

## OBTSETNG01 TANGIER - "THE BRIDE OF THE NORTH"



On your arrival at the Port of Tangier you will be met & assisted with Customs formalities and transferred from the Port to start your visit of Tangier "The Bride of the North" and surroundings. This is one place where our licensed guide comes in handy for you'll never find your way out or around without one in the time available to you. Tangier has no formal Mellah, but has instead an unprotected Jewish quarter dating from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where many synagogues were once concentrated in one narrow, winding street, "Synagogues Street," recently renamed "Synagogue Street" because only one now remains open. You will visit the medieval Medina, a vast, picturesque, vibrant souk - the 'Grand Socco' (Spanish for 'souk'); tea houses; the Mendoubia Gardens with their eight-hundred-year-old trees; the Sidi Bounabid Mosque, its minaret decorated with multi-hued faïences dominating the Medina, the Kasbah Square with its portico of white marble columns and the great Méchouar where the pashas once granted audiences; the Moulay Ismaïl Mosque; the Tangier American Legation Museum and the Merinid College. The Tangier American Legation Museum, the first property acquired abroad by the United States Government, is a thriving cultural centre, museum, conference centre and library in the heart of the old walled Medina, housed in the only historic landmark of the United States located abroad. Since the American Bicentennial celebration in 1976

the Legation has been operating a museum and cultural centre and is symbolic of the 1786 Moroccan-American Treaty of Friendship, which is still in force today. The complex expanded over the years as the surrounding houses were bought up. During World War II it served as headquarters for United States intelligence agents.



Leaving Tangier to set out towards the west on a zigzag road passing through the wealthy residential district of the Marché aux Boeufs and along the new mountain road edged with elegant, sumptuous villas, ornate gates and beautiful gardens, the Governor's Residence and the King's Summer Palace, we follow the mountain road towards the seaward extremity of Jbel el Kbir at Cape Spartel, set on the Atlantic Coast, considered by political convention to be the most north-western point of Africa, the African intersection of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Just before reaching the striking, square-shaped lighthouse the scenic drive comes upon long golden ocean beaches and the blue Atlantic Ocean. Here we may stop briefly to marvel at the panoramic view. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this wooded hill area provided cover for the Moors in their battles against the Portuguese and the English. Beyond this area we continue along through, forested hills covered with a uniquely Mediterranean variety of pine tree that were all planted by volunteers. In these westernmost hills of Morocco there are large forested areas of oak, juniper, cork-oak, cedar, fir and pine. The lighthouse, 312 ft. above sea level, built in 1864 at the cost of the Sultan of Morocco and maintained at the joint expense of England, France, Italy and Spain, is the only one on the western coast. It is provided with a large fixed intermittent white light for the safety of passing ships. They may carry on to enjoy a visit of the Caves of the Oracle of Herakles, where legend has it he breathed his last breath after separating Europe from Africa, having completed his 12 Labours. The mouths of these caves, partly man-made and partly natural, open up onto the Atlantic Ocean to be flooded at high tide when water gushes up through these massive holes in the ground and cliffside; it's quite impressive. No-one is exactly sure how the caves were created; some say that for some reason an ancient civilization used to carve millstones out of the solid rock that caused giant caves to form over the years. How these Neolithic people managed to cut into solid rock with simple and crude tools is still a mystery. At low

tide, the views from inside the caves looking out over the ocean are stunning, the colours in particular; the blue Atlantic Ocean and sky above may seem to resemble an upside-down silhouette of Africa. Some people would have it the caves were once joined under the sea to St Michael's Caves on the Rock of Gibraltar and that this is "possibly" how the Barbary Apes crossed over. We now make a short dash back up to the throbbing city of Tangier to return for refreshments at the delightful Hotel El Minzah, thence, time permitting, to explore again the fascinating city of Tangiers on foot, strolling through the mysterious winding alleyways and souks of the Medina, stopping to barter for that "essential" souvenir and to admire the many beautiful handicrafts, to return to your ship and the continuation of your adventure at sea. L.



**OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE:** Private circle trip transportation in an air-conditioned vehicle from Tangiers' Port. Medical and Accident insurance. Private guided sightseeing excursion and all related entrance fees as listed in the itinerary. An English-speaking Licensed National Guide throughout. Light refreshment. Bottled or gaseous water en-route.

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

**IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU:** Day pack; hygienic 'wipes,' good trainers or sandals; camera and Ziploc bags for sensitive lenses; sunglasses, sunscreen.