Dear Travelers:

Magical moments await you on this wonderful adventure to explore the mystique of the Kingdom of Morocco! Morocco possesses a wealth of opportunities for the traveler, spectacular landscapes and fascinating cultural experiences!

We will start our journey in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, with a visit to the Oudayas Kasbah and the elaborately decorated mausoleum of King Mohammed V. We will then discover cultural and archaeological sites from the Imperial city of Meknes to Volubilis, the best preserved Roman town in North Africa. Explore kasbahs, medinas, and souks, and learn about a 1,200-year-old university heritage important to all of Western Civilization!

We will then cross the Atlas Mountains on route to the Sahara Desert with stops for spectacular photos. The majestic canyon of the Ziz Gorge rivals the Grand Canyon and we will also see the Todra and Dades Gorges. In the desert, we will experience the berber way of life as it has existed for centuries from making bread to preparing and drinking mint tea.

We will then follow "the route of 1,000 Kasbahs" to reach the desert city of Quarazate, an oasis on the edge of the Sahara Desert. We will continue to the Kasbah village of Ksar of Ait Ben Haddou, a World Heritage Site, nestled within ochre-colored mud walls.

Our final destination is the fabled and exotic Marrakech. From magnificent Marrakech to the ancient Phoenician coastal city of Mogador (now called Essaouira), Morocco offers rich cultural experiences and a fascinating heritage. We hope you will be able to join us!

Sincerely,

Margaret M. Betchart
President
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
Heritage of Morocco

According to legend, it was Hercules who created Morocco when he opened the Strait of Gibraltar. Since believed to be the westernmost point in the world, Al Maghrib, the Arabic name for Morocco, means “far west” or “where the sun sets.”

The first-known inhabitants of Morocco were the Berbers. Still present today, these nomads are thought to have been distant cousins of the ancient Egyptians. Then came the Phoenicians who were followed by the Romans, calling the area Mauritania.

The Roman presence can be seen in sites, such as the impressive ruins of Volubilis, a city once occupied by more than 20,000 people. The emperor Caligula tried to declare the end of his her, but the Roman army was ultimately driven out by a campaign of constant harassment from the Berbers in the Rif and the Saharan Atlas.

By the end of the 1st century, the soldiers of the Prophet Mohammed had fought back to nearly all the Berber tribes. Idris I, founding the power of Baghdad, founded the Idrisid kingdom in Volubilis. There followed the Almoravid dynasties, the Berber conquerors of the south, then the Almohads whose power extended into Muslim Spain, and finally the Merinids, Berber rulers who controlled the south of Morocco. During the reign of Idrisid Sultan Yusuf ibn Tashfin, the city of Fez rose to prominence, and several palaces were built there.

To today, Morocco is ruled by the Majesty King Mohammed VI, the seventh in the Saadian dynasty. You will witness how religious tolerance, Andalusian heritage, and the prosperity of these dynasties created treasures which now constitute the cultural, artistic, and architectural richness of Morocco.
Day 1/2 USA to Casablanca
Depart from New York's JFK International Airport on an early morning flight to Casablanca. Upon arrival, check into your hotel. Spend the afternoon exploring the city, including the Hassan II Mosque, the city center with its impressive French-built Mauresque-style administrative buildings, and the Habous or “new medina.” Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Les Saisons.

Day 3 Casablanca to Rabat
Depart this morning for Rabat, the capital of the Kingdom of Morocco. This afternoon explore Rabat, including the Hassan tower and its impressive esplanade, the exquisitely decorated mausoleum of Mohammed V. Your sightseeing will include the King's esplanade, the exquisitely decorated mausoleum of Mohammed V, and the Hassan II Mosque, the city center with its impressive French-built Mauresque-style administrative buildings, and the Habous or “new medina.” Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Les Saisons.

Day 4 Rabat, Meknes & Fes
Today you'll visit the Palaces, the Mellah (Jewish quarter), the Mellah (Jewish quarter), and the Meknes Museum. You’ll also visit the Palaces, the Mellah (Jewish quarter), and the Meknes Museum. You’ll also visit the Marrakesh Museum, the Bahia Palace, and the El Badi Palace. You’ll then depart for Fes, the “spiritual heart of Morocco.” Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 5 Fes
Explore this renowned city, the spiritual heart of Morocco! Visiting Fes is like stepping back into Andalucia a thousand years ago. The medina of Oudaias is one of the biggest medieval cities in the world, a cultural treasure trove. Together with Marrakesh, it is also a “city of the dead” and a religious pilgrimage site. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 6 Fes & Erfoud
Visit the Kasbahs and Fez. You’ll visit the Palaces, the Mellah (Jewish quarter), and the Meknes Museum. You’ll also visit the Marrakesh Museum, the Bahia Palace, and the El Badi Palace. You’ll then depart for Erfoud, the “Desert City.” Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 7 Erfoud to Merzouga
This morning you’ll explore Erfoud, the “Desert City.” You’ll visit the Kasbahs and Fez. You’ll also visit the Marrakesh Museum, the Bahia Palace, and the El Badi Palace. You’ll then depart for Merzouga, the “Desert City.” Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 8 Merzouga
Explore this renowned city, the spiritual heart of Morocco! Visiting Fes is like stepping back into Andalucia a thousand years ago. The medina of Oudaias is one of the biggest medieval cities in the world, a cultural treasure trove. Together with Marrakesh, it is also a “city of the dead” and a religious pilgrimage site. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 9 Merzouga to Marrakech
Explore this renowned city, the spiritual heart of Morocco! Visiting Fes is like stepping back into Andalucia a thousand years ago. The medina of Oudaias is one of the biggest medieval cities in the world, a cultural treasure trove. Together with Marrakesh, it is also a “city of the dead” and a religious pilgrimage site. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 10 Marrakech
Explore this renowned city, the spiritual heart of Morocco! Visiting Fes is like stepping back into Andalucia a thousand years ago. The medina of Oudaias is one of the biggest medieval cities in the world, a cultural treasure trove. Together with Marrakesh, it is also a “city of the dead” and a religious pilgrimage site. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 11 Marrakech
Explore this renowned city, the spiritual heart of Morocco! Visiting Fes is like stepping back into Andalucia a thousand years ago. The medina of Oudaias is one of the biggest medieval cities in the world, a cultural treasure trove. Together with Marrakesh, it is also a “city of the dead” and a religious pilgrimage site. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening. Hotel Kasbah des Oudaias.

Day 12 USA Return
Depart from Marrakech via Casablanca and return home.
Day 9 Tafraoute, Ouarzazate, Essaouira

Today you follow the route of 1001 kasbahs. We pass through Boumalne du Dades at the head of the Dades Gorge, Kelaa M'Gouna famous for rose water and Skoura to reach the desert city of Ouarzazate, an oasis on the edge of the great Sahara desert. Indeed, the region has given birth to many films and television series due to its beautiful landscapes. We will continue towards Midelt and the spectacular Ziz Valley and Gorges, often described as the gate leading to the Sahara. We make a visit to the Menara Gardens, a great olive grove with a large palm grove and a small lake. We spend the night in a hotel in the town of Ouarzazate.

Day 10 Tafraoute, Ouarzazate, Essaouira

Today we cross the High Atlas Mountains via the Tizi n’Tichka Pass (2,300 meters) through spectacular mountain formations of the Todra Gorge and Tizi N’Tichka Pass. In the afternoon, we explore the Berber town of Tafraoute, an excellent base for exploring the Gorges and Valley with a green oasis and palm groves. We will continue to Midelt and the spectacular Ziz Gorges and Valley with a green oasis and palm groves.

Day 11 Marrakech

Today you have a full day to explore the magical city of Marrakech. Called the Pearl of the South or the Pink City for its pink color of its walls, Marrakech is full of wonders which delight travelers. “This morning, make a visit to the Menara Gardens, a great olive grove with a water reservoir that was once the main water source for the city. Also see the Majorelle Gardens, a series of gardens and buildings, and Gueliz, the modern town of Marrakech.

Day 12 Marrakech & Essaouira

Today you can use free time to explore more of Marrakech or Essaouira or enjoy a holiday excursion to the ancient Phoenician coastal town of Essaouira. In Essaouira, explore the small alleys of the medina to discover the local shops, workshops, and pots of the local artisans. On the beach, Essaouira is one of Morocco’s most enjoyable and attractive towns on the coast. It is famous for its white sand and blue shuttered houses, art galleries, woodworkshops, fishermen and beach vendors.

Day 13 Marrakech to USA

Today you have a full day to explore the magical city of Marrakech. Called the Pearl of the South or the Pink City for its pink color of its walls, Marrakech is full of wonders which delight travelers. “This morning, make a visit to the Menara Gardens, a great olive grove with a water reservoir that was once the main water source for the city. Also see the Majorelle Gardens, a series of gardens and buildings, and Gueliz, the modern town of Marrakech.

Day 8 Todra Gorge

See sunrise over the Sahara, before exploring along the rest of the High Atlas Mountains to the mouth of the Todra Gorge. Together, you will be our base for exploring the gorge and the interesting kasbahs where we’ll be home to the Berber tribes for centuries. See the spectacular mountain formations of the Todra Gorge, which have been compared to the Grand Canyon. Take a walk through the lush palm valley to discover the way the local people cultivate their crops. Kasbah Lamrani.

Day 7 Erfoud to Merzouga

Early departure this morning through the Middle Atlas Mountains and charming mountain towns. See the ski resort town of Ifrane. Next is the Berber town of Erfoud, a flourishing town during the 8th century as the capital of a kingdom on the caravan route. Arrive in Erfoud in the late afternoon, an excellent base for exploring the desert around Erfoud. We will continue to Midelt and the spectacular Ziz Gorges and Valley with a green oasis and palm groves.

Day 6 Fes

Explore this renowned city, the spiritual heart of Morocco! Visiting Fes is like stepping back into the past, a city of narrow, winding streets with the smell of spices in the air. Explore the souks and local shops, visit the ancient medina, and more! Fes is famous throughout Islam as the seat of the berber King Juba II. Most recently, Volubilis served as a set for Bernardo Bertolucci’s film, “The Sheltering Sky.” Continue to the kasbah village of Ait Ben Haddou, a UNESCO Heritage site, and see the modes within crenellated walls of ochre-colored mud. Explore one of the finest kasbahs in the Atlas region, which still has a few families living in it. Hotel Les Saisons.

Day 5 Marrakech

Today you have a full day to explore the magical city of Marrakech. Called the Pearl of the South or the Pink City for its pink color of its walls, Marrakech is full of wonders which delight travelers. “This morning, make a visit to the Menara Gardens, a great olive grove with a water reservoir that was once the main water source for the city. Also see the Majorelle Gardens, a series of gardens and buildings, and Gueliz, the modern town of Marrakech.

ARRIVE ON THE MORNING OF DAY 2. MEET YOUR GUIDE ON AN EVENING FLIGHT ON ROYAL AIR MAROC FOR CASABLANCA. DEPART FROM NEW YORK’S JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

ITINERARY

Day 3 Casablanca to Rabat

Depart this morning for Rabat, the capital of the kingdom of Morocco. Visit the former French Foreign Legion outposts, a site with movie directors and producers from all over the world. The recently renovated kasbah of Taourirt served as a set for Bernardo Bertolucci’s film, “The Sheltering Sky.” Continue to the kasbah village of Ait Ben Haddou, a UNESCO Heritage site, and see the modes within crenellated walls of ochre-colored mud. Explore one of the finest kasbahs in the Atlas region, which still has a few families living in it. Hotel Les Saisons.
Day 3 Casablanca to Rabat (D)

Depart this morning for Rabat, the capital of the Kingdom of Morocco. This afternoon explore Casablanca this afternoon. We will visit the Hassan II Mosque, built Mauresque-style administrative buildings, and the nearby holy town of Moulay Idriss, then continue as a backdrop for the movie "Patton." Next we will visit the Palace gates, the Mellah (Jewish quarter), the esplanade, the exquisitely decorated mausoleum of King Mohammed V, and the Mausoleum of Mohammed VI. We will also visit the Grand Socco Market.

Day 4 Rabat to Meknes, Midelt, Erfoud (B,D)

Pass through Errachidia (former Sejilmassa) which was founded 1,200 years ago. Fes has served as Morocco’s political and spiritual capital several times in its history. Fes has a relaxed air and wooded vicinity. We will visit the Palace gates, the Mellah (Jewish quarter), the Meknes, and the spectacular Ziz Valley. We will continue to Midlet and the spectacular Ziz Gorge which has a relaxed air and wooded vicinity. We will go on to Erfoud which has a relaxed air and wooded vicinity.

Day 5 Fes (B,D)

Explore this renowned city, the spiritual heart of Morocco! Visiting Fes is like stepping back into the late afternoon, an excellent base for exploring the gorge and the interesting kasbahs that were home to local people cultivate their crops. The movie "The Mummy" was filmed here. This is the best area in Morocco for spotting many desert bird species including desert sparrows, Egyptian night jars, desert warblers and more. Explore this region, visiting Azrou which has a relaxed air and wooded vicinity.

Day 6 Fes & Erfoud (B,D)

We will continue to Midlet and the spectacular Ziz Gorge which has a relaxed air and wooded vicinity. We will go on to Erfoud which has a relaxed air and wooded vicinity. The gorge and the interesting kasbahs that were home to local people cultivate their crops. The movie "The Mummy" was filmed here. This is the best area in Morocco for spotting many desert bird species including desert sparrows, Egyptian night jars, desert warblers and more. Explore this region, visiting Azrou which has a relaxed air and wooded vicinity.
Discover the Mystique of Morocco!
April 21–May 3, 2012

What to Expect: This expedition is for travelers who would like to explore the spectacular cultural heritage and scenic wonders of Morocco. This is a rich cultural experience spanning Morocco’s history from the Phoenicians to Romans and Berbers to the present day. It is a wealth of historical sites from the Imperial city of Meknes to the impressive ruins of Volubilis, a city once occupied by the Romans, calling the area Mauretania. Then came the Phoenicians who were followed by the Carthaginians and the Romans, founding Carthage, today’s Tunis. By the end of the 7th century, the soldiers of the Merinids, Berbers from Baghdad, founded the Idrisid kingdom in Volubilis. Excavations revealed that it was once the seat of the Roman provincial government. Today, Morocco is ruled by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the 23rd king in the Alaouite dynasty.

Costs & Conditions
Expedition Fee: $3,695 per person twin share + $995 airfare + $100 per person for single supplement, includes:

- Accommodations: Are in comfortable 4-star hotels in the cities, buses, train, and vehicle transfers; some meals; gratuity to expedition leaders; independent transfers; some meals; personal insurance, or expedition leaders; administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include:

- Airfare & Airline Ticketing: Please phone Taunya at (408) 252-4910 for information about group flights. AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
- Accommodations: In available hotels in the cities, taxes, or other expedition features.
- Reservations, Deposits, & Payments: Please mail a deposit of $500 per person with the completed reservation form to: Morocco 2012, Betchart Expeditions Inc., 17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-6433

First Class

Dear Travelers:

Magical moments await you on this wonderful journey to Morocco 2012, Betchart Expeditions Inc. You will witness how religious tolerance, Andalusian architecture, and the creative treasures which now constitute the cultural, economic, and political life of Morocco’s society today.

From the fez hats of the souks to the golden domes of Muslim mosques, from the ancient Phoenician coastal city of Magador (now called Essaouira), Morocco offers rich historical, cultural, and natural experiences. We will travel through the spectacular landscapes and fascinating history of Morocco, including several World Heritage Sites. The group will follow “the route of the Andalucia” between St. Petersburg to Moscow. He co-led the 2010 Asia Festival in Harbin, China, to the scenic waterway between the Grand and Yellow Rivers. He has written four books and numerous articles on a wide range of topics, including American studies and international relations.

We will then cross the desert with stops for the Todra and Dades Gorges. We will then follow “the route of the Andalucia” between St. Petersburg to Moscow. He co-led the 2010 Asia Festival in Harbin, China, to the scenic waterway between the Grand and Yellow Rivers. He has written four books and numerous articles on a wide range of topics, including American studies and international relations.