



Desert Cavalcade

MOROCCO

Make your way through the desert on a **horseback trail ride in Southern Morocco** through a beautiful string of oases. Explore the first sand dunes of the Sahara, ascend the Djebel Bani and ride through villages and past ksours and kasbahs surrounded by the green of palm groves. Sleep under the stars and discover the Berber lifestyle with an experienced local team, and ride sure-footed and forward **Barb-Arab stallions**.

Trail Riding	8 days / 6 days riding	From £880	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride through the first big dunes of the Moroccan Sahara
- Experience the mysterious life of the villages nestled in the palm groves of the Draa Valley, one of the most inhabited areas of southern Morocco
- Large, wide open spaces offer plenty of opportunities for faster riding
- The route offers a wide variety of sights to discover: the fortified medina of Oulad Driss, the desert village of Mhamid and the ancient kasbah of Benu

Day 1 — 1: FLY TO OUARZAZATE



International flights are not included.

Please note that there are currently no direct flights to Ouarzazate so it may be easier to fly to Marrakech and take the private transfer by road to Ouarzazate. If flying in to Marrakech, then you need to arrive by 14:00 to allow time for the transfer (4 hrs). This is payable locally and will be split between all riders arriving that day (see dates and prices)

You will be collected from arrivals by a representative holding an Equus Journeys sign and driven directly to your hotel.

Day 2 — 2: OUARZAZATE - ZAGORA - FEIJA PLATEAU - 2 hours riding

You will be collected from your hotel in the morning at 08:30 and driven to Zagora through the Draa Valley (a journey of around 170km c. 3-4 hours). On your arrival in Zagora, you will be met by the riding team and allocated your horse for the week.

After checking that everyone is happy and comfortable, you will head out riding in a southwesterly direction. Crossing the vast Feija plateau you will get your first taste of the enormity of the Sahara and slowly approach the last mountain range separating you from the desert - Djebel Bani. You will set up

camp there for the night.

Day 3 — 3 : DJEBEL BANI - OUED NAAM - 6 hours riding

Riding up via a small, winding path you will reach a peak from where you should have impressive views of the Feija plateau and further afield to Djebel Saghro. You will then ride down through a narrow gorge, at the bottom of which is a small oasis, frequented by nomads; it is here that you will stop for lunch.

You will set off to a new desert plateau where only a few acacia trees seem to resist the drought. Here will come in to view the first dunes of the Moroccan Sahara, whose size will only continue to increase as you ride further south. The horizon here seems almost without limits. This area of the desert is maintained as a nature reserve and is home to an ever-growing population of gazelles.

Day 4 — 4 : OUED NAAM - OULED DRISS - 5 hours riding

Today you will start by riding through sand dunes dotted with tamarisk, a plant native to this arid region. You may also come across nomadic camps in the form of kheimas - low tents made of camel and goat wool that are typical to Southern Morocco. Your ride will continue to the end of the Draa valley where buildings will start to appear in the midst of the Bounou palm grove. The Ksar here, a fortified village, is one of the valley's most striking. Your ride will come to an end for the day at the village of Ouled Driss where you will camp for the night.

Day 5 — 5 : OULED DRISS - NESRATE - 5h30 riding

In the morning, you will be back in the saddle for day's ride through the Draa valley, crossing the dunes and plateaus at a faster pace. Riding through the Djebel Selman mountain pass, you will come out into another impressive set of sand dunes. You will arrive at the palm grove of Tagounit and pass through fields and small villages (ksours) with decorated walls.

This route passes the old palm grove of Nesrate which has now been re-claimed by the sand. You will camp out in the dunes.

Day 6 — 6 : NESRATE - OUED DRAA - 5 hours riding

Today you will re-join the hustle and bustle of the villages in the valley: a succession of ksours and gardens in the heart of the oasis will offer refreshing shade; the palm grove comes to an end where the Oued Draa (Draa river) passes between Djebel Bani and Djebel Tadrart. Continuing on horseback along this pass between the hill ranges, you will reach another shady palm grove and spend the night camping in the oasis.

Day 7 — 7 : OUED DRAA - TINFOU DUNES - OUARZAZATE - 2-2h30 riding

 Fint hotel

Riding northwards, you will follow trails that wind through ksours and cultivated palm fields to reach the village of Tinfou where impressive dunes threaten to engulf homes and crops. Dune stabilisation measures have been taken but the results have yet to be qualified as a success. Here, you will say goodbye to your horse and the team and you will be transferred (c. 4 hrs) back to Ouarzazate.

You will spend the night in a hotel opposite the medina, the old town, and have dinner with your guide.

Day 8 — 8 : DEPARTURE

After breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to Europe. If you are flying from Marrakech then your flight must depart later than 16:00 to allow time for the road transfer (payable locally).

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
10/12/2023	17/12/2023	£880	Open
17/12/2023	24/12/2023	£880	Open
24/12/2023	31/12/2023	£1,020	Open
07/01/2024	14/01/2024	£1,115	Open
14/01/2024	21/01/2024	£1,115	Open

04/02/2024	11/02/2024	£1,115	Open
11/02/2024	18/02/2024	£1,175	Open
18/02/2024	25/02/2024	£1,175	Guaranteed departure
25/02/2024	03/03/2024	£1,175	Open
10/03/2024	17/03/2024	£1,175	Open
17/03/2024	24/03/2024	£1,175	Open
24/03/2024	31/03/2024	£1,215	Open
31/03/2024	07/04/2024	£1,215	Open
06/10/2024	13/10/2024	£1,175	Open
13/10/2024	20/10/2024	£1,215	Open
27/10/2024	03/11/2024	£1,215	Open
03/11/2024	10/11/2024	£1,115	Open
10/11/2024	17/11/2024	£1,115	Open
17/11/2024	24/11/2024	£1,115	Open
24/11/2024	01/12/2024	£1,115	Open
01/12/2024	08/12/2024	£1,115	Open
08/12/2024	15/12/2024	£1,115	Open
22/12/2024	29/12/2024	£1,175	Open

Price details

- Flights to your destination are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room and tent.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 3 riders and a maximum of 10 international riders, plus guides.

- Please note: the ride will also confirm for 2 riders on payment of a supplement of c. €375/£325/\$410 per person (or €320/£275/\$335 in 2024). Once the group has reached 3 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.

- Transfers are included from Ouarzazate, but if you arrive into Marrakech then there is an additional transfer cost of c. €150 (€140 in 2024) each way (per vehicle and split between all guests arriving/departing Marrakech). If flying into Marrakech your flight must arrive before 15:30 on day 1 and leave after 14:00 on Day 8.

- If you wish to guarantee single accommodation (hotel in Ouarzazate and tent), the supplement is approx. €115/£100/\$125 per person.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English or French speaking horse guide

1 groom

SUPPORT TEAM

1 cook
1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider
1 vehicle and driver

INLAND TRANSPORTS

Transfers from Ouarzazate airport if your arrival date matches the rest of the group
Private bus or Land rover

ACCOMMODATION

2 person tents and foam mattress
Double/triple room in hotel standard 3/4*

MEALS

Filtered or bottled water
Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

First aid kit

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Lunches on D1 and D8 depending on your departure time
Beverage (except during the trek) and personal extra

TRANSPORT

International flights

EXTRA

Tips to local team
Small group supplement - see above for the details

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

Single room/tent supplement

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

The horses are Barb or Barb Arabian and many are stallions. They are forward going but sensible and perfectly adapted to the desert landscape with big hearts, small feet and smooth paces. They are not particularly big and stand 14hh - 15.2hh.

Guide & local team

You will be guided by local Moroccan's who are familiar with the horses and the landscape. They will be accompanied by a local team - groom/back up guide, driver, cook. The lead guides will speak English but the others may only speak French and Arabic.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You should be a capable rider who is happy riding outdoors in all paces. You should be able to control your horse (speed and direction) in walk, trot and canter whilst maintaining a light hand.

If you weigh more than 90kg or are over 1.95m tall then please contact us to enquire about a suitable horse.

PACE

There are long periods of walking interspersed with good trots and canters each day, some in single files, some group canters. There may also be opportunities for gallops where the terrain allows.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Everyone is expected to participate in caring for the horses - grooming, tacking up and untacking. You are also expected to assist around the camp, such as erecting and dismantling tents. You can participate in feeding and watering the horses if you wish.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You should be in good physical condition and fit enough for long hours in the saddle. You should also be prepared for cold evenings in the desert, particularly during December and January.

The ascent of the Djebel Bani is physically demanding and require a good head for heights.

Experience of riding a trail of several days would be an advantage but is not required. Riders who do not ride regularly should ensure they are back in the saddle and riding fit before departure.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life. 8

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Forestier trail riding saddles and comfortable tack.

Saddlebags are provided.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

In Ouarzazate you will stay in a 3 star hotel in double or 3-person rooms.

On the trail you will camp in two-man tents with mattresses. You will need to bring your own sleeping bag. There is a central "caidale" Moroccan tent for meals, a toilet tent and a hot shower tent.

MEALS

A cook travels with you and prepares all of the meals. You will usually have a cold lunch and a hot evening meal when camping. Meals are typical Moroccan cuisine.

Breakfast: a light breakfast of bread, cheese, jams, tea

Lunch: an assortment of salads, pasta or rice.

Dinner: soup, tajines, couscous, chicken, and fruit for dessert.

Water is provided on the trail. Please bring your own water bottle to fill in. Drinks including mineral water are not provided at the hotel.

Special diets can be accommodated, however please note that some foods can be difficult to find in Morocco. Certain diets may incur a supplement (gluten-free diets can be accommodated at a supplementary charge of €100/£90/\$110 for instance). All dietary requirements must be specified at the time of booking.

CLIMATE

In southern Morocco the rains are rare but not non-existent and in recent years the Sahara has experienced substantial rainfall.

In the Spring and Autumn months the temperatures are pleasantly warm. In October and April the temperatures can be 35c during the day, dropping to 20c at night whilst in November, February and March it is a little cooler (25c daytime and 12c night).

In the heart of the winter (December/January) the mornings and evenings can be cold, as low as minus 5c. At midday the temperatures will be 18-20c

can drop rapidly once the sun sets.

In summer it is too hot to ride (45c) and so no desert trails run in the summer.

TIPS

It is customary, as a sign of thanks to tip the local team. We recommend a tip of €50/£45, but you should give what you feel comfortable with. We recommend giving the tips to your guide who can distribute them amongst all of the staff members.

PACKING LIST

Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana

Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and dust
- T-shirts
- Fleece, jumper or jacket - the evenings can be cold
- Waterproof jacket - the rains can be difficult to foresee and it's better to be prepared. Layering is key to cope with the fluctuations in temperature between day and night
- Casual clothes for the evening

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Shorts for lazy lunchtimes
- Casual clothes for the evening

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps as long chaps/long boots can get very hot.
- Sandals, flip-flops or trainers for moving around the camp
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding

Nightwear

- Thermals are a good option for sleeping in, or a t-shirt and shorts for warmer nights
- A woolly hat when camping (desert nights can be cold)
- Sleeping bag - we recommend a comfort factor of 2-5c (Oct-Nov and Feb-April) and minus 5 - minus 8 for Dec/Jan. We also recommend taking a silk or fleece liner for an extra layer
- Camping pillow (mattresses are provided)

Other useful items

- Swimsuit
- Towel. Camping towels will pack lighter and dry more easily
- Sarong (for going to/from the shower tent)
- Water bottle (1.5 litre or two x 1 litre)
- Hand sanitiser
- Wet wipes for when showers aren't possible
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night
- Small plastic bags for taking rubbish away
- Power bank

Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - must be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Rehydration sachets (dioralyte or similar)
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Ear plugs, particularly if you are a light sleeper

Our Recommendations

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided and you should pack it into two bags if it weighs more than 15kg so it's easier for the team to transport between camps
- Take a second, smaller bag to pack things you may need during the day such as a book or sunscreen then you can easily access it during the long lunch break
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .