

BERBER TOURS

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Tour 8, OURIKA VALLEY AND ATLAS MOUNTAINS 4X4 TOUR PACKAGE

ARRIVE ANY DAY IN MARRAKECH – PRIVATE 4X4 TOUR

1-6 PEOPLE PER 4X4

FOR PRIVATE PARTIES OF MORE THAN 6,
CONTACT BERBER TOURS FOR PRICING

5 nights – 6 day 4X4 Tour

3-star or 4-star hotel accommodations

Transportation by **TOYOTA LAND CRUISER** 4x4

Dinner and breakfast with room accommodations

Services of one English speaking driver for the ENTIRE tour

Airport transfers

ALL PRICES ARE BASED ON 3-STAR HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

HIGH SEASON – September 1 to May 31

LOW SEASON – June 1 to August 31 – 30% Reduction in Price, excluding options

**4x4 TOURS SOLD BY BERBER TOURS ARE OFFERED AS
"INDIVIDUALIZED OR PRIVATE GROUP TOURS"**

CLIENTS MAY NOT PURCHASE "PLACES" ON SOMEONE ELSE'S 4X4 TOUR

THIS PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE AIRLINE COSTS

PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Day 1: Arrive in Marrakech

Day 2: Ourika Valley

The Ourika Valley is an attractive string of villages along the dangerous river carrying the same name. The landscape is fresh and green, and in summer a popular destination when Marrakech is boiling. But in winter the Oued Ourika can be dangerous, and floods sometimes destroy villages, roads and tear up trees.

The Ourika Valley starts about 30 km south of Marrakech, and the tarmac road will slowly bring you 37 km into the valley until you reach Setti Fatma, famous for its seven waterfalls.

The main attraction of Aghbalou must be the brick mosque, a rare change from the standard mosque in Morocco. It has an appearance which resembles more of a church. Since Aghbalou is the largest village along the Oued Ourika, it is also a popular place to stop en route. A popular place to pass an hour or two is the nice café along the river. Extremely basic, with an uneven ground, but the food is surprisingly good. Spent the night at L'Arganier d'Or (The Golden Argan) Riad Hotel in the Middle Atlas Mountains.

Day 3: Tizi N'Test Pass – Ouarzazate

Back on the Tizi N'Test road and a little further on is Ijoukak where a piste (dirt road) leads into the less visited, but beautiful, Agoundis Valley. Close by stands the ancient Kasbah of Talat N'Yaccoub, surrounded by olive groves, with the foaming Oued Nfiss stream lapping at the foot of its ramparts. Dominating an adjacent knoll, with the snows of the western Igdet as a backdrop, is the Agadir N'Gouj, a former stronghold of the Goundafi tribe that was notorious in the 19th century for its dungeons. The entire location is now regarded as one of the outstanding beauty spots of the Great Atlas chain.

Higher up on the other side of the stream is the 12th century mosque of Tin Mal, birthplace of the Almohad movement that eventually gave rise to the famous Berber dynasty of the Middle Ages. This mosque, which is roughly contemporary with the Koutoubia in Marrakech, has now been renovated and is one of the few in Morocco that non-Muslims can visit outside prayer times.

The mountain behind the mosque is Gourza, first climbed by the Hooker botanical expedition in 1871. The Test road narrows near the top of the pass but then has a good surface all the way to Taroudannt. Animals winding along in "Indian file" and sentinels watching over groups of dromedaries are images that will be etched on the travelers' minds, but the area is actually an environmental disaster, as vast forests have been chopped down for building materials and firewood. Here, and similarly along the eastern boundary of the Toubkal Massif plainly marked by the Tichka pass commercial road, the watershed divides the lush from the barren. A quilt of green fields stitched round a few oases occasionally brightens the monotony.

We continue on over the "back-country" roads to Ouarzazate where we spend the night at Hotel Riad Salam.

Day 4: Ouarzazate – Tinerhir – Ouarzazate

Leave the hotel at 8:00am to return to the head of the Draa Valley to explore the Vallée du Dades, popularly known as the Valley of Kasbahs, east of Ouarzazate. The Dades finds its water high in the Central High Atlas and this burst out of the mountains in one of Morocco's most spectacular canyons, the Gorges du Dades. At its mouth is the town of Boumalne, a center for roses and their associated perfume industry (a festival is held each spring to celebrate the opening of the rose buds). Like its sister, the Gorge du Todra, this 1,000-meter (3,280 ft) canyon, sheer in places, becomes a raging torrent in spring when the snow thaws on the Atlas.

The parallel Todra Gorge was once populated by Jews, who still remember Todra in a popular Hebrew folksong. Of the two gorges, the Dades, which is longer and in places wider, is probably the more beautiful. Extraordinary rock formations like elephant hide look as if they have only recently lost their molten ability to move.

Return to Ouarzazate to spend the night at Hotel Riad Salam.

Day 5: Ouarzazate – Marrakech

Ouarzazate, the capital of the south, sits astride the Draa, at the end of the Tichka road, dominated by the Atlas range that fills its northern horizon. It is a crossroads through which everyone must pass, and was originally a base of the French Foreign Legion. It is now increasingly important to Morocco's film location industry, and is served by a plethora of hotels and a regional airport. It is a modern town of little character or interest, but hidden away are a number of features that bring to life its short history.

The Legionnaires have left their mark in the church, which is still maintained by Catholic nuns, and Chez Dimitri restaurant. Once a wild drinking hole, Dimitri's is now famous as one of the best restaurants south of the Atlas, thanks to its colorful founder. Dimitri was an energetic Greek, who jumped ship in Casablanca as a 14-year old in 1928 on his way to the United States. He eventually made his way to the Legionnaire post of Ouarzazate, where he set up his soon to be celebrated restaurant. His son, who now runs the place, grew up rubbing shoulders with the likes of Orson Welles, and has his own moment of film fame playing the son of Anthony Quinn in *Lawrence of Arabia*.

In the morning, visit the great Glaoui palace, Kasbah Taourirt, which is empty and under restoration and is only partially open to the public. The Kasbah has some fine painted wooden ceilings and much of the rest of the Kasbah village is still occupied and worth a visit.

From Ouarzazate, in the afternoon we will travel about 30km to another Glaoui Kasbah, Ait Benhaddou, which is the oldest continuously inhabited Kasbah in Morocco (500+ years) and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From Ait Benhaddou, we will take a piste (dirt) road along mountainous cliffs high above the valley floor and then stop at Telouet Kasbah, the “seat” of Glaoui tribal power, Telouet Kasbah, is now mostly in ruins except for the magnificent state rooms of this once great kasbah which can still be visited. British author Gavin Maxwell accomplished the twofold task of detailing the daily life, customs, and rituals in pre-independence Morocco and of recounting the rise and fall of El Hadj T'hani El Glaoui, the legendary tribal warlord through whom the French ruled one of their prize colonies in North Africa in his famous book, *Lords of the Atlas*. Maxwell, who died in 1969, considered himself an explorer and wrote of faraway places; in *Lords of the Atlas* he introduces readers to the harshness and beauty of Morocco. He shows how the blend of Berber, Arab, and black African races created an extraordinary cultural mosaic and explains how the French colonialists recruited the Atlas Mountain tribal warlords to subdue the other tribes. As the chief beneficiary of this policy, El Glaoui was able to rule most of southern Morocco in an absolute fashion, until Morocco's independence from France in 1956 brought an end to the rule of a very colorful warlord. The book contains many superb color photographs that enhance Maxwell's lively narrative.

Arrive back in Marrakech late in the afternoon and spend the night at your hotel.

Day 6: Departure from Marrakech

Berber Tours will accompany you the Menara International Airport. End of services.

INCLUDED IN TOUR:

6 Day Program from arrival in Marrakech to departure from Marrakech

Includes all transportation in air conditioned Toyota Land Cruiser 4x4

All 3-star or 4-star hotel accommodations

Dinner and breakfast accommodation with hotel rooms

Airport transfers

Services of one English speaking driver for the ENTIRE tour

Note: Breakfast and dinner are included in the in the cost of this package. However, if the clients wish they are not obligated to have dinner or breakfast “when or where” Berber Tours says that they must. The clients are free to go somewhere else if they choose, but there will be NO REFUND or DEDUCTION to the base price should the clients choose to have dinner or breakfast on their own and that is not supplied by Berber Tours.

NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR PRICE:

Tips and portage for Berber Tours Employees: Ten percent (10%) of the TOTAL TOUR COST

Additional entrance fees: Not able to quote, depends on where you go. However, the “average price” is \$2.50 to \$6.00 USD PER PERSON.

Additional Guide Services: Cost depends on what is required. For example, a guide in Marrakech averages approximately \$40.00 USD - \$50.00 USD per day for a 7 hour day. **Due to restrictions by the Moroccan Government, ONLY those guides who live and work in the city visited are allowed to guide any clients and they set their own rates.** This is the reason why Berber Tours does not include guide services in the cost of a 4x4 tour. However, if given prior notice, Berber Tours will arrange for a guide but it is the responsibility of the client to pay for the guide services themselves.

Lunches unless provided by Berber Tours: \$7.00 to \$13.00 USD PER PERSON. This is considered a “free time” for the clients to explore the towns and villages that we visit.

Incidentals: such as soft drinks, wine or beer with meals; personal purchases, or tips.

Single room supplement: \$45.00 USD per room, per day

Airline costs are not included and Berber Tours does not supply other information such as airline cost; hotel costs; transportation not directly supplied by Berber Tours.

RATES FOR OURIKA VALLEY AND ATLAS MOUNTAINS 4X4 TOUR PACKAGE:

HIGH SEASON: SEPTEMBER 1 TO MAY 31

OFF SEASON: JUNE 1 TO AUGUST 31 – 30% REDUCTION IN PRICE, EXCLUDING OPTIONS

Prices are based on 3-star hotel accommodations with double occupancy:

\$2,200.00 USD total package cost: 1 person, 3-star hotel accommodations

\$2,700.00 USD total package cost: 1 person, 4-star hotel accommodations or a combination of 4-star hotel/riad – 4-star hotel tour rates will be charged

\$2,075.00 USD total package cost: 2 people, dbl. occ. w/1 room, 3-star hotel accommodations

\$2,570.00 USD total package cost: 2 people, dbl. occ. w/1 room, 4-star hotel accommodations or a combination of 4-star hotel/riad – 4-star hotel tour rates will be charged

For a 3 rd person add \$250.00 USD total

\$1,950.00 USD total package cost: 4-6 people, triple occ., w/2 rooms, 3-star hotel accommodations

\$2,450.00 USD total package cost: 4-6 people, triple occ. w/2 rooms, 4-star hotel accommodations or a combination of 4-star hotel/riad – 4-star hotel tour rates will be charged

A SECOND 4X4 WITH AN ADDITIONAL 4-6 PARTICIPANTS – 20% REDUCTION IN PRICE

HOTELS IN MOROCCO:

Berber Tours uses a variety of different 3 and 4 star hotels around the country for our 4x4 tours. While we cannot guarantee a specific hotel, we can guarantee that ALL of the hotels we use are clean and comfortable and will have many of the amenities you would expect to find in a hotel. The hotels we use also offer either breakfast or dinner, but usually both, as part of the hotel stay. Where available, as in Marrakech, we can also offer at the 4-star hotel package rate, the option of staying at one of the many quaint and comfortable riads within the Medina. However, at a riad, usually only breakfast is offered as part of the cost for staying there.

Hotel standards in Morocco and Europe DIFFER from those in the United States; in most cases, a “3-star” hotel by U.S. standards is the same as a “4-star” hotel in Morocco and Europe.

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