

MARRAKECH AND MOROCCO'S SOUTHERN SAHARAN SYMPHONY

OBTC21m 7 DAYS/6 NIGHTS. MARRAKECH/OUARZAZATE/ROUTE OF 1000 KASBAHS - TODRA GORGES -TINEHRIR/DADES GORGES - ERFOUD - MERZOUGA - ERG CHEBBI (SAHARA)/ ALNIF - N'KOUB - AGDZ - OUARZAZATE

MARRAKECH

DAY 1: MARRAKECH. You will be met on arrival in Marrakech by our English-speaking Licensed National Guide and transferred to your hotel. Subject to the time of arrival of your flight, after check in and at an agreed time we shall now take a ride in a calèche around the magnificent ramparts, quite the best introduction to this Garden City. The city walls of the Medina are huge and have some 200 towers and 20 *Babs*, or gates. First constructed in the 12th century, these ramparts form a neat circuit of six miles of *pisé* or rammed earth, the fortress taking on a pinkish tinge and glow in the setting sun. With the touch of a journey back into time we shall visit the delightful Majorelle Gardens and Museum of Islamic Art designed by the French artist Louis Majorelle, overlooked by the High Atlas Mountains with pavilions in a dynamic shade of blue; lush greenery, palm trees, cacti, still pools and shady nooks, all very Zen, indeed and now the property of the recently-deceased fashion icon Yves Saint Laurent; here, too, we shall visit the Museum of Islamic Art before continuing down via the dramatic Almohad Koutoubia Minaret (entrance to those not of the Islamic faith is prohibited) which for centuries has dominated the skyline of Marrakech. The Koutoubia Mosque is the tallest mosque in Marrakech, its construction decided in 1158 by the Almohad Sultan Abdel Moumen soon after his conquest of Marrakech, occupying the square of a former Almohavid palace whose mosque was destroyed, supposedly as it did not face Mecca. Completed in 1199 with the construction of its famous minaret ordered by the Sultan's grandson, the Caliph Yacoub el-Mansour who died the same year, this minaret (from the Arabic word *menara* or lighthouse) was later used as model for Giralda of Seville then for the Hassan Tower of Rabat. The main function of the minaret was to provide a vantage point from which the muezzin can call out the *adhan*, calling the faithful to prayer. In most Mosques these days, the *adhan* is called not from the minaret, but in the *musallah*, or Prayer Hall, via a microphone and speaker system, the role of the minaret is now largely for traditional and decorative purposes. A jewel of Hispano-Moresque art made up of 16 outlying naves and one larger central nave, its name is derived from the Arabic *al-Koutoubiyyin* for "bookseller", or "librarian", since it used to be surrounded by the stalls of sellers of manuscripts and books and by scribes. This square tower in finely-worked dressed stone is 77 metres tall, (as high as the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris) including its lantern. Considered to be the *ne plus ultra* structure of its kind, decorated with ceramic tiles forming different patterns on each side, it boasts of six rooms, one above the other, with a ramp leading up around them by way of which the muezzin could ride his horse (or mule) up to the balcony. It is built in a traditional Almohad style and the tower is adorned with four copper globes. According to legend, they were originally made of pure gold, and there were once supposed to have been only three. The fourth was donated by the wife of Yacoub el-Mansour. As compensation for her failure to keep the fast for one day during the month of Ramadan she had her golden jewellery melted down to fashion the fourth globe. On now through the Medina to arrive at the Djmaâ el Fnaâ Square (the 'Assembly of the Dead'), where, until the 19th century, were traditionally displayed the severed heads of criminals. Now we see stalls of goods, from fruit to alarm clocks; snake charmers and water sellers; fortune tellers and public scribes; tumblers and *nakkachat* - women with syringes full of henna - soothsayers and *gnaoua* musicians and from whence we return to our hotel or riad for dinner. D.



DAY 2: MARRAKECH - KASBAHS AÏT BEN HADDOU & TAOURIRT- OUARZAZATE: Refreshed, breakfasted and raring to go, we now set forth towards the south down across the Glaoua Plains via Aït Ourir Taddert (1650m) up into the High Atlas Mountains and the exhilarating hairpin bends to alight at the top of the Tizi n'Tichka (2260m) - the highest paved road in Morocco, which offers an impressive landscape in the heart of the Atlas Mountain chain. We'll see deep valleys and villages clinging to steep mountain slopes, with fields cultivated along the edges of the rivers in the valleys below. We stop for a photo-op of a vista dominated by peaks of some 2500+m to continue now into a totally different countryside, from mountains and plains into the Assif Ounila Valley to ochre earth, oases and the magnificently exotic and remote kasbah and ksour of Aït Ben Haddou, declared, and rightly so, a World Heritage Site. Here we alight from our vehicle to visit these various kasbahs. Originally built circa 1703 by the Sultan Moulay Ismail from Meknes, the first King of Morocco, it was to become home to employees of El Haj T'hami el Mezouari el Glaoui (1879-1956), the last ruling family of the south (the 'Lords of the Atlas') and a strong contender for control over Morocco, they are so closely-knit that they appear to be but one complete building, backed up against the looming mountain in a stretch of unforgiving Hamada. The thick, high, sheer, elaborately decorated pisé walls, stepped-up housing, turreted, crenulated ramparts, and balustrades and arched 'babs' are a sight not to be missed. One of the more spectacular sights in the Atlas ranges, set upon a rock above a reed-strewn assif, commanding the area for miles around, this kasbah controlled the route to Marrakech until the French blasted a road through the Tizi n'Tichka in the late 1920s. We shall cross back over the oued to set off to the new (1920s) once-garrison town of the French Protectorate - Ouarzazate - at the crossroads of the Dadès and Draâ Valleys, set between the High Atlas Mountains and the end of the Sahara region of oases and sand. During the French Protectorate period, Ouarzazate expanded considerably as a Foreign Legion garrison town, administrative centre and customs post. It is still the arrival point of different cultures and crafts with a Sunday souq filled with henna, roses, caraway, distilled herb tea, Berber vases, objects in engraved stone, blankets and famous Ouzguita carpets of blue or resplendent gold with beautiful geometric designs. Here we shall visit the nearby Kasbah of Taourirt, the kasbah of the former caïd (meaning "master" or "leader,") and later the possession of the same Pasha El Glaoui who had this palace built in Ouarzazate - but never



lived there. Once Pasha of Marrakech from 1912 to 1956, he allied himself to the French in Morocco during the Protectorate and conspired with them in the overthrow of the Sultan Mohammed V, great grandfather of the actual king of Morocco. Until the second half of the 20th century, Moroccan society was in a state of feudalism very close to that which pertained in Europe during medieval times. At the top was the sultan, who held the two positions of king (temporal ruler) and imam (spiritual leader). His court, or central government (Makhzen), was headed by a Grand Vizier. The next tier of government was provided by a large number of Pashas (from the Persian *padshah*, literally: Viceroy and caïds (the equivalent of European dukes, barons etc) whose responsibilities were to collect taxes and keep order, to which ends they often kept private armies. Under them were the mass of ordinary commoners whose responsibilities were to pay taxes, obey their local master and provide him with troops when necessary. In the autumn of 1893, the then ruling Sultan Moulay Hassan and his army were crossing the High Atlas Mountains after a tax-gathering expedition when they were caught in a blizzard. They were rescued by Si Madani and T'hami and the grateful Sultan bestowed on Si Madani *caïdats* from



Tafilalet to the Souss Valleys. In addition, he presented the Glaoui arsenal with a working 77-mm Krupp cannon, the only such weapon in Morocco outside the imperial army, which the Glaoui army used to subdue rival warlords and which is located still outside the kasbah's walls. From here we turn for our dinner and overnight accommodation. The late afternoon is free for you to roam at will around the town or pay an (optional) visit to the Atlas Film Studios (where, everyone will tell you, Lawrence of Arabia, The Jewel of The Nile and many other Hollywood films were shot.) **BD.**

DAY 3: OUARZAZATE - SKOURA OASIS AND KASBAHS - Q'LAAT DES M'GOUNA - BOULMANE DU DADES - DADES GORGES - TINEHRIR: The late King Hassan II of Morocco once likened his country to a tree with its roots deep down in Africa and its leaves reaching up into the heady air of Europe. But here, south of the High Atlas Mountains, there is no doubting which continent you are in. The barren landscapes are an exact reprint of Namibia and as we drive back to Ouarzazate with the evening light falling across immense vistas of empty steppe and shadowy mountains one can feel the freedom that always comes with Africa's boundless horizons.



Bright and early after breakfast we set off today towards the south then south-east through what, until half a century ago, was still known as the Bled es Siba - the lawless land - to the Kasbah at Skoura and the living museum of Kasbah Amerhidl, (featured on the old 50dh note) a desert Chatsworth built of mud. Inside is a riad, or courtyard, with a well and a fig tree, in whose shade you may be invited to wash your hands and remove your shoes and sit on a rug, to drink mint tea and eat bread dipped in olive oil. This is, of course, something put on for tourists, but conducted with such innate courtesy and warmth that it makes the whole place come alive. We continue thence further east along the Route of 1000 Kasbahs. Built improbably of pisé - mud stiffened with palm fibre - these sun-dried citadels of clay rank among the greatest of Morocco's glories. We arrive at Qlâa't Des M'Gouna (Citadel of the M'Gouna Tribe) where thousands of small, pink Damascene roses, first planted by French settlers, are grown to make the rose oil essence - "Eau de Rose" - so beloved of the Berber people - you'd do well to purchase some of the beauty and medicinal products sold here - and finally to the small town of Boumalne Du Dadès situated at the mouth of the Dadès Gorges. Here we venture up between the wide, high limestone cliffs with their strangely-shaped erosions and green vegetation, ksours, kasbahs and pisé houses ranging in colours from dark red to greenish black and startling lime-white, passing the Glaoui kasbah at Aït Youl as far as a group of ksours at Aït Arbi built against a volcanic twist in the rocks. We return to the mouth of the Gorge to continue on to our hotel in the small town of

Tinerhir, located at the mouth of the fabulous Todra Gorges and overlooked by a Glaoua Kasbah. **BD.**

DAY 4: TINEHRIR - TODRA GORGES - TINEJDAD - ERFUOD - MERZOUGA (SAHARA). After breakfast, we shall set out up the



Oued Todra for some 15km into to the deepest, narrowest and most spectacular part of these further wonders of Mother Nature's canyons. Onwards to the oasis town of Tinejdad and the end of the Route of 1000 Kasbahs in the Dadès Valley. En route to the Tafilalet Oases we can see khattara - holes that have been dug to give access and air to old underground water canals - each owned by a family, but now largely redundant owing to new bore water pumping and storage. An impressive 300 km network of khattara was excavated in the Tafilalet basin beginning in the late 14th century. Some of these tap into the aquifer at the base of High Atlas Mountains along the western margin of the main oasis. Others exploit the shallow water tables adjacent to major stream channels which pass through the basin. Eighty of these chains provided perennial water for 28 ksour (villages; sing. ksar) in the northern part of the oasis. The ksour and khattara simultaneously developed following the breakup of Sijilmassa. Ksour in the central and southern oasis - where the water table was and is much deeper - continued to rely on the same sources of water (wells and surface canals) for irrigation and drinking water that sustained Sijilmassa.

It is possible that khattara first came to Morocco from the Middle East following the Islamic revolution; the pattern of diffusion closely follows the historic dispersal of Islam. However, it is not certain if this technology was introduced by Muslims first to Morocco and later to Islamic Spain, or whether it first swept into Islamic Spain from North Africa, and then diffused back into Morocco. It appears that qanat technology had earlier diffused to Roman Spain from the Near East where the Romans, presumably borrowing Persian technology, had built and used qanats in Jordan and Syria, so there could have been an Iberian precedent to Morocco's filtration gallery systems. We arrive at the Saharan town of Erfoud. This is the only 'true' desert area of the kingdom of Morocco and an area where meteorites continue to be found, as were crocodile teeth, shark, pterosaur and spinosaurus fossils and where we may visit a fossil factory. Here we'll change our vehicle for Land Cruisers to take us to the village of Merzouga and the Hotel Auberge Du Sud and now change 4x4s for our ships of

the desert at around 3pm for a 7km ride into the highest dunes in Morocco - the extensive crescent-shaped dunes of Erg Chebbi. We arrive at our carpeted Berber Nomadic camp in a small oasis seemingly in the middle of nowhere to have our tagine dinner under canvas and, after dessert, tea or coffee, you might like to sing and chat to your heart's content under the star-filled heavens.

BD.

DAY 5: MERZOUGA - ERFOUD - RISSANI - SIJILMASSA - ALNIF - N'KOOB - AGDZ - OUARZAZATE: Our trip today takes us



on down further south for a quick dash again south to the town of Rissani, most of whose inhabitants live within the 18th century ksar (fortified kasbah) in a maze of dark almost troglodyte passageways. 5 minutes away are the ruins of the ksour of Sijilmassa. Established in 757AD, until the 11th century it was on the exit point for the important camel caravan trade from the Sudan, Mali and Ghana. Laid waste in 1056, rebuilt and again destroyed in 1363 to be rebuilt in the 18th century to be again destroyed, the result of discordant social forces contending for the region. And that's what we'll now see - the ruined town of Sijilmassa, recognised by the World Monuments Fund. Sijilmassa (A.D. 757-1393) was the North African head of the gold and salt trade across the Sahara in medieval times. A synthesis of fieldwork undertaken by geographers, historians, and archaeologists suggests the environmental and social structure of the ancient city and its surrounding oasis. Collaboration demonstrates geography's role in solving regional problems originating in history and archaeology. In reconstructing the geography of past place and the demise of place, one can see the knitting together the oasis landscape and environment; local water resources, agricultural production, and social organisation were key to the development of Islamic Sijilmassa. Drawing upon methodologies of oral tradition, field reconnaissance, remote sensing, historical documentation and archaeological fieldwork, medieval Sijilmassa emerges as a Saharan entrepôt founded in Islamic folklore; a landscape developed through diversion of a desert stream; and a city that walled its oasis to protect against Bedouin incursions from the east. The process of urban growth and decline were driven by socio-political forces and the allure of new hydraulic technologies. Sijilmassa remains an icon of sacred space in the landscape of contemporary Morocco. We shall also visit the Mausoleum of Moulay Ali Cherif, the founder of the Alaouite Dynasty, which rules Morocco to this day before continuing westwards on a different more southern route through stark Devonian limestone features with interbedded shales and mudstones between the Jbels Ougnat (1719m) and the volcanic Sarhro - the 'Dry Mountain' (2780m) - where it took the full military might of France to defeat 1,000 warriors of the Aït Atta tribe in the 1930s -perhaps to stop for lunch in the town of Alnif. Here everything is made of earth; people depend on it and get everything from it, they live in it, keep their food in it and play in it. Here you will find Palaeozoic fossils such as trilobites, starfish and echinoderms - the mountain range around Alnif, the Jbel Issimour, are called the Trilobite Mountains - before proceeding through up to Tazzarine to make a stop in another marble fossils site. We continue on through oases to N'Koob to the oasis region around Tansikht where we turn north into the Draâ Valley to stop briefly at Agdz, a town short on vowels but offering a good line in mint tea. Fed by the snows of the High Atlas, the Drâa is Morocco's longest river but seldom runs its full course to the Atlantic. Most years, it falters and dies in the desert somewhere beyond Tamegroute to the south, forming a linear oasis of date palms watched over by brooding kasbahs with ochre walls and towers. Driving north from Agdz via dramatic mountains in coloured layers, we pass fields of bee hives before driving through the Tizi (Pass) n'Tiniffit and down the winding road to Ouarzazate, our dinner and overnight accommodation. **BD.**

DAY 6: OUARZAZATE - MARRAKECH: After breakfast and at an agreed time we set off back north over the Tizi n'Tichka to the



pink and ochre Garden City of Marrakech. After checking in, accompanied by your guide and driver, with a further touch of a journey back into time we continue our visit of this Garden City to venture into the southern part of the bustling Kasbah to the lavishly-decorated Saâdien Tombs - discovered in 1917 with some tombs dating from the middle 1550s. This is the ancient cemetery of the *shorfa*, the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed. Here you see the Prayer Hall with its horseshoe arches, the tombs of the Alaouite princes from the 18th century and a large tomb of the Black Sultan, the Merinid Dynasty Abou Hassan. On into the Hall of Twelve Columns, the central mausoleum of Ahmed el Mansour, who died in 1603, with its colonnade of twelve decorated marble pillars and intensely carved upper stuccowork that looks like gilded lace. To his right is his son and successor Zaidan; to his left his grandson Mohammed ech-Cheik. There are 33 other tombs of Saâdien princelings. From here to the El Badii Palace. The remnants of a magnificent palace built by the Saâdien Sultan Ahmed Ibn Moussa al-Mansour in 1578(?) designed by Mohammed el-Heqqq under the influence of the Alhambra in Granada, which took some 16 years to complete, was named 'Badii' (the Incomparable), one of the 99 names of Allah (moreover, ksar *I-bdi* in Moroccan Arabic means 'the porcelain palace', which could refer to the rich ceramic panels that profusely decorated the building). Montaigne, in his *Voyage en Italie*, reported that Italian craftsmen near Pisa were cutting 'for the King of Fes in Barbary', 50 very tall Italian marble columns which were paid for in sugar, weight for weight. Workmen from different countries, including in Europe, were recruited to execute the work. For three-quarters of a century, the Badii was the venue for all of the great ceremonies and parties given by the Saâdien Sultans and ended up with a reputation, more or less deserved, for excess and debauchery. This was the main reason why the Alaouite Sultan Moulay Ismail (1672-1727) ordered the complete destruction of the once fairy tale building and used the materials to decorate his own palace in Meknes. Consequently all that remains today is a section of the 2 metre-thick outer wall, the esplanade, with remains of its pools and orchards, one of the pavilions with its columns and some decorative elements (stucco, marble, zellige - small tiles). However, excavations carried out in the 20th century, the discovery of two drawings of the palace (one Portuguese and one English) and the reports of contemporary chroniclers and foreign visitors give us a reasonably precise idea of how the Badii would have been in its heyday. The palace, thought to have consisted of 360 rooms, was symmetrically planned around an enormous rectangular courtyard measuring 135 m by 110 m, including a long central pool measuring 90 m by 20 m that contained a monumental fountain and had hollows on either side planted with trees and flowers and four small rectangular basins at the ends whose ceramic mosaic paving is still visible. The east side of the palace looked out over a large garden known as 'the Crystal Garden'. Two pavilions measuring 15m by 16m were built halfway along the shorter sides of the courtyard and two more measuring 23m by 15m in the middle of the longer sides.

Truncated-pyramid towers stood in the corners of the courtyard. The pavilions were crowned with domes whose ceilings were encrusted with gold from Sudan and precious *muqarnas* (honeycomb work) supported by marble columns with capitals covered with golden leaves. The floors and walls were covered with faience mosaics, the doors were made of sculpted cedar wood and, throughout, the fountains gushed water from the mouths of lions, leopards and pythons sculpted in solid silver. It also has a small, underground, tunnel-like jail with about four cells where the king kept his prisoners. On now to the nearby late 19th century Dar el Bahia Palace (its name translates as 'The Brilliant') built by craftsmen from Fes for the black slave Si' Ahmed Ben Musa (or Bou Ahmed) after he had risen to power and wealth as the Grand Vizier of Sultan Moulay al-Hassan. The attractive, well preserved, Harem Courtyard has featured in many Big Budget Movies. It took nearly 15 years to complete; the rooms (nearly 150!), housed Bou Ahmed, his 4 wives and 24 concubines plus servants and guards. The Palace follows the patterns of typical Islamic architecture, with central courtyards, having rooms leading off them, with doorways that are placed so that you can't see beyond (providing privacy).



Fountains and gardens are also typical features, along with the decorative stucco panels, tiled floors and zellige work. From here we continue to the 14th century Ben Youssef Medersa - one of the most beautiful buildings in Marrakech that housed the Islamic equivalent of a monastery; the tranquillity within contrasts with the chaotic pace of life outside in the Medina. Founded by the Merinid Sultan Abou el Hassan in the 14th century, it was almost completely rebuilt during the Saâdien Dynasty who made their distinctive mark in its architecture and art. The Medersa centres around a large courtyard with a central pool for ablutions. The buildings are made of carved cedar wood, exquisite stuccowork, and colourful zellige tiles. At the back is a sizable prayer hall where the most elaborate decoration can be found. The interior is covered in an abundance of pine cone and palm motifs used around the mihrab to create a three-dimensional appearance. Throughout the Medersa are many Arabic inscriptions in stucco and zellige tile, the most common of which is the *bismillah* invocation: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful." Above the



central courtyard are the small windows of the tiny student dormitories; over 800 students were housed in this Medersa, difficult to imagine. From stairs in the entry vestibule you can explore all the rooms and enjoy a nice view over the courtyard. The rooms are arranged around smaller inner courtyards, rimmed with fine wood railings. We shall go on to see the



Almoravid Dynasty Koubba; also called Koubba Ba'Adiyn, it is the oldest building in Marrakech and the only Almoravid building to remain standing in Morocco. The Almoravids (1062-1145) were reformers and monastic-type warriors from the desert nomadic Sanhaja Berber tribe in what is now Mauritania. After conquering their homeland, they expanded to Morocco in 1062 and eventually extended their empire all the way to Algiers. Probably an ablutions annexe for the Ben Youssef Mosque, for centuries it was covered over amid the many rebuildings of the mosque; it was only excavated in 1952. This little building is significant not only because it's very old, but because its style is at the root of all Moroccan architecture. Its motifs of pine cones, palms and acanthus leaves were used in the Ben Youssef Mosque and other later buildings; its beautifully-shaped windows became the distinctive design of the Almohades and Merinids. Also highly influential on later designs are the koubba's pyramid-like battlements, the rib design on the dome, and the sophisticated interior support system, composed of a square and star-shaped octagon. In addition to the koubba itself, visitors can view a large water cistern and remains of fountains for performing ablutions. We now proceed to the Marrakech Museum of Contemporary Art and the Bert Flint Museum in the Maison Tiskiwin. Displayed in a riad constructed at the turn of the twentieth century in Hispano-Mauresque style, Bert Flint, a Dutch anthropologist and art historian, displays his excellent collection of costumes, jewellery, arms, basketwork, musical instruments, Moroccan art, popular traditions and artefacts, carpets and furniture collected over a period of 50 years as he travelled along the Gold Road from the Atlas Mountains to Timbuktu, crossing the regions of the Sahara and the Souss Valley. Flint was born in Groningen in Holland in 1931 and after studying Islamic and Hispanic art and culture moved to Marrakech in 1957 where he taught art while continuing to study Andalusian-Arab culture. Over the years his focus had increasingly turned to rural culture shown here in all its glory and variety. We continue on through the labyrinth of narrow alleyways making up the renowned cool, colourful and aromatic Souqs of Marrakech - the Dyers' Souq being the last to be visited - finishing our guided visit in the Djmaâ el Fnaâ Square. Back at your hotel, you may either lounge around in the late afternoon or decide to venture further into the bustle of this cosmopolitan city. **BL.**



You might like to go and chill out at the Le Pacha night club (<http://www.pachamarrakech.com/pachaen.html>). Then there's always the optional excellent finale to any stay in Marrakech, the (touristy) Chez Ali 'Fantasia' (http://www.ilove-marrakesh.com/chezali/index_en.html) - truly a 1001 Nights' experience. Your journey this evening would take you out of the heat of the city on a road to palm groves, where twinkling lights beckon you out of the darkness to a magnificent spectacle. As evening progresses, various folklore groups pass through the nomad tents, singing and dancing to their throbbing music. The highlight comes at the end of your meal when you are invited to witness charging robed horsemen in a display of their old tribal power as they shout and fire off their muskets and muzzle-loaders, bringing their horses to a sudden halt before you. Above you, in the night sky, Sheherazade and her Prince fly to the heavens on their magic carpet ride whilst fireworks light the sky as your evening of magical splendour comes to an end.



DAY 7: MARRAKECH - ONWARDS: You will be transferred to the airport in accordance with your flight schedule, here to bid farewell - bi'salama - to your guide and driver, taking with you some certainly incredible memories of a land so full of remarkable contrasts and very friendly people. **B.**

(FOR COUPLES OR SMALL FAMILIES, WE RECOMMEND CERTAIN RIADS BE CONSIDERED FOR MORE ATMOSPHERE AND PRIVACY)

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OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE: Accommodation at specified hotels/riads including taxes, subject to availability at time of reservation. Porterage on 1 piece of luggage per person. All meals as shown in the itinerary (not including alcoholic drinks). Private transportation in an air-conditioned vehicle from Marrakech to Marrakech. Sightseeing tours, including a calèche tour in Marrakech, a dromedary ride to the overnight Sahara bivouac and all related entrance fees as listed in the itinerary. English-speaking Licensed National Guide throughout the tour; bottled or gaseous water en-route; medical and accident insurance.

OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE: Gratuities to waiters, guide, drivers, cameleer and camp headman. Any expenditure of a personal nature, nor anything not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU: Good trainers or sandals; for the Saharan sortie: day pack; broad-brimmed hat (or you may purchase a 'Chèche' before you set out from Erfoud); personal toiletries; long trousers (dromedary ride); camera and Ziploc bags for your sensitive lenses; sunglasses, sunscreen and swimming costume (seasonal). For those who wear contact lenses, it could be a good idea to bring along a spare pair of glasses.

