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Info Sheet – Day Trip from Marrakech

Introduction

This one day excursion is the perfect opportunity to experience the beauty of Berber hospitality for those who have only a short time to visit. It makes an excellent “day trip” from Marrakech, and our schedule for the day is designed to get you back there by evening.

During the excursion, you’ll get the chance to have morning tea and afternoon lunch in Berber homes located in small villages of the High Atlas mountains. We encourage you to take the opportunity to learn how the people live and get a taste of their culture. Feel free to ask questions and interact with those you meet (using your guide as translator of course!).

Here is a list of things to consider for your trip and some information about what you can expect. Please read everything carefully before starting your excursion. If you have any questions, please email us in advance.

What to Bring

You’ll need to have the following:

- a good, comfortable pair of walking shoes or hiking boots
- for women: long trousers that cover your legs completely (for the summer months, try to find something that is still relatively cool and comfortable)
- for men: long trousers are normal, but shorts in the summer months are acceptable
- shirts that are modest and cover at least your shoulders and upper arms; no tank tops
- a waterproof jacket/shell or even an inexpensive plastic rain poncho (in case it is raining while we’re hiking out to the village)
- a warm fleece/sweater/jacket for cold months (not necessary in summer months)
- a backpack for the hike out to the villages. It does not need to be a large, professional pack – just large enough to carry your water for the day and any personal items you want to have with you.
- sunblock cream for skin protection
- a hat and sunglasses (they’ll make your time in the sun much more comfortable)
- any prescription or over-the-counter medications you use

What to Bring – Voluntary

None of the following is needed, but some travellers might want these extra items:

- a water bottle (we’ll provide bottled water, but it comes in large 1.5 litre containers that might be a bit big to carry while we’re hiking)
- any snacks you particularly love
- hand disinfectant gel (for use before eating / after toilet use)
- camera (there will be lots of opportunities for photos, but ask before you take shots of people)
- small binoculars
- a small gift for the Berber family – possible suggestions include soaps, hand towels, school items for children, T-shirts, toys (even used ones), torch/flashlight, souvenirs from your country, biscuits/cookies, or chocolates (this is completely optional and up to you...no one is expecting it as a norm)

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Hiking, Health, and Safety

To hike out to the Berber villages, we'll be taking established trails/roads used by locals. The hike will not include any "mountain climbing," but you will need to be in good physical condition nevertheless. The "moderate walking" itinerary includes 3-4 hours of moderate walking with some slightly inclined trails. The "heavy walking" itinerary includes 5-6 hours of walking including some steeper "hiking" trails. If you ever need a break, let your guide know...no problem!

To stay healthy during your excursion, drink plenty of water, especially in the summer months when you're walking out to the village. Wearing a hat and sunglasses also protects you from the sun, as does sunblock cream applied beforehand.

Your guide will have a basic first aid kit, but there won't be oral medications in it. So if there is something you think you might need (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, allergy pills, etc.), please bring it with you.

Food and Drink

Lunch will be provided for you during the excursion. You should consider having a good breakfast the morning of the excursion, however.

The actual meal will depend upon the host family we'll visit. Major meals like a "tajine" normally include meat and vegetables and often bread. For these types of meals, you will need to eat using the bread—we'll show you how. Couscous with vegetables and meat is often eaten with spoons. Vegetarians should let us know ahead of time whether they are okay eating vegetables cooked in the same dish with meat; if not, we'll need to make arrangements for separate, strictly vegetarian meals.

We'll have bottled water for drinking. You will need to carry your water for the day, so have a backpack with you. If this is a concern, let us know ahead of time so we can discuss other possibilities.

Accommodations and Facilities

We'll visit the home of a Berber family for lunch. However, do not expect running water or normal bathroom facilities. Most of the homes have a "squat" toilet where you squat (not sit) over an opening and then (if you wish) rinse with soap and water. We'll have toilet paper as well. If you need a toilet during the hike out to the village, you'll have to settle for a "natural setting."

Respecting the Culture

Our excursions are meant to give you the opportunity to personally experience the life and culture of the Berber people. Therefore, it is important to respect that culture during the time you come in contact with it. Clothing should be relatively modest and cover the legs, shoulders, and upper arms (Moroccan villages are not like the big cities where you might see more western dress). Taking photos is an important part of the excursion and encouraged, but please ask first before you photograph someone; some don't like being photographed.

During your time in the village, please remember that you're visiting someone's home. As much as possible, try to be aware of rubbish/trash and/or dirty shoes.

Even for married couples, public displays of affection (such as kissing) are considered inappropriate and will cause the family and villagers to avoid us. You should refrain from this in public.

Young children may approach you and ask for things. Consult your guide. It may be best to give to their parents if you're so inclined (though it's by no means necessary).

Tipping

We make it very clear on our website that our stated price includes everything for the day. You will not need to spend any money beyond the cost of transport and our excursion price. Nor will we ever take you to a merchant and pressure you to buy something—you can be 100% certain of that. However, we are occasionally asked, "But what if I want to tip the host family, guide, or donkey owner? Is that acceptable?" Culturally, and according to our company policy, yes. But no one is expecting it and there will be no awkward moments or pauses in anticipation of one. We're simply happy to have you come on one of our excursions.

We look forward to seeing you! Email us with any further questions.