

# Deep Dive into Morocco

January 4-9, 2024 (6 days)

Casablanca, Morocco  
Marrakech, Morocco

Photo by Thiago Rocha

Academic  
Odyssey



# Experience Moroccan culture, business & society

Join our trek if:



**You look for a blend of adventure, cultural immersion, and insightful learning, just like:**

- Spending the night in the Moroccan desert
- Roaming around the souks (local markets) in the Marrakech medina
- Discussing North-African macroeconomic policy with heads of Moroccan Central Bank and a leading pan-African PE firm
- Volunteering with local NGO to understand the repercussions of local socio-economic divides



**You are curious about the world around you** and are eager to push yourself to the boundaries of your comfort zone



**You want to make lifelong friends** with students outside your HBS section



# Agenda. Day 1 – Casablanca

06:00

## Arrivals to Casablanca

Take a city bus/train or hire a taxi

12:00

## 12:00: Hotel check-in and welcome lunch

Location: TBD

## 15:00: Tour of Hassan II Mosque

Guided tour of the Mosque

18:00

## 16:30: City tour

Explore the old town of Casablanca, grab snacks at the local market

## 19:00: Optional group dinner

Location: TBD

24:00

## 22:00: Free time

Up to you; we will share a list of bars



## Casablanca, Jan 4

### Highlights of the day:

- Visit the only Mosque “visitable” to non-Muslims in Morocco, a white pearl by the sea
- City tour in which you’ll get an overview of Moroccan history, and Morocco’s economic capital
- Introduction to local food!



**Text** – activity is organized by the hosts; costs are included in the price of the trip

**Text** – activity is organized independently by visitors; costs are not included in the price of the trip (tips will be shared)

# Agenda. Day 2 – Busy with Business

06:00

**Breakfast**  
Hotel breakfast

12:00

**9:00: Meeting at Attiwarajafabank with Ismail Douiri, HBS graduate**  
Location: Attiwarajafabank

**10:30: Trek kick off coffee**  
Location: TBD

**12:00: Optional group lunch**  
Location: TBD

18:00

**14:00: Meeting with a Oum Kheltoum foundation**  
(charitable foundation)

**16:00: Optional volunteering** (Eng. teaching)

Free time

**20:00: Dinner with HBS alumni**  
Location: La Sqala

24:00

**22:00: Free time**  
Up to you; we will share a list of bars



Casablanca, Jan 5

## Highlights of the day:

- Overview of the Moroccan economy, through the financial institution that strategically helps drive it
- Insight into Morocco's business & economic position in Africa
- Get to know the city's growth & inequality by visiting a previously extremely disadvantaged neighborhood through a charitable foundation
- Mingle with HBS alumni who live and work in Morocco
- Optional: Learn to surf the waves, or discuss your experiences and studies with children who aspire to go to top universities



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# Agenda. Day 3 – Intro to Marrakech

06:00	<b>Breakfast</b> Hotel breakfast	<b>Optional: Surf/Yoga</b>
12:00	<b>9:45: Bus to Marrakech</b>	
	<b>11:30: Free time</b>	
	<b>12:30: Welcome lunch</b> Location: Riad Les Hirondelles	
18:00	<b>16:00: Guided tour of Medina (Old Town) of Marrakech + sunset views on main square</b>	
	<b>18:00: Optional drinks</b> Location: La Mamounia hotel	
	<b>20:00: Optional group dinner</b> Location: TBD	
24:00	<b>22:00: Free time</b> Up to you; we will share a list of bars	



**Marrakech, Jan 6**

## Highlights of the day:

- Visit Morocco's cultural capital & ancient imperial city
- Check into gorgeous traditional Moroccan riads (houses)
- Learn about the city's history & key products
- Get your bargaining on in the souks (markets)
- Drinks at La Mamounia, ranked amongst the Top 10 of the world's finest hotels



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# Agenda. Day 4 – Moroccan Culture

06:00

**Breakfast**  
Hotel breakfast

12:00

**10:00: Meeting with Stéphane Bacqueart:**  
Chat about investing in Africa (PE fund manager, HBS Alumni)

**11:15: Visit of the Medersa Ben Youssef & Souks (markets)**

**12:30: Lunch and free time**  
Up to you; we will share a list of restaurants

18:00

**15:00: Visit Montresso Foundation**  
(Art Foundation)

**19:00: Group Dinner**  
Location: Riad les Hirondelles

24:00

**22:00: Casablanca-themed party**  
Location: Riad les Hirondelles



**Marrakech, Jan 7**

## Highlights of the day:

- Learn about Africa's Private Equity landscape, through Stéphane's experience and work sharing
- Visit a leader in African art, the Montresso foundation, and meet the artists there
- Visit the largest coranic school, originally built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century



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# Agenda. Day 5 – Desert Day

06:00	<b>Breakfast</b> Hotel breakfast	<b>Optional photo shoot at the Riad</b>
12:00	<b>9:30 AM: Visit to Jardin Majorelle &amp; YSL Museum</b>	
	<b>12:30 Lunch</b> Up to you; we will share a list of restaurants	
18:00	<b>15:00 Travel to the desert</b>	
	<b>17:00: Optional activities in the desert</b> Camel ride, quad bike, etc.	<b>19:00: Desert Dinner + Return</b>
24:00	<b>22:00 Travel back from the desert</b>	



Marrakech, Jan 8

## Highlights of the day:

- Visit the Majorelle garden, where Yves Saint Laurent lived
- Learn about Yves Saint Laurent and how Marrakech influenced his craft
- Ride a camel or sandboard in the Moroccan desert
- Enjoy a gorgeous dinner and sunset on the desert



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# Agenda. Day 6 – Hike the Atlas Mountains

06:00

**Breakfast**  
Hotel breakfast

12:00

**10:00 Hike the Atlas mountains**  
(3-4 hours, easy-medium difficulty)

**14:00 Lunch in Amazigh village**  
Location: outdoor lunch by the water

18:00

**15:30: Visit Orphanage in Amizmiz:**  
Engage in activities with the children

**18:00: Dinner & Departures**  
Up to you; we will share a list of restaurants

24:00



**Marrakech, Jan 9**

## Highlights of the day:

- Get a deeper perspective of Morocco's diversity through learning about Amazigh (Berber) culture and language
- Hike with a view on Mount Toubkal and the snowy Atlas in the background
- See the impact of 2023 earthquake as well relief efforts
- Eat at a local's home
- Visit the orphanage that trek is contributing to (more details on slide 17)



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# Accommodation

## Casablanca, 2 nights



4-star hotel in the heart of the city



Photos by: Marriott Bonvoy, Toa Heftiba, Jessica Kantak Bailey

## Marrakech, 3 nights



**Different Riads\*:** Les Hirondelles, Riad Zaouia, Riad Azzouna, Riad Bindoo



\* A riad is a type of traditional Moroccan interior garden or courtyard associated with house and palace architecture. **Why?** Because riads are unique to Morocco and they give you a sense of how Moroccan nobility used to live for centuries. They are a unique cultural staple, which a hotel chain will not be able to match. All 4 riads are within walking distance from each other. Quality of the rooms/facilities is the same across all four.

# Recommended packing list

**Weather in Casablanca will be: 50-66F (10-19C) and in Marrakech 45-65F (6-19C). The trek will cover a range of activities: city tours, meetings with companies and hiking. Pls pack accordingly!**

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Hoodie or a light sweater (Casablanca might get chilly in the winter)
- Athletic leisure attire (smth. you would wear for a city tour)
- Smart casual attire (appropriate for a meeting with companies' representatives)
- Hiking/sports attire
- Swimsuit
- Go-out attire (we will have one fancy-ish reception, so you may wanna dress-to-impress)
- Small backpack or handbag
- Sunglasses
- Medication (if necessary)
- Student ID (super important!)
- Sunscreen
- Reusable water bottle
- Power plug adapter (European plug) for your electronics
- Cash: MAD or USD, we recommend bringing ~\$500 (but totally up to you)
- Other:
  - make sure your mobile data plan covers Morocco
  - inform your bank that you may be using your credit card in Morocco so that it won't get blocked



# Activities



We will be organizing sporting and cultural activities to keep the program diverse and fun, and for you to see all sides of Morocco!

Some are optional, some are included:

**Sports:**

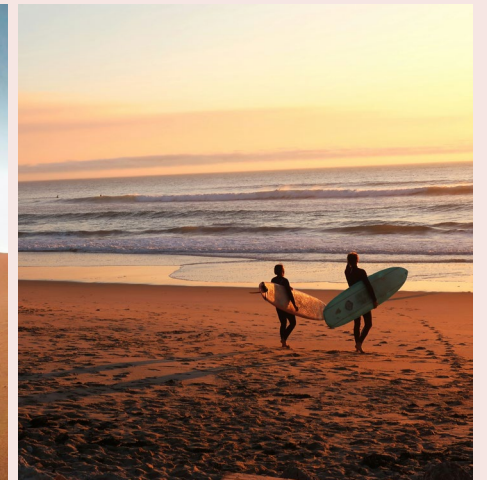
- surf
- yoga
- hiking
- camel rides
- quad biking

**Cultural:**

- city tours
- tours of key sites
- photo shoots



During the free time, we'll also suggest some activities you can go do yourselves! Eg. live music & belly dancing



# Food

Morocco's food will undoubtedly tingle your senses, and leave you wanting more.  
Here are some restaurants that we will take you to:



La Sqala



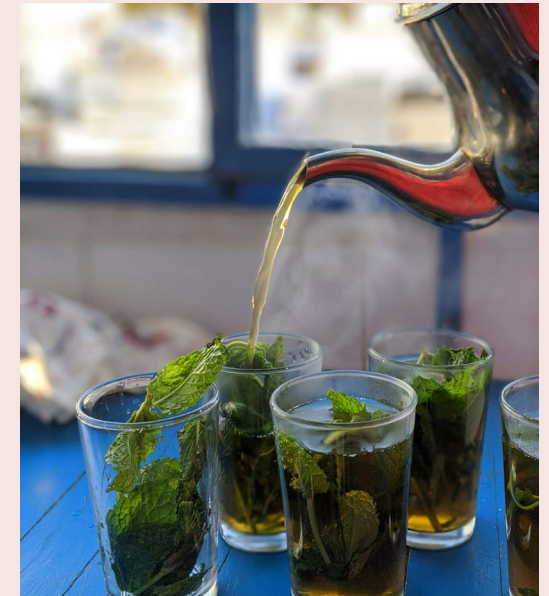
La Mamounia



Dar Dada



Riad les  
Hirondelles





# Price of the trip is \$1,700

## Included:



### Accommodation

(5 nights, 1 room split between 2 people)



### Meals

11/18 meals in total



### Visits to historic sights and museums

All entry tickets and guides where applicable



### Meetings

Speaker and translator fee where applicable



### Guided tours

In Casablanca and Marrakech



### Transfers

All transfers within the country, except for airport transfers



### Taxes

Tourist city and state taxes where applicable

## Not included (extras):



### Insurance

Health and travel insurance



### Airport transfers

Transfers from (arrival) and to (departure) the airport



### Flights

You are responsible for booking flights



### On-demand mobile hot-spots

Mobile data



### Tips

Tips are not required but are welcomed in the Moroccan service industry



### Optional activities

Ex. Surfing, SUP, camel rides, etc.

# FAQs 1/2

**Q1: Do I need a visa for Morocco?**

**A1:** American citizens do not need a visa to enter Morocco. Nationals of other countries may require a visa.

**Q2: Is consumption of alcohol permitted in Morocco?**

**A2:** Yes, in certain restaurants and bars. You're also able to purchase alcohol at the supermarket, but out of respect don't drink it publicly in the old towns

**Q3: Can partners join?**

**A3:** Yes

**Q4: Can my partner and I share accommodation?**

**A4:** You and your partner can share accommodation if neither you or your partner are citizens of Morocco

**Q5: Is Morocco safe? As a woman?**

**A5:** Yes, Morocco is a safe country. However, at times there is wolf-whistling and uncalled for attention given to foreign women. I (Capu) live in Morocco and have become fairly accustomed to it. It's never felt aggressive. If you're in a larger group, you'll be totally fine – particularly if some group members are men.





# FAQs 2/2

**Q6: Is Morocco safe? As LGBTQ+**

**A6:** Yes, Morocco is a safe country. There are many LGBTQ+ people in Marrakech particularly. Whilst it's frowned upon by traditional Muslim people, they will never bother tourists for this.

**Q7: Can we do our own thing sometimes?**

**A7:** We ask that you're present for all planned activities, as they're specifically planned out with the total group number in mind. Of course, for optional activities and in case of an emergency, just let us know!

**Q8: We arrive to Casablanca but depart from Marrakech... what do I do?**

**A8:** Casablanca is an easy 3h train ride + 30m taxi from Marrakech, you can get back fairly easily. We'll share more info on where to book train tickets etc closer to the time, but make sure you factor in travel time!

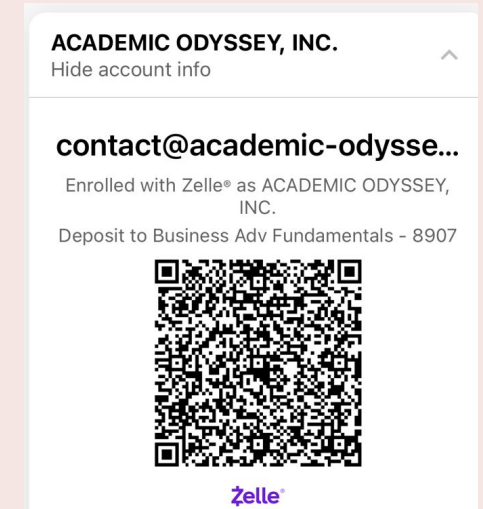
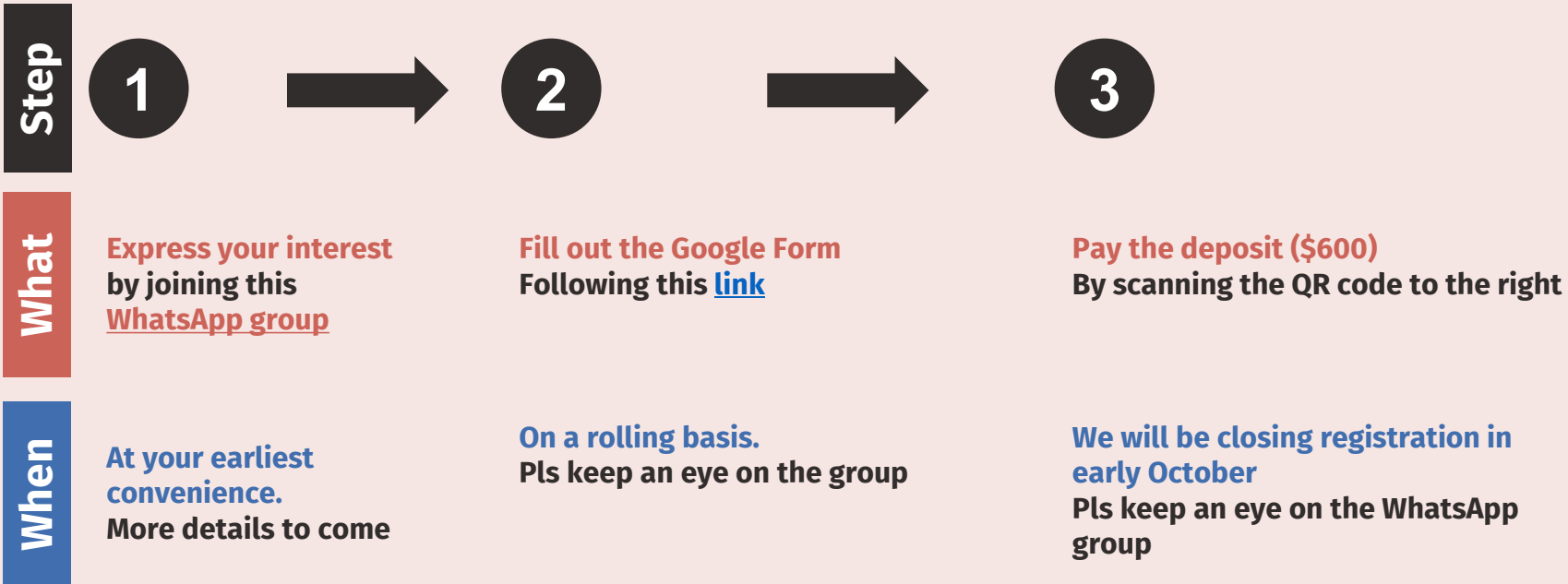
**Q9: I have to attend a virtual interview while on the trek. How can I do so?**

**A9:** As confirmed by our trek participants last year, there are plenty of spots in Casablanca and Marrakech that offer a quiet atmosphere with high-speed internet and refreshments. Let us know and we will suggest a few spots and make necessary arrangements so that your interview experience goes smoothly.



# Next steps

Capacity is limited to **45 people** and we'll be operating on a **first come, first served basis**.



If you have a specific question, please reach out via email:  
[capucinemmcoigne@gmail.com](mailto:capucinemmcoigne@gmail.com)  
[contact@academic-odyssey.com](mailto:contact@academic-odyssey.com)



A narrow alleyway between old, textured buildings. The walls are made of reddish-brown and orange-brown plaster, showing signs of wear and peeling. A cobblestone path leads towards a black door with a small number '16' above it. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Hope to see you soon

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