

**DURATION: Approximately 8 hours Ship to Ship**

*The itinerary may be modified to exclude the visit of Azemmour in accordance with the sailing schedule and has a maximum walking time of around 2 hours.*

El Jadida - 'The New One'; founded in 1513 by the Portuguese as Mazagão - their first and last possession in Morocco, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and called Morocco's Deauville, is a small, delightful coastal town with several 3 metre-thick bastions - L'Ange, Saint Sebastian, Saint Antoine and Saint Esprit which were destroyed in 1769 by the same Portuguese when they were forced to leave Morocco, but which were subsequently restored to their former armed state.



On disembarking from your ship we set out to Casablanca's magnificent Hassan II Mosque for an essential visit of this magnificent mosque, the biggest in the world of Islam after that of 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 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1993 was built partially on the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, on the farthest western point of the Maghreb. 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 Earth - 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 motifs, all testifying of the talent and the innovative spirit of Moroccan artists. After some 25 minutes here, we carry on from here along the Corniche for an hour's drive down along the coast to Azemmour (in the Berber language - wild olive - and *not* the perfumes of Crabtree & Evelyn) for our guided walking tour of some 50 minutes of this delightful once-Carthaginian, once-Portuguese strategic natural port (Azama) where the ochres of Morocco change to white, blue and yellow, where violet bougainvilleas challenge the purplish ramparts; where the Dar el Baroud (powder storage house of the Portuguese) bastion guards the now-ruined kasbah, the Arab Medina and Jewish Mellah (the synagogue of Rabbi Abraham Moul Niss is still frequently used). Around 11 o'clock, we continue on our picturesque drive for some 45 minutes down the coast towards El Jadida, arriving in time for a light lunch (either buffet or set menu according to the actual number of participants on this private tour) including water, wine, tea or coffee at the 5\* Sofitel Royal Golf Hotel. Taken back from the Portuguese in 1769, Mazagan was to become a Jewish Mellah (or Quarter) which we shall visit after lunch. We set out on our private guided walking tour of some 90 minutes where our first stop is at the old fortress inside which lies an ancient structure that escaped the destruction of the fleeing Portuguese - the misnamed 'Portuguese Cisterns', as they were actually built by the Romans originally to store grain, then used by the Portuguese as a fresh water cistern to withstand sieges, to be discovered by accident in 1977 by a Jewish spice merchant and where Orson Wells shot the riot scenes for his film Othello. We leave there to continue to the Porto do Mar (the Sea Gate) where we visit the communal bakery. A short walk will then take us to the Bastion of St Sebastian. Here is the old prison compound and the Tribunal of the Inquisition - we continue to the Mellah and an early 19th century synagogue, as the Star of David underneath a Moslem crescent on the wall testifies - surmised by some to symbolise the appreciation of the Jewish population of the time at being accepted by an Islamic country after fleeing Spain and persecution at the hands of the Inquisition and of their desire to integrate into Moroccan life. Integration was never really complete, however, as Jews here always lived under a different set of laws to those of Muslims (one was they were not allowed to wear shoes!). No Jews live here now, as they all left for Israel after the founding of the State, yet their centuries of tradition, artistry and culture are still quite tangible. Our return from this privately-guided excursion to mosques, Mellahs, Medinas and coastal bastions takes us to Casablanca and our ship by 17:30. **L.**



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**OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE:** Private circle trip transportation in an air-conditioned vehicle from Casablanca to Casablanca. Private guided sightseeing excursion and all related entrance fees as listed in the itinerary. An English-speaking Licensed National Guide throughout. Medical and Accident Insurance; light lunch and bottled or gaseous water en-route.

**OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE:** Gratuities to waiters, guides 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'; camera and Ziploc bags for sensitive lenses; sunglasses, sunscreen.