

MOROCCO, TUNISIA AND MALTA

18 DAYS



Travel to the continent of Africa brings to mind vivid sights, and exotic sounds. Stroll through Tangier's *souk* (colorful local market) and shop for carpets, silver, copper, or leather items. Visit the imperial cities of Morocco; see elaborate stucco work, intricately carved woods, and complex mosaics. Drive along the Atlantic coast, enroute to Casablanca – a city with a marvelous combination of French, Moorish, Algerian and Tunisian architecture. And when you come to Marrakech, you stay at the world-renowned **La Mamounia** – a favorite of Winston Churchill.

From here, you fly on to Tunisia and visit historic Carthage, ancient Thugga, and the artistic village of Sidi Bou Said. Your journey continues on the island of Malta where you relax in the sun, stroll through charming fishing villages, and ride in colorful little motor boats to see the kaleidoscope of color in the coastal waters.

- Each departure limited to 16 guests
- Luxury hotels or best in each location
- 40 à la carte meals (table d'hôte, if unavailable) including beverages of your choice
- Professionally escorted
- All sightseeing, including entrance fees and special events as indicated in the itinerary
- Arrival and departure transfer by private car
- All gratuities included (also your tour manager's)
- Portage of 2 suitcases per passenger
- Airport departure taxes

Day 1 (Monday)

USA – TANGIER

Depart from the United States by comfortable overnight flight to Tangier, Morocco.

Day 2 (Tuesday)

TANGIER

Upon arrival in exotic Tangier, you are met at the airport and go by private car to the **El Minzah Hotel**, long considered the best in the city. Your manager will welcome you in the lobby and answer any questions you may have or offer suggestions; the remainder of the day is yours to spend as you wish at leisure. This evening, join your travel companions for a welcome cocktail party and à la carte dinner at the **El-Korsan** restaurant in our hotel. (D)

Day 3 (Wednesday)

TANGIER

Tangier has a rich history; founded by the Berbers, it later became an important trading center for the Phoenicians. Ruled by the Romans and later captured by the Arabs, the city was a very wealthy town with important trade between Marseilles, Genoa and Venice. The Portuguese, and subsequently the Spanish, ruled Tangier in the 15th and 16th centuries. Known as the "gateway to Africa" during the middle 1600s, Tangier was the object of considerable envy in Europe.

Your morning sightseeing tour unveils the many influences of the city's colorful past. In the afternoon, sun by the hotel's pool or relax under the orange trees in the garden. Later in the afternoon, enjoy a tour through a colorful local market – a *souk* – and bargain with the merchants for traditional Moroccan items such as silver, copper, carpets, pottery, and leather goods. Tonight, you dine à la carte at the **El Pescador** restaurant. (B,D)



Mosaics

Day 4 (Thursday)

TANGIER – VOLUBILIS – MOULAY IDRIS - FES

This morning, you journey southward to Fes - the oldest of Morocco's four imperial cities. En route, you visit Volubilis – founded in pre-Roman times and once the capital of the Roman territory Mauritania. Trade in oil, corn, and wild animals flourished here in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The city was in its decline when it was completely destroyed by shock waves from the 1755 earthquake that devastated Lisbon. The ruins of the city were not excavated until the late 1800s and are still being uncovered today. While there, you will see the Triumphal Arch, the *Decumanus Maximus* (the main paved street) and the temples of Orpheus, Dionysus and Ephebus among other impressive ruins.



Moroccan girl



Man of the desert

You have lunch along the way to Moulay Idris, named for the great-grandson of the Muslim prophet Mohammed, and considered holy by Muslims. See the shrine of Idriss I - the most eminent saint in all of Moroccan lore - and the awesome mausoleum, erected by Abd er Rahman, replete with intricately crafted mosaics and brilliant stained-glass windows. Then continue on to Fes, where you will stay at the **Palais Jamai**, located just inside of the walls of the old city. Once the Prime Minister's palace, elaborate stuccowork, mosaics, carved wood, and ornate painted ceilings provide a lavish welcome. (This is where all of King Hassan's guests stay while in Fes.) Dinner tonight is à la carte at the **Dar el-Fassia** restaurant in our hotel. (B,L,D)

Day 5 (Friday)

FES

Today you are guided through the fascinating walled city of Fes. You see such sights as the 15th-century Borj Nord Arms Museum, the 9th-century Karaouine Mosque, the Bou Jeloud Gardens, the Sultan's Palace, the ancient harem gardens, the Dar Batha Museum, and the thousand-year-old medina. Later, in the afternoon, you have leisure time to explore on your own; you might like to stroll through the "new" section of the city to watch snake charmers and street performers. There are a variety of shops in which to browse for jewelry, carpets, or pottery with wonderful cobalt-blue designs. Tonight, you eat à la carte in one of the rooms of a sumptuous

16th-century house, in the heart of the medina, called **Dar Saada**. (B,D)

Day 6 (Saturday)

FES – MEKNES – RABAT

This morning you depart Fes for the youngest of Morocco's four imperial cities - Meknes. Sitting atop a hill, the numerous minarets of the city can be seen from all directions. Twenty-five miles of triple ramparts (each progressively higher than its predecessor) surround Meknes - the first was designed to stop horsemen; the second, soldiers on foot, and the third, and highest, wall was to stop any soldier who might have been able to overcome the first two barriers.

The walls and gateways are massive; above the gate to the main entrance to this "garden city" are the words: "I am a gate which is open to all races, whether from the West or the East." After lunch, you visit the palace tombs, Moulay Ismail, the Dar Jamai Museum, the 14th century Bou Inania Seminary, the 18th century Dar el-Beida fortress, the ruins of the Imperial Stables, and the Sultanas' Gardens. Afterwards, the journey continues to Morocco's capital city of Rabat, where you dine à la carte at our hotel, **Rabat Hilton**. (B,L,D)

Day 7 (Sunday)

RABAT

You spend this morning visiting the ancient Hassan Tower, all that remains of the original mosque built in 1196, and the Archeological Museum, which houses an extensive collection of prehistoric, and newer, objects from throughout Morocco.



Red carpets of Fes



Carpet maker

You also tour the Mohammed V Mausoleum, and the Kasban of the Oudayas - an artists' enclave. The afternoon is yours to spend as you wish at leisure. You might like to browse through the fine cloth, jewelry, and carpet shops of the Rue Souika and the Rue des Consuls.

Tonight, you have an à la carte dinner at **Le Dinarjat**, which features excellent Moroccan cuisine, including chicken tangines and bowls of vividly colored salads. Afterward, your guide leads you through the medina by lanternlight. (B,D)

Day 8 (Monday)

RABAT - CASABLANCA

After breakfast, you begin the short drive along the Atlantic coast to Casablanca, where you are greeted with a melange of architecture - French, Moorish, Algerian, and Tunisian. You tour the seaside Grand Hassan II mosque. Considered the North African equivalent of the Statue of Liberty, its prayer hall accommodates 25,000 worshippers, with space for an additional 80,000 to pray on the esplanade. Then you visit the Mahkama du Pasha law courts and the Skala, an 18th-century fortification with a stunning view of the Atlantic Ocean from the terrace. You lunch à la carte at **Le Cabestan**, located in an exotic garden near the El-Hank lighthouse. Its setting is the perfect contrast to the hustle and bustle of downtown Casablanca.

Your hotel, the **Royal Mansour**, is located in the heart of town near the harbor; it combines Moroccan accents with European luxury. Relax in the commodious lounge, which opens to an airy skylighted atrium with glossy marble floors, lush plants, a cascading waterfall, and elegant white rattan furniture. Dinner tonight is à la carte at the renowned restaurant **Volubilis** in our hotel. (B,L,D)

Day 9 (Tuesday)

CASABLANCA – MARRAKECH

The morning and early afternoon is yours to spend as you wish at leisure. Perhaps you would like to take a stroll

ACCOMMODATIONS

Tangier – El Minzah Hotel (2 nights)

El Minzah's sterling location in the heart of town puts the medina, souks, boutiques, casbah (the ancient military and political center), and beach—and the most interesting cafés and restaurants—all within strolling distance.

Fes – Palais Jamaï (2) Condé Nast Traveler Gold List '01

This former palace of a Grand Vizir was converted to a hotel in the 1930s; the guest rooms combine modern comfort with the beauty of superb Arabian Moorish styling. Surrounded by an impressive Andalusian garden with fountains and terraces, the hotel is a peaceful and relaxing retreat, just steps away from the hustle and bustle of the country's busiest Medina.

Rabat – Rabat Hilton (2)

The hotel is located in the prestigious residential area of Souissi, not far from Rabat's administrative, shopping, and entertainment district.

Casablanca – Hotel Royal Mansour (1) Condé Nast Traveler Gold List '01

Located in the heart of the city, Le Royal Mansour Meridien maintains a tradition of excellence to satisfy the most demanding guests who want to discover the splendor of Morocco and its legendary hospitality.

Marrakech – La Mamounia (3), Condé Nast Traveler Gold List '01

A hallmark of art deco and unadulterated luxury, La Mamounia is considered the top hotel not just of Marrakech, but the whole of Morocco.

Tunis – Tunis Hilton (3)

Nestled in exclusive Belvedere Park overlooking the city of Tunis and such attractions as the charming Arab Medina, the Ruins of Carthage, and Bardo Museum.

Valletta- Meridien Phoenicia Hotel (3)

The Phoenicia has retained its original architecture based on the grand style of the 20's and enjoys a distinct colonial atmosphere, unique in Malta. The hotel is noted particularly for its luxurious classical decor and blend of warm hospitality with old world service, a standard which is synonymous of a Forte Grand Hotel.

through the Park de la Ligue Arabe, with its pergolas, long palm tree vistas, and shady, inviting café terraces. Or maybe you would prefer to walk through the Quartier Habbous, past the Royal Palace and along the Boulevard de la Corniche for a splendid view of uninterrupted shoreline. Stop at one of the cafes and savor the cool sea breezes.

Arriving in the walled city of

Marrakech, befezzed porters clad in traditional baggy white trousers and yellow pointed-toe slippers greet you at **La Mamounia** hotel. A crown jewel among Morocco's numerous lavish hotels, it was to this establishment that Winston Churchill came every winter until 1952. (There are signed paintings by Churchill here which he created while sitting in the La Mamounia's enchanted 32-acre garden,



Early travelers

located within the city's ancient ramparts.) It is also a favorite with heads of state, movie stars and other celebrities. This evening, dine à la carte in the hotel's **Le Restaurant Marocain** restaurant. (B,D)

Day 10 (Wednesday)**MARRAKECH**

This morning, walk through the Djemaa el Fna square, complete with snake charmers, jugglers, acrobats, dancers, storytellers, and fortune tellers. You also visit the El Bahia Palace, the Dar Si'Sai Museum of Moroccan arts, the Saadian Tombs, and the ruins of El Badi Palace. After lunch in the garden at the **Relais al-Baraka** restaurant, wander through the Menara Pavilion, which includes a huge lake and views of the snow-covered Atlas Mountains in the distance.

Join your companions for an à la carte dinner with specialties such as, platters of golden couscous with fresh yellow and red peppers accompany tender lamb mechoui, and desserts sprinkled with delicate rosewater - all served to the rhythmic beat of Berber music. (B,L,D)

Day 11 (Thursday)**MARRAKECH**

Today you have the entire day to explore the oasis city of Marrakech. There are numerous shops offering an array of items to bring home: paintings, tiles, clothing, lapis and coral jewelry, silver urns and teapots, lamps and lanterns, leatherwork, and beautifully hand-embroidered fabric. For instance, a French woman named Brigitte Perkins works out



Hotel La Mamounia, Marrakech



of her home weaving sensational linens on traditional looms, implementing vivid colors and designs.

For dinner, you travel outside the city where you will dine in a traditional tent. After your meal, featuring typical Moroccan fare, you are entertained with a *fantasia*, a dazzling performance of traditional singing, acrobatics, horseracing, and rifle fusillade. (B,D)

Day 12 (Friday)

MARRAKECH – TUNIS

Today you fly from Marrakech to Tunis, Tunisia. Upon our arrival in Tunis, you transfer to the **Tunis Hilton**, set on a hill overlooking the city. The hotel is just beyond the Parc du Belvedere in a quiet traffic-free location. A harmonious blend of contemporary décor and colorful local accents greets you. Tunis was occupied before Carthage was founded in 800 BC and is thus second only to Rome as the oldest city in the Mediterranean area; it is now the administrative, economic and cultural center of the country. It sits on a ridge between two bodies of water - the Lac de Tunis to the east and the Sebkhia es Sedjoui lagoon to the southwest - and two sets of hills - the Belvedere to the north and the Sidi Bel Hassen to the south.

You have time to explore the well-preserved old Arab sector along the harbor and the newer part of the city, which has distinctly European touches, with its modern shops. There are perfumes of jasmine, ceramic plates and vases, carvings of palm and olive wood as well as leather book covers, wallets, and belts. The famous Bardo National Museum is housed in a former villa which Alexandre Dumas described as a “fairytale residence”. It is best known for its Roman and Byzantine mosaics but also has an extensive display of items from numerous excavated sites throughout Tunisia. This evening you dine

on Tunisian specialties, a marvelous blend of Eastern and Western cuisine. (B,D)

Day 13 (Saturday)

TUNIS – CARTHAGE – SIDI BOU SAID – CAP BON - TUNIS

Today you journey 12 miles from Tunis to the ancient ruins of historic Carthage – once the greatest city in North Africa. Founded around 800 BC by the Phoenicians, Carthage flourished for centuries. The Romans destroyed the city in 146

BC – the ruins of the temples, amphitheaters, and statues only hint at the once glorious existence its population enjoyed.

On our way back to Tunis, you stop in the whitewashed Andalusian-style village of Sidi Bou Said, built on the slopes of Cap Carthage, overlooking the sea. The area was a favorite source of material for three French painters – Klee, Macke, and Moillet – at the beginning of this century; and their work continues to be highly regarded. (Be sure not to miss the Café des Nattes at the upper end of the main square, which often shows paintings by Macke.) Protected by government statute, the town has been preserved in its original style; cars are not allowed in the village, which makes strolling past wrought iron doorways, Spanish courtyards, and Moorish coffee houses even more enjoyable. From the village’s highest point, just below the lighthouse, there are splendid views of the Gulf of Tunis, Cap Bon, and Carthage in the distance. For your à la carte dinner, you return to Tunis to eat at a local restaurant. (B,L,D)

Day 14 (Sunday)

TUNIS – DOUGGA (ANCIENT THUGGA) – TUNIS

Today you take a day-trip to Dougga (ancient Thugga); its name is taken from the word *tukka*, which means sheer rock. The ruins, considered the best preserved in Africa, lie atop a plateau, with a view of sweeping pastures and olive groves below – there is a particularly impressive view

from the Capitol, which was dedicated to the Roman gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva as well as Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Dougga is thought to have been first settled by the Numidians in the 4th century BC and was recorded in the 1st century BC by the Greek historian Diodorus as a “large and handsome” city. The Romans started to settle in the surrounding area around 100 AD and enlarged the town considerably. After a break for lunch, you walk through the site; keep in mind that, unlike the orderly street plans of most Roman cities, there was a maze of pedestrian walkways here.

In its most prosperous period – around 260 AD - the town was called Colonia Licinia; the majority of its inhabitants were Roman citizens. Most of the impressive public buildings and private residences were built during this time by wealthy Roman landowners. The town started to decline when the Romans departed, although it was restored and fortified by the Byzantines, who used stone from the ancient buildings; but they subsequently abandoned it. Refugees from southern Spain settled in the area later and revived the cultivation of olives. The sight was not rediscovered until the 17th century; excavations began in 1899 and are still in progress. You return to Tunis in time for an à la carte dinner at a local restaurant. (B,L,D)

Day 15 (Monday)

Tunis – Valletta

This morning you fly from Tunis to Valletta, Malta – birthplace of Hannibal. The island’s British past is still evident in the names of local shops in Valetta, but is also has the charm of a small Italian city. There are great stone buildings, with wooden balconies richly painted in shades of green or blue, set along wide streets –



Amphitheater, Dougga



St. Paul's Cathedral - Mdina, Malta

some with steps leading right down to the sea.

The **Meridian Phoenicia Hotel**, just outside the walls of old Valletta, is a former villa constructed of carmel-colored stone and set among palm trees in a lush garden. Inside are elegant high ceilings, marble floors, arched windows, and wonderful views of multi-colored boats sitting at anchor in Valletta's harbor. This afternoon, we tour St. John's Cathedral in Valletta. Within its Baroque interior are two of Caravaggio's paintings – *The Beheading of St John the Baptist* and *St. Jerome* - and an extensive collection of Flemish tapestries. This evening you make your dinner selection from the à la carte menu of the **Phoenix Restaurant** in our hotel. (B,D)

Day 16 (Tuesday)

VALLETTA – MDINA – RABAT – VALLETTA

Today you visit two picturesque villages. The first is Mdina, a medieval village with cobblestoned streets and little plazas, once the capital of Malta (before the arrival of the Knights of the Order of St. John). The second is Rabat, with a former Roman villa that has been transformed into a museum where you learn more about the Knights of the Order of St. John, who occupied Malta for more than 250 years, beginning in the mid-16th century.

This afternoon we go along the picturesque cliff road to the boat landing to take one of the brightly colored motor boats to the Blue Grotto. The electric blue of the water and the purple, rose and blue-gray coloring of some of the rocks are a vivid contrast with the island's gray cliffs.

You go to **Bacchus** for an à la carte dinner of Mediterranean, as well as international, fare. If you like, try the Maltese *bragoli* (rolled beef with mincemeat, stewed in tomato sauce) or tender rabbit stew made with potatoes and vegetables in a wine sauce; locally caught prawns and swordfish are also favorites here. (B,D)

Day 17 (Wednesday)

VALLETTA – GOZO - VALLETTA

Today you travel to the 24-square-mile island of Gozo (where legend says the nymph Calypso held Odysseus for seven years). Here you see quaint fishing villages, Calypso's Cave, and the Basilica of Ta'Pinu Marsalfarn. Charming shops offer splendid handmade lace and a variety of woolen goods. You lunch à la carte at the restaurant in the **Ta'Cenc Hotel**, a small limestone estate in an idyllic setting overlooking a turquoise inlet dotted with rocks. You descend to the shore to board a boat to explore the Azure Window – a natural rock arch - and the Fungus Rock, where legend has it that a valuable medicinal plant prized by the Knights could be found. Tonight, after our return to Valletta, horse-drawn carriages take us to the **Black Pearl** for a farewell cocktail party and à la carte dinner. The **Pearl** is a renovated 100-year-old schooner that was used in the filming of the musical "Popeye", and is said to have belonged to Errol Flynn. (B,L,D)

Day 18 (Thursday)

VALLETTA - USA

Your journey comes to an end today, and your tour manager escorts you to the airport for your flight home. (B)

DATES

Depart-MON (from USA) May 02, 2005	Return-THU May 19
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COST PER PERSON

Land Portion (Double occupancy)	\$ 8,500
Single supplement	\$ 2,100
International Airfare (New York)	\$ 1,800

All airfares are subject to availability and to change by the airlines. Cancellation penalties and surcharges may apply. Fares from other U.S. cities, as well as First and Business Class rates, are also available.

FOR RESERVATIONS, PLEASE TELEPHONE TOLL FREE: 1-888-377-8023