MARRAKECH – DAKAR

Re-designed for the 2027-2028 season. This tour will take you to the North East of Mauritania and deep into the Sahara.

Join us as we journey through desert landscapes, remote coastal routes, and rarely visited communities. This trip is truly off-the-beaten path, through a part of the world that very few get to see.

Whether you join our Marrakech to Dakar trip or the Dakar to Marrakech trip, the destinations and highlights are the same. Please note that for our Dakar to Marrakech trip, this itinerary runs in reverse.

Both trips are timed to run during the dry season.

Trip: Marrakech to Dakar (DKR—MRK)
Start Date: 4th October 2027 (at 09:00 am)
Finish Date: 25th October 2027 (at 08:00 am)
Joining Instructions: Meet at 09:00 am on 4th October 2027

Trip: Dakar to Marrakech (MRK—DKR)
Start Date: 27th March 2028 (at 09:00 am)
Finish Date: 17th April 2028 (at 08:00 am)
Joining Instructions: Meet at 09:00 am on 27th March 2028

NB: All trip itineraries are subject to change!

Summary & Key Highlights

- Journey from the **medinas of Morocco**, through the desert landscapes of **Western Sahara** and into the vibrant Atlantic port city of **Dakar** (or vice versa)
- Witness the famous **Djemaa El Fna square** in Marrakech as it comes alive at night with food stalls, storytellers, and snake charmers.
- Explore **Essaouira's** historic walled **medina.**
- Visit **Sidi Ifni ,** home of the impressive **Legzira sea arch**
- Stay in the grounds of a traditional **Bedouin camp**
- Explore the ruins of the ancient **Ksar** at **Tafnadilit**
- Drive through the **Western Sahara** with its dramatic desert landscapes and miles of golden sand beaches
- Enjoy Kite surfing, quad biking, or land sailing across the sweeping dunes of **Dahkla**
- Visit the **centuries-old libraries** of **Chinguetti**, a world UNESCO heritage site

- See the **Richat Dome** in Mauritania, otherwise known as the "Eye of Africa" which is visible from space.
- Observe the hustle and bustle of the **fishing market** in **Nouakchott**
- Spend time in the old Senegalese capital of **St Louis**, explore the streets of the old town characterised by its pastel-coloured colonial-era architecture
- Kick back on the banks of the **Senegal River,** in **Langue de Barbarie National Park**. With its impressive array of birdlife, a boat trip is a must for the wildlife enthusiast
- Explore cosmopolitan **Dakar** with its vibrant arts and crafts scene, superb music, museums, galleries, and mosques
- Take a trip to **Ile de Goree**, an intriguing island off the coast of Dakar known for its role in the Atlantic slave trade

Challenges: Is This Trip For Me?

New for our 2026-27 season and tailored to focus on **Western Sahara** and **Mauritania**, we now offer this epic 3-week adventure. From camping through the desert in Western Sahara to visiting the ancient libraries of **Atar** in northern Mauritania, we'll explore a part of the world very few ever visit.

Hot days and cool nights define the Sahara. We will spend at most 3 nights without facilities while bush camping our way through this vast and magnificent part of Africa.

If you enjoy off-the-beaten-track adventures and want to experience the vast expanse of the desert, you'll love this trip.

Be prepared for a true overland adventure along a route dominated by stunning landscapes and scenery!

MARRAKECH – DAKAR

Week 1: Morocco and Western Sahara

Our first stop will be **Essaouira,** a historic port city on Morocco's Atlantic coast. Made famous for its depiction as 'Astapor' in Game of Thrones, Essaouira is also known for its 18th-century medina, a walled city with a mix of European and North African architecture. Wander the narrow streets, visit artisan workshops, or explore the fresh seafood markets.

We'll stock up on supplies before leaving Essaouira and start heading south. The next 5 days and 4 nights of camping remain flexible as we head through Southern Morocco and into Western Sahara.

First, we'll stop at **Sidi Ifni**, a former Spanish town dominated by white-washed and art-deco style buildings, including the old Spanish consulate. We'll visit **Legzira beach** to see the impressive sea arch. This beautiful stretch of coastline has been battered by the Atlantic wind and waves for centuries, resulting in 2 stunning sea arches, one of which collapsed in 2016. Walking on the cliffs gives you the chance to take some great photos. If the tide is out, you should be able to get some great shots posing under the arch.

Our second night will be spent in the shadow of the **ancient Ksar at Tafnidilt**. There will be time to explore the atmospheric ruins before relaxing with a traditional Moroccan mint tea beside the pool, while taking in the spectacular desert views.

Western Sahara, or **Sahara Occidental**, is classed by the United Nations as a 'disputed territory'. Many different tribes have called this region their home over the centuries. The **Saharawi** people of Western Sahara have been fighting for independence since the Spanish left in the 1970s. Huge swathes of the territory are ruled by Morocco, with a more autonomous region administered by the **Polisario**.

Tarfaya is the first significant town we will reach after crossing into Western Sahara from Morocco. In 1975, hundreds of thousands of Moroccans gathered at Tarfaya as a staging point to launch the **'Green March'** orchestrated by King Hassan. This was the event that saw Morocco attempt to stake its claim to Western Sahara after the Spanish agreed to leave the territory.

If time permits, we will stop at a local **hammam** that draws on natural thermal waters, the perfect way to wash away the Saharan dust before continuing to our hotel in **Dakhla**. Located just 20 km or so north of the **Tropic of Cancer** on a narrow spit of land sticking into the Atlantic Ocean, the scenery in and around the city is beautiful. Pristine beaches and dramatic cliff faces dominate the view. Dakhla has become a well-known **kite surfing** destination due to the reliable coastal winds, and it's well worth going up the old Spanish lighthouse for great views of the surrounding landscape.

Week 2: Mauritania

Once we leave **Dakhla,** it's a long drive through the desert to the Mauritanian border. As we drive between border posts, we'll pass through an area of 'no-man's land' infamous amongst travellers for being strewn with land mines. The road is partly tarmacked these days and navigated by hundreds of vehicles a day. However, it's probably still one of the most intriguing border crossings in the world.

We'll spend two nights bush camping as we make our way from Dakhla to our campsite in Atar. Along the way, we hope to visit the beautiful **Terjit Oasis**, just south of Atar.

From Atar, we'll set off on a two-day, one-night desert expedition with our local guides. Our first stop will be the ancient caravan town of **Chinguetti**, where we'll visit its famous historic manuscript libraries before heading deeper into the Sahara. That evening, we'll spend the night in traditional desert tents and enjoy an authentic meal prepared by our guides beneath the stars.

The following day, we'll visit the spectacular **Richat Structure**, better known as the **Eye of Africa**. One of the world's most remarkable geological formations, the structure can be seen from space. Afterwards we'll return to Atar and be reunited with Aminah.

A full day's drive takes us back to **Nouakchott,** where once again we will be welcomed at our auberge. The next day you'll have time to visit different sites of interest. The **fish market, or port de peche**, is considered one of the liveliest in all of West Africa, and guaranteed to impress with hundreds of colourful local fishing boats lined up along the beach. It's also worth visiting the bustling **central market**, or the **camel market**, to watch the traders negotiate amongst the crowds of livestock. Mauritanians are largely descended from the **Maures** and therefore have a unique ethnicity in this region. Mauritanian men wear a distinctive traditional robe called the '**Dara'** and women often wear a wrap-around called the **'Malaffa'**.

Depending on the weather and road conditions, we will cross the border into Senegal at either **Diama** or **Rosso**, where the River Senegal comes into view for the first time. The bright green landscape here is quite a contrast from the endless sand of the Sahara.

Week 3: Senegal

Our first 3 nights in Senegal will be at **Langue de Barbarie National Park,** where we'll stay at a beautiful campsite on the banks of the **River Senegal.** The park's name translates as 'Tongue of the Berbar' as it lies on a narrow peninsula and was inhabited by the **Berber** tribe from **Morocco** for a period.

You'll have the chance to go on boat trips and guided walks to look for **sea turtles**, **monkeys**, and 160 different species of **birds.** Alternatively, relax in hammocks by the river and watch fishermen come and go in their colourful boats.

On one of our days here, there will be the option to take a short drive north to the beautiful old colonial city of **St Louis**, the former capital of Senegal. Originally founded as a trading post, St Louis is located at the mouth of the **River Senegal** and is spread out along a narrow island, reached from the mainland by an impressive cast iron bridge.

The **old quarter** is full of colourful architecture from the French colonial period, with most buildings now home to a number of restaurants, bars, art galleries, and boutique clothing shops behind wooden shutters. Walking around the narrow streets is, at times, reminiscent of being in New Orleans or Havana.

As we wave the River Senegal goodbye, it's one long drive to Dakar, our final destination on this trip. We'll have two nights to explore **Dakar**, a cosmopolitan and vibrant city, so there will be plenty of opportunity to see the sights. Lose yourself in art galleries and markets or visit the recently opened **Massalikul Jinaan mosque** or the **African Renaissance monument**. Take the ferry to the beautiful UNESCO-listed island **Île de Gorée** to learn about its role in the Atlantic slave trade.

Looking for a longer adventure? Combine this trip with our Dakar—Freetown and Freetown—Accra trips for the ultimate West African overlanding adventure.