

OBTSECAS01P PHOTOGENIC CASABLANCA.

DURATION: Approximately 5 hours Ship to Ship

Subject to your ship's schedule and number of participants, the itinerary may change in order of visits shown, but all mentioned will be seen.

Ask any photographer - Morocco is undoubtedly one of the world's most photogenic locations. The Moroccan sky is a common object of photographers; certain objets d'art can do the same, particularly rugs, which Morocco is renowned.

The Imperial Kingdom of Morocco has long been one of the World's most interesting travel destinations, with an irresistible allure, it provides some superb subjects for photographers. With good lighting conditions, Morocco is a brilliantly colourful country, full of vibrancy, warmth, hospitality and spectacular and varied scenery.

For the time available to you during your port of call, this tour allows a photographer to gain a fresh perspective of Casablanca, in particular its bustling streets and French Art Deco buildings; exotic market places and souks; imposing mosaic gates and the incredible Hassan II Mosque while aiming all the while to capture the charisma of Casablanca's cosmopolitan people, dressed either in typical traditional clothing or in modern Western gear of all sorts, colours, variations and description. Incidentally, Tripods are forbidden, because you could be deemed a professional and were you to be stopped to discuss and obtain to use of one, it may be allowed (*for a consideration*) for a few seconds only.

PHOTOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT: We advise participants to take the following photography equipment. Camera Body: A 35mm SLR camera system with interchangeable lens to allow you to get the best shots in most conditions.

Suggested Lenses: A wide angle (24 - 135mm) and a telephoto (70 - 200mm or 100-300mm) are very useful. Skylight/UV filters to protect your lens. A telephoto lens might prove to be a must item for photography in Casablanca. The modern telephoto zoom lenses are actually great in quality and they are popular for their flexibility. You may get so close to people and places that a fixed lens of 200mm is actually too long: with the zoom you simply adapt the lens. The proper focal length for a telephoto zoom is in the range of about 80-200mm. You do not need a super-long telephoto lens of 400mm or more, unless you are a very experienced photographer. Long lenses are bulky, hard to focus and call for a steady and experienced hand. You should take care about your lenses by putting a filter over each one. A 1A Skylight or UV filter does not cut down the light and is handy in screening out darkening. You should bring a filter which will prevent your lens from the damage. You may not need any other filters except a polarising filter to make clouds look more vivid. The 35mm single lens reflex may be called the most appropriate and flexible kind of camera for such photography. It can be easily held in hands, accepts different lenses and shows in the viewfinder an image that is rather close to what the final print or slide will look like. Take the camera which has a built-in light meter for easy exposure setting. All modern models offer automatic exposure, which is disputable, as many professionals prefer to make all regulations manually. But in most cases you will see that you will be able to take about 80 percent of your pictures with the automatic camera, as it often saves precious time when you try to take a picture in a hurry.

Filters: A polarising filter is essential for landscapes. Optional ND filters x 4 and x 8. It is also necessary to put shades on your lenses, because of the glare which can easily ruin your photos, especially true when you use telephoto lenses, as some of the longer ones come with built-in hoods. And make sure your equipment is clean. Dust-off sprays are very useful and do not take much space (but do not use them on the mirror of your camera). "Q-tips" are also useful in cleaning in the nooks and crannies. You may also need a compact electronic flash for taking pictures indoors.

Batteries, Memory & Storage: Bring spare batteries (2 or 3), battery charger, travel adapter, sufficient memory cards and a digital storage device (such as the Jobo GigaVu Pro Evolution). Camera bag: Preferably a backpack type as you will be carrying your equipment when out photographing.

Miscellaneous: A brush for cleaning your lens and an air blower are important and your camera and lens need to be in protective cases. Shutter release cable.

Print Film: (Kodak, Fuji) is widely available (from 200 ASA up), but slide film of 100 ASA or less can be very difficult to find. Slide film of 50 ASA is highly recommended for Moroccan light and high colour saturation.

PHOTOGRAPHING ETIQUETTE: Do not forget to ask permission before taking photos of other people as someone may not wish to be photographed. *It is prohibited* to take pictures of airports, government buildings and installations or of military compounds and personnel, since photographing places where permission is not granted can result, at best, in confiscation of your film. And of course consider that you will be with other people, who are not less eager to take the greatest photo of their life. Share the best views with other fellow travellers and do not impede their pleasure by making noises, creating a fuss, or hindering their view and picture taking.

And here are some useful observations. First of all, check that you reset your ASA setting to the specifications of your film. Prop your camera so you would have a firm base when taking a picture (do not forget about a handy bean-bag). Remember that the pictures taken from the roof-hatch may not make as much of an impressive portrait as the picture taken at eye level from a window. Make sure you operate your camera properly and know all its aspects. Consider the background while composing your picture. And before you depart learn about shutter speed and depth of focus, so you could take the best possible shots under any circumstances.

PHOTO TECHNIQUES: The right equipment is only a half of your success. What you should not forget is that the right moments are all around and all you have to do is be patient, attentive and ready to take the best shot of your life any second. That's all in your skills and vision. So be as ready as only possible to shoot. Your camera should be preset as closely as possible to what is the most likely focus and exposure. If your camera has automatic exposure, leave it set on automatic unless you are sure that conditions prove to be different. Once again, it is vital that you knew your camera completely so that you are sure what to do with it at the dramatic moment. Do not stint in your use of film. Take several pictures, if something you see is especially worth photographing. Try several different exposures because too often film comes back scratched or spoiled in some way. Or you may just get your prints lost or damaged when you send your film in to have prints made. If something like that happens, you will then always have another copy.

If you use telephoto lenses, try to minimise camera vibration. Ask your driver to switch off the engine of your vehicle. Lean your camera against a window ledge or on the roof, using a bean bag, and fast shutter speeds. Practice releasing the shutter without shaking the camera. Follow the classic rule of thumb, which is that you should not try to hand-hold a camera at a shutter speed slower than the inverse of the focal length of your lens. That is if you are using a lens of 200mm, you should use a shutter speed of 1/20, 1/500 or faster. If you are using a 50mm lens, you can manage with a shutter speed of 1/60, 1/125 or faster. Consider the sunlight angle. Most of your shots will look best if the sun is behind you and your camera, and the subject directly lighted up. Your driver should know about this and try to put the vehicle at the best possible angle. But if you are likely to try for unusual effects such as backlighting, you should know how to set your camera's exposure meter so that it isn't fooled by the extraneous light in the background. Of course you will frequently use the roof hatch of your vehicle, but don't ignore the view from the windows, as a lower angle of view may allow a more excellent view. The skill of photographic composition is among those which are almost impossible to teach.

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS: As your film may be damaged by X-rays, consider buying a lead-lined "Film Shield" bag, and always ask customs inspectors to check your camera equipment by hand. Your camera is to be protected from vibration and dust. Consider taking a foam-lined camera bag, which should be put on the floor of a moving vehicle, as the vibration may loosen screws or cause damage in other way. Put your cameras on a vacant seat or carry them with you on the laps. And take a sufficient amount of plastic bags and rubber bands to keep dust off.

USING YOUR EQUIPMENT: The first and the most important rule is that you should not take camera equipment that is new to you. Bring equipment that can be used readily and do not waste a lot of money for apparatus whose operation you can't understand.

If you really want to head for this photographing opportunity you would be heartbroken if your camera will be broken and you will miss out on any photo opportunities, you should consider taking a second camera of the same model as your first one, or at least accepting the same lenses. It is obvious that you won't have any major camera repair done quickly while you are for such relatively short time in Casablanca. Another plus of a second camera is that you will be able to keep a second type of film and another lens ready for use at the first necessity. A small screwdriver is also very useful for fulfilling minor repairs along the way.

Video gear: If you carry a video recorder with you, you will be well rewarded. Make sure to take equipment as light in weight as possible. The only problem you may have is with battery power. Most vehicles have cigarette lighters which may be used for operating your camera. But it may happen that several people would like to use the lighter simultaneously. It also may not always be possible to reload batteries at the lodges. You will need an adapter for 220-240 volt current, along with converters for two-pin round and three-pin square plugs. Another solution is to bring with you sufficient amount of fresh batteries to last the entire trip, although that may be a massive and expensive way-out.

CLOTHING: Casual clothing is the order of the day. Hard wearing, easy to wash travel clothes are ideal. During the tour you may need a wide brimmed sun hat and sunglasses. Lightweight, comfortable walking shoes are advised throughout. Cultural considerations: As Morocco is a Muslim country we advise you to take this into consideration, especially in the way you dress in the cities and villages. It is expected that women will cover legs and shoulders, although as Morocco becomes more westernised, local people are becoming more relaxed about this. To gain respect from the Moroccan people you should show that you are trying to respect their culture. When in Casablanca both men and women should cover up, either wear trousers or a long skirt for women; no bare midriffs.



We disembark to meet up with our professional photographer and English-speaking national Guide to be taken first to visit the Mohammed V Square for our first photography session; this Square groups buildings of the main administrative departments in attractive modern Moslem architecture inspired by national traditions. To the west, a monumental fountain was built in 1976: at certain hours, one can admire water shows accompanied by Arabic, European or Asian music. On the other side of the Avenue Hassan II, there is a public garden bordering the Law Courts and the Prefecture. Between these two buildings, behind the railings of the French Consulate, is the statue of Marshal Lyautey by François Cogné, sculptor of the Clemenceau of Champs-Élysées in Paris. From here on to the bustling Central Market, a kaleidoscope of colour, charm and street musicians; of fresh fish, freshly-cut flowers, fruit, and spices, thence for a stroll to visit of the interior of the Mahakma Court of Islamic Law (if we are visiting on a Saturday or Sunday, only an external visit of the Mahakma Traditional Court Palace will take place); this building was erected in 1952, with no fewer than 60 rooms, delightfully-decorated in the Hispano-Mauresque style to be used simultaneously a Law Court and the Pasha's (Governor's) Reception Hall. On, now, to the New Medina, or Habous Quarter. The fast development of Casablanca attracted thousands of people from all over the country in search of employment. They settled down at first near the ancient Medina, then around the city, in miserable encampments. To reduce these 'Bidonvilles', the new Medina, was constructed in 1923 during the period of the French Protectorate respecting the traditional style whilst applying the rules of modern town planning. The immediate neighbourhood around the Mosque and especially that part of the Medina to the northeast offers picturesque alleys lined with arches under which shopkeepers of every sort ply their trade and where you'll find the Brass Souk, where artisans shape and polish cauldrons, trays, teapots and an entire space dedicated to the sale of olives. Here, too, is the renowned Patisserie Bennis Cake Shop which opened in 1938, is Casablanca's oldest Patisserie and whose sign is the only thing distinguishing it from the rest of the buildings, but whose interior, decorated with amazing mosaics, shelters one thousand and one delicacies; On we stroll to the outside of the King's Palace. From here we shall continue in our coaches to the Church of Notre Dame de Lourdes. This fairly modern church constructed with concrete was finished in 1956 following the design of a Mr. Dangleterre. The interior deserves to be seen for the large stained glass window by Gabriel Loire, chief glassworker in Chartres, contrasting with the wooden copula of the choir shows the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the visitations at Lourdes and other visitations of the Virgin Mary. Back in our coaches to Anfa, the elegant residential district of Anfa, built on a hill dominating the city. This is the original site of Casablanca. You'll appreciate the main avenues, green parks and especially the magnificent and variously constructed villas illustrating the evolution of the architectural concepts of the early 1930s to today. Anfa hosted the Conference of Casablanca with President Roosevelt and Sir Winston Churchill, during which the date of the Allied landings on the French coasts was fixed for the spring of 1944 and where the somewhat difficult meeting with them and Generals Charles de Gaulle and Henri Giraud took place. Here, also, at Anfa, President Roosevelt received in secret the Sultan Mohammed V where the possible future of Morocco was discussed in depth. On once more to the Corniche where a stop is made for refreshments before continuing on to visit the interior (on Fridays at 9 am only) of the amazingly-beautiful Hassan II Mosque, the second largest mosque in the Islamic world after the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca. This architectural masterpiece, a symbol of an Islam open to the world, took 7 years to complete using 50 million man-hours and inaugurated on the 30th August, 1993 was built partially on the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, on the farthest western point of the Maghreb. Conceived by the French architect Michel Pinseau (1924-1999), the Mosque employed 3,300 craftsmen from all over Morocco; has 53,000 m² of carved cedar wood; 67,000 m² of plasterwork and some 10,000 m² of sculpted ornamentation and writings; it contains on the ground floor an oblong Prayer Hall of perfect symmetry measuring 200 x 100m. Supported by seventy-eight pillars where granite, marble and onyx mix their respective reflections, this vast room supports a retractable roof covered with emerald green tiles – the symbolic colour of Islam, representing Mother - to welcome to prayer 25,000 believers inside and 80,000 on the adjoining esplanade. Embedded in the axis of the southern facade, a 210 metre-high minaret, boasts a laser beam of 30km reach pointing towards Mecca. This magnificent Mosque also encompasses a Medersa (School of Koranic learning), a Library, a National Museum and immense lecture halls, all beautifully decorated by artisans from all over Morocco: frescoes and zelliges in traditional geometrical motives, painted and sculptured woods, stuccos of intricate designs, arabesques in decorative drawings and writings in brilliant colour inaugurated in 1992 and a masterpiece of Moroccan architectural design and craftsmanship. The last part of our tour takes us to the busy United Nations Square. Under the walls of the old Medina, at the beginning of the 20th century, there was but an empty space where the souq was held. It very quickly became the heart of the modern town. We may make a stop here for shopping, time permitting, before returning to our ship. L.

OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE: Private circle trip transportation in an air-conditioned vehicle from Port to Port; Medical and Accident Insurance. Private guided sightseeing excursion (including a visit of the interior of the Hassan II Mosque) and all related entrance fees as listed in the itinerary. Light refreshments. Bottled or gaseous water. A professional photographer and an English-speaking Licensed National Guide throughout.

OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE: Gratuities to professional photographer, guide and driver. Any expenditure of a personal nature, nor anything not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU: Good trainers; hat, pullover (seasonal); day pack; hygienic 'wipes'; Photo and/or video cameras and Ziploc bags for sensitive lenses; sunglasses, sunscreen.