MOROCCO - A SPRING ADVENTURE - £890

26th March 2020 - 2nd April 2020 (8 days)

This fully supported Spring tour starts in the vibrant walled town of Taroudant, with its bustling souks and vibrant atmosphere. We then travel through the stunning Anti-Atlas Mountains with their fabulous moonscape views. The barren mountain roads snake up to hidden passes and cut through ancient deep gorges. The rural village people are welcoming and the food is wonderful. We expect this to be a tour full of exceptional experiences and one that will last long in your memory.

HOLIDAY TYPE: Guided
TOUR MANAGER: David Goodworth
GRADE: Challenging
BOOKING STATUS: Places Available
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel & Guesthouse
BOARD BASIS: Half Board
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Land Only
ROAD / OFF ROAD: Road
HOLIDAY STYLE: Moving-on
VEHICLE SUPPORT: Full Vehicle Support
HOLIDAY REF NO: 03475

Holiday Itinerary

Thursday 26th March
We meet at Agadir airport for a minibus transfer to our hotel in Taroudant. Time for lunch and to unpack your bike before exploring the local area for a couple of hours before dinner. Stay 1 night. Meals: L D

Friday 27th March
After breakfast we ride out of Taroudant and head towards Igherm, a frontier type town in the foothills of the Anti-Atlas. The ride goes progressively up and over several passes and we will have a picnic lunch along the way before arriving in the town in the late afternoon. We will stay in the only hotel in town which is basic but functional and they served great tagine last time we were there. 85km (1,950m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B L D

Saturday 28th March
After a traditional breakfast we head off towards Tafraoute. The views get more and more stunning as we climb over high passes and barren Anti-Atlas scenery. Lunch at the top is followed by a long decent, following the edge of the mountains. We stay in the oasis area of the Ameln Valley at a beautiful hotel looking out onto the Lions Head rock. The accommodation and food are simply wonderful here. 95km (1,900m total ascent). Stay 2 nights. Meals: B L D

Sunday 29th March
We spend the day exploring the harsh rocky desert area around Tafraoute. Led by our local guide we will learn about the stunning rock formations and the wildlife that lives there, and have a wilderness picnic lunch. In the evening we cycle to a small restaurant in Tafraoute where you can choose from an extensive menu of local tagines and Moroccan food. 50-70km. Meals: B L D
Monday 30th March
A short and stunning ride, this starts with the long climb back up the climb that we descended two days ago. Once at the top the road gently takes us downhill through the central valley of the Anti-Atlas to the fabulous Tizourgane Kasbah. You will say "wow" when you see where we are going to stay tonight. 46km (1,095m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B L D

Tuesday 31st March
Leaving Tizourgane we follow twisting mountain roads that gradually descend to the flat plains that lead us back to vibrant Taroudant. Wonderful food and accommodation awaits us. 115km approx (1,156m total ascent). Stay 2 nights. Meals: B L D

Wednesday 1st April
A leisurely day to discover the delights of Taroudant, which has the largest unbroken medieval town wall in Morocco, two grand souks, fruit markets, the old tannery and many interconnected alleyways. Sit in the square and eat lunch, cycle around the walls and barter for another pair of sandals. A wonderful way to end out tour. Meals: B D

Thursday 2nd April
Spend the morning bike packing and having a long Moroccan breakfast before a mid-morning minibus transfer to Agadir airport where the tour ends.
Meals: B

Meals: B = Breakfast  L = Lunch  D = Dinner

Holiday Summary

Accommodation & Meals
Accommodation will generally be in 3-star hotels sharing double or twin rooms, but in some smaller hotels three or four to a room might be necessary. Single occupancy will be available for a supplement but anyone requesting such should indicate if they will accept occasional sharing. All breakfasts and dinners are included, taken at the hotel or in a nearby restaurant, along with lunches on cycling days.

Vehicle Support
A minibus driven by our excellent and highly knowledgeable local guide will transfer luggage between hotels and support the group where needed.

Passports, Visa & Health
EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.
There are no compulsory health-related requirements for EU residents although it is strongly recommended that you are vaccinated against hepatitis A, typhoid, and polio and that your tetanus protection has not expired. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain these vaccinations and the latest advice for travellers.
Although this is Morocco and outside of the EU, it is recommended that you bring your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) with you.

Travel Insurance
Our Booking Conditions stipulate that, for holidays outside the UK, travel Insurance is mandatory. Details of the level of cover needed and other conditions you should check are stated in the Booking Conditions. CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd cannot accept responsibility for any costs that may be incurred due to insufficient insurance cover.

Price
The price of £890 is based on a minimum number of 10 people taking part in the holiday; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3. If there are insufficient bookings by 16th January 2020, we will contact you and return all monies paid, although in certain circumstances the holiday may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price Includes
- Return transfer from Agadir airport to hotel in Taroudant
- 7 nights hotel, sharing room
- 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 7 dinners
- Local guide and minibus to transport luggage and provide support where needed
- Lunch, rest stop snacks and water on cycling days
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price Does Not Include
- Travel to and from Agadir airport
- Drinks with dinner
- Other refreshments during the day
- Entry fees at any attractions visited
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Single occupancy supplement (£150, subject to availability)

Payment Schedule
A deposit of £90 per person is payable upon booking, with the final balance of £800 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 16th January
Cancellations
Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Written notice received</th>
<th>Cancellation charge:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Before 16th January 2020</td>
<td>Deposit (£90)</td>
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<tr>
<td>From 16th January 2020 through to departure</td>
<td>100% (£890) plus any supplement</td>
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Additional Information

Area Covered By The Holiday
Morocco’s position at the top edge of Africa, with trading routes crossing it in all directions, has made it a vibrant and colourful place with a mixture of Western and African influences creating a unique culture. It is very moderate politically and the people are warm and welcoming. The Anti-Atlas mountains are the major focus of the tour. They differ from European mountain ranges such as the Alps and Pyrenees with long distances between towns. The gradients are usually constant with the roads winding around the contours at 4-7%. The barren emptiness of the Atlas mountain ranges are a stark contrast to the normality of the towns and markets. It is an intoxicating country that needs to be visited more than once.

Rides & Rest Days
The rides will be supported by a Tour Manager, riding at a pace of approximately 20km/h on the flat, a lot slower on the hills. The daily distances and total ascents are indicated in the itinerary, but the potentially high temperatures make some sections of this tour challenging. The majority of the climbs are long but gradual, but there are some steep sections and you should have low enough gears to manage. Not all days are hilly and there are a surprising number of flat kilometres which make for easier cycling. The longer days also feature lengthy downhill sections. There are some shorter days to allow for sightseeing and a rest day at the end to explore Taroudant. There is always the opportunity to use the minibus should you feel the need for a rest or just want to bypass a section of hills.

Most of the roads used are tarmac and in good condition but sections can be badly damaged and potholed. Many of the main roads have a narrow lane of tarmac, with broken edges and wide run-off strips of gravel and sand. Riders must have a good level of fitness which will allow you, and the group as a whole, to enjoy the riding. However, due to the minibus support, this tour should be accessible to anyone who tours regularly.

Accommodation & Meals
We are restricted in accommodation choice and in a couple of locations we will have to stay in the only hotels available. These will be basic but functional. Many of the hotels have pools and stunning indoor garden areas.

If you know that you are a noisy or restless sleeper we ask you to request a single occupancy room and pay the supplement, and this should be stated on the Booking Form. In the event of an odd number of individual participants expecting to share with another of their sex, one person might sometimes be accommodated in a single occupancy room at no extra charge.

One of the key areas where Morocco is different to any other country is the food with tagine being the national dish. Moroccan food is generally very good with lots of salad and bread added to each meal. The Moroccan people will often bend over backwards to see that their guests eat well. Vegetarians and vegans will be well catered for but Morocco isn’t a country than can cater for wheat and dairy intolerances.

In the larger hotels most of the water is drinkable from the tap, but we recommend that you buy water if you have any doubt. On cycling days sufficient drinkable water will be carried in the minibus and our guide will supply a mid-day picnic lunch and rest stop snacks.

Travel
There is no travel included in this tour, thus it is very important that you note that neither your Tour Manager nor CTC Holidays & Tours are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements to meet the tour, you should ensure that you have read and understood our booking conditions. Should this tour not attract sufficient bookings to reach the minimum operating size, we may cancel the tour at any time up to 10 weeks before departure. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation, or wait until you have been told the tour will go ahead, as in the event of the tour being cancelled, we will not be responsible for any losses incurred.

The times of the minibus transfers from and to Agadir airport and the hotel have still to be agreed but your flights will need to be arranged accordingly, or you will need to make your own transfer arrangements.

Group Information
The maximum number of participants will be 14 excluding the Tour Managers.

Weather & Clothing
Temperatures in Morocco are very variable with March-April temperatures likely to be 15C-25C but the evenings can be cool, remember we are in the mountains. Bring clothing suitable for both hot and cold weather, and waterproofs may be necessary in the mountains. It is important to fit in with cultural sensitivities so please try and keep lycra to a minimum. Out of politeness we would ask that both men and women carry shorts and maybe a long sleeved shirt to quickly pull on over the top of lycra cycling shorts or close fitting tops when entering villages, cafes or shops. There is no need for women to wear any form of head scarf.

Cycles & Equipment
A strong road bike, touring cycle or hybrid is suitable as the roads are generally in good condition but puncture proof tyres with tread are recommended. You should ensure your bike is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. A low bottom gear (e.g. small chaining the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended for the long climbs. If you are unsure about gears, please talk to the Tour Manager.

Unless you ride a 26” mountain bike that is 20 years old, bike parts, cables and spare tyres are very very hard to find. 700C tyres are almost impossible
to find outside of major cities like Agadir, so please bring a spare. Our minibus will never be too far away so there is always the option to keep spares there for emergencies.
As it is early in the year lights are recommended but might not prove essential. Each participant is expected to carry what they need during the day, but otherwise your luggage will be transferred for you to the next hotel.

Maps & Guides
You should carry a map in case you become separated from the group. Three that cover our area with different levels of detail and often different spellings of places are:
The Oxford Alpine Club Anti-Atlas map
National Geographic Morocco Adventure map
Marco Polo Morocco
Route instructions and GPX tracks will be sent out three weeks before the tour starts.

Travel Insurance & Advice
In addition to travel insurance, it is advised that EU nationals should carry a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This enables you to take advantage of emergency medical services free or at a discount under a reciprocal provision that exists between EU member states. Your travel insurer may refuse to meet the extra costs of medical treatment if you do not carry this Card. In spite of Morocco being outside the EU this is generally recommended.
Before booking you should check the Foreign Office ‘Travel Advice by Country’ at www.fco.gov.uk or on 0845 850 2829.

Other Information
All towns have Pharmacies but even simple drugs like Paracetamol are expensive so please bring the medication you require from the UK.
Most of the locals speak Arabic, Berber or French but many are now speaking English and sign language is always enjoyed by them if you are stuck for directions.

Tour Manager's Contact Details
If you require any assistance, or have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the Tour Manager using the information provided below.

David Goodworth
Email: david@avanticycling.co.uk