



Morocco – Essaouira:

The Gnawa and World Music Festival

Morocco 5 days – June 24-28 2010 (ex-Marrakech)

Morocco 8 days – June 24-July 1 2010 (ex-Marrakech)

Essaouira is a picturesque port town on Morocco's Atlantic coast. Built by the Portuguese it is full of narrow whitewashed alleyways and beautiful squares. It's also an artistic community and a centre of Gnawa music. In June each year, it hosts the extraordinary Gnawa and World Music Festival.

Thousands of people crowd the streets, milling between the open-air stages. There's a good range of top Gnawan musicians and international artists playing many different styles of music. There are great late night sessions getting you deep into the roots of Gnawa music.

The music shares its roots with American blues as the people were brought to Morocco as slaves from sub-Saharan Africa. As someone said, "the Africans who were brought to America as slaves created the blues, whilst those sent to Morocco created Gnawa".

Our tour offers a long weekend in Essaouira, with two full days to enjoy the full range of the music and the opportunity to explore the narrow lanes of the old walled medina and the wonderful long beaches beyond.

All Songlines Music Travellers will receive an information sheet about the local music plus recommended recordings and DVDs.

Morocco – Essaouira

Itinerary

Day 1 Thurs

We start our weekend in Marrakech, destination for so many low-cost flights to Morocco. As many such flights arrive in the late afternoon, our tour is timed to start after their arrival. We will meet at our downtown hotel and from there head, via the airport, for the coast. The drive to Essaouira take about three hours. Arriving part way through the evening, after a quick check-in at our hotel, it's time to get straight out on the streets to sample the first evening of the festival.

Days 2-3 Fri & Sat

For four days, the town is taken over by music. Whilst the main stage is on the Place Moulay Hassan, the central square, there are several other stages, dotted through the town and scattered in and around the walled medina. Performances run through into the night. Taking a break from the music, there are the intriguing backstreets of the medina to explore, the ramparts of the old Portuguese town, the fishing harbour, and the beaches outside town to sample. A heady mix of music and sightseeing for two crowded days.

Day 4 Sun

Today is the last day of the festival, and things are winding down. We will probably leave in the late morning, and reach Marrakech mid-afternoon. Time then to head for the Djemma El Fna, the throbbing main square at the heart of Marrakech, explore the maze-like souks and perhaps indulge in a little last-minute shopping. If you wish, our Travel Leader can arrange a guide to take you on a walking tour of the old city. In the evening we suggest a visit to a restaurant where local musicians play; a fitting musical accompaniment to a last get-together at the end of an exhilarating weekend.

Day 5 Mon

After breakfast our tour ends; time to head for the airport for the flight home, or continue your travels in Morocco.

Morocco – Essaouira plus Marrakech

Days 1-4 As above

Days 5-7 Mon-Wed

After breakfast on the Monday our Travel Leader will discuss ideas with you for your time in the city. You may want to arrange a walking tour of the city or sightseeing, try a *hammam*, or even head out of the city to the nearby Atlas Mountains for the day. One of the best things to do is just spend time in cafés around the city watching the world go by. There are impressive architectural monuments like the 12th century Koutoubia minaret, the symbol of the city, the El Badi Palace and the Majorelle Gardens.

Day 8 Thurs

After breakfast our tour ends. Time to head for the airport and the flight home, or continue your travels in Morocco.

To reserve your place

Please read the booking conditions on the website and contact the reservations office on:

+44 (0)20 8505 2582
 or email:
songlines@thegroupscompany.com

Pricing details

We have designed these tours to give you the option of taking up an all-inclusive package which includes your air seats, or the option of making your own way there and then meeting up with the rest of your party at the first hotel.

Morocco – Essaouira

5-day tour June 24-June 28 2010 (ex-Marrakech)

Tour price – £395 per person

Price includes:

- four nights accommodation in Marrakech and Essaouira on a bed and breakfast basis,
- transfers between Marrakech and Essaouira
- three days at the Gnawa festival
- the services of a Songlines Travel Leader

Not included: Flights, single supplement, travel insurance, gratuities, items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Single supplement: £139 per person.

Morocco – Essaouira plus Marrakech

8-day tour June 24-July 1 2010 (ex-Marrakech)

Tour price – £449 per person

Price includes:

- seven nights accommodation in Marrakech and Essaouira on a bed and breakfast basis,
- transfers between Marrakech and Essaouira
- three days at the Gnawa festival
- the services of a Songlines Travel Leader

Not included: Flights, single supplement, travel insurance, gratuities, items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Single supplement: £189 per person.

Flights are available from London from £123 in connection with this tour. You may book these yourself or we can book these for you. Transfers from and to Casablanca airport are included with flights purchased through Songlines Music Travel.

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Fishing harbour in Essaouira