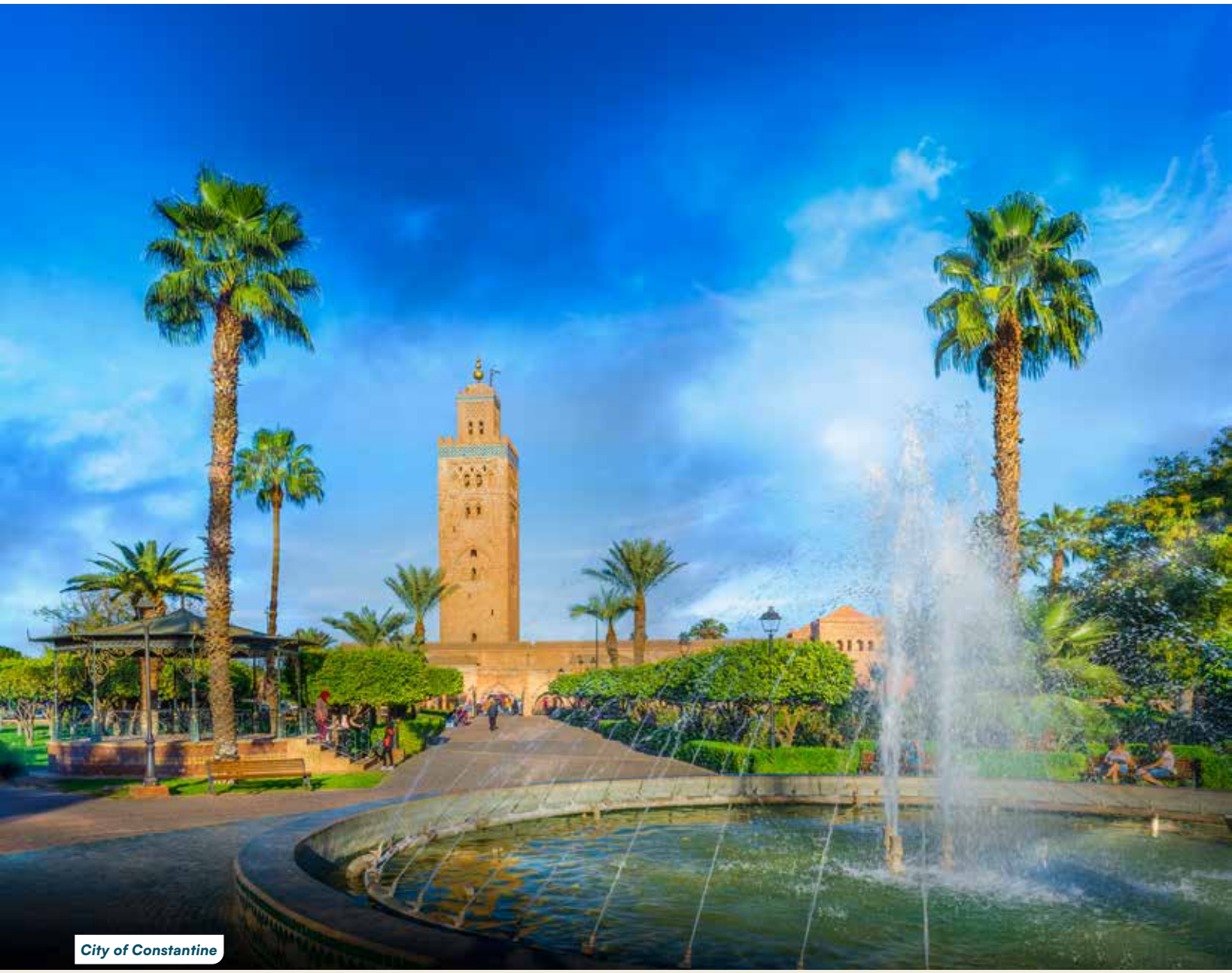
SPECIALIST
JOURNEYS



City of Constantine

Morocco: Tangier to Marrakesh
Imperial cities and Lords of the Atlas

Morocco is known as the 'Maghreb el-Aqsa' the land of the further west, encircled by three great seas and tucked in at the corner of Africa. This tour programme focuses on the legacy of the medieval dynasties of Morocco and its Imperial Cities on a journey which extends from the northern tip of the country at Tangiers to the borders of the desert at Marrakesh in the south.

Key highlights

- Explore the remarkable Roman site of Volubilis, ancient capital of Mauretania Tingitania
- Enjoy the sensation of time travel in one of the world's most complete medieval cities — Fez
- Discover Marrakesh and its famous Jamaa el Fena Square with its storytellers, jugglers, musicians and snake charmers

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Day One: UK - Tangier
Arrive into Tangier and meet your expert Guide Lecturer and fellow travellers at your hotel.

Meals: Dinner

Day Two: Lixus & Tangier
We start our explorations with **Lixus**, originally a Phoenician settlement and later Roman control. The site occupies a commanding position with spectacular views over the Loukos Estuary. A small portion of this large site has been excavated but we are able to see temple remains, a Paleochristian church, as well as bath complexes. Returning to Tangier for lunch, we spend our afternoon exploring this ancient trading city, once one of the world's most popular literary hangouts.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Three: Tangier - Chefchaouan - Fez
Today we make the long journey south to Fez, stopping en route at **Chefchaouen**, the stunningly picturesque blue-tinted city. Settled in the 15th century by refugees fleeing the Reconquista, the town was both a safe haven and strategic outpost in the Rif Mountains. After lunch, we continue to Fez arriving in the late afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Four: Fez
Today is devoted to **Fez**, the most ancient of the Imperial cities on the north-south caravan route and one of the best-preserved medieval settlements in North Africa. We make sense of this magnificent muddle of mosques, minarets, palaces and squares with, at its heart, the warren of winding lanes which make up the old medina. We visit the odiferous tannery and admire the stunning architecture of its Mosques *(from the exterior — Morocco is traditionally strict and prohibits non-Muslims to enter)* including the **Bou Inania Madrasa**, founded in the 14th century and considered the epitome of Marinid architecture; the 9th-century **Andalucían Mosque**, built by refugees from Andalucía fleeing the repression of the Umayyads, and **Qarawiyyin University**, built in the 9th century and a smorgasbord of Moroccan architectural styles, including elements from the Almoravid and Almohad periods.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Five: Volubilis
We spend our day at the most famous archaeological site in Morocco, **Volubilis**. The ancient city developed from the 3rd century BCE, largely because it is in a fertile area, but really came to its own in the 1st century AD when it became capital of the kingdom of Mauretania. Many of the city's most photogenic ruins, including temples, a basilica and a magnificent triumphal arch of Caracalla, date to this period when the city grew wealthy from the olive oil trade. This opulence can be seen in the scale of the elite residences which are decorated by exquisite mosaics, many of which are still in situ.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Six: Fez - Meknès - Rabat
Leaving Fez, we travel west to Rabat, stopping en route at **Meknès**. Founded in the medieval period by the Almoravids and once capital of Morocco in the 17th century, the city also boasts a UNESCO listed Medina. We see the Bab al-Mansour gate constructed in the 17th century using zellij tilework and Roman columns and walking along its winding streets past a symphony of colours, street vendors and madrassas, we admire the façade of the Great Mosque.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Seven: Rabat
We enjoy a day in Rabat, starting with a visit to the **Museum of History and Civilisation**, which contains the most extensive collection of archaeological artefacts found in the country. The museum holds prehistoric and pre-Islamic collections, including objects uncovered by archaeologists working on the Roman sites of Volubilis, Banasa and Thamusida. We also see the **Hassan Tower**, a minaret of an incomplete mosque by the third Almohad Caliph in 1195, whose ambitions to build the largest minaret and mosque in the world were thwarted by his death. The tour continues to the UNESCO-listed Medina and Kasbah of Rabat, which is smaller than the medina in Fez.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Eight: Rabat - Marrakesh
Today we make the journey south to Marrakesh, arriving in time for lunch. The architecture of this vibrant city founded in the medieval period by the Berber Almoravids is decidedly Andalusian in character. In the afternoon, we explore the **Kutubiyya Minaret**, which is decorated in typical Almohad style and akin to the Giralda of Seville and the Hassan Tower of Rabat.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Nine: Marrakesh
This morning we visit the 16th-century **Saadian Tombs**, which includes a medieval necropolis and the **Dar Si Said Museum**, an elegant 19th-century Hispano-Islamic residence which today includes a museum of artisanal art works. After lunch, we explore the 16th-century **Baddi Palace**, a sumptuous residence designed to showcase the power of the Saadian Sultans and **Ben Yousef Madrasa**. The day ends with a visit to the famous **Yves Saint Laurent Museum** in the **Jardin Majorelle**, which includes a botanical garden, and the **Islamic Art Museum** of Marrakech.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Ten: Marrakesh - UK
Depart for the airport or continue your trip at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast

SPECIALIST
JOURNEYS

Activity level - **Moderate** ●●○

Your Expert Guide Lecturer

Dr Eireann Marshall



A Research Associate and Associate Lecturer with the Open University, Eireann has published a number of articles on Ancient North Africa and has co-edited volumes on Death and Disease in the Ancient City and Women's influence on Classical Civilisation. Eireann has led many tours, including several to Ravenna, Venice, Pompeii, Sicily and Tunisia, and is bilingual in English and Italian.

Your tour includes

- Expert Guide Lecturer & professional Tour Manager
- Entries to all sites as per the itinerary
- Andante Field Notes
- All taxes & gratuities to local staff *(drivers, waiters, site custodians)*
- All local transport aboard a private air-conditioned coach
- 2 nights at The Marina Bay City Center Hotel, Tangier, 3 nights at the Hotel Les Merinides, Fez, 2 nights at the NJ Hôtel, Rabat & 2 nights at the Kenzi Rose Garden, Marrakech
- 9 breakfasts, 8 lunches & 9 dinners
- Water with all meals, tea or coffee with dinner



Djémila