

MOROCCO TEXTILES TOUR with Rachael Daisy Dodd 3 - 17 May 2025



Marrakech, Atlas Mountains, Sahara, Fes, Chefchaouen, Rabat

Travel with artist **Rachael Daisy Dodd** and explore the traditional Amazigh (Berber) crafts of Morocco at a grassroots level where women's cooperative ventures present a range of textile creations melding age-old skills with new innovations.

In Marrakech we visit the exquisite new Yves Saint Laurent Museum featuring his fashion design as well as the Berber Museum that houses the Moroccan textiles and jewellery that inspired his work.

We then venture into the High Atlas Mountains and follow the ancient trade routes across the Tizi'n'Tichka Pass from Marrakech to the Sahara. Weavers of carpets and cloth, embroiderers and basket weavers are found in remote locations where they still employ their skills and maintain their traditional life style.

Next we make our way north to Fes and the blue city of Chefchaouen for a feast of colour and Islamic culture, finishing in the capital city of Rabat.

The tour includes hands-on experiences and demonstrations with local artisans. On the road in the mountains and Sahara we learn some exquisite embroidery techniques, tie knots to make rugs, explore some eco-dyeing using Rose Madder and Pomegranate.

Guest artist **Rachael Daisy Dodd** will share her skills and experience to allow participants to develop their ideas for textile design, drawing inspiration from the sublime landscape and rich cultural environment provided by the art and architecture of Morocco. The tour is not an intensive workshop as there is too much to see and experience in Morocco, but time will be devoted to sharing ideas, discussing colour, pattern, materials and trialling techniques for future development. You will be encouraged to develop a visual diary and to create studies and samplers incorporating your ideas.

Workshop with Rachael Daisy

Using inspiration from Moroccan symbols, textiles and colour Rachael will guide participants through hand stitched blocks that can be used in a wall hanging or larger quilt, to create a beautiful souvenir of a magical trip.

MORE ABOUT THE TOUR

Accommodation is provided in the most comfortable traditional guesthouses, where we enjoy the extraordinary delights of Amazigh food and hospitality. You will discover the highlights of Morocco and the indigenous Amazigh culture that evolves and continues largely through the extraordinary textile traditions. We also enjoy music and a complete range of traditional cultural experiences and crafts.

Traveling with a small group of like-minded people and an experienced team of co-hosts the program offers an innovative and creative way to explore a new place that is stimulating, supportive and safe.

ABOUT RACHAELDAISY



Rachaeldaisy has always walked a creative path, from delving into all sorts of crafts as a child and then working as a busy creative events florist for more than 20 years. Then the allure of patchwork and quilting captured her heart in the early 2000s, marking the beginning of a passionate journey. Rachael has seamlessly integrated her wealth of floral design experience into her quilts to infuse her work with colour, balance and creative joy. In regards to style Rachael has been affectionately described as a "kangaroo on a pogo stick" (given the endless possibilities in the realm of patchwork and quilting). However, a consistent thread in her quilts is the exploration of fresh ways and innovative techniques to reinterpret conventional designs. Her work often features lots of colour, pattern on pattern, a variety of 3D elements, including Yo-Yos, Prairie Points, wool felt, appliquéd and pieced denim, doilies, and trims. Words frequently used to characterise the resulting quilts are whimsical, creative, colourful, and happy.

Rachael's quilts have received many awards internationally, including several Best in Show awards, Best Use Of Colour, Most Innovative and Viewers Choice. They have been exhibited in and won prizes in fine art exhibitions and published in magazines and books both nationally and internationally. Her book, Whizz Bang! Adventures in Folded Fabric published with Quiltmania has inspired quilters around the world to create award winning folded fabric quilts. Rachael delights in teaching and sharing her quilts with fellow enthusiasts, inspiring creativity and proving that patchwork and quilting doesn't always have rules. Her workshops create a space where participants, whether enthusiastic beginners or advanced sewers, can explore diverse techniques in a fun and relaxed environment.





DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1: Marrakech

Arrive Marrakech. Greet and transfer to our Riad in the old Medina.

5pm meet in the lounge room for the official start of our tour with introductions, followed by our first short walk in the Medina before dinner. This first evening we have some informal discussion as some people may be tired after a long journey.

Accommodation in a traditional Riad guesthouse in the old Medina on Half Board to include dinner and breakfast.

DAY 2: Marrakech

8.30am breakfast 9 -9.30am orientation and update on tour itinerary.

9.30am morning walking tour of the Medina with a City Guide. Visit Museum collections of textiles & artefacts from Morocco and the Saharan basin. Lunch in the Medina followed by a visit to the Alnour association for disabled women, a handcraft cooperative that focuses on sharing traditional embroidery skills, providing women with a means to earn an independent income and improve skills and literacy. Return to the Riad in the afternoon for some free time.

6 - 7pm Rachael Daisy will make a presentation about her own work practice, introduce the workshop project and discuss ideas for developing your own creative ideas and designs to make the most of your travel experience in Morocco.

Riad accommodation on B&B includes breakfast.

DAY 3: Ait Oumghar

8.30am breakfast.

9am we depart Marrakech today, but first we will visit the exquisite Les Jardins Majorelle, see the private collection of Yves St Laurent at the Musée Berbère, including regional Amazigh (Berber) costumes, jewellery and carpets that inspired his life and work. Next door there is the Yves St Laurent Museum that is a showcase of his personal clothing and jewellery design. Next we depart for the village of Ait Oumghar in the High Atlas Mountains with lunch served on arrival.

FB Full Board accommodation includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

DAY 4: Ait Oumghar

A relaxing day at a beautiful guesthouse that has a wonderful kitchen garden and natural swimming pool. We will spend time discussing the traditions, colours and patterns of the Moroccan textiles we have seen. We will begin developing design ideas for our hand stitched souvenir block project. After lunch we visit a small women's embroidery group for a mini workshop and cultural exchange. The association has developed a range of educational resources for the local women including embroidery, sewing, cooking, numeracy and literacy classes. Late afternoon spend time working on your designs as well as preparing a special silk scarf for eco-dyeing in a few days time.

Guesthouse on FB to include all 3 meals.



PHOTO: Tiwisi Embroiderers Association workshop



PHOTO: UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ksar Ait Ben Haddou

DAY 5: Ait Ben Haddou

7.30am breakfast, 8.30am departure to transfer across the High Atlas Mountains via the Tizi-n-Tichka pass. The landscape is spectacular and we will stop along the way for lunch in a local cafe and to visit an Argan Oil cooperative where the local women will explain the complex process of extracting the rare oil that is used for cosmetics or roasted for a delicious culinary oil. Continue to our guesthouse in Ait Ben Haddou, Accommodation on HB includes breakfast and dinner.

DAY 6: Skoura

We start the day with a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ait Ben Haddou, an impressive walled Ksar (fortified village) and back-drop to many famous movies including Gladiator, Jesus of Nazareth, Game of Thrones and more. Then we visit a carpet cooperative to see weavers at work and view a range of traditional Amazigh carpets. The women will show us how to tie knots in weaving and prepare a home-made lunch of traditional couscous. Next a short drive to a village in the Anti-Atlas Mountains to visit a women's textile association where the local women work together to support their creative traditional weaving. The women will demonstrate natural dying techniques using rose madder or pomegranate and show their wares. This is an opportunity for us to also do some dying of our own using silk we have preprepared ahead of time. The association also generally serves tea and too much food and it is an amazing cultural experience!

Accommodation in the Skoura Oasis on FB to include 3 meals.

DAY 7: Skoura

After breakfast we will take a walk through the village gardens to learn about the local lifestyle and subsistence farming in the oasis. We visit a local pottery for mint tea and a demonstration by the traditional artisans, followed by local women's textile cooperatives to view the local handcrafts including weaving and embroidery. After lunch we gather on the terrace of our guesthouse to work on our stitching project.

Accommodation on FB include all meals and a spectacular traditional music performance.

DAY 8: Erg Chebbi Dunes, Merzouga

8am breakfast. 8.30am transfer to Merzouga (5-6hrs) via the Valley of the Roses. Lunch in a cafe en route and visit the Musee de Oasis at Tinjdad and a women's embroidery association where they create the traditional shawls worn in the Sahara. Continue via the village of Erfoud and visit the Fossil display and sales outlet where they produce a range of items made of the local black stone embedded with ancient fossils.

Accommodation on HB to include dinner and breakfast.



PHOTO: Erg Chebbi Dunes, Sahara

DAY 9: Erg Chebbi Dunes, Merzouga

A day to enjoy the Sahara, you can get up early and see the sunrise in the desert.

Today we can spend the day on our design project, drawing or stitching taking a break for lunch to drive to the nearby village of Khamlia where we feast on a local specialty dish, Medfouna, followed by a traditional Gnawa music performance.

Accommodation on FB includes all meals.



PHOTOS: above - Fes Leather Tannery; below - Chefchaouen

DAY 10: Fes

7am breakfast, 8am we depart early to drive north to Fez (8-9 hours). A long, but spectacular drive through the incredible landscape of the Ziz Valley and Middle Atlas Mountains, home of the Barbary apes. The sublime landscape offers plenty of scope for your imagination and design elements for textiles. Accommodation in the old Medina of Fes on B&B. Free time for dinner.

DAY 11: Fes

8.30am breakfast. 9.30am morning guided tour of the oldest Medina in the Islamic world, operating for 1,000 years. Visit the famous leather tannery and wander the streets to see the cultural highlights, artisanal workshops, the wood and metal souks, weaving workshops, traditional embroiderers and more. Lunch in the Medina. Free time in the afternoon to explore the Medina, do some shopping or have a massage or hammam.

Riad accommodation on B&B. Free time for dinner.



DAY 12: Chefchaouen

Today we drive north to the famous 'blue city'. Founded in 1471, Chefchaouen is nestled in the Rif Mountains and reveals a mix of cultural backgrounds as in its early history many Spanish Moors and Jews exiled from Spain settled amongst the local Amazigh people and the region was also annexed to Spain for a time in the early 20th century. Accommodation on B&B. Free time for dinner.

DAY 13: Chefchaouen

A day to explore the beautiful 'blue' village. After breakfast we drive to the 'Ras el Maa' waterfall at the top end of town and then walk to wind our way back through the narrow streets of Chefchaouen, back to the Uta Hammam square at the bottom of the hill for lunch. Time in the afternoon to work on the stitching project, relax or explore.

5-7pm Final review of our souvenir block works.

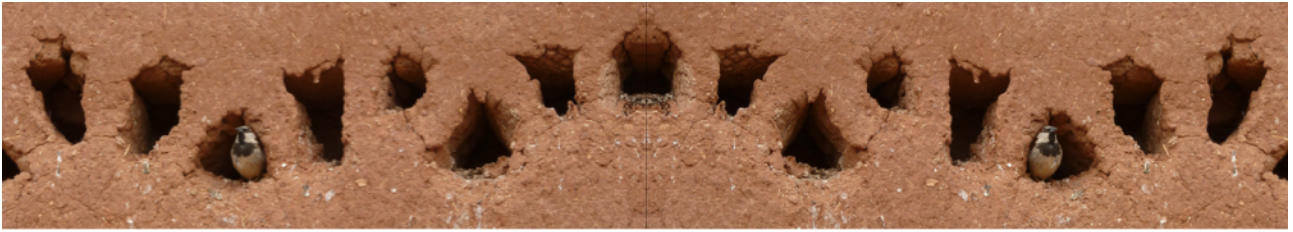
Accommodation on B&B. Free time for dinner.

Day 14: Rabat

A half day drive from Chefchaouen, we arrive in the capital city of Rabat in time to explore the old Medina and the nearby Oudayas Kasbah where we will visit the National Museum of Jewellery and Finery. Final farewell dinner at a nearby restaurant. Accommodation on B&B

Day 15:

Tour ends after breakfast. Transfer to Casablanca airport included in tour price.



TOUR PRICE:

AUD\$6,800 twin share/double room accommodation

Single room supplement AUD\$1,400

TOUR PRICE to INCLUDE:

Guest artist: Rachael Daisy Dodd

Experienced Tour Leader: Rita Lazauskas

English-speaking professional Amazigh Guide: Abdou

Private vehicle with driver and fuel for duration of the Tour

Airport transfer from Marrakech Airport on tour start date

Airport transfer to Casablanca airport on tour end date

Accommodation on FB (full board with 3 meals), HB (half board dinner & breakfast) or B&B (bed & breakfast) as per itinerary - all breakfasts, 8 dinners, 5 lunches

Local City Guides for walking tours in Marrakech and Fes

Hands-on workshops (some materials supplied, some extra will be available for purchase)

Entrance fees to cultural sites (Jardin Majorelle, Musée Berbère, YSL Museum, Ait Ben Haddou, etc)

Bottled water on the bus.

PRICE to EXCLUDE:

Flights; Travel and health insurance (compulsory); Airport transfers on dates other than tour start and end dates as listed above; Lunches, Evening meals when on B&B; Extras eg. Massage, hammam, cooking classes, etc; Beverages including alcohol, soda and mineral water; Tips Kitty (100MAD per day/) for porters, hotel staff, driver, guides will be collected at the beginning of the tour.

Please note that this tour starts in Marrakech and ends in Rabat.

We recommend that you fly in to Marrakech and out of Casablanca airport.

(We also offer a free transfer to Marrakech on the last day, however we do not arrive until mid afternoon so if flying from Marrakech on that day you would need an evening flight. Or we can arrange post tour accommodation at your request)

If you wish to extend your stay in Morocco we can organise airport transfers or make arrangements for any extra pre or post tour accommodation or extra tours. We highly recommend staying an extra day or two in Rabat or Marrakech if you want to catch up on some shopping.

If you would like to spend more time in Morocco we can recommend a trip to the coast at Essaouira or the ancient city of Taroudant in the south. We offer extension tours with a 5% loyalty discount. Ask us for some ideas on what's on offer!

Note:

Itinerary occasionally subject to variation as we are always building on the program as new opportunities arise, or if local conditions outside of our control change.

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