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Info Sheet: 3-5 Day Custom Excursions

Introduction

We hope you're looking forward to your upcoming excursion. Here is a list of things to consider for your trip and some information about what you can expect. Please read everything carefully before starting your excursion. If you have any questions, please email us in advance.

What to Bring – Absolutely Necessary

You'll need to have the following:

- ☐ a good, comfortable pair of walking shoes or hiking boots
- ☐ for women: long trousers that cover your legs completely (in summer, something still relatively cool)
for men: long trousers are normal, but shorts in the summer months are acceptable
- ☐ shirts that are modest and cover at least your shoulders and upper arms; no tank tops
- ☐ a waterproof jacket/shell or even an inexpensive plastic rain poncho (in case it is raining while we're hiking out to the village)
- ☐ a warm fleece / sweater / jacket / long underwear for cold months (not necessary in summer months)
- ☐ sunblock cream for skin protection
- ☐ a small hand towel to dry off your hands / face when washing
- ☐ normal toiletries (toothbrush, etc.)
- ☐ any prescription or over-the-counter medications you use
- ☐ soft luggage/duffle bag/backpack that can be loaded on to a donkey/mule (it's difficult to load large hard suitcases)

What to Bring – Recommended

These items will make your excursion a bit more comfortable...but aren't necessarily required:

- ☐ a hat and sunglasses (they'll make your time in the sun much more comfortable)
- ☐ sandals for when we arrive at the home where we'll be staying (you probably won't want to keep hiking boots on all night)
- ☐ a small personal torch / flashlight (if you have to get up at night)
- ☐ a small backpack / daypack for the hike out to the villages (if you want to carry anything with you personally rather than leave it in your bag that is on the donkey/mule)
- ☐ hand disinfectant gel (for use before eating / after toilet use)

What to Bring – Voluntary

None of the following is needed, but some travellers might want these extra items:

- ☐ sleeping sheet and pillow case (see accommodations section)
- ☐ a water bottle (we'll provide bottled water, but it comes in large 1.5 litre containers that might be a bit big to carry while we're hiking)
- ☐ any snacks you particularly love
- ☐ camera (there will be lots of opportunities for photos, but ask before you take shots of people)
- ☐ small star chart (it's very dark at night...you'll see everything in the sky)
- ☐ small binoculars
- ☐ a small pack of wet wipes (sometimes they're nicer to use than toilet paper)
- ☐ small gifts for the Berber family – possible suggestions include soaps, hand towels, school items for children, T-shirts, toys (even used ones), torch/flashlight, souvenirs from your country, biscuits/cookies, or chocolates (this is completely optional and up to you...no one is expecting it as a norm)

Hiking, Health, and Safety

To hike out to the Berber villages, we'll be taking established trails/roads used by locals. We'll normally have a donkey or mule with us to carry your bags and the bottled water. Let us know if you have good backpacks and would like to carry everything on your own...that gives us a bit more flexibility.

To stay healthy during your excursion, drink plenty of water, especially in the summer months when you're walking out to the villages. Wearing a hat and sunglasses also protects you from the sun, as does sunblock cream applied beforehand. There will be about 4-5 hours of moderate walking/hiking each day between Amizmiz and the villages you visit, plus time on foot seeing each village itself. The hike will not include any "mountain climbing," but you will need to be in good physical condition nevertheless. If you ever need a break, let your guide know...no problem!

Your guide will have a basic first aid kit, but there won't be oral medications in it. So if there is something you think you might need (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, allergy pills, etc.), please pack it with you. In the winter months, it can get very cold at night. Make sure you've got warm clothes to sleep in.

Food and Drink

All of your meals will be provided for you during the excursion. You should consider having a good breakfast the morning of the first day before coming to Amizmiz, however. All food for breakfasts, lunches, and dinners is purchased locally, and thus meals depend upon what is available at the time.

Breakfast often includes bread with olive oil/butter (sometimes jam) and tea/coffee. Major meals like a "tajine" normally include meat and vegetables and often bread. For these types of meals, you will need to eat using the bread—we'll show you how. Couscous with vegetables and meat is often eaten with spoons. Vegetarians should let us know ahead of time whether they are okay eating vegetables cooked in the same dish with meat; if not, we'll need to make arrangements for separate, strictly vegetarian meals.

We'll bring along bottled water for drinking and brushing teeth.

Accommodations and Facilities

We'll be staying at the home of a Berber family, so we won't be "camping" or sleeping in tents. However, do not expect running water or normal bathroom facilities. Most of the homes have a "squat" toilet where you squat (not sit) over an opening and then (if you wish) rinse with soap and water. We'll have toilet paper as well. If you need a toilet during the hike out to the village, you'll have to settle for a "natural setting."

At the Berber home, you will have a room where you will be able to put your bags and where you'll sleep at night. Normally, the family will provide you with rugs and/or blankets for sleeping (and maybe a hard pillow). If you want, feel free to pack a sheet and pillowcase, but don't feel you have to.

There won't be the opportunity to shower/bathe at the Berber home, but of course you can wash yourself.

Respecting the Culture

Our excursions are meant to give you the opportunity to personally experience the life and culture of the Berber people. Therefore, it is important to respect that culture during the time you come in contact with it. Clothing should be relatively modest and cover the legs, shoulders, and upper arms (Moroccan villages are not like the big cities where you might see more western dress). Taking photos is an important part of the excursion and encouraged, but please ask first before you photograph someone; some don't like being photographed.

During your time in the village, please remember that you're staying in someone's home. As much as possible, try to keep things tidy and be aware of rubbish/trash and/or dirty shoes (you may want to bring sandals to wear inside). After the family has gone to bed, please keep noise to a minimum so they can get to sleep. Some families where you'll stay may have small children, so it's best to keep your personal items in your bags (rather than sitting out in the living area) so we don't have to worry about curious young boys or girls.

Even for married couples, public displays of affection (such as kissing) are considered inappropriate and will cause the family and villagers to avoid us. You should refrain from this in public.

Young children may approach you and ask for things. Consult your guide. It may be best to give to their parents if you're so inclined (though it's by no means necessary).

Tipping

We make it very clear on our website that our stated price includes everything for the day. You will not need to spend any money beyond the cost of transport and our excursion price. Nor will we ever take you to a merchant and pressure you to buy something—you can be 100% certain of that. However, we are occasionally asked, "But what if I want to tip the host family, guide, or donkey owner? Is that acceptable?" Culturally, and according to our company policy, yes. But no one is expecting it and there will be no awkward moments in anticipation of one. We're simply happy to have you come on one of our excursions.

We look forward to seeing you! Email us with any further questions.