



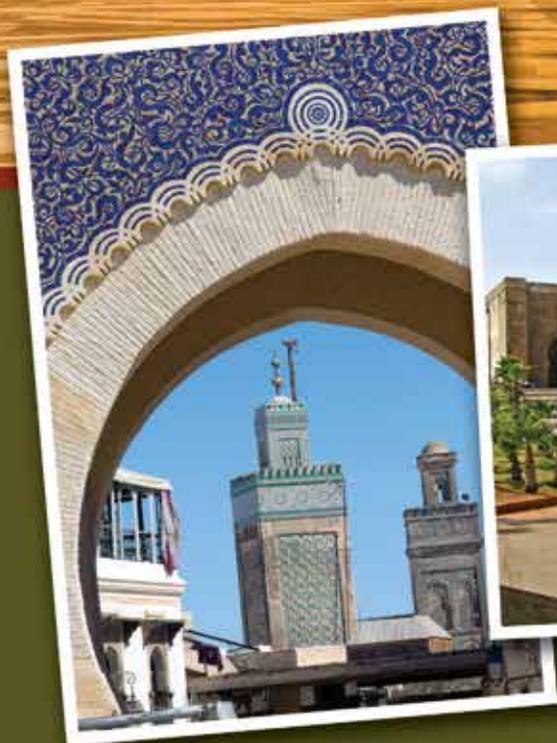
The Northern Illinois University
Alumni Association

Presents

Discover the Imperial Cities of Morocco

October 12 – 22, 2017

**\$3,945 Per Person, Double Occupancy
from Chicago**



This is an exclusive travel program presented by the Northern Illinois University Alumni Association

Day by Day Itinerary

Thursday, October 12 – CHICAGO / EN ROUTE (I)

We depart Chicago's O'Hare International Airport this evening by scheduled service of Air France on the overnight transatlantic flight to Paris, France.

Friday, October 13 – PARIS / CASABLANCA (I,HD)

As the sun begins to rise on the French coast we arrive in Paris and change planes for the connecting flight to Casablanca, Morocco. On arrival we'll meet our Tour Escort who will accompany us during our tour. Then we're headed to our downtown hotel where the remainder of the day is at leisure. As we'll soon find out, Casablanca is likely Morocco's most famous city, but you can put all black and white thoughts of Bogart and Bergman aside.

Saturday, October 14 – CASABLANCA (B,RD)

Our day will begin at the Parc de La Ligue Arabe, a huge garden with café terraces and avenues lined with tall palm trees, ficus, arcades and pergolas framing the stunning flower beds. Then we're headed to Place Mohammed V, the administrative heart of the city that is home to four monumental public buildings, the Post Office, the Palace of Justice, the Prefecture and the Bank of Morocco all set around a central fountain. We'll continue along the Boulevard Mohammed V to the Place des Nations Unies, recalling scenes from the film starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, before arriving at Old Medina, where we'll explore the labyrinth of narrow streets. This afternoon we'll visit the monumental Hassan II Mosque, the second-largest religious building in the world after the mosque in Mecca. A tour of the mosque will reveal a fabulously ornate interior and spectacular view of the ocean bed through the Prayer Hall glass floor; a monument to Moroccan architectural genius and craftsmanship.

Sunday, October 15 – CASABLANCA / RABAT (B,HD)

This morning we depart Casablanca and travel to Rabat, the capital city of Morocco, where we'll learn of the city's history and enjoy its beautiful domes, minarets, wide avenues and green spaces. We'll walk the picturesque Almohad northern walls to Bab Oudaïa, the monumental city gate that is the main entrance into the Kasbah. We'll see the historic palace of Moulay Ismail, before moving on to the city medina, where we'll explore the labyrinth of souks and artisan shops. Next we'll visit the Wool Market Square and then walk the famous and lively Rue des Consuls while browsing the craftsmen and traders shops. This afternoon we'll see the Hassan Tower, a gigantic mosque, emblematic of Rabat and famous for its unfinished minaret where storks nest. Next door, we'll visit the beautiful Mausoleum of Mohammed V decorated with stained glass windows, white marble and wrought-iron entryway. We'll also take in the Ville Nouvelle, where the wide boulevards, open green spaces and avenues lined with residential blocks can be found, before ending with a visit to the Musée Archéologie, which houses the most extensive collection of archeologic artifacts in the country.

Monday, October 16 – RABAT / FES (Meknes) (B,HD)

This morning we depart Rabat and travel to Meknes, one of Morocco's four Imperial Cities, and quite possibly the least well-known. We'll begin our tour at the Bab El Mansour Gate as we pass through the intricately patterned triumphal arch, argued to be the most beautiful in Morocco, before entering the Square of Ruins which links the medina and Kasbah. We'll visit the Musée Dar Jamaï, showcasing modern Moroccan arts and an Andalusian garden planted with tall

cypresses. Next, we'll visit the Bou Inania Medersa to explore the beautiful Koranic school established by the Merinids in the 14th century. Standing opposite the medersa, we'll see the Grand Mosque with its green glazed terracotta tiles and striking 18th century minaret. Then we'll browse the Rue de Souks lined with hardware merchants, corn chandlers, and fabric sellers.

This afternoon we'll explore Dar el-Kebira, a fortified quarter known as the Imperial City. Protected by a double line of walls and monumental angled gates, the Imperial City has the appearance of an invincible ksar and is home to three palatial complexes. We'll visit the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail, where the great sultan lies, and see the imperial Koubba el-Khayatine pavilion, before taking in the Bassin de l'Aguedal, built to supply water to the Palace and the Imperial City.

Afterward, we'll set our sights on Fes, the oldest of Morocco's Imperial Cities located between the fertile lands of the Sais and the forests of the Middle Atlas. Holding an enduring fascination for visitors, Fes el Bali is believed to be the largest contiguous car-free urban area in the world.

Tuesday, October 17 – FES (B,L)

A leisurely day on tour will begin with a view of the 16th century ruins of the Merinid Tombs and the Musée des Armes, the fortress that both defended and controlled Fes. We'll make our way into Fes el-Bali through the monumental Bab Boujloud Gate. We'll visit the Bou Inania Medersa, the largest and most sumptuously decorated medersa built by the Merinids, and then follow the Rue Talaa Kebira past Zaouia Moulay Idriss II, containing the tomb of the founder of Fes. We'll also see the Dar el-Magana, a 14th century water clock, and Zaouia el Tijaniya, containing the tomb of Ahmed el Tijani who spread his infamous doctrine throughout Morocco. Next we'll view the Mosque of the Slipper-Makers and set aside time to browse the souks selling caftans, henna, jewelry, silks and slippers. Afterward, we'll explore the Medersa of the Spice Sellers, considered to be one of the wonders of Moorish architecture, and view the 9th century Karaouiyine Mosque with its beautiful emerald tiled roof. One of the oldest and most illustrious mosques in the western Muslim world, it is considered to be one of the main spiritual and intellectual centers of Islam. This afternoon we'll enter Bab el Ftouh to explore the Andalusian quarter, a quiet residential neighborhood of the medina laced with monuments. Then we're headed to Fes el-Jedid, a Kasbah which functioned as Morocco's administrative center until 1912. Here we'll see the Place des Alaouites, the central entrance to the 14th century royal Dar el-Makhzen palace. Our tour will come to an end with a visit to the Moulay Abdallah Quarter and Mellah, thought to be the first Jewish enclave located in Morocco.

Wednesday, October 18 – FES (Volubilis & Moulay Idriss) (B,L)

Today we visit the breathtaking archaeological site of Volubilis. Once occupied by the Romans, Volubilis has been recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site and gained international acclaim when Martin Scorsese made it a feature location for "The Last Temptation of Christ." We'll visit the fascinating ruins adorned with beautiful mosaics and colorful tiles depicting Roman mythology, and learn how the Roman Empire transformed the original Carthaginian settlement into a typical Roman city. On our return to Fes, we'll travel through the picturesque whitewashed town Moulay Idriss. One of the country's most important pilgrimage sites, the town is named after Moulay



and venturing into the souks specializing in Berber carpets, silver jewelry, artisan workshops, handmade shoes and tanneries. Then we'll travel to Lower Medina to explore more of Marrakesh's secrets: we'll see the El Mansour mosque with its distinctive minaret, visit the 16th century Saadian Tombs constituting some of the finest examples of Islamic architecture in Morocco, and view the remains of 16th century El Badhi Palace. This afternoon we'll explore Mellah and visit the 19th century Bahia Palace, an excellent example of Eastern Architecture from the 19th century, and home to a 19-acre garden. Next we'll visit the contemporary Moroccan Art Museum, a private museum dedicated to popular arts & crafts, styled as a beautiful Spanish-Moroccan house. We'll end our afternoon sightseeing with a visit to the Majorelle Gardens, a lush garden estate designed by Jacques Majorelle and maintained by Yves Saint Laurent.

Tonight we'll enjoy an evening of dinner and entertainment combining an authentic Moroccan meal with traditional folklore. The Fantasia dinner takes place at the spectacular Chez Ali restaurant and is a true Arabian Nights' experience.

Idriss, a great-grandson of the Prophet Mohammed, the founder of the country's first real dynasty, and Morocco's most revered saint.

Thursday, October 19 – FES / MARRAKECH (Beni Mellal) (B,L,HD)

This morning we depart Fes and travel through the Middle Atlas, a wild region of rare beauty that is surprisingly little visited. Nicknamed the "Switzerland of Morocco," we'll travel through the scenic small towns of Ifrane and Azrou as we journey to Beni Mellal, located on the edge of the great Tadla Plain. Following a traditional Berber lunch, we'll continue south as the Middle Atlas foothills eventually give way to the luxuriant palm groves of Marrakech. Known as "The Red City" thanks to the hue of the thick walls surrounding the old city, Marrakech has been a must-see destination in Morocco since the 1960s.

Friday, October 20 – MARRAKECH (B,RD)

One of the world's most mysterious and fascinating cities, Marrakech has a memorable beauty, with its palm-lined streets and red earth walls surrounding a huge medina. Our introduction to Marrakech will begin in the medina, above which rises the minaret of the 12th century Koutoubia Mosque. We'll walk through the labyrinth streets and alleys near the Place Jemaa el-Fna, while enjoying the aromatic smells

Saturday, October 21 – MARRAKECH / CASABLANCA (B,HD)

Another leisurely day on tour will begin with our return to the medina, allowing an opportunity to further explore Place Jemaa el-Fna. The "Place of the Dead" is the focal point of the entire city, a huge square in the heart of the medina that at each moment of the day can take on a distinctive character with nonstop entertainment – we'll find storytellers, snake charmers, fire-eaters and more. In addition, the souks of Marrakech are among the most fascinating in the country. This afternoon we depart Marrakech and travel across the farming country of the Southern Atlantic Coast as we make our way back to Casablanca in preparation for tomorrow's journey home.

Sunday, October 22 – CASABLANCA / CHICAGO (B,I)

Early this morning we travel to Casablanca's Mohammed V Airport as we take to the skies for the return journey home. No better time to reflect on memories of our *Discover the Imperial Cities of Morocco* vacation to last a lifetime and new friendships made along the way!

***** Welcome Home *****

Visit myniu.com to make your reservation.

The Tour Price Includes:

- Pre-trip assistance.
- Informational packet.
- Alumni staff assistance for a worry-free travel experience.
- Economy-class air transportation by scheduled service of Air France.
- Transportation by deluxe private motor coach with accompanying Tour Escort.
- Accommodations in first-class hotels.
- All meals as shown in the Day by Day Itinerary.
- Sightseeing as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary including applicable entrance fees.
- Luggage handling and portorage charges for one suitcase per person at the hotels.
- Taxes for included ground services, **and airline taxes and fuel surcharge of \$740 per person.**

The Tour Price Does Not Include: Items of a personal nature such as passport fees; gratuities to the motor coach driver(s), Tour Escort, and local guide(s); luggage handling at airports; personal and baggage insurance; and meals other than those stated above.

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Tour Deposit and Payment: Reservations may be made by check or credit card (Visa, MC, or Discover). Tour prices do increase every year and it is possible that increases could occur after the printing of this brochure in advance of your tour's departure.

Tour Pricing: This is a package tour in which land tour costs and special group airfares have been combined in the most advantageous way. Should you wish to make any deviation from the package tour by changing your departure and/or return dates, the advantages of the package tour price may be eliminated and additional charges will be assessed.

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For more information contact the NIU Alumni Association at 815-753-1512 or visit the Travel section at myniu.com to make your reservation.

\$100 of the trip cost is tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

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