



## The Saffron Trail

### MOROCCO

A **horseback trail ride** in the Siroua mountains, a volcanic range situated between the High Atlas and the Anti Atlas. The area is famed for its saffron production and is the ideal destination for spring/autumn when the desert is too hot for riding and the mountains too cold.

<b>Trail Riding</b>	 <b>8 days / 6 riding</b>	 <b>From £1,130</b>	
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### ITINERARY

## Highlights

- Long meadows for nice canters
- Siroua landscape : volcanic rock interspersed with small Berber villages, traditional sheep pens and saffron fields
- Ride traditional Moroccan Barb and Arabian stallions which are well schooled and well balanced
- High level of service whilst camping during the ride

## Day 1 — 1 : ARRIVAL IN MARRAKECH

You will be met on arrival in Marrakech and transferred to your hotel, usually in Marrakech but occasionally in Ouarzazate. If in Marrakesh then the hotel is situated in the Gueliz area. The Jemaa el-Fna square is a 5 minute drive by taxi or a 20 minute walk on foot.

Please see dates and prices for transfer information.

Remember that flights are not included but can be booked on request.

## Day 2 — 2 : MARRAKECH - TAMLLAKOUTE - 2-3 hours riding

### Moroccan Camp

At 07:00 you will be collected from the hotel reception and transferred to Ait Marssid in the Siroua massif (c. 4h drive). Here you will be welcomed by your equestrian guide and the logistical team. After lunch you will be introduced to your horse and after a short ride to ensure everyone feels comfortable with their horses, you will set off on the trail. Follow the bank of the Anzal Oueds to the village of Tamlakoute where you spend your first night of camping.

## Day 3 — 3 : TAMLLAKOUTE - AMEZRI - 5 hours riding

### Moroccan Camp

The morning starts along a track which offers the opportunity for faster riding, before crossing the little town of Tinzaline. You then ride across rocky terrain until reaching the village of Tizgawine which appears lost in the mountains. After lunch you continue to Merzoug and the vast Amezri plateau, from where there are beautiful views over the surrounding mountains.

## Day 4 — 4 : AMEZRI - TALAT N'MDIST - 5 hours riding

 Moroccan Camp

Today, your trail takes you to the Siroua summits, crossing the Ait Tigga which towers above the valley of Ait Semgane with its saffron fields. You keep climbing up a path which offers views across the numerous Berber villages which are scattered along the valley. Lunch is taken above the sheep pens at Tiswatine.

In the afternoon, you ride up to the well known high pass of Tizi n'Anzommer (2,732m) for views of the surrounding mountains. Descend along old shepherding trails to your camp in Mdist valley.

## Day 5 — 5 : TALAT N'MDIST - AZAZOUGZANE - 5 hours riding

 Moroccan Camp

During the morning you ride along a track which crosses a mountainous and desert landscape which is rich in medicinal plants. Berbers travel all over Siroua and collect several plants to sell in Moroccan souks. Descend along a scenic track until reaching the river with views over Ighighi gorges. There is time to rest and enjoy lunch at the foot of Djebel Tazoulte.

In the afternoon you ride along a trail which brings you to the sheep pens at Azib Azazougzane where camp is set up for the night.

## Day 6 — 6 : AZAZOUGZANE - ANMID - 5 hours riding

 Moroccan Camp

After breakfast you continue riding through green meadows and sheepfolds in a magnificent rocky landscape. Lunch is taken amongst the sheep pens before climbing to Tizi n'Ait Qalla for a panoramic view over the large village of Anmid. Set up camp at the base of the village.

## Day 7 — 7 : ANMID - AMASSINE - MARRAKECH - 2-3 hours riding

After your final night of camping, ride out in the direction of Agrilaoune village. You will ride on a long track which towers above beautiful Berber villages which hang from the mountains steep sides. After a final canter, you say goodbye to your horses and board a vehicle for the transfer back to Marrakesh and your hotel (c. 4h drive).

## Day 8 — 8 : DEPARTURE FROM MARRAKECH

You will be transferred to the airport in time for your flight home.

### DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
29/09/2024	06/10/2024	£1,130	Open

## Price details

- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room/tent.
- Groups are composed of a minimum of 3 international riders and a maximum of 10 riders, plus guides.
- Please note: the ride will confirm for two riders on payment of a supplement of c. €365/£315/\$385 per person. Once the group has reached three people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.
- Transfer is included for an arrival in Marrakesh before 4:00 pm on the first day (transfer is leaving at 5:00 pm) and after 12:00 noon from Marrakesh on the last day. For flights not matching the transfer times, a private transfer can be organised at an extra cost of €25/£20/£30 each way.
- There is no single supplement if you are willing to share, but to request single accommodation for the whole trail, the supplement is c.

€115/£100/\$125.

- Please note that the horses are only c. 15hh so if you weigh over 90kg or are taller than 6ft 5inches then please contact us before booking so that we can check there is a suitable mount for you.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

## Price includes

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### SUPPORT TEAM

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1 English-speaking horse guide  
1 groom

### SUPPORT TEAM

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1 vehicle and driver  
1 cook  
1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

### INLAND TRANSPORTS

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2 people in a 3 man tent and foam mattress  
Double room in hotel standard 3/4\* in Marrakech

### ACCOMMODATION

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Full board from dinner on day 1 to last breakfast D8  
Filtered or bottled water

### MEALS

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First aid kit

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

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Beverage (except during the trek) and personal extra  
Free lunches on D1 and D8 depending on your departure time

### TRANSPORTS

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International flights

### EXTRA

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Small group supplement. See above the price details.

### EXTRA

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Cancellation and travel insurances are not included. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend to take out an insurance policy as soon as your travel is booked in case of cancellation.

## Optional

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### ACCOMMODATION

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Single room/tent supplement

# Horses

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The horses are all Barb Arabs or Arabian stallions. They are tough and keen but sensible and sure-footed across the varied terrain. As they are stallions, they do need to be handled with softness and you do have to maintain distance from the other riders, but they are well schooled. Their average height is 15 hands.

## Guide & local team

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You will be guided by local Moroccan's who are familiar with the horses and the landscape. They will be accompanied by grooms. At least one of the guides will speak English but the grooms may only speak French and Arabic.

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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You need to be a competent rider, capable and in control in all paces. You must be able to rise to the trot and canter in a forward seat. It is also important to be a confident rider as you will be riding stallions.

Please note that the horses are only c. 15hh so if you weigh over 90kg or are taller than 6ft 5inches then please contact us before booking so that we can check there is a suitable mount for you.

### PACE

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There is a lot of walking on this trail because of the long hours and steepness of the tracks, however there are opportunities to trot and canter each day where the terrain allows.

Please note that canters are always in single file due to the fact you are riding stallions.

### TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

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You will be expected to assist with grooming, tacking up and untacking your horse each day whilst out on the trail. It would also be appreciated if you could help with camp tasks such as putting up tents or watering and feeding the horses.

### TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

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You need to be physically fit for long hours in the saddle (c. 6 hours) in the African sun and at high altitudes. The terrain is varied to include steep ascents/descents and there may be holes to avoid. Temperatures are cooler in the mountains than in Marrakech because of the altitude but it can still be hot and very sunny in summer. Please remember that there is always a level of unpredictability when riding in the mountains and you may experience wind, cold or even storms.

Having previous experience of riding a trail of several days would be an advantage but it is not compulsory. Guests who do not ride regularly are requested to get fit prior to the ride. It is of particular importance to ensure you are comfortable and balanced when riding at speed across rough terrain and open spaces.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life.

### EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

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Forestier trail riding saddles and comfortable tack.

Saddlebags are provided.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

## TRAVEL INFO

### COMFORT

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The first and last nights are in a 3 star hotel in either Marrakech or Ouarzazate, in twin or triple rooms. There is the option to upgrade to a riad for extra cost.

Whilst camping, you stay in two person tents with mattresses (you must bring your own sleeping bag). There is a communal tent for dining, a shower tent with hot water (morning/evening) and a toilet tent.

### MEALS

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A cook travels with you and prepares all of the meals. You will usually have a cold lunch and a hot evening meal when camping. Meals are typical

Moroccan cuisine.

Water is provided but you should bring your own bottle.

Special diets can be accommodated, however please note that some foods can be difficult to find in Morocco. Certain diets may incur a supplement (gluten-free diets can be accommodated at a supplementary charge of €100/£90/\$110 for instance). All dietary requirements must be specified at the time of booking.

## **CLIMATE**

The Atlas mountains have a typical mountainous climate with cold winters and the rides don't run during the winter months.

During the summer months the mountains offer a good alternative to the heat of the desert or Marrakech. The nights are cool without being cold (9-14c depending on altitude) and the days are usually sunny with temperatures around 25c. In short, the climate is ideal from May to September, with temperatures dropping in March/April and October.

Marrakech has a Mediterranean climate which is usually hot summers and a clear blue sky, with cold winters. The best season to visit this city is Spring/Autumn when the temperatures are pleasant all day (22-30c).

## **TIPS**

It is customary, as a sign of thanks to tip the local team. We recommend a tip of €50/£45, but you should give what you feel comfortable with. We recommend giving the tips to your guide who can distribute them amongst all of the staff members.

## **PACKING LIST**

### Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana

### Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and dust
- T-shirts
- Fleece, jumper or jacket - the evenings can be cold
- Waterproof jacket - the rains can be difficult to foresee and it's better to be prepared. Layering is key to cope with the fluctuations in temperature between day and night
- Casual clothes for the evening

### Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Shorts for lazy lunchtimes
- Casual clothes for the evening

### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps as long chaps/long boots can get very hot.
- Sandals, flip-flops or trainers for moving around the camp
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding

### Nightwear

- Thermals are a good option for sleeping in, or a t-shirt and shorts for warmer nights
- A woolly hat when camping (desert nights can be cold)
- Sleeping bag - we recommend a comfort factor of 2-5c (Oct-Nov and Feb-April) and minus 5 - minus 8 for Dec/Jan. We also recommend taking a silk or fleece liner for an extra layer

### Our Recommendations

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided and you should pack it into two bags if it weighs more than 15kg so it's easier for the team to transport between camps
- Take a second, smaller bag to pack things you may need during the day such as a book or sunscreen then you can easily access it during the long lunch break
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

### Other useful items

- Swimsuit
- Towel. Camping towels will pack lighter and dry more easily
- Sarong (for going to/from the shower tent)
- Water bottle (1.5 litre or two x 1 litre)
- Hand sanitiser
- Wet wipes for when showers aren't possible
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night
- Toilet paper and small plastic bags for taking rubbish away

#### In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag.
- Small penknife

#### In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

#### Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - must be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Rehydration sachets (dioralyte or similar)
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Ear plugs, particularly if you are a light sleeper
- Micropur or similar water purification tablets

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .