

MEHARÉE TO THE DISTANT DUNES OF ERG LIHOUDI

Meharée' 1 dromedary per person + 4x4. See the most in the shortest time!

OBTFFDD01. 2DAYS/1NIGHT

DAY 1: MARRAKECH - OUARZAZATE - ZAGORA - TAMEGROUTE - OULAD DRISS - ERG LIHOUDI. Departing from your



hotel or riad in Marrakech at 06:45 at the latest we set off south in our air-conditioned 4x4 over the Glaoua Plain to cross the High Atlas Mountains via the fabulous Tizi n'Tichka Pass (2260m) – so hold on to your hats - to continue down alongside the Oued Ouarzazate to the ex-French Foreign Legion town of Ouarzazate and a quick visit of the Glaoui Kasbah Taourirt; on now down through the magnificent Valley of the Oued Drâa until you arrive at the small charming kasbah-like Hotel Fibule Du Drâa in the oasis village of Zagora where you will have your midday lunch, to then set out - around 2 in the afternoon in winter 3pm in the summer - for your lightning adventure towards the south-east deep into a sub-Saharan desert surrounding of many small dunes interspersed with the black gravelly 'Reg' stretches of the Jbel Tadrart basin. Driving further on down the eastern bank of the Oued Drâa for some 14km we pass by the ancient village of Tamegroute until, some 34 miles south of Zagora we arrive at the outskirts of the hamlet of Oulad Driss in the Hamada Du Drâa, close to the undefined border with Algeria, once a stop for the trans-Saharan caravans of salt, gold and slaves - and where the longest river in Morocco we have been following – the Oued Drâa - finally sinks into the desert. We now exchange our 4 wheels for the 4 legs of our ships of the desert for our "méharée" of some 3 hours up and over small dunes until we reach the dunes of Erg Lihouïdi and our specially-erected nomad's camp, just in time for Mother Nature's tremendous show of Light and No Sound Sunset (no cloud cover permitting). These dunes are the closest one can get to the Sahara, as one imagines it, from Marrakech. The 'real' Sahara is to be found in the Merzouga region to the eastern border of Morocco with Algeria. After a welcoming traditional glass or two of mint tea, we shall have our dinner of vegetable tagine, or of chicken, or of couscous - which, doubtless, you'll try your hand at preparing – mint tea, bread and fruit. This night may be spent in our tents or out in the open air if you wish, under the awesome canopy of the starlit heavens around a blazing fire to witness the magnificent sunset from the crest of the dune, the rarefied heavens turning from bright blue to cobalt, to yellow to gold, to purple to black. The sands and stones change their colour too, in step with the lowering rays. **LD.**

DAY 2: ERG LIHOUDI - TAMEGROUTE - ZAGORA - AÏT BEN HADDOU - OUARZAZATE - MARRAKECH: Having witnessed



an awesome sunset the night before, now is the hour for an even more startling sunrise you can witness again from the top of the dune before our Bedouin breakfast of mint tea, bread, jams and cheeses, after which, your ships of the desert saddled up, you'll somewhat reluctantly strike off back towards the north-east and relative civilisation for your almost 2 hour long dromedary 'méharée' covering some 12 miles of Hamada in the direction of the distant Jbel Beni, to arrive around 10:00 - and now only 50 Days To Timbuktu - to rejoin our 4WD, some 11 miles north of M'Hamid which'll take us right at the trailing edge of the Jbel across the low dunes of Aït Isfoul and through an oasis via the ancient, remote once-Jewish Kasbahs of Beni Hayoun and Beni Sbih. Back now onto the asphalt road at Tagounite and north on to an unusual tightly-knitted grouping still-inhabited underground kasbahs; this is the ancient village of Tamegroute, a seat of learning since the 11th century, with its Library of 13th century illuminated Koran scrolls written on gazelle hide, some works of Pythagoras and some original maps of Alexandria, together with some very early mathematics primers; a - voluntary - contribution to the upkeep of the Library is always appreciated. We continue our stroll through the alleyways of the Kasbah to an ancient Pottery Co-Operative, where pottery being still produced in the simplest of manners, in the simplest of kilns. If you have been to Fes, or have seen photographs of this Imperial City, here you'll see the famous green glaze associated with its tiled roofs - green, the colour of Islam representing Mother Earth - for the founders of the 17th century Abou Ben Naceur 'Naciri Brotherhood' in Tamegroute invited craftsmen and potters to this remote area with the intent of turning it into a thriving caravan hub city. Onwards now to the Fibule Du Drâa to arrive around 1pm, perhaps for a quick shower here before continuing on our way back up north to Ouarzazate along the Drâa Valley perhaps to stop at the ancient kasbah at Agdz or other en-route points of photo-opportunity. On the road from Ouarzazate to Marrakech we take you to visit the remarkable UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Ksour of Aït Ben Haddou. Here we alight from our vehicle to visit these various still-inhabited stepped up kasbahs, one half plainly-built Jewish section, one half decorated Berber and so closely-knit that they appear to be but one complete building, backed up against the looming hills in a stretch of unforgiving Hamada. The thick, high, sheer, elaborately decorated pisé (rammed earth - adobe) walls, turreted, crenulated ramparts, balustrades and arched 'babs' are a sight not to be missed. Obviously, here Hollywood has shot many of its films, including, as everyone will tell you, "Laurence of Arabia". One of the more spectacular sights in the Atlas ranges, set upon a rock above the reed-and-rock strewn Assif, commanding the area for miles around, this Kasbah controlled the caravan route to Marrakech until the French blasted a road through the Tizi n'Tichka in the late 1920s. We'll stop for a light lunch here at the restaurant of the Riad Dar Mouna before continuing ever - further north over the Adrar n'Deren (High Atlas) range of mountains to your hotel or riad in Marrakech from the deep south of the Kingdom of Morocco. **BL.**



OUR PRICES FOR THE STANDARD VERSION WILL INCLUDE: Transfer by Land Cruiser Marrakech-Ouarzazate-Zagora/Oulad Driss-Zagora-Fint Oasis-Marrakech. Experienced cameleer throughout (desert), trained dromedary, cook; luncheon at the Fibule Du Drâa on first arrival; tagine dinner (alcoholic beverages excluded), overnight and breakfast in Berber nomad tented, carpeted accommodation sleeping on mattresses with sheets and blankets; European toilet. Visit of the Library, Potteries and Kasbah at Tamegroute. Off-road adventure in the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs. Visit of the Fint Oasis. Unguided visit of the Ksour at Aït Ben Haddou (you may hire a local guide, though not really necessary) and light lunch. Medical and Accident Insurance.



OUR PRICES FOR THE DELUXE VERSION WILL INCLUDE: Transfer by Land Cruiser Marrakech-Ouarzazate-Zagora/Oulad Driss-Zagora-Fint Oasis-Marrakech. Experienced cameleer throughout (desert), trained dromedary; cook. Visit of Library, Potteries and Kasbah at Tamegroute. Lunch at the Fibule Du Drâa on arrival at Zagora; dinner, overnight and breakfast in Caudal tented, carpeted accommodation (maximum 4 persons per partitioned tent); raised bed with mattress with sheets and blankets; European toilet. Off-road adventure in the Fint Oasis. Unguided visit of the Ksour at Aït Ben Haddou (guide not really necessary here, but useful) and light lunch. Lavabo, mini shampoo, towels, lanterns and candles; dinner (alcoholic beverages excluded) includes Moroccan salad or harira soup, kebabs or 'kefta'*, Berber vegetable tagine, fruit, Moroccan pastries and mint tea served by a waiter in traditional costume. **Live Moroccan folklore musicians.** Bar service (BYOB is best). Medical and Accident Insurance.

* Those **vegetarians or vegans** amongst us need to pre-advise at time of reservation.

OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE: Accommodation pre & post, nor transfers from/to Marrakech's airport. Gratuity to driver, waiters, camp headman and cameleer. Any expenditure of a personal nature. Bottled or gaseous waters/sodas, nor anything not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

To choose you hotel or ryad, please close this page and go to [Find a Hotel](#) or [Find a Ryad](#).

IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU: Day pack, trainers or sandals; long trousers and sweater; windcheater (seasonal), broad-brimmed hat (or you may purchase a 'Chèche' before you set out from Zagora; personal toiletries and towel; hygienic 'Wipes'; small First Aid kit; torch with batteries (non-essential); filled water bottle or bottled water from Marrakech; sunscreen, sunglasses; nibbles and/or dried fruit. Drinking chocolate if preferred. Camera, film and plastic bags for lenses; extra toilet rolls could come in handy! For those who wear contact lenses, perhaps it would be a good idea to bring along a spare pair of glasses.