Tour Code
MCMA

ADVENTURESABROAD

MOROCCO, WESTERN SAHARA & MAURITANIA

17 days

Created on: 12 Nov, 2026

Day 1 Arrival in Agadir, Morocco

Today we arrive in Agadir and transfer to our central Agadir hotel.

Situated in the west of the country, south of the Atlas Mountains and bordered by the waves of the Atlantic, Agadir is a modern city and a vital port and tourist hub.

Dinner if required.

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary has been designed to enable the traveller to experience fascinating places where the arrival of foreigners is an exceptional event. One needs to be both tolerant and flexible in order to fully enjoy the unique nature, landscape and the spontaneous hospitality of the local populations. Daily itineraries, visits, overnight points and our accommodation are all subject to change due to: improvements and adaptation from recent experiences, news from the field, and force majeure. The changes are decided by the organizer and team on the ground, and our exact route and places visited are also subject to change based upon local weather conditions.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Journey South - Tiznit & Sidi Ifni

Originally a Berber settlement, today Agadir is a cosmopolitan town with Phoenician origins. Thanks to its geographical position and mild climate, this region has seen the influence of Carthaginians, Portuguese, Dutch, Sephardi Jews and finally French. The town was destroyed by an earthquake in 1960 and has been almost entirely rebuilt.

After meeting our local guide and 4x4 drivers, we climb aboard our vehicles this morning and start our journey. Before departing from Agadir we will drive up to the Kasbah of Agadir Oufella. From the summit we are provided with great views over the Atlantic Ocean, the city of Agadir, its fishing port, and the surrounding coastline. We then start our journey south.

At the Berber town of Tiznit we will wander the old streets and make a stop for lunch. From here we leave the main highway an enjoy a scenic journey along the Atlantic coast, between reefs and creeks. The Legzira region is one of Morocco's most visually stunning coastal destinations. Nestled against the backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean, it boasts dramatic vistas that captivate nature lovers. Here one finds iconic cliffs looming over a scenic bay, and the contrast between the rugged cliffs and fine sands creates a unique ambiance.

Sidi Ifni is our final destination for the day. Between sea, mountains and the great desert of the south, Sidi Ifni is built on a rocky plateau overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. This Art Deco military town dates back to the 1400's and was a Spanish enclave until 1969. Built on a clifftop site, many of its 1930s buildings that can be seen today have been the victims of neglect. The still inhabited Hispano-Moresque citadel dominates the ocean from a rocky hill, and the large alleys and round plaza have a unique atmosphere.

Overnight in Sidi Ifni.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 3 Guelmim Market - Ksar Tafnidilt / Tan Tan

We leave the coast this morning and venture southeast to Guelmim - once a stopover on the route to Timbuktu and a gateway to the Sahara.

This ancient caravan terminal is one of Morocco's best-kept secrets, and is home to a small but important livestock market. The right day to be in Guelmim is the market day (Saturday). In the animal section of the souk you will uncover a unique scene of colours and sounds with camels, sheep and goats. Some nomadic herders come all the way from Mauritania. Adjacent to the livestock market is the covered produce market, which gives us an idea of the agricultural offerings of the region. In the medina we can discover an array of goods including ancient glass beads from the trans-Sahara trade.

We will enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before we leave the road for a track to Ksar (Fort) Tifnidilt in Tan-Tan, located at the top of a hill overlooking the western bank of Ouadi Draa riverbed. This southern bend of the Ouadi (river) Draa was the border between the French protectorate of Morocco and the Spanish Sahara colony, and the ghostly military fort of Tifnidilt still guards this ancient border. Tan-Tan, situated east of the Atlantic Ocean in the extreme northwestern reaches of the Sahara, is both a military post and a market centre for the Regeibat and Tekna nomads who live in the area.

We arrive at our hotel in the late afternoon. Our base for the next two nights will be the Ksar Tafnidilt Hotel, built using local materials in a traditional Saharan style of architecture.

Overnight in Tan Tan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 Draa Valley Estuary - Coastal Drive & Exploration

Today we explore the Draa Valley Estuary region - an area only visited by true intrepid travellers. Between the cliffs and the Atlantic Ocean one only finds tracks that seem to vanish into the sand.

Tucked away in the enchanting region of Ben Khlil, the Draa Valley Estuary offers a unique retreat into a serene landscape where the desert meets the ocean. Admire the contrasting beauty where the arid valley landscape converges with the Atlantic's azure waves. The area serves as a crucial habitat for migrating birds, and the estuary acts as a natural reservoir of nutrients, supporting an array of bird species throughout the year.

Along our adventure today we will discover tiny temporary settlements where locals can be found fishing directly from the cliff, or from caves facing the ocean. Old colonial military posts are part of the landscape, as are dunes and camels. If the tide permits, we will drive for miles along a wild beach strip between dunes and waves. We eventually leave the coastline finding our way along a riverbed (Ouadi) in a large canyon, the only possible path between desert, cliffs and the ocean.

In the evening we return to our comfortable base - Ksar Tafnidilt hotel.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5 Dunes & Lagoons - Laayoune, Western Sahara

As we depart from Tan-Tan this morning our route follows an exciting itinerary through a crag between the Sahara and the Atlantic. We make a short detour away from the coast as we pass nearby the Naila salt lagoon (Khnifiss National Park) - separated from the ocean by rows of dunes. This estuary on the sea is the largest salt lake in Morocco and seems to come out of nowhere, after miles and miles of desert as far as the eye can see.

Later in the afternoon we arrive at the tiny town of Tarfaya on the Juby Cape, less than 100 km away from the Canary Islands. The Canary Islands are so close that, on a clear night, the local residents claim to be able to see the lights across the water. This region is a semi-desert buffer zone between Morocco proper and the Western Sahara. Tarfaya is a former 'Aeropostale' base, and the nearby Cape Juby airfield was an important refueling and stopover station for Aéropostale - an air route connecting France to its French colonies in Africa. The last town in Morocco proper, Tarfaya is really just a sleepy little fishing village, but, there is a charmingly lazy air about the place, and here one finds a small interesting museum. The famous French writer and aviator Antoine de Saint-Exupéry lived in Tarfaya for two years before writing his masterpiece 'The Little Prince'.

From here we continue south and cross into the Western Sahara, a sparsely-populated area of mostly desert. A former Spanish colony, the Western Sahara was annexed by Morocco in 1975, and since then it has been the subject of a long-running territorial dispute between Morocco and its indigenous Sahrawi people. The Sahrawi people are of Arab and Berber ethnicity and speak a unique dialect of Arabic.

After a full day of travel we arrive in Laayoune - situated inland from the Atlantic Ocean. This was the capital of Western Sahara from 1940 to 1976 (when Western Sahara was a northwest African overseas province of Spain known as Spanish Sahara).

Overnight in Laayoune.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6 Western Sahara Expedition: 'The Forbidden Track'

This morning we will spend some time exploring Laayoune - the largest town in Western Sahara. Laayoune, built on the site of a desert oases, is the principal town in Western Sahara and is a useful base before onward travel into the desert. The administrative Western Sahara towns might lack history, but they can be colourful places. Women wear sari-type fabrics swept over their heads and bodies, and the array of colour choices is striking in the bleach-white midday sun.

Later this morning we will meet our local 'guide', a nomad from a Sahrawi tribe who will lead us through a three-day total off-road expedition crossing the Western Sahara from north to south. The former Spanish Sahara colony (now part of Morocco) has been the site of a long conflict between the Polisario Armed Front and the Moroccan army. Since the second half of the seventies, due to this long “sand war,” this region has been off-limits to travelers and until today no peace treaty has been signed. We will venture into this vast sandy region, and along our Saharan expedition, we will cross large dunes and discover wells frequented by camels belonging to the legendary Reguibat nomads.

Tonight we will camp under the stars. Camping in the immensity of the Sahara is an unforgettable experience, and our home for tonight and tomorrow night will be at a comfortable mobile camp. We will sleep in large comfortable tents, each fitted with a carpet and sleeping cot or inflatable mattress. You will have a private tent and will not be sharing with other travellers.

Dinner under the stars is part of the experience, so tables and chairs will be set up so we can eat outdoors. A toilet tent will also be available. In the unfortunate case of sand-storm, a 'dining tent' will be set up for a more comfortable dining experience.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 7 Western Sahara Expedition: 'The Forbidden Track'

Our adventure through the Western Sahara continues as we shift location today and move further to the south.

We explore rolling dunes and watch for camel trains as we explore a land that has almost been forgotten. It is here where traditions are strong and the scenery awe-inspiring. We spend our time exploring, stopping at wells, and meeting the local population. Morocco may be familiar to many, but the deep south is a different world that has changed little over the centuries.

In the late afternoon we will arrive at our new mobile desert camp location.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8 Journey from the Desert to the Ocean / Dakhla

Today we continue with our Trans-Saharan expedition, through a region of dunes, wells and nomadic camps. In the afternoon our route will lead us back to the ocean.

The charm and richness of this land are due precisely to its desolation. This is a wild and unspoilt landscape, set between desert, lagoons and ocean waves. We will witness breathtaking panoramas alongside monumental cliffs with surreal shapes. We eventually spot the whitewashed buildings of Dakhla, near the Oued Ed-Dahab Bay.

The city of Dakhla, on the edge of the Atlantic, is built on the 40 km long peninsula that forms the bay of Rio de Oro. This is a haven of peace between lagoon and ocean, and area that is popular for kite surfing and wildlife. This part of the Sahara was controlled by Spain for hundreds of years and has close ties to the Canary Islands. Dakhla was made the capital of the Spanish Sahara.

If you’ve made it down to Dakhla, the last town before Mauritania, you’ve travelled far into Western Sahara. With its location on the skinny peninsula, this modern town makes much of its double shoreline and bay.

Overnight in Dakhla.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9 Dakhla Peninsula Exploration - Rio de Oro

The astonishing beauty of the Dakhla peninsula landscape makes it a unique place. The Rio de Oro is a 25-mile-long sea loch between cliffs and dunes. The city is characterized by arcaded buildings with a colonial flavour, numerous mosques, and a cathedral. Characteristic is the harbour with its' impressive fishing fleet and poetic Spanish lighthouse.

This small town was founded by Spanish navigators as 'Villa Cisneros', and pastel colours paint the scenery: the blue ocean, yellow sand, emerald seaweed fields and dark rocks. Today we will explore the region. The majority of the residents of Dakhla rely on fishing to provide a living, and this morning we will visit the colourful fishing harbour. We will also make a stop at a nearby beach which is scattered with fishing vessels of every size and colour.

Today we will experience lunch at an oyster farm - a long-established oyster farm cooperative that has earned its reputation as one of the region's finest seafood destinations. We will also enjoy a stunning drive along the shore to discover where the waves lap the sand dunes.

Overnight in Dakhla.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10 Crossing into Mauritania - Nouadhibou

Our journey today will track along the cliffs between the desert and the ocean as we follow the only open road going south. A signboard indicates that we are 'on' the Tropic of Cancer. At the Guerguerat military post we will cross the southern border post of Morocco, and we will travel a few miles into no-man's land. The boundary here is a theoretical line in the desert that 'divides the sand from the sand', and on the other side is the military post of Mauritania.

Mauritania is a destination that once suffered from security issues and travel bans, but today it is on the return and offers a unique blend of wild Atlantic fisherman mixed with traditional desert nomads of the Sahara. This is an epic, raw and off the beaten track destination, home to a vast, jaw-dropping desert, occasionally dotted with ancient caravan cities which once were important trading routes. This huge and sparsely populated nation is just waiting to be explored. Mauritania bridges the Arab Maghreb with western sub-Saharan Africa, and the largely-desert country presents a cultural contrast, with an Arab-Berber population to the north and black Africans to the south, with many of its people still leading a nomadic way of life.

This evening we arrive in Nouadhibou where we overnight. This is one of the most important cities in Mauritania, and an important fishing port. Nouadhibou is also where the epic Mauritanian iron-ore train stops to offload its cargo onto boats.

Overnight in Nouadhibou.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11 Dunes and Mountains / Akjoujt

Nestled beside the Atlantic Ocean and consumed by the Sahara, Mauritania is the land of endless dunes and stunning coasts. Though rarely visited, this country is filled with breathtaking landscapes and authentic desert life. Today provides a wonderful introduction as a day of driving between road and trail will take us on a journey inland.

A full day of traveling will end at the mining town of Akjoujt where we overnight.

Overnight in Akjoujt.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12 Dunes and Mountains / Chinguetti

Today we experience an absolutely amazing journey that will take us through some high dunes. To cross long ranges of dunes our drivers will decrease the tire pressure of our 4x4's in preparation for our navigation through this untouched landscape. The Sahara can make a traveler truly feel like the first person on a planet.

We come to Erg Amatlich, one of the most beautiful dune basins in Mauritania. This vast dune barrier is trapped between the mountains of the Adrar plateau. Along our route we may discover traces of thousand-year-old human presence such as stone tools and shards of pottery. Nomadic settlements may be discovered along the way. These human encounters, after the deep silence of the desert, are intense. We will venture into the scenic landscape of the Adrar massif: valleys, high mountains, yellow sand dunes, peaks of dark and red rock. The term Adrar derives from a Berber language and means mountainous area. Because of its natural shelter in the desert, Adrar has historically been of special importance for the area of present-day Mauritania and for trans-Saharan trade. The people who populate the Adrar region were once truly nomadic

Today we will enjoy remote oasis and tiny adobe villages, and after a long and intense journey we will arrive at Chinguetti where we spend the next 3 nights. The ancient city of Chinguetti has welcomed travellers seeking shelter from the blistering Saharan heat for more than 1,200 years.

Overnight in Chinguetti

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 13 Chinguetti Oasis Exploration

Today will be spent discovering the unique atmosphere of the Chinguetti region - considered the true jewel of the Mauritanian oasis. Chinguetti was founded in the 8th Century as a caravan stop for pilgrims en route to Mecca. This red-stone desert oasis eventually blossomed into one of the biggest centres of science, religion and mathematics in West Africa. This was the center of several trans-Saharan trade routes linking the Mediterranean coast to 'Black Africa'. Much of this stone citadel dates to the 13th century, and we will soak in the atmosphere of the old stone town and admire the architecture.

Home to some of the world's most important medieval Quranic texts, this desert oasis was once an intellectual hub. We will visit one of the old libraries where we see some ancient manuscript collections from the Middle-ages, including Ould Habott, the largest in Mauritania. The oasis with their 'green miracles' of palm tree gardens are surrounded by large chains of yellow dunes. The western boundary of the town that is always waging a battle against the push of the sands of the Sahara. As the Sahara continues to expand southward at an alarmingly fast rate and encroach on Chinguetti's flat-roofed buildings, and with climate change causing flash flooding to rip through the town, this treasure of a location remains in jeopardy.

We will see the main mosque and the Chinguetti stone minaret - believed to be the second oldest still operating in the entire Muslim world. Chinguetti means a lot to Mauritania, and today its mosque, restored with financial assistance of UNESCO, is one of the symbols of the country.

We later return to our guest house in Chinguetti.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 14 The Remote Oasis of Ouadane & The Eye of the Sahara

Today we will drive to Ouadane, a small town in the desert situated on the southern edge of the Adrar Plateau just 93 km northeast of Chinguetti. Along with Chinguetti, this is one of the most culturally and historically important cities in the Adrar region.

Following a dry creek we will come across tiny oasis hidden along our route in the high dunes. Ouadane is the most remote oasis in Mauritania, and a true outpost in the emptiness of the desert. Ouadane was founded in the 12th Century, and while most has fallen to ruin, some of its stone houses, perched on a rocky hill, are still inhabited. This was once an important caravan trading point in the trans-Saharan trade and for caravans transporting slabs of salt from the mines at Idjil. Nowhere else in Mauritania do the ruins of an old city extend over such an extensive area as here. It is therefore not without reason that the ksar is a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Founded to serve the caravans crossing the Sahara, this trading and religious centre became a focal point of Islamic culture. Ouadane has managed to preserve an urban fabric that evolved between the 12th and 16th centuries. Typically, like in Chinguetti, houses with patios crowd along narrow streets around a mosque with a square minaret. They illustrate a traditional way of life centred on the nomadic culture of the people of the western Sahara. Ouadane is composed of three different zones: the archaeological area, the old city, and the more recent settlements to the east of the ancient core.

We then venture further into the Sahara to see a natural wonder that has intrigued scientists and adventurers for centuries. Known as the Richat Structure or, more commonly, the Eye of the Sahara, this massive geological formation consists of a series of rings on the Adrar Plateau. This is a prominent feature in northwestern Mauritania, measuring 31 miles (50 km) in diameter, making it highly visible even from high above Earth. In the local dialect of Arabic, the people refer to it as Guelb er Richât, meaning 'The eye of the Richat'.

We later return to our base in Chinguetti.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 15 Oasis Exploration - Desert Rock Art - Atar Market - Terjit Oasis

The landscape will continue to amaze us as we say farewell to Chinguetti. Leaving the main track, we will reach a region of spectacular mountains, gorges and canyons... infinite space dominated by the ochre of the earth and the blue sky. On the horizon one may spot the ruins of Fort Saganne, a modern structure built as the set for the film of the same name.

The Agrour Amogjar Mountains offer shelter from the heat and wind of the Sahara Desert. A series of caves lie as high as 150 meters up the face of a cliff on top of Aghour Aghajer, which is what the Agrour Amogjar mountaintop is called. These natural shelters are home to some rich rock paintings (handprints, naturalistic wildlife such as giraffe, lion and crocodile, as well as herds of cattle and human collective scenes).

In the town of Atar we will make a visit to the local market, and then our route brings us to Terjit, one of the most lush oases of Mauritania. Terjit is located on the western edge of the Adrar Plateau and is situated in a gorge protected from the sun on three sides by high rock walls. We will follow a tiny stream as we walk through a dense palm grove protected by a gorge, and we will soon discover a vast rock shelter where spring water flows. For hundreds of years it had been a place of rest and shelter for caravans and insanely brave lone wayfarers who decided to travel through the vast Sahara Desert.

We continue to Akjoujt for the overnight.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 16 From Desert To The Ocean - Nouakchott

From the desert to the ocean, today we travel to Nouakchott - the capital and largest city of Mauritania. Here we will discover the treasures of Mauritania's capital. An overview of Mauritanian history and culture is presented to us at the National Museum, which displays archaeology, artifacts, costumes and textiles from prehistory to the present days. Nearby is the Presidential Palace, the main post office and the modern university.

Lunch will be enjoyed at a local restaurant in the city that offers up some tasty local cuisine.

A highlight of our sightseeing here are the hundreds of brightly painted colorful pirogues that line the beach near the Nouakchott fishing harbor. This is truly an amazing sight. It is here that the sub-Saharan (mainly Senegalese) fishermen sell the abundant catches to the market. No matter what time of the day or what day of the week, Port de Pêche is always hectic. There are always fishing boats setting off and others returning, with the daily catch quickly unloaded and taken the market on donkey-drawn carts. A true attraction here are the throngs of pirogues lying idle on the sand banks, one beside the other, row after row.

Overnight in Nouakchott

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 17 Departure

Departure from Nouakchott.

SAFE TRAVELS!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast