



ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION *of* SMITH COLLEGE

Inside Morocco: A Hands-On Cultural Exploration

April 12-22, 2008

DETAILED ITINERARY
(subject to amendment)

U.S./CASABLANCA

Saturday, April 12

Depart the U.S. on the recommended overnight group flight, or independently, to Casablanca. OVERNIGHT FLIGHT (Meals aloft)

CASABLANCA/RABAT

Sunday, April 13

After an early-morning arrival in the storied city of Casablanca, visit the monumental Mosque of King Hassan II. This modern mosque—the second largest in the world accommodating more than 100,000 worshipers—extends out over the Atlantic Ocean and features a glass floor. Continue by coach to the ancient royal city of Rabat, capital of Morocco, and check into the hotel. After lunch, the afternoon is at leisure. Gather tonight for a festive welcome reception. HOTEL TOUR HASSAN (L,R)

RABAT

Monday, April 14

Enjoy a morning lecture program with an introduction to Morocco from Smith College faculty leader Jonathan Gosnell, and a guest presentation titled “Islam in Morocco’s Daily Life” at Rabat’s renowned Center for Cross Cultural Learning. After lunch, explore King Hassan II’s Royal Palace and the grand Mausoleum of King Mohammed V, magnificently decorated with intricate stucco carvings and mosaic work. Nearby stands the unfinished 12th-century Tower of Hassan surrounded by the remains of 350 stone columns. Stroll through the lovely 12th-century Andalusian gardens of the Kasbah of the

Oudaïas. Dine this evening at a local restaurant in the medina, joined by local Smith College alumnae, schedules permitting. HOTEL TOUR HASSAN (B,L,D)

RABAT/VOLUBILIS/MEKNES/FEZ

Tuesday, April 15

This morning travel to Volubilis, a distant outpost of the Roman Empire dating from the 3rd-century BC, and enjoy a tour of the site's beautiful and haunting ruins. Marvel at the well-preserved Triumphal Arch and the exquisite mosaics preserved *in situ* in many of the original Roman homes. After lunch, continue to the walled city of Meknes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and imperial capital of the infamous Alouite sultan, Moulay Ismail. Marking the entrance to the old part of the city is the famous 17th-century gateway—known as Bab el Mansour—opening up to the vast array of gardens, ramparts, and Moulay Ismail Granary and Stables. Explore the sights on a walking tour before departing. Arrive early this evening in the minaret-studded city of Fez, made up of many layers, including Fez el Bali, founded in AD 789; Fez Jdid, or New Fez, begun in the 13th century; and the modern New Town, built by the French. Check in to our lovely riad, a deluxe traditional guesthouse built around a courtyard within Fez's mythical walled medina. RIAD FEZ (B,L,D)

FEZ

Wednesday, April 16

The majestic city of Fez remains Morocco's heart and soul, encapsulating the mystery and intrigue of the country within the labyrinth of the medina. This morning attend a guest lecture titled "Women and the Medina" and enjoy an Arabic vocabulary lesson. This afternoon, in small guided groups, take a walking tour of Old Fez and the medina. Wander through the colorful tanners' quarter, pass the fragrant spice stalls, and marvel at the bustling Old Town Bazaars. Visit the Karaouiyine Mosque—founded in the 9th century by a woman—and the beautifully preserved and extravagant Bou Inaniya Medersa, featuring zellij tilework, built in 1355. Conclude the day with an exclusive look at traditional medina homes undergoing extensive preservation efforts. RIAD FEZ (B,L)

FEZ

Thursday, April 17

Begin the day with guest lectures on Moroccan music and storytelling. An integral part of Moroccan popular culture, storytelling and the oral tradition thrives in the form of lively street entertainment. Colorful characters, romantic locales, and elaborately-woven plotlines combine to shape an intricate art form revered for centuries. After lunch, embark upon a driving tour of New Fez, and visit the Dar Batha Museum, a converted 19th-century sultan's palace filled with fascinating weaponry, woodwork, costumes, and Fez's celebrated blue pottery. Continue to a local pottery workshop to learn about the production of traditional Moroccan tiles. The evening is at leisure, with dinner on your own. RIAD FEZ (B,L)

FEZ

Friday, April 18

Enjoy a full day at leisure in Fez, with time for independent pursuits and our expert guide available at a hospitality desk throughout the day for advice and recommendations. This evening enjoy a guest lecture on Berbers in Moroccan society, followed by dinner accompanied by traditional music and folkloric entertainment. RIAD FEZ (B,D)

FEZ/AZROU / BENI MELLAL / MARRAKECH

Saturday, April 19

This morning, depart Fez and embark upon a stunning drive along the foothills of the snow-capped Atlas mountains. Stop in the Berber village of Azrou. The Berbers, Morocco's original inhabitants for over 3,000 years, have preserved their deep-rooted culture, dialects, and rich traditions despite centuries of Roman, Spanish, and Arab conquest. Stroll through the local *souk* and watch women weaving vivid textiles, listen to the poetic music of wandering minstrels, and take in the spectacular cedar forest scenery. Continue on to Beni Mellal, stopping for lunch at a local restaurant before arriving in Marrakech. This evening enjoy a special dinner at the palatial Yacout Restaurant, one of Morocco's finest. HOTEL SOFITEL (B,L,D)

MARRAKECH

Sunday, April 20

Known as “the Pearl of the South,” Marrakech has a rich 1,000-year history and bohemian street culture that is complemented by breathtaking scenery beneath the snow-capped High Atlas mountain range. This morning explore several of Marrakech's cultural wonders, including the Saadian Tombs, the Dar Si Said Museum of Moroccan Arts and the Bahia Palace, a 19th-century residence of the chief vizier to Sultan Moulay el Hassan. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure, with lunch on your own. In the early evening, experience Jemaa-el-Fna Square—one of Morocco's most famous sites—and browse within the ancient medina, an enduring epicenter that hums with music, performers, color, and fragrance. As the evening lights come on, snake charmers, acrobats, magicians and conjurers take center stage. Conclude the evening with a farewell reception at a local riad and dinner at a restaurant adjoining Jemaa-el-Fna Square. HOTEL SOFITEL (B,R,D)

MARRAKECH

Monday, April 21

This morning enjoy a tour of the lush French Majorelle Gardens, with their cobalt blue architecture and exotic North African birds. During a local guest presentation, learn more about the origins of traditional Moroccan foods, including the medicinal virtues of many spices and herbs, the key to the unique sweet-and-sour flavor of many recipes, and the significance of the famed mint tea. Following the discussion, experience a hands-on cooking lesson at the luxurious Maison al Arabe hotel, and dine on a self-prepared lunch of traditional Moroccan cuisine. Enjoy this afternoon and evening at leisure, soaking in the colors, smells, and sounds of this magical and mysterious city. HOTEL SOFITEL (B,L)

MARRAKECH / U.S.

Tuesday, April 22

Transfer to the airport for an early morning flight to Casablanca and connect to

international flights back to the U.S. (B)