

"To visit Morocco is still like turning the pages of some illuminated Persian manuscript all embroidered with bright shapes and subtle lines."

Edith Wharton, writer

We invite you to join us on an incredible journey to the **Gardens of Morocco!**

Come and be a part of this rich cultural experience as we visit gardens, riyaads, palaces, and medinas. A country of astounding diversity, Morocco has epic mountains, sweeping deserts, and ancient cities, and it greets travelers with genuine hospitality and the perfect glass of mint tea. It is a feast for the senses—especially Moroccan cuisine—as it is the literal melting pot of Arabic, Berber, Jewish, and Mediterranean cultures.

COST: \$7360.00 per person

(Double occupancy, including airfare from Washington Dulles to Morocco and return)

DATES: April 3-14, 2024

Deadline to Register: December 5, 2023

Seats on the tour are limited, please sign up early!



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MOROCCO

Gardens & History

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Rabat

Oudaya Kasbah • Chellah Necropolis • Sidi Bouknadel Exotic Gardens

Tangier

American Legation • Umberto Pasti Garden • Dar Al Makhzan Museum
Cap Spartel Lighthouse • Donabo Botanical Gardens • Bab Essalam Gardens
Villa Mabrouka • Villa Josephine Garden • Veere Greeney Gazebo Garden

Marrakech

El Bahia Palace • El Badi Palace • Garden of La Majorelle • Gardens of Ben Chaabane
Yves Saint Laurent Design Museum • High Tea at the Royal Mansour Hotel
Jamaa el Fna Marketplace • Souks of Marrakech • Medressa Ben Youssef
Atlas Mountains • Nectarome Garden • Anima Garden

Casablanca

Art Deco District • Hassan II Mosque • La Corniche • Anfa District

TOUR AT A GLANCE

The tour begins at Washington Dulles International Airport with a flight to **Rabat** (with layover in Paris). We stay one night in Rabat before heading north to **Tangier** for four nights. Then we take a train south to **Marrakesh**, where we stay for four nights. The last leg of our journey is to **Casablanca** where we depart for our flight home to Dulles. All along the way, we visit extraordinary gardens and explore the exotic culture and history of Morocco.

TOUR HOST

The hosts on this tour are Nancy and Robert McDuffie. Owners of MCDUFFTOURS and former faculty members at Virginia Tech University, Nancy and Robert have led over 65 tours on six continents since 1998.

ITINERARY

This itinerary is subject to change

Included meals: (B) Breakfast (L) Lunch (T) Tea (D) Dinner

DAY 1 – Wednesday, April 3

We board our evening flight from Washington Dulles Airport to Rabat on *Air France*.

DAY 2 – Thursday, April 4

Our arrival in **Rabat** is in the early afternoon, in time for a panoramic driving tour on our way to our hotel in the city center. This is the capital of Morocco, filled with domes, minarets, wide avenues and green spaces, along with timeless architectural treasures. This evening we enjoy a get-acquainted dinner at our hotel. **Lodging: La Tour Hassan Palace Hotel, Rabat (D)**



Hassan Tower, Rabat

DAY 3 – Friday, April 5

Checking out of our hotel, we spend the day in Rabat, starting at the **Oudaya Kasbah**. 'Kasbah' is the Arabic word for fortress, and the Oudaya Kasbah was built in 1672 to protect the city. Once we enter the grounds of the Kasbah, we immediately notice the Andalusian style gardens and the quiet residential areas of white and blue painted houses adorned with flowers. This area is now a haven for artists from all over. We have tea and pastries at **Café Maure**, overlooking the river. Next, we enter **Chellah Necropolis**, located on a hilltop above the fertile Bou Regreg River. This is not just a place where we can see centuries-old monuments, but if we listen carefully, it will tell us the tale of the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, and Arabs who lived here. It is the perfect setting for exploring antiquities, as well as the setting for an annual international jazz festival. We have lunch at **Dar Naji Restaurant**, where we can taste delicious Moroccan dishes like tagines, dadda salads, couscous with the 7 veggies, and of course, the famous *pastilla*. Afterward, we go across town to **Sidi Bouknadel Exotic Gardens**. In 1951, Marcel François, a French horticultural engineer,



Oudaya Kasbah, Rabat

acquired 4 acres of flat and exposed land in Sale, Morocco. Ten years later he opened his childhood dream to the public: Bouknadel Exotic Gardens, a horticultural and artistic achievement. François traveled all over the world collecting plants from as far away as China, South Asia, the Savannah, Congo, Japan, Brazil and Polynesia. After our garden visit, we board a high-speed train to Tangier, arriving in time for dinner at our hotel. Lodging: **Barcelo Tangier Hotel** (B)(T)(L)(D)

DAY 4 – Saturday, April 6

Tangier is a crossroads of history and culture where the ancient blends with the modern. The treasures of Hispano-Moorish architecture and the vibrant local craft industry go hand in hand. Its Kasbah, as well as **Mendoubia Park**, are close in an ancient well-preserved *medina*. ('Medina' is Arabic for the old part of a city). Not far away is the Hafa Café where Sean Connery and the Rolling Stones enjoyed a mint tea. Many artists have chosen Tangier as their dream destination. Delacroix, Matisse, Tennessee Williams, and Paul Bowles have all fallen under its charm.

In this bustling city, **Tanjazz**, the jazz festival, is held every year celebrating tunes from three continents. On the borders of Europe and Africa, Tangier is a timeless, cosmopolitan city. Beginning on the Corniche Road out to a remarkable **lighthouse**, we enjoy exceptional views of the city, the **Gulf of Tangiers**, the **Strait of Gibraltar**, and the Spanish coast. Returning to the city, we stop at the **American Legation**, the only US National Historic Landmark located in a foreign country. A delicious lunch



Villa Mabrouka

Tangier at sunset



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follows in one of Tangier's most enchanting gardens, **Villa Mabrouka**, formerly the secluded sanctuary of fashion legends Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé. The Villa was later transformed into an elegant hotel by the esteemed British designer, Jasper Conran. In the afternoon, we step into the past, entering **Kasbah Palace**, also known as **Dar Al Makhzan Museum**, the **Kasbah Museum of Mediterranean Cultures**. It is located on one of the highest points of the city overlooking the medina, and the Strait of Gibraltar. **Lodging: Barcelo Tangier Hotel (B)(L)**



Cap Spartel Lighthouse

by Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Abderrahmane after tragic shipwrecks on the rocky coast. It is a beacon, shining across the sea to warn sailors of danger. After our visit, we make our way to the **private garden** of Italian writer, **Umberto Pasti**. Twenty years in the making, his Moroccan hillside garden combines spectacular views with a carefully cultivated mass of indigenous plants he has saved from extinction. Returning toward Tangier, we stroll through **Donabo Botanical Gardens** before ending our day with afternoon tea at **Daniel Aron's residence and garden**. **Lodging: Barcelo Tangier Hotel (B)(L)(T)**



Umberto Pasti Garden

DAY 6 – Monday, April 8



Veere Greeney's Gazebo

We begin our day with a visit to **Bab Essalam**, a private garden masterpiece fashioned by the acclaimed French landscape designers, Eugenie Denarnaud and Louis Lazaroo. Afterward, we enjoy lunch on the inviting terrace of **Villa Josephine**, a timeless classic that offers both exquisite cuisine and stunning views. In the afternoon, we venture to **Gazebo**, the remarkable home and garden of interior designer **Veere Greeney**, thoughtfully crafted by landscape architect John Mason. As the evening sun paints a warm glow, we enjoy refreshing drinks within this exquisite oasis. **Lodging: Barcelo Tangier Hotel (B)(L)**

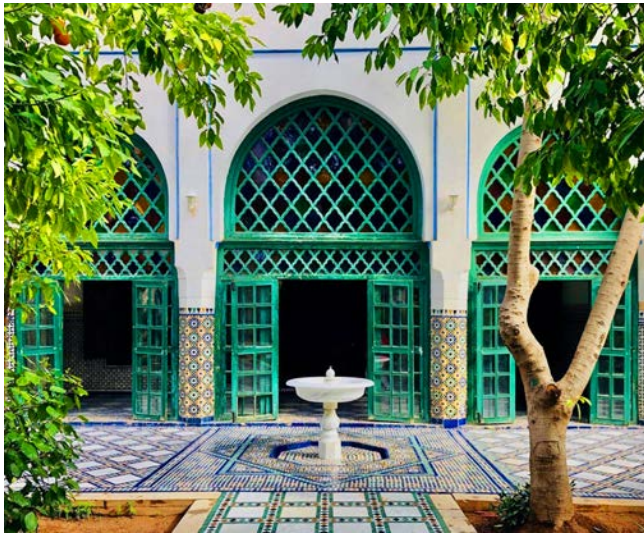
DAY 7 – Tuesday, April 9

This morning, our luggage is safely transported to our Marrakesh hotel while we step aboard the **Alboraq high-speed train**. This, the fastest train in Africa, is a marvel of modern engineering as it carries us through captivating landscapes toward Casablanca's Voyageur Central Station. Here we change to a different train, comfortable in our first-class seats enroute to Marrakesh. Arriving in mid-afternoon, we take a panoramic bus tour of this very vibrant city before settling into our beautiful hotel, **Al Fassia Aquedal**. This is a boutique hotel designed as a 'riad'—a type of traditional Moroccan dwelling with Andalusian interior courtyards. This evening we enjoy dinner at one of the highly rated restaurants in the hotel. **Lodging: Al Fassia Aquedal Hotel, Marrakech (B)(D)**



Alboraq High Speed Train

DAY 8 – Wednesday, April 10



El Bahia Palace

After breakfast we begin our exploration of Marrakech with a visit to **El Bahia Palace**, built in the late 19th century by the great vizier, Sidi Moussa. It was intended to be the greatest palace of its time, capturing the essence of the nation's style, both Moroccan and Islamic. From there we walk to **El Badi Palace**, built by Ahmad al-Mansur over a period of 25 years in the late 16th century. The original building is thought to have consisted of 360 rooms, richly decorated with marble and gold. We end our morning at the famous **garden of La Majorelle**, which was created in the 1920s by the French painter, Jacques Majorelle, with marble pools, raised pathways, banana trees, groves of bamboo, coconut palms and bougainvillea. Not surprising, the garden is composed with bold colors, with many of the solid features painted in a rich blue ('Majorelle Blue'). Water is a prominent feature of the garden, with channels, and lily-filled ponds and fountains. After years of neglect, the garden was rescued and restored by the fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent, and today presents an extraordinary, and at times surreal combination of color, form and light. Afterward we walk to **Yves Saint Laurent Art and Design Museum** for a brief visit before we drive to the expansive **gardens of Ben Chaabane**, who is a renowned garden designer, botanist, perfume maker and publisher.



Majorelle Garden

Chaabane was approached in 1998 by Yves Saint Laurent to restore the Majorelle Gardens and develop a perfume that represented them. In the afternoon, we enjoy high tea at the **Royal Mansour**, a luxury hotel set within the walls of the old city. Lodging: **Al Fassia Aguedal Hotel, Marrakech (B)(L)(T)**

DAY 9 – Thursday, April 11

Today, we are invited to delve into the soul of Marrakech, exploring its vibrant souks, historical landmarks, secret gardens, and lively squares. From morning to night, each hour offers a new facet of this enchanting city's rich tapestry of culture and heritage. We start with the iconic **Jamaa el Fna**, as the bustling square comes to life with vibrant energy where performers, musicians, and vendors create a sensory spectacle. We wander into the labyrinth of narrow alleyways in the **Souks of Marrakech**, filled with a kaleidoscope of goods, from spices to textiles and intricate handicrafts. Nearby, we discover the architectural marvel of **Medressa Ben Youssef**, an ancient Quranic school that embodies intricate Moorish design of delicate carvings creating a soothing tranquility in the courtyard. In the afternoon, we travel to **Dar el Bacha**, a historical palace that provides a glimpse into Morocco's opulent past.



Architectural detailing at Medressa Ben Youssef

Jamaa el Fna Marketplace Marrakech





Secret Gardens Marrakech

We admire the detailed architecture and exquisite tilework as each room tells a story of the city's rich history. Later, we escape the hectic city and enter the serenity of the **Secret Gardens** to discover hidden pathways, tranquil pools, and lush greenery in this oasis of calm. In the afternoon, we visit **Arset Moulay Abdessalam**, a picturesque square bordered by palm trees

and traditional buildings. Here is where local residents gather, offering a glimpse into the authentic rhythm of Marrakech. As the day draws to a close, we head to **Jnan El Harti**, a peaceful garden oasis tucked away from the city's hustle. At the end of the day, we return to the lively embrace of **Jamaa el Fna**, as the square transforms into a culinary haven, with food stalls offering an array of Moroccan delicacies. We enjoy a sumptuous dinner surrounded by the vibrant energy of the square. **Lodging:** **Al Fassia Aguedal, Marrakech (B)(L)**

DAY 10 – Friday, April 12

After breakfast, we drive into the **Atlas Mountains** to visit the organic and aromatic gardens nestled in the lush **green valley of Ourika**. Reaching the first foothills, we visit a saffron plantation and learn all about this ancient, expensive and almost mythical spice; its cultivation and its culinary and therapeutic properties. We enjoy a cup of delicious Moroccan saffron tea before



Nectarome Garden

we head to **Nectarome**, an garden located deep in the valley. On arrival, we have a guided tour of the property to discover the secrets and benefits of local plants, as well as the Moroccan natural cosmetic products optimized by modern science. Our succulent lunch, carefully prepared with organic vegetables from the garden, served in a beautiful pergola. After lunch, we visit the contemporary gardens of **Anima**, created by an Austrian artist who skillfully combines plants and indigenous African art. We return to our hotel for a farewell dinner. **Lodging:** **Al Fassia Aguedal, Marrakech (B)(T)(L)(D)**



Anima Garden Marrakesh

DAY 11 – Saturday, April 13

Today we say goodbye to Marrakech and make our way to **Casablanca**, arriving in time for lunch in the **Art Deco District**. The stunning architecture harkens back to the city's cosmopolitan past. The streets are lined with geometric patterns, intricate facades, and elegant balconies that pay homage to a bygone era. We continue on to the majestic **Hassan II Mosque**, a masterpiece of Islamic architecture with its intricate mosaics and stonework. Then we take our time to meander along **La Corniche**, Casablanca's picturesque coastal promenade, taking in panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean. We also take time to discover the trendy **Anfa District**, where modernity meets tradition, with its upscale boutiques, chic cafes, and dynamic street art that exemplify Casablanca's contemporary urban scene. Finally, we visit the bustling markets into the winding alleys of the **Central Market** and **New Medina**. As our afternoon adventure draws to a close, we head to the coast to witness the beautiful sunset. The warm hues of the sky paint a memorable backdrop to the city's silhouette, providing a fitting end to our Moroccan experience. **Lodging: Atlas Sky Airport Hotel (B)(D)**



Art Deco District

DAY 12 – Sunday, April 14

All too soon, our Moroccan adventure ends as we drive to the airport for our 10:20 am flight. (B)

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OUR HOTELS

To find out more about our hotels, please click on the hotel names below:

[La Tour Hassan Palace Hotel, Rabat](#)

[Barcelo Tangier Hotel, Tangier](#)

[Al Fassia Aguedal Hotel, Marrakech](#)

[Atlas Sky Airport Hotel, Casablanca](#)

MAP OF OUR TOUR



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

COST:

\$7360.00 Total cost per person (double/twin sharing, airfare **included** from Washington to Morocco, and return to Washington)

\$1200.00 Single room supplemental fee

While we attempt to find roommates for single participants, if a roommate is not available, the participant is subject to pay the single supplement fee.

Method of Payment: by check only, payable to: MCDUFFTOURS LLC

Included in the Cost

The cost of this tour includes lodging, entrance fees, guides, ground transportation, all breakfasts, bottled water, and dinners and lunches outlined in the Itinerary. Also included is the cost of flights on Air France from Washington Dulles to Morocco, and return to Dulles. While we attempt to find roommates for single participants, *if a roommate is not available, the participant is subject to pay the single supplement fee.*

Not included in the Cost

Costs of obtaining passports, visas, excess/overweight baggage charges, items of a purely personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone and optional tours are not included. Only meals indicated in the itinerary are included. Trip insurance is not included as well as tips to driver/guides and any foreign departure taxes. Transportation from home to Washington Dulles International Airport is not included.

TOUR CONDITIONS:

MCDUFFTOURS LLC acts only as agents for the passengers with respect to transportation, hotels and restaurants, and exercise every care possible. MCDUFFTOURS LLC assumes no responsibility to any person or entity for liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, breakdown, disruption of advertised schedules, delay or irregularity in connection with the service of any ship, ferry, airplane, train, automobile, motorcoach, carriage, or any other conveyance used in carrying out these tours, or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept responsibility for losses or additional expense due to delay, refusal of visa, or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, violent acts, quarantine, acts of God, or any other causes beyond our control. All such losses will have to be borne by the passenger, as our tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations to the itinerary or accommodations as may be deemed necessary for carrying out the tour. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. The right is reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely. The price of the program is based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on September 1, 2023, and is subject to adjustment in the event of change in tariffs, taxes or exchange rates. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely. The acceptance of any service provided as part of tour or any ticket or voucher shall be deemed to be acceptance of, and consent by the tour member to these conditions. Services are subject to the laws of the country where services are provided. For a more detailed Term and Conditions statement from MCDUFFTOURS, please click [HERE](#).

Please note that this tour requires a considerable amount of walking and since most of the gardens, markets, and kasbahs we visit are not wheelchair accessible, participants must be able to walk on uneven paths with steps. Participants must also be able to manage their own luggage.

I understand and accept these terms and conditions:

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Cancellation and Refund Policy: The total deposit is refundable until December 5, 2023. If you must cancel between December 5, 2023 and February 5, 2024, \$100 of the \$1000 deposit will be retained. After February 5, the \$1000 deposit plus actual expenses incurred in airline and hotel arrangements will be retained and the remainder will be refunded.

MCDUFFTOURS LLC is a travel company founded by Nancy and Robert McDuffie, both former professors at Virginia Tech. Nancy is a soprano and was on faculty in the Department of Music, while Robert is a Landscape Architect and was faculty in the Department of Horticulture as well as Director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden. After establishing the first Virginia Tech Horticulture group study abroad program 26 years ago, it was a natural progression to now take garden lovers of all ages around the world to see the most beautiful gardens on earth. More than 1600 travelers have joined us on tours in the U.S. and abroad. Our travels have taken us to England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Costa Rica, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Monaco, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, France, Ecuador, Israel, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and the Netherlands.

At the heart of our company is our growing 'family' of traveling friends that together experience our special brand of garden adventures. And on every tour, one or both of us are on board to lead the group, lecture about gardens, and do whatever it takes to make our travel go smoothly.



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REGISTRATION FORM

Please print – each participant must complete this form

Full Legal Name (as on passport) _____

First name for NAME TAG _____ Phone # _____

Birthdate _____ Email _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Passport# _____ Place of issue _____

Date of issue _____ Date of expiration _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone # _____

Special food requirements or allergies _____

Name of preferred roommate _____

Total Tour Fee is \$7360.00 (double occupancy, per person)

_____ \$1000.00 Deposit due: December 5, 2024

_____ \$6360.00 Final payment of the balance due: February 5, 2024

_____ \$1200.00 Supplemental Fee for Single due: February 5, 2024

\$_____ Total payment enclosed

Questions? Ask Robert McDuffie - 540 818 0154 - mcdufftours@yahoo.com

Please mail your completed reservation form, a signed copy of the Terms and Conditions form, and a deposit check by December 5, 2023 to:

MCDUFFTOURS LLC
4810 Susannah Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Office Use	Received	AMT: _____
		CHK#: _____
		DATE: _____