

# COBBLESTONE

PRIVATE TRAVEL



## Morocco Itinerary for **VIP Travel + Leisure** readers

*February 24 – March 9, 2022*

Cobblestone arranges private, custom-designed itineraries. This is just a small sample of the possibilities.

Contact us to design your Morocco experience!

Thursday, February 24:

Arrival at **Casablanca's Mohammed V Airport**.

VIP airport services include being met upon arrival, expedited through passport control, and escorted to meet your guide.

Check in at the **Four Seasons Casablanca**. Located in Anfa on the Boulevard de la Corniche, the hotel is just ten minutes from Casablanca city center.

You will be staying in a **grand premier room with ocean view**.

As time allows, begin exploring Casablanca. Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal.

Cosmopolitan **Casablanca** has roots dating to the Roman settlement of Anfa. The port became a key trading post for the Sultan in the 18th Century and was greatly expanded during the French protectorate. Recent years have seen efforts to restore the once crumbling medina. Nearby you will see various art deco facades.

Visit the of the massive **Mosque Hassan II**. Completed in 1993, the Mosque can accommodate up to 25,000 worshippers making it the second largest in Islam today. *Last tour of the interior is at 2 pm.*

*8:00 PM dinner reservations at Petit Rocher, offering seafood and great views.*

Overnight: Four Seasons Casablanca – grand premier room with ocean view.

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Friday, February 25:

Breakfast at your hotel.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal.

Enjoy a leisurely day en route to Fes.

*Total driving today is about **four hours** (plus stops).*

Explore **Volubilis**, the ruins of the late Roman era capital of the province of Mauritania. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Volubilis overlooks the fertile plains of the Meknes region near the foot of Mt. Zerhoun.

Continue to **Moulay Idriss**, a scenic hill town just a few minutes from Volubilis. In the center of town is the Shrine of Moulay Idriss I, the man who brought Islam to Morocco. Though the shrine is not open to non-Muslims, one gets fantastic views from strolling the narrow streets above.

Enjoy **lunch** at the **Scorpion House** in Moulay Idriss.

Continue to Fes.

Upon arrival in Fes, check in at **Riad Fes**, the Relais & Chateaux inn. The riad offers authenticity spread over a series of courtyards and includes a spa, swimming pool and an excellent restaurant.

You will be staying in an **Ambassador suite**.

*7:30 PM dinner reservation at Riad Fes.*

Overnight: Riad Fes – Ambassador suite.

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Saturday, February 26:

Breakfast at your hotel.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal.

Dive into the **medina of Fes**, itself a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Experience the scents and rhythms of Morocco's cultural capital.

As you explore Fes, you will wind in and out of a variety of **souks** – from vegetable markets through the street of butchers, alleys of Harira soup cafes, weavers, carpenters and so much more. Pass communal bread ovens that are very much a part of daily medina life.

The **Nejjarine Museum** of Wooden Arts & Crafts is a beautifully restored example of the many foundouks – lodging for traders from far and near – that were an important part of Fes' commercial past.

Pass the **Blue Gate**, the shrine of Moulay Idriss, and peak through the many entrances of the massive Al Quaraouiyine Mosque.

Continue to the iconic (and pungent!) **Chouara Tanneries**. It's best to head up to the balconies of one of the shops that will welcome you with a sprig of mint and a memorable view.

This afternoon, continue to **Fes el Jdid** and see the gates of the Royal Palace.

*8:00 PM dinner reservations at Dar Roumana for French cuisine with Moroccan flavors in a beautifully restored riad.*

Overnight: Riad Fes – Ambassador suite.

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Sunday, February 27:

Breakfast at your hotel.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

Head south to the **Sahara** today. *Early start suggested.*

*From Fes to Erfoud: total driving time today is approximately **7 hours** (plus stops).*

*From Erfoud to the encampment is about 60 minutes by desert – ready 4x4.*

Cross the **Middle Atlas Mountains** this morning. The mountain town **of Ifrane** is worth a stop for mint tea and a look at this surprising alpine town. Continue south over open, rocky desert.

Follow the stunning, green **Ziz River valley** through the Tafilet oasis.

Upon arrival in Erfoud, leave the world behind as you continue by 4x4. Venture further towards the legendary dunes of remote Merzouga.

Enjoy a **sunset camel trek**. Climb the dunes to watch the glorious sunset.

A traditional Berber dinner will be prepared for you at the encampment.

Overnight in your shared encampment, **White Camel Acacia Camp** – one tent.



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Monday, February 28:

Breakfast at your hotel.

This morning, try **sand boarding** on the dunes.

Return by 4x4 to Erfoud (about 90 minutes).

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

Continue west as you pass the foot of the **Todgha** and **Dades Valleys**. Head up the Todgha valley to the narrow gorge. Take a stroll up the gorge. If you wish, this is a nice stop for lunch.

*Total driving time today is approximately **5 hours** (plus stops).*

Continue to the Skoura oasis.

Check in at **Dar Ahlam**, a boutique hotel fashioned from the ruins of a Kasbah. It features sprawling gardens, a large pool, and an outstanding chef. All excursions and meals are included during your stay. You will be staying in the restored original Kasbah.

You will be staying in a **kasbah junior suite**.

Once you settle in, you may wish to begin your stay with an exploration of the oasis on foot.

A private dinner will be arranged for you at Dar Ahlam.

Overnight: Dar Ahlam – Kasbah junior suite.



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### Tuesday, March 1:

Breakfast at Dar Ahlam.

You will have a **4x4 and driver** (provided by Dar Ahlam) at your disposal throughout your stay at Dar Ahlam. All excursions are included in your stay.

Suggested 4x4 excursion (by road and by piste) is to the Valley of the Almond trees. Visit the Glaoui Kasbah, once a home of a powerful clan. Take a short hike to a spot overlooking the valley and the old salt mines.

Lunch will be provided in the gardens of the hotel or on your excursion.

A private dinner will be arranged for you at Dar Ahlam.

Overnight: Dar Ahlam – Kasbah junior suite.

### Wednesday, March 2:

Breakfast at Dar Ahlam.

At 10:00 AM, meet your guide.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

This morning, explore the UNESCO-restored **Kasbah of Ait Ben Haddou**.

Continue along the ancient caravan route through the **High Atlas Mountains** and the dramatic pass of Tizn Tichka en route to Marrakech. This hairpin road is one of only two passes through the largest mountain chain in Africa and contains spectacular scenery.

*Total driving time today is approximately 6 hours (plus stops).*

Check in at **Kasbah Tamadot**, Richard Branson's retreat in the High Atlas. Once the home of an Italian antique dealer, Branson's mother discovered the property in the late 90s and began its transformation to a Virgin collection property.

You will be staying in a **Berber tent suite**. Your tent suite is set just apart from the main hotel. The suite has a sitting area.

Dinner Kasbah Tamadot (drinks not included).

Overnight: Kasbah Tamadot – Berber tent suite.

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## Thursday, March 3:

Breakfast at your hotel.

At **10:00 AM**, meet your hiking guide in the lobby.

Enjoy a **2.5-hour guided hike** from Kasbah Tamadot.

Embark on a climb up the mountain opposite Kasbah Tamadot to discover the stunning surrounding countryside and panoramic views from the top with a local mountain guide.

Pass through Berber villages as you make your way along ancient pathways.

Lunch and dinner Kasbah Tamadot (drinks not included).

Overnight: Kasbah Tamadot – Berber tent suite.

## Friday, March 4:

Breakfast at your hotel.

At **10:00 AM**, meet your guide.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

Travel to seaside **Essaouira** (about **3 ½ - 4 hours** from Kasbah Tamadot), a former Portuguese town on the Atlantic Ocean.

En route, you are likely to see goats climb **Argan trees** in search of the tree nuts.

Upon arrival in Essaouira, check in at **Palais Heure Bleue**. This Relais & Chateaux boutique hotel was once a customs house. Enjoy the rooftop terrace, heated pool, hammam, and excellent restaurant.

You will be staying in a **suite**.

*8:00 dinner reservations at La Table by Madada for fresh seafood.*

Overnight: Palais Heure Bleue – suite.

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### Saturday, March 5:

Breakfast at your hotel.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

Explore the picturesque street of the **thuya workers**, the oceanside **ramparts**, and the numerous art **galleries** and boutiques.

*8:00 PM dinner reservations at Palais Heure Bleue.*

Overnight: Palais Heure Bleue – suite.

### Sunday, March 6:

Breakfast at your hotel.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

When you are ready, return inland to **Marrakech** (about **2½-3 hours**).

Visit the **Jardin Majorelle**. The garden was a gift to Marrakech from Yves-Saint Laurent. Purchased from the painter Jacques Majorelle, the garden is adorned with Majorelle blue, the color named for him.

Continue to the **Yves-Saint Laurent Museum**. The museum highlights the life work of the designer, his works, and his connection to Marrakech.

The **Koutoubia Minaret** dominates the skyline of Marrakech. The 12<sup>th</sup>-Century monument is a master class in Moorish architecture.

Check in at the **Royal Mansour Marrakech**. Stay in the King's hotel in a private riad, based on the traditional courtyard house common in the medina. Your riad has a rooftop terrace with plunge pool. The Royal Mansour's public spaces are both opulent and refined.

You are staying in a **superior one-bedroom riad**. Your riad is a free-standing unit with private courtyard. Your roof terrace features sun beds, a private pool and stunning views.

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Early this evening, head to the **Djemaa el Fnaa**, the main square at the heart of Marrakech's medina. In the late afternoon, food stalls appear next to rows of escargot sellers, snake charmers, musicians, and story tellers.

*8:00 PM dinner reservations at +61, the restaurant in Gueliz offering locally sourced ingredients reflecting the owner's Australian roots.*

Overnight: Royal Mansour – superior one-bedroom riad.



### Monday, March 7:

Breakfast at your hotel.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

Get an insider's look at **Marrakech's design, shopping and artisanship scene** with a local designer. Visit ateliers and workshops tucked out of public view. These are personal connections of your host.

Head to Sidi Ghanem, the Industrial quarter of Marrakech and visit some of Marrakech's top shops and ateliers. Your guide knows the off the beaten path hot-spots and has personal relationships with Morocco's top artisans and designers.

*1:00 PM lunch reservations at L'Mida, a stylish rooftop restaurant near the spice bazaar.*

Explore the endless **souks of Marrakech**. Each trade and specialty clusters together over alleyways and squares. The colorful spice souks lead down the metalworkers clanging away.

*8:30 PM dinner reservations at the Royal Mansour's Grande Table Marocaine.*

Overnight: Royal Mansour – superior one-bedroom riad.

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Tuesday, March 8:

Breakfast at your hotel.

Your **guide and driver** are at your disposal today.

**9:00 AM:** Take a three-hour experience exploring the medina, new town and Palmeraie by **motorcycle side car**.

Explore with an expat insider as you travel on a Russian-made knockoff of classic BMW motorcycle and side car. Marrakech police used a similar vehicle in the 1950s. Two people would travel on each motorcycle - one person will ride behind the driver and one person will ride in the side car. They will be driven by expats living in Marrakech.

*12:30 PM lunch reservations at Café de la Poste, a bustling spot in the new town.*

This afternoon, visit the small museum in **Dar Bacha**, the Museum of Confluences, focusing on the coexistence in Morocco of the three Abrahamic faiths. Dar Bacha, an ornate palace built by the powerful Glaoui family, is itself an attraction.

Explore the architectural **Secret Garden**, a recently restored complex showcasing Islamic art and architecture. The garden and adjacent buildings date back 400 years.

Visit the opulent **Saadien Tombs**, the mausoleum of a great dynasty which once ruled North Africa. The site has some of the most eye-popping mosaic work.

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As time allows, you may wish to visit the **Bahia Palace**, a 19th-century palace with a trapezoidal garden, a huge tiled courtyard, and many hidden treasures. The palace is a mix of Andalusian and Moorish architecture.

*8:30 PM dinner reservations at the Relais & Chateaux Villa des Orangers' Mediterranean restaurant.*  
Overnight: Royal Mansour – superior one-bedroom riad.

Wednesday, March 9:

Breakfast at your hotel.

You will be escorted to **Marrakech Menara Airport** for your departing flight.

VIP airport services includes help checking in, being expedited through passport control and use of the VIP lounge while you await your departure.

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[www.cobblestoneprivatetravel.com](http://www.cobblestoneprivatetravel.com)