

Save the
DATE

SPLENDORS OF MOROCCO

Let ICAN take you places you can't go on your own!



ICAN EVENTS
ceramicartsnetwork.org/events

May 24–June 6, 2024

Join ICAN and a small group of ceramic artists as we journey through souks, kasbahs, tiled palaces, the High Atlas Mountains, and the wide open Sahara desert. Highlights include hands-on workshops with local ceramic artists, traditional glazing demos, and group wood firing in an old family kiln.

Contact Holly Goring, ICAN Manager, at hgoring@ceramics.org or 614-895-4213. Learn more at ceramicartsnetwork.org/events.

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**ICAN presents:
Splendors of Morocco!
May 24–June 6, 2024**

Travel Morocco and discover the world of pottery, ceramics, and zellige (traditional mosaic). This tour will traverse Morocco from the imperial city of Marrakech, to Safi on the coast, then crossing the High Atlas Mountains to the Sahara in the South, to the ancient Medina of Fes in the North, then back to Marrakech. Visiting museums, busy souks (markets), and traditional artisans working in clay, we will experience the wonderful world of Morocco. During this cultural tour with a focus on exploring Moroccan ceramics and crafts, you will gather ideas and inspiration for your work, visiting renowned regions known for their unique traditional styles such as Fes, Safi, Skoura Oasis, and the Rif Mountains.

Highlights of the tour include hands-on workshops: experience intricate and decorative glazing designs in Fes and at the edge of the Sahara we work with a traditional third-generation artist to handbuild pieces with locally sourced clay, which will be fired in a traditional wood kiln.

We will end each day in luxurious, traditional guesthouses, and even an overnight stay in a luxury, desert camp in the Sahara! You will enjoy the extraordinary delights of Amazigh (Berber) food and hospitality, including a traditional music performance. The warmth and good humor of the Moroccan people is immense, and the insights into the Islamic world, Amazigh spirituality, and contemporary life is fascinating. Traveling with a group of like-minded people and an experienced team of co-hosts, you'll be joining a program that offers an innovative and creative way to explore a new location that is stimulating, supportive, and safe.



Trip Highlights:

- Hands-on workshops at the world renowned Fes Pottery district
- Hands-on handbuilding pottery at Ouled Arabia pottery in Skoura Oasis
- Pottery demonstrations in Safi and the Rif Mountains
- Dar El Bacha Historic House and National Museum of Confluences
- Day trip to Safi National Ceramics Museum and pottery districts
- UNESCO World heritage Ksar of Ait Ben Haddou
- Traditional Amazigh (Berber) weaving workshops
- Guided tours of Fes Medina and Marrakech Medina
- Tours of Morocco's traditional artisan workshops: wood, leather, metal, ceramics, textiles, and more
- Spectacular landscape of the High Atlas, Middle Atlas, and Rif Mountains
- Skoura Oasis
- Erg Chebbi dunes (Sahara) and luxury camp
- Traditional architecture; Amazigh (Berber) Adobe Ksars and Kasbahs; Islamic traditional Riads and palaces

Included in the Registration:

- A small, friendly group of up to 24 guests
- English-speaking tour leader
- Experienced local guides who speak Arabic, Berber, French, and English
- Curated itinerary focused on ceramic arts and Moroccan culture
- Private air-conditioned vehicle with driver
- Accommodations in luxury, traditional guesthouse accommodation
- Workshop materials
- Airport transfers on the first day and last day to and from the Marrakech guesthouse
- All tours and admissions covering group sightseeing events
- Meals: 14 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 6 group dinners (includes water and Moroccan mint tea). Some lunches will be in a group setting, but not covered by the tour price.

Not Included in the Registration:

- Air flights to and from Morocco (arrive and depart in Marrakech)
- Several lunches and dinners
- **Travel and health insurance (compulsory for this tour in Morocco)**
- Alcohol, mineral water, and soft drinks
- Personal expenses and personal purchases
- Shipping expenses (for any purchased items or ceramics you make)
- **Pre and post-tour accommodation**
- **Pre and post-tour airport transfers**

Daily Itinerary

DAY 1: Marrakech

Fly in to Marrakech where our guides will meet you at the airport on arrival to arrange for your transfer to the hotel. At 5pm we meet in the lounge area for introductions, orientation and briefing on tour details. The tour commences late afternoon to give everyone time to arrive, check in, and freshen up after traveling before we enjoy our first welcome dinner of traditional Moroccan fare.

Accommodation: Riad Dar Sara

Meals: breakfast and dinner

Day 2: Marrakech

After breakfast this morning we have a walking tour of the Medina with a local guide. We visit cultural sites including Dar El Bacha, an historic house resplendent with the finest traditional mosaics and exquisite decorations. Dar El Bacha houses the National Exhibition of Confluences, which includes displays of exquisite woodwork, jewelery, pottery, weapons, carpets, weavings, as well as objects of worship from the three monotheistic religions; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, demonstrating their close connections. The museum includes a vast collection of artifacts that were compiled by Patti Birch, an American philanthropist. Next, we explore the artisanal souks (market place) with a broad range of crafts including ceramics from all regions of Morocco. Our time in Marrakech will be an immersion into the culture and history of this amazing country. The afternoon will be free to explore the Medina or take up one of the optional extras on offer (see list below.) Dinner tonight will be on your own.

Accommodation: Riad Dar Sara

Meals: breakfast

DAY 3: Marrakech - Day Trip to Safi

After breakfast we take a day trip to Safi (3 hours drive from Marrakech, on the Atlantic coast) we visit a major pottery region where artisans work with a very red colored local clay, making traditional cooking vessels and tableware with intricate painted decoration. We will also tour the National Pottery Museum with its beautiful displays of ancient and contemporary pottery from all the regions of Morocco. We will visit the museum, the ancient traditional potter district in the old Medina of Safi, the pottery souk (market), and a contemporary government-run pottery production facility. Lunch at the Museum is included. Dinner tonight will be on your own in Marrakech.

Accommodation: Riad Dar Sara

Meals: breakfast, lunch

Day 4: Marrakech

A free day to explore Marrakech or take up one of the optional extras on offer or relax by the pool, have a massage, facial or Hammam (Turkish-style bath). Visit other nearby cultural highlights or venture into the 'new town' of Gueliz to see Jardin Majorelle or some contemporary art galleries.

Optional afternoon visit to the industrial area of Marrakech to explore some interior design and homewares venues that feature a large range of contemporary Moroccan ceramics, which combine traditional techniques and decorative motifs into unique new designs.

Accommodation: Riad Dar Sara

Meals: breakfast

DAY 5: Skoura Oasis

After Breakfast, we have an early start to transfer across the High Atlas Mountains over the highest mountain pass of Tizi-n-Tichka to our destination at Skoura Oasis (approx. 6-hour drive). We will break the drive for lunch and to visit the UNESCO World Heritage Kasbah of Ait Ben Haddou, an ancient walled adobe village and the location for many famous movies such as Gladiator, Game of Thrones and more. We have a guided tour of this unique historic site before continuing to our destination at Skoura Oasis. We will visit a local carpet cooperative where we can see the women weaving traditional Amazigh (Berber) rugs and relish in the color and pattern of traditional weavings from many regions of Morocco. This is a good opportunity to find that special souvenir of Morocco with an ethical vendor and excellent shipping service if you wish.

Accommodation: Auberge Chez Talout

Meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 6: Skoura Oasis

An exciting day, after breakfast we walk 5 minutes to the nearby pottery in the Oasis village of Ouled Arabia where a family dynasty continues to produce a variety of traditional wood-fired vessels, clay ovens, and decorative lanterns using the local clay. We drink tea with Mohamed and see a demonstration of his craft. After lunch we start working on our own creations! We will have a hands-on session with Mohamed, handbuilding a form using the local clay. This is an opportunity to feel the consistency of the local clay and to create a piece inspired by your new experiences of the culture and history of Morocco. These pieces will later be fired by Mohamed in the simple wood-fired kiln built by his grandfather many years ago, which continues to be used by the third generation of the family. We will be reunited with our pots at the end of the tour. Non-potters will have an opportunity for some free time to relax by the pool, walk in the oasis gardens, or visit the nearby Amridil Museum.

Accommodation: Auberge Chez Talout

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 7: Erg Chebbi dunes luxury camp

Off to the Sahara! (approx. 6 hour drive.) In the morning we can check on our pots as they dry before we drive to Merzouga and the Erg Chebbi dunes. We will drive through the Rose Valley and Dades Valley, otherwise known as the Valley of 1000 Kasbahs. We will make several stops along the way to break the drive including visiting a unique local museum that has a focus on traditional rural life in Morocco, then on to a fossil display where we learn more about the geology of the Sahara that was once the ocean floor! In the village of Merzouga we leave behind our bus and take a short drive in 4WD vehicles to our luxury camp for the night. Note: you will need to pack a small overnight bag with essentials only for this night. Our larger luggage will be secure with the bus and security staff.)

Accommodation: Riad Serai luxury camp

Meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 8: Erg Chebbi

Rise early to watch the sun rise over the dunes of the Sahara. We depart our camp after breakfast and make our

way to our exquisite guesthouse on the dune line where we can relax for the day beside the pool or walk in the dunes. We will enjoy a special traditional lunch of Medfouna (Amazigh calzone).

Accommodation: Riad Lamane guesthouse

Meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Day 9: Fes

Today we depart early to drive north to Fez (approx. 8–9 hours). A long, but spectacular drive through the incredible landscape of the Ziz Valley and Middle Atlas Mountains, home of the Barbary apes. The sublime landscape offers plenty of scope for your imagination and design elements for ceramics.

Accommodation: Riad El Yacout

Meals: breakfast

DAY 10: Fes

Morning: We begin with a guided tour of the oldest Medina in the Islamic world, operating for more than 1000 years. We visit the Jewish Mellah, the spectacular gates of the Imperial Palace, and wander the streets to see the cultural highlights, historic buildings, the famous leather tannery, artisanal weaving workshops, the wood and metal souks.

Afternoon: We continue our hands-on workshops: After lunch we visit a traditional Pottery where we will see the highly skilled artisans at work throwing a range of vessels and hand-painting glazes in elaborate highly decorative patterns. The workshop also produces exquisite zellige (mosaics) including furniture, fountains, and a range of diverse objects. After a tour of the facility we will take time here to participate in two workshops with skilled artisans. *Workshop 1:* work with local artisans as they demonstrate how they mark out and apply complex geometric designs for traditional decorative glazing and then try your hand at decorating a small vessel or form. *Workshop 2:* work with local artisans as they demonstrate how they create complex traditional mosaics for architectural decoration, tables, and fountains before trying your hand at assembling your own small mosaic.

Evening: Return to the guesthouse. Free time for dinner. Venture into the Medina for some local fare or you can arrange to eat in at the guesthouse if you place your order in the morning.

Accommodation: Riad El Yacout

Meals: breakfast

DAY 11: Fes

A free day to explore the old Medina of Fes, have a cooking class (optional extra), do some shopping, visit the nearby Batha Museum and Andalusian garden or have a relaxing massage or traditional Hammam. In the Medina you can do some shopping or seek out traditional Koranic schools and museums.

Accommodation: Riad El Yacout

Meals: breakfast

DAY 12: Fes - Day Trip to Rif Mountains

We depart for a 2-hour drive North through the Rif Mountains where local women continue an age old tradition creating simple domestic pottery that is handbuilt and fired in the ground using animal dung as fuel. We will visit a local family for lunch and see a demonstration of their craft. The simple forms are decorated with traditional motifs. The techniques used have not changed for millennia and are now seeing a revival in recent times as interest in the handmade returns.

Accommodation: Riad El Yacout

Meals: breakfast and lunch

Day 13: Marrakech

In the morning we depart Fes to return to Marrakech (approx 6–7 hours) where we will be reunited with our

Skoura pots! We will enjoy a farewell dinner and reminisce about our incredible journey together, sharing the highlights, new inspiration and ideas gathered throughout our travels.

Accommodation: Riad Dar Sara

Meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

DAY 14: Marrakech

Tour ends after breakfast. Marrakech airport transfers are included on this day.

Meals: breakfast

Optional Extra Activities (Available during the free-time spaces listed on the itinerary and for non-potters during the ceramic workshops. Each activity is available for an extra fee and will need to be arranged prior to the start of the tour. The activities, along with pre- or post-tour airport transfers and accommodations, can be arranged through ICAN's tour partner once your initial registration is complete.)

- Relaxing traditional hammam (Turkish-style bath) spa experience; massage; facial; manicure
- Traditional cooking class in Fes or Marrakech can be arranged on free days (approx US\$50 includes meal; price subject to number of participants)
- In Fes - visit the Batha Museum, Koranic schools, traditional woodcraft museum
- In Fes - additional guided walking tour of the Medina
- Fes and Marrakech free days - hire a personal city guide to help you find your way around to cultural sites or shopping in the Medina (price subject to number of participants)
- In Marrakech - visit the glorious Jardin Majorelle where you can enjoy the famous garden and see the private collection of Yves St Laurent at the Musée Berbère. The YSL museum dedicated to the fashion design of Yves St Laurent and changing exhibitions is next door. (Tickets for this activity can be purchased online and the two museums are a short taxi ride from our guesthouse.)

Important Travel Information

- **IMPORTANT This trip will include a SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF WALKING including climbing stairs, and navigating uneven ground, and is not recommended for those who have difficulty walking for long distances and at a swift pace. Each leg of the tour is time sensitive and will we need to keep moving.**
- Participants may contact the tour partner following registration to arrange pre- or post-tour airport transfers and pre- or post-tour accommodations, if you wish to stay at the same guesthouses.
- This tour does not include a separate non-potter tour. Should registered potters want to bring along a non-potter companion, our tour partner can help arrange optional extra activities during the ceramic workshops. These additional activities will be at the non-potter's expense.
- All participants must obtain international travel and medical insurance to participate in the tour. This is compulsory per our tour partner.
- All tour inquiries should be directed to the ICAN manager, Holly Goring, at hgoring@ceramics.org or 614-895-4213.
- The itinerary is sometimes subject to change.