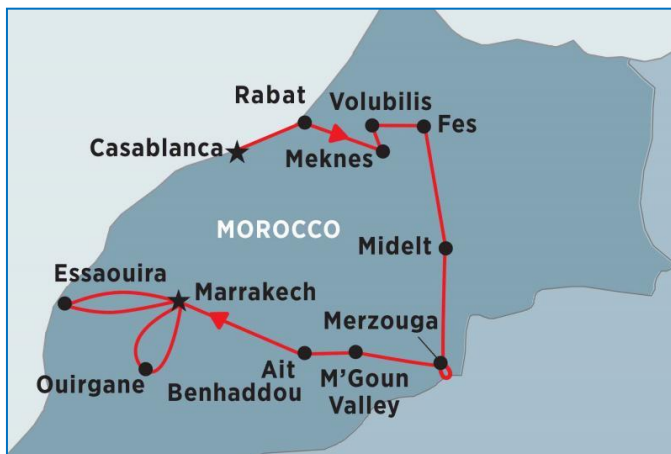


## Peregrine 'Highlights of Morocco' tour

Bronlyn Schoer

### Brief outline of the tour

This is a 16 day small group (max. 12) minibus tour through Morocco incorporating an ancient Roman site, medieval bazaars, mountain villages and the dunes of the Sahara Desert, with several opportunities to enjoy the hospitality of local Berber people in their homes. All hotels and traditional riads are of 4-star quality. A moderate level of fitness is required to enable you to be on your feet at least 4-6 hours on some days. The cost (per person twin share) for the 16 days is from \$2,605(AUD).



### Major highlights of the tour

This comprehensive tour gives the traveller a unique oversight of Morocco's changing landscapes from the coast, across the Atlas Mountains and into the Sahara Desert. With local guides you explore medinas, kasbahs and the impressive Roman ruins of Volubilis whilst enjoying traditional Berber hospitality including the consumption of endless cups of mint tea and the sampling of delicious local foods.

"Balak! Balak!" is the cry you hear from behind as you negotiate your way through the narrow laneways of the old medina or old city of **Marrakesh**. Completely surrounded by about 17km of high walls and built in the 16th Century, the medina is a maze of hundreds of narrow laneways where the local people live, work and worship.

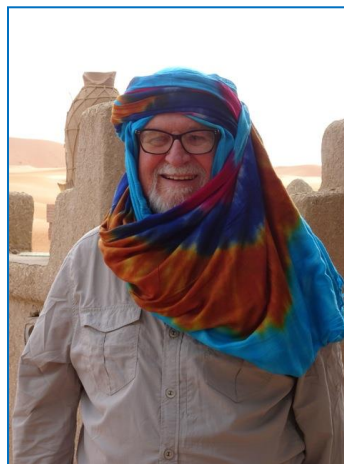
The warning "Get out of the way, I'm coming through!" must be taken seriously, so you step into a narrow doorway or flatten yourself against a wall and wait for the donkey cart, hand pulled cart or several motor bikes to push past as they move goods or people around the old city. They are so used to a huge crush of people in the alleyways that they never slow down – unless they have actually hit a person!



The medina is divided into a number of special markets or 'souks', with each one selling some particular product, e.g. fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh chickens (killed and cleaned in front of you), all sorts of olives and preserved fruit, fresh dates, beautiful leather work, leather slippers and shoes, kaftans and shirts, fabulous jewelry and silverware, all sorts of decorated metal items for the home and, of course, thousands of ceramic tagine dishes which are both plain and richly decorated. The sights, sounds and smells of the souks can be very challenging for a person used to shopping in the calm atmosphere of a Westfield shopping mall.

The workshops of the craftsmen are tiny, dark and very cramped. Yet they work there 7 days a week, 10 hours per day making shoes, metal products, sewing clothes, dying wool and leather etc – life is very hard for them. Close by, the traders have tiny shops crammed full of goods to sell to customers. As you walk by, they have many tricks to encourage you to enter their shop, and once there it's very difficult not to be persuaded to buy something! So, before I knew it, I had purchased an embroidered rug, a leather bag and some lovely jewelry.

Oh, the joys of travel in this wonderful country!



### Other comments

We stayed three extra days in Marrakesh to participate in a cooking class which included shopping for food in the medina, preparation of a delicious chicken tagine with side dishes and (of course) sharing our lunch with fellow travellers. We had also built up our confidence to independently explore the complex maze of narrow laneways, tiny artisanal workshops and retail outlets within the medina – and of course you need to get lost to ultimately enjoy the fun of finding your destination!

Throughout our 19 days in Morocco we felt quite secure, rarely hassled in the souks and found the local people to be warm and welcoming.

For further information a useful link is:

<https://www.peregrineadventures.com/en-au/morocco/highlights-morocco-117425>

### Contributor details

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Bronlyn was the Principal of Lucas Heights Community School from 1992-2006. Since retiring from the Department she has consulted in the area of school leadership and combined a deep interest in voluntary roles supporting young women and students from a refugee background. Bronlyn is a life member of the NSWSPC and has enjoyed many travel adventures since retirement with her husband Gary, both in Australia and overseas.