



## MOROCCO BOUND - FEB 2012

### Day 1

Rendezvous at 7.00am at the Mar y Sol building (Golfers Paradise) Junction 130/131 for the short journey to Tarifa which will give time to catch the 9.00am Hydrofoil for the 40 minute crossing to Tanger. Entry visas are obtained from the Immigration Officer on board. There is a duty free shop for alcohol and tobacco situated in the centre of the ship. On arrival after custom formalities our transport will be waiting with our Moroccan guide for the short drive along the Atlantic, south to the Portuguese 15<sup>th</sup> century coastal town of Asilah, wander around the picturesque Medina dominated by the 'El Kamra' (Tower of the moon) although its summit has suffered violent restoration work notice the slender Gothic columns that flank an upper window, which betray its Portuguese origins. Continuing our drive south along the motorway passing through Meknes arriving at the historical Roman town of Volubilis where we visit the 2000 year old ruins. Volubilis was the ancient capital of Mauretania. It is without doubt one of the finest Roman archaeological sites in Morocco. A local guide will escort you around the site with its well-preserved basilica; mosaic floored villas and triumphal arch. Staying the night at the Hotel Volubilis where you will be able to sip your gin and tonics overlooking the famous site in time for the sunset.

### Day 2

After an early start for the short drive to Meknes, our local guide will escort you around the Medina with its souk, royal stables, ornamental gates, hanging gardens watered by a 4 acre reservoir and even the underground slave pens. Meknes is one of the Imperial cities of Morocco, once the capital of Sultan Moulay Ismail who was famous for his vast collection of slaves plundered from even as far as the south coast of England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Leaving Meknes we take the motorway again for the short journey to Fez. Fez is the most complete Islamic city in the world and is home to a mixture of Arabs and Berbers living in close harmony. The university was founded long before Oxford or Cambridge by the daughters of the then Sultan. It was founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and was the first Muslim Kingdom of Morocco. The medersas from that time are open to non Muslims but the rest of the vast heritage of religious architecture remains inaccessible to non Muslims. Visitors are left to concentrate on the street pattern, the style of life, the sounds and odours, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. We will follow in the footsteps of Michael Palin and view the vats of dyes for the leatherworkers that Fez is famous for. Staying overnight in Fez.

### Day 3

After breakfast we have a panoramic tour of Fez stopping at the medieval ceramic factory. We head north stopping for lunch en route near Ouezzane before the climb into the Rif Mountains to the spectacular town of Chefchaouen, one of the most beautiful towns in Morocco which nestles in the hollow of the two mountains achchaoua (the horns) from which it takes its name. Chefchaouen was isolated until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and it has preserved a way of life that flourished in Moorish

Spain more than 500 hundred years ago. It was as late as 1926 that slaves were openly sold in the market situated in the medina. There will be time to explore and wander at will absorbing the tranquillity of this photographer's gem of a town, walking around the many tiny streets (only pedestrian) visiting the waterfall where the local women wash their clothes. Around every corner is a collage of tiny doors, painted steps and cobbled streets painted in the blue of the town. Please feel free to take all the photos you want but please ask if you want to take a portrait of one of the local inhabitants, as sometimes they don't like it and can be quite offended. Dinner will be taken at Casa Aladdin on the roof overlooking the floodlit Casbah and the main square. Your accommodation will be in a small riad close to the main square.

#### Day 4

Today will be spent exploring the town, or even trying out one of the hammams (Steam Bath), where for the price of a gin and tonic a massage can be arranged lasting an hour. You will be free wander at will, visiting the waterfall and numerous little shops before meeting in the main square for pre dinner drinks.

#### Day 5

Following a leisurely breakfast in the main square there will be time to buy any last minute souvenirs before the 2-hour journey back through the Rif Mountains to the bustling international city of Tanger for a tour of the environs. After lunch we head back to the port where visa formalities and exit stamps for the passports are processed for the short crossing back to Spain and home.

#### Price includes:

- Cost per person in a double room (supplement for single occupancy)
- Hydrofoil tickets
- Transportation in ac luxury coach
- Accommodation in either hotels or Boutique Riads with breakfast and evening meals.
- English speaking guides
- All entrances to places of interest and local taxes (tipping is optional)