



PLANNING A HOLIDAY OR JUST CURIOUS ?

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SOUTHERN MOROCCO

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FENNEC TOURS

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In need of adventure ?

Known for its well-developed tourism infrastructure, Morocco is often avoided by the hardliners who claim that the real Africa off-road is elsewhere. But do they know what they are missing ? We think not and have no problem rounding up some top notch destinations and tracks that remain almost untouched by mainstream tourism.

Morocco can undoubtedly offer a travel experience as adventurous and un-touristy as you want it to be. The atmosphere is a seductive tribal blend, the open spaces are at once generous yet mysterious and contained, the variety of landscapes is amazing, giving a sense of romantic and unspoiled natural beauty.

Get the powerful impression that time has stood still and soon forget the meaning of the word stress.



Your pleasure is our reward !

Fascinated by Morocco's diversity of landscapes and culture, we decided to share our enthusiasm and make it possible for some adventurous travelers to discover the beauty of this amazing country.

A trip needs no explanations. It is reason in itself. You think you are going to make a trip, but sooner or later it's the trip that makes you.

Nicolas Bouvier, *The worlds experience*

The team

SOPHIE BOSSI : Nomad of modern-times, traveling and discovering has always been part of my life. But nevertheless, I couldn't help my Swiss origins to appear in my sharp sense of organization and love of details. I spent seven years studying the Arabic language and culture, first in Switzerland and later in Syria, an apprenticeship and direct contact with the Arab world, that helped me better understand its complex multiplicity. My first trip to Morocco took place in 1989. Even though the country has changed since, it has lost none of its charm and beauty.



ANDREAS BOSSI : My first 13 years spent outside of Switzerland, this early life made of different environments and constant changes has increased my taste for the unknown. On top of all, my passion for engines and motor sports reinforced my desire to hit the road as soon as I finished my studies in business-administration. Fond of the out-doors, I found Southern Morocco with its seemingly endless open spaces very exciting. The discovery of this fascinating country, as dry and austere as its people are generous and courageous, has been an invaluable experience for me.

Safety

Safety is our number one concern.

We believe that maximum safety is dependent on :

proper maintenance of *vehicles* :



both our Land Rovers 130 TD5, 5 seaters, pick-up, have been especially equipped to cope with the difficulties encountered on rugged terrain. Winch, tow-bar, integrated extra fuel tank, reinforced suspensions, reinforced shock absorbers, air-compressor, differential lock (front and rear), etc. are part of our basic equipment.

Up-to-date *technology* :



we are aware that we cannot match the experience and ancestral knowledge of the locals. We therefore compensate this lack by means of a reliable technology like GPS (Garmin), detailed pilot maps (TPC), laptop, satellite phone (Inmarsat), mobile phones and, last but not least, our personal experience.

Availability of the best *additional equipment* :



in case of a flat tire or of a vehicle getting stuck in the sand, all the necessary equipment and tools are provided for on board : sand racks, shovels, hi-lift, repair-kit for tires, etc.

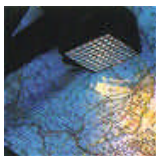
Appropriate *medical kit* :



our first-aid kit has been planned by a doctor expert in this type of expedition in order to cope with all the physical problems that can occur. We carry with us disinfected water, although there is no declared infection risk of malaria or any other kind in Morocco.

We also believe :

that *experience* should not be taken for granted :



the essential knowledge of the local meteorology, track difficulties and dangers inherent to the terrain is primordial. Our trips must be adapted to these prevailing factors.

that *common sense* is usually reliable :



exploits should be avoided. In case of unforeseen situations during any trip it will be up to us to make the appropriate decisions. In advance we thank you for your understanding.



A different approach ...

A way of traveling for those who want to avoid the beaten track. Give it a thought !
A top quality tailor-made off-road trip, alone, with family or friends...

Let's put your ideas and our knowledge together and elaborate a program according to your wishes and requests. Most of what you can think of is possible, with the right equipment !

Our à la carte system

Make your choice !

Decide on one of our tested routes :

- you don't know Morocco,
- you're not more than eight persons,
- you don't want to miss the most impressive sights,
- you're attracted by one of our proposals...

Don't wait any longer, contact us to secure your travel dates !

Plan your own trip :

- you're a group over eight people,
- you'd like one particular location to be included,
- you'd love riding a camel,
- you're not tempted by out-back camps,
- you're short on time*...

Tell us your dream and we'll try to make it come true !

*Attention : In order to be worthwhile a trip should last at least five days.

Seven days through the High Atlas and Drâa-Valley

This short trip will give you an idea of Morocco's changing landscape from the snow-capped mountains to the Sahara desert.



Best seasons :

Mid March to end of May and
mid September to end of December

Accommodation :

One hotel of high standards,
Two charming guesthouses,
a lodge with Berber tents (khaima).

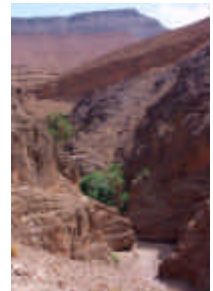
Highlights :

The Dadès Gorges, the dunes of the Erg
Jehudi,
the kasbahs of the Glaoui.

Travel distance :

1300 km

Leaving Ouarzazate – an ancient French military garrison, and now major city of the local film industry – we will drive along the famous valley of Dadès bordered by numerous ksour and kasbahs, to *BOUMALNE DADÈS* where we spend the night. A hotel of high standards awaits us, with troglodyte rooms and a spectacular view of the valley. During a two-day excursion in the steep and rugged mountains of the High Atlas we will reach *MILCHIL*. This village located at 2500 meters above sea level in total margin of modernity, is especially known for its moussem of the brides where girls from all over the region come to offer themselves in marriage. Our lodging for the night will be a simple inn, romantically located at the edge of a little mountain lake. The following day, our descent will take us over the steep pass of Tizi-n-Ouano and down the famous Gorges of Dadès, with its 300 meters high cliffs. End of the day's journey, and some well-deserved rest at the same hotel in *BOUMALNE DADÈS*. Early the next morning, we will explore a very different chain of mountains, while crossing the



Anti-Atlas from North to South, more exposed and rocky than the High Atlas. End of today's trip in *ZAGORA* located in the middle of what is Morocco's biggest palm grove. After the dust and fatigue accumulated during the day, the hotel's swimming pool will undoubtedly be very welcome. The next day we will head-off to

see the first dunes of southern Morocco near M'hamid in an almost lunar environment. Return to *ZAGORA* for the night. The voyage coming to an end, we'll head north again, reaching *AÏT BEN HADDOU* on off-beaten tracks. This Ksar, not only famous for being the back-drop for many movies but also a world heritage site of UNESCO, will be the enchanted décor of our last night. On our way back to Ouarzazate, we will visit Telouët, another architectural highlight of Morocco's South, which will bring our journey to an end.

Discover the South in twelve days

An itinerary for desert lovers : it follows the partly dried out river of the Drâa to the Atlantic Ocean through spectacular desert landscapes and back across the rugged mountains of the Anti Atlas.



Best season :

Mid October to end of April

Accommodation :

Top class hotels,
charming guesthouses,
two bivouac-style luxury camps.

Highlights :

The Iriki lake, the dunes of Chegaga,
the mouth of Drâa,
Tafraout and its rocky compositions.

Travel distance :

2500 km

Without delay, we leave Ouarzazate on the famous road of the thousand kasbahs. These traditional fortress-like constructions made out of loam, combine an impression of robustness with surprisingly brittle materials. First luxury overnight at *BOUMALNE DADÈS* and last preparations before the great off-road adventure. Heading South we will find our first piste, crossing a mountain-pass, with sumptuous views of rocky formations comparable to the American canyons. The day's journey comes to an end in *ZAGORA*, the final tourist destination before the endless desert, right in the middle of the lush palm grove



of the Drâa valley. At this point the Drâa river is barely more than a thread of water in its vast bed. The next day will first take us to M'hamid: end of the tarmac - end of civilization – and the beginning of sand. A well-defined piste will enable us to reach the dried out lake of Iriki bordered by a sea of dunes, the *CHEGAGA*. The one night experience spent in desert, will for many remain an unforgettable memory. The following day the landscape will

change rather quickly to become harsh and stony. Then, in the middle of nowhere *TATA* will appear, a large borough halfway through our Moroccan crossing to the West. The river Drâa which we inevitably follow for some time, remains visible through the landscape which it carefully carves; thus digging valleys, modeling plains and basins, as with *ASSA* our next destination. This is also the starting point of a faster, less-technical former Paris-Dakar piste, which will



take us to *EL-OUATIA* on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, where we will



spend the night in a pleasant motel. This new section is synonymous of new landscapes too : an often rough sea, a rocky coast strewn with dunes of fine sand, and finally the mouth of the Drâa, semi-river semi-lake. Not being able to cross it, we will circumvent before setting our *CAMP* on its northern edge. Our journey will take us through a wild and uninhabited coastal area to

an immaculate white beach, before reaching *FORT BOU JERIF*, a local style guesthouse kept by Guy and Evelyne. The desert landscapes are finally relayed by attempts at agriculture and cattle farming. Our return to civilization will take place in the evening, in the animated village of *TAFRAOUTE*, known for its rock formations of which the Napoleon cap and the work of a Belgian artist are some of the most striking examples. Our final lap will cross the Anti-Atlas through landscapes of unchanged but contrasting aridity : a chaos of burst rocks, at times pale as if bleached by the sun, and at others, dark as if blackened by intense heat. We overnight in the heart of the mountains at *TALIOUINE*, the city of the saffron. The end of our trip will take us to an architectural master-piece and splendid testimony of the golden age of this area, the famous Ksar of *AIT BEN HADDOU*, where we will stay overnight. Last stop before arriving back in Ouarzazate, is the kasbah of Telouët, one of the many residences that belonged to the Glaoui, an important leader of ancient times who controlled the region from North to South as late as the years of French protectorate.



Nine days to encounter the mysterious beauty of the East

Probably the most varied route. It will take you from verdant palm groves to the harsh cedar tree forests passing by the ochre sands of the Erg Chebbi.



Best seasons :

Early April to mid May and
early September to mid December

Accommodation :

One hotel of high standards,
charming guesthouses,
a lodge with Berber tents (khaima),
two bivouac-style luxury camps.

Highlights :

The dunes of Merzouga, the circus of Jaffar,
the Souk of Imilchil.

Travel distance :

1700 km

First impressions of typically Moroccan landscapes on the road of a thousand kasbahs between Ouarzazate and *BOUMALNE DADES*. Departure the following day for a North to South crossing of the Djebel Saghro heading for *ZAGORA* a tourist village known for its legendary sign indicating "Timbouctou 52 days" which remains one of the most photographed subjects of the country. It is only a few kilometers further that a piste starts towards the famous red sands particular to the Eastern part of Morocco. On this pretty much forsaken trail, we will set up our *CAMP* close to an ancient lake formation, which has now been drained. Our eastward journey will end at the foot of the famous dunes of *MERZOUGA*, of which the highest is over a 100 meters. After having taken time to climb it, we will leave the sand desert behind us heading north to the verdant Tafilalet, region of origin of today's ruling dynasty. It is in the neighborhoods of Boudnib, that we set up another luxury *CAMP* in the shade of a small quiet oasis. The following day, continuation and end of our drive northwards through a still desert and little attended area. An undoubtedly welcome stay as comfortable and friendly as you can think of awaits us in *MIDELT* where one can already feel the chilly breeze from the High Atlas. This is where our ascension towards the breathtaking Cirque of Jaffar will begin through cedar forests. At the end of this route towards the West and right in the middle of the striking mountains of the High Atlas we will reach *IMILCHIL*, its weekly Souk definitely being the most significant and genuine of the entire region. The inn where we will spend the night is located near two mountain lakes, which according to the legend resulted of the tears of lovers separated by their enemy tribes. Last but not least, our journey will take us over a steep and exposed pass trail, and finally through Morocco's deepest Gorges opening into the valley of Dadès. During the final kilometers of our journey back to *OUARZAZATE* one can admire the many kasbahs along the way.



Specials

something for bikers

Are you a bike freak ?

Then how about riding in total freedom :

No luggage,

No passenger on the back

No time lost on deciding which track to choose...

Tell us what you want and, depending on your needs and our means of assistance, we may provide you with an escort vehicle !



Our service

Costs include :

Transfer to and from the airport

Transportation in Land Rovers (fuel, mileage and insurance included)

Accommodation in double room* or camp depending on daily program

Full board

Non alcoholic beverages and table vine (if available)

Admission to monuments

Taxes

*extra charge for single room occupancy

Are not included :

Airfare

Insurance for cancellation, luggage, accident and repatriation

Tips

è The à la carte tourism we promote implies the individual elaboration of the cost of every trip according to its mileage, duration, number of persons, style of accommodation, etc.

Good to know



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE: Depending on the airline company, the period of the year and the travel agency you will choose, the prices can almost vary from simple to double. For more details, contact your travel agent or an consult on-line ticket service.

As with regard to the service and cleanliness you will undoubtedly note some negligence. But do not forget that the Moroccans need to learn the values of European service standards like a foreign language. We therefore prefer putting up a private camp in some remote parts of the country.

BISMILLAH - BON APPÉTIT: you have probably heard of couscous and tajine, the main national dishes of Moroccan cuisine, which are low in fat and moderately spicy. The cuisine is composed of single dishes, which can be cooked many different ways. You will find couscous with lamb, beef, chicken, or fish or just simply, vegetarian. Although the variety is less in the number of different dishes than in their composition, there are nevertheless some dishes not to miss... most famous of all is the bastilla (a pastry stuffed with chicken or pigeon, almonds, eggs, cinnamon...).

CLEANNESS: Moroccans are unfortunately not yet very sensitive to the concept of environmental protection! Sanitation in general and toilets in particular, are of relative spotlessness, although the situation is improving!

CLIMATE: the great geographical and geological diversity of the country, doesn't make it easy to draw a simple sketch of Morocco's climate. In general one can divide Southern Morocco into three climatic zones: the *High Atlas* (area of high mountains up to 4000 meters, some of which are snow-capped all year, involving the closure of many roads in winter; rains in spring and autumn are not uncommon, making the crossing of rivers impossible; pleasantly warm summertime, although nights may be fresh); the *Anti-Atlas* and *Hamada of Drâa* (these areas of hills and desert plains know the greatest daily fluctuations: moderate to hot during daytime - very hot from May to September - fresh to chilly throughout the night, frequent winds in altitude); *Atlantic coast* (influenced by the stream of Canaries, the climate is moderate winter like summer, often misty and knowing strong breezes).

CLOTHES: Limit your luggage. Choose comfort: broad, light and long clothing, in layers of all warmth. You'll need something very isolating as well as head cover all year long. Show mercy to your feet and ankles: bring light, closed and rising walking shoes.

CURRENCY AND CHANGE: 100 Dirham are roughly worth 10 Euros. The Dirham can neither be imported, nor exported (do not change too big amounts, you'll have to spend all of the money before leaving the country). The exchange rate is fixed by the government, in order to prevent the black market. The foreign currencies are thus exchanged everywhere without any difficulty at the same rate. Credit cards such as Visa or MasterCard are useful for large amounts and in tourist centers, where distributors become increasingly popular. Not being accepted everywhere, we don't recommend the use of checks such as " American Express Traveler Checks ", if it's not by precaution (only means of payment refunded in case of robbery or loss). The simplest remains: cash in foreign currencies.

To have a look at the exchange rate of the day : www.oanda.com/converter/classic

CUSTOM AND HABITS: Is it necessary to shock the spirits? To respect the local habits and sensitivity, avoid shorts, miniskirts, sleeveless shirts, and so on. Also remember that the less your skin will be exposed to the sun, the less you will suffer from the heat and sunstrokes! Last but not least you'll certainly understand that respecting the local dressing code will make human contact much easier.

ELECTRICITY: 220 Volt.

HASHISH: The presence of hashish throughout Morocco is well known, but the accent is less often put on the measures of repression taken by the Moroccan government against violation of law.

HOTEL FACILITIES: we believe that the quality of accommodation takes part in a considerable way in the success of your holidays. Charm and peace thus mainly influenced the choice of the hotels and inns that we suggest. In the cities, the quality of the best hotels meets high European standards. As for smaller towns, sleeping facilities are often simple with sometimes even summary comfort. Altogether, it would be exaggerated to speak of great luxury, with a few exceptions. The local style has usually been favored for architecture and decoration. Most of the rooms dispose of shower, toilet and sometimes air conditioning, although not everything is always in working order. Some hotels are surrounded by beautiful gardens and swimming pools.

IN FAMILY: Itinerant tours are seldom of much rest. This is why we don't recommend our tours to families with children that haven't reached the age of scholarship. Only then do they start having the necessary curiosity and enthusiasm to take pleasure in adventure. In advance we thank you for your comprehension.

INSURANCES: For security sake, we require that each participant have an insurance covering illness and accidents and guaranteeing repatriation in case of emergency. Travel insurance is also recommended covering the expenses of cancellation, as well as robbery and loss of luggage.

LUGGAGE: remember that no hard luggage can be accepted on our Land Rovers (choose flexible and as far as possible "dustproof" luggage, i.e. sea bags). Attention also to overweight: airlines allow a maximum weight of 20kg per passenger, charging 20\$ on average for every additional kg.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING: Caution! Dust and sand penetrate everywhere and shocks are to be expected. Thus give up carrying ultra-sensitive and sophisticated gear, if you're not a pro. Especially as light, compact and easy to handle equipment allows much more freedom in picture taking in public areas. Also, it is preferable to carry films and rolls with you, as they are often badly stored, outdated and expensive. Difficult to find are: sensitive rolls (more than 400 ASA), slides and professional quality, as well as VHS and DVC cassettes, etc.

PHYSICAL CONDITION: No particular fitness is required for a trip by Fennec Tours. We however recommend good health, some endurance (the tracks can be pretty bumpy) and a certain amount of flexibility (the unforeseen is synonymous with adventure).

SECURITY: From a political point of view, Morocco has been a stable country for many years, and doesn't therefore justify any apprehension. If you're concerned about personal aggressions and robbery, keep in mind that these crimes are still very seldom throughout the Muslim world, for they are very severely punished. As for the importance which the word security takes within Fennec Tours, consult our chapter on Security.

SOUVENIRS: You will find something for every taste and budget : spices, pottery, leather work, jewels, carpets... but watch the rip off and be careful about the false " real ones ".

SPORT: opportunities for sportsmen are numerous: skiing, surfing, trekking, mountain-biking,... and especially golf, be it in Rabat, Agadir, Marrakech or Essaouira. To be combined with a trip by Fennec Tours...

STANDARD TIME: Greenwich-mean-time (GMT).

TELEPHONES: there is hardly one village without a Tele-Boutique (public phone); good communication and unquestionably the least expensive way to call abroad. Mobile phones are not of great use off the beaten tracks, where the network is frequently lacking. In case of emergency, we are equipped with a satellite telephone.

TIPS: Are not included in our prices. They are always welcome by locals, but be careful with the value the currency has over there. As a bench mark, think about how much a loaf of bread costs, and how much you would give in terms of bread in your country for the same service.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: European and Swiss citizens need a passport valid for six months beyond their departure from Morocco. No Visa is required for a stay of less than three months. For any other nationality, please contact the Moroccan Embassy of your country.

VACCINATION: there's no compulsory vaccination to enter Morocco, but we nevertheless recommend the usual basic ones: tetanus, diphtheria and poliomyelitis (renewable every ten years). Hepatitis A - one of the diseases most often contracted by travelers - is welcome all over the world. For more information, please contact a specialized doctor or the institute of tropical medicine of your area.

Do not hesitate moreover to consult the site www.safetravel.ch

WEATHER: check <http://weather.yahoo.com/regional/MOXX.html>

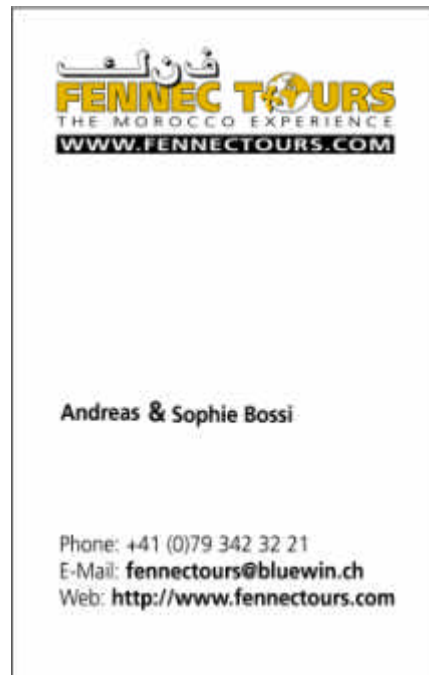
Contact us

If you like our approach,

If you've enjoyed our website,

If you've got any remarks or questions,

here's how to contact us :



It will be a pleasure to answer your queries and to discuss your plans and expectations.