

7-Day Morocco Itinerary: Marrakech, the Sahara Desert & Fes

Marrakech, the Sahara Desert, and Fes are the three anchors of Morocco's classic first-timer loop — a walled medina of souks and gardens, a night beneath the dunes of Erg Chebbi, and the country's oldest and best-preserved medieval city. This route links all three by road, using the same overland desert crossing nearly every Morocco tour operator runs between the two cities.

DURATION

7 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

March – May & Sept – Nov

mild days, cool desert nights

FROM

\$700 USD / person
for 2 people

Day 1

Arrive in Marrakech, Settle into the Medina

Land at Marrakech Menara Airport and head straight into the walled medina — you'll land early enough most days to catch the main square as it comes alive for the evening.

Private Airport Transfer — Marrakech Menara to the Medina

~20 minutes · About \$30 USD for 2 people

A fixed-price private transfer skips the haggling with taxi drivers outside arrivals. Most riads sit inside car-free lanes, so expect a short walk or a porter handoff for the last stretch.

Marrakech Airport Transfer · marrakechairporttransfer.com

Overnight — Riad Yasmine

From \$185–205 USD / night, for 2 people

A four-star riad built around a green-and-white tiled courtyard and small indoor pool, just over a kilometer from Jemaa el-Fnaa and a few minutes' walk from the Ben Youssef Madrasa.

Riad Yasmine riad-yasmine.com · +212 524 377 012

Dinner at Jemaa el-Fnaa

Est. \$10–20 USD / person

On your own — the square's food stalls fire up at dusk with grilled meats, snail soup, and fresh orange juice carts. Pick whichever stall has the busiest local crowd.

Day 2

Marrakech Medina & Gardens

A full day split between the ochre walls of the medina's palaces and the cobalt blue of a garden created by a French painter and later restored by Yves Saint Laurent.

Bahia Palace

~1 hour · About \$10 USD / person

A 19th-century palace of carved cedar ceilings, zellige tilework, and courtyard gardens built for a grand vizier — arrive early to get ahead of the tour groups funneling in from the nearby souks.

Jardin Majorelle

~1.5 hours · About \$26 USD / person

A cobalt-blue villa and cactus garden created by French painter Jacques Majorelle, later owned and restored by Yves Saint Laurent. Book timed entry online in advance — daily capacity is limited.

Jardin Majorelle · jardinmajorelle.com

Dinner in the Medina

Est. \$15–25 USD / person

On your own — the streets around Rue Riad Zitoun el Kedim mix rooftop restaurants with small family-run tagine spots, away from the crowds of the main square.

Overnight — Riad Yasmine

From \$185–205 USD / night, for 2 people

Second night at the same riad.

Riad Yasmine · riad-yasmine.com

Day 3

Cross the Atlas Mountains to the Dades Valley

The first leg of the classic overland desert route — up over the Tizi n'Tichka pass, a stop at the kasbah of Ait Ben Haddou, then down into the Dades Valley's rose-and-almond-orchard landscape.

3-Day Desert Tour — Marrakech to Fes via the Sahara

3 days / 2 nights · About \$160 USD / person (shared group tour)

A minibus circuit run daily between the two cities, covering the Tizi n'Tichka pass, the UNESCO kasbah at Ait Ben Haddou, an overnight kasbah in the Dades Valley, a camel trek and desert camp night near Merzouga, and the final drive into Fes over the Middle Atlas. Price includes transport, guide, both nights' lodging, breakfast, and dinner.

Marrakesh Desert Tours · marrakesh-desert-tours.com

Ait Ben Haddou

~45 minutes · Included in the tour

A fortified clay-and-straw ksar and UNESCO World Heritage site that has doubled as a filming location for *Gladiator* and *Game of Thrones*. Climb to the top for views over the Ounila Valley.

Overnight — Dades Valley Kasbah

Included in the tour package

A traditional kasbah-style guesthouse set against the folded red rock walls of the Dades Gorge, with dinner served on a terrace overlooking the valley.

Day 4

Sahara Desert — Camel Trek & Overnight Camp

The tour's centerpiece — a drive through Todra Gorge, then a camel trek into the dunes of Erg Chebbi for a night under the stars in a Berber-style desert camp.

Todra Gorge

~1 hour · Included in the tour

A narrow limestone canyon with walls rising up to 300 meters — a popular stop for a short walk, or for climbers, some of Morocco's best-known routes.

Camel Trek into Erg Chebbi

~1.5–2 hours (sunset) · Included in the tour

A camel caravan into the dunes near Merzouga, timed to reach camp as the sun sets over the Sahara. Bring a scarf for wind-blown sand and a layer for the temperature drop after dark.

Overnight — Desert Camp, Erg Chebbi

Included in the tour package

A Berber-style camp of tented rooms among the dunes, with a cd a gh 1goDRf* 0rmBringn r ant theirrged andor

Dinner in the Fes Medina

Est. \$15–25 USD / person

On your own — the riad can arrange an in-house Moroccan dinner, or it's a short walk to small restaurants near Place Seffarine.

Day 6

Fes Medina — Tanneries, Madrasas & Souks