

## Walking in Southern Morocco in the Spring, plus Marrakech

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**16 – 27 February 2021**

Spring comes early to southern Morocco and late February is ideal for walking, with warm sun and cool air temperatures, blossom on the terraces of almond trees and snow still gleaming on the peaks of the Atlas Mountains.

Daily walks take us through groves of olive and argan trees, into oasis gardens and palm-filled gorges, and up and over low passes with extensive mountain views. We explore the walled towns of Tiznit, Taroudant and Essaouira and enjoy delicious *tagines* accompanied by good Moroccan wines. We begin our visit with a stay in a remarkable hotel converted from a French Foreign Legion Fort on the Morocco-Spanish Sahara border and finish in style, exploring Marrakech from a four-star boutique *riad* in the historic *medina*.

### **HIGHLIGHTS of the tour include:**

- Walking through olive and argan groves, oasis gardens and over low cols with fine views of the Atlas Mountains
- Discovering the picturesque Atlantic port of Essaouira and the fascinating city of Marrakech
- Exploring the *souqs* of Tiznit, Tafraout and Taroudant
- Staying in charming *riads* and a special hotel converted from a French Foreign Legion fort on the border with Spanish Sahara
- Enjoying delicious, traditional, Moroccan cuisine accompanied by very good Moroccan wines

### **Guests' comments on this trip:**

*'This was an excellent holiday - we were particularly lucky with the group but above all the leaders added so much to the enjoyment (we enjoyed all the botany, geography, history and anecdotes) - this was an adventurous holiday where we got a chance to see the 'real Morocco' as well as having a touch of western luxury.'*

*'We so enjoyed our first Kudu holiday - Katharine was the most charming and excellent leader - Tereza a delight and so efficient, especially in how generously the wine flowed, and nothing was denied one. Every detail was thought through and it was much appreciated by us.'*

*'A wonderful trip. Great guides, congenial company, a different culture, varied landscapes, thank you!'*

### **Itinerary**

#### **DAY 1**

#### **L, D included**

After arriving in the late morning at Agadir airport, we head for our first Moroccan lunch to the town of Tiznit, surrounded by crenelated pink-ochre walls and famous for its silverwork. Later, we continue to the coast and our hotel for 3 nights, a beautifully converted French Foreign Legion Fort in a dramatic hilltop setting, with a pool and an excellent restaurant. Once settled in, we can stroll from our hotel up to the old Moroccan fort and look at plants and the views along the coast.

## **DAY 2**

### **B, L, D included**

We walk from our hotel on a country track with our destination a traditional village 9 km away. From our guide, we learn about life in the village, before we have a lunch of typical Moroccan cooked salads and couscous. The experience of traditional Berber hospitality surrounded by a large family is truly unforgettable. In the afternoon, there is the option of returning on foot or by vehicle, with time to see and buy some fine ceramics from Fez in Mirleft.

## **DAY 3**

### **B, L, D included**

Following the coastal road south for 30 km, we visit Sidi Ifni, the former frontier post of the Spanish Sahara, with its collection of faded Art Deco buildings, then walk by the pounding surf on the huge sandy beach at Legzira (tide dependent) and enjoy freshly grilled fish and a chilled rosé for lunch. The remainder of the afternoon is free for relaxing by the pool with a good book.

## **DAY 4**

### **B, L, D included**

We drive up from the Atlantic coast into the Anti-Atlas Mountains with their terraces of almond trees in blossom, towering cliffs and deep valleys. In the Ameln valley, we walk on narrow paths through the spring-fed gardens of villages sheltering at the foot of the 1,000 m cliff of Jebel Lekst, seeing figs, olives, palm-trees, carob trees and almonds, the colourful Moussier's redstart and numerous working donkeys en route to our Kasbah-style hotel.

## **DAY 5**

### **B, L, D included**

Transferring to 4WDs for the day, we drive to the village of Agard-Oudad to walk through a valley with bizarre painted rocks (by Belgian artist Jean Veran) and early spring wildflowers, then continue south into a remote gorge and climb up to see prehistoric rock carvings – trumpeter finches and black wheatears also occur in this arid habitat.

## **DAY 6**

### **B, L, D included**

We visit the *souq* in Tafraoute (Berber woollen carpets and cloaks, silver jewellery and spices) then walk gently up over a low col with marvellous views of the Anti-Atlas and down to our hotel for lunch. A scenic drive takes us over several high passes in the Anti-Atlas to the Sous valley where our elegant four-star hotel is built in Arab-Berber style and set in 4 acres of gardens with a heated outdoor jacuzzi.

## **DAY 7**

### **B, L, D included**

Today we explore the Sous valley, known for its argan tree-climbing goats and numerous birds of prey (including black-shouldered kite), stroll in search of wild tortoises, visit a traditional Berber village and a women's co-operative, and picnic in an oasis on the northern edge of the Anti-Atlas Mountains. We have dinner in the heart of the mediaeval walled town of Taroudant, in a small *riad* known for its authentic cuisine.

## **DAY 8**

### **B, L, D included**

We drive north for one hour to walk in the scenic Mentaga valley, with fine views of the snow-capped Jebel Aoulime (3,555 m) in the High Atlas. We follow a track linking small

villages past oasis gardens and through a small river gorge with oleander-fringed pools and picnic en route. We return in time to explore Taroudant's excellent *souq* or to enjoy the hotel's pool and gardens.

### **DAY 9**

#### **B, L, D included**

After a morning's drive on the scenic coastal road, we walk down to the beach for lunch just before we reach Essaouira, an Atlantic port dating back to the Phoenician period. We settle into our hotel, an historic caravanserai converted into a comfortable *riad*. An orientation walk through atmospheric narrow streets takes us to the photogenic fishing harbour and the 18<sup>th</sup> century battlements in time to watch the sun setting over the ocean. We have dinner in a delightful traditional restaurant.

### **DAY 10**

#### **B, L, D included**

We have a free morning – time to walk on the beach, take pictures, indulge in a little shopping – before a simple fish lunch by the harbour. We transfer by road (3 hours) to Marrakech where our four-star boutique *riad* is perfectly located in the historic *medina*. A stroll round the famous Jemaa el Fna – alive with musicians, storytellers, acrobats, snake-charmers, monkeys and clowns – is a colourful and essential ritual before dinner.

### **DAY 11**

#### **B, L, D included**

Setting off on foot, we visit the celebrated Saadian Tombs, dating from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. We proceed through the *mellah*, the atmospheric Jewish quarter, to the Bahia Palace with its series of grand paved courtyards and Andalusian gardens. After lunch, we take a leisurely walk through the *medina* to visit Ben Youssef Medersa, a beautiful Koranic school, founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which is particularly noted for its rich decorative detail. Our farewell dinner showcases Moroccan cuisine at its best.

### **DAY 12**

#### **B included**

After a leisurely breakfast on the roof terrace, we transfer to the airport for flights home.

### **Activity Level**

#### **Standard**

6 walking days, 1.5 to 4 hours daily. Lightweight hiking boots which provide good ankle support are essential and hiking poles/sticks are advisable as the terrain is generally rough underfoot.

### **Temperatures**

In late February temperatures average 21°C in southern Morocco but can drop to 8°C in the mountains in the evening. It is normally dry and clear at this time of year.

**Trip Price**, per person sharing:

**£2,395.75** until 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020                      **£2,460.50** until 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**£2,525.25** until 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020            **£2,590** after 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020

<https://www.kudutravel.com/faq#discounts>

**£320** single supplement

**£400** deposit per person

*Please note that the single room supplement is imposed by the hotels and not by Kudu Travel. If you are willing to share but no other suitable guest books on the trip, we regret that the supplement will be payable. We shall endeavour to obtain double rooms for single occupancy whenever possible.*

### **Price Includes**

- accommodation for Days 1 through 12, on a twin shared basis
- meals (with wine/beer at dinners and some restaurant lunches) as listed in the daily notation
- land transportation in a private vehicle with drivers (minibus and 4WDs) as described
- entrance and sightseeing fees, except during free periods
- services of English-speaking local guides on some days and Kudu tour leader throughout
- gratuities for hotel and restaurant staff, drivers and local guides (appreciation for Kudu tour leader is discretionary)

### **Price does not Include**

- flights to Agadir and from Marrakech
- trip cancellation, medical or other insurance
- immunisations, prescriptions or other medical requirements
- passport, visa and health documentation
- personal expenses (laundry, alcohol besides wine/beer with group lunches and dinners, free time activities, etc.)
- meals noted as excepted in the daily notation
- transport and transfer of excess baggage
- Moroccan departure tax (if any)

### **Visa and Health Requirements**

Visitors from the UK, EU, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand currently require a valid passport, but not a visa, for entry to Morocco. If you are a national of any other country, please check visa regulations with your nearest Embassy of Morocco.

At present, there are no specific and compulsory health requirements for entry to Morocco, but you may wish to **consult your doctor (at least 6 weeks before you travel)** about updating your immunisation against Hepatitis A, polio, tetanus and typhoid, or anything else they consider advisable. A dental check-up is also sensible. You may also wish to check the advice given to travellers by the Department of Health (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/healthcare-when-travelling-abroad/>) and the FCO (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>).

### **Insurance**

It is essential, and a condition of booking, that you protect yourself with a suitable travel insurance policy as soon as you book a trip. We can arrange comprehensive cover for UK residents. For further details, please see our website or ask our office.

### **Size of Party**

This trip will run with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 14 guests.