



Global | **Learning
Across
Borders**

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Get Global Expeditions (GGEx)

FROM SOUQ TO SUFI...KASBAH TO SAHARA

Exploring the Vibrant Cultures & Dreamy Landscapes of Southern Morocco

October 8 – October 21, 2008

*Global Learning Across Borders (Global LAB) is excited to announce a fall 2008 **Get Global Expeditions (GGEx)** journey to Morocco that will explore the cultures, landscapes, colors, contrasts, and hospitality for which this North African country is renowned. Designed specifically for adults and inspired by Global LAB's experiential education programs for students, this expedition will feature exclusive introductions to fascinating people and places well off the typical tourist track. The late King Hassan II described Morocco's complexity and essence best: "Rooted in Africa, watered by Islam and rustled by the winds of Europe." We welcome you to join us on this intimate and intriguing journey. Group size limited. Advance reservations highly recommended.*

Day 1 (October 8)

US → Marrakesh

Overnight departure from NY/JFK.

Days 2– 4 (October 9-11)

Marrakesh

Our first experience in Morocco is with The Rose City...The Pearl of the South...or simply **Marrakesh**, Morocco's second largest city. Marrakesh pulsates with the possible. Its frontier-like and African spirit is certainly a reflection of its history as a depot for caravans transporting slaves, gold, and ivory from Timbuktu in Mali. Stylish, ambient, and sun-filled, Marrakesh is on a jet-set and international real estate investment tear: more European retirees are calling it home and many have spawned a revival in restoring decrepit domiciles to former artisanal glory.

There is a societal consequence to this dynamic, however: rising property values have displaced many Moroccan families and maintaining cultural authenticity will be an enduring challenge.

After checking into our riad (a traditional home with central courtyard/garden and fountain) in Marrakesh's own UNESCO-recognized *medina* ("old city"), we'll refresh ourselves with a traditional lunch then indulge in an afternoon siesta, courtesy of local custom. We'll close our first day by encountering Marrakesh's primary source of spirit and energy: the place and spectacle of the Djemaa el Fna, "Assembly of the Dead"—an open square where musicians, peddlers, merchants, snake charmers, fortune-tellers, acrobats, and artists co-mingle and perform day into night, every night. Marrakesh's anything-can-happen air is nowhere thicker than here. Against this fascinating backdrop, you will awaken to new layers of the Moroccan experience.

Day two will largely be devoted to a guided *medina* walking tour—but first, a brief introductory lesson on select Moroccan Arabic greetings and phrases...keys to bargaining for the multitude of handicrafts that will soon beckon. Along the way, we'll experience Marrakesh's own storied cultural and historical treasures, including: the landmark Koutoubia Minaret; the Ben Youssef Medersa with its exquisite *zillij* tilework, woodcarving, and *tadelakt* plasterwork; the lavish, 16th century Saadian Tombs; and the glorious 19th century Bahia Palace. We will also traverse the *medina's* various *souqs* ("markets") and leisurely quaff a cup or four of mint tea, the "whiskey of Morocco", as we settle in for a good-natured haggle over a Berber rug, tajine vessel, or pointed leather slippers known as *babouche*. Take a moment to get lost in the *medina's* atmospherics and blind alleys, embracing the fragrances of orange blossoms and cumin and absorbing the sounds of metalworkers hammering copper trays and children at play. Later that evening, from the riad's rooftop terrace overlooking the honeycombed *medina*, the dusk call-to-prayer will flood you from all compass points. If you haven't realized it by then, now you will: you're in a very different and special place.

Our last day in Marrakesh will begin with a morning lecture introducing Islam and Sufism, its mystical practice. The distinguishing role of saints (*marabouts*) and festivals (*moussems*) in Moroccan spirituality will provide insights, new perspectives, and context for tonight's special event. Our primary touring today will be a visit to the splendid subtropical Jardin Majorelle, maintained by fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent. Here, color is in high definition—particularly the cobalt blue, created by French painter Jacques Majorelle, which accents many planters, pergolas, and structures within this placid 12 acre setting. In the afternoon, for those who are up for a genuine cultural immersion experience, the *hammam* (segregated public baths) will beckon.

Finally, we'll conclude our Marrakesh encounter with an evening observance of a Sufi *dhikr*—Islamic mystical chanting, often in repetition, to reach a state of love with the Divine. This intimate and intense expression will vividly undercut any perception of a “monolithic, radical Islam” that naively prevails in mainstream America. A group dinner, in communion with our Sufi performers, will draw the curtains on this first chapter in Maroc du Sud.

Days 5 & 6 (October 12-13)

Essaouira

Before departing for the Atlantic coast by private coach, we'll have the privilege of meeting the descendant of a Saharan slave, marvel at his intriguing past (the bartering of dates for vocabulary, being one key to his learning English), and hear his point of view on Berber and Sahara culture and identity in modern Morocco. Late morning, we head due west to the self-proclaimed “Windsurfing Capital of Africa”, **Essaouira**. En route we'll visit an Argan oil cooperative and see firsthand the many products derived from this native, nut-bearing Argan tree: cooking oil, food, soaps, and cosmetics among them. Goats facilitate the process by eating Argan berries and depositing kernels that are ground and pressed for oil. Goats dangling ornament-like in these trees are an iconic Moroccan visual, and we'll seek out this strangeness in a woodland reserve.

Laid-back, charming (but unpretentious), and “chill” are adjectives that come to mind in describing this whitewashed and blue-shuttered town with art galleries and aromatic *thuya* wood workshops. Simple to navigate and easy to like, Essaouira is a compact and restorative tonic to Marrakesh's frenzy. Plans to spend a few days here can effortlessly slip to a few weeks to a few months. With sunsets over the Atlantic Ocean, scenic ramparts, breeze-kissed cafés, a distinctive *medina* made for strolling, friendly Arab fishermen, and its famous seafood grills near the port, we'll savor all dimensions. As the locals say, “relax to the max without the tax”...so wander, wonder, shop, and rest well during our two nights here.

Days 7 & 8 (October 14-15)

The High Atlas Mountains

The largest of four mountain ranges in Morocco that stretch across Algeria and into Tunisia, **The High Atlas Mountains** are home to the highest peak in North Africa, Mount Toubkal, at 13,665 feet. They are also considered a bastion of the Berbers, the indigenous peoples of North Africa who pre-dated the Arab conquest of the 7th century. And so for the next two days we will dramatically shift our geographic milieu to peaks and valleys and our cultural lens to one with a unique language, music, lifestyle, and history. The village of Imlil, launch point to Toubkal,

will be our cradle. Despite the hard labor of rural mountain life, we will experience a boundless warmth and hospitality that characterize the *Imazighen*, or “free men”, in their native tongue.

There will be ample opportunities for day hikes, encounters with villagers (and their cattle, sheep, chicken, and goats), taking in the sweeping vistas, hillside adobe homes and green terraced fields, and free time for photography, journal writing, and sketching over hot mint tea. A guided eco-tour of the region will highlight its flora and fauna and the environmental challenges that lay ahead. We will also take a moment to give back and engage in a community service endeavor—be it helping to plant a few walnut or cherry trees, or distributing some desperately needed school supplies to teachers and students. Finally, we’ll attend an authentic Berber musical performance that will highlight yet another variation of sound and song in a land rich in this performing art. The stars will beam and seem within reach.

Day 9 (October 16)

Skoura

From High Atlas to Sahara. But first, kasbahs and oases will set the stage. So, down the mountains, a wink at Marrakesh, then back up The High Atlas through the Tizi n Tichka pass (7,415 feet), then another descent to the cinematic (literally and figuratively) and well-preserved Kasbah complex of Ait Benhaddou—backdrop to the epic films *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Jesus of Nazareth*, among others. With its elaborate design, stalwart towers, crenellations, and sheer walls of ochre mud, Ait Benhaddou is a spectacular sight and the stuff of dreams in soft, filtered light. We’ll also tour the nearby Atlas Film Corporation Studios—provided a film isn’t currently being shot—and admire past sets from Martin Scorsese’s “Kundun” to Ridley Scott’s “Gladiator”, among others. With the inimitable light of the south and its dramatic scenery, we’ll readily acknowledge Morocco movie-making potential.

After this stopover, we move onward through Ouarzazate (a name that will grow on you and begs to be shouted) and finally into the **Skoura** Oasis—a body of green amidst the hardscrabble—where we will overnight. Date palms, canals, abandoned kasbahs, birdsong, and a newfound appreciation for water become apparent. To comprehend this fragile ecosystem, we’ll have a leisurely walk through the oasis and no doubt come across some friendly inhabitants before moving on.

Days 10 – 12 (October 17-19)

Merzouga/The Sahara

Private Coach will transport us eastward across the Dades valley, through the Tafilalt oasis, pass the Todra Gorge, and ultimately to **Merzouga**, Morocco’s portal to **The Sahara**. Today is a

long day on the road, but with the geologic and geographic diversity before you—bare, unforgiving, stratified, and sculpted mountains and mesas abbreviated with life-giving palmeraies—the vivid landscapes will serve as satisfying pre-desert foreplay.

Upon arrival in Merzouga, the Erg Chebbi (the actual dunes), really do live up to expectation. This is The Sahara, the real deal, and the wavy dunes which can reach up to 400 feet, are quiet and hypnotic. We should arrive in time for sunset when color, hue, and tint modulate by the minute. Brilliance and subtlety happen at once. And each grain of sand has its own atomic glow.

Caravans and Carvanserai evoke fantasy in the western consciousness, and we'll try to conjure up a bit of magic this second day in the desert. The camels will be watered by late afternoon, we'll mount them, and then shuffle into the Sahara at dusk. The horizon is endless, the sands aflame, the white popcorn on navy galaxy in waiting, and the audio in your sphere is comprised of your breath, your guide's hushed camel-coaxing, and shifting sands as hooves meet dunes. Whether it's real or a dream, it's all very sublime.

Paul Bowles, celebrated American author and resident of Tangier for many years, captures the desert sentiment perfectly in *The Baptism of Solitude*:

“Immediately when you arrive in the Sahara, for the first or the tenth time, you notice the stillness. An incredible, absolute silence prevails outside the towns; and within, even in busy places like the markets, there is a hushed quality in the air, as if the quiet were a constant force which, resenting the intrusion of sound, minimizes and disperses it straightaway. Then there is the sky, compared to which all other skies seem faint-hearted efforts. Solid and luminous, it is always the focal point of the landscape. At sunset, the precise, curved shadow of the earth rises into it swiftly from the horizon, cutting it into light section and dark section. When all daylight is gone, and the space is thick with stars, it is still of an intense and burning blue, darkest directly overhead and paling toward the earth, so that the night never really grows dark.”

If the camel caravan wasn't magnificent enough, we'll also consider a 4x4 excursion taking us to hidden reaches, concealed oases, and remote springs. Then there is the pool. There is no better wade, swim, dip, or soak than when surrounded by arid desolation. Call it field research in water appreciation.

Day 13 (October 20)

Casablanca

A dawn flight from Er Rachidia, the provincial capital a few hours north of Merzouga, transfers you to the metropolis of **Casablanca**, Morocco's largest city and home to the largest port in Africa. After hotel check-in and breakfast, we'll try to decipher this Bogart and Bergman mythologized city that wraps commercialism and cosmopolitanism around a prevailing core of history and tradition. Mini skirt meets the *hijab* (head scarf) and *niqab* (veil). *Medina* and stock market. Affluence and *bidonville*. European, African, Islamic, and Arab. "Casa" is an interesting microcosm of the complex and often conflicting forces shaping modern-day Morocco.

We'll embark on a guided cultural and architectural tour that includes: the extraordinary Hassan II mosque, the 2nd largest mosque in the world after Mecca, the only one in Morocco permitting non-Muslim access, and an exclamatory testament to faith and the 1400 master-craftsmen who created it; the Mauresque ("Neo-Moorish"), Art Nouveau, and Art Deco styles that characterize many of the structures from the French colonial period; and a visit to the Jewish Museum of Casablanca, the only such museum in the Islamic world, which catalogues Morocco's significant Jewish heritage once accounting for nearly 300,000 Jews but now just 5,000. A farewell dinner will mark our grand finale in North Africa. And you were just starting to decipher Morocco. Or so you thought. But what's the rush? Leave this colorful land and hospitable culture with a Moroccan proverb in mind: "Little by little, the camel goes into the couscous."

Day 14 (October 21)

Casablanca → US

Mid-morning departure to NY/JFK then transfers, as appropriate.

Tariff*

\$6,395 per person (double occupancy)

Single supplement: \$1,900

**tariffs are all-inclusive with the exception of alcoholic beverages & international airfare and are subject to change based on lodging availability at time of booking*

Terms & Conditions

Health: All participants must be in good health. This program involves traveling in hot, arid climate; high altitudes; walking over uneven surfaces; climbing in and out of various conveyances and climbing stairs at locations not handicapped accessible. Contact Global LAB for more details.

Insurance: For the protection of all Global LAB travel participants, trip cancellation and medical evacuation insurance is highly recommended. Global LAB will provide recommendations for insurance providers upon request.

Changes in Itinerary & Costs: This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Global Learning Across Borders. All prices quoted are based upon prevailing airfares, fuel prices, and currency exchange rates in effect as of March 2008 and are subject to change.

Deposit: A deposit of \$1,000 per person per tour is required to reserve space on a Global LAB travel program. The deposit is applied toward the full cost of the program. Remaining balance of program cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure. For late tour reservations (made after the due date of final payment), payment in full is required.

Cancellation Policy: Tour cancellations must be made in writing and are effective from date of postmark or email time-stamp. Cancellations made 90 days or more prior to departure, a refund less an administrative fee of \$250 per person will be made. Cancellations made less than 90 days prior to departure are subject to full forfeiture of the tour price unless the tour is fully subscribed and your space is resold (in which case the \$250 handling fee will apply). Leaving the tour in progress, for any reason whatsoever, will not result in a refund, and no refunds will be made for any unused portions of the tour.

Global LAB reserves the right to cancel any tour due to insufficient enrollment that makes the tour economically unfeasible to operate or because of good-faith concerns with respect to the safety, health, or well-being of the participants. If Global LAB cancels a tour prior to departure, registrants will receive a full refund of all monies paid to Global LAB. Should Global LAB cancel a tour in progress, participants will receive a prorated refund based on the number of days not completed on the tour. Global LAB will not be responsible for any refund for nonrefundable airline tickets or for any airline tickets purchased by the passenger directly from an airline or travel agent.

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MOROCCO • OCTOBER 8 – 21, 2008

RESERVATION FORM

To reserve a place, please return this form along with your deposit of \$1,000 per person to:

Global Learning Across Borders
4818 43rd Street, Ste. 4C
Woodside, NY 11377
Or call (800) 984-4522 or email info@global-lab.org for more information

Final payment is due no later than July 1, 2008.

Name/s of Traveler/s _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

ACCOMODATIONS

I wish to share a room with: _____

Double Twin Single Occupancy (\$1,900 supplement)

PAYMENT

Enclosed is my check for my deposit of \$1,000 per person, payable to Global Learning Across Borders

I/We confirm that I/we have carefully read and agree to the Terms and Conditions of this program, and agree to full payment to Global Learning Across Borders by check no later than July 1, 2008.

Each participant must sign below.

Signature (required) _____ Date _____

Signature (required) _____ Date _____



Global Learning Across Borders, a non-profit 501(c)(3) based in New York, exists to educate and inspire new generations of young people and adults to become responsible and committed global citizens in their local communities and beyond. We do this through international cultural immersion and community service programs for young adults; global studies professional development programs for educators; partnering with schools to help design and launch experiential global education and service programs; and through global expeditions that offer exceptional cultural experiences for adults.