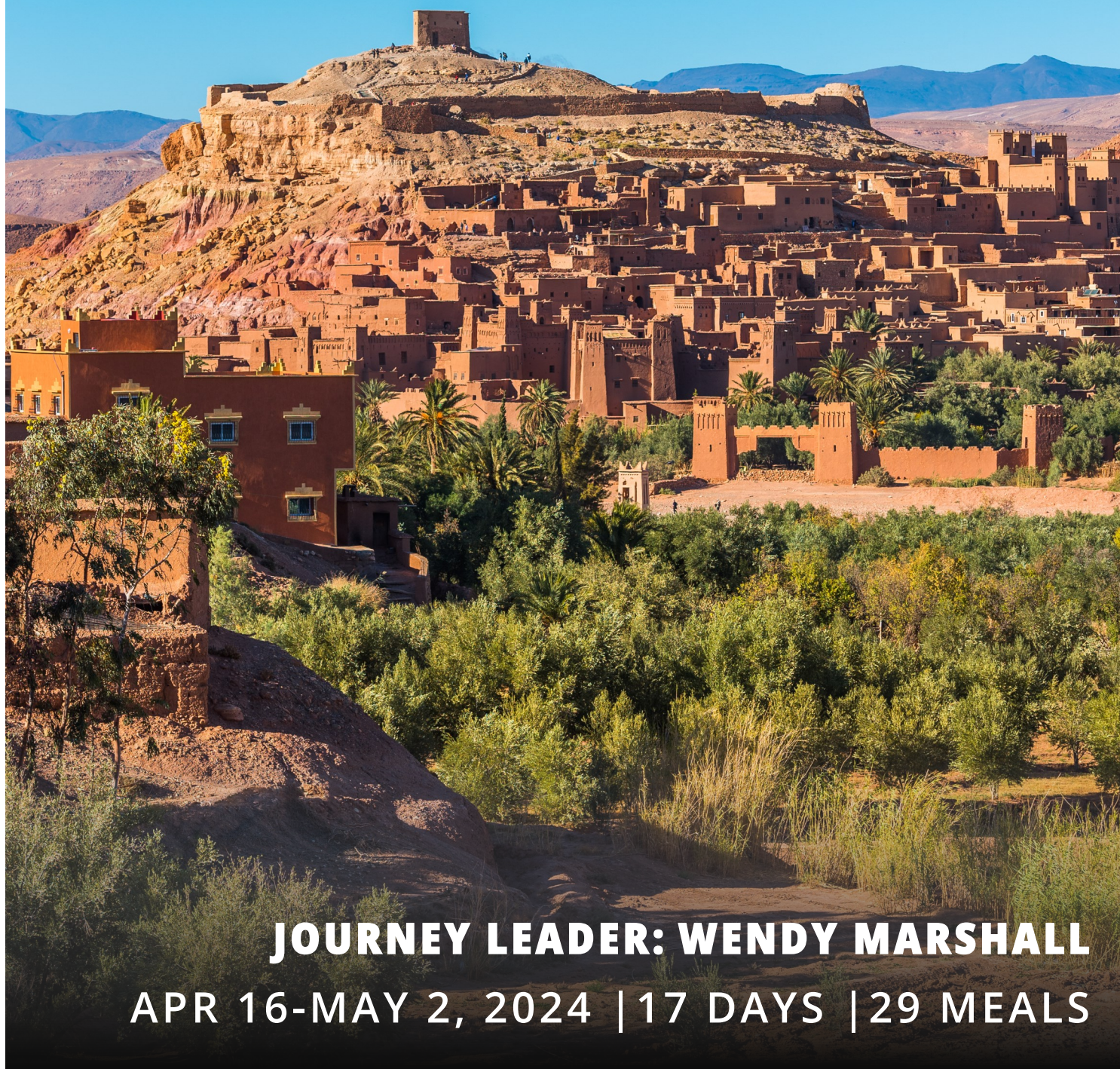


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JOURNEY LEADER: WENDY MARSHALL

APR 16-MAY 2, 2024 | 17 DAYS | 29 MEALS

The fortified desert jewel of Ait-Ben-Haddou gleams before the brooding Atlas Mountains

Nestled at the intersection of Africa and Europe, where Christianity and Islam converge, Morocco beckons with its alluring blend of cultures and timeless charm. On this journey, we will unravel the secrets of Morocco's walled imperial cities, labyrinthine alleyways and bustling souks.

We will be staying in charming riads, traditional boutique hotels that offer a glimpse into Morocco's storied past. Venturing beyond the city walls, we will push the boundaries of exploration to the very edge of the mesmerizing Sahara Desert. As twilight descends, we will find ourselves surrounded by the ethereal beauty of the desert landscape, indulging in an overnight stay at a deluxe tented camp under a sky glittering with stars. Thrilling 4x4 rides over the undulating sand dunes will awaken our spirits, tracing the enduring path taken for centuries by the resilient Berber people.

Inclusive Features

- Return economy group airfare from Canada
- 15 nights in first-class hotels and comfortable riads, as indicated or similar
- 29 meals (B-15 breakfasts, L-3 lunches, D-11 dinners)
- Bottled water on the coach daily and at all included lunches and dinners, plus tea/coffee at dinners
- Transfers and baggage handling
- Gratuities, taxes, and fees for included services
- Services of our journey leader and local guide in Morocco
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare

Journey Leader

Meet your tour escort, **Wendy Marshall**, a retired science teacher from Woodstock, Ontario who loves sharing her passion for travel. She has been escorting Craig Travel tours since 2019. Most recently, she has led groups to Costa Rica and a Heart of Europe tour including Oberammergau. Wendy has escorted student groups across Europe, and alongside her husband **Ron**, they have led community groups to both Scotland and Ireland. Some of her personal travel highlights include Peru, Panama, and numerous European countries. They live on a dairy farm where they produce their own milk and cheese. In their free time, Wendy enjoys quilting, singing in choirs, and playing the tenor drum in the Ingersoll Pipe Band, while Ron plays the bagpipes. She is thrilled to be adding Morocco and a fourth continent to her travel destinations and looks forward to you joining her on this adventure!



Tour Highlights

- Experience the four imperial cities of Morocco: Rabat, Fez, Meknes, and Marrakech
- Overnight in a deluxe tented camp
- Venture to the edge of the Sahara with 4x4 excursions
- Discover Kasbah Country, the old Berber trading route
- Visit Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca

Book With Confidence

For peace of mind, your deposit for this journey is fully refundable until:

January 10, 2024

APR 16, Tuesday

Depart Canada

Tour members from across Canada gather in Toronto and Montreal for the overnight flight to Casablanca.

APR 17, Wednesday

Casablanca / Rabat

Welcome to Morocco! On arrival in Casablanca, we will meet our local guide and transfer up the coast to our hotel in Rabat. In the evening, we gather for dinner at our hotel. **Tour Hassan Palace (2 nights)** D

APR 18, Thursday

Rabat

Explore the city of Rabat, which features the exquisite Hassan Tower, the busy Kasbah des Oudayas, the impressive mausoleum of Mohamed V, and the imposing Royal Palace, Chellah. Balance of the day at leisure. BD

APR 19, Friday

Meknes / Volubilis / Fez

This morning, we travel further inland to Fez, the world's oldest and largest medieval city. En route, we shall visit Meknes, which once rivalled Versailles in its beauty and opulence. Built over a fifty-year period as an imperial city by Moulay Ismail, Meknes is a treasure trove of palaces and gardens enveloped by 40 kms of mighty walls. Enter through the monumental gates of Bab Mansour to find the exquisite mausoleum of the city's builder. Nearby we

explore the Roman ruins at Volubilis. This UNESCO site dates back to AD 40 and was the capital of the Roman province of Mauritania. Later this afternoon, we arrive in Fez where we will spend two nights in the heart of the Medina with its bustling markets and heady mix of aromas, sounds and sights.

Hotel Palais Medina & Spa or similar (2 nights) BD

APR 20, Saturday

Fez

This is a day of enchantment as we visit the Medina of Fez, the ancient walled city of artisans, craftsmen, and lively markets. We then descend into the souks of Fez and enter yet another world filled with mingling aromas of cedar, leather, and spices, as we discover the districts of tanners, engravers, and merchants. You may want to visit the Kairaouine Mosque and University, the Bou Jeloud Gardens, and the Sultan's Palace, each offering displays of classical Islamic art.

BD

APR 21, Sunday

Midelt / Erfoud

Departing Fez, we cross over the Middle Atlas Mountains into the heart of Berber country. En route, we pass Ifrane, a charming ski resort, and Azrou, an important handicraft centre. Midelt is a pleasant town surrounded by verdant pine trees in a tranquil mountain setting. Take in the scenery as we head to the edge of the Sahara via the palm-fringed Errachidia and Ziz Valley.

Kasbah Hotel Xaluca Arfoud (1 night) BD

APR 22, Monday

Erfoud / Merzouga

After breakfast, we depart for Merzouga where 4x4 vehicles await to carry us through the final leg to the remote Erg Chebbi dunes. Surrounded amidst the undulating dunes lies our deluxe tented camp. Each tent offers comfortable beds, a private en suite bathroom with hot and cold water, and all the comforts of a well-appointed desert camp. As the desert sun sinks low, casting the dunes in rich amber hues, we have the chance to ride camels and witness the sunset. At night we gather for a traditional Berber meal, the sound of music filling the air as we dine under a canopy of stars.

Saharian Luxury Camp (1 night) BD

APR 23, Tuesday

Merzouga

Enjoy a morning at leisure followed by an afternoon visit to a local village and school situated along the fringe of the vast Saharan sands.

Kasbah Hotel Xaluca Tombouctou (1 night) BD

APR 24, Wednesday

Todra Gorge / Dades

Following an early call to admire the sunrise over the desert, we depart for Rissani, the holy city where Moulay Ali Cherif, an ancestor of the Alaouite dynasty is buried. Visit the ruins of a 17th century Kasbah and the ruins of the imposing 19th century castle, Ksar Abbar. We continue onto Tinghir to visit the magnificent Todra Gorge, its towering limestone cliffs soaring 1,000 feet overhead. After lunch, we will journey via the rugged Dades Valley to Dades, renowned for its blooming roses each spring.

Kasbah Tizzarouine or similar (1 night) BD

APR 25, Thursday

Dades Valley / Ait-Ben-Haddou

Today, we journey through extraordinary red rock formations to reach the stunning Dades Gorge. This area is often referred to as "Kasbah Country" due to the impressive forts that grace the valley, evoking memories of



Centuries-old tanning pits brimming with vivid leather dyes in Fez



Soaring over the Hassan II Mosque, this 689-foot minaret is the world's tallest



Atop a camel, watch the sunset blaze over endless amber sands



Wander through Marrakesh's vibrant souks lined with textiles and spices

ancient desert caravans traveling from Africa's depths to the Moorish cities in the north. Following lunch, we will explore Ait-Ben-Haddou, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where the timeless masterpiece Lawrence of Arabia was filmed. **Oscar Hotel Studio** or similar (1 night) BD

APR 26, Friday Ait Ourir / Marrakech

Winding through the Atlas Mountains, we journey to the village of Ait Ourir. There we hope to meet a local Imam and visit a school where nearly 90 children are educated. You may bring a small gift for the children if you wish (school visit subject to confirmation). We continue onward to Marrakech, the fabled imperial city that served as a painting retreat for Winston Churchill. Later, we settle into a riad at the heart of the city, close to all the action.

Palais Sebban (4 nights) BD

APR 27, Saturday Marrakech

Stroll through the Jardin Majorelle, a tranquil retreat from the bustle of the city. Visit the Museum of Islamic Art before participating in a special cooking class and at La Maison Arabe (or similar). Step back in time as we explore the Medina's narrow streets brimming with local handicrafts. Highlights will include the Koutoubia Minaret, the Saadian Tombs with their ornate carvings, the Kasbah, and the lively Jemaa el-Fna Square. BL

APR 28, Sunday Marrakech

Delve deeper into fascinating Marrakech at the Tiskiwin Museum, set within a traditional palace filled with Berber artifacts and insights into local culture. Marvel at the striking artistry of Bahia Palace, built in the 19th century with sections still reserved for the Royal Family. A special highlight will be our visit to the Amal Centre created to support local women from disadvantaged backgrounds. BL

APR 29, Monday Toubkal National Park / Imlil

Just outside of Marrakech lies Toubkal National Park. Drive up the mountain into the Berber village of Imlil. A gentle walk on country roads and local paths follows, before a graciously hosted lunch with a local family, offering insights into rich Berber traditions. As the day ends, we return to Marrakech, leaving the evening open for leisure. BL

APR 30, Tuesday Marrakech / Casablanca

Legendary Casablanca awaits, made famous by Humphrey Bogart. Explore this port city, highlighted by the eclectic Medina, the Royal Palace, and the magnificent Ain Diab Corniche. Our farewell dinner will be at Rick's Café, recreated to fit the theme of "Casablanca's" set in 1942.

Le Palace d'Anfa (2 nights) BD

MAY 1, Wednesday Casablanca

Today we visit the stunning Hassan II Mosque, the seventh largest building of its kind in the world and truly iconic. After a visit, we shall enjoy some free time to explore the area. B

MAY 2, Thursday Homeward Bound

This morning we catch our flights to Montreal and Toronto with connections to our homes across Canada. B

CT Rating 3.5 / 5 - Challenging: Members should be prepared for crowded cities and busy souks (bazaars). In the countryside, services and facilities can be basic, especially in remote areas. This is a fast paced itinerary with several one night stays. This journey includes long walks, uneven surfaces, and stairs. Members must be in good health and physically fit to fully appreciate this journey. A Riad is a traditional Moroccan house or palace built around a central courtyard that has been converted into a private boutique style hotel, with atmosphere and great locations, but often with limited restaurant and other facilities, no elevators or direct coach access.



**Book and deposit by November 30, 2023
and save \$200 per person**



Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars per person

Land Only* (Join / Leave at hotel)	\$5,075
Montreal	\$6,545
Toronto	\$6,745
Halifax / St. John's / Winnipeg	\$6,995
Regina / Saskatoon	\$7,145
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver	\$7,095
Victoria	\$7,145
Single Supplement	\$1,665

Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Air inclusive prices are estimated (subject to confirmation).

*Land only excludes flights and airport transfers. Tour price is based on sharing a twin room at hotels and on a minimum of 20 members, based on rates, taxes and fees effective July 2023 and are subject to change due to factors beyond our control. Group to be escorted from Canada with a minimum of 20 group members.

Insurance is NOT INCLUDED but is highly recommended. Premiums are calculated based on the individual's age, destination (country), trip length, and trip booking window – please contact our staff to receive a quote. Your coverage starts on the effective date of your confirmation of coverage. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information. Refer to the enrollment form for terms and conditions.

Final payment is due January 11, 2024

Deposit is \$700 per person

To reserve your spot on this tour, complete the enclosed enrollment form, and forward it with your deposit to:



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