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Right: The ornate interior of the Hasan II Mosque in Casablanca

Previous Page: The Hasan II Mosque at twilight





Meandering Morocco



### **Summary**

Morocco is one of those locations that simply fires the imagination. Mornings begin with the iconic call-to-prayer as the quiet of night is broken by the cries of dozens of Mullahs announcing their prayers over the tinny loudhailers atop every minaret. Bazaars and narrow walk-ways with stall-holders shouting wares. Scooters bustling past pedestrians with bales of cloth, or baskets of steaming bread. Activity is everywhere and it always has this sense of timelessness mixed with the modern overhanging it all.

This is the Morocco we explore through the photographic workshop; Meandering Morocco. The workshop concentrates on the eastern side of the Atlas mountains, visiting the most quintessential Moroccan cities. Crucially we spend actual time in the cities where most other photography tours have single night stop-overs with the bulk of the trip being spent in a bus.

Meandering Morocco is a travel photographer's delight, with landscapes, street scenes, architecture and people (with permission) to photograph. We take photographers to location where we know they will come away with portfolio worthy material. Mixed into this is a strong workshop component in the sense that there teaching by the instructors with dedicated editing and critique sessions as well discussions on the various genres of photography during the course of the workshop.

## **Key Highlights:**

## **Photograph:**

- Photographing the Hasan II Mosque in twilight
- Create images of incredible architecture dating back hundreds of years
- Experience and image the bustle of Moroccan life through labyrinthine pedestrian streets
- Photograph the old cities of Fes, Chefchaouen, Rabat, and Marrakesh

## Enjoy:

- Probably the world's best instructor to participant ratio, maximizing your learning
- Small photographic groups (max 6 photographers with 2 instructors)
- Having highly experienced tutors watching over your shoulders and helping you on the spot as you craft your image of Morocco's most iconic destinations
- The phenomenal cuisine of Morocco as we dine on delicious traditional Moroccan Tagines and more







#### • Learn about:

- Creative Composition: The basics and beyond, such as The Element Approach, Balancing Composition etc.
- Basics to advanced techniques in digital landscape photography. With three instructors all levels of ability can be catered for.
- Workflow & digital asset management.
- How to create awe-inspiring astro-photography and star trail images.
- Painting with light.
- How to create panoramic images.
- How to create time lapses (optional)
- Post-production using Lightroom and Photo Shop

All of the Nature's Light instructors regularly run workshops and classes on Lightroom, Capture One, Photoshop layers and masking and luminosity masking. These sessions will be included in the travel itinerary for those who want to spend more time on these aspects.

A shop owner and artist in the busy pedestrian streets of Fes' Medina

#### Reasons to Join Us:

Imagine having only one afternoon and one morning at an iconic location such as Marrakesh or Fes? Having one chance only, and no time for scouting for the best spot and angle, you'll feel lost and stressed from the moment you arrive! And what if something goes wrong? Wrong camera setting, accidentally bumping your tripod during a long exposure, someone walks into your frame? If this is your once in a lifetime trip to Morocco, and your photos don't come out the way you wanted, that would be devastating! Unlike other tours, we spend multiple days in most locations, allowing time for scouting, experimenting with different techniques and angles, asking for advice beforehand, so by the time the golden light has arrived you are there where you want to be to create the shot you envisaged! Even if something goes wrong, we can usually try again the following day! And if you have, after the comment and critique session with your instructors and fellow participants of your photos from day one, learned something new or gotten a new creative idea, you can try it out on day two, potentially at the same location.

Morocco is vast, so long travel days are a requirement. We use either four wheel drive vehicles or a small minibus with dedicated diver and translator. We keep our numbers small which allows for true versatility and flexibility.

Morocco is a walking destination so having a bus makes sense in getting from location to location. Once in the cities we spend time on foot wandering the streets and seeing the sites. Despite the long distances, we are not rushed to travel every day, we have plenty of time to include lots of tuition, comment & critique sessions etc.

Our workshops are usually Landscape photography focused only, although this workshop is an exception/ Tuition and photo shoots on this tour focus on street and city photography however move into travel and landscape photography (with a touch of wildlife), making this a truly diverse photographic workshop.



With a maximum of 6 guests and 2 instructors we offer one of the best instructor-participant ratios available on the market, as others typically take 5 to 8 participants per instructor.

This allows teaching simultaneously at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels, as participants can choose what they would like to learn about, from which tutor and at what level. This ensures the steepest possible learning curve for you, regardless of your level of experience!

Our Meandering Morocco workshop is timed to coincide with the start of autumn. This is a unique time of year when the possibility of capturing snow on the Atlas Mountains is very good (not guaranteed but highly likely). There are also fewer tourists as the peak season of spring and summer is still around the corner. Importantly, the workshop is also timed to avoid Ramadan where travel can become a lot more difficult.

Unlike other workshops in Morocco, our tour is inclusive of all road transport and three meals a day. It excludes drinks (whether alcoholic or not) and any snacks you may require between meals. It also includes entrance fees into the various specialty locations and some instances we have arranged for additional photographic access.



The Jewish cemetary in Fes with its startling white tombs and graves.



### About us, description of Tour leaders:

**Emil von Maltitz** is an internationally recognized South African landscape photographer and member of the International Environmental Photographers Association. He has been involved in photography for the better part of the last two decades. After completing his post graduate degree in Anthropology, he opted to pursue his dream and turn his passion for photography into his career. Along with freelance commercial and assignment photography, Emil spends time running a number of photographic workshops. Wellversed and knowledgeable in the Adobe suites, Emil will be able to help and guide in photo-editing and several advanced photographic techniques during the workshop. A particular interest of Emil's is the theory and practical application of advanced composition in landscape photography, which will be discussed at length during the workshop.

**Nick van de Wiel** is originally from The Netherlands where he attained a post-graduate degree in biology before he moved to South Africa in 2008. There he started his first company and then working as a specialist photographic safari guide for many years. Currently he divides his time between teaching photography on short or longer workshops, being a participating dad, and being the CEO of a Travel group comprising of four companies. A busy little bee indeed!

In 2016 Nick won the prestigious Nature's Best Photography Africa award in the Landscape category (and a honourable mention in the Black & White category) with two images taken in Namibia. As a photography instructor, he is known for his inventive teaching methods and ways of explaining difficult or abstract concepts in layman's terms, so that they are easier to understand.





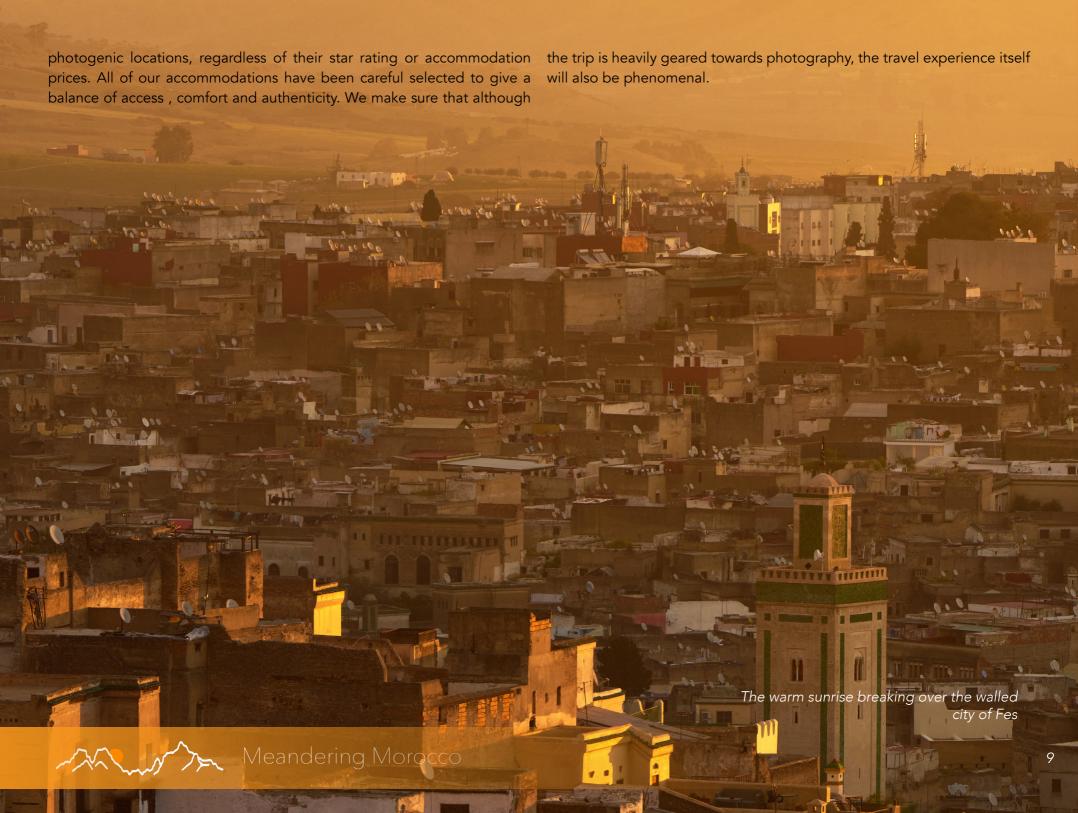
## What you will learn:

You don't become a better photographer by buying more and more equipment, better cameras or bigger lenses. That you probably know. Better equipment doesn't mean better technique! There is no better way to improve your photography skills than to be taught by someone who has more experience than you in the field. What better way to learn more than at some of the world's most iconic landscapes and cities, together with a group of like-minded people! Technique and equipment can only get you so far, after that it is 'creativity' that will set you apart. Creativity is what allows someone to create captivating images, rather than an ordinary photo of a beautiful landscape. It is hard to learn to be creative yourself, and you don't learn to think out of the box from an online course. Creativity develops when someone pushes you out of your comfort zone, while giving you practical tips and hints as to what options you have from a compositional point of view. And this is exactly what we do with you in the field. We wish to inspire you so that you go home with great images and better photographic knowledge!

Not only do we try to develop your creativity, (pre)visualisation skills and composition whilst in the field, we also spend time in 'classroom sessions' where we are able to view images and discuss the philosophy and technique behind the image. At the start of the workshop the tutors will sit with each participant to find out individual wishes and expectations, and to see at what level they are. In between the morning, afternoon and evening/night shoots there will be discussions on topics of the participants' choice. There will also be guided photo-editing sessions. We always add informal comment & critique presentations every second day to third day where we discuss each others' photos in a constructive and fun manner.

The big benefits of the Meandering Morocco workshop is that we're staying at the very best locations possible for accessing the desired





## **Daily Itinerary:**

Once again, this tour is not a traditional, relaxed, holiday. Although joining photo shoots and/or teaching sessions is of course optional and you may skip some of them if you want, be prepared for some early-ish mornings and some late nights. A typical daily itinerary looks like:

Wake up around 6:30am for an early breakfast so as to be able to be out for the sunrise. Return for breakfast around 8:00am. In some cases we do a later breakfast after the sunrise (which is around 8:30 in the morning)

Four options (or a combination of them) depending on the day:

- A few hours private time where you can relax, get a nap, download photos
- Lessons or guided editing time
- Comment & Critique sessions
- Exploring the location in the early morning light before the bustle of trade begins.
  - Traveling to the next destination if a traveling day.

Lunch around 13:00pm - 14:00pm (this is usually a light snack as opposed to a large sit down with multiple courses)

Three options depending on the day:

- A few hours private time where you can relax, get a nap, download photos
- Lessons or guided editing time
- Comment & Critique sessions

Afternoons shoot from 17:00pm to about 20:00pm (Sunset is just after 19:00pm most days)

Dinner around 20:00 to 20:30pm

We cannot stress enough that this is not a typical lazy holiday. Some days are very long, but the rewards of joining this workshop are phenomenal. Incredible locations, wonderful camaraderie, excellent photographic guidance and unique photography opportunities make for a sensational thirteen days in the desert that you will be talking about for years to come.





## **Itinerary in full:**

#### Day 1 - All guests arrive in Casablanca

Guests arrive and are transferred to the hotel where there is time to spend the rest of the day relaxing, meeting the other participants and potentially wandering around the streets of Casablanca to get to know it a little bit.

One of the photography leaders will be there to meet the guests and can familiarize everyone with the plan for the exciting two journey ahead!

### Day 2 - Casablanca and the Hasan II Mosque

Casablanca is a really wonderful city to familiarize yourself with the bustle and activity that is ever-present in Morocco. The streets are easy to walk and offer a range of street-photography opportunities. The people who live there are more cosmopolitan in their outlook, making a it a gentle start to Morocco and its culture.

One of the highlights of the city is the enormously impressive Hassan II Mosque. We photograph this incredible piece of Islamic architecture both in the evening when the external light are switched on and the morning when access is granted to the interior and we can wander through the halls and cloisters.

During the middle of the day participants are encouraged to wander through the streets looking for compositions and just generally getting to know the city. We dine out in one of the quintessential Moroccan restaurants close to the sea before spending the evening photographing the Mosque.



### Day 3 - Travel to Fes

We have an early departure for the city of Fes. Travel is slow in the country so most of the day is spent on the road to the iconic ancient walled city. Fes is a destination worth spending time in, so we have opted for three nights within the walled media in a wonderful and quaint Riad that is several hundred year's old. The Riad overlooks the old city.

#### Day 4 - Exploring Fes

The old city of Fes is a labyrinth of narrow streets, tunnels and buildings abutted against each other. The markets are a frenetic, noisy and filled with a kaleidoscope of smells, colour and sound. Some of the narrow footpaths are so busy that you have to flow with the other pedestrians through the alleys until you can find a point to step away.



The day starts though with a photo-shoot of the walled city from an overlook where we can see the clusters of streets and buildings atop each other. From there we are guided first to the old Jewish cemetary and past the King's Palace before we enter the Medina.

For this we hire a specialized guide to take us through the city to some of the most photographic sites. In particular we visit the famous tannery where we are able to capture images looking down into the courtyard where the leather's are died. We also spend time at the old ceramic school.

Fes is exhausting, so we make sure that there is some downtime in the afternoon in order to go through images and potentially put together some work for our first crit session to be held before dinner.

#### Day 5 - Excursion to Ifran

Ifran lies an hour and half drive from Fes and is the gateway to the western side of the Atlas Mountains. It's nicknamed the Swiss-Alps of Morocco and once there it is easy to see why. Ski-slopes and tall mountains look over Swiss style chalets and beautifully wooded forests.

We visit these forests particularly in search of the famous Barbary apes, and to wander through the deep conifer forests. Being February, there is a very good chance that the forests will be draped in snow, with the tall mountains behind similarly capped in white.

#### Day 6 - Travel to Chefchaouen with Volubilis

An early breakfast and we make our way from Fes towards our next destination, the incredibly photogenic Chefchaouen, also known as the Blue City. On the way we first make a detour and spend some time wandering through the ancient Roman ruins at Volubilis. These are



fascinating and surprisingly well-preserved ruins.

By the afternoon we will be the Blue City and will be able to spend time photographing it as the last light of day disappears and the city lights paint the blue streets in a neon glow.

#### Day 7 - Chefchaouen

Chefchaouen is worth exploring slowly! We have specifically booked on the immediate outskirts of the old city in order to be able to wander freely through the cobblestoned walkways that climb the hill where the city was founded. Although originally a military base, it grew rapidly with Jewish and Muslim refugees when Spain conquered Granada in the late 15th Century.

The well-preserved Medina and walled city date back to this period and are still lived in and used to this day. It is these streets that we wander through, photographing the old architecture.

As the day warms up stalls are brought out and the principle artisanal economy of the town flows onto the streets. This is very much a tourist destination so once the stalls come out the town becomes very busy with travelers. This is the reason we set out early before stalls are erected, which coincidentally is the best time of day for photography.

As the stalls getting busier we make out way to one of the rooftop restaurants that overlook the Medina for lunch. From there we can either continue strolling the streets, or make our way back to the accommodation for a crit session. The

The evening is spent either in the city again, or overlooking the hillside from the Spanish church with it's commanding view of Chefchaouen.



### Day 8 - Travel to Rabat

Rabat is the current Capital of Morocco and the seventh largest of the country's cities. It is rapidly modernizing and it can be really interesting to see the juxtaposition of the old harbour town against the new glass and steel high-rises that are slowly going up.

Rabat is also home to the 12 Century Hasan Tower and the Mausoleum of Mohammed. We arrive in the early afternoon for lunch before exploring the old city overlooking the enormous old cemetary. We also spend some time at Hasan Tower and potentially a late afternoon city shoot of the new Mohammed VI Tower which is the tallest building in Africa.



#### Day 9 & 10- Marrakesh

Marrakesh is one of the highlights of the workshop with its quintessential gates into the walled city. The colourful and vibrant Souk as well as the oldest existing university in the world are guaranteed to keep photographers busy. Unlike Fes, Marrakesh is also easier to navigate independently, meaning photographers can feel more confident about finding their way through the warren of old streets.

On our first morning in Marrakesh we rise relatively early in order to photograph the Medina in the early morning light as people make their way to work. Electric lights still on make for fascinating colourful scenes as locals enter mosques and walk through alleyways. We also plan to get to the Ben Youssef Madrasa (the Islamic College built in the 12th Century) while it is still quiet and there are fewer tourists around.

We'll visit the various gates as well as explore the Medina Walls and the famous Souk (market) with its myriad alleys and paths.

Our final afternoon is spent overlooking the Jemaa el-Fnaa open air market square, which is an explosion of colour as hawkers continue their trade into the night.

#### Day 11 - Departure

The last morning is entirely dependent on exit times to the airport, but for some there is the opportunity to once more head out for one final photoshoot before departure from this extraordinary country.



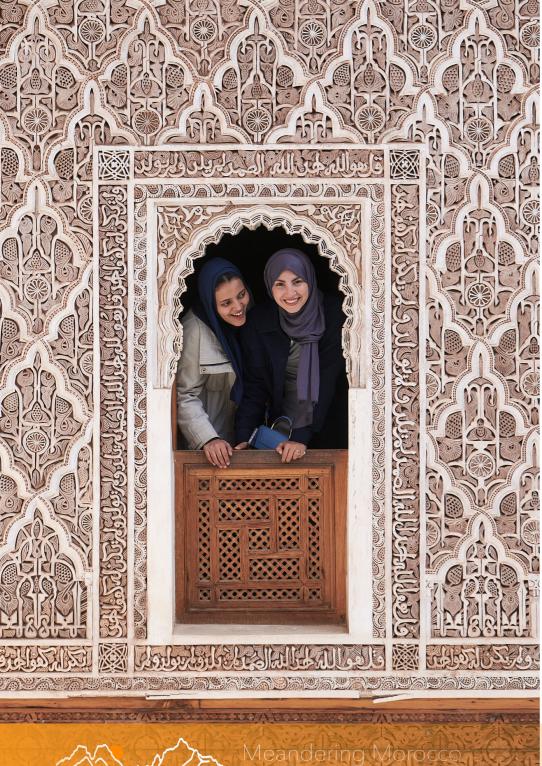
Day	Date	Plan of Day	
1	February 2025	All Guests arrive in Casablanca. Welcome Session	
2	February 2025	Breakfast at 7:00, departure at 8:00. We spend the morning in the Hasan II Mosque. The afternoon can be spent exploring the city on foot. We finish with an early dinner and shoot of the mosque in the early twilight.	
3	February 2025	Departure after breakfast for the long drive to Fes. We arrive in time for a later afternoon shoot of the exterior of the Old City.	
4	February 2025	Exploring the sites and opportunities of Fes.	
5	February 2025	Breakfast at 7:00am for departure to Ifran in search of Barbary apes and photographing the (potentially) snow laden conifer forests.	
6	February 2025	After an early breakfast we depart for Volubilis to be there in the morning light. From there we travel to Chefchaouen for a last light shoot of the famous Blue City.	
7	February 2025	The day is spent wandering through the streets of Chefchaouen photographing the blue streets and walkways of the old Jewish quarter.	
8	February 2025	Departure for Rabat where we are able to visit the historical sites and have a late afternoon photo-shoot of the modern skyscraper overlooking old Rabat.	
9	February 2025	A longish drive to Marrakesh in time to wander through some of the streets for late afternoon and evening light.	
10	February 2025	Early breakfast in order to make our way through the walled cit in the best light	
11	February 2025	Guests can opt for a lie-in depending on departure times to the airport for flights home. Departure from Casablanca can be arranged if necessary.	

### **Accommodation and Logistics:**

All accommodation, food and transport to and from the International Airport of Casablanca and Marrakesh respectively where the tour starts and ends is included in the fee. The tour will be conducted in either an SUV or a small air-conditioned mini-bus.

The table below describes the accommodation at each location:





#### **Price:**

€7,200 - Minimum 2 participants, maximum 6 participants. The workshop runs with one instructor for the first four guests and a second instructor joins the workshop if there are 5 or 6 photographers.

Single Supplement: €750, subject to availability

Costing:

Early Bird Booking Special:

If you book and pay the deposit before the 1st August 2024 you will receive a 10% discount on teh base fee (does not include the cost of the sinle supplement.

Two girls look through the dormitory window of the Ben Youssef Madrasa in the centre of the Medina

What is included	What is not included
All lodging (based upon sharing)	Airfares to and from Morocco
Pickup up from Mohammed V International Airport (Casablanca) and Drop off at International Airport (Marrakesh)	Single room supplement (€750)
Dinner day 1, breakfast, lunch, dinner day 2-10, breakfast day 11	Drinks and non-meal time snacks
Local tips for guides and for restaurants	Possible extra excursions/ activities and/or additional days
Photography guidance by two professional photographers	Travel insurances (mandatory!)
All tuition including teaching material and hand-outs	Photographic gear rental (if required)
All road transport in comfortable vehicles (either a SUV or small minibus based on group size)	
All entrance fees and photography permits	
All toll and parking fees	

#### **Extensions:**

We are working on a possible Western Morocco extension that will run from Marakesh to the Sahara Desert and back. This 5 night add-on costs €4000 plus a €450 Single Supplement if required (the early bird booking deposit also extends to the extension). The extension requires a minimum of two photographers to commit for it to take place and ends on the 26th February in Marrakesh.





## What to bring:

Upon booking, we will send you a detailed list of what to bring, but below we list the essentials in terms of photographic equipment.

Photography Equipment

- A digital interchangeable lens camera.
- A good quality tripod, preferably one not made of plastic. We can help you choose a suitable one if you don'talready have a tripod. This type of workshop is best suited to slightly lighter 'travel' tripods.
- Enough batteries and memory cards to be able to shoot for several days.
- A wide angle lens (Emil and Nick use wide and ultra-wide angle lenses as a matter of preference).
- A telephoto zoom lens, such as a 70-200 or 70-300.
- Filters: A polariser in particular, but there can be use of neutral density and graduated filters as well.
- A laptop with editing software already loaded. Emil uses
  Capture One Pro and PhotoShop while Nick opts for Lightroom and PhotoShop
- A backup hard-drive for backing up images (it would terrible to travel to Namibia only to lose all the images if a laptop hard-drive crashes).

## What to bring:

### **Personal Equipment and Clothing**

- Personal medications and toiletries, sunscreen, Medicine for diarhea and stomach ache is highly recommended.
- Wide brimmed hat
- Backpack (Your camera backpack is fine for this) with a waterproof slip-on cover. We are in the dry season, but rain is still a possinility in the mountains.
- A small camera bag for keeping a camera and other small essentials with you in the vehicle, as well as potentially when wandering through streets if you don't want to tote a large camera-bag.
- Decent shoes that can be used for walking. We spend a fair amount of time walking through the old cities and there is some walking (potentially in snow) at Ifran.
- Torch or headlight, although this is less for photography and more just in case the power goes out in an accomodation.
- Lightweight travel towel although towels are provided a lightweight microfiber travel towel is worth it's weight in gold for emergency camera drying etc).
- Clothing: It is going to be colder than you expect. Although Morocco can have quite warm winters, you can expect the

temperature in locations like Chefchaouen to get to as low as 3 degree Centigrade and only as high as 15 dgerees. Ifran will probably be around the zero degree mark in the early morning.

- Puffer-jacket.
- Rain-jacket. It is unlikely that we'll have siginificant rain, but a light rain-jacket is excellent for wind and is also small and packable for emergency covering when we are in the Medinas of Fes and Marrakesh. Although not strictly necessary, rain-pants can be useful on the day we head to Ifran.
- If you are concerned about power during the trip, a nice extra is one of the new portable and battery kits such as the Power Monkey (for cameras) or Power/Solar Gorilla (for cameras and laptops). These are excellent, but you will definitely be able to get by without this during the trip (there is power in all the locations we travel to). Nevertheless a backup charging solution such as a powerbank is a 'nice-to-have'.



### Frequently asked questions:

- **Do I have to do anything?** Not Really. Help with little chores like unpacking and setting out coffee after a shoot is always appreciated though. We have organised catering pretty much everywhere, so apart from snacks on the road and after a shoot, there is little catering to be done. In our experience, running the logistics of a workshop as a team effort is fun and keeps the spirits high!
- Can I have a room to myself? Sometimes. This tour and its price is based upon sharing accommodation with other participants of the same sex. At some locations there are simply no other rooms/chalets available as we have booked out the entire camp or riad, so there you will have to share if every other participant is also in single room (usually not the case). However at most locations you could potentially have a private room, if available. The costs for the single supplement is, once again, subject to availability.
- Can you cater for special dietary requirements? For the most part, yes. Please do let us know of any dietary requirement you have and we can see what we can do. Please note that in the Morocco culture meat is an important part of the meal, so if you are vegetarian we can cater for you, but meals might be rather 'plain' or repetitive. Moreover, where we eat in restaurants, menu choice is often limited. That said the cuisine in Morocco is superb and vegerations on previous workshops were thrilled with their meals.
- **Is Morocco safe?** Morocco is one of the most stable and safe countries on the African continent. Although crime exists, it is comparable to any first world country in Europe or North America. We have traveled throughout Morocco and have yet to experience any issues. Still, a basic awareness of your valuables is still required, particularly when walking through the streets of the major cities.

- Do the tour leaders take photos themselves? Yes they do. However, the emphasis is on teaching and guiding you throughout the workshop. Our experience has taught us that most participants enjoy teaching sessions interspersed with 'try-out-alone' time, where they put the taught techniques into practice. Moreover, landscape photography is all about seeing the beauty in the land, which for each individual is different, and then to be creative with it. To have a teacher talking you through every step along the way in the field will hinder the development of your creativity, as you are not 'pushed' to try things for yourself. Hence, our teachers will be there when you need them in the field, give tips and directions, regularly checking on each individual participant to see if they need advise, but don't be surprised if you see them taking photos themselves in between helping other participants - Also, there are two dedicated instructors on the workshop and a maximum of six participants, so you are guaranteed to get assistance with your photography when you need it!
- How fit do I have to be? Relatively fit. Physical difficulty for this tour is rated as intermediate. There is a fair amount of walking through the old cities. There is also some walking through the forest at Ifran. Obviously, it is up to you to decide when you want a rest, need some help with carrying your photography gear, or opt to miss a particular shoot altogether.
- Should I be concerned about the water or any other health issues? The water is potable almost everywhere in Morocco. Where it isn't we will provide bottled water for consumption. Morocco is also well-versed in catering to tourists, and bottled water is available everywhere we travel. In terms of health concerns, if you are concerned please consult with your GP or travel doctor. Morocco is largely disease free and is also malaria free. T. It is still advisable to bring your own personal medications. Antihistamine, pain-killers, insect repellent, sun-tan lotion (NB!), antiseptic cream and plasters are always a good idea.

• Is there Internet Access? All of our destinations have WIFI access, but the connections can be slow at times. It is also possible to purchase a SIM card (Morocco has excellent good 4G and 3G networks through most of the country) for your cellphone which will allow internet access for email and Whatsapp/Facebook/etc. It is unlikely that you will be able to upload full-resolution backups to the internet, but you can certainly maintain email and social media contact.

# **Contact and Bookings:**

If you would like to join for the Composing The Dunes photography workshop, you can make a booking by contacting Nature's Light at:

Email: info@natureslight.co.za

Phone: +27(0)845849959

Terms and Conditions are available on:

www.natureslight.co.za/termsandconditions



