

# Topdeck

## MOROCCAN EXPLORER



## TOPDECKER, meet Middle East & Nth Africa

Is this trip for me? IN-DEPTH. OTHERWORDLY. ADVENTUROUS.

Thought Morocco was all #wanderlust pics of bazaars, riding camels and a whole lot of couscous? Well yeah, there's that...but in 11 whirlwind days with us you'll see the side of Morocco your Instagram feed can't do justice. Delve deeper into a unique culture, throw yourself into new experiences and discover a world unlike any other with a small group of absolute legends. Yalla!

### WORTH NOTING...

Heads up! Max of 16 people on this trip. Meaning? A more intimate group of legends to have a bloody awesome time with.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Explorer



Nights



Android/iPhone  
app download  
info



This is a principal  
package.

# Hi, and thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

You can rest assured that we'll pull out all the stops to make your trip unforgettable.

Now it's time to get excited about your holiday...

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – including where to meet and what to bring. We recommend that you read these notes thoroughly so you know what to expect on your trip of a lifetime. Also, you can easily download and print this document off so you can bring it with you when you travel.

Please bear in mind that some points should be taken as a guide only – after all, everyone's different! For example, daily spending money and clothing lists can vary from one person to the next, so don't be alarmed if you don't expect to spend (or even wear) so much!

**PLEASE NOTE:** We strongly urge you to refresh this document as close to the time of your departure as possible to ensure you have the most up-to-date accommodation list and information available.

### ON THE BUCKET LIST (INCLUDED)

- + Traditional dinner at local guesthouse
- + Orientation walk of Chefchaouen
- + Orientation tour of Moulay Idriss
- + Traditional lunch with a local family in Moulay Idriss
- + Locally guided tour of the archaeological site of Volubilis
- + Locally guided tour of Fes
- + Sunset camel ride in the Sahara Desert
- + Traditional campfire dinner at Merzouga Desert Camp
- + Overnight stay at a desert camp in the Sahara Desert
- + Visit Todra Gorge
- + Visit Ouarzazate
- + Travel through the Atlas Mountains
- + Visit UNESCO World Heritage listed Ait Benhaddou Kasbah
- + Locally guided walking tour of Marrakech

### MORE INCLUSIONS

- + Airport transfers
- + Traditional dinner at local guesthouse
- + Orientation walk of Chefchaouen
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- + Traditional lunch with a local family in Moulay Idriss
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YOUR TRIP WILL

YOUR TRIP WILL

## START

### PICK UP:

Casablanca  
Morocco

## FINISH

### DROP OFF:

Marrakesh  
Morocco

# TRIP CURRENCIES

+ Morocco -

# YOUR ITINERARY



**AWESOME  
TRIP  
LEADER**



**DRIVER**

## DAY 1 | CASABLANCA, MOROCCO

Touch down along Morocco's Atlantic Coast. Ready to experience the new and exotic? This is the place to start. Spot your Topdeck Rep at the airport (hint: they're holding a placard with your name on it), then brace yourself for Casablanca's mix of sparkling waters, palm-fringed avenues, street art and colonial buildings. Yep you're finally here. Dump your stuff at the hotel, meet the gang and get pumped for our included dinner – a traditional Moroccan meal at a local family's home. Name a better way to start the trip.



### MEALS:

+ Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Airport transfers
- + Traditional dinner at local guesthouse

## DAY 2 | CASABLANCA TO CHEFCHAOUEN

Swap glittering blue coasts for bluer-than-blue cities – we're rolling onto Chefchaouen. Nestled between the looming peaks of the Rif Mountains, this enchanting city is totally out of this world. Brilliant blue buildings. A maze of narrow alleyways. And authentic local vibes. We'll get our bearings on a stroll with our Trip Leader – then you can tuck into dinner at a local restaurant with the gang or head off and do your own spontaneous this-is-what-I-came-for thing. It's 100% up to you.



### MEALS:

+ Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Orientation walk of Chefchaouen



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Group dinner at local restaurant: from prices available locally

## DAY 3 | CHEFCHAOUEN

You wanted freedom to explore. So, here's 24 hours to just do you. Our suggestion? Kick things off with a city tour. Your local guide will give you low-down on the city's historic past; point out all the hidden gems; and tick off the 'Blue City' must-sees. Check out the Spanish Mosque. Stock up on souvenirs in the medina. Relax at a local hammam. Or strap on the Nikes and head out into the mountains for some incredible waterfalls and panoramic views – there's some of the best hiking trails in Africa here, just sayin'. Then, get the gang together for some delish street food at the city square. This is living!



### MEALS:

+ Breakfast



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + City tour of Chefchaouen: from prices available locally

## DAY 4 | CHEFCHAOUEN TO FES VIA MOULAY IDRIS AND VOLUBILIS

Glue your face to the coach window as we take the scenic route to Morocco's sacred heart: Moulay Idriss. This place is considered to be so holy, it was pretty much inaccessible for non-Muslims until 2005. Meaning? It's the definition of off-the-beaten-track. Take in the relaxed local vibe on an orientation walk – before we tuck into a DE-licious home-cooked lunch with a local family. Then: put on your archaeology hat, 'cos we're off to Volubilis to check out the Roman ruins with a local guide. Want more history? Good! Tonight we'll be heading deep into the heart of old Morocco on our journey to Fes.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Orientation tour of Moulay Idriss
- + Traditional lunch with a local family in Moulay Idriss
- + Locally guided tour of the archaeological site of Volubilis

## DAY 5 | FES

Mausoleums, mosques and medinas are on the cards today as we hit the streets on a full-day whip around the city with a local guide. The 9,000 narrow cobbled streets in Fes el-Bali are lined with spices, food stalls and tanneries, so don't waste a second – get exploring! Visit a local tannery (hint: say yes to the mint, you're gonna need it). Head over to the Ruined Garden for Moroccan tapas in an awesome setting. Hike up Mount Zalagh for all the views. Or hunt down a hammam for a body shine and polish. It's a tough life. Tonight, tuck into a camel burger (or chicken couscous if that's not your jam) at Café Clock.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Locally guided tour of Fes

## DAY 6 | FES TO ERFOUD VIA IFRANE AND MIDELT

Truth bomb alert: you've got a bit of a drive from Fes to Erfoud today. Plug in the AUX cord and glue your face to the window as we wind our way through acres of cedar forests and stunning scenery. We'll stop in Ifrane (Morocco's take on Switzerland) and Midelt for some breathtaking views of the High Atlas Mountains. Then, it's time to adjust to the altitude in Alpine-fresh Erfoud: the 'Door to the Desert'. Dinner tonight is on us, but you gotta try madfouna: authentic wood-fired Berber 'pizza'.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Travel through the Atlas Mountains

## DAY 7 | ERFOUD TO MERZOUGA DESERT CAMP

Endless stretches of blazing red dunes. A kaleidoscope of burning colours at sunset. Vast clear skies filled with dazzling stars. Welcome to the Sahara Desert. After a free morning in Erfoud, we'll make our way into the sandy abyss – stopping at the dunes of Erg Chebbi before reaching our isolated desert camp\*. Merzouga looks as if it might be engulfed by the surrounding dunes at any moment – so sit back and enjoy the view. Later, you can jump aboard Alice the camel for a sunset joy ride to remember. Tonight, we'll gather round the campfire and dig into a traditional dinner with the gang. This is what you came for. \*Reality check: we'll be staying in modest tents whilst in the Sahara. And no, there's no aircon or power plugs for your hairdryers – you're in the middle of the largest hot desert in the world after all...



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Sunset camel ride
- + Traditional campfire dinner
- + Overnight stay at a desert camp

## DAY 8 | MERZOUGA TO AÏT BENHADDOU VIA TODRA GORGE AND OUARZAZATE

Step into your own Roadrunner cartoon today as we make our way to Aït Benhaddou. First up? Todra Gorge. With a 3D landscape of imposing orange sandstone peaks, trickling streams and the odd camel playing outside your window, this place will take your breath away. Then: yell lights, camera, action as we roll into 'Ouallywood'. The sprawling Taourirt Kasbah of Ouarzazate has played backdrop for plenty of big-budget blockbusters – try name them as we walk around with our in-the-know Trip Leader. Later, we'll get stuck into an included dinner with the gang in ancient Aït Benhaddou.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit Todra Gorge
- + Visit Ouarzazate

## DAY 9 | AÏT BENHADDOU TO MARRAKECH

Gladiator. Lawrence of Arabia. Game of Thrones. The thousand-year-old ksar of Aït Benhaddou has a few famous friends – and we'll take in alllllll the otherworldly vibes on a walking tour of the UNESCO protected Kasbah with our Trip Leader. After, we'll wind our way through the spine-tingling Tizi n'Tichka mountain pass to Marrakech. Then? The rest is up to you. Head to Jemaa el-Fnaa square for all the night-stall craziness. Wander the narrow streets of the medina. Or head to Gueliz for stylish restaurants and live music. This is your chance to embrace it all.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit UNESCO World Heritage-listed Aït Benhaddou Kasbah

## DAY 10 | MARRAKECH

Ok, no body panic: this is our last full day. So, don't waste a second! We'll kick things off with a locally guided walking tour. Stroll through the old medina; past colourladen stalls of buzzing souks; check out the famous Koutoubia Mosque minaret; and wriggle past the snake charmers in Jemaa el-Fnaa square. Then make the most of your free time with an optional lunch at the Amal Association restaurant: empowering disadvantaged local women with training and job placement. Or don your chef hat at a tagine cooking class. Want to delve a little deeper? Get on your bike and explore the palm groves on the outskirts of the city. Relax and unwind with a massage and hammam experience at a local spa. Or escape the city chaos with afternoon tea in the riad of Le Jardin Secret. Tonight, get the gang together and head to Nomad for one last mouth-watering tagine. What. A. Trip.



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Locally guided walking tour of Marrakech



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Group lunch at Amal Association restaurant: from prices available locally
- + Hammam and massage in a local spa: from 750 MAD
- + Tagine cooking class: from 640 MAD
- + Food tour: from 605 MAD
- + Palmery cycling tour: from 350 MAD

## DAY 11 | MARRAKECH

Just like that, it's all over. Get down to breakfast and swap those Insta handles – you're going to need them for next year's reunion trip. Where to next? Asia? Africa? Europe? All the above? HECK YES!



### MEALS:

- + Breakfast

## MEALS

Breakfasts are included every day on most trips (except on the first morning). A typical breakfast may consist of cereals with milk or yoghurt, bread, croissants, cold meats, cheese and a range of spreads, with fruit juice, tea or coffee to drink. It is rare to get a hot breakfast, though on some occasions there may be some hot food available as well.

Included evening meals are in local restaurants or your place of accommodation. In most cases table water is provided with the meals, and if you wish to purchase additional drinks you can do so at your own expense.

If you have any dietary requirements we will make every effort to cater to your specific needs as long as you advise your travel agent or Topdeck Customer Service Consultant when you book. But please be aware that although we will do everything in our power to arrange it, we cannot guarantee that every restaurant we use will be able to cater to all dietary needs. We also cannot cater for tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

Your included meals are detailed in the 'More Inclusions' section of this document.

**Important note on Ramadan:** As many Middle Eastern countries are of Islamic faith, it is important to remember that many restaurants and shops will either be closed or operating on reduced hours during this time. Some Optional and Included Activities may also be affected. Despite some of these restraints, Ramadan is an incredibly important and sacred month for Muslims. When equipped with some basic knowledge, you'll have the chance to immerse yourself in this special tradition and experience all its highlights.

# TIPPING

## NO TIP NECESSARY

Your Topdeck Trip Leaders and Drivers never expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. We also know how much tipping can cost you. So go ahead – spoil yourself with the money you save traveling with us (just don't forget Mum's souvenir).

# TOPDECK TRAVEL APP

Our app is available to download before you travel. With a range of cool features including a currency converter, budget planner, check-in tool and group chat, it'll help you plan your trip like a pro. Think of it as your very own Topdeck Trip Leader in the palm of your hand.

## TRIP GROUP CHAT

Connect with your fellow Topdeckers before you depart and begin your magical friendship in the flash of a winking face emoji.

## ITINERARY VIEWER

Get the lowdown on where you'll be going and what activities you'll be doing on each day of your trip with this handy little tool.

## CHECK-IN

Plug in all your vital deets and we'll keep them safe for when you really need them. Making your life easier, one swipe at a time.

## BUDGET TRACKER

Keep an eye on your holiday spending, leaving you with more FUN-ds to play with. Think: elaborate Spanish feasts (not questionable supermarket sandwiches).

## MAPS

Navigate your way to meeting points and lesser-known local gems using pins dropped by your Trip Leader, seek out your own bucket list sites and take to the streets like a pro.

Once the trip is over, you'll need the app to give us feedback about your trip experience. We love to hear what you thought about your trip, as it helps to give us an idea of the things we're doing well and the things we could be doing better.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Topdeck Travel App should only be downloaded once you have booked your trip. You will not be able to log in unless you have a Topdeck booking reference number.



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# PASSENGER SAFETY

## NIGHTS OUT

One of the best parts of travelling is experiencing the nightlife and entertainment each city has to offer. However, amidst the fun and excitement, it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety as well. Before you hit the road with us, be sure to familiarise yourself with the following safety information.

When you're on a night out, remember to avoid walking alone, particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation details so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. It's also a good idea to get your Topdeck trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking, and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

## RESPECTING FELLOW PASSENGERS

Here at Topdeck, we're all about inclusivity. We want to make sure that everyone has a great time on our trips, and that everyone feels like they're part of one happy Topdeck family.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong – that's just not what families do. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow passengers. The golden rules? Always remember to respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation and treat others how you'd wish to be treated yourself. Easy!

## DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Passengers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana, even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

**REMEMBER** – if you are found in possession of drugs, not only could you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if drugs are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you wouldn't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up again.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- + Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- + Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!
- + Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink, you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- + Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home, too – so they're sure to know of some tried-and-tested ways to beat the blues
- + Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you

are to feel homesick (trust us).

## HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome holiday AND have a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- + Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your hotel towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- + Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- + Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets and book tours and activities run by local guides
- + Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- + Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

## OTHER INFORMATION

### INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

World Nomads provides comprehensive travel insurance for people from over 140 countries. For more information, visit [www.topdeck.travel/travel-insurance](http://www.topdeck.travel/travel-insurance).

### PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

# WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it! (As long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is.)

- + 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- + 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- + 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- + 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- + 4 shirts/T-shirts
- + 2 sweaters/jumpers
- + Smart casual evening wear
- + 1 rainproof jacket
- + 1 warm jacket
- + Underwear and socks
- + Swimwear
- + Towel
- + Toiletries
- + Hat and sunscreen
- + Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- + Insect repellent
- + Conversion plug
- + Reusable water bottle
- + Snow gear



**THAT'S IT!**