many riads, twin rooms feature one double bed and one single bed, rather than two large beds.

Note: Unlike hotels, riads do not have multiple identical rooms. Instead, some rooms that are small and others more palatial.

Moroccan hotel rooms rarely have kettles or tea/coffee supplies. Some will supply basic toiletries and hair dryers, but not all. If a hairdryer or particular brand of soap is important to you, please bring your own.

Some, but not all of our accommodations have swimming pools.

Pre-tour and post-tour accommodation

It is our understanding that everyone in your group has independently booked at least one night of accommodation before the tour, at a hotel other than the starting point hotel. Accordingly, please make your own way to the starting point riad on Day 1.

Tour starting point

The joining point accommodation is [Riad Shanima](#), 175 Derb Arset Aouzal, Bab Doukkala, Marrakech. Tel: +212 524 386516

Check in time is 2:00pm. If you arrive before 2pm the staff can store your luggage for you until your room is ready.

Tour finishing point

The finishing point accommodation is [Hotel Barcelo Anfa](#), 44 Boulevard Anfa, Casablanca. Tel: +212 520 009000

Check out time is noon. If your flight departs later in the day, Reception staff will store your luggage.

Flights and Transfers

Flights to and from Morocco are not included in the trip price. Please ensure you book flights that ensure you will be in time to attend the briefing meeting at 6pm on Day 1.

Arrival airport transfers from Marrakech airport to the starting point riad on Day 1, or to pre tour accommodation booked through us, are included in your tour price. However all members of your group have booked pre tour accommodation independently, and as such you are responsible for arranging your own transport from the airport to your chosen accommodation, and on Day 1 from that accommodation to the starting point riad. Please note that vehicles cannot access the riad, and if you are arriving by car you will need to walk the final five minutes to the riad. (See Google Maps for location).

Departure airport transfers from our Casablanca hotel to CMN airport are not included in your tour price. In the final days of the tour our guide can assist you to book a private vehicle transfer to Casablanca airport if you wish.

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is not included in the trip price and is mandatory in order to participate in our tours. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment, COVID-19 related scenarios as far as possible, and loss of luggage and personal effects. You will not be able to join the tour until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24-hour emergency contact number have been provided. If you have credit card insurance, we need details of the underwriter, policy number and a 24 hour emergency contact number rather than just the bank's name and credit card details. You are strongly encouraged to take out travel insurance at the time of paying your deposit.

Safety

The Australian government provides a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. Please see the [Smart Traveller website](#) for up to date information.

Our guide has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

Our guide will accompany you on all included activities, however you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax, or explore. Please note any activities that you undertake that are not part of the itinerary are at your own risk and we are not responsible for the safety or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting activities for your free time.

Petty theft and personal safety

We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt for the safekeeping of your money, passport and airline tickets. Please leave all valuable jewellery at home. Not all our hotels will have safety deposit boxes for storage of valuables; a lock for your suitcase is essential. Maintain the same vigilance you would at home and take sensible precautions to avoid petty theft or pick pocketing, especially in crowded souks and medinas.

Always take a hotel business card with you when going out, so you have the address and contact numbers and can find your way back.

When walking through touristy areas of cities you may be approached by 'helpful' locals who want to give you directions or take you to a local spice/carpet/leather shop. At the destination you will be expected to pay. Please note these people are not registered guides and it's not recommended you avail yourself of their services. A firm friendly 'La shukran' (no thank you) will suffice. If you arrive a day or two before the tour, ignore any locals who try to tell you your hotel/destination is full or closed and who want to take you elsewhere. An arrival transfer to the joining point hotel (or pre tour hotel booked through us) is included in your tour cost to avoid these potential issues.

Transport and seat belts

Depending on where you come from, note that drivers in this part of the world may drive on the opposite side of the road to what you are used to. Take extra caution crossing roads. Traffic may be more chaotic than in your home country. Be aware that local laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country. Some of the transport we use may not provide seat belts.

Fire Precautions

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodations we use may have fire exits, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms.

Stairs and handrails

Building standards may differ to those in your home country. Many stairs are steep and uneven, without hand rails.

Swimming pools

You may stay at hotels with unfenced pools and no life guard on duty.

Passports and Visas

Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the duration of your trip and have at least one blank page. Please ensure the name on your passport matches the name on your booking form and airline tickets. Citizens of most countries including Australia, Europe, UK, USA, Canada and New Zealand do not need to apply for a visa for visits to Morocco that are less than 90 days. South African citizens will need a visa. All travellers are responsible for ensuring they have the correct documentation required for entry to Morocco.

Money Matters

The official currency of Morocco is the Moroccan Dirham (MAD). The dirham has weakened slightly against the AUD in the past year, which is good news for your tourist dollar.

Exchange rates below are as at August 2026.

MAD	GBP	EURO	USD	AUD
200	16.00	18.50	21.00	30.00
100	8.00	9.25	10.70	15.15
50	4.00	4.65	5.35	7.60
20	1.60	1.85	2.15	3.00
10	0.80	0.95	1.07	1.50



Changing money is easy at banks and money exchanges. If you bring cash to exchange, bring GBP, Euros or USD only (Australian, NZ, Canadian notes etc are not accepted at exchanges or banks). Use official money exchange offices or banks only. It's illegal to exchange money with street touts. Note that the dirham is a closed currency and you are unlikely to be able to pre-purchase banknotes outside Morocco.

The best option for obtaining cash is to simply use ATMs and withdraw dirhams when you arrive, using your debit card, credit card or a travel card such as Wise, or Revolut, or Latitude28, etc. The benefit of a travel card is that it's isolated from your bank account so in the event of loss or theft, your main bank account is not at risk of compromise.

Be sure to advise your bank of your travel dates so your credit/debit card isn't frozen the first time you use it.

ATMs are commonly found in cities but there are fewer in the desert and rural villages. It may take several attempts before you find an ATM brand that works with your brand of card. For this reason it can be helpful to have a mix of cash

and card on you, and to have access to two cards such as your usual credit/debit card and a travel card.

Debit/credit/travel cards can be used in large shops but many local restaurants, markets, and shops will only accept cash.

Bargaining is standard practice in Morocco. Don't begin bargaining unless you are seriously interested in the item. Haggle in a friendly manner, beginning by offering half the asked price and you should end up somewhere in the middle. Be respectful, polite, smile and have fun.

Spending money - every traveller is different and spending money requirements will vary. Please consider your own spending habits when allowing for shopping, and remember to allow for drinks, optional activities, gifts and souvenirs, laundry, and tipping. Note that the itinerary includes all breakfasts and several lunches and dinners – you will need to buy the remainder of the lunches and dinners. As a rough estimate, an amount of MAD 250 per day should cover meals.

Tipping - hotels, restaurants, taxis etc

Tipping is standard practice in Morocco, at restaurants and for other service providers. Morocco is not a wealthy country and a small tip can make a big difference to the recipient. As part of your tour price, we will *include* tips for hotel staff, luggage porters, taxi drivers, camel drivers, city guides, waiters etc; our guide will tip these staff on behalf of the group. This takes away any stress and uncertainty over inappropriate tipping amounts. However note that when meals are *not included* in the tour price, or when you're out and about dining or catching taxis on your own, a tip of around 10% is usual.

Tipping – guide and driver

If you are happy with our local guide's and driver's services, a tip for each is appropriate at the conclusion of the tour. As a guideline, our group members often choose to contribute an amount of around 100-150 MAD (AUD \$15-\$20) per person per day for our guide, and less for our driver.

Shopping

This is not a shopping focussed tour. There are tours that offer fancy 'cocktails and shopping in the Marrakech souks' type fun, and there are also serious scholarly tours. Our tours fall somewhere in the middle, with a focus on cultural exploration, a generous dollop of fun and a few shopping opportunities.

As in many cultures, the receipt of commissions in exchange for recommending particular shops is ingrained in the tourism culture of Morocco. In an effort to control and monitor shopping activities with the aim of the best possible outcome for all parties (fair prices directly to the makers, and quality products with reliable delivery for our travellers), our guide has curated a small number of carefully selected shopping experiences, based on positive feedback from previous travellers. On occasion these will be part of our included walking tours.

If you are looking to purchase:

leather goods - there is an opportunity while in the shop we visit in order to access a view of the Fes tanneries;

ceramics - at the Fes pottery studio while your zellige tile masterpieces are drying;

embroidery - at several cooperatives we visit;

carpets - in Ait Ben Haddou at the women's cooperative where we learn about Amazigh carpet techniques and styles.

We encourage you to purchase directly from these co-ops as the proceeds go directly to the makers, rather than to middlemen in the city souks. However, please be assured there is no obligation or pressure to purchase.

There are also periods of free time in Marrakech, Fes and Casablanca which you can use for your own shopping. You may also wish to book extra days before/after the tour if you're keen for more shopping time than we can offer. (Feedback from our guests is split 50-50: "Too much shopping time!" "Not enough shopping time!" So ... we think that suggests we've found the right balance, whilst acknowledging we can't please everyone all the time).

Phone and internet

Internet access is available at all our hotels although it is often patchy. However please don't just rely on wifi in the evenings at the hotel. You must arrange to have internet access during the day when we're out and about in case you get separated from the group. If you get lost we need to locate you safely and efficiently, and not negatively impact the rest of the group or the itinerary schedule. Options include:

- an e-SIM (eg HolaFly, Airalo). Install before you leave home then activate upon arrival at the airport. For a discount on an Airalo e-SIM use the code SUSAN7066;
- global roaming from your mobile phone provider;
- a local SIM purchased on arrival

Tour leader

On this tour you will be accompanied by our local English-speaking guide. The aim of the guide is to help you have the best trip possible while also providing cultural and historical information and suggestions for things to do and see and recommend local dining options. A list of additional recommended shops, galleries/museums and activities will also be provided closer to departure.

Emergencies or other issues

While we endeavour to provide the best experience possible, due to the nature of travel, occasionally things go awry. Should any issue occur during the trip, please discuss this with your guide in the first instance so we can do our best to rectify the problem.

Emergency funds

Please make sure you have access to an additional ~\$1000 AUD for emergencies or in case unforeseen circumstances (eg natural disaster, civil unrest etc) necessitate a change to our route.

What to pack

A **Suggested Packing List** is on your tour page. Please bring one medium sized suitcase and a small soft backpack/daypack to carry your water bottle, medical kit etc which can also function as an overnight bag in the Sahara.

Please ensure all luggage is lockable and clearly labelled ON THE OUTSIDE so we can see at a glance whose case is whose.

Responsible travel

At retreat|recreate we believe strongly in low impact, or rather positive impact, travel. Broadly speaking this means we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local culture and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects.

As a women's travel organisation, we strive to patronise locally-owned small businesses and visit places where one can purchase direct from artisans. We are proud to engage with and support not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises, co-operatives and other associations that particularly assist women and girls. By travelling with us you are also contributing directly towards the following non-profit organisations (through our itinerary activities):

- Women's Carpet Co-operative, Ait Ben Haddou
- The Anou, Fes
- Midelt Women's Embroidery Association
- Women's Association of Ait Ben Haddou
- El Khorbat Community Co-operative
- Women's natural dyeing co-op, Ait Ben Haddou
- Al Kawtar Embroidery Co-operative, Marrakech.

Ethics of riding camels

Unlike the tourism practice of riding of elephants, most available guidance on sustainable tourism does *not* discourage camel riding. In fact it is seen as a means of helping nomadic people find a sustainable way of living. Globally the only organisation that objects to camel riding is PETA. (PETA objects to *all* forms of horse riding, domestic and commercial). The key to riding a camel ethically is to take note of the camels' condition, surroundings, the manner in which they're treated by their handlers, and the surfaces they are ridden on. Their feet are suited to sand, not tarmac. Thus, city-based camel rides, or anywhere animals appear ill treated, should be avoided. Camels are of great cultural and social significance to communities in Morocco, and while the changing nature of their role to suit a modern economy should be acknowledged, we are satisfied that the camel rides included in our itinerary are in accordance with our ethical travel values. However the decision to ride is personal, and you may elect to travel to the Sahara camp by four wheel drive vehicle if you prefer.

Refrain from supporting businesses that exploit animals such as snakes or monkeys.

Clothing

While Moroccans are used to tourists and Western dress, particularly in Marrakech, they themselves dress modestly. We will spend time at a mosque, ancient gardens, private homes and workspaces, and rural areas; wearing clothing that covers your shoulders and knees is essential at the

mosque and preferred elsewhere. *No shorts or skirts above the knee, and no shoestring straps or revealing tops.* Consider how you would dress at home when visiting a church or synagogue. Headscarves are not required for the mosque.

Environment

Please bring your own refillable water bottle to fill at water stations and from the large bottles we provide on the bus. To further reduce plastic consumption, consider investing in a self filtering water bottle.

We encourage you to say no to plastic bags, and will provide a cloth tote bag in your welcome pack on Day 1.

Shopping ethically

Shop for locally made products and directly from artisans where possible. When bargaining, don't be aggressive – it's a game! Be polite and keep a smile on your face. See the more detailed section on general shopping on page 5.

Photography

Please ask and receive permission before taking photographs of people, especially children.

Begging

Morocco has little in the way of a social security system. If you wish to assist beggars, note that most Moroccans give 1-10 dirhams, however this is entirely optional and you should not feel obliged to give money. We recommend you ignore any aggressive begging requests. Please refrain from giving money or sweets to children as this encourages them to continue begging and skip school.

A couple of rules

Any illegal activity including the use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated. Possession or use of these substances is not only against the law but puts the rest of the group at risk. If you feel any member of the group is behaving inappropriately in this or any other way, please let us know. See the Booking Conditions section 'Authority on Tour' for further details regarding the right of the guide to remove any group member who is threatening the wellbeing of the group or communities we visit.

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group – patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, please ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on everyone's part.

Bring a sense of humour and a sense of adventure!

You're going to have a wonderful trip ☺