Eagle-Eye Tours

Morocco Itinerary

Link: Morocco

Tour Overview

Our Morocco Birding Tour is specially designed for birdwatchers, blending excellent birding opportunities with rich cultural experiences across Morocco. Following the classic birding route, it offers chances to see most Maghreb specialties and endemics.

We will explore a diverse range of natural habitats, including High Atlas Mountains, rocky central plateaus, mosaic agro-ecosystems and oasis-like palm groves, as well as wetlands and Atlantic coastal ecosystems. Additionally, we explore vibrant urban areas such as the historic medina of Marrakech and traditional towns, providing a fascinating cultural dimension that complements and enriches the birdwatching experience.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Marrakesh (RAK Airport)

Our Morocco Birding Tour will begin this evening in Marrakesh. After arriving at the Marrakesh Menara International Airport (RAK) you will transfer to the hotel in the nearby city centre—one of the most iconic and evocative destinations in Morocco. In the late afternoon/early evening, we will gather comfortably at the hotel for a welcome briefing, where we'll introduce ourselves, review the trip's key features, go over the target bird species and daily itinerary, and address any questions. We may also have the opportunity to spot some of the first local bird specialties in the hotel's immediate surroundings. We will enjoy our first dinner together at the hotel, which will serve as our introduction to Morocco's excellent and diverse cuisine. Overnight at a hotel near the centre of Marrakesh.

Day 2: Marrakesh – Oukaimeden (High Atlas) – Jemaa el Fna Square



After breakfast, we will travel into the High Atlas Mountains, passing through the picturesque Ourika Valley—a region of traditional Berber villages and terraced hillsides. As we gain altitude, the landscape becomes increasingly rugged until we reach our destination: the Oukaimeden plateau, located at around 2,700 meters above sea level. This high-altitude plateau lies above the tree line and is easily accessible by road. Here, in open alpine terrain, we'll explore on foot in search of iconic and endemic mountain species such as Crimson-winged Finch, Atlas Shorelark, and Moussier's Redstart. We also expect to encounter Alpine and Red-billed Chough, Levaillant's Woodpecker, Barbary Falcon, African Chaffinch and Barbary Ground Squirrels. During our visit, we'll also stop at a scenic viewpoint overlooking the snow-capped summit of Jebel Toubkal (4,167 m), the highest peak in North Africa. In the afternoon, we'll return to our hotel in Marrakech for a short rest before heading into the city to experience the lively Jemaa el Fna Square, a UNESCO World Heritage site full of music, food, and tradition. Overnight at a hotel near the center of Marrakesh (second night).

Day 3: Tizi n'Tichka Pass – Ait Ben Haddou



Today, we say farewell to Marrakesh as we continue our journey deeper into Morocco's dramatic landscapes. We will depart southward, ascending the winding Tizi n'Tichka Pass (2,000 m) through the High Atlas Mountains. Our first stop will be at a forest track where we have a good chance of observing the Moroccan subspecies of the Common Crossbill and African Chaffinch and African Blue Tit, feeding among the conifers. As we continue ascending along the sinuous mountain road, we'll keep an eye out for Black Wheatear and Long-legged Buzzard. Mid-morning, we'll pause at a scenic terrace to enjoy a traditional Moroccan mint tea or coffee while taking in splendid panoramic views of the surrounding valleys and peaks. The route through the Telouet Valley offers spectacular views of traditional Berber villages and ancient kasbahs perched on the hillsides. Our final destination, Ait Ben Haddou, lies beside the river and is famed for its remarkable traditional fortified architecture. This UNESCO World Heritage site has served as the backdrop for numerous Hollywood films since the 1970s, including well-known titles such as Gladiator and Lawrence of Arabia. Here, we may spot species such as White-crowned Wheatear and Desert Lark. Overnight at Kasbah La Cigogne (or similar) in Ait Ben Haddou.

Day 4: Ouarzazate – Boumalne Dades / Tagdilt Track



After some early birding, we will make our way to Boumalne Dades. En route, we will drive through the picturesque Valley of the Roses, famous for its extensive rose cultivation used in the production of rose water and various cosmetics—a unique and fragrant highlight of the region. Upon arrival, we will visit the Tagdilt Track, an extensive rocky plateau locally known as a hamada. This vast, barren landscape of rocky desert terrain offers a striking habitat for desert-adapted bird species. We will explore the surroundings of a nearby landfill site, which over the past decade has become an essential and reliable birdwatching spot for enthusiasts hoping to observe species such as Thick-billed Lark, Temminck's Lark, Red-rumped Wheatear, and occasionally the elusive Black-bellied Sandgrouse at close range. Overnight at Hotel Xaluca Dades or La Perle du Dades in Boumalne Dades.

Day 5: Tagdilt Track – Dades Gorges



We'll begin the day with an early dawn visit to the Tagdilt Track, taking advantage of the morning light and increased bird activity. Following this, we'll visit nearby cliffs, where, with the invaluable assistance of our expert local guides, we'll search for some of Morocco's most sought-after bird species, including the very scarce Maghreb Wheatear, Pharaoh Eagle-Owl, Lanner Falcon, and Desert Wheatear, all of which breed in the area. In the afternoon, we'll explore the breathtaking Dades Gorges—a dramatic canyon carved into red sandstone, framed by towering cliffs and dotted with unique rock formations known as the "Monkey Fingers" (Doigts de Singe). This spectacular landscape provides a prime habitat for Bonelli's Eagle and offers stunning panoramic views of the rugged Atlas Mountains. Overnight at Hotel Xaluca or La Perle du Dades in Boumalne Dades (second night).

Day 6: Boumalne Dades – Goulmima – Erfoud – Merzouga



This day will primarily be a transition stage as we make our way toward the sandy desert of Erg Chebbi in Merzouga. However, it will also offer a second chance to spot some of the iconic species that we might have missed the previous day. Our main target will be the elusive Streaked Scrub Warbler—a truly skulking bird that can be challenging to observe and especially to photograph. Before reaching the desert, we'll visit the nearby ancient irrigation systems close to Erfoud, where traditional water channels—locally known as khettaras—draw groundwater through underground tunnels to sustain agriculture in this arid region. Once in the desert, we may also encounter the first groups of Brown-necked Ravens, a striking species well adapted to this harsh environment. We'll arrive at Merzouga and our hotel situated at the base of the towering sand dunes, with time to relax and enjoy a spectacular desert sunset surrounded by camels. We will have time to stroll around the hotel grounds, where in spring some areas become seasonally flooded amid the desert. Even when dry, these wadis and water channels often attract a good number of migrant warblers. Overnight at Hotel Yasmina in Merzouga.

Day 7: Merzouga (Erg Chebbi) – 4x4 Excursion into the Sahara Desert



One of the absolute highlights of the trip awaits us at sunrise, when we set off on a 4x4 excursion deep into the wild dunes of the Sahara Desert. Traversing the spectacular Erg Chebbi landscape, we'll search for iconic desert species including Desert Sparrow, African Desert Warbler, Cream-colored Coursers, and Bar-tailed Lark—especially near the remote Algerian border. We'll have the invaluable assistance of local guides and nomad shepherds to help us locate the elusive and legendary Egyptian Nightjar at its day-roost. The Spotted and Crowned Sandgrouse will be patiently awaited at a specially created waterhole designed to attract these fascinating birds. During the excursion, we'll also enjoy comfort stops at cozy desert campsites where we can rest in the shade, enjoy Moroccan tea and snacks, and observe the charming Desert Sparrow, a species that often nests close to human habitation, much like other sparrows. While extremely difficult to spot, we cannot rule out the possibility of encountering the rare Houbara Bustard or the elusive Fennec Fox during our journey. Overnight at Hotel Yasmina in Merzouga (second night).

Day 8: Rissani



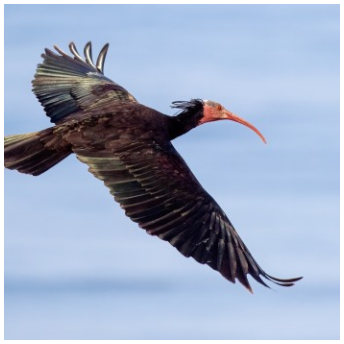
After a relaxed breakfast overlooking the sand dunes, we'll bid farewell to the vast desert of Erg Chebbi, marking the end of our desert adventure as we begin our journey westward. We will visit the vibrant town of Rissani, where we'll visit a traditional royal market—quite distinct from the more tourist-oriented souks of Marrakesh—offering an authentic glimpse into local life and commerce. The surrounding palm forest is home to species such as Fulvous Babbler and Maghreb Lark, and features historic kasbahs reflecting the rich heritage of the region. Rissani is also notable as the birthplace of the Alaouite dynasty, Morocco's current royal family. We'll pause for lunch near Alnif at a charming local restaurant nestled among fertile orchards, where Laughing Doves are commonly seen. We will continue towards Boumalne Dades where we will stay the night.

Day 9: Taroudant



Today marks a new transition stage as we journey westward toward a very different region of Morocco—the Atlantic coast. We will begin our morning with a walk near the Todra Gorge and surrounding palm groves and traditional orchards. Here, we'll enjoy observing common species such as Blackcap, Serin, and Garden Bulbul, while also taking in everyday scenes of rural Moroccan life. As we continue our route toward Taroudant, we'll pass near the region of Taliouine, renowned for its centuries-old saffron production. Known as Morocco's "red gold," this precious spice is still harvested by hand and plays an important role in the local economy and cultural identity. Overnight near Taroudant.

Day 10: Agadir – Tamri National Park



After breakfast, we'll begin our journey toward the Atlantic coast, crossing part of the Argan Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO-recognized area that protects the unique ecosystem of the argan tree (Argania spinosa), endemic to southwestern Morocco and vital to local biodiversity and land conservation. Later in the day, we'll visit the Tamri area, one of the last remaining strongholds of the critically endangered Northern Bald Ibis. This coastal habitat also offers excellent chances to observe Audouin's Gulls, Atlas Long-legged Buzzard, and—with some luck—Skuas and Shearwaters offshore. Overnight in Agadir.

Day 11: Souss Massa National Park



Today we'll dedicate the entire day to birding in the Souss Massa National Park, one of Morocco's most ecologically rich protected areas. This unique coastal and wetland reserve offers the chance to once again enjoy views of the critically endangered Northern Bald Ibis, which breeds in the area's coastal cliffs. We'll also search for other key species such as the elusive Black-crowned Tchagra and the Brown-throated Martin, both of which inhabit the park's mosaic of habitats. The flooded areas and coastal wetlands will allow us to significantly expand our trip list with a wide variety of waders, waterbirds, and other migrant species. This park is also considered one of the best places in the country to spot Moussier's Redstart, a striking North African endemic that often shows well here. On our way back to the hotel in Agadir, we'll visit a women's cooperative specializing in the traditional processing of argan nuts, where we'll learn how this emblematic tree is transformed into Morocco's renowned argan oil and high-quality natural cosmetics. Overnight in Agadir (second night).

Day 12: Agadir – Souss River Estuary – Return to Marrakesh



On our final morning, we'll enjoy a last birding stop at the Souss River estuary, just outside Agadir. This rich wetland ecosystem, where freshwater meets the Atlantic, serves as an important stopover and wintering site for many migratory shorebirds on their journeys to and from Europe. We'll be on the lookout for a wide variety of waders, as well as Greater Flamingos, White Storks, and other waterbirds that thrive in this productive habitat. With its mudflats, shallow lagoons, and surrounding scrub, the estuary offers a memorable final opportunity to round out our species list. After wrapping up our last birding session in Morocco, we'll begin our journey back to Marrakech via the modern highway, where our trip will officially come to an end. Overnight in Marrakesh.

Day 13: Departure

Our Morocco Birding Tour ends today in Marrakesh. You can depart anytime today.

What to Expect

Overview

This is a moderately paced birding tour with full days in the field. Most mornings begin with breakfast and departure around 8:00 a.m., and we often do not return to our accommodations until late afternoon. Morocco follows a different daily rhythm than many North American travelers may be accustomed to. Lunch is typically served around 2:00 p.m., while dinner is often not until 8:00 p.m

Walking

The walking on this tour will generally be easy with short, gentle walks. The longest walk was at the

gorges and cliffs of Imiter and was about 2.5km taking approximately 2.5 hours in length.

Driving

Transportation is provided in a comfortable minibus with AC and a local professional driver. Some seats are intentionally left empty to maximize comfort. Some long drives are necessary to reach the country's diverse regions and habitats. The tour also features a 4×4 desert excursion, guaranteeing every participant a window seat for optimal viewing and photography.

Accommodations

Accommodations are generally above average, ranging from modern to traditional, charming hotels, comfortable with private bath.

Food

We will have very good traditional Moroccan cuisine with some international options. Some days we will have picnic lunches in the field. Most dietary restrictions can be accommodated with prior notice.

Weather

Weather conditions can vary considerably over the course of this tour due to the wide range of habitats and elevations we visit. For much of the trip, expect generally mild daytime temperatures, although periods of rain, strong winds, and occasional storms are possible.

Conditions in the Atlas Mountains will be significantly cooler, particularly in the mornings and evenings, and temperatures may approach or fall below freezing at higher elevations. Warm clothing, including thermal base layers, a fleece or insulated jacket, hat, and gloves, is strongly recommended.

Guiding

Our guide will be an English-speaking bird guide, with in-depth knowledge of Moroccan avifauna and ecology. We will have support from local guides in key areas (e.g., desert species, raptors, owls).

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All accommodations
- All meals, with water and one soft drink per meal
- Guides - 1 guide with 4 to 8 pax, 2 guides with 9 to 10 pax
- All park, conservation and entrance fees
- Gratuities to drivers
- Airport transfers
- Ground transportation

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to/from Marrakech
- Travel Insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Tips for guides
- Items of a personal nature
