



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## Morocco 2012

### Ride Information Sheet

Morocco is a wonderful mix of Africa and Arabia. Its exotic Arabian cities with their noisy, colourful souks contrast with peaceful cedar-wood forests and lush valleys of the Atlas Mountains. Further south, huge sand dunes and date palm oases border the Sahara and endless empty beaches stretch along the coast to the west. The Berber people who live in the mountains and desert have a culture very much linked to the horse and are immensely proud of their unique breed, the Berber Arab, perfectly suited to desert and mountain. We offer a number of different riding itineraries in Morocco, each exploring a distinct area, including the Middle Atlas, the Atlantic Coast and the northern edge of the Sahara Desert. All rides are progressive, following a route from place to place, with nights spent in simple camps or local hotels. They are aimed at adventurous, confident and independent riders who enjoy long riding hours, an energetic pace, vast open spaces and a simple nomadic life. If this sounds like you, you will find them a fantastic way to explore and, of course, for winter sun only a short flight from the UK.

**Dates** Ride are run pretty much year round, with set date 7, 8, 9, 14 & 28 night itineraries. Please see the departure dates overleaf. Other dates can be arranged on request for groups - please contact Ride World Wide to discuss.



**The Horses** The horses used are mostly pure and cross-bred Berber Arabs of between about 14.2hh and 16hh. They are working desert horses owned by Renate and Driss Erroudani, who have about 30 horses in all, including stallions, mares and foals, at their stables near Meknes. The horses are of a fairly narrow build, slight but strong, sure-footed and with excellent stamina. They are responsive and forward going to ride and there is a good selection for riders of intermediate ability and above. Both mares and stallions are used as riding horses and there may be 2 or 3 stallions as well as mares on any ride. The stallions are often noisy and need to be treated with a little extra care and attention, keeping them a sensible distance from any mares when out as a group and, if there is more than one on any ride, ensuring they are kept apart. However if you are sensitive to these needs you will find them responsive to ride and easy to control. If you prefer to ride a mare or stallion, you only need ask when you book. It is not unusual for at least one mare to be running free alongside the ride as a 'spare', or a youngster learning the ropes! The horses are moved by truck from the stables near Meknes to the start point of the different rides and you generally do not visit the stables - although if you do, be warned, they are typical of the region, quite shabby and very much a working environment where horses come first and there is no time for appearances! There is a rider weight limit of 95kg (15 stone) but please contact us if you are close to this to ensure a suitable horse is available.

**Riding** These rides are aimed at fit, confident riders with a sense of adventure. They are 'endurance style' rides and all itineraries are fairly strenuous with long hours in the saddle, quite long stretches (at least 3 to 4 hours) without a break and (usually) many opportunities for long, fast canters on open going. There is an emphasis on all rides on keeping up the pace. The amount of riding varies with individual itineraries but on average there is about 6 hours in the saddle each day, broken up with a rest for lunch and a siesta, although some rides include days with longer hours, sometimes up to 8 or 9 in all and stretches of 4 ½ or more without a break. Daily itineraries also vary depending on the time of year - if it is hot you may be woken early to ride, stopping for a long lunch and siesta in the shade during the heat of the day and riding again when the temperature drops. When it is cooler, you will ride for longer during the middle of the day. Tack is English style although most is sourced locally and horses are often ridden without some of the 'extras' we are used to in the UK (eg they often go without nosebands). Also, as locally sourced leather is of varying quality and the dry desert environment can cause stitching to deteriorate quite quickly, there is a constant need for fresh equipment that is difficult to keep up with - don't expect tack to be anything more than adequate although we are continually trying to improve this. Saddle-bags are provided for personal belongings when riding. Rides are lead by Renate (Rena), who is Swiss but has lived in Morocco for about 25 years and is a very experienced guide. She speaks English, French, German and Arabic and is approachable and friendly although her guiding style is to leave riders to 'get on with it' rather than to offer a lot of extra assistance and continual instruction. She expects riders to be able to cope, to keep up with the group and to manage their horse for themselves although she is always willing to help out and advise if asked. Grooms / helpers (usually 2 or 3 for a full group of 10 guests) are on hand to look after the horses at lunch stops and when you arrive in camp in the evening, but numbers in the group mean some help tacking up / un-tacking is usually required. Rena carries a mobile 'phone with her for emergencies when riding and the back up crew are in contact with her by mobile 'phone. Rides are arranged for a minimum of 4 and maximum of 10 (occasionally 11) guests.



**Pace** The pace on the rides is fast to moderate overall, with good opportunities for long canters each day. Where the going is good, you often canter for a mile or so, then rest some minutes for a breather, before cantering on again. In some places, particularly on the mountain rides, there are times when the going is rocky, rough or stony and the horses have to walk and / or be led for some distance. Each ride is a little different but you generally cover between about 30 to 50km a day.

**Riding Experience** Although you don't have to be an expert over jumps or in competition to join these rides, you should be a fit, confident rider who is relaxed, secure and in control on a horse at all paces (including long trots and canters) when riding in open country. Due to the miles covered riders are encouraged to use a "forward seat" position at the canter (ie weight on the stirrups, no contact with the back of the saddle) and, as the horses are sensitive to the leg, little lower leg contact. You should also be used to riding over varied, uneven or rocky terrain and confident if ground becomes rough or difficult. General fitness is also very important to cope with harsh and changing desert conditions (from hot midday sun to cold nights camping out) and the several occasions on each ride when you will need to get off and on, unassisted, and to lead your horse over stretches of rough, rock-covered, ground. **cont. over**



**Riding Experience cont.** You also need to be prepared to help look after your horse and although help is nearly always available, should be confident of tacking-up and un-tacking a horse unassisted and of handling it comfortably from the ground. If you do not ride regularly at home you will certainly need to accustom yourself to long hours in the saddle with regular training before you go. These rides are some of the most strenuous we offer so make sure you prepare well.

**Terrain** Morocco offers a huge variety of landscapes. Olive groves and green fields of wheat in the north, forested valleys in the Middle Atlas, flat topped mountains and extinct volcanoes of the Atlas and Anti-Atlas, the Atlantic Coast and of course the sand dunes of the Sahara desert in the far south. In the desert there are oases of date palms and characteristic mud villages dominated by Kasbahs with tall towers and thick sandstone walls. In the mountains, Berber villages are linked by narrow winding shepherd tracks, that are often rough and stony. On all rides dry river-beds, open plateaux or sandy beaches provide excellent chances for faster riding.



**Accommodation** Accommodation on all rides is in a combination of hotels and camps set up ahead of you by staff. Hotels are generally about 2\* and accommodation is reasonably comfortable although hotels vary quite considerably in the facilities offered. All bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms (usually with a shower rather than bath) and several hotels have a swimming pool. Camping is fairly basic - there are certainly no frills - and some of the equipment is well used and rather tatty! Small 2 man dome tents are provided for sleeping (these are put up ahead of you by staff), with foam mattresses (about 3" thick) to sleep on. You will need your own sleeping bag. There is a general 'mess' tent for eating, a shared 'short drop' loo tent in camp, and also a washing tent. Hot water for washing is provided on request (although not in huge quantities) and you can 'shower' with a bowl of water inside the tent. Luggage will be transported by back up vehicle, which will also meet you for lunch where possible. Folding tables and stools are set up for dinner and for lunch when the back up vehicle meets you. When it is not possible to meet the back up, a picnic lunch is carried in saddle-bags. Rates assume twin bedded rooms / tents but singles can usually be organised by prior request for a supplement.



**Meals** The French influence in Morocco ensures a good and varied menu and meals are a simple mixture of local and European food. Breakfast is generally just fresh bread, butter and jam, perhaps yoghurt or fruit, coffee with hot milk or tea. Lunch is either cooked by the back up team if you meet the vehicle or carried as a picnic in saddle-bags - bread, cheese and salads eaten in a shady spot out riding. Cooked meals usually start with a salad (tomato and cucumber for instance - not usually lettuce), soup or starter, followed by a local dish such as Moroccan chicken, meatballs with a tomato sauce, tajines or couscous. Melons, grapes, pomegranates or some other seasonal fruit will usually round off the meal. Mint tea is a great favourite in Morocco (generally drunk sweet!) and will be offered to you when you arrive in camp after riding and at lunch. Although Morocco is a Muslim country, it is fairly relaxed and wine and beer are available to purchase - when camping you will need to advise your guide in advance if you would like wine, beer or other drinks so that these can be bought ahead. Generally you keep a tab and pay for extra drinks in camp at the end of the ride. Bottled mineral water is provided. Vegetarians can be catered for but please let us know in advance if you have any special dietary requirements.



**Weather** The geological variety of Morocco also means a wide range of climatic conditions - but it does offer year round sun. The coastal regions are generally mild, with average temperatures from 12 degrees C in winter to 25 degrees C in summer (though day time temperatures can easily exceed this). The interior, particularly the south, can be stiflingly hot in the summer, particularly when the hot and dry Sirocco winds blow from the desert. The rainy season is usually November to January - even during these months there is little rain in the southern desert areas although in the hills and mountains rain is possible year round. Mean monthly temperatures in °C for Fes, Ouarzazate and Agadir are:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Agadir	14	14	16	17	18	21	22	22	22	20	18	16
Fes	9	11	12	14	17	21	24	26	23	19	14	10
Ouarzazate	9	12	14	17	21	25	29	29	26	20	14	9

These are an indications based on 30 year averages - bear in mind that daytime temperatures will be higher and night time temperatures lower.

**What to bring** We will send you a list of things we suggest you bring when you make your booking.

## Dates and Rates 2012

**Please note** that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are quoted in Euros. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the euro/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

**Royal Cities Ride (7 nights) - 995 Euros per person** (single supplement 80 Euros)

8th to 15th April\*

15th to 22nd September

28th April to 5th May

30th September to 7th October\*

27th May to 3rd June\*

\* These rides start in Rabat; other dates start in Fes

**Middle Atlas Ride (9 nights) - 840 Euros per person** (single supplement 80 Euros)

29th June to 8th July

17th to 26th August

**cont. over**

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**Golden Sands, Agadir & Atlantic Ride (7 nights) - 995 Euros per person**

(single supplement 65 Euros)

25th February to 3rd March

4th to 11th March

22nd to 29th December

30th December to 6th January 2013

24th February to 3rd March 2013

3rd to 10th March 2013

**Morocco Easy Rider & Tai Chi (8 nights) - 1435 Euros per person** (single supplement 120 Euros)

28th January to 5th February

26th January to 3rd February 2013

**Tafilalelt Ride (14 nights) - 1545 Euros per person** (single supplement 95 Euros)

**1st half (7 nights) 995 Euros / 2nd half (8 nights) 1090 Euros** (single supplement 60 / 70 Euros)

5th to 19th February

14th to 28th October

**Nomadic Lands & White Beaches (14 nights) - 1545 Euros per person** (single supplement 95 E)

**1st half (8 nights) 1090 Euros / 2nd half (7 nights) 995 Euros** (single supplement on both 60 E)

10th to 24th February 2013

**Tata Akka (14 nights) - 1545 Euros per person** (single supplement 95 Euros)

18th March to 1st April 2012

24th March to 7th April 2013

**Across Morocco, East to West (28 nights) - 2800 Euros per person** (single supplement 190 Euros)

11th November to 9th December\*

\*This is a once only departure, for real adventurers only

Other dates can be arranged on request for groups of 4 or more.



**Prices** quoted above assume a minimum of 4 people on the ride.

They **INCLUDE** 7, 8, 9, 14 or 28 nights (as indicated) accommodation based on two people sharing (single rooms / tents if paying supplement), all riding, meals (as per the individual itinerary) and equipment, transfers from a set meeting / drop off point (as indicated in the individual itinerary) and the services of an English speaking guide. Single rooms can normally be arranged on request and payment of the single supplement.

**Prices DO NOT** include international flights to Morocco and taxes, any extra nights accommodation before / after the ride itinerary, your bar bill during the ride and at hotels, transfers between your arrival and departure airport and the set meeting / drop off point, personal travel / medical insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, personal items at hotels (eg laundry, telephone calls etc) nor any tips you might wish to leave staff.

**Itineraries** These are summaries of the different itineraries offered. For all the rides you need to be both riding fit and physically fit, happy to cope with your own horse and to mount / dismount unaided in uneven terrain.

**Royal Cities Ride** This 7 night trip starts and ends with a night in a hotel either in Rabat or Fes (see dates above marked\*). From here you are driven to meet the horses in Meknes, and the ride follows a route across the Rif mountains to the royal city of Fes, before heading back to Meknes by a different route. 3 nights are in hotels and 4 camping out in simple camps, moving on each night. There is usually between 5 and 6 ½ hours riding a day with occasions when you need to get off and walk, leading your horse over rocky terrain. The ride includes a visit to Fes, to the Roman ruins of Volubilis and the Arab city of Moulay Idriss as well as a variety of scenery and terrain including the rocky, white mountains of Rif, the harsh and dramatic 'Death Valley' and agricultural land of olives, vineyards, melons and figs.



**Middle Atlas Ride** This is one of the toughest itineraries, taking you to remote areas of the Middle Atlas Mountains. It includes 9 nights accommodation with 7 days riding (an additional trial ride if time allows on the first day), 7 nights camping out in simple camps and the first and last nights in a riad hotel in Fes. There is usually between 5 and about 8 hours riding a day, with quite a few occasions when you need to get off and walk, leading your horse over rocky terrain and down some steep slopes. As well as Fes, the ride includes a visit to the popular little town of Ifran, a variety of scenery from rocky mountains and canyons to cedar woods, salt lakes and fresh springs and some wonderful long canters across open plateaux. Moving on each day, it will give you with a real sense of adventure.

**The Golden Sands, Agadir and Atlantic Ride** This 7 night ride starts and ends with a night in a hotel in Agadir and after meeting the horses follows a route to the medieval city of Tiznit at the end of the Anti-Atlas and then back to the Atlantic Coast. 3 nights are in hotels and 4 nights camping out in simple camps, moving on each night. There are 6 days riding and usually between 5 and 7 hours riding a day with occasions when you need to get off and walk, leading your horse over rocky terrain. The ride includes many opportunities for long fast canters on open going and a variety of scenery and terrain from the fertile planes of Souss, rocky hills with cacti and Argan trees, to sand dunes, long sandy tracks and vast open beaches.



**Morocco Easy Rider with Tai Chi** A 9 night trip starting and ending in Ouarzazate, with first and last nights spent here. From Ouarzazate you drive to meet the horses near Tinghir, then ride to the village of Rissani and across desert planes to the erg sand dunes. Here you ride into the dunes on camels, with a night spent deep in the desert. There will be Tai Chi classes each morning before breakfast and each evening before dinner and you can join as many or as few as you wish.

### **Tafilalelt Ride**

Also for the fit and keen independent rider, and an itinerary that can be embarked upon as a whole (5 nights in hotels / auberges, 9 camping) or you can ride the first or second half. The meeting point is Ouarzazate, 'the door of the desert' and much favoured as a film location (Gladiator, Lawrence of Arabia and The Living Daylights are just a few). From here you drive to meet your horses and continue into the hinterland, with the High Atlas on the horizon and herds of camels wandering from one well to the next. The land crossed is for those who love the vastness of the desert, with sand dunes up to 150 metres high, lengthy canyons, palm trees, oases, lonely valleys, dry rivers - and even some camel riding in Merzouga. Those on the first half of the ride leave the group on Day 6 and are driven to Ouarzate for the night for onward travel the next day (so no camel riding). The second half starts (on Day 7 of the full itinerary) with a night in Ouarzazate and joins the group in Merzouga the next day.



**Nomadic Lands & White Beaches Ride** 14 nights starting and ending in Agadir. You first drive about 150 kms to Goulmim to meet the horses, then follow a route to the village of Taidalt, across desert planes to the Draa valley, the town of Tantan and finally back through sand dunes to Goulmim. 4 nights are spent in hotels and 10 nights camping out in simple camps, moving on each night. There are 11 days riding for those doing the whole ride, usually between 5 and 7 hours riding a day. Day 9 is a rest day in Tantan. The ride can also be split and you can leave on Day 8 after the first half or just do the second half, starting with a night in Agadir then joining riders in Tantan on Day 9 of the itinerary. There are occasions when you need to get off and walk, leading your horse over rocky terrain but there are many opportunities for long fast canters on open sandy plains and dry river valleys and a variety of scenery and terrain from rocky mountains to sand dunes and Atlantic beaches.

**Tata Akka Ride** 14 nights (4 hotels, 10 nights camping), with 10 full days and one half day riding through desert sands, endless plains, immense oases of palm trees, salty rivers and mountain chains. The meeting point is Agadir with a transfer then to Tata on the Sahara plain close to the Algerian border. The ride heads off through villages into the desert to the oasis of Akka, once a stop on an ancient caravan route which became an area of Jewish settlement in Morocco. From Akka the route leads across mountains, by waterfalls and along narrow paths taking each opportunity to move on across the plains to the remote Foum Zguid where you have a day to explore before taking a road transfer back to Agadir where the last night is spent.

**Across Morocco, East to West** A special one off event, 28 nights crossing the entire country from East to West. This ride is for fit, hardy and adventurous riders only. Starting in Ouarzazate and ending a month later in Agadir, the route takes you south along the Draa Valley to the edge of the Sahara desert and then turns west, crossing the Anti Atlas mountains and eventually arriving at the Atlantic coast.



The following is an example of the **Royal Cities Ride** day by day itinerary - please enquire for other itineraries and please note that itineraries are only examples and daily timetables and routes ridden may vary, depending on the weather and other local conditions. This is left to the discretion and experience of your guide.

**Day 1** - [Own arrangements to arrive Casablanca or Rabat airport. If you arrive in Casablanca there is a good train service from the station in the airport to Rabat ville station (about 1hr 30mins). The Medina and the garden of Oudaiya in Rabat are well worth a visit.] In the evening meet your guide and other riders at the Hotel Bouregreg for dinner and the night. (D)

**OR** Arrive in Fes, the oldest of Morocco's Imperial cities, either by internal flight to Saiss airport which is 15km to the south of Fes, by train from either Rabat or Casablanca. You will be met at the airport or at the Riad El Yacout where the first night is spent. Meet your guide and other riders for dinner. Night at Riad El Yacout in Fes (or similar). (D)

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**Day 2** - Breakfast and set off early in the morning driving to the stables close to the city of Meknes (about 2 hours). Meet the horses - small but strong Berber-Arabs with a lot of stamina. Set off riding towards the foot of the mountain range of Zerhound. The route will wind through many small villages with clay houses, olive trees, sunflowers and cornfields. Follow a small river valley up to the village of Sainte de Sidi Ali with splendid views of Meknes and the surrounding countryside. Meet the vehicle for a picnic lunch and in the afternoon ride on through sandy fields, which offer many chances for good canters. Arrive at camp set up in a small river valley close to the site of the Roman ruins of Volubilis. A chance to visit the site with its ancient temples, bathing houses and beautiful mosaics. There may also be time to visit the wonderful markets in the town of Moulay Adriss - the first Royal Arab City of Morocco - which overlooks Volubilis. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D).

**Day 3** - Breakfast in camp then set off riding towards Moulay Idriss, through olive groves and up to the peak of the Zegota. There are magnificent views of the Rif mountains as you make your way to the sources of Nzala Des Ben Ammar. Here the ground is rocky and allows few crops to grow - just olive trees and small shrubs. The route takes you through country that it is so deserted and devoid of human life that it is hard to believe. A few shepherds may be found around a water well taking their animals to drink - these wells are very important socially as they are one of the few places that remote families meet other human beings to talk, collect news and discuss rumours. Ride on to camp set up in an olive grove. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

**Day 4** - Today's ride crosses the white mountain range of the Rif. Ride past a little village with small low houses built of clay, which is almost medieval. Agriculture here is by hand in the old fashioned way and you will see many women working hard in the fields. Stop for a picnic lunch, then ride on, descending to the oued Mikkes. Follow this stream along many small windy tracks, passing several Arab villages. Camp is set up in a river valley within an olive grove. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)



**Day 5** - Breakfast in camp and set off riding into 'Death Valley', so named because the river is very salty and the water cannot be used for drinking, irrigation or livestock. The people living in the valley are forced to fetch water up to three hours march away. The land in 'Death Valley' is sterile with colours changing between yellow, white and beige. The route takes you through many small Berber villages, via sandy fields from Moulay Yakoud, and up to the fertile plains surrounding Fes. A few final canters down through the fields to arrive at an olive grove where the horses and grooms spend the night. Lunch in camp, then a short drive to a hotel in the city of Fes. Time to wash away the dust, to change and visit the old town of Fes, the Medina, the old University, the Souk with its narrow streets and all manner of shops. Dinner and night at a hotel in Fes. (B,L,D)

**Day 6** - Breakfast at the hotel then leave the royal city, rejoining the horses in camp. The countryside today is very different, fertile plains with a few rolling hills and small river valleys. You may spot turtles in the streams, diving under water to escape the horses' feet. Stop for a picnic at the top of a hill, amongst the fig trees. Not far away is a spring, a popular watering hole and washing spot for local shepherds. From here you can see the entire Fes valley and even the mountains of the Atlas. In the afternoon ride on towards the foothills of the Atlas mountains, crossing small stony hills before arriving on an open plain, good for a canter. Camp is set up on a hill, an old French farm now government run, with a beautiful view towards Fes. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

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**Day 7** - The ride today takes you from hill to hill, occasionally passing through a small village. Once in a while there will be opportunities for long, exhilarating canters by the edges of the fields where grapes and melons grow. Finally a lonely valley takes you back to the stables in Meknes in time for lunch. Say goodbye to the horses and set off driving to Meknes, where you will have a short time to visit the souks and Medina. Then, depending on the ride date, drive on to Rabat and to the Hotel Bouregreg (or similar) for dinner and the night. **OR** Drive to the Riad El Yacout in Fes for a farewell dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

**Day 8** - Breakfast in the hotel and own arrangements for onward travel / or flight home. (B)

**Flights / travel** - Each ride itinerary has a different meeting point - either in Fes, Agadir, Ourzazate or Rabat. Please see the individual itineraries or ask us for more detailed information. Royal Air Maroc fly daily to Casablanca from London and have onward flights to Fes, Agadir and Ourzazate. They also fly direct from London to Marrakech.

Easy Jet fly from Gatwick to Marrakech daily and to Agadir. British Midlands fly to Marrakech, Agadir and Casablanca. Ryan Air fly from London Stansted to Agadir and Fes and from London Luton to Marrakech. You can also fly via Paris with Air France who fly from Paris CDC to Rabat and Casablanca. There is a good train service in Morocco ([www.oncf.ma](http://www.oncf.ma)) and there is a station at Casablanca airport with mainline connections between Meknes, Fes, Rabat and Marrakech. You can also travel by train all the way for the UK (see- [www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com))

**General visa and health information** (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking.)

**Visas** If you hold a full British Passport, currently a visa is not required to visit Morocco.

**Health** No jabs are required as a condition of entry to Morocco from the UK and Europe although The Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London recommends that you ensure you are up to date with Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A. If you are not up to date with these you should visit your GP or a travel clinic about 4 weeks before departure.

**Malaria** There is no Malaria risk in any of the major cities of Morocco. In some regions there is low Malarial risk between May and October and you are advised to take precautions against Malaria if travelling during that time.

(Updated 10/01/12)

