

Marrakesh, the High Atlas and desert



Day 1

Upon arrival at Ouazarzate Airport, your group will be met by your Discover guide and taken to your accommodation, the Hotel La Vallee. Flights generally arrive late at night, so there is just a little time before bed to absorb the new smells and sights of this desert frontier town, nestled between the High Atlas mountains and the great Sahara desert.

Day 2

After breakfast, we make an early start, driving across the Anti-Atlas mountains and through the desert oasis of the Draa valley to Zagora, and the start of our desert adventure. We will have lunch in Zagora and be met by our local Tuareg guide, and introduced to our camels for our desert trek into the sand dunes in the pre-Sahara desert. We make camp in traditional Bedouin tents and watch as the desert night unfolds around us. Song, drumming and laughter will fill the night, as we experience an unforgettable night in the company of these proud nomadic people.

Day 3

Waking with the dawn, we breakfast early and return on our camels to Zagora. Today there is the opportunity of visiting Tinfou, a village further into the desert, which is gradually being encroached by the sands, and students can carry out fieldwork here. We can also visit a traditional pottery and silver-smith and consider the impact of eco-tourism in the desert. Night at the Hotel Fibule du Draa.



Day 4

Today we drive from Zagora in the deep south, to Imlil in the High Atlas mountains. Whilst long, it is a day of superlatives, recognised as one of the worlds 'classic drives'. After an early start, we retrace our route along the Draa valley, over the Anti-Atlas, then continue over the High Atlas mountains, cresting the Tizi n Tichka pass, at 2260m.

Here, the rarified air is hard to breathe but the views are breath-taking anyway! We continue to round the mountains and reach our destination, Imlil, where we will settle in to our accommodation.



Day 5

The village of Imlil is set in fabulous mountain scenery. Mount Toubkal (4165m), the highest mountain in North Africa, dominates the valley and always impresses.



Your time in Imlil may be spent in a variety of ways:

Trekking. Trek from Imlil to one of several mountain passes from which you can view the mountain environment in all its splendour. With your Discover guide, a local mountain guide and mules will walk with you at your pace, and lunch is served as a Berber picnic on your arrival at your chosen vantage point. Awe and Wonder are the themes of your trek, as you discover this fabulous mountain environment, one of the world's classic mountain ranges.



Fieldwork. You may choose to spend your time in Imlil carrying out one of our fieldwork investigations. We have a range of studies enabling your students to study flooding and hazards in a mountain environment, river morphology, tourism and eco-tourism, cold environments, rural settlement, microclimates or ecosystems.



Community work. You may wish to spend your time in the mountains 'giving back' to the local community. We have many projects to which students can contribute their time and energy, from repairing footpaths to clearing irrigation channels, from clearing litter to engaging local children in play.



You may like to fund-raise or collect materials for a specific project before your trip, and spend your day in the Imlil area putting your efforts to good use. Past projects have included the construction of the village incinerator, ensuring a safe drinking water supply for the village and working with the children in Imlil Primary School, listening to children read, playing games and doing craft work. Gifts of stationery and balls are always appreciated and will be put to good use!



Day 6

This morning, you may like to visit the village of Imlil to chat with locals and perfect your haggling technique, perhaps enjoy a hammam (traditional Moroccan steam bath), or even just relax and reflect on your time in this vibrant country. After lunch, you travel to the vibrant city of Marrakesh. On arrival, you will check-in to your hotel, the Foucauld, a Marrakchi institution on the edge of the Medina! Depending on your arrival time, you may begin your exploration of this beautiful city, and visit the Djemaa el-Fna, the infamous 'Place of the Dead', in the heart of the ancient city of Marrakesh. Dinner is taken in the hotel restaurant.



Here, youthful, dynamic and aspiring Moroccans live alongside more traditional Islamic culture. In the evening, you may choose to head back into the Square and spend time watching the local entertainers, where snake charmers and acrobats, fortune tellers and dancers vie for your attention, and visit the spectacular food stalls which make the atmosphere unforgettable...



Day 7



After breakfast, your Discover guide will accompany you and a local Marrakchi guide on a horse-drawn caleche tour around the city walls. You will spend the day exploring this enchanting city, visiting the leather tanneries, experience a local Berber apothecary, bartering for goods in the souks, or carrying out a field study on the human geography of this rapidly developing city in an LEDC.

Day 8

Depending on the time of your return flight, you may have time to visit the Jardins Marjorelle, Yves St Laurent's fabulous garden in Marrakesh, before your return to Marrakesh Menara Airport for your flight.

