



Desert Cavalcade

Maximum weight: 90 kg

Nearest airport: Ouarzazate

8 days / 7 nights / 6 on horseback



The ride takes you up and over the dunes of the Sahara where the plateaus offer the ideal terrain for a gallop or two on this faster-paced ride. More varied than some of the Moroccan trails the scenery takes in desert, mountains and oases, narrow gorges and palm groves. This is a challenging ride which involves riding and camping in remote locations, and is suitable for experienced riders happy to canter and gallop in the open.

This trail offers varied and rewarding riding across Morocco's landscapes. Long stretches of desert plateaus offer fast canters, while rocky dunes, mountains and remote villages keep the scenery varied. You'll be paired with a sure-footed Barb or Arab stallion, forward-going yet well-mannered, perfectly suited to the region's diverse terrain. Riders are expected to help with grooming and tacking up, giving you time to build a real partnership with your horse over the week. The pace of the ride is 60% walk, 25% trot and 15% canter/gallop. You'll ride around five hours per day except on Day 7 where you will ride in the morning for two hours before transferring back to Ouarzazate.

Horse riding

Riders must be confident and secure at all three gaits—walk, trot, and canter—and comfortable riding in open country. Previous experience with long hours in the saddle is essential, as the program includes six to seven hours of riding per day, often at a lively pace with extended canters. A good level of physical fitness is needed to manage the demands of the desert terrain, where conditions can be hot and dry. Riders should be adaptable, ready to embrace both the physical challenge and the spirit of adventure that comes with travelling on horseback through such a wild and remote landscape. Therefore this trail is suitable for intermediate to advanced riders in good physical condition. The weight limit is 90 kilos.

Guides & Group Size

You will be guided by a Moroccan local from the Sport Travel team whose local knowledge is second to none. All guides speak Arabic, French and English fluently and are friendly and enthusiastic horsemen and women, keen to show visitors rural Morocco at its best. An experienced and passionate equestrian support team will meet the group for meals and at overnight stops. The maximum group size is 8 riders.



Horses & tack

Morocco may well win the prize for the most stunning-looking horses! Known as Barb-Arabs, this breed was created almost a century ago to produce the perfect war horses by crossing fine Purebred Arabians and Barb (Berber) horses. This crossbreeding provides horses perfectly adapted to the mountainous and desert environment of the region, they are strong and robust, with the speed and beauty of Arabian horses. The horses stand at approx. 15hh and almost every possible colour is represented. All the horses used on the trail are owned by your hosts and are well cared for and loved. They live a happy lifestyle in a large herd when not on the trail.ended in a large herd.

Accommodation & Meals

Throughout the trail, you will stay in desert inns, showers are available every night, ensuring a welcome refresh after long hours in the saddle. A single room supplement is possible with prior notice. The names of the hotels below are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Itinerary

Day 1

On arrival at Ouarzazate Airport, you'll be warmly welcomed by the team and transferred to your hotel. Take time to relax, settle in, and soak up your first impressions of Morocco's desert gateway. Overnight in Ouarzazate.

Day 2

An early morning departure (around 7:00 am) takes us south towards Zagora (approx. 3-hour drive), where our horses await. From here, the adventure truly begins. We ride southwest across the vast Feïja reg, an open stony desert that immediately conveys the immensity of the Sahara. Gradually, the dramatic silhouettes of the Djebel Bani mountains rise ahead — the final mountain chain before the great desert beyond. A winding trail leads us up to the mountain pass, rewarding us with breathtaking panoramic views over the Feïja plateau and the distant Djebel Saghro. We then descend through a narrow gorge to reach a small oasis, long used as a resting point by nomadic tribes. Evening under the stars in a traditional desert bivouac.

Day 3

We begin the day crossing an arid plateau scattered with hardy acacia trees — some of the only vegetation able to survive in this harsh environment. As we ride south, soft sand hills gradually appear and grow into sweeping dunes. The landscape becomes endless and serene. This protected area is a natural reserve where gazelles and ostriches are slowly being reintroduced. We camp beside the Naam River — its name meaning “ostrich” in Arabic — and enjoy a peaceful desert evening.

Day 4

Today's ride takes us through rolling dunes, where you may occasionally spot nomadic camps — low, traditional tents made from camel or goat hair, known as kheïmas. Gradually, the scenery changes as we approach the end of the Drâa Valley. Palm trees appear, sheltering small houses within the Bounou palm grove. The beautifully preserved ksar (fortified village) is one of the most impressive in the region. We arrive in Ouled Driss, where you'll have time to visit the ksar and its small local museum before settling in for the night.

Day 5

From here, the pace can quicken as we ride along the Drâa Valley, moving between sand hills and wide stony plateaus (regs). Crossing the Selmane Pass, we're rewarded with sweeping views over the Tagounite palm grove. We continue through dunes, cultivated fields, and villages with beautifully decorated earthen walls — proud testimonies of local craftsmanship. Near Nesrate, we reach an area where a once-thriving palm grove has been gradually swallowed by the sands. Bivouac in the dunes for a magical desert night.

Day 6

Today brings us back toward village life, with its lively contrast of fortified homes (ksour), lush gardens, blazing sun, and welcome shade. The palm grove gives way to the Drâa River, flowing between the Djebel Bani and Djebel Tadrart mountain ranges. We continue to a tranquil oasis, where we set up camp for the night.

Day 7

Our final ride takes us north along quiet trails weaving through ksour and cultivated fields within the palm grove. We reach the village of Tinfou, where impressive dunes threaten to engulf houses and farmland — a striking reminder of the desert's ever-advancing power. In the early afternoon, we transfer back to Ouarzazate. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at a charming local restaurant before spending your final night at the hotel.

Day 8

Departure Depending on your flight time, enjoy a final stroll through the souks before your airport transfer and journey home.

Accommodation & meals

The first and last night of the trip are spent in a hotel in Ouarzazate with a swimming pool (it's warm enough to swim between April and October usually). Accommodation while on the trail (5 nights) is in simple two-person dome tents. Foam mattresses are supplied, you need to bring sleeping bags. There is a shower tent with a large bucket of hot water for washing every day. There is one shower tent and one toilet (chemical). Private rooms and tents are available for a single supplement

All meals are included and feature traditional Moroccan and European (usually French) dishes. Lunches are typically light - fresh salads and delicious homemade bread - while dinners include hot and cold salads followed by tagine, couscous or flatbread. Drinking water is provided, but please bring a metal water bottle (no plastic). Other drinks can be purchased locally.

Alcohol is not available along the trail but you are welcome to bring your own from home or buy from duty-free, be aware that local options are limited and expensive. The back up includes a truck carrying the luggage and camping equipment which will meet you most lunchtimes, there is a cook, driver, a guide who cares for the horses and an English speaking guide.

Flight and transfer information

Do NOT book flights until you have received the 'Booking Confirmation Email' from saddletravel.com

- Arrival airport: Ouarzazate (OZZ) or Marrakech (RAK)
- Arrival time: Ouarzazate anytime and Marrakech before 14h00
- Departure time: Ouarzazate anytime and Marrakech after 14h00
- Transfer arrangements: If you are flying into and from Marrakech please take into account a transfer time of about 5 hours which cost €150 per car/per way. Transfers from Ouarzazate are included.

What to bring:

We recommend that you wear your riding boots or booties for the journey and take a set of riding clothes and your helmet in your hand luggage, so that you can participate in the excursion and ride even if your luggage should not arrive at your destination in time.

Space is limited in the vehicle carrying your belongings on the trek, so please travel light and use a large backpack or soft travel bag rather than a hard case.

Please use the checklist as a guide, taking into account the season in which you ride.

- ☐ Your own riding hat or helmet, adjusted to your size
- ☐ Comfortable riding trousers
- ☐ Non-slip riding or trekking boots
- ☐ Chaps
- ☐ Riding gloves
- ☐ Long-sleeved T-shirts to protect you from the sun
- ☐ Warm clothing such as a fleece or woollen jumper
- ☐ Sleeping bag for temperatures between -5° & 0°
- ☐ Personal washing pack i.e. soap, towel etc
- ☐ Lamp for moving around camp at night
- ☐ Waterproof jacket - it rarely rains, but it's best to be prepared
- ☐ Bandana or scarf to protect you from the sun and dust
- ☐ Comfortable clothes for the evening
- ☐ Light footwear for when you're not riding
- ☐ Sun cream and lip balm
- ☐ Sunglasses and hat
- ☐ Portable battery / Power bank
- ☐ Adapter
- ☐ Copy of your travel insurance

- ☐ Micropur or Hydroclonazone tablets
- ☐ Mosquito repellent

Climate

The climate in Morocco is hot all year round, with very little rain. From December to February, winter temperatures are around 20°C during the day and drop below 10°C at night. March to May and October to November are generally very pleasant, with temperatures between 20 and 30°C during the day and over 10°C at night. This tour is not available in June/July/August due to extreme heat.

Health

We recommend packing Micropur or Hydroclonazone tablets to disinfect water as well as an anti-mosquito cream and spray. Please consult with your GP at least 8 weeks before your trip to discuss any travel vaccinations or health precautions they may recommend

Travel documents

A valid passport covering the entire planned stay is required for a stay in Morocco. Passports are compulsory, including for groups on organised tourist trips. Entry to Morocco is no longer possible on presentation of the national identity card alone.

For more information, visit

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco>

For all other nationalities, please contact your embassy to check the conditions and procedures for entering the country.

It is your sole responsibility to be in possession of the travel documents you need to enjoy your holiday.

Currency and tips

The local currency in Morocco is the Moroccan dirham. Your holiday is all-inclusive, so we recommend you don't bring too much money with you. Tipping your guide is at your discretion, and will be greatly appreciated by the team. We suggest €40 for the team.

Rider's declaration

'I declare that I am an experienced rider, able to mount and dismount without assistance. I have a good seat and am confident and in control at all gaits (including collected trot, balanced canter and fast canter), and am physically fit to ride. I do not suffer from any disability or illness that could affect my safety or the safety of others.'

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