

PETERS VALLEY  
SCHOOL OF CRAFT

# Crafts in Imperial Morocco

May 7-17, 2019

Accompanied by Kristin Muller  
Executive Director of Peters Valley

Morocco has captured the imaginations of visitors for centuries with its layers of rich history, vibrant landscapes, and a craft culture that fuses indigenous Berber traditions with Arab, Jewish, Andalusian, and other European influences. Techniques passed on through specialist guilds where a master instructs apprentices are at the core of Moroccan crafts. The preservation of these skills has been a conscious priority and today tile makers, wood and stucco carvers, metalworkers, ceramicists, weavers, and embroiderers continue to work using traditional techniques to create beautiful, authentic, one-of-a-kind pieces.

Our carefully designed program focuses on this extraordinary craft tradition. We begin in the medieval Arab city of Fez where we meet with traditional artisans as well as fine artists, designers and photographers who are breathing new life into the ancient city. Visit two notable eras of Moroccan history at the Imperial city of Meknes, once home to the grand Moroccan sultanate, and the ancient Roman settlement of Volubilis, whose abandoned, graceful ruins sit atop of a stunning collection of mosaics. In Sefrou enjoy a workshop with Amina Yabis whose needle-weaving buttons are used on robes and made into jewelry. Spend two nights in the High Atlas Mountains understanding the unique ways of life of Morocco's Berbers. End the trip in Marrakesh and be immediately immersed in the country's proud artistic history on display in the surrounding architecture, elaborate tile mosaics, and traditional artisanship that define this ancient trading center.

We hope you will join us on this wonderful journey!





## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### Tuesday, May 7: Depart USA.

Depart the USA – this program has been designed using TAP as the International Carrier as they have direct flights into Fez and back from Marrakesh.

### Wednesday, May 8: Fez.

B,L,D

Arrive at the fabled city of Fez, Morocco's 1,200-year-old capital. Check into the *Sahrai Hotel* perched over the Ville Nouvelle on a grassy hilltop with two glorious pools and a Givenchy spa.

Before a reception and dinner at the hotel this evening, meet for a discussion on preserving the Medina of Fez.

### Thursday, May 9: Fez.

B,L

Spend the day exploring 9th century Fez, a World Heritage Site and the only medieval Arab city that's still absolutely intact. Wander the city's labyrinth of narrow streets where you are surrounded by age-old traditions. The medina is believed to be the world's largest car-free urban area. Begin at the tannery of **Chouara**, which still operates as it did a thousand years ago. The dyes all come from natural substances, such as indigo, henna, saffron, poppies, and pomegranates. Next visit the **Bougueddach Collective** who create colorful Moroccan fabric.



Continue to the beautiful **Nejjarine Square** which is dotted with Andalusian-style architecture dating from the 18th century. Visit the square's **museum** which showcases a collection of wood work, both ancient and modern from various regions in Morocco.

Enjoy lunch set in the romantic remains of a crumbling riad, with mosaic floors, fountains and exotic foliage.

After lunch, visit the **Batha Museum**, housed in a 19th century summer palace. The museum houses an excellent collection of traditional Moroccan arts and crafts including an entire section dedicated to famous Moroccan carpets.

Enjoy dinner this evening at **Nur**, an intimate new restaurant located in the medina.

### Friday, May 10: Fez.

B,L

Depart Fez to drive to the vast ruins of **Volubilis**, Rome's commercial capital for the region up until the 3rd century. In the fertile area where the ruined Roman city is located, it's difficult to remember you're in Morocco and the ruins stand as a testament to an empire that changed the world forever.

Continue on to the Imperial City of **Meknes**, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the 17th century capital offering a fusion of color, culture and history. Visit the magnificent mausoleum that entombs the great sultan, Moulay Ismail.





Enjoy lunch at **Villa des Pins**, a manor amid vast olive and fruit tree groves followed by a private tour and tasting at **Chateau Roslane**, the main wine production facility of Celliers de Meknes.

Dinner at leisure.

### Saturday, May 11: Fez.

B,L

This morning visit **Ain Nokbi**, the ceramic producing area of Fez to watch artisans work on the painstaking hand painting and laying out of zellij (tilework). Next visit Sefrou to meet with **Amina Yabis** who formed a women's craft association called Golden Buttons to market the djellaba fabric, scarves and rugs they create. There will be an opportunity for travelers to try these techniques.

Enjoy lunch here before returning to Fez and a free afternoon.

On the return to Fez, we will look for the famous 'laine de Habba' or the natural white sheep's wool yarn that is somehow hand-spun with tiny pill balls added in. It is used to add interesting texture to high quality djellabas for men, and we will discover how it is made because it defies the usual spinning methods!

Before dinner meet with a local Fez clothing designer who has a unique way of fusing traditional Moroccan designs with a more modern cut.

Free evening.



### Sunday, May 12: Kasbah du Toubkal.

B,L,D

Fly to Marrakesh and continue by road to the **Sidi Fares** region to a traditional earth-made village perched at an altitude of just over 1,800 metres, where you'll meet a local family and spend some time experiencing their way of life sharing a simple lunch. Next visit a **Berber community** for a craft workshop with local craftsman.

Check into **Kasbah du Toubkal**, perched on a hilltop against the soaring backdrop of the tallest mountain in North Africa.

Dinner at the hotel this evening.

### Monday, May 13: Kasbah du Toubkal.

B,L,D

Meet with local crafts people where their genuine friendliness, warmth and hospitality are exceptional. Meet with weavers and carpet makers. The Berber tribes have developed a variety of weaves to be adaptable to different climates.

Berber weaving is still highly dependent on the female culture, and is passed down traditionally within the home. The young apprentice is expected to learn the different looping techniques, patterns, color ranges and motifs. Historically women wove carpets for their families, but today these inspiring designs have been motivation for more modern carpet fabrication.

### Tuesday, May 14: Marrakesh.

B,L,D

After a morning at leisure, depart the hotel and head towards Marrakesh. Upon arrival in Marrakesh, visit the Medina and Riad Yima, the childhood home turned gallery of one of Marrakesh's most famous artists, **Hassan Hajjaj**.

After lunch spend time in the Medina. Built like a chunk of honeycomb, the medina is comprised of several neighborhoods spinning out from its heart and woven together by whip-thin lanes and knotty souks. Spend some time at **Djemaa El-Fna**, Marrakesh's main square and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. By mid-afternoon the square begins to fill with water-sellers with fringed hats, henna tattoo artists, monkeys and oboe-playing snake charmers.

Stop at **Dar Bellarj**, a culture center located in a beautiful old



palace. Next meet with **Randall Bachner**, a New York native who melds traditional weaving techniques with contemporary patterns. (Schedule permitting)

Check into the *Sofitel Marrakesh Palais Imperial*. This comfortable hotel is set in a former Moorish palace.

This evening enjoy dinner under the stars.

### Wednesday, May 15: Marrakesh. B,L

Begin the day learning about Marrakesh at the beautiful 12th century minaret of the **Koutoubia Mosque** – Marrakesh’s iconic landmark – visible for miles around.

Proceed to visit the **Bahia Palace**, a prime example of Moorish-Andalusian architecture.

For lunch we head to the palm groves just outside the city to **Jnane Tamsna**, a little paradise of tranquility and the private resort and home of Gary Martin, an ethno-botanist. Mr. Martin will give us a tour of his garden and talk about projects he spearheads as Director of the Global Diversity Foundation.

After lunch visit the upscale neighborhood of Guéliz to visit to Yves Saint Laurent’s garden called **Marjorelle**. Close by is the new **Yves Saint Laurent Museum** which houses thousands of articles of clothing and haute couture accessories.

End the day at **Maison de la Photographie** with its extraordinary collection of 3,500 photographs about Morocco between 1870 and 1950. Sip mint tea at the Maison’s secret rooftop café which offers the highest, sweeping panoramic views of Marrakesh.

Dinner at leisure.

### Thursday, May 16: Marrakesh. B,L,D

This morning we start with a visit to **Soufiane Alaoui**, who has been working with copper for over 30 years. Next we plan on visiting jewelry designer, **Faouzi** who will share his passion and his pieces.

Enjoy lunch at Kamal Laftimi’s **Le Jardin**, in which he and interior architect Anne Favier have created a true magical oasis located within a beautifully renovated 16th century building.

**Afternoon at leisure** for independent activities

Enjoy a private reception and farewell dinner this evening.

### Friday, May 17: Return. B

Drive to the Marrakesh airport for your homebound flights.

