

ITINERARY
MOROCCO
September 3-17, 2024



Of the 13 species of larks we will seek, Dupont's Lark is likely the most difficult to see, due to its cryptic nature, however we've managed some wonderful views on our tour. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Morocco tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

For those with a yen for something different, Morocco can't be beat. Although it lies just a short step across the Strait of Gibraltar from mainland Europe, the contrast with that continent is extraordinary. From the scenic Atlantic coast via the forested Atlas Mountains to the very edge of the great Sahara desert, Morocco is magnificent at any season. Blessed with the richest birdlife in northwest Africa, the country deservedly ranks as one of the Western Palearctic's truly great birding destinations. Specialties of the region include Eleonora's Falcon, Barbary Partridge, Double-spurred Francolin, Levaillant's Woodpecker, Moussier's Redstart, African Desert and Tristram's warblers, African Blue Tit, Desert Sparrow, and the critically endangered Waldrapp (Northern Bald Ibis). For those with an interest in regional races and forms, this is an exciting area, too. In fact, a number of birds here may yet be elevated to full species—among them the distinctive forms of Long-legged Buzzard, Yellow and White wagtails, and Chaffinch.



Upon departing Casablanca, our tour begins near the capital of Rabat, where the coastal plain harbors Spotless Starling, Common Bulbul, European Stonechat, and Southern Gray Shrike (the dark *algeriensis* form) in open country. A chain of wetlands in the area form important stop-off points for many migratory shorebirds; these may be seen here alongside Marbled Teal, Western Swamphen, Red-knobbed Coot, and Yellow-legged and the localized Audouin's gulls. As we move inland, up into the Atlas Mountains, the marvelous scenery provides a splendid backdrop for a different set of birds, including distinctive subspecies of a number of typical Palearctic birds.

Dropping down to the east of the Atlas chain, we find ourselves on the edge of the world's largest desert—the Sahara. The rugged landscape of barren hills and stony

desert (or *hamada*) is in stark contrast to the awesome beauty of the massive red sand dunes we shall see at Merzouga. Many sought-after birds are confined to the desert edge, and we'll make several excursions to search the area for Cream-colored Courser, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Fulvous Babbler, African Desert Warbler, and Trumpeter Finch, as well as many of the fourteen species of larks and seven species of wheatears that also occur in Morocco. A pelagic trip out of Agadir should provide a nice change of scenery as well as a few interesting seabirds, plus from Agadir we visit the Souss Massa in search of the Critically Endangered Northern Bald Ibis (or Waldrapp), with just around 700 birds (est. 2019) in Morocco (nearly the entire world's population). Finally, we finish the tour in Marrakesh with a visit above tree-line to Oukaimeden in search of crossbills and Hawfinch and both species of chough.

A long history of settlement by an array of different peoples, including the Moors and Berbers, as well as strong French and Spanish influences, has produced a country that not only has a wonderfully diverse birdlife but an exciting and varied culture, too. Morocco is not a wealthy country; hotels vary, but in the main they are good and come as a pleasant surprise to most visitors. This coupled with the country's often spectacular and ever-changing landscape, its distinctive Moorish cuisine, and a people noted for their traditions of hospitality and warmth, should make this a tour to remember!



The critically endangered Northern Bald Ibis, or Waldrapp, is one of the main targets of our tour. We've seen these fascinating birds very well on recent tours. Photograph by participant Myles McNally.



When we visit the desert near Erg Chebbi, we'll travel in 4x4 vehicles. It is likely to be dusty, but this is our chance to see desert specialties like the beautiful Cream-colored Courser, and the Desert Sparrow. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Most walks are on flat ground, and are a mile or less. There is one long walk of about 5 miles into coastal sand dunes in the Agadir area, and another of about 2 miles on a moderately hilly trail at Oukaimeden. In the High Atlas Mountains, trails may be steep. **In the desert, walking is on flat ground, but during the heat of the day (sometimes) with potential high winds and sand.** We may walk through areas with rocks and thorny vegetation.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** On the main tour, we will have a pelagic trip that lasts about 5 hours. Smoking is not allowed in the van; however, Moroccans are allowed to smoke in most public places, and while we will try to avoid this as much as possible, we will not be able to completely avoid cigarette smoke. In the Sahara, we'll travel in 4WD land-rovers, and the roads may be rough and dusty.
- **PACE:** We'll have early starts, usually by about 6 am. In general, the days are long; starting early and ending at dusk with a few night options. Stamina is key on this tour.
- **ELEVATION:** We will reach a maximum elevation of about 8500 feet on this tour on one day only.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will vary depending on location, from 62-80 F in the northern coastal areas, to hot in the Sahara with highs reaching a possible 125 F. The high plains can be rather cold and windy. Rain and possible sandstorms may occur, again depending on location.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions. Depending on the size of our group, space in the vehicle could be limited, so please expect to share a row in the bus with two others on at least a few days of the tour, if the tour goes full.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use indoor restrooms, but even these can be quite primitive by modern standards, and they are not always clean (mainly on the Morocco tour, but this has gotten better over the years). On occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature. **NOTE: Bring your hand sanitizer!**

- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

In some areas where we need to be out early in order to find special birds, we may have a few simple picnic breakfasts of sweet bread and fruit with instant coffee prepared with hot water (you may want to bring your own tea bags if you have a preference). Moroccans generally have simple breakfasts (Continental-style), so we will try to supplement where possible or have a mid-morning snack. Dinners and most lunches will always be at our hotel (usually buffet).

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with Jesse.



Moussier's Redstart is a North African endemic that we should see well on this tour. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Itinerary for Morocco

Day 1, Tue, 3 Sep. Departure from the US. Participants joining the tour from the US will need to leave today in order to arrive in Casablanca on Wednesday, September 4.

NOTE: If you would like to have time for cultural sites in Casablanca, like a visit to Rick's Café or the Hassan II Tower and Mosque (one of the largest and most beautiful mosques in the world), then it would be best to arrive a day early and overnight in Casablanca. Our office will be happy to make arrangements for you. If you prefer to arrive early and stay at an airport hotel we can recommend a hotel for you near the airport as well.

Day 2, Wed, 4 Sep. Casablanca to Skhirat. Those arriving a day early will rendezvous in the hotel reception at 1 p.m., and we'll drive to our hotel in Skhirat (around an hour and 15 minutes) with a stop at the airport to collect folks arriving today. Those arriving today should plan their arrival no later than 11:45 a.m. We will enjoy some afternoon shorebirding on the beach if the tide is in our favor or venture further afield to the Zaer. Night at La Kasbah, Skhirat.

Day 3, Thu, 5 Sep. Rabat area and Lac du Sidi Bourhaba. After an early breakfast in the hotel we will depart around 6:00 a.m. Our early start will give us the best chance for finding one of Morocco's rarest inhabitants—the Double-spurred Francolin. This rare, elusive gamebird (the Moroccan subspecies is quite distinct from those in tropical West Africa) is now confined solely to Zaers, an area of scrubby hill forest that lies about an hour's drive from Rabat. Here, its dwindling population was "guess-timated" way back in 1988 to be "at most a few hundred birds." It has almost certainly decreased further since then. We would be extremely lucky to spot one, but it has happened on a couple of our trips. As we search for francolin, we may be lucky with other birds such as Barbary Partridge, Black-shouldered and Black kites, Short-toed

Eagle, Common Wood-Pigeon, Stock Pigeon, Wood Lark, Spotted and Eurasian Pied flycatchers, European Greenfinch, Great and African Blue tits, Black-crowned Tchagra, and Eurasian Jay.

Depending on our time in the Zaer, either before or after lunch, we will drive to Lac de Sidi Bourhaba. The narrow, ribbon-like shape of this shallow freshwater lake makes it a good spot to observe waterfowl, especially Great Crested Grebe and dabbling ducks such as Northern Shoveler, Mallard, and Common Teal, while Common and Ferruginous pochards and Marbled Teal are among the scarcer species sometimes to be seen. Raptors such as Western Marsh-Harrier, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, and Eurasian Hobby patrol the wooded rim of the lake, and the rare Eleonora's Falcon is occasionally found hawking overhead—eyes to the sky! We will return to Skhirat in the late afternoon. Night at La Kasbah, Skhirat.

Day 4, Fri, 6 Sep. Rabat to the Middle Atlas. Today we leave the coast and head due east, driving inland across a landscape of wide, rolling agricultural plains towards Fez. From there, the road begins to climb up into the beautiful Middle Atlas range, where we shall spend the night at a hotel in Ifrane. Along the way we may encounter such species as Booted Eagle and Thekla Lark, while birding in the oak forest of El Jabaa may reveal Great Spotted Woodpecker, European Robin, Mistle Thrush, Eurasian Blackbird, Firecrest, Coal Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch, and Short-toed Treecreeper. The Seebohm's form of Northern Wheatear, which may itself be given specific status, can be found in the area. Night at Perce Neuge, Ifrane.

Day 5, Sat, 7 Sep. Ifrane to Midelt. Situated at an elevation of around 5000 feet, the area north of Ifrane is known as the Lakes Region (though completely dry in 2018 & 2019). Actually, it comprises a varied cross section of birdy habitats including oak and cedar woodlands and high stony plateaus (or "*causes*"), as well as many seasonal lakes. We'll be looking for any of the species that we missed yesterday, and in particular for the lovely Moussier's Redstart—a northwest African endemic, the dazzling males are a real delight, unmistakable in their black, white, and rosehip-red dress. If we haven't been successful earlier in the tour, we have further chances today to search for Levaillant's Woodpecker. On the whole, Morocco is not noted for its large mammals, but Barbary Ape (the only primate in North Africa) is locally common here.

Later, we will drive south from Ifrane and as we descend from the mountains and the countryside becomes increasingly arid, we'll look out for Black and Red-rumped wheatears, arriving at Midelt in the late afternoon. Night at Taddart, Midelt.



*The colorful Levaillant's Woodpecker is near-endemic to Morocco, so we'll make an effort to find this regional specialty.
Photograph by participant Myles McNally.*

Day 6, Sun, 8 Sep. Midelt to Merzouga. If necessary (depending on previous evening success), we'll make a very early start this morning, aiming to travel out from our hotel at Midelt to arrive at the barren, high plains near Zeida before

daybreak. Set at an elevation of just under 5000 feet, it will likely be chilly or even cold here first thing. But it's only as the sun begins to rise that we have a real chance to try and locate the object of our desire, the secretive Dupont's Lark. With its tell-tale "rusty swing" song ceasing immediately after sunrise, this lark remains one of the most difficult of all Palearctic birds to see—though quite how they manage to conceal themselves so successfully behind the scant, low scrub seems positively baffling!

Having returned to our hotel in Midelt for breakfast, we'll then continue our journey south, passing through increasingly stark mountain scenery where we'll make a special stop to search a scrubby valley for Tristram's Warbler—yet another very localized bird. We'll then drop down into the surprisingly lush valley of the Ziz, before approaching the edge-of-desert town of Erfoud, where we may well spot our first White-tailed Wheatears, a characteristic bird of the desert wadis and oasis villages. We will lunch on the way and afterwards make a short detour to look for Scrub Warbler near Goulmima.

Our destination this evening is the base of the large dune system, Erg Chebbi, the western most extension of the Sahara, located near the town of Merzouga. Night in Merzouga.

Day 7, Mon, 9 Sep. The edge of the Sahara; Merzouga. Our journey into the Sahara desert today promises to be one of the highlights of the tour. We'll want to start early, setting off by 4WD land rover vehicles, so as to be birding before the heat starts to build. One of our first targets will be to find Greater Hoopoe-Lark, and with luck we may see their extraordinary display flights, often performed just after dawn. We'll also be on the lookout for Cream-colored Courser, Bar-tailed Lark, and the elusive African Desert Warbler. Our ultimate goal is a scattered desert settlement that stands in the lee of an island of towering red sand dunes, Erg Chebbi. The largest and most spectacular dune system in all Morocco, Erg Chebbi has been the setting for many desert movies and is home to many classic desert birds. We'll be hoping to see Brown-necked Raven and that most reclusive of desert dwellers, the handsome Desert Sparrow. If we are fortunate, a pair or two will be here for us to enjoy as we sip a glass of fresh mint tea at the local cafe.

After returning to the hotel for lunch, we'll take a longer break (bring those swimming suits) and set out again in the late afternoon. This will be a long day (with a late dinner). Night in Merzouga.



We'll seek the the Desert Sparrow in the dunes of Erg Chebbi. Photograph by participant Myles McNally.

Day 8, Tue, 10 Sep. Auberge Derkaoua to Boulmane Dades. Our route west from Erfoud is marked by a string of ancient earth-walled villages and alluring palm-fringed oases. Colorful European and Blue-cheeked bee-eaters are among many roadside birds to watch for as we pass. Beyond the settlement of Jorf, long lines of six-foot-high earthen "volcanoes" (locally called *khattara*) march across the scrubby desert to create a bizarre, almost lunar landscape. In fact, they are nothing more sinister than an ancient and highly ingenious system of underground irrigation wells, one that's virtually unique in the world. As we pause for the obligatory photo-op here, Desert Wheatear, Southern Gray Shrike (the pale desert form, *elegans*), and the odd passerine migrant are possible.

We'll continue on toward Tinejdad (lunch nearby) and in the late afternoon we'll arrive at the small town of Boulmane Dades, which will be our base for the next two nights. Night in Boulmane Des Dades.

Day 9, Wed, 11 Sep. The Tagdilt track. We'll want be out early today to come to grips with one of Morocco's most productive areas of *hamada*, or stony desert, known simply to birdwatchers as the "Tagdilt track." By doing a mix of both driving and walking, we'll investigate this high arid plain for several of Morocco's elusive larks: Desert, Thekla, Greater and Lesser short-toed, Temminck's, and the bruising Thick-billed. Desert Wheatears are common, and we may even be treated to a Red-rumped Wheatear's classic rendition of a kettle coming to the boil! Mammals are generally scarce on the barren plateau, but the Fat Sand Rat (yep, that's really its name!) is common and a major prey item of the resident Long-legged Buzzards. In the afternoon we will drive up the Dades Gorge for striking views and impressive geology along with the chance of finding Bonelli's Eagle. Night in Boulmane Des Dades.



Crowned Sandgrouse are one of four species of these ground-dwellers that we'll watch for. These birds are found in the hot, stony areas, unlike some of the other species that prefer cooler or sandier habitats. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 10, Thu, 12 Sep. Boulmane Dades to Agadir. A very long day. We will check out early and begin our long drive to Agadir. We will make a stop briefly to see Ait-Benhaddou (largest active csar in Morocco). From lunch onward it is pretty much a straight shot towards Agadir, but always scanning and watching for sandgrouse or Barbary Falcon. We expect to arrive to our hotel in Agadir around 5 pm. Depending on our arrival time and stamina, in the early evening we can visit the Oued Souss in Agadir for shorebirds and a few possible night birds. Night in Agadir.

Day 11, Fri, 13 Sep. Oued Massa and Oued Souss. We will leave early (circa 5:30 a.m.) and drive to Oued Massa, about an hour to the south of Agadir, where we will have a picnic breakfast. This shallow, reed-fringed waterway and the surrounding bushland can be excellent for resting migrants, but there're also several very localized resident birds here, including Barbary Partridge, Laughing Dove (a relative newcomer to Morocco), and the secretive Black-crowned Tchagra, whose curious fluting whistles betray its skulking presence. Another special resident is the delicate Plain Martin, which hawks insects over the baked-mud houses, date palms, and fig trees that are so characteristic of the villages in this part of Morocco. However, the target of today's birding is the rare Waldrapp or Northern Bald Ibis. We will spend the morning birding here and searching out the bald ibis and anything else of interest and then return to Agadir for lunch. We will lunch in Agadir, then have a short siesta before venturing out in the late afternoon in search of the rare and local Northern Bald Ibis. The guides know of a couple of spots to check and we will visit the best option depending on where the birds are recently being found. Night in Agadir.



Balearic Shearwater is a critically endangered seabird that can be found in the waters off the coast of Morocco. We'll watch for these and other pelagic species on a trip out from Agadir. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 12, Sat, 14 Sep. Agadir Pelagic trip. As always with boat trips, we never know what we'll find offshore. Sea conditions vary, but we will keep our eyes open for Cory's Shearwaters, Northern Gannet, jaegers, and skuas. September is a good time to find migrant seabirds and is also a time when young of the year from nearby seabird colonies may appear. Sizable seabird colonies exist not so far from the Moroccan coast, and with some luck we might stumble across Little or Balearic shearwaters. Yet other sought after species are possible, and with bird-rich waters nearby, there ought to be some birds to see (maybe even a whale or two). We'll keep our fingers crossed and our eyes peeled. Generally, the pelagic lasts from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. We'll travel about maybe 10-15 km from shore. Lunch is on board and upon returning to the dock, we will head to Marrakech (about a 3-hour drive) and get checked into our next hotel. Night in Marrakech.

Day 13, Sun, 15 Sep. The High Atlas. We'll hope for good weather today as we conclude our tour with a full day's birding in the High Atlas Mountains. A winding alpine road climbs south from Marrakech to reach the upland meadows at Oukaimeden, a winter ski resort. At an elevation of some 8500 feet and with the towering peak of Jebel Toubkal (13,500 feet) as a backdrop, this will quite literally be the high spot of our trip. If the weather is clear, the birding up here can be every bit as exhilarating as the crisp mountain air, with White-throated Dipper, Blue and Rufous-tailed rock-thrushes, Red-billed and Yellow-billed choughs, Eurasian Linnet, Crimson-winged Finch (rare), and Rock Bunting among those we shall be looking for today. Night in Marrakech.

Day 14, Mon, 16 Sep. Departure. We will leave the hotel mid-morning for our two-and-a-half-hour drive to Casablanca to meet international flights and thereby avoid the possibility of cancellations if we were using local domestic carriers. **DO NOT BOOK A DEPARTURE FOR EARLIER THAN NOON (12 PM).** If an overnight is necessary (or preferable), our office will be happy to assist you with arrangements.

Day 15, Tue, 17 Sep. Arrival home.

Financial Information

FEE: \$5350 from Casablanca

DEPOSIT: \$550 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: March 7, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$525 (Singles are limited during our stay in Merzouga.)

LIMIT: 9

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

About Your Guide

Jay VanderGaast was introduced to birding by his father, and his obsession with birds was evident by age seven when he memorized the plates in Peterson's eastern field guide. He went on to earn a B.S. in biology at university and briefly contemplated a career in research, but two years on the buggy arctic tundra watching ptarmigan do little other than occasionally getting eaten by Gyrfalcons soon put an end to that plan! Instead, he strapped on a backpack and a pair of bins and began roaming the world in search of birds. His travels eventually led him to Costa Rica, where he took a job as a birding guide at Rancho Naturalista Lodge. He held this position for six years, becoming one of the country's leading guides in the process, before joining Field Guides in 2000. When not touring, Jay can be found at home in the Montreal region, usually with his own three nestlings-daughters Ariane and Elodie, and son Noah-- in tow.

"Jay VanderGaast is an excellent guide. The trip would not have been the same without him. His acute hearing and sight and genuine interest and caring resulted in our seeing many exquisite birds. He took great care of us from handling things at airports to choosing super restaurants. The pace was perfect." S.M., New Guinea & Australia

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Jay's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

A NOTE ON ALTITUDE: Please note that we will reach a maximum elevation of about 8500 feet on this tour (on one day only). We will take it easy, but you should be well aware of the symptoms of altitude sickness and consult your physician regarding your own preparation for such elevations.

DOCUMENTS: A **passport** valid for six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Morocco. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. You will be issued a **tourist card** upon arrival in Morocco; please keep this in your passport, in a safe place, as you will need the tourist card to depart Morocco.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Moroccan consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: If possible, we recommend coming in a day early to adjust to the time change and collect any luggage that may have been delayed. **On the final day of the tour, do not book a departure flight earlier than noon (12:30 PM) from Casablanca.**

Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights

not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.

LUGGAGE: Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase/duffel per person and a carry-on (there are several opportunities for laundry on this tour). Also, be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$5350 for one person in double occupancy from Casablanca. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 13, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 14, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to Casablanca, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$525. (Singles are limited during our stay in Merzouga and some participants may have to share a room.) If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$550** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by March 7, 2024**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your

family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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