

NORTHERN MOROCCO & THE SPANISH ENCLAVES

**“GATES TO SPAIN THROUGH THE TINY
ENCLAVES OF CUETA & MELILLA”**

February 23 - March 05, 2025
Led by Historian and Tour Lecturer Mohamed Halouani

Ceuta and Melilla are two small forbidden enclaves on the coast of Morocco. Despite seemingly being a part of Morocco, they actually belong to Spain. Coveted by Morocco, they have long been a flashpoint in diplomatic relations with Spain. Madrid asserts that both territories are integral parts of Spain and have the same status as the semi-autonomous regions on its mainland. Increasingly Ceuta and Melilla's heavily fortified borders have come under pressure from African migrants seeking a better life in Europe. Both cities date their original establishment to the Phoenicians, the sailors, and merchants of the ancient Mediterranean. Later Ceuta and Melilla became the site of a Carthaginian settlement, which was taken over eventually by the Romans. In the 5th century the cities were captured by the Vandals, who in time lost it to Byzantium. After that the Visigoths, Arabs, Portuguese, and finally the Spanish in 1580 seized control. Since that time, except for a period from 1694 to 1720 when the Moors gained control, the enclaves have remained under the jurisdiction of Spain. Separated from Spain by the Straits of Gibraltar and sandwiched between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean lies Morocco on the northern shores of Africa. Discover the rich history and culture of the Imperial Cities and the north. This tour will capture the dramatic contrasts of the kingdom. Against a backdrop of breathtaking scenery, the footprints of history wind from antiquity through the pinnacle of Islamic achievement in a country determined to modernize on its own terms. Its culture is on display every day in its buzzing souks (marketplaces). Discover this glorious land in the enchanting city of Fes-a walled enclave suspended in a medieval dream. Be mesmerized by the truly stunning desert oasis where golden dunes stretch to the horizon. Morocco offers the opportunity to experience a rich Islamic culture in a safe and tourist-friendly environment.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Sunday, February 23

Arrive in Casablanca (MOROCCO)



Upon arrival at **Casablanca Airport** and after passing through customs, meet and transfer to *New Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(D)**

Note: Standard check-in time is 3:00 pm. if you arrive on February 22 or in the early morning of February 23, an extra Hotel night needs to be booked.

Monday, February 24

Casablanca



Begin the day with a city tour of **Casablanca**, the biggest city in Morocco. Head to visit **Hassan II Mosque**, situated at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean and the largest mosque in Morocco, King Hassan II built it at the end of his 40-year reign. Admire the monumental colonial architecture of **Mohamed V Palace** and the French-built **Quarter Habous** that accommodate families of merchants from various regions of Morocco. Also, visit the **Jewish Museum Museum**, which is the only one of its case in the Muslim and Arab world. It traces the 2000-year history of Morocco, focusing on Casablanca's Jewish community and was created by the foundation of Judeo-Moroccan Cultural Heritage in 1995 and opened its doors in 1997. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, February 25

Casablanca – Tangier (3 hrs. 45 min.)



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to the coastal town of **Tangier**, through Cape Spartel, built-in 1864 by Sultan Muhammad III and located about 1,000 feet above sea level at the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar. It is considered an exceptional place as it connects the

Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. Get a chance to visit **Hercules Caves**, where myths say that Heracles stayed and slept in this cave before doing his 11th labour. Upon arrival, head to explore the city's Medina and Kasbah around the **Place de la France** in the Ville Nouvelle. Visit the **American Legation Museum**, a Moorish-style building built of stuccoed masonry. It commemorates the historical relationship between the two countries, which dates back to when the Kingdom of Morocco became the first to recognize the United States as a nation. It is also symbolic of the 1786 Moroccan–American Treaty of Friendship, which is still in force today. Also, visit the recently reconstructed **Beach Promenade**, where we will enjoy a fresh seafood lunch by the port. Transfer to *Andalucia Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, February 26

Tangier - Ceuta (SPAIN) - Tetouan (MOROCCO)



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to the *El Tarajal* border crossing into **Ceuta**, where there is a cacophony of car exhausts, car horns, and the chatter of thousands of people attempting to cross the border on foot. In northern Morocco, Ceuta, the autonomous city, is most famous for the metallic fence separating Europe from the Global South. Historically, Ceuta developed as a military and trade center linking Africa to Europe.

After the border crossing, head to visit the **Monumental complex** of the **royal walls**, which dates back to the 5th century. These extensive fortifications, of great strategic complexity, have been beautifully restored. Stop at the **Royal Walls Museum** for a visit, then head to visit

the Africa Square (Plaza de Africa), **Maritime Park central market, gigantic Hercules statue, and Mount Hacho**, created when Heracles broke the mountain that had connected Africa and Europe-defined the western limits of navigation for the ancient Mediterranean world. Stop at **Casa de los Dragones**, or "House of the Dragons," built in a mishmash of Mudéjar revival and 19th-century designs with four dragon statues capping the roof. If time permits, we may stop at the **Museum of Ceuta** occupies one of the former ravelin pavilions built in 1900 by the Military Engineers Squad. Then continue the drive to **Tetouan** in the northern area of Morocco. It was also home to an important Sephardic Jewish community, which emigrated from Spain after the Reconquista and the Spanish Inquisition. Many houses belonging to aristocratic families are often exquisitely carved and painted in hispano-moresque designs, found in the Alhambra of Granada, and the tilework for which Tetouan is known may be seen on floors, pillars, and dados. Upon arrival, transfer to *Chams Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, February 27
Tetouan (Chefchaouen)



After breakfast, begin the drive to **Chefchaouen**. one of the prettiest small towns in Morocco and famous for its soothing shades of blue set against crisp white and muted creams, winding streets, and stunning setting in the foothills of the Rif Mountains. The City's blueness is a tradition that dates back to the 15th century when Jews fled Spain because of the religious upheaval that was taking place. They believed it was the color of heaven and reminded them of God. The tradition is still going strong today. Upon arrival, begin the tour of the Blue City with a visit to its blue and white **medina**, known for its beautiful doors. Tour the **17th-century Kasbah**, and admire its unique **Grand Mosque**, constructed in the 15th century, Chefchaouen's Grande Mosque was built on the orders of Moulay Mohamed Ben Ali Ben Rachid, the son of the City's founder. End the day with a visit to **Ras Alma**, the waterfalls, and sources. We may see Berber women doing their washing. Enjoy lunch, then head back to the *Hotel* while enjoying the panoramic views. Dinner & overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, February 28
Tetouan - Nador (5 hrs. 45 min.)



After breakfast, begin a scenic drive to **Nador** via AL Hoceima, passing through red cliffs, verdant gorges, and, midway, an enormous sculpture of deeply eroded hills. Upon arrival, transfer to *Mercurie Rif Nador Hotel* or similar for check-in. In the afternoon, head for a short

sightseeing tour of the city with its many large resorts, beautiful beaches, and many more. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, March 01
Nador (Melilla - SPAIN)



After breakfast, begin the drive to the border to cross into the **Melilla enclave**. The city has been under Spanish control since 1496, although it has been an important port in the Mediterranean since Phoenician times. Now many of this outpost's inhabitants are Spanish military troops. Explore the old **city's medieval fortifications** and enjoy the views of the Mediterranean. Also, visit the **Museum of Archaeology and History & the Military History Museum**, which houses an extensive collection of coins, weapons, munitions, flags, and reproductions, including a scale model of Melilla Square as it was in 1846. Visit **Las Cuevas des Coventico**, "Caves of the Convent." These natural caverns are said to have been excavated by the Phoenicians and used as hiding places throughout different eras. Drive back to Nador and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant, then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, March 02
Nador - Fes (4 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the drive to **Fes**. Upon arrival, explore the 14th-century **Fes El Jedid (New Fes)** and admire the **seven gates of the King Palace**, one for each day of the week and have giant brass door knockers, explore the 15th-century **Jewish quarter (Mellah)**. The Mellah of Fes contains **narrow streets, ancient synagogues & an extensive Jewish cemetery**. Also, visit the **Ibn Danan Synagogue**-the oldest synagogue in Fes, and the **Jewish cemetery** and then walk in the Mellah, the old Jewish quarter, which provides an interesting insight into the Jewish architecture. Transfer to *L'escale Hotel* for check-in, dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, March 03
Fes



Begin the day with a city tour and take a step back to the Middle Ages, where we will visit **Fes El Bali Medina**, the largest living medieval medina city, Morocco's spiritual and cultural heart. Fes was founded in the 8th century by Moulay Driss 1 and subscribed as a UNESCO patrimonial in 1981. Visit the **Nejjarine complex** that houses a beautiful fountain and the nearby Foundouk, now converted into a museum. Fes is also the capital of Arab handmade crafts; visit the **medieval tanneries** and see artisans and brass workers at Essafarine. Among Fes's highlights are the **Karaouine mosque & university** and

the **shrine of Moulay Driss**. Admire the stunning **Bab Boujloud gate**, perhaps the most beautiful gate in Fes. Visit the **Bou Inania Mederssa** (Koranic College), a jewel of the Hispano-Moorish architecture, built in the 14th century. Then tour the **Borj Sud**, a 16th-century fort with fantastic medina views. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, March 04



Fes - Meknes - Rabat - Casablanca (3 hrs. 15 min.)

Begin the day with a drive to **Meknes**, the Imperial City, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1996 and holds many treasures within its walls. Meknes can rival the likes of Rabat and Fez. It comprises the old (medina) and the new (ville nouvelle), two distinct centers less than three miles apart but harnessing quite different vibes. Visit the impressive 17th-century **Bab Mansour gate**, the last important construction project ordered by Sultan Moulay Ismail, designed to elaborate homage to himself and the strong Muslim orthodoxy of his dynasty, walk-in **Lahdime square**, located between the old town and the imperial part of the city. Its name, "place of demolition," was given to it after tons of rubble were stored there during the reconstruction work of the town. It houses a covered market that comes alive at sunset, where storytellers, animal trainers, and boatmen create a most exotic atmosphere.

Continue to **Heri Souani**, the granary of massive, vaulted structures and Royal stables, then visit the **house of water**. Continue the drive to **Rabat**, and upon arrival, head to visit the 12th-century **Oudaya Kasbah**, a picturesque walled Medina. Continue to the parade ground of the **king's palace** and end the tour with a visit to the landmarks of Rabat: **Mohamed 5th Mausoleum** and the **Hassan Tower**. This huge unfinished mosque was built mainly at the end of the 12th century. Then continue the drive to **Casablanca** and, upon arrival, transfer to *New Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, March 05

Casablanca - US



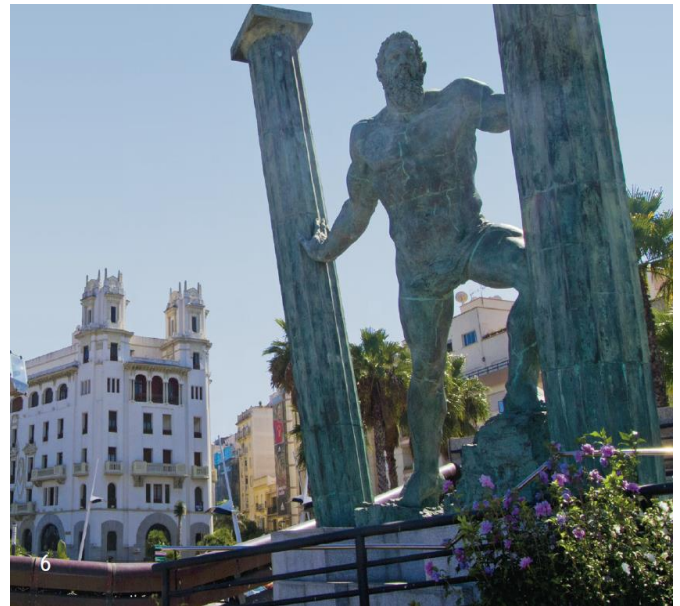
After breakfast, transfer to Casablanca airport for your flight back to the **US**. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".

Special Tour Remarks:

Knowing the nature of such an off-the-beaten-track journey, all travelers joining this tour are required a high level of flexibility, tolerance, and willingness to go with the flow when things change. Anyone joining this tour must understand that border crossing involves patience, and participants are acknowledging their complete understanding and acceptance of all terms and conditions and admit that they are in good physical and mental health and are equipped with an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a tolerant and patient spirit to cope up with the tour. We retain the full right to make any necessary changes to the itinerary, the sequence of visits, and the choices of hotels, sites, or activities previously described in the itinerary.

Visa: Spain is a part to the Schengen Agreement. This means **U.S. citizens** may enter **Spain & Enclaves** for up to 90 days for tourist visits. **Moroccan visa** is currently **gratis** for us citizens and obtainable upon arrival at Casablanca airport.



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$ 5,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

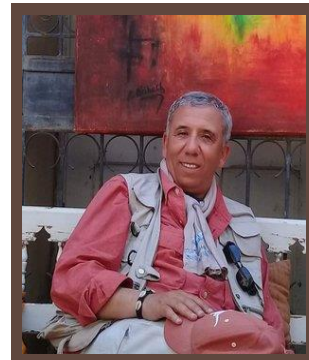
Single Supplement: \$ 495.00

Price based on group size of minimum 6 participants and maximum of 10 participants

Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: ***

Paris where he now resides. He has extensive knowledge on Islamic architecture and Eastern decorative elements, as well as archaeology and history. An excellent lecturer on ethnographic and anthropological subjects, he will introduce you not only to the historical jewels of the countries, but he'll also reveal to you their culture and history and introduce you to the tribes and villages. He is the Co-founder of the Tunisian Interprofessional Federation for Tourism and President of the Cultural Tourism in Tunisia that was founded in March 2016 and aims at conveying together various operators to have a direct connection with the Tunisian Tourist sector.

About your lecturer, Mohamed Halouani... Mr. Halouani, Tunisian native, He transformed his profound passion for travel and history into a creative and diversified educational career, designing, and carrying out multiple archaeological and cultural trips for various institutions such as The Detroit Institute of Art, the Textile Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, and many more organizations. After having received his degrees in English and Spanish, Mr. Halouani completed his European Master's in linguistics and Hispanic studies at the Sorbonne University in



Tour Includes:

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- All accommodation at mentioned *Hotels* or similar.
- Travel by modern a/c vehicles.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner, as well as water with all meals).
- All Tours as per itinerary & entrance fees to the sites and museums mentioned.
- Escort of tour lecturer (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- English Speaking local guide.
- Bottled water on touring days only.
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Trip Grade:

II Active - Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides.

Lodging Level:

***** Superior** - Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars).



Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA - Casablanca - USA.
- Moroccan Visa (Currently free to US citizens and obtainable upon arrival at Casablanca airport).
- Photography and video making fees.
- Beverages and alcoholic drinks with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance (Highly recommended).

