

FREEGUIDE · MAJESTYMOROCCO

# Morocco

# Uncovered

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## The Private Traveler's Guide

*The routes, the camps, the deserts and the timing that no travel blog will ever publish.*

BEFORE YOU READ THIS

## What Makes This Guide Different

You have already read the Morocco travel guides. Jemaa el-Fnaa. Blue city of Chefchaouen. Camel ride in the Sahara. This guide does not repeat any of that.

This was written by the team at Majesty Morocco — a private tour operator based in Marrakech designing custom experiences for American travelers since 2012. Every client gets a trip built specifically for them: their dates, their interests, their group, their pace. No two itineraries we build are ever the same.

What follows is what we tell our clients before they arrive. The real desert comparison no one explains honestly. The southern routes most operators skip. The timing that separates a good Morocco trip from an extraordinary one.

### OUR PROMISE

Every experience in this guide is one our team has personally designed and delivered. If we wouldn't send our own family there, it doesn't appear here.

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Three Deserts of Morocco

*Most tourists see one. Private travelers choose the right one for them.*

Morocco has three distinct desert experiences. They are not interchangeable. Understanding the difference is the single most important decision in any Morocco itinerary that includes the south.

## Erg Chebbi — Merzouga

The most famous. Dunes reaching 150 metres — the tallest in Morocco — rising suddenly from flat ground near Merzouga. Accessible by paved road from Marrakech (9 hours). Over 200 camps to choose from, ranging from basic tents to full luxury glamping.

**Best for:** First-time visitors. Short itineraries (3-4 days). Families. Dramatic dune photography.

**Honest caveat:** The most visited desert in Morocco. During peak season the camps nearest Merzouga feel crowded. The fix: choose a private camp 5-10km further into the dunes — your operator should know which ones.

## Erg Chigaga — M'Hamid el Ghizlane

Morocco's largest erg — 35km wide, 15km deep — south of M'Hamid el Ghizlane, the last town before the Algerian border. Paved road ends at M'Hamid. From there: 60km of off-piste 4x4 tracks through hamada (flat rocky desert), roughly 2 hours, before the dunes appear.

You cross the dried-up bed of Lake Iriki — a vast prehistoric lake where crocodiles once lived, stretching to the horizon. The silence when you arrive at Erg Chigaga is complete. No generator noise. No other camps visible. Just dunes, wind, and stars.

**Best for:** Travelers who want the untouched Sahara. Longer itineraries (5+ days). Couples. Solo travelers. Anyone who has already done Erg Chebbi.

**The circuit option:** Continue from Erg Chigaga along the Algerian border to Foug Zguid, then north — a full southern Morocco loop almost no group tour offers.

## The Draa Valley & Zagora — The Forgotten Route

Zagora is the gateway to M'Hamid and Erg Chigaga, 350km southeast of Marrakech. But the drive through the Draa Valley — 200km of date palm oases, earthen kasbahs and Berber villages — is the most visually complete route in southern Morocco.

- Agdz: Kasbah Tamnougalt nearby — 18th-century fortress, former capital of the Mezquita region. Almost no tourists.
- Tamegroute: a 1,000-year-old library with manuscripts written on gazelle skin. Green pottery made here using techniques unchanged since 1011 AD.
- Foug Chenna: 2,500 rock engravings on an 800-metre rock face — ibex, horsemen, ostriches, camel caravans. The largest rock art site in southern Morocco. Almost entirely unknown to foreign visitors.
- Amezrou: former Jewish quarter of Zagora. Silversmiths still practice the Jewish craft tradition. The 12th-century Jewish kasbah still stands.
- "52 Jours" sign at Zagora's edge: not a tourist prop. Caravans actually took 52 days to reach Timbuktu from here.

*"The Draa Valley is the journey most people rush through to reach the desert. Our clients who slow down in it — who stop at Tamegroute, who walk Foug Chenna with a guide — consistently say it was the part of the trip they remember most vividly."*

### At a glance

	ERG CHEBBI (Merzouga)	ERG CHIGAGA (M'Hamid)	DRAA VALLEY (Zagora route)
Access	Paved road all the way	4x4 required 60km off-piste	Paved road via Ouarzazate
Crowds	High in peak season	Very low	Low to moderate
Dune height	Up to 150m (tallest in Morocco)	Up to 100m but much vaster	Small dunes (Tinfo / Lihoudi)
Best for	First visit, short trips	Deep desert, solitude, adventure	Culture, history, the journey itself
Min days from Marrakech	3 days	4-5 days	3-4 days
Combine both?	Yes — long circuit via Rissani & Zagora	Yes — Chigaga + Foug Zguid circuit	Always on the Chigaga route

## CHAPTER TWO

# How We Build Your Trip

*Every Majesty Morocco itinerary is designed from scratch for one client.*

No two trips we build are the same. The choice between Erg Chebbi and Erg Chigaga alone creates two completely different southern routes. Add group size, travel pace, interests, dates, and whether to include the Draa Valley, Jebel Saghro, the Atlantic coast, or the High Atlas — and every combination produces a trip that belongs to you.

## How the process works

1

**You tell us who you are**

Honeymoon couple? Family with teenagers? Solo traveler? Friends celebrating a milestone? The starting point is always the person, not the itinerary.

2

**We ask the questions no one else asks**

Do you want to arrive at the desert by camel, 4x4, or both? Private riad buyout or boutique hotel? Is there a surprise element — a proposal, a milestone we should design around without the other person knowing?

3

**We build a custom route**

We select every property, every guide, every camp. Nothing is pulled from a catalogue. We know which private camp in Erg Chigaga has the best star position at 2am. We know which guide at Foug Chenna makes those ancient engravings come alive.

4

**You receive a full proposal within 24 hours**

Day-by-day itinerary, full pricing, accommodation details, transport plan. Free. No obligation. You decide whether it is the trip you imagined — and if not, we revise.

## Three real trips we built

<b>Anniversary couple — Chicago</b>	They wanted the real Sahara — not the tourist version. We routed them through the Draa Valley, stopped at Tamegroute's manuscript library on a quiet Tuesday (completely empty), overnighted in a private riad in Zagora, then 4x4'd to Erg Chigaga for two nights in a private camp with no other guests. Dinner on the dunes both nights. Zero other travelers within sight.
<b>Solo female traveler — Seattle</b>	She wanted wellness and depth, not Instagram highlights. We built her week around a hammam morning in Marrakech, a slow medina day with a female guide, riad yoga at sunrise, two nights of desert silence at Erg Chigaga, and a final day in Essaouira with the Atlantic wind and nothing to do. She came back two years later and brought three friends.
<b>Family of 6 — two parents, four kids aged 8-17</b>	The teenagers wanted adventure. The parents wanted culture and peace. Mornings with the guide (Ait Ben Haddou, kasbahs, Draa Valley), afternoons free at the riad pool. Quad bikes into Erg Chebbi for the teenagers. Camel trek at sunset for the parents. Private riad buyout — the whole property for the family. Every family member cited different highlights.

**THE POINT**

We do not sell tours. We design trips. A tour is a product that exists before you arrive. A trip is something built because you exist.

## CHAPTER THREE

# When to Go

*Month by month. No vague answers.*

Morocco has five distinct climate zones. The coast, the imperial cities, the mountains, the Draa Valley, and the deep desert all behave differently. Most travel advice treats Morocco as one climate. It is not.

MONTH	MARRAKECH & IMPERIAL CITIES	DRAA VALLEY & ZAGORA	ERG CHEBBI & ERG CHIGAGA	VERDICT
Jan–Feb	12–18°C Cool, some rain	10–20°C Cold desert nights	5–22°C Near-freezing nights	Low crowds, great value. Pack warm layers.
Mar–Apr	20–26°C Ideal	22–32°C Perfect	18–34°C Best window	Peak season. Book 3+ months ahead.
May	28–33°C Warm	30–38°C Hot days	25–38°C Hot but manageable	Excellent. Crowds thin after Easter.
Jun–Aug	36–42°C Very hot	40–48°C Extreme	40–48°C Extreme	Coast only. Inland Morocco in summer is brutal.
Sep	30–36°C Warm	32–40°C Hot	28–40°C Cooling down	Shoulder season. Last 2 weeks excellent.
Oct–Nov	24–30°C Ideal	22–34°C Perfect	18–34°C Prime desert	Second peak season. October the best month.
Dec	14–20°C Pleasant	12–22°C Cool	8–22°C Cold nights	Quiet, festive cities. Desert needs warm gear.

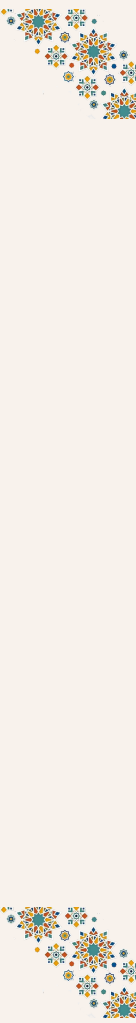
*Highlighted = optimal travel windows.*

## The Ramadan question

Ramadan is not a reason to avoid Morocco — but it requires a different itinerary. Restaurants close during daylight. The cities come spectacularly alive after iftar. If your trip overlaps with Ramadan, tell us. We will design your days around it.

**BOOKING  
WINDOW**

For March–April and October–November: book 3–4 months ahead. The private camps in Erg Chigaga have limited capacity and fill early. All other months: 4–6 weeks is usually sufficient.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Solo Female Travel in Morocco

*The honest guide. No sugarcoating, no fearmongering.*

Morocco is rated Level 1 by the US State Department — the same rating as France, Germany, Spain and Japan. "Exercise Normal Precautions." The reality on the ground matches the rating.

SITUATION	INDEPENDENT TRAVEL	WITH MAJESTY MOROCCO
Medina navigation	The souks are a genuine maze. Persistent vendors target solo walkers beside you. Approaches handled. You simply	Y
Transport	Petit taxis require negotiation. Prices sometimes inflated for solo women.	Private vehicle for every journey. Driver meets you at your door.
Accommodation	Variable quality and safety. Research dependent.	Every riad personally vetted. Staff briefed. You are expected and
Desert travel	Group tours mix you with strangers in shared camps.	Private camp. Private guide. Your desert belongs entirely to you.
Evening in the medina	Can feel uncomfortable after dark in certain areas.	Guide accompanies or advises exactly which areas are fine alone.
24/7 support	Your phone and a travel forum.	WhatsApp access to our Marrakech team. Real people, real respo

*"I was nervous about going alone. I had nothing to be nervous about. My guide was extraordinary — professional, knowledgeable, and genuinely kind. I never felt anything other than completely safe. I came home and immediately started planning my next trip."*

— Rachel T., Seattle WA, Solo Wellness Trip 2025

## Practical notes

- Dress code: lightweight loose clothing covering shoulders and knees is practical in the medina — not required, but reduces unwanted attention.
- Hammam protocol: traditional hammams have separate sections or hours for women and men. Your guide books the right session.

- Visa: US citizens enter Morocco visa-free for up to 90 days. Valid passport only.
- Currency: Moroccan Dirham (MAD). Cards accepted at most riads. Cash useful for souks and tips.
- Health: no vaccinations required for US citizens. Standard travel insurance recommended.



# Your trip does not exist yet.

*That's exactly the point.*

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Majesty Morocco designs 100% private tailor-made experiences for American travelers. Every trip built from scratch for the specific person making it.

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[contact@majestymorocco.com](mailto:contact@majestymorocco.com)