

# 4x4 DRIVE & 'MEHAREE' IN MOROCCO'S SUB-SAHARA

'Meharée': Trek with 1 dromedary per person + 4x4.

2DAYS/1NIGHT OBTFFDD06

**DAY 1: MARRAKECH - KSAR AIT BEN HADDOU - ZAGORA - TILLOUGUI OASIS.** From your hotel or riad in



Marrakech we set out at **07:30** across the Glaoua Plains, up via the winding road over the High Atlas Mountains through the Tizi n'Tichka (2260m), thence down alongside the Oued Ouarzazate to see a dramatic change in the countryside - from high mountain ranges to semi-desert and oases. We shall stop at the magnificently exotic ksour of Ait Ben Haddou, declared, and rightly so, a World Heritage Site. Here we alight from our vehicle for an unguided visit these various kasbahs 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, 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 a reed-strewn assif, commanding the area for miles around, this ksour controlled the 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 before continuing ever - further south to Ouarzazate and down the beautiful Drâa Valley to the small kasbah-like Hotel Fibule Du Drâa in the oasis village of Zagora. From here we set out on our "Ships of the Desert" adventure of some **3** hours towards the south-west into a desert of many small dunes, interspersed with the black gravelly 'Reg' stretches of the El Fajia plain in the Nebche region and isolated enough to let your imagination take hold. As the air has heated up, the winds have risen to make the sand swirl about us. You'll notice that older dunes appear darker, for the iron in the sand has finally oxidised. Here, some 14km from Zagora, we have our bivouac for the night in a carpeted Berber tent at Tillougui set amidst some small dunes in a private oasis where, after a welcoming traditional tea ceremony, we shall have our dinner of vegetable tagine - which, doubtless, you'll try your hand at preparing mint tea, bread and fruit. The sunsets and sunrises in the rarefied air of our desert can simply take your breath away, far more than the hot air has done, so far. This night may be spent in our nomads' tent or out in the open air

under an awesome canopy of the starlit heavens. **LD.**

**DAY 2: TILLOUGUI - ZAGORA - TAMEGROUTE - ZAGORA - MARRAKECH.** Having witnessed an awesome sunset the



night before, now is the hour for an even more startling sunrise before our Berber breakfast of mint tea, bread, jams and cheeses, after which, our dromedaries saddled, we somewhat reluctantly strike off back towards the north-east and relative civilisation, passing through the lush oases through dangling bunches of dates, accompanied by the scents of oleander, mint and orange, via the Ksar Asrir Ignaoûn, with its sun-dried mud and reed buildings known as pisé, tiny Sarte and Douar Amezrou, home to an old Jewish kasbah and where there are still silver shops working Berber jewellery to arrive finally at the Fibule Du Drâa hotel in Zagora sometime between 9:30 and 10am. From Zagora this morning, we'll drive down on to the Library at Tamegroute, with its 13<sup>th</sup> century illuminated Koran scrolls written on gazelle hide, some works of Pythagoras and some original maps of Alexandria, even an ancient maths primer. We shall walk through the still-inhabited Kasbah to visit the Pottery Co-Operative of Tamegroute, where pottery still being 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, for the founders of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Abou Ben Naceur 'Naciri Brotherhood' in Tamegroute invited craftsmen and potters to this remote area with the intent to turn it into a thriving caravan hub city. We should be back in Zagora around midday for a shower, before setting off back up the Drâa Valley with some 14km off-road touring of the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs and on to the French Protectorate-era

city of Ouarzazate, where we shall make a short tour of the city and the Glaoui Kasbah of Taourirt to stop for a light lunch here at the Restaurant La Vallée before continuing on up over the Adrar N'Deren and down across the Glaoua Plains to Marrakech and your hotel or riad, arriving there around 8 o'clock at night after a really incredible journey into the sub-Sahara. for you to continue on with your adventurous holiday in our remarkable Kingdom. **BL.**

**OUR PRICES FOR THE STANDARD VERSION WILL INCLUDE:** Meals\* and Berber tented, carpeted accommodation, (sleeping on mattresses with sheets and blankets) as detailed; chemical toilet; trained dromedary & cameleer. Transfer Marrakech-Zagora/Tillougui - Tamegroute - Zagora -Marrakech. Visit of the Library, Kasbah and Potteries at Tamegroute and of the Ksar Ait Ben Haddou. Off-road valley tour of the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs and short visit of Ouarzazate with light lunch here at the Restaurant La Vallée. Medical and Accident Insurance.



**UPGRADED TO DELUXE VERSION: PRICES WILL INCLUDE:** Caudal tented, carpeted accommodation (maximum 6 persons per tent) (sleeping on raised beds with sheets and blankets); chemical toilet; trained dromedary & cameleer. Transfer Marrakech-Zagora/Tillougui - Tamegroute - Zagora - Marrakech. Visit of the Library, Kasbah and Potteries at Tamegroute and of the Ksar Ait Ben Haddou. Off-road valley tour of the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs and short visit of Ouarzazate with light lunch here at the Restaurant La Vallée. Lavabo, mini shampoo, towels, lanterns and candles; dinner includes Moroccan salad or harira soup, kebabs or 'kefta\*', Berber tagine, fruit, mint tea; 1 bottle of wine between 2 people, soda water served by waiters in traditional costume. Bar service.

(BYOB from Marrakech is advisable) **Live Moroccan folklore musicians.** 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, nor anything not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

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**IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU:** Day pack, trainers or sandals; sweater and long trousers; 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; 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.

