

Moorish Delights of Andalusia and Morocco 2020

Lead by Fiona Wright and Praveen Nayak

A long time ago a kingdom existed where the Three Peoples of the Book lived together and created a culture of incredible beauty. These were the Muslim, Jewish and Christian Moorish people of Andalusia in Southern Spain and Morocco.

On this journey we will have a chance to trace a little of their history through some of the beautiful places left behind: incredible architecture, gardens to equal those of paradise, delicious food and music.

In Morocco Africa more strongly comes into the mix and a rich layer of textile culture is still to be seen—think Magic carpets, softest leathers, rich embroidery... A feast of impressions, splendid palaces, rich carpets, labyrinth like markets or souks, Medinas or walled cities, deserts and oasis, old Kasbahs; the famed Imperial cities, Roman ruins and off the beaten track to some of the smaller, colourful local markets, sunset and then sunrise in the Sahara Desert are all to be visited.

Inspired by Moorish splendour you might like to work on a travel journal as a record of our observations and the inspirations arising- a piece of work that will potentially stand alone as an art work and certainly be a recourse for future inspiration. A small sketch book, handful of pencils or paints and/or some swatches of cloth to stitch a sketch [the silk seller in the market has a whole rainbow of threads!] and digital camera- a small handful of tools to capture so much! We will sit around the campfire on the edge of the Sahara to experience Berber music and dancing, wander the maze of alleys in the old cities, sit in café's with sangria and watch the locals pass and snack on delectable treats along the way!

Something to think about...John Ruskin pointed out the importance of sketching when travelling is not to become a great artist rather it is about taking the time to look and really observe, really notice where you are. [I don't see myself as much of a drawer so call it making diagrams to catch ideas and am so much more relaxed about it- hey call it what makes you comfortable!] Watch yourself when you are somewhere new- if you just click with a camera what is your experience? If you sat for a moment and made a quick doodle/ sketch/ diagram [depending on the word you are comfortable with] what would your experience of the location be like? Let us use a combination of the two.

Cost – US\$ 5350 -twin share
Single US\$1250

Deposit US\$2140 to book today
Booking Deadline 23 February, 2020
Full payment due 23 February, 2020
Email fiona@creative-arts-safaris.com
or phone +91 998 203 2755

Day 1– Sunday, 23.5.20

Madrid

Madrid is rich with wonder and beauty; you might like to arrive a few days early to explore and take advantage of being here. People came from many directions last time– easiest if we meet at the hotel– will supply details upon booking, and I will send you a list of my favourite spots around our hotel.

Day 2–Mon, 24.5.20

Madrid –Cordoba

An early start off to the high-speed train for Cordoba, arriving in the middle of the day we can drop our bags, have lunch and head to the Tower across the river- it houses a great museum of the story of Andalusia,

Later the fabulous Mesquita; originally? Roman mosaic under the floor, then a mosque which had a cathedral was built over it...this is the fabled building with a forest of striped arches, it showcases the beauty that can arise when Muslim and Christian culture intermingle. Later we will meet up at an open-air café for drinks and dinner, it is the perfect spot to watch the locals take their evening promenade...perhaps we will follow suit before we retire for the night. [Breakfast, dinner]

Day 3–Tues, 25.5.20

Cordoba-Granada

If you like an early start it is lovely to wander the quiet streets before breakfast...a visit to Alcazar de los Reyes Cristianos, this peaceful Fort has a dreaded history to be told...later after we have seen it in daylight! Then travel via bus through the glorious countryside of olive groves, old castles and villages to Granada. We will wander down to the Capella Real, final resting place of Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain then soak up the local vibe for the afternoon before gathering later in the evening to act like the locals, wandering the tapas bars for a snack, a glass of wine or two, listen to the music and have a good laugh! [breakfast, tapas]

Day 4–Wed, 26.5.20

Granada

The Alhambra! This palace complex was built in the Muslim style to reflect paradise; elegant buildings, intricate mosaics and gardens full

Creative Arts Safaris tours are – art and culture based with a hands-on, get out and about type attitude.

- all inclusive utilising good quality mid-range up to flash accommodation and excellent dining experiences – we look for atmospheric places to stay [off the beaten tourists trails where possible] always good, clean bathrooms, friendly service and comfortable rooms.

- groups of 8-14 participants

These trips are not traditional package tours, rather it is hoped we can travel as a group of friends; Creative Arts Safaris have done the research, a host makes sure it runs smoothly; we all share our observations and knowledge along the way. [any info you pick up in preparation is easy to share with the group via the internet and helps you 'meet' the others too]

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of scented flowers and sparkling water features— it must come very close. Our day will pan out depending on entrance times allotted to us, then we can spend time soaking up its beauty. In the evening, we are free to daydream and sample some of the lovely restaurants near our hotel [breakfast]

Day 5– Thurs, 27.5.20

Granada-Tarifa

So far, we have been travelling at a cracking pace, today we move onto the little seaside village of Tarifa via train, a much slower pace and our launching point for Africa and Morocco. Tarifa is the most southerly point in Europe; we will be able to walk out on a sand spit and have the Atlantic Ocean lapping on our right-hand side and the Mediterranean Sea on our left. Wander the old town and relax. Great place to sketch the view or just dream of Africa, we can see Morocco across the water. [breakfast, dinner]

Day 6– Fri, 28.5.20

Tarifa-Chefchouen/ Morocco

An early ferry and we leave Europe behind and head to mystical Africa. Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, we reach Morocco, landing at Tangiers we will be met by our Moroccan crew. Funny thing is we arrive before we leave Spain according to the clock. Climbing into our a/c vehicle we will wind our way up into the picturesque Rif Mountains and the quaint little village of Chefchouen, a perfect start to Moroccan life. [breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 7– Sat, 29.5.20

Chefchouen/ Fez

Off to Fez today and along the way we will visit the fabulous Roman ruins at Volubilis, reaching our hotel later in the afternoon. [breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 8– Sun, 30.5.20 Fez

Fez or should I write FEZ! The oldest of the Imperial Cities, this ancient city has always been regarded as the religious and cultural centre of Morocco. Its 9th Century Old City- Fez el-Bali- is the oldest living, breathing, functioning Medieval Islamic city in the world. Hicham [our man in Fez] will take us to the Medina today, and reveal such

Notes

Weather – At this time of year is warm in the daytime but perhaps evenings and mornings can be cool

Clothing – light weight layers of clothing is good. To respect local customs it is best for skirts or trousers to be mid-calf length at least, tops not too revealing. Light, loose layers work well with the climate. Generally I find 3 or 4 outfits sufficient, there is always the opportunity to pick up things along the way. Pack a pair of socks and cardigan for the cool of the morning.

Shoes – sensible walking shoes such as sneakers or strapped on sandals are the best options. Surfaces are often rough and you really want your footing stable so you can focus on all the wonderful things everywhere to look at! Pair of rubber thongs or flip-flops are good – often bathrooms are marble and can be slippery when wet.

Money – ATMs are everywhere so you can use a travel card, visa debit or credit advance easily. If you plan to use a card overseas DQ warn your bank to expect overseas activity – some will freeze the card wondering what is happening. Money changes can be found to change travellers cheques or currency.

Power – 240 volts, European adaptor plugs are the most useful.

Begging? – is generally not to be encouraged. Giving gifts of pens and lollies to children is encouraging them to learn a begging mentality [if you like to give a gift to children we can hand it onto a school]. There is no pension in Morocco – a few Dirham to a very old person or a handicapped person is very kind.

Tipping? – it is the local custom so have a pocket full of small change to be ready If you receive a personal service – e.g. bags into or out of hotel, cup of tea through room service, laundry delivery, it is customary to give a tip If you enjoy the commentary of a guide, a performance, take a photo of some one posing in the street etc it is customary to give them tip. Set something aside for our driver – he will take us safely and comfortably through the adventure of many Indian roads.

Step lightly on our environment, be frugal in water use, turn off power switches, take rubbish with you where possible.

Say NO to Plastic! Please bring a cloth carry bag.

delights as the history of Fez, the tanneries and some of the wonderful monuments and souks will be uncovered. Lunch will be in the Medina...and an afternoon to explore together. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 9– Mon 31.5.20

Fez

We will start the day with a calligraphy lesson, a fine introduction to much we see around us.... learn a few letters in Arabic, at least your name. Our enthusiastic hosts make this a fun exercise. Rest of the day is free. There is a fabulous Hamman if you would like a visit or dive into the souk again. [inc- breakfast]

Day 10– Tues 1.6.20

Fez

Today we will visit Sefrou, an hour or so outside Fez and spend time with the women of the Golden Button Co-operative and learn how to make buttons ourselves. [breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 11– Wed 2.6.20

Fez-Erfoud

Breakfast early and then on the way over the mountains and a big drive through the truly magnificent scenery of the

Creative Arts Safaris tour include:

Note- we use train and bus in Spain- you need to be able to manage your suitcase, once we hit Morocco we have an AC bus.

- For this tour, we will meet at the designated start hotel, info supplied once hotel confirmed.
 - Departures last day of tour are provided
 - Accommodation provided from the evening of Day 1 up to and including the night of our Farewell Dinner. Our accommodation is generally mid-range. We use heritage type hotels where we can. All places are clean, friendly and have western bathrooms! It is ambiance and friendliness we are looking for.
 - All transportation- train, bus in Spain, bus and driver, road taxes and fuel costs for the tour in Morocco AND the ferry in between
 - *All breakfasts and many other meals. Food is a reflection of the culture and we are pleased to say we will sample a range of good dining experiences.
 - Sightseeing entrance fees [which covers the use of a still camera]
 - All tuition fees
 - Tips for meals we provide, bags to the bus are included. See tipping in the notes section for tipping for personal requests or other tipping instances.
- You need to cover:**
- Some meals
 - Drinks and bottled drinking water
 - Laundry
 - The one expense that we can't 'guestimate' for you is shop- ping! [this is not a shopping expedition, but you will see some amazing things and you will probably want to indulge!]
 - Airfares
 - travel insurance
 - visa [where necessary] Generally Moroccan visa is - dependent on country of your passport.

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Middle Atlas Mountains and the Ziz River Valley to our staging post for the Sahara, Erfoud. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 12– Thurs 3.6.20 Erfoud– Sahara

First we will head into Rissani and the busy local market, check out the donkey parking lot, the date market and other sights. Along the road to Merzouga and the Sahara is an informative museum and shop highlighting the wonderful fossils found in abundance in the area. Sunset camel rides will be arranged from our doorstep- tonight we sleep at the foot of the dunes in a lovely Auberge.[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 13–Fri 4.6.20 Merzouga- Dades Gorge

We'll head off to visit Todra Gorge after following the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs. When you arrive, you will be gob-smacked at the sensational scenery but also might feel a touch of déjà-vu -this is quintessential adventure country from many an exciting movie- we just need whip cracking and fast-moving horses rushing by! Berber villages and palm trees dot the landscape. Home tonight will be high up in the Dades Valley [breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 14– Sat, 5.6.20 Dades Gorge -Ait Ben Haddou

Slow start to the day....all local villages weave carpets...we can visit one up the road this morning and then wander down the valley where we hope to meet up with local artist Fatima Mellal if she is home.

www.fatimamellal.net .

Roses have made El-Kelaa famous throughout the Middle East and we are passing through just at the start of rose season, should smell good as we head further down the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs through desert, past palm groves, oasis and ancient forts or Kasbahs. As we pass through Ouzazate we'll spot where they made the movies Gladiator, Mummy I & II, Kingdom of Heaven and many others came to life. You might remember our village tonight from Gladiator. [inc-breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 15-Sun, 6.6.20 Ait Ben Haddou-Marrakech

This village has been seen in many a movie, sunrise is a magical time to wander down and cross the river to look around. Then off to Marrakech, we arrive in time to wander through the Djemma el-Fna before a fabulous dinner cooked by the ladies who run our riad. This amazing market place has been declared by UNESCO to be of world cultural importance for Oral Traditions and Performances. Keep a handful of coins in your pockets to give the many performers. [inc-breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 16- Mon 7.6.20 Marrakech

A wander through the souq to The Musée de Marrakech and Ben Youssef Medursa. After the early tantalizing meander through the souks, there is free time to explore before Djemma el-Fna starts to come alive- it is a great place to choose dinner from the hundreds of stalls or visit a nearby restaurant. If you would like a cooking class I can make you a booking at a fabulous women's training programme [fee extra] or just run wild in the souk, it is fascinating. [inc- breakfast]

Day 17- Tue 8.6.20 Marrakech

The Maison Tiskiwin this morning– its fabulous collection tells the story of the Berber peoples from all around the Sahara [boy does it make you want to travel further!] and then we hope to join the women of Al Kawtar to sit and stitch ...we'll work on a small piece and spend time with this inspiring self-help group

The afternoon and evening are free to wander the area, we will meet to go out for dinner this evening.

[breakfast, dinner]

Day 18-Wed, 9.6.20 Marrakesh/Casablanca

Creative Arts Safaris

Pushkar, Rajasthan, India +91 998 203 2755

fiona@creative-arts-safaris.com

www.creative-arts-safaris.com

An early visit to The Jardin Majorelle and associated museum before the crowds arrive and then head out to Casablanca. We'll wander along the Corso this afternoon, view the Atlantic and have lunch.

Evening time we will head along to Rick's Cafe for a drink...for those nostalgic about the movie Casablanca it is on the screen here in this elegant restaurant, a fitting setting for our farewell dinner [inc- breakfast, dinner]

Day 19- Thurs 10.6.20 Casablanca / Home

Departing from Mohammed V International Airport, Casablanca -we will organize airport transfers in time for your flights [inc- breakfast]

A little preparation will really add to your experience, here are a few suggestions– see what your local library has to offer....

If you can, do try and read these, they really set the scene

--- "A Handful of Honey" by Annie Hawes

---"Leo of Africa" by Amin Maalouf

---"Tales of the Alhambra" by Washington Irving

---"The Little Prince" Antoine de Saint Exupéry – an imagination of what might be out there in the Sands...

—Jane Johnson

Fair Trade

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organizations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category.

By Fair Trade we mean those places where the products are produced with the workers being paid a 'liveable' wage. Some of these projects also support healthcare and education for the families of their workers.

The Indian Government actively supports the founding of Craft Peoples' Co-operatives, with education and marketing support, tax breaks and help with visa card access. The combined bargaining power of a Co-operatives means better prices for the workers, a combined buying power for better priced materials and being able to collectively meet the demands of the marketplace.

A Co-operative takes the power of determination into the people's own hands rather than terms being dictated to them if they work at piece work. When working at piece-work materials are delivered to them, work must be completed by a certain date and the payment is determined by the middleman.

Co-operatives lead to people empowerment and a better standard of living for the craftspeople whilst continuing ancient traditional skills.

Be the change you want to see in the world
Gandhi

Do and in doing...
Become.
Sartre

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