**Dates: To be advised**

**Trip Highlights**

* Explore Essaouira, a former slave port transformed into a pocket-sized city of cafes and boutiques
* Have tea with a Berber nomad family surrounded by the dunes of the Sahara
* Explore the date palm, fig, olive and pomegranate plantations in the Ourika Valley in the shadow of the Atlas Mountains
* Mingle with the Koran readers, acrobats, Gnaoua musicians, fortune tellers, dervishes, trance healers, food stalls and sellers of fetishes in Marrakech’s Djemaa el Fna
* Enjoy a Moroccan fusion-food lunch at Scorpion House overlooking the sacred town of Moulay Idriss Zerhoun
* Walk through the green ribbon of the Valley of the Roses, nestled within the ochre foothills of the Atlas Mountains
* Drive through rust-coloured villages in the Ounila Valley
* Visit the crumbling but still majestic kasbah of the El Glaoui family, who usurped the power of the Moroccan king during the French colonial period
* Lunch at the sublime Secret Garden in Marrakesh
* Shop for exotic souvenirs in the souks, with a visit to modern boutiques in Marrakech
* Explore the coastal town of El Jadida, where we stay in a hotel that was once a Spanish church
* Explore Marrakech’s wonderful Jardin Majorelle, an exotic walled garden created by Yves Saint Laurent.

**Itinerary**

DAY 1
ARRIVE CASABLANCA

Pass through immigration and baggage collection. A tour representative will be waiting when you exit the terminal, assist with baggage and transfer you to L’Iglesia, a small and charming hotel in the walled coastal town of El Jadida.

www.liglesia.com

Meals included: Dinner

DAY 2
EXPLORING EL JADIDA

A guided tour of this historic trading port, a low-key introduction to the wonders of Morocco. Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 3
TO CASABLANCA AND FES

Depart El Jadida, morning tour of Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca, one of the world’s largest mosques, with the tallest minaret of any mosque.
Depart for Fes.
Next three nights at Riad Laaroussa, a luxury riad within the medina

Dinner at Riad Laaroussa
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner https://riad-laaroussa.com/

DAY 4
FES

Half day food tour of Fes.
Free afternoon for further exploration, shopping, a hammam treatment or relaxation at the riad.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch (included in food tour)

DAY 5
VOLUBILIS AND A VERY SPECIAL LUNCH

Travel to the ancient ruins of Volubilis, an original Berber settlement colonised by the Romans and the southernmost outpost of their empire. Now an archaeological treasure chest with mosaics that hint at a leisured, wealthy society with a taste for the finer things in life.
Lunch at Scorpion House, a very special experience overlooking the town of Moulay Idriss Zerhoun, a sacred shrine where non-Muslims were once excluded after dark. Time to explore the town before returning to Fes.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6
DRIVE TO THE SAHARA DUNES

A drive south through forests to the alpine village of Ifrane, across the Atlas Mountains and through the rugged beauty of the Ziz Valley, where the landscape gradually dries out as we approach the Sahara.
Dinner at hotel

Overnight at Le Riad

http://www.hotelleriad.com/

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7
BERBER CULTURE, AND THE DUNES OF THE SAHARA

Four-wheel drive visit to a family living a traditional nomadic life in the desert. Late afternoon one- hour camel ride OR four-wheel drive to luxury tented desert camp. This is camping with a silk edge. Carpets on the floor, hot showers, flush toilets and a proper bed. A three-course dinner and music around the campfire.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 8
KASBAHS AND PALMERIES

Sunrise camel ride across the dunes (about one hour), board our bus to visit the incredible khettaras, the irrigation system that once greened the oases around Merzouga. Lunch at Ksar El Khorbat, a village once used as a setting for the TV mini-series, “The Bible”. Visit the local Berber Museum, then walk through majestic Todgha Gorges. Continue to Skoura Oasis where we stay at L’Ma Lodge for the next three nights.

https://www.lmalodge.com

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 9
SKOURA PALMERY

Walk in the irrigated palm grove of Skoura, where the agriculture has changed little for centuries, visit 16th century Kasbah Amridil. Optional activities in the afternoon include hiking or relaxing around the pool.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 10
THE VALLEY OF THE ROSES

An easy hike through the beautiful green palmery in the Valley of the Roses, about two hours. We’ll lunch on the rooftop terrace at Gite d’Etape Tamaloutte

www.tamaloutte.com

There’s also a chance to do a cooking class here (optional - $45) Afternoon relax around the pool at L’Ma, or another walk around Skoura. Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 11
ACROSS THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

Drive to Ouarzazate with a view over postcard-perfect Ait Ben Haddou from a lookout above the town then along the incredible Ounila Valley where rust-coloured villages are set in a weathered gorge. Stop at Telouat to visit one of the finest of all Moroccan palaces, the Kasbah of Thami El Glaoui, the former strongman and Pasha of Marrakesh. Lunch at the restaurant next to the kasbah. Next two nights at Kasbah Bab Ourika, an outpost of luxury and style poised above the Ourika Valley.

http://kasbahbabourika.com

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 12
EXPLORING THE OURIKA VALLEY

Guided walk through the fig, pomegranate, olive and apple trees that line the Ourika Valley. Visit the amazing botanical world of Anima Garden in the morning, billed as “One of the most imaginative gardens in the world”. Lunch at the garden’s café.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 13
TO ESSAOUIRA

Drive to the former slave port and one-time European enclave of Essaouira via the Jarjeer Mule and Donkey Sanctuary, a rescue facility for working animals.
Lunch at Jarjeer.
Afternoon stroll through the town and to the beach.

Dinner at Villa Maroc
Next two nights at Villa Maroc

www.villa-maroc.com

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 14
ESSAOUIRA

Early morning visit to the fishing port, where the fishermen will be unloading their catch. Guided tour of the medina of this fascinating, pocket-sized city, which also has excellent shopping, both traditional and high quality modern. Free time in the afternoon for further exploration.

Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 15
MARRAKECH

Drive to Marrakech. Lunch in the medina at Naranj, a Lebanese restaurant, then we’ll walk across the great square of Marrakech, Djemaa el Fna, and through the souks to get to our hotel.

Next three nights at La Maison Arabe, in the northern part of the medina

www.lamaisonarabe.com

Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 16
THE MAGIC AND MYSTERY OF MARRAKECH

Guided tour of the medina, finish in the souks with lunch at The Secret Garden, a green lung at the heart of the souks.

Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 17
AN INCREDIBLE GARDEN, SHOPPING AND A FAREWELL DINNER

Visit the Jardin Majorelle, with an optional visit to Yves St Laurent Museum
Afternoon at leisure with optional shopping tour, more time to explore the souks or relax at La Maison Arabe

Farewell dinner at Plus 61, Marrakech Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 18
DEPARTURE

Transfers to airport at Marrakech. Meals included: Breakfast

**What’s included**

* A fully licenced, English-speaking Moroccan guide to accompany the entire trip, plus tour leaders Michael and Liz
* 17 nights accommodation in a double/twin room with breakfast
* Airport transfers
* 17 Breakfasts
* 3 Lunches
* 12 Dinners
* Still water with meals
* Still water on board the bus and on day tours
* All admission fees except for Yves St Laurent Museum (optional) and cooking class at Valley of the Roses ($45 per person)
* All tips for porters, guides and restaurants where meals are provided
* Half-day guided city tours with a local guide in El Jadida, Fes, Essaouira, Marrakech
* Private transport, depending on tour size, using either 14-seater minibus (up to 8 persons), Mercedes Sprinter 17-seater (from 9 to 12 persons)

**What’s Not Included:**

* International air travel
* Travel Insurance
* Alcoholic beverages
* Soft drinks including those with meals
* Laundry, mini-bar charges, phone charges, spa treatments and other optional services provided by the hotel
* Lunches or dinners not included in the itinerary

**Need more information?**

mike@tripwired.com.au

0434 520 302