

Siroua Saffron Trail, Morocco

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive at Ouarzazate. If you fly to Marrakech you must be scheduled to arrive before 2pm to allow for the four hour transfer (extra cost) to Ouarzazate. If you can only get an evening flight to Marrakech then you should arrive the previous day. Meet at Ouarzazate and be transferred to your hotel.

The Siroua Mountain, situated between the High Atlas and the Anti Atlas, is a volcanic formation with an average altitude of 2500 m although the summit is actually at 3400 m. This area is perfect for horse trekking in spring-time and in autumn when it might be getting a bit too hot to ride in the desert and not yet warm enough to ride in the High Atlas.



You ride through various landscapes alternating between green grass and dark volcanic rocks in sight of many small villages in the valleys. Saffron is a very valuable product of this area and you will ride past the saffron terraces (saffron is a spice derived from the flower of the *Crocus sativus*, commonly known as the saffron crocus).



Our well trained horses will take you very safely in some difficult places. The good thing is that the hard paths usually lead to nice pastures. You should be a confident rider fit enough for an average of 5 hours in the saddle each day. Much of the riding will be at a

walk (c. 60%), but there will also be opportunities for trot (c. 25%) and canters, which may be fast (15%).

The following is the proposed itinerary but please note that changes are possible due to weather and local conditions.

Dinner and accommodation in a hotel in Ouarzazate. Unless advised otherwise this is the Hôtel Le Fint, Kasbah de Taourirte Avenue Med V in Ouarzazate. Tel: +212 524 88 48 86 www.finthotel.com

Day 2

After breakfast transfer west from Ouarzazate by vehicle (c. 2 hours) to meet your horses which have already been transferred to the start of the trail. Ride briefing and allocation of horses. After lunch you set off on the trail along the bank of Anzal Oued until you arrive at Tamllakoute village. Dinner & overnight in camp (approx. 2.5 hrs riding)

Day 3

In the morning there may be some opportunities for fast riding before reaching Tinzaline village. Then the terrain becomes very rough and stony until you reach Tizgzawine. In the afternoon you head for Merzoug before reaching the huge plateau of Amezri which offers great views over the surrounding mountains. Overnight in camp (approx. 5 hrs riding).



Day 4

Today your ride will take you to the Siroua summit, through Aït Tigga. This village overlooks the superb valley of Aït Sengane with its saffron terraced fields. Climb up to a small pass and have views over the Berber villages of the valley. Your picnic lunch will be near the sheep pens of Tisswatine.



Later continue towards the high and famous Tizi n'Anzommer pass (2732 m) which will offer a panoramic view over the whole mountain. Ride down sheep tracks to the camp site deep inside the Mdist valley.

Overnight in camp (approx. 5 hrs riding)

Day 5

Continue riding along a beautiful trail that crosses a mountainous and arid area very rich in medicinal plants. Actually the Siroua region is one of the richest regions as far as medicinal plants are concerned. The Berbers collect them and sell them on the markets all over the country. Descend to the river along a little path with a beautiful view over the Ighighi gorges. The horses rest and you picnic at the foot of Djbel Tazoulte.

Shortly after the break you ride up a trail until you reach the high mountain pastures and the Azazougzane Azib (sheep pens) where camp will be set up. Overnight in camp (approx. 5 hours riding)



Day 6

Still in the rocky mountains you ride through green sheep pastures passing one azib (sheep enclosure) after another. The scenery is very beautiful today.



In the afternoon, you ride up to Tizi n'Ait Qalla with a panoramic view over the big village of Anmid. Overnight in camp by the village (approx. 5 hrs riding)

Day 7

You start in the direction of Agrilaoune village and ride up a long path that overlooks small Berber villages hanging to the steep slopes of the mountain. There should be an opportunity for a final canter before ending the ride.

After lunch transfer by vehicle to Ouarzazate (2 hours) or Marrakech (4 hours).

Overnight in a hotel in Ouarzazate or in Marrakech (approx. 2 ½ hours riding)

Day 8

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight.

Accommodation

On the first night and last night you will stay at a hotel in Ouarzazate.

During the ride you stay in two person dome tents with a porch at each end for baggage. You may have a tent to yourself. Foam mattresses are supplied but you will need to bring a sleeping bag and camping pillow. Normally everyone helps with the setting up of the sleeping tents.



There is a large mess tent for eating and relaxing and also a shower tent and a chemical loo. There is a separate shower tent and you are provided with a large bucket of hot water for showering.



The support vehicle normally meets you for lunch and goes ahead to set up camp.

When staying in hotels, there is no single supplement if you are willing to share. If you wish to guarantee a single room, there is a single supplement.