

Trip Report – Morocco 2023



I jumped on a last-minute opportunity to go with EYHO tours to Morocco on the first trip since the lockdowns. It was a marvelous journey with a group of seven intrepid and convivial travelers. I can tell everyone that it was a superbly organized tour though the country with an excellent guide and lots of stops in weaving cooperatives and other local artisan hubs, not to mention an unforgettable camel trek into the Sahara for a night. And we had the flexibility for unplanned diversions and excursions. Thank you, Shila! – *Jessica Bradley, Montreal*

When I travel, I want each “new” country to be as different as possible from home and the last country I visited. I love the way travel expands your mind and your heart and introduces you to entirely different ways of thinking, living and being...

Morocco was a spectacular trip for me in every way possible! The physical landscape was utterly astonishing and beautiful - especially our drives through the High Atlas Mountains; the fact that we went through 5 completely different landscapes in a single day was really remarkable. Riding a camel into our tented camp in the Sahara Desert in the afternoon heat and staying overnight was such a highlight - to see that incredible landscape, to have dinner outside on the sand with a table illuminated by a string of white lights and then the moon rising, deepening the shadows on the dunes, as we sat by the light of the fire and listened to the drumming. The quick morning cup of Espresso out of the trunk of a car at the edge of the camp is a story I will tell many times!

The other remarkable thing for me was the incredible warmth and kindness of all the Moroccan people we met - their hospitality was immediate and overwhelming in its generosity.

Our guide was incredible and a huge force on this trip. He is a strong natural leader. He takes really good care of people. With his blazing intelligence, deep knowledge of his country and people, his ready willingness to share his personal life and culture gave the trip so much content and depth. He was able to talk about history, agriculture, politics, hydroelectric projects, climate change and green energy, women’s rights and sharia law. We were not able to stump him once! His wry sense of humour, his

gentle encouragements, attentiveness, and his many quiet kindnesses made each one of us feel recognized and safe and secure on this trip. Whether it was helping an older group member down a flight of steps, locating ATMs for dirham depleted wallets, his warm greetings in the morning, finding medics when covid descended on the group, locating doctors in 2 cities to administer rabies shots - even taking all of our laundry to get done in Fez was so kind. Nothing seemed to be a bother or too much trouble – our guide went above and beyond countless times for his guests!

And you, dear, beautiful Shila. Thank you for all the planning, hard work, endless phone calls, troubleshooting behind the scenes to make our trip so unforgettable and memorable. Our accommodations, meals and excursions were of the highest order of comfort and appointment. Each property was truly unique. The restaurant choices were superb - we ate so well!

I will remember our afternoons of cherry button making, mint tea making, wool washing in the river, and embroidery! I will also tell stories about us walking through the gorge, having tea in a cave, and meeting a nomadic family - what a privilege. And thank you for introducing me to the huge pleasure of a hammam and massage! I will be going to the one downtown, I am sure!

I am filled with wonder and gratitude. I would like to go back to Morocco and do all the things we did again. I would be much more confident about exploring the winding lanes of the medinas and city streets on my own now. I can see how more would certainly be revealed each time one visits. Morocco has mystery and magic! – *Suzanne Cross, Morocco, 2023*

Morocco is rich in history, landscapes, urban centers, casbahs, riads, medinas, great food, music, magical sunsets, arts, and crafts. It's the perfect combination of "exotic" and comfortable. EYHO's tour of Morocco is one of the best travel experiences I have ever had. That is due in large part to the knowledge, organizational skills, kindness, generosity, and just plain good sense of our trip leader, Shila, and our guide, Hisham. The congeniality of the group and the wonders that are Morocco also helped.

EYHO provides the Grand Tour of Morocco including: a sunset in Tangiers where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic; a sunset at a desert encampment overlooking high dunes; and a sunset, seafood dinner overlooking the Atlantic. Of course there are miles to traverse between some of these locations. But Shila and Hisham made each day interesting. There were a few longish bus rides, but the landscapes were incredible and there were stops (not just pit stops) for hikes, workshops, fossil hunting, ceramics, shopping, meeting a nomadic family., etc.

I started looking forward to changing hotels when I began wondering what grand little gem Shila had in store for us that night. We never stayed in a hotel that could be anywhere. They all had Moroccan charm: from grand casbahs to small cottages in a lush garden. In the cities, where we enjoyed multiple nights, there were the Grand Riads. Some cultures wear their grandeur on the outside. As Shila always says, Morocco's riches are on the insides.

You can't talk about Morocco without talking about the Medinas. As one who loves markets, this was

one of the greatest draws of Morocco for me. It did not disappoint: the hills and doorways in the blue city of Chefchaouen; the narrow alleys of Fez; the more open passageways and shops of Marrakech; and the easy, breezy cobblestone lanes of old Essaouira. They are all feasts for the senses in different ways. I did some damage to my budget in Marrakech and Essaouira, but unlike some other tours, the time devoted to shopping was adequate but not Too Much!

EYHO's Morocco Arts and Crafts Tour, was my first trip with EYHO. God willing, it won't be my last.

It was an incredible treat travelling with you. Thank you for fulfilling my dreams of Morocco!!!! – *Janice Cogger, Cleveland, OH*

This was such a memorable trip for the sights and culture of Morocco! Shila and H., thank you both so very much for all your tireless, thoughtful, and warm hosting, and all your hard work in making us looked after and informed about what we were seeing. – *Val M. Toronto*

It was an honour to explore the Wonderland that is Morocco under the brilliant and compassionate leadership of Shila and the deeply illuminating and good humoured guidance of H.—*Judith T. Toronto*

It will take a while to truly absorb all I experienced. The amazing landscape, warm inviting people, the creative experiences, and a really special travel group.

Yes, we packed a lot but so much to share at home. Thank you Shila and H! – *Kathleen N., NY*