

MOROCCO HANDCRAFTS & GARDENS

3-20 November 2026

retreat|recreate is delighted to offer this 18-day private handcrafts & gardens tour

Discover the fascinating fusion of Africa, Arab & Amazigh that is Morocco. Enjoy SIX private handcraft experiences (embroidery, leatherwork, carpet knotting & weaving, palm leaf weaving, botanical dyeing and *zellige* mosaic tiling) and several world class gardens. Engage with local families and artists, be inspired by incredible design and craftsmanship, explore multiple UNESCO World Heritage listed sites, cities and rural villages, and travel through stunning scenery including the Sahara desert and the ancient Atlas Mountains.

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Day 1	Tuesday 3 NOV	Day 2	Wednesday 4 NOV	Day 3	Thursday 5 NOV	Day 4	Friday 6 NOV
MARRAKECH	Riad Shanima	MARRAKECH	Riad Shanima	MARRAKECH	Riad Shanima	MARRAKECH	Riad Shanima
Salaam aleikum! Welcome to your BRIDGY TO MOROCCO private Morocco handcrafts and gardens tour! Make your own way from your pre tour accommodation to our lovely <i>riad</i> (traditional Moroccan home set around an inner courtyard) – Riad Shanima. Your tour begins in the lounge area of the riad with a briefing meeting at 6pm (timing to be confirmed via WhatsApp). This will be followed by a delicious welcome dinner where we'll introduce you to traditional Moroccan cuisine.		Today you'll dive straight into your Moroccan craft exploration at the extraordinary Museum of Adornment, and the famous Jardin Marjorelle with its stunning Berber Museum. These are a fabulous way to begin understanding Moroccan traditional craftsmanship. It's a rich cultural morning and an excellent introduction to this beautiful country. Lunch will be on the rooftop of the Museum of Adornment. In the afternoon the delights continue as you enjoy your very first hands-on textile experience – learning the art of the famously intricate Fessi embroidery at Al Kawtar with a group of disabled women who've banded together to form an association to earn an independent income from their stitching skills.		A little day trip today! Nectarome is Morocco's first aromatic and medicinal garden. Featuring a hectare of around fifty different aromatic plants, the garden represents an important ecological nature reserve for the Ourika valley region. Leaving Nectarome, head to Anima, an opulent 3 hectare botanical and art lover's delight, filled with exuberant plants, ponds, pavilions and sculptures by the likes of Keith Haring, Rodin and Pablo Picasso, all framed by spectacular views of the snow capped Atlas Mountain peaks. You'll have plenty of time to wander the garden and grab a delicious lunch at the Paul Bowles café on site.		Head into the winding lanes of the Marrakech medina for another fabulous immersive experience. In the heart of the leather souk you'll be guided through the process of making your own pair of babouches (traditional Moroccan slippers). They're the perfect handmade souvenir of Morocco. After your workshop you'll visit the exquisite Secret Garden, a garden of two parts: firstly a restored 19thC Islamic garden with a formal four part layout and central fountain. And secondly, an exotic garden featuring plants from around the world. The Secret Garden has a lovely café too, if you're ready for lunch. Otherwise, wander the medina – it's free time for relaxation, shopping in the souks or whatever you fancy.	
Meals: Dinner		Meals: Breakfast, Lunch		Meals: Breakfast		Meals: Breakfast	



Day 5 Saturday 7 NOV



Day 6 Sunday 8 NOV



Day 7 Monday 9 NOV



Day 8 Tuesday 10 NOV



Day 9 Wednesday 11 NOV

OUIRGANE

Ksar Shama

The road beckons! Today you bid farewell to Marrakech, and head out of town. You'll very quickly find yourselves in the High Atlas Mountains as you travel south through stunning scenery.

Your first destination is a **traditional Amazigh (Berber) home** nestled by a river in a small rural village. Your charming hostess Saida will show you around her house and productive garden, and you'll enjoy a home cooked lunch on her terrace.

In the afternoon continue your drive to **Ouirgane**, a picturesque Amazigh village in the heart of the **Toubkal National Park**. You can enjoy a walk through the countryside to stretch your legs and admire the scenery.

Dinner is included at our eco-lodge accommodation tonight (as it will be most nights on the road trip part of the tour).

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

AIT BEN HADDOU

Ksar Ljanoub

Another day of once in a lifetime experiences awaits as you travel the famous **Route of a Thousand Kasbahs** to the most famous one of all, the UNESCO World Heritage listed kasbah of **Ait Ben Haddou** (pictured above). If it looks familiar, it's because you've probably seen it at the movies, in Game of Thrones, Lawrence of Arabia, Gladiator and so many more.

Depending on the time of arrival you may enjoy a walking tour around the kasbah, or you may do this in the morning.

Tomorrow you'll each dye a scarf with the women from a local cooperative so this evening you may wish to spend a little time doing some tie dye prep. Bring some rubber bands and pegs, or simply tie or knot your scarf, or maybe you're good at fancy stitched shibori? Bring thread too if so!

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

AIT BEN HADDOU

Ksar Ljanoub

This morning's visit is to a large local **women's carpet co-op** – you'll see demonstrations of spinning, carding, weaving and knotting, and learn about the various styles of carpets and the meanings of their woven symbols. If you wish to buy a carpet, this is a great opportunity, knowing that the money goes directly to the women, with no middle man.

At a nearby tiny local co-op you'll learn a little about **natural dyeing**. Traditionally, craftswomen dyed with local plants, however these days synthetic dyes are mostly used, so it's a treat to engage with a group who are maintaining traditional dye practices. You'll dye your scarves (the ones you prepped last night) with pomegranate, turmeric or madder, depending on what's on offer on the day.

Lunch will be at the co-op – *you will sit on the floor for this meal*.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

TAMNOUGALT

Kasbah des Caid

Leaving Ait Ben Haddou, you'll drive through the Atlas Mountains to **Tamnougalt**. Your destination is a 15th century kasbah in the Draa Valley, set in a lush palm oasis, and while it's rustic, it is a **highlight of the tour**. You'll meet the current owner of the kasbah (descendent of the village's original *caid*, or tribal chief), hear about local life in the village and the ongoing restoration works of this ancient kasbah.

The earthen mudbrick building has few mod cons. See the Trip Notes for details about this accommodation. You will spend two nights here. It's a fabulous, authentic experience that most tourists don't get to access, but you *must be physically able and prepared* to cope with this rustic homestay experience.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

TAMNOUGALT

Kasbah des Caid

Today is a relaxed day soaking up the slow kasbah life. Your host will lead a walking tour of the village, after which there'll be a **demonstration of traditional palm leaf mat weaving** and you can have a turn yourselves. (*Note, you will be sitting on cushions on the ground*)

Lunch will be under the palm trees in the oasis (weather permitting) and the afternoon will be **free time** to spend as you wish. You can relax in the rooftop terrace of the kasbah and enjoy some down time with a book, or stitching project, or you might enjoy wandering around the village. The choice is yours. It's Day 9 and the perfect opportunity halfway through the busy tour to simply chill.

Tonight after dinner you will rock the kasbah, with live music and dancing with local Gnaoua musicians. (*The evening musical entertainment may occur the previous night, depending on the musicians' schedule*).

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 10 Thursday 12 NOV



Day 11 Friday 13 NOV



Day 12 Saturday 14 NOV



Day 13 Sunday 15 NOV



Day 14 Monday 16 NOV

SAHARA DESERT Golden Camp
Pack an overnight bag for your desert adventure! You'll continue your road trip, heading towards the Algerian border and the mighty Sahara desert. On the way, stop for lunch in the small rural village of El Khorbat where the locals have established a fabulous **folkcraft museum** and a **women's embroidery co-op** within their traditional kasbah.

Late in the day you'll arrive at **Merzouga** and travel by jeep through the stunningly beautiful dunes to your luxury camp in the **Sahara Desert**.

This evening there'll be Gnaoua music around the campfire under the breathtaking starry Saharan sky.

The tents here have proper beds, air conditioning, wifi and ensuite bathroom facilities. This is glamping!

MIDELT Hotel Taddart
Rise early this morning if you want to witness a **glorious sunrise** (weather permitting) over the magnificent Saharan sand dunes. After breakfast it's time to meet your **camels** and enjoy a slow, quiet trek through the dunes back to town. This camel ride is a once in a lifetime experience, however you can travel by jeep if you prefer.

Your destination today is **Midelt**, a market town originally built as a base for mining, nestled between the Atlas and Anti-Atlas mountains.

In Midelt you'll visit **Andaz Nouska**, a **women's handcraft co-operative** in the afternoon. The embroidery work of these women is of a high standard and is very impressive. Originally they learnt their stitching skills from a community of French Franciscan nuns who settled here, and they still maintain close ties with the few nuns left in the convent.

FES Riad Ness Zmane (or similar)
Say goodbye to the Atlas Mountains today and drive toward **Fes**, a fascinating living example of the medieval Arab world, with its mind-blowingly enormous medina of over 9000 tiny lanes and alleys.

On the way it's possible you'll stop for morning tea with a nomad family if they're home (TBC). *Note, you will sit on the floor here.*

Upon arrival in Fes you'll dive straight into its cultural delights with a tour of its best **ceramic studio**. Morocco, and Fes in particular, is famous for its **zellige** mosaic tilework, and you are lucky to be able to experience the process yourselves by making a small coaster sized piece in a **zellige mosaic workshop**. The studio makes wheel thrown pots, dishes and tagines as well as zellige tiles.

Dinner tonight is included; we have a standing invitation to dine with a local family at their home.

FES Riad Ness Zmane (or similar)
Today's adventure is an all day **guided walking tour of the Fes medina**, the largest urban car-free city in the world and another UNESCO World Heritage listed site. You'll see a multitude of artisan studios within the souks - many of the artisans are running businesses in the same tiny studios as their ancestors. There are metal workers, weavers, tool makers, embroiderers, wood workers, copper beaters and leather workers among others. No visit to Morocco is complete without visiting the world famous **tanneries** (pictured) where workers dye leathers and skins in enormous dye vats that have been in continuous operation since the 11th century.

You'll also visit the **Museum of Islamic Arts**, not only for its fabulous collection but the magnificent architecture and stunning central **Islamic style garden**.

FES Riad Ness Zmane (or similar)
As you have seen over the past two weeks, carpet knotting and weaving are a part of everyday life for many Moroccan women, particularly rural Amazigh women. Skills and expertise are passed from grandmother to mother to daughter. In addition to providing additional income, carpet weaving is an important way of maintaining and strengthening Amazigh culture and traditions.

We're thrilled to give you a firsthand experience of the craftsmanship involved in these traditions in your own **carpet weaving workshop**. Under the expert guidance of the fabulous team of Amazigh carpet weavers at The Anou, you'll each design and weave your own tiny carpet on a mini loom.

After the weaving session it's **free time** for independent exploration, a little shopping time, or maybe a hammam. We can recommend a great hammam near our riad for the quintessential Moroccan experience!

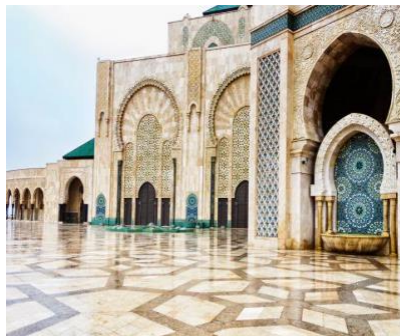
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

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Meals: Breakfast

Meals: Breakfast



Day 15 **Tuesday 17 NOV**

MEKNES

Riad d'Or

Another UNESCO World Heritage listed site features this morning, as we depart Fes to explore the **Roman ruins of Volubilis**, the Roman empire's furthest western point. The columns, arches and beautiful mosaics are quite extraordinary and the site continues to be excavated, with much left still to uncover. You'll explore the site with a local expert.

Then take a short drive to another imperial city, the laid back centre of Meknes. Lunch today is a special Moroccan delicacy – a camel burger! (There'll be an alternative for vegetarians, don't worry).

You'll have a guided walking tour of **Meknes** making sure to include the souks which are full of the tiny studios of embroiderers, garment makers, braid, tassel and trim weavers, tailors and spinners, and shops crammed with threads, buttons, cloth and *djellabas*.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16 **Wednesday 18 NOV**

CASABLANCA

Continuing your journey west, travel to Morocco's capital city **Rabat**, home of Morocco's parliament and the royal family. A stunning mix of old and new, Rabat is home to some of the country's most famous and innovative architecture, and also one of the prettiest residential kasbahs, complete with a pirate look out over the Atlantic ocean and a **12th century traditional Andalusian garden**. Within this beautiful garden is an excellent **museum housing the royal collection of traditional costumes and jewellery** from all over Morocco.

In the late afternoon you'll drive to **Casablanca** for the final two nights of your tour. After a couple of single night stays, it's lovely to settle into a 5 star hotel for a bit of luxury for two nights.

Meals: Breakfast

Day 17 **Thursday 19 NOV**

CASABLANCA

Casablanca is Morocco's largest city and the country's economic centre. Its most famous landmark is the extraordinary **Hassan II mosque**, the largest in Morocco, and the only one open to non Muslims. Completed in 1993, it can accommodate a staggering 105,000 worshippers (25,000 indoors and another 80,000 in the massive courtyard outside), and displays a vast array of artisan handcrafts including *zellige* tiles, carved plaster, metalwork, woodwork, marble and painted surfaces. You'll have a **private tour** of this truly awe inspiring incredible building and stunning example of Moroccan artisanship in your final excursion together.

This afternoon is **free time** for last minute shopping, or final galleries and museums.

Tonight, reflect on your adventure together at your **farewell dinner**.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 18 **Friday 20 NOV**

CASABLANCA

Sadly, your tour comes to an end today after breakfast. It's time to pack up your memories and souvenirs, say your farewells and head for home.

We can assist you to book a transfer to the Casablanca international airport for your flight home if you wish.

NB: As this itinerary was developed a year ahead of departure, some further refinement may occur. We will always keep you fully informed regarding any changes to this itinerary.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions:

- 17 nights/18 days accommodation (hotels, riads, a rustic kasbah homestay and a 'glamping' campsite)
- Arrival airport transfers
- Daily breakfasts, 6 lunches, 11 dinners (drinks not included)
- Transport: private air conditioned vehicle, camel, occasional taxi
- 6 hands on handcraft experiences
- Handcraft cooperative visits
- Entrance fees to cultural sites & gardens
- Services of a local English-speaking guide and driver
- Tipping of hotel/restaurant staff, porters etc on behalf of the group
- Water in the bus (please bring a refillable bottle)

Exclusions:

- International airfares
- Travel insurance
- Departure transfers
- Meals and drinks not specified in the itinerary
- Tip each for guide & driver

Notes:

- Please read the Trip Notes thoroughly to understand the health & mobility requirements.
- The handcraft experiences on this tour are not formal workshops or classes with trained teachers. They're more about informal and personal experiences with local artisans and practitioners.