Kingdom of Morocco

The Kingdom of Morocco continues to be one of our most popular Gaston College Study Tour destinations. In May, 2020, we will once again embark on a Moroccan adventure for a select group of 20 participants. This time we are adding some new locations on our Morocco itinerary.

This 10-day tour will include a visit to the northern Mediterranean Coast. We have arranged a quick trip from Casablanca to Tangier on the Moroccan Fast Train. Our luggage will be brought to us by our private motorcoach so that we do not have to bother with it on the train, and the trip that usually takes half a day is only a 2-hour journey by fast train. We will also go into the picturesque Rif Mountains in the north, where we will do sightseeing at Chefchouan, the jewel of the north. We will still travel to Fes, Merzouga and the Sahara Desert,

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You will also be able to explore the old Medina area and souk.

There will also be time for you to explore the city on your own and to shop for souvenirs.

Our hotel is located on the Corniche with various shopping opportunities close by.

Dinner this evening will be arranged at a restaurant close to the hotel.

You depart from Casablanca this morning, taking the new high-speed train which travels to Tangier in just two hours. Tangier has a history dating back to when it was important trading port on the Barbary Coast. Its more recent
dissolute past, when the likes of Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs might have frequented its drinking dens, have been brushed aside and it is now a modern artistic city, retaining a colorful and lively medina.

• There will be an afternoon to explore the city at leisure, and for those with an interest in the American writers who made Tangier their home for a while, you should make a pilgrimage to their hangout at the Café de Paris which has changed very little in the past fifty years.

DAY 4
Wednesday, May 20
Tangier to Fes via Chefchaouen
• This morning you depart by private bus, climbing up into the Rif Mountains to Chefchaouen.
• Along the way we plan to stop for a photograph of the southern coast of Spain across the Mediterranean.
• Founded in 1471 Chefchaouen was largely cut off from the outside world until the early 20th century. The houses of Chefchaouen are painted in extraordinary vibrant shades of blue and white, testament to the Jewish community from Spain that once thrived here.
• You can explore the Medina and main square with its lively cafes and restaurants. The town is famous for its silks and wools and can be a good place to buy a rug or kilim from the souk. Be prepared to bargain hard!
• In the afternoon you continue to Fes with time to explore on your own.
• In the evening, dinner will be in a restaurant overlooking the souk.

DAY 5
Thursday, May 21
Fes City Tour
• The day will be spent in Fes, a fascinating city which dates from medieval times. It is undoubtedly one of the jewels of the north of Morocco and an afternoon spent exploring its labyrinthine souks will reveal a city lost in time, while its palaces, city walls and Kasbah will enthrall you.

• Dinner this evening will be at your hotel.

DAY 6
Friday, May 22
Fes to Erfoud & Merzouga
• This morning you continue your journey, heading south through the Middle Atlas and cedar forests near Azrou to the grassy plains where nomads still graze their goats and camels.
• You pass by the dramatic Ziz Gorge before arriving at the town of Midelt which is a half-way lunch stop on the journey to the Sahara.
• From Midelt you continue the journey south heading towards the Sahara Desert and the town of Erfoud, which is the gateway to the Sahara Desert.
• Your hotel is in the town of Merzouga, situated by the sand dunes on the edge of the Sahara.
• We will be able to watch a spectacular sunrise (or sunset) from the Sahara dunes nearby the hotel.

DAY 7
Saturday, May 23
Merzouga-Todra-Boumalen-Dades
• Departing from Erfoud you now travel west to Tinghir where you (continued on page 4)
visit the spectacular Todra Gorge where the Dades River has carved out a 25 mile long canyon with sheer walls rising several hundred feet.

• You have time here to explore the canyon and have lunch.
• After lunch you continue to the town of Boumalen-Dades which is inhabited by Berber people and where you spend the night.

DAY 9
Monday, May 25
Marrakech to Casablanca
• This morning you have a guided tour of the Old Medina quarter of the city starting with the ancient Koutoubia Mosque which dates from the 12th century. While it’s not possible for non-Muslims to go inside the mosque, you can explore the surrounding gardens.
• You then walk over to the main square of Marrakech, the Djemma al Fnaa. This huge square (often just called the main square) is a vibrant mix of food stalls, musicians, jugglers, snake charmers and other performers, all vying for your attention.
• Beyond the Djemma you can find the Souk, a cavernous and rambling maze of narrow alleyways with stalls selling every manner of products imaginable. You need your bargaining skills to be at their sharpest here.
• An optional visit could include the famous Majorelle Gardens which were once owned by Yves St. Laurent.
• In the afternoon you travel by road back to Casablanca.
• Your farewell dinner this evening will be arranged at Rick’s Café which recreates the original movie set.

DAY 10
Tuesday, May 26
Depart Casablanca-Arrive in Charlotte
• Your flight departs from Casablanca this morning and arrives into Charlotte in the evening of the same day.
What IS Included in the Tour Package

- Round trip flights from Charlotte Airport to Casablanca
- Accommodation at the 4- and 5-star hotels throughout your stay in Morocco in twin or double rooms
- Breakfasts and dinners at your hotel (except for three dinners at local restaurants)
- Welcome dinner at a city restaurant in Casablanca
- One dinner at a restaurant in Fes
- Farewell dinner at Ricks Cafe in Casablanca
- Transportation by private coach for airport transfers, sightseeing and all touring
- Land Rover (or similar) 4x4 vehicles for Merzouga and the desert dunes drive
- Bottled mineral water provided on the coach throughout the tour
- Professional tour guide throughout
- Specialized local guides as required
- All admission fees and excursions as mentioned on your itinerary
- 100% Financial Protection through our Travel Trust Association License

What is NOT included in the Tour Package

- Valid passport (Visas are not currently required for US citizens)
- Travel Insurance
- Lunches and drinks with meals
- Visa fees (not currently required)
- Tips for driver and guide
- Additional single-room supplements not included
- Cost of Gaston College registration

All-Inclusive Tour Price

Land and air package: $3,485 per person, double-occupancy hotel with transportation and fees (based on 20 paying tour members).
Reservation Form

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PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, DETACH AND SEND TO GASTON COLLEGE STUDY TOURS AT THE ADDRESS BELOW.

Send a $500 (per person) deposit by check or credit card (credit card payments can be made at 704.922.6435). Deposits must be received on or before February 3, 2020 to Bob Blanton at the address below.

Full name (as it appears on your passport):

________________________________________________________________________

Current address: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Telephone number: __________________________________________________________

Email: _______________________________________________________________________

Valid passport number (for airlines): ________________________________

Expiration date: _____________________________________________________________

Note: Many foreign countries now require that your passport be valid at least 6 months after you end your visit. Make sure yours will meet this requirement.

I wish to room with: _________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

I require a private room at additional cost: ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Special dietary/health needs (for hotels/airlines): ______________________________

________________________________________________________________________

☐ I am covered by my own health/hospitalization insurance policy while overseas. You must provide proof of coverage.

☐ I plan to purchase additional health/hospitalization insurance (on my own). Trip Mate is our preferred company.

Bob Blanton, Study Tours Director
Box 76, Gaston College
201 Highway 321 South
Dallas, NC 28034-1499

Reservations

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All prices based upon a minimum of 20 paying participants (prices are valid at the time of this printing, but are subject to change). Tours are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Checks should be made payable to Gaston College Study Tours, and payment should be sent directly to Bob Blanton, Gaston College Study Tours, Box 76, Gaston College, 201 Highway 321 South, Dallas, NC 28034.

NOTE: Even those who pay by credit card are required to return this reservation form.

Final Payment Deadline
February 17, 2020

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OUR GUIDE

THE BEST NATIONAL GUIDE IN MOROCCO!