



**DURATION: Approximately 4 hours Ship to Ship**

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



We disembark to be taken by our awaiting coaches, first to visit the Mohammed V Square; this groups buildings of the main administrative departments in attractive modern Moslem architecture inspired by national traditions. To the west, a monumental fountain 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 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 as 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 m<sup>2</sup> of carved cedar wood; 67,000 m<sup>2</sup> of plasterwork and some 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

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There is about 1½ hours of walking during this tour, some of which may be over uneven ground and there are some steps to negotiate from time to time. We may not be able to visit the inside of the Mosque during religious services.

**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. Bottled or gaseous water en-route. Light refreshments. An English-speaking Licensed National Guide throughout.

**OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE:** Gratuities to waiter, 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.