



Share the Experience

January 2008

March 2009

## MOROCCO 2009 PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Hi, thank you for choosing to holiday with Topdeck to Morocco. We certainly appreciate your decision to travel with us and rest assured everyone at Topdeck will be doing their utmost to ensure you have the holiday of a lifetime.

We have prepared the following information for you which we trust will assist you in planning for your trip. Some points should be taken as a guide only such as personal spending money, which can vary greatly between individuals but we are sure you will find the information in general very useful.

Get ready for a fantastic holiday!

*From all the Crew at Topdeck Travel*

### Baggage

Soft bags, suitcases or frameless backpacks are best, plus a small day pack or carry bag. **No external framed packs** please, as they damage other bags on the coach. Remember, if you take too much, you have to carry it around. **Please limit your baggage allowance to a maximum of 20kgs.** Maximum allowable size for all bags must not exceed 70cm x 50cm x 25cm.

### What to Bring

- Camera
- Hat and sunscreen
- Loose cotton clothing
- Daypack to carry your camera, bottled water and souvenirs
- Money belt
- Sunglasses
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Medication – some prescription medicines can be difficult to buy in Morocco
- First aid kit – Imodium is recommended in case of an upset stomach
- Book to read on long journeys
- Guide book
- Passport, visa, travel insurance, and air tickets.

## **Visas:**

Currently the following nationalities do not need a visa for the Kingdom of Morocco for stays up to three months.

British  
United States  
Australian  
New Zealand  
Canada  
Plus many others

Requirements do change periodically so check on the website. Your passport should be valid for six months after the date of travel. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant documents and Topdeck will accept no responsibility for being refused entry through incorrect documentation.

## **Health & Safety:**

All clients travelling on Topdeck trips must have comprehensive personal insurance to cover all medical and repatriation costs. Please take your insurance policy with you. You will be asked to produce the policy number and emergency contact details by the trip leader on the first day of your trip.

There are no compulsory vaccinations to travel to Morocco, but it is recommended that you ensure your tetanus, diphtheria, typhoid, polio and hepatitis vaccinations are up to date. Please consult a medical practitioner for the relevant requirements prior to travelling.

Sensible food and water hygiene is essential to avoid diarrhoea. Make sure food has been properly prepared, drink only boiled or bottled water and keep in mind that ice will have been made up with tap water.

Take precautions against insect bites and sunburn. During the hot summer months it is advisable to carry bottled water in your daypack at all times.

Take care with your passport, credit cards and money - a money belt to fit beneath your clothes is highly recommended.

## **Money:**

Upon arrival at Marrakech airport it is advisable to cash some money as you will be arriving in the weekend. This will cover any expenditure on your Marrakech sightseeing day and give you flexibility until you need to change more money. On each trip you will be given the opportunity to change money at either a bank or hotel. You can draw money at ATM machines which are quite abundant in Morocco

There is no compulsory money exchange or limit on the amount of foreign currency brought into Morocco. Try to budget wisely and not have surplus Moroccan currency at the end of your trip.

The currency unit in Moroccan Dirham and is divided into 100 Centimes.

Current Approximate exchange rates as at March 2009 are:

1 Dirham = £0.08 GBP, \$0.12 USD, \$0.17 AUD, \$0.14 CAD, and \$0.21 NZD  
1 £GB= 12.13 Dirham  
1 \$US = 8.26 Dirham  
1 \$AU = 5.78 Dirham  
1 \$CA = 6.72 Dirham  
1 \$NZ = 4.66 Dirham

## **Arriving in Morocco:**

### **Marrakech:**

Marrakech airport is served by many airlines from the UK, including British Airways, Royal Air Morocco, Atlas Blue, Easy Jet, and Ryan Air.

Banks are open 24 hours a day at the airport enabling money to be changed at whatever time of day or night you arrive.

From outside the airport terminal, taxis leave for downtown. A taxi ride from the airport to the hotel should be 60 Dirham (approx £4). If you arrive at night the charge is normally 100 Dirham.

**Day 1:** Is a joining day with no activities planned so you can arrive at any time. Check in is generally from 11:00am. At about 19:00 or 20:00 the Trip Leader will meet the group at the hotel for a trip briefing. Here the Trip Leader will give information on things like the itinerary and sightseeing, optional tours and meals. The Trip Leader will also take a photocopy of passports and outbound flight tickets for reconfirmation.

**NOTE:** If you arrive in the morning on Day 1 and you want to take the optional excursion to the Ourika Valley let Topdeck know so we can pre-book it for you. This half day excursion can also be done on the departure day if you are arriving late on day one and fly out late on Day 9 the departure day.

### **Joining Address:**

For the commencement of all trips, the hotel address is:

#### **Marrakech Hotel Jnan El Harti**

30 Rue Kadi Ayad  
Marrakech

Phone: + (212) (0)5 24 44 80 00  
Fax: + (212) (0)5 24 44 93 29

Should you experience difficulties of any kind in Morocco prior to your trip starting please contact:

#### **Mountain Safari Tours:**

64 Lot Laksour  
Route de Casablanca  
2177 Gueliz  
Marrakech  
Tel: + (212) 5 24 30 87 77

Emergency numbers in Morocco: + (212) (0) 661242034, or 664039913  
Or contact Topdeck in the UK + 44 7792 775 415

### **Pre and Post Trip Accommodation:**

Should you require pre or post trip accommodation, please notify your agent at the time of booking; this can be pre-booked for you by Topdeck. Unless a room is immediately available most hotels will not allocate your room until at least midday, it may be later than this if the hotel has had high occupancy the previous night.

In the reception of the hotel there is a Topdeck board with trip information and the trip leader's name and mobile number. If arriving a few days prior to the start of your trip please feel free to contact the trip leader for information on what to do in the area or advice on any problems.

If you are staying in the hotel before the start of your trip please be advised not to accept offers from people to visit speciality shops or to take guided tours. These people are not associated with Topdeck and therefore we can't be responsible for the service you receive from them. Your Topdeck trip includes a driver/guide who will accompany you to all the sites mentioned in your itinerary.

### **Local Payment:**

The Trip Leader will also collect the local payment part of your trip price in £UK cash, which has been displayed in the brochure and on the website. This is part of the total overall trip price, but paid locally. They will also check your travel insurance. Please make sure you get a receipt for the local payment.

### **Weather:**

Morocco can be very hot in summer but the climate is extremely dry. Temperatures will vary from north to south, Average temperatures range from 15-35°C. The desert region can be hot in summer but quite cold in the winter months.

### **Language:**

Arabic is the official language in Morocco although English and French are widely spoken throughout the tourist centres.

### **Opening Hours:**

The following opening hours are a guide only as they vary from business to business.

<b>Banking</b>	Mon -Fri	08:30am – 03:45pm
	Sat/Sun	closed
<b>Business</b>	Sun - Thurs	9:00am – 7:00pm
	Fri / Sat	closed
<b>Shopping</b>	Sat - Thurs	9:00am – 12:00pm and 3:00pm – 8:00pm

These hours are very approximate; some shops open on Friday and many close on Sunday. In tourist centres the hours may be extended. Some shops will close for a longer period in the afternoon from 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

### **Shopping:**

Bargaining is a common practice and an art when shopping in Morocco. Other than shops with fixed prices most shop owners accept the bartering of a price with the first quote rarely being the final price. Morocco offers popular items including gold and silver jewellery carpets and other handicrafts.

### **Electricity:**

The electricity supply in Morocco is 220 volts at 50 hertz. A standard European adapter is required.

### **Optional extras:**

Our trips will take you to many historical sites and museums. Entrance fees for the places visited as part of the itinerary are included in the price. If any sites and museums charge a camera charge it is payable by the clients. Flash photography is often prohibited as it contributes towards the destruction of sensitive colours, especially in the tombs. On day one the Trip Leader will advise you of the optional trips available and the prices.

### **Travel:**

During your trip you will be travelling between destinations in a modern car or minibus, depending on group size. The day tour in Marrakech will be by horse drawn carriage and the tour of the Fez medina will be walking. Depending on group size you will be accompanied by a driver/ escort. For larger groups, (6+) you will have a guide as well as a driver.