

Morocco with Racheal Jackson and Ashley Wilson

March 20–28, 2025

\$2999

Group size- 8-20 Travelers

Duration- 9 days, 8 nights

Come explore Morocco with At Home with Ashley and Banyan Bridges! A dizzying array of ancient cities, frenetic markets, mind-blowing landscapes, and North African hospitality awaits you, welcome to Morocco! Make friends, learn to watercolor with Ashley, and absorb all of the inspiration that surrounds you.

Day 1-

Welcome! Please be prepared to meet in the lobby at 5:30pm to depart for your welcome dinner. The dinner reservation time will be finalized closer to your trip date. If you plan on arriving today, we recommend flying into CMN.

Let's raise a glass together to an exciting trip ahead during your welcome dinner! Tonight's gathering will take place at a local restaurant, just a brief 15-minute transfer from the hotel. The evening promises a delightful a la carte menu, offering a taste of the most authentic Moroccan flavors. Seize the chance to savor traditional dishes like tagine, couscous, and grilled meats. Please note that beverages are not included and can be purchased at the venue. The specific restaurant will be determined by your on-site guide.

Day 2-

Embark on a journey from the bustling city of Casablanca toward the captivating Chefchaouen in the north. Enjoy the scenic beauty of Morocco's countryside as you travel. Upon reaching the hotel, take a leisurely stroll through the city to immerse yourself in the charm of the renowned Blue City. As today involves several hours of travel, we recommend wearing comfortable clothing for the journey.

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and embark on the journey to the enchanting Chefchaouen. Rest stops will be provided for bathroom breaks as needed, please be aware that using facilities may incur an additional charge. Around midday, we will make a stop for lunch, with the specific location determined by your on-site guide. Duration- around 7 hours.

Late in the afternoon, after settling in and freshening up at the hotel, your local guide will lead a leisurely walk around the city. This stroll will help you unwind after the journey and immerse yourself in Chefchaouen's vibrant streets. Wander through narrow alleys adorned with an array of colors and aromas, guided by our expert. You'll observe local vendors at work and gain insight into the city's way of life. This relaxed tour, starting from the hotel, is an ideal introduction to the Blue City. You'll have the chance to purchase traditional Moroccan handicrafts and indulge in local delicacies. You'll return to the hotel by sunset, and the evening will be free for you to enjoy dinner on your own. The walking tour covers approximately 0.5 to 1 mile, allowing you to explore the labyrinthine streets on foot. Restrooms are available at restaurants and cafes along the way, with additional costs if used.

Day 3-

Today is dedicated to exploring Chefchaouen's breathtaking natural surroundings. You'll embark on a hike through the stunning Rif Mountains, starting with a morning transfer from the hotel to the trailhead. The day will be spent uncovering the awe-inspiring views of the Akchour waterfall. By afternoon, you'll return to Chefchaouen for a city walking tour, where you'll discover the highlights of the Blue City, including the Kasbah (old fortified town) and the Ras El Ma river. For the hike, dress according to the day's weather, keeping in mind the high humidity of the area. It's advisable to wear hiking shoes and trousers. Remember to bring a hat, sunscreen, and at least 1.5 liters of water to stay hydrated.

After breakfast, a 50-minute transfer will take you to the trailhead of the hike to Akchour Waterfall and God's Bridge in the Rif Mountains. Starting from Akchour town, the trail winds through a beautiful valley with rivers, waterfalls, and lush greenery. It offers different paths suitable for all kinds of hikers, from beginners to experts; your guide will pick the path that suits you best. Along the way, you'll encounter Akchour Waterfall, a majestic sight as the water cascades into a natural pool. Continuing, you'll reach God's Bridge, a stunning rock formation shaped by the river's flow over centuries. The trail might involve some rock scrambling and narrow passages, adding excitement. The hike duration can vary from 3 to 7 hours, covering 3 to 12 miles, based on your guide's chosen route. The terrain is diverse, from rugged landscapes to muddy paths. You'll return to your hotel by mid-afternoon. Remember to pack a backpack with snacks, fruits, and water. Local vendors on the trail offer nuts, fresh fruits, and drinks. For a fuller lunch, consider pre-ordering a packed meal from nearby restaurants the day before. Depending on the weather, you might want to bring a swimsuit and towel for a river dip. Duration- 5 hours.

After resting and freshening up at your hotel post-hike, a guided walking tour begins through the quaint streets and alleyways of Chefchaouen. Listen to captivating stories of the city's past as you explore the Kasbah, the ancient fortified town from the 15th century, where buildings are adorned in various shades of blue. Strolling along the banks of the Ras Elma River, you'll have time to relax and absorb the scenic beauty. You will have the opportunity to stop at cafes to sip mint tea and browse vibrant markets where locals sell colorful handicrafts and traditional Moroccan items. This leisurely walk covers approximately 0.5 to 1 mile, allowing ample exploration of the labyrinthine streets on

foot. Restrooms are available at restaurants and cafes along the route, with possible additional charges for use. Duration- 2 hours

Day 4-

Today, depart from the Rif Mountains and journey southeastward toward the captivating city of Fes. Enjoy the scenic beauty of Morocco's countryside as you travel. Along the way, there will be a stop at the historic Volubilis ruins, an ancient Roman city dating back to the 3rd century BC. Upon arrival in Fez in the afternoon, you'll have free time to explore the city at your leisure. As today involves several hours of travel, we recommend wearing comfortable clothing for the journey.

Set off from the Blue City on the route to Fes, celebrated as Morocco's cultural capital. After a 3-hour journey, there will be a scheduled stop to explore the Volubilis ruins, a historically significant archaeological site. Once the visit concludes, resume the journey towards Fes, adding an extra 2.5 hours on the road. Restroom breaks and chances for snacks will be provided as required during the trip. Along the way, a stop in Meknes is planned, with free time for lunch. Duration- 5 hours 30 minutes

On the way to Fes, a stop at Volubilis presents an opportunity to explore an ancient Roman city and archaeological site, offering a glimpse into a pivotal historical settlement. Accompanied by your expert guide, you'll journey back in time to the 3rd century BC, when Volubilis thrived as a significant outpost of the Roman Empire in North Africa, serving as a vital center for trade and agriculture. During your visit, marvel at the impressive structures, including the well-preserved Triumphal Arch, an iconic entry point to the city. Discover remnants of grand mansions adorned with intricate mosaics, alongside public buildings, temples, and basilicas, reflecting the city's architectural splendor. Nestled amidst Morocco's picturesque countryside, the ruins provide breathtaking views of rolling hills and fertile plains, enhancing the allure of the visit. Facilities, including restrooms, are available at the entrance gate. This guided tour covers approximately 0.5 to 1 mile on foot, allowing for an immersive exploration of this historical site. After the visit, resume your journey toward Fes. Duration- 1 hour 30 minutes.

Day 5-

Today is dedicated solely to exploring Fes's key highlights, such as the ceramic village, tannery, and weaving sites. This comprehensive day tour combines vehicle transfers and guided walking explorations. There will be free time for lunch on your own during the tour, and we'll return to the hotel in the afternoon. Considering the day involves walking and transitions between locations, it's advisable to wear comfortable walking shoes. Don't forget to bring a hat, sunglasses, and a water bottle.

Embark on an enchanting tour of Fes, uncovering its unique highlights. The day begins with a 10-minute vehicle ride from your hotel, heading first to the Royal Palace. Here, soak in the rich history

with a brief stop for explanations before embarking on an exploratory walk through the charming Jewish Quarter. From there, hop back into transport and journey to the highest point of Fes—the fortress—for a breathtaking panoramic view of the medina. Next, delve into the enchanting world of the Ceramic Village, where a 30-45 minute tour unveils the artistry behind this unique craft. Returning to the medina, the remainder of the tour is on foot. Strolling through vibrant streets, encounter Fes's lively Vegetable Market and visit cultural landmarks like the Koranic School and the esteemed Akraouyin University. At this point, you will have some free time to enjoy lunch on your own. Post-lunch, discover the ancient craft of tanning at Dar Jeld, navigating the narrow streets of Fes for an authentic experience. The tour culminates with a visit to the Weavers Cooperative, a celebration of traditional craftsmanship. Finally, meet your driver for a return journey to your hotel. This tour covers approximately 1 to 1.5 miles on foot. Restrooms are available at restaurants and cafes along the route, with possible additional charges for use. Duration- 7 hours.

Day 6-

Today, we'll say goodbye to Fes and head to peaceful Bin El Ouidane after breakfast. Our journey starts in the morning and includes a lunch break along the way. When we arrive in El Ouidane in the afternoon, you'll have time to relax before we gather at a local home for a classic Moroccan barbecue with your fellow travelers. As today involves several hours of travel, we recommend wearing comfortable clothing for the journey.

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and embark on the journey to the tranquil Bin El Ouidane. Rest stops will be provided for bathroom breaks as needed, please be aware that using facilities may incur an additional charge. Around midday, we will make a stop for lunch, with the specific location determined by your on-site guide. Duration- 6 hours and 30 minutes.

Tuck in a Barbecue dinner in your accommodation.

Day 7-

Today, we leave the serene Bin El Ouidane and head back to the bustling Marrakech. During the journey, we'll make a stop at Ouzoud Waterfall in the Atlas Mountains. By mid-afternoon, you'll arrive at your hotel for a quick freshen up before starting an enjoyable walking tour through the medina to taste the delicious traditional street food, ending with free time at the Jemaa El-Fna Square for dinner on your own. As today includes some hiking to reach the waterfall, wearing comfortable walking shoes is recommended, along with a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

Start your journey from the peaceful city of Bin El Ouidane heading to vibrant Marrakech. After a 1.5-hour ride, we'll stop at the stunning Ouzoud Waterfall in the Atlas Mountains. Once we're done exploring, we'll continue towards Marrakech, adding another 3.5 hours on the road. Restroom breaks and snack stops will be provided as needed. Around midday, we will make a stop for lunch, with the specific location determined by your on-site guide. Duration- 5 hours.

After a scenic 1.5-hour drive, your journey pauses for an unforgettable encounter with the Ouzoud Waterfalls nestled within the Atlas Mountains. Led by your knowledgeable guide, embark on a 50-minute hike along a natural path and stairs, immersing yourself in shaded olive groves and rolling hills. Traverse this picturesque route, soaking in the tranquility of nature as you draw closer to the captivating Ouzoud Falls. Witness the continuous cascade, an awe-inspiring sight against a breathtaking backdrop. Take your time to unwind by the serene lake and natural pools below. Here, you can opt for a traditional boat ride or even plunge into the refreshing pond from a cliff, adding a touch of adventure to your experience. Along the trail, local vendors offer an array of nuts, fresh fruits, Berber delicacies, and beverages. Depending on the weather, a swimsuit and towel might enhance your enjoyment for a river dip. After this enchanting exploration, rejoin the vehicle to continue your journey towards Marrakech. Duration- 2 hours.

Upon arrival at your Marrakech hotel, take some time to settle in and freshen up before embarking on a delectable exploration of the Medina. A 15-minute transfer will whisk you to the bustling old city. Follow your food guide through the busy streets filled with amazing smells. You'll taste lots of local foods like olives, nuts, spices, and fresh bread as you explore hidden shops. The tour ends at Jemaa el-Fna square, where you can choose from many local dishes for dinner with your group. Following your meal, your driver awaits to escort you back to your hotel. Please note, while your guide will enlighten you about the diverse foods, the cost of meals and beverages is at your own expense. This walking tour spans approximately 0.5 to 1 mile, ensuring a comfortable exploration. Restrooms are available at various stops along the tour, with potential additional charges for use. Duration- 2 hours.

Day 8-

Today is your leisure day to explore the enchantments of Marrakech at your own speed, diving into the treasures of this stunning city. Wander freely and your guide will suggest spots based on your interests. For those seeking the perfect sunrise photo, there's an optional hot air balloon ride to peacefully drift, embrace tranquility, and capture the stunning sunrise. Later in the afternoon, explore the Yves Saint Laurent Museum. In the evening, a short ride will take you to a local restaurant for your farewell dinner. For the hot air balloon ride, it's advisable to have a jacket handy, while a swimsuit and flip-flops are recommended for the hammam.

Today, you'll be picked up from your hotel before sunrise, embarking on a 45-minute journey to the countryside. Upon arrival at the launch site, the hot air balloon staff will welcome you and provide a briefing about the activity. Climb into the balloon basket, and your approximately 1-hour flight will begin. This sunrise hot air balloon tour in Marrakech promises an unforgettable experience. You'll ascend gently into the tranquil morning air, suspended in a wicker basket. Below, the countryside stretches out, the vast desert seems endless, and the majestic Atlas Mountains loom in the distance, creating a breathtaking backdrop for your journey. As you gracefully glide above the landscape, the only sounds are the occasional whisper of the flame heating the balloon and the gentle rustling of the wind. After the activity, a simple yet delicious breakfast is served in a tent. It's a wonderful opportunity to share your photos with the group while enjoying a cup of coffee. After

breakfast, you'll head back to the hotel with the rest of the day at your leisure to explore this vibrant city. Duration- 2 hours.

After midday, you'll be picked up at your hotel. Following a 15-minute transfer, you will arrive at the Yves Saint Laurent Museum, once the legendary designer's home. Step into his creative universe, where haute couture, art, and Moroccan inspiration seamlessly blend. Explore his iconic fashion collections, sketches, and photos of his personal life. Depending on your interests, you can spend one or two hours in the museum. Time seems to fly inside this amazing place. Duration- 1 hour.

In the evening, a brief 20-minute transfer will take you to a local restaurant for your final dinner with fellow travelers. The evening promises a delightful a la carte menu, offering a taste of the most authentic Moroccan flavors. Seize the chance to savor traditional dishes like tagine, couscous, tangia and grilled meats. Please note that beverages are not included and can be purchased at the venue. The specific restaurant will be determined by your on-site guide.

Day 9-

All good things must come to an end, but only until your next adventure! Enjoy a final breakfast and then make your own way onward. If departing directly from the hotel, we recommend flying out of RAK.