Day 1 – Welcome to Casablanca

Upon arrival, you’ll be met and escorted to the Sofitel Casablanca Tour Blanche Hotel. Our luxury hotel enjoys a privileged city-center location close to the historic medina. Then join your guide to explore this vibrant city. Stand in Mohammed V Square, where French and Moroccan architectural styles blend harmoniously, and marvel at the glorious Hassan II Mosque; its stunning location built on a platform that extends over the Atlantic Ocean is complemented by the soaring artistry of its design and the exquisite indigenous materials used in its construction – creamy marble from Agandir, Cedar wood from the Middle Atlas Mountains, and gleaming granite from Tafraoute.

At the bustling Central Market, you’ll mingle with city residents who come daily to shop for fresh seafood, fruits and vegetables. Other vendors specialize in fine Moroccan goods that make excellent mementos and gifts, from leather slippers and lanterns to fragrant spices and Argan oil – the famous elixir used in moisturizers, shampoos and even food. This evening, you’ll enjoy dinner, wine and cocktails at Rick’s Café, an evocative re-imagining of the classic Bogart film. Meals D

Day 2 – El Jadida + Onward to Marrakech

Depart Casablanca and travel to El Jadida, a colorful coastal city that lies off the beaten path for most other visitors. Tracing its history to the 16th century, El Jadida is home to the mighty Mazagan Fortress. Overlooking the sea with impressive ramparts and bastions, this World Heritage Site is hailed as a fine early example of Renaissance military design.

Enjoy lunch here along the coast and then travel inland to Marrakech. On arrival, check in to La Maison Arabe and enjoy the rest of your evening at leisure. You can relax here at this intimate luxury riad, enjoying the tranquility of its garden patios. Or take advantage of our location in the heart of the medina and venture forth to explore a bit at your own pace. Meals B+L

Day 3 - Explore Imperial Marrakech

Today you’ll enjoy a comprehensive guided exploration of this marvelous city, founded 800 years ago by the Almoravid Dynasty. First you visit the lavishly decorated Saadian Tombs, dating to the late 16th century. The gravestones of these Saadian princes and members of the royal household are embellished simply and elegantly with colorful ceramic tiles, each with a
short epitaph and a quote from the Qur’an. The next stop is the Dar Si Said Museum, an unparalleled collection of Moroccan art exhibited in an exquisite former palace. Continue to the 12th century Koutoubia Mosque and the lovely Bahia Palace, built in 1880.

Then experience the exotic atmosphere of the city’s famed souks; exploring with your guide through this labyrinthine maze of shops and vendor stalls, you’ll emerge in lively Djemaa el Fna Square, undoubtedly the heart of the Marrakech medina. Next up, in contrast, is the tranquility of Le Jardin Majorelle — a botanical oasis of rare plants and vibrant blooms — created by a painter and more recently owned by the renowned designer Yves Saint-Laurent. On the roof top of Maison de la Photographie, you’ll enjoy afternoon tea as you take in the breathtaking views over the Marrakech medina. Meals B+L

**Day 4 - Full-day excursion into the Ourika Valley**

Leave behind the bustling pace of Marrakech and travel into a tranquil land of olive groves and citrus orchards. As the peaks of the Atlas Mountains draw near, you enter the timeless Ourika Valley. At an innovative Berber cooperative, you’ll observe and learn more about the production of Argan oil — highly prized for its hydrating and beautifying effects. The process from tree to oil is time consuming and done almost entirely by hand. Employing local women, this cooperative is an important community resource and promises an enlightening visit.

Our full-day excursion continues deeper into the Ourika Valley to Setti Fatma, a lovely stream-side village set in a canyon beneath the rugged peaks of the High Atlas Range. Back in Marrakech, we’ll take you to Palais Soleiman for a wonderful dinner surrounded by the lavish décor of this erstwhile palace. Meals B+L+D

**Day 5 - Into the Middle Atlas Mountains to Fès**

Leaving Marrakech behind this morning, you’ll journey to the laid-back market town of Azrou before continuing on to Immouzer du Kandar, a friendly Berber community surrounded by rugged gorges and wooded hills. Passing through Ifrane, you might be surprised by its distinctly Alpine feel. Fondly referred to as the Switzerland of Morocco, this charming town was built by the French in the 1930’s. Venture deeper into the undulating hills and fragrant Cedar forests of the Middle Atlas Range — a favorite habitat of Barbary macaques. Arriving in Fès, you’ll check in to the enchanting Riad Fès. Located in the medina in the heart of this ancient Imperial City, our luxury retreat evokes the elegance and romance of Morocco’s traditional courtyard palaces. Meals B+L+D

**Day 6 - Excursion to Meknes and Volubilis**

Today’s excursion begins with a scenic drive to Meknes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was originally founded as military settlement before emerging as the capital of the Alaouite Dynasty. Renowned for its blending of Spanish and Moorish architectural styles of the 1600’s, Meknes is further distinguished by its high and thick walls - punctuated by gracefully arched
gates. Chief among these is Bab Mansour, a magnificent gate with superb Zellij tilework, sturdy columns of fine Corinthian marble and an imposing door of wood and iron. You’ll also explore the ancient Jewish quarter and visit the Royal Stables, large enough to hold 12,000 Arabian horses; although the stables have fallen into an evocative state of disrepair, it offers further insight into the wealth and power wielded by Morocco’s ancient rulers.

Continue to Moulay Idriss, a sacred hilltop city, and then explore the archaeological site of Volubilis, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. With finely preserved ruins dating back to the 3rd century, this remarkable ensemble of temples, baths, a basilica, brothels and finely preserved mosaic floors offers a unique look into the ancient history of Roman Africa. Return to Fès where the evening is free to relax, enjoy and dine at your leisure. Meals B+L

**Day 7 - Immerse in the Imperial City of Fès**

Founded in the 9th century, this is the best preserved medieval city in North Africa. Home to one of the world’s oldest universities, it reached its peak of influence and glory in the 13th and 14th centuries when it replaced Marrakech as the capital of the Kingdom. Although the modern capital was transferred to Rabat nearly 100 years ago, Fès remains the cultural and spiritual heart of the country.

Setting out with our engaging guide, today’s sightseeing includes the ancient Medina and two medieval institutions of learning. With their extravagant style, these Madrasas stand in striking contrast to the timeworn cobblestones and simple market stalls of the souks that surround them.

In el-Nejjarine (Carpenter’s Square), where skilled artisans still chisel and sculpt indigenous cedar wood, you’ll admire the much-photographed Nejjarine Fountain, famed for its exquisite ceramic mosaics. Also on the day’s program is the Kairaouine Mosque with its graceful 1,000-foot minaret. Founded in the 9th century this is the second largest mosque in Morocco and home to one of the world’s oldest universities. Meals B+L

**Day 8 - Farewell to Morocco**

We’ll take you to the airport for your onward flight. Meals B