



Global | **Learning
Across
Borders**
EXPERIENCE MATTERS[®]

Morocco: A Mosaic of Cultures, A Crossroads of Continents
Spring/Fall Semester Program



- Each time I go to a place I have not seen before,
• I hope it will be as different as possible from the places I already know. •*
--Paul Bowles, celebrated American author and longtime Morocco resident



A mere 17 miles south of Europe, across the Strait of Gibraltar, a very different experience awaits—an intriguing place of great contrast, color, culture, and history. This is Morocco, a captivating and multifaceted country "rooted in Africa, watered by Islam and rustled by the winds of Europe" in the words of its late King Hassan II. If you are up to the challenge of submerging yourself in a traditional, Arab, and Islamic culture...if you are eager to explore an ecological diversity ranging from Atlantic Ocean to High Atlas Mountains to Saharan Desert to the Mediterranean...and if you desire close interaction with people of legendary hospitality, the rewards of a Morocco semester will be intense and enduring.

Primary Locations

Fes / Fez

After a brief in-country orientation in Morocco's modern, bustling commercial center, Casablanca—and a tour of the spectacular Hassan II Mosque on the shores of the Atlantic—this Global Learning Across Borders™ (Global LAB) Morocco immersion experience begins with intensity in Fes, the oldest of Morocco's four Imperial Capitals. Founded in 808 and claimant of the “oldest university in the world” (Qairaouine Mosque, established in 857), Fes was renowned during the Middle Ages for its achievements in Arab commerce, art, religion, mathematics, and philosophy. Today, its old city (“the *medina*”)—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—preserves this glory and timelessness as a living

museum. In its crowded maze of alleys and markets (*souqs*), suffused with sensations unfamiliar, and lush with simple and pro-found moments, you'll cut the surface of your adventure.

Once you are settled in your welcoming *medina* home-stays and have relished your first of countless cups of delectable mint tea (*na'na'*), courses in Moroccan Arabic (*darija*), lectures on Moroccan Culture & Society, Islam, Gender Issues, and Amazigh (Berber) Identity will give your daily rhythms meaning and context. Hands-on workshops in Arabic calligraphy, henna, *zellij* (tilework), and woodwork will introduce you to these centuries-old arts. Community service activities will include volunteering at a shelter for homeless street children and participating in *medina* restoration projects alongside skilled artisans. Independent Study Projects (ISPs) in Fes can include a wide range of topics—from Moroccan cooking/cuisine, examining the role of *hammams* (public baths) in society, or pottery lessons to studying Islamic architecture, surveying Moroccan musical traditions, including *oud* (lute) instruction, or dedicating additional time for intensive language study—be it the local dialect, Modern Standard Arabic, or French.

Finally, you'll explore the surrounding areas throughout this first circuit of the semester with regional excursions to and to the Portuguese-influenced coastal town of Asilah, the nearby Imperial Capital of Meknes, and the wonderfully preserved Roman ruins of Volubilis—the empire's westernmost outpost in North Africa.

The High Atlas Mountains

For the next 1-2 weeks, you'll continue experiencing the new and superlative. You'll travel south into North Africa's grandest mountain range, the High Atlas (once connected to Appalachia



during the ubercontinental time of Gondwanaland), for a first-hand perspective of Morocco's oldest inhabitants, the indigenous Berbers, or *Imazighen* (literally, "Free Men") who predated the 7th Century Arab conquest by nearly two millennia. You'll trek across pristine streams and valleys, mule dirt roads, overnight in hillside-terraced villages at Berber *gites*, or guest houses, and, weather-permitting, ascend North Africa's highest peak, Jebel Toubkal at 13,665 feet. Penetrating this habitat offers the privilege of witnessing a remarkably friendly and brightly dressed people, seemingly incongruent with their labor-intensive lifestyle. The unique Berber language (you'll learn some basic phrases of the regional Tachelhit dialect), music, and architecture will be on vivid display for appreciation. To understand the challenges of rural development, you'll conclude with a period engaged in community service, observing how villagers gain consensus on fundamental needs such as shelter, food, sanitation, and potable water—and you will help fulfill some of these needs before descending these highlands. Planting olive trees, creating sustainable gardens, and helping construct drip irrigation systems are among the possible projects in which you'll participate.

Marrakech



Pushing onward to Morocco's second largest city, Marrakech, you plug back into an urban environment for the next semester phase. Known as "The Pearl of the South" and "The Red City", Marrakech stands in stark contrast to Fes' predominantly Arab and insular feel. Here, the spirit is more frontier-like and African—certainly a reflection of its history as a depot for caravans transporting slaves, gold, and ivory from Timbuktu. Marrakech boasts its own UNESCO-stamped *medina* and cultural-historical icons such as the Koutoubia Mosque, Saadian Tombs, and Jardin Majorelle. Yet its heart and energy derive from 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. The aroma of fresh dates, oranges, almonds, and grilled kebabs is saturating. Marrakech's anything-can-happen air is nowhere thicker than here. Against this fascinating backdrop, you awaken to new layers of the Moroccan experience.

Discussions on Berber-Sahara culture, lectures on the tradition of storytelling and Sufism—the varied practice of Islamic mysticism—and actually observing a Sufi *dhikr* ritual will comprise some of the experiential elements for this circuit. You will also have time to explore abbreviated ISPs here with possible topics including Berber dance traditions, herbal medicinal practices, Gnaoua music, analyzing the *Djemaa el Fna*, or researching the impact of development and European retirees on Marrakechi culture.



To be sure, we'll take advantage of Marrakech's relative proximity to the Atlantic coast with excursions to the laid back seaside city of Essaouria, the acclaimed "Windsurfing Capital of Africa", and a visit to the exquisitely preserved *kasbahs* (fortified villages of ochre mud) of Ait Benhaddou, backdrop to the epic films *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Jesus of Nazareth*, and *Gladiator* among others.



Oases and Desert—The Sahara

Next, we indulge desert fantasies and deliver an awareness of Morocco’s vast geographic breadth. Move east to the Skoura oasis then across the rock-and-scrub wasteland through the Dades and Ziz Valleys and discover numerous *ksour*, *khasbahs* and cinematic date-palm oases that increasingly fleck the southern landscape, culminating in the Tafilalet region. In the

village of Tinerhir, you will engage in your next community service

activity. It could be with a local association dedicated to improving the lives of local Moroccans with disabilities by training them in trades such as candle-making, beading, or metalwork. Or it could be collaborating with a local school in painting health murals to promote sound hygiene. Moving on, you will explore the nearly 1,000 foot high cliffs of the Todra Gorge and its surrounding palmery. And now you will begin to note the subtle textures of light and kaleidoscope effect for which Morocco is famous. Finally, our southern terminus is at Erg Chebbi, the largest sand dunes in Morocco on the doorstep of the Sahara. Here you’ll traverse by camel caravan, and encamp for a couple days, under dark skies shot with starlight, with mint tea served by our Berber guides at sunrise.

Fes, Part II

Next, a return to the Fes “base camp”—or, by now, your adopted second home—where, over the following several weeks, you’ll become more integrated into the fabric of this special city.



Language instruction will continue (with French as an option) and facilitate your daily interaction with Moroccans. Lectures on Moroccan music, literature, anthropology, and geography will further your cultural insight and appreciation, and prior ISPs may be recommenced or new ones begun. You will re-connect with children eager to play at the shelter, and your ongoing *medina* restoration project “apprenticeships” will reveal the artisanship for which “Fassis” are famous, including tilework (*zellij*), intricate wood carving, and sculpted plaster work (*tadelakt*). You will also benefit from a unique cultural exchange opportunity at a local high

school or university: sitting on a roundtable, you will dialog on pressing global issues such as education, job opportunities, and the Western media’s portrayal of Islam. Finally, you will bid your caring home-stay families a tender, memorable farewell.

You’ll eventually leave Fes, but Fes stays—its spirit, people, images, sounds, and smells will be there for you to ponder for years after.

*“Much travel is needed
before the raw man is
ripened”
--Arab proverb*



As with every segment of the semester, time is allocated to explore a region’s diversity. During this second tour of Fes, we map routes to the south and east, including: an eco-tour of the Middle Atlas cedar forests to spot Barbary Macaques; a visit to the “alpine” hamlet of Ifrane, site of the prestigious all-English

Al Akhawayn University, with special guest lectures; an excursion to the characteristically French seaside capital of Rabat; and a possible overnight to Taza to explore Friouato Cave and Djebel Tazzeke National Park.

Tangier, The Rif, and Southern Spain (Andalusia)



The final days of the semester route you back north, first to the picturesque, blue-on-white Rif mountain village of Chefchaouen where you will enjoy a day-hike into this wildest of Moroccan ranges. In addition, you may participate in a rural herbal distillation workshop and witness how select villagers are substituting ecotourism for cannabis cultivation. Then onward to Tangier, the Mediterranean resort that lured artists, musicians, authors, and assorted international hedonists during its moment of 20th century fame and infamy. The spirit of Paul Bowles and the Beats still emanates from legendary hangouts such as Café Hafa where time lingers and hovers from its

perch above the ocean. It is from here that you symbolically ferry yourself across the strait, into Spain, and bear witness to Morocco's past influence, incarnate in the Moorish grandeur of The Great Mosque ("La Mezquita") of Cordoba, founded in 785, and the 13th century Alhambra ("Red Castle") at Granada. Witness an Andalusian orchestral ensemble or a Flamenco dance performance. Here, East-meets-West, and the semester of experience ends... leaving you enlightened, if not transformed, by the extraordinary culture and mosaic that is Morocco.

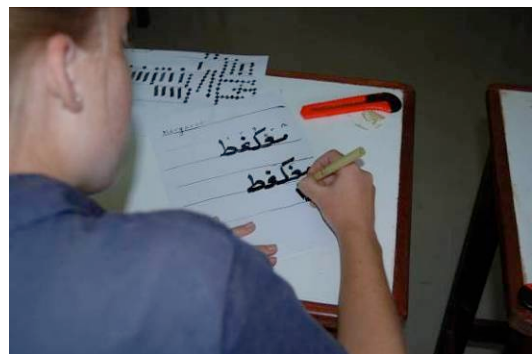
Core Semester Elements

Language Training

Regular, formal language instruction while in Fes in Moroccan Colloquial Arabic (*daraja*), French, and/or Modern Standard Arabic. Coupled with the real-world, instant feedback of a native environment enables a richer cultural experience and builds a foundation for further study. No prior linguistic knowledge required.

Family Home-stays

There is simply no better way to gain a deep appreciation for another culture than the home-stay. The Global LAB Morocco Semester includes two remarkable opportunities to share the rhythms and warmth of indigenous families: the first in the Fes *medina* where you'll achieve a special intimacy over a period of weeks; the second in the High Atlas with overnights in Berber villages.



Community Service Projects

Gain a perspective on local community needs and instill a sense of service by working alongside citizens on fundamental projects, for example: participating in English discussion classes at schools; assisting at orphanages or shelters; promoting conservation awareness and habitat preservation; planting trees to mitigate soil erosion; helping preserve cultural resources; assisting people with disabilities in income-generating projects; creating murals in rural locales to promote health and hygiene; distributing potable water to remote areas; and observing the governance process of rural villages.



Independent Study Project and Portfolio

With the guidance of Global LAB advisors, design and pursue your own study of an area of Moroccan arts, music, dance, history, spirituality, cuisine, environment, folklore, or other cultural aspect that interests you. Perhaps even assisting at one of the local *hanouts* (the ubiquitous cubby-hole “general stores” of the *medina*) to practice your French or Moroccan Arabic. The ISP culminates with a group presentation where you have the opportunity to share what you have learned, as well as a multimedia portfolio—writings, photography, video, performance, website design—that you will take home with you at the semester’s conclusion.



2012 Program Dates

Spring Term: *February 13 – May 12, 2012 (*pre-travel orientation in US, February 13-15)

Fall Term: *September 10 – December 8, 2012 (*pre-travel orientation in US, September 10-12)

Applications accepted year-round on a rolling admissions basis (group size: 6-12 students)

2012 Semester Program Tuition

\$13,295 (*not including r/t international airfare or travel to point of group departure—NYC or Washington, DC*). Tuition includes: pre-trip preparatory and educational materials and orientation; dedicated student web pages for program communications and resources; all logistical facilitation; all hotels and guest houses; all meals; all domestic air fares/taxis/buses/trains; museum, park and temple entrance fees; Global LAB faculty and instruction; local coordinators, cooks, porters; all program elements (independent study projects and apprenticeships, community service projects, home-stays, community support/charitable contributions).



Please note: Additional expenses not covered by Global LAB include: inoculations, travel insurance and international medical and evacuation insurance; visa/passport processing fees; personal costs (laundry, phone calls/emails, souvenirs, etc.).

Cancellation/Refund Policy

While Global LAB would like to provide as much flexibility as possible, this policy is based on the timing of our commitments to instructors, international airfares and travel arrangements, confirmation of in-country program components, logistical administration, and student preparation. We recommend that participants



purchase travel insurance to protect themselves against financial loss in the case of personal emergency or other unforeseen events requiring last minute cancellation.

Program Deposit

A \$500 program deposit is due with student application. \$250 of the deposit is refundable up to 90 days prior to departure. If a participant withdraws his or her application within 90 days of program departure, the deposit is nonrefundable. The \$500 deposit is fully credited toward program tuition. If Global LAB does not accept a student's application, the full deposit is refunded less a \$75 processing fee.

Tuition Balance

Tuition balance is due in full 60 days prior to program departure and is 50% refundable up to 30 days prior to departure. If cancellation occurs within 30 days of departure, 20% of tuition is refundable.

How to Apply & Eligibility

Global LAB accepts applications on a rolling admissions basis, accepting qualified applicants until programs are full (maximum of 12 participants). For this reason, we recommend candidates submit their applications as early as possible. Semesters are open to those ages 16-22. No language prerequisite is required. While the semester is geared toward interim or 'gap' year students, high school seniors as well as college freshmen and sophomores will be considered.



Credit

For high school seniors, Global LAB works closely with you and your school to ensure that you receive the fullest credit possible for participating. University students may also be eligible for credit, and appropriate language proficiency exams can be arranged through the Arabic Language Institute in Fes (ALIF). Contact our Director of Programs for the very latest credit information and guidance.



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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.

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