



Last call & Travel Update! Exciting additional private visits and receptions!

ICAA Private Morocco: Casablanca and the Imperial Cities

Exemplary Sites, Private Residences & Gardens of Rabat, Casablanca, Fes, Meknes & Marrakech

Sponsored by Institute of Classical Architecture & Art

Organized by Pamela Huntington Darling, Exclusive Cultural Travel Programs

Saturday, May 10th to Sunday, May 18th, 2014: 8 days & 8 nights



The Kingdom of Morocco's rich and ancient culture bears the traces of conquerors, invaders, traders, nomads and colonists—from the Phoenicians and Romans to the Spanish and French. An extravagant mosaic of stunning landscapes, richly textured cities and welcoming people, Morocco's high mountain ranges, lush forests, sun-baked desserts and exotic cities, including many UNESCO World Heritage sites, make for a traveler's paradise.

Gateway to Africa, the influence of the many peoples and cultures that have left their mark on this storied country is captured in the architecture and monuments, gardens, art, music and cuisine. The bustling bazaars and splendid Medinas, Kasbahs and mosques of Casablanca and the Imperial Cities offer travelers a tantalizing mix of ancient and modern.

For eight magical days, in the company of our expert lecturer Khalid Mouzaki and Pamela Huntington Darling, we will explore some of Morocco's most important sites and monuments under privileged conditions and be received by officials and prominent members of the community. **We will enjoy rare and unique visits, receptions and dinners with our distinguished hosts, owners of superb private riads (palaces), and villas—not open to the public—celebrated for their architecture, gardens, interiors—many by the famous American interior designer Bill Willis—and world-class art collections. Confidential names and details will be sent to confirming participants.**

Tour Highlights

Extra Day: Friday, May 9th: Rabat

We recommend arrival in Casablanca a day prior to the official program. Guests will be met at the Casablanca airport and travel by private car (*at cost, count \$100 for one or two passengers*) to **Rabat** where they will be greeted by **Pamela Huntington Darling** and our expert lecturer **Khalid Mouzaki**, at the elegant **Villa Mandarin** hotel. (*3 nights; extra night of May 9th at cost, count \$275 per room*)

Late afternoon welcome tea and presentation of Morocco and our program with Khalid Mouzaki.

Evening cocktails offered by the Villa Mandarin on the terrace and **dinner in the stylish hotel dining room**, renowned for its gastronomic French cuisine (*at cost, count \$45 per person*).

Day 1: Saturday, May 10th: Rabat & Salé, UNESCO World Heritage Sites

We begin our morning exploring the royal necropolis of **Chellah's** impressive Roman and medieval ruins and the mosque's striking minaret, home to nesting storks. Then to the fortified town of **Salé**, an ancient Roman settlement and hideaway of the Barbary pirates, with **professors Mekki and Jamila Zouaoui**, who will introduce us to the new **Marina** on the Bou Regreg estuary and the 13th-century fortified gates and ancient ramparts.



Lunch at Mekki and Jamila Zouaoui's historic private riads. After our morning tour, professors Mekki and Jamila Zouaoui will lead us on a rare visit through their admirable private family homes in Salé's Medina. We will enjoy a homemade lunch in **Dar Zouaoui's** inner gardens and then discover **Dar Ben El Cadi** and its superb inner courtyard.

In the afternoon our hosts and expert guide will lead us through the marvelous 18th-century fortification **Tour des Larmes** (Tower of Tears), the 12th-century **Great Mosque of Salé**, one of the oldest religious mosques in Morocco, and the adjacent 14th-century **Madrassa** school for Islamic theology and law.

Afternoon reception at the private residence and showroom of fashion designer Fadila El Gadi. A wonderful opportunity to meet an internationally acclaimed Moroccan high fashion designer at her private home and to discover her handmade creations.

Welcome dinner at the private residence of Fouad Filali. Our host, son of the former Prime Minister of Morocco, will welcome us to his villa, next to the Villa Mandarine, for a convivial buffet dinner with distinguished friends to welcome us to Morocco.

Day 2: Sunday, May 11th: Rabat & Salé

In the morning we will discover the elegant architecture of lush Rabat, Morocco's capital, and the stately 19th-century **Royal Palace and gardens**, seat of the Moroccan government. We will visit the majestic **Hassan Tower**, emblem of Rabat, and the unfinished, influential 12th-century **Hassan Mosque**. We will view the magnificent **Mohamed V Mausoleum**, resting place of two kings and one of the rare shrines open to non-Muslims, and the stunning **Villa des Arts and gardens**, built in 1929, one of Rabat's Art Deco gems.



Lunch at Villa Mandarine. A refreshing lunch awaits us on the Villa des Arts' beautiful outdoor terrace with views over the splendid gardens.

Late afternoon visit to the striking 12th-century **Kasbah of the Oudayas**, Rabat's original citadel. We will stroll through the Kasbah's delightful Andalusian gardens and enjoy a traditional tea and magnificent views of the Bou Regreg River and Salé. We will explore tiny streets lined with charming traditional homes; a village-like quarter inhabited by local artisans and painters.

Cocktail reception at the private residence of Yasmina Filali, President of the Orient-Occident Foundation. Daughter of the former Prime Minister of Morocco, Yasmina Filali and her husband, professor and author **Abdelhak Serhane**, will warmly welcome us to their riad, **Maison du Cadi**, in Rabat's picturesque Medina, for cocktails and a mini fashion show. An excellent opportunity to meet distinguished members of the local community.

Private dinner with our hosts Yasmina Filali and Abdelhak Serhane at Riad Senso. We will savor a delicious light Moroccan meal to the strains of live traditional music as guests of the Foundation's restaurant, an esteemed address in Rabat.

Day 3: Monday, May 12th: Rabat to Meknes, Volubilis and Fes, UNESCO World Heritage Sites



We travel to the imperial city of **Meknes**, the "Versailles of Morocco" and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Meknes' golden age was during the reign of Moulay Ismail, who came to power in 1672 and built this imperial city to rival Louis XIV's Versailles (the two rulers became allies).

Lunch at Chez Philippe. We'll enjoy a gourmet French lunch at this stylish modern bistro prepared specially for us by the great chef himself.

Afternoon visits to Zerhoun, Volubilis and Fes. We arrive in the holy city of **Zerhoun**, a stunning pilgrimage center dramatically set between two hillsides, where winding streets open onto captivating views. A short distance away lies **Volubilis**, ancient meeting point between Romans and Berbers. This UNESCO World Heritage Site encompasses Morocco's most impressive Roman ruins, which we will view in the same magical light that enchanted Matisse and Delacroix.



Fes: Dinner at Palais Jamai's exquisite Al Fassia restaurant. On to **Fes** where we'll stay at the magnificent 5-star Palais Jamai Hotel, built in 1879. We will dine in splendor on gastronomic Moroccan fare amidst the Al Fassia's elaborate interior, or on the terrace under the stars, accompanied by live Andalusian music and dancers. *(3 nights)*

Day 4: Tuesday, May 13th: Fes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and most ancient Imperial City



Morning visit to the medieval Medina. Dating from 808 AD, the magnificent city of **Fes** was the spiritual, artistic, economic and intellectual capital of Morocco. The greatest of the four imperial cities, Fes is renowned for its palaces, lush gardens, beautiful private homes, exquisite mosques and the world's largest and most perfectly preserved medieval city. We begin our day at **Borj Sud**, one of the city's two fortresses, celebrated for its panoramic views of Fes and the Medina, where we will discover the superb **Attarine School**, built in 1325.

Lunch at Riad Fes. We will enjoy a light gourmet lunch at this majestic palace, member of Relais & Chateaux and an authentic example of Hispanic-Moorish architecture, with breathtaking panoramic views of the Medina and the Atlas mountains *(at cost, count \$40 per person)*.

Afternoon visits. After a relaxing lunch, we will enjoy a **privileged visit, by private invitation from the Mokri family, to the exquisite El Mokri Palace** (closed to the public). An extraordinary example of Moroccan architecture. Our journey continues to the 14th-century **Royal Palace** in the Medina and the **Mellah** district, once home to Morocco's largest Jewish population.

Dinner at L'Amandier. We will enjoy an exceptional dinner, rich in the flavors of traditional Fassi cuisine, on the terrace of the **Palais Faraj**, an architectural gem of exquisite refinement emanating the ancient culture and history of Fes, with stunning views of the Old Medina *(at cost, count \$45 per person)*.

Day 5: Wednesday, May 14th: Fes, the Atlas Cedar Forests and Ifrane

Morning visit to Imouzzer Kandar and Ifrane. We will travel past fields of wildflowers orchards to **Imouzzer Kandar**, built by the French authorities in the early 20th century. We will continue on to the mountain resort of **Ifrane**, perched in the Middle Atlas mountain range among stately cedar forests. Noted for its charming Swiss-style chalets, immaculate gardens and crystalline lake, Ifrane was built by the French in 1929 as a colonial retreat and attracts affluent Moroccans for its cool summer climate.

Lunch at Hotel Michlifen, Ifrane. We will enjoy a delectable bistro lunch of contemporary Moroccan cuisine at the luxurious Hotel Michlifen, offering dramatic views of mountains and forests.

Relaxing free afternoon in Fes. Guests can explore the Medina's winding streets with our expert guide, relax by the hotel pool, enjoy a spa treatment or play a round of golf at the hotel's 18-hole course.

Dinner at La Maison Bleue, one of the finest restaurants in Fes, housed in a splendid residence featuring colorful Moroccan *zellij* tiles and fountains, that was once a cultural and intellectual hub owned by prominent astrologer and professor Mohammed El Abbadi. We will savor traditional Moroccan cuisine in an intimate and romantic atmosphere.

Day 6: Thursday, May 15th: Fes to Casablanca to Marrakech

Morning visit to Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca. We begin with a visit to the **Hassan II Mosque**, a stupendous architectural achievement jutting dramatically into the Atlantic Ocean. One of the world's largest mosques—and one of the few mosques in Morocco open to non-Muslims—it took six years to build and cost over \$750 million.



Lunch at Rick's Café. Set in a superb riad, restored by renowned Moroccan architect **Hakim Benjelloun** and the celebrated American interior designer **Bill Willis**, Rick's Café re-creates the bar immortalized in the film *Casablanca*. Located on the edge of the old Medina with sweeping views of the port, this chic restaurant, bar and jazz club offers excellent cuisine and is filled with architectural and decorative details recalling the film (*at cost, count \$40 per person*).

Afternoon arrival in Marrakech, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After lunch and a relaxing 2.5-hour journey by private coach, we will arrive in peerless **Marrakech**, where we will stay at one of the city's two top hotels: the elegant **La Maison Arabe** or the 5-star **Naoura Barrière Marrakech**. Called "the Rose City" for its beautiful pink buildings, Marrakech is an irresistible mix of bustling markets, winding lanes and stunning architecture. Once a major stop on the ancient Timbuktu caravan route, the city pulsates with an intoxicating energy fueled by its remarkable diversity, mystery, excitement and romance. (*3 nights*)

Private evening reception and buffet dinner at the residence of Naymah Benjelloun, President of the Foundation Omar Benjelloun, who will warmly welcome us to her home, **Dar Chajara**, in an ancient tower next to the Jardin Majorelle, one of the first residences decorated by the American designer **Bill Willis**, who captured the essence of Moroccan style for such distinguished clients as the Gettys, the Rothschilds, and Yves Saint-Laurent and Pierre Bergé. Her late husband, Omar Benjelloun, was a leading industrialist and art collector who funded the restoration of many important historic sites in Marrakech, including the **Marrakech Museum**, to which he bequeathed most of their collection. A wonderful way to meet a distinguished local figure.



Day 7: Friday, May 16th: Marrakech, A UNESCO World Heritage Site

Morning visit to Marrakech's extraordinary architectural sites in the Medina. We begin with a tour of the superb 12th-century **Almoravid Koubba** and 14th-century **Ben Youssef Madrasa**, the largest Islamic theological college in North Africa. Then to the exceptional **Marrakech Museum**, in the **Dar Menebhi Palace**, an example of classical Andalusian architecture, with central fountains, intricate tile work and featuring modern and traditional Moroccan art and examples of Jewish, Berber and Arab pottery.

Late morning visit to the residence of a praised Empress (name to be sent to confirming participants). An unprecedented invitation to the former home of late Chilean artist **Claudio Bravo**, beautifully restored by

French-born, Marrakech interior designer **Jacqueline Foissac**, referred to as the "high priestess of the rehabilitation of Marrakech architecture".

Exclusive lunch at the Villa Oasis, private residence of the late Yves Saint-Laurent and Pierre Bergé. Pierre Bergé and Madison Cox, a prominent landscape architect and Director of the Majorelle Gardens, extend a rare invitation to this lavish private residence (closed to the public), designed by their friend and renowned interior designer **Bill Willis**. Madison Cox and Quito Fierro, Director of Communications, son of Jacqueline Foissac, will warmly welcome us. A rare invitation indeed!



Afternoon visit to Dar es Saada, the Majorelle Gardens and the Berber Museum. We will enjoy another privileged invitation to **Dar es Saada**, Yves Saint-Laurent and Pierre Bergé's private guesthouse, also **closed to the public**. Artist Jacques Majorelle's last home, it is one of **Bill Willis**'s signature works. We will visit the exquisite gardens, created by Majorelle, and view the **Berber Museum**'s superb collection.

Late afternoon visit and tea at the incomparable Hotel Royal Mansour, owned by the royal family of Morocco. The ultimate in luxury, the Royal Mansour palace is considered the most extraordinary hotel in the world for its architecture and interior design. Built by the foremost artisans of Morocco, with no expense spared, it exemplifies a sumptuous traditional Moroccan style.

Evening reception at the palatial residence of a noble Belgian family. Our esteemed hosts, eminent art collectors, welcome us to their exquisite private residence in the Medina—five palaces transformed by architect **Hakim Benjelloun**, interior designer **Bill Willis**, and **the Baroness**, into a superb residence, the quintessence of taste in architecture, decorative arts, terraces, and gardens.

Dinner at Les Trois Saveurs at La Maison Arabe, offering the finest in French-Moroccan cuisine prepared by a celebrated chef and served on the terrace overlooking lush gardens. A coveted culinary experience (*at cost, count \$45 per person*).

Day 8: Saturday, May 17th: Marrakech

Morning visit to Marrakech's Mellah (former Jewish quarter). We begin at the spectacular **Saadian Tombs**, resting place of the 16th-century Saadian dynasty's princes and sultans. Sealed during the reign of Sultan Moulay Ismail (1672-1727), the tombs were only rediscovered in 1917. Then to the once-magnificent **El Badi Palace**, built in 1578 by the Midas of Marrakech, with 360 rooms and a vast central courtyard of pools, fountains and sunken gardens. Its restored architecture and original 12th-century silver-and-gold inlaid marquetry pulpit are still outstanding. After refreshments, we'll view the magnificent **Bahia Palace** and gardens, built between 1860-1874 and later embellished by the Grand Vizier Si Moussa. The palace's carved, gilded and inlaid ceilings and intricate tile work are prime examples of Moorish-Andalusian architecture.



Late morning private visit to the astounding Palais de la Zahia. The distinguished French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy extends a rare invitation to his superb private residence (closed to the public), the **Palais de la Zahia**. Commissioned by the Glaoui of Marrakech in the 18th century, it is the former residence of Paul and Talitha Getty, Jr. and **Bill Willis's** first restoration in Morocco, with gardens recently redesigned by renowned French landscape architect **Louis Benech**.

Lunch at the private residence of internationally hailed 1930's experts and antique dealers Felix and Noelle Marcilhac. Our prominent hosts will warmly welcome us to their marvelous villa for a convivial lunch. Designed by the distinguished architect **Elie Mowyal** in the traditional Moroccan style, the villa **Dar Abiad** was built in 1983 and is known for its outstanding gardens.

Afternoon at the Souk. We will spend a fascinating afternoon with our expert lecturer exploring Marrakech's vast and colorful **Souk**, an extravagant labyrinth of open-air markets overflowing with authentic local handicrafts, spices, nuts and fruit. Or guests may discover the sought-after feminine, handmade creations of **De Velasco** at their showroom.

Or: Guests may register (at cost, \$120) for a gourmet cooking class at the Maison Arabe, 3:00–7:00 pm.

Evening reception at one of Morocco's most extraordinary and iconic private palaces. The distinguished French owner of this stupendous residence in the heart of the Medina—**former residence of the King of Morocco's sister**—welcomes us for a memorable private visit and cocktail reception (*name to be sent to confirming participants*). **Farewell dinner at Dar Yacout**, where we will celebrate in style the culmination of our extraordinary program at this splendid palace designed by **Bill Willis**, offering a sumptuous décor, panoramic views of the Medina from the terrace, fine cuisine and enchanting Moroccan music.

Day 9: Sunday, May 18th: Breakfast and adieu until the next exclusive tour!

Departure: Marrakech to Casablanca Airport. After breakfast and goodbyes, guests will travel by private chauffeur-driven car, a pleasant 3-hour drive, to Casablanca airport.

Accommodation: All rooms are spacious, elegantly appointed and equipped with wifi and air conditioning.

May 9th-12th: the lovely **Villa Mandarine** hotel is set among seven acres of lush flower gardens and mandarin groves. The hotel's exotic Berber-inspired décor has been meticulously restored to splendor with all the modern comforts, including a pool and full-service spa. www.villamandarine.com. *The night of May 9th is at cost, \$275 per room, breakfast included.*

May 12th-15th: Five-star **Palais Jamai Hotel** in Fes is luxuriously housed in a 19th-century palace among landscaped gardens and ramparts with glorious views of the nearby Medina. www.sofitel-legend.com/fes/en/.

May 15th-18th: Marrakech's **La Maison Arabe**, optimally situated in the Medina, is one of the best small luxury hotels in the city, a lavish *riad* famed for its authentic elegance, fine service and internationally acclaimed restaurant, www.lamaisonarabe.com; or **Hotel Naoura Barrière**, a 5-minute walk from La Maison Arabe, this 5-star hotel has spectacular views of the Medina and the Atlas mountains and offers spacious, elegant light-filled rooms, a luxury spa and heated pools. www.lucienbarriere.com/en/luxury-hotel/Marrakech-Hotel-Naoura-Barriere/home.html

Tour Price: \$7,250 per person, double occupancy, and \$8,250 per person, single occupancy; plus a fully tax-deductible \$500 contribution to the Institute's Annual Fund. Members at the Contributor or Individual, Professional level (\$150), or higher, are welcome to attend ICAA tours. The tour price is based on 20 participants, maximum 21.



Tour Price Includes: 8 days of visits and receptions; 8 nights hotel accommodation; 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 6 dinners; transportation in a modern air-conditioned coach; all private visits and expert lecturers.

Registration: To assure availability, [please reserve by March 8th, 2014.](#)

For more information & to reserve: please email: pdarling@exclusiveculturaltours.com or call Tel. +33 1 45 67 62 81, Paris, France. Website: www.exclusiveculturaltours.com

Due to the nature of our private visits and receptions, the date of a visit or reception may change, in which case confirmed participants will be notified.