

Bicycle Tour Itinerary: Discovering Marrakech's Hidden Gems

Starting Point: Pikala Bikes

- **Time:** 9h30 AM - 3h00 PM
-

First Stop: Zaouia Sidi Bel Abbas

The first stop is the **Zaouia Sidi Bel Abbas**, a historic religious complex dedicated to one of the seven saints of Marrakech, **Sidi Bel Abbas**.

- **Historical Insight:**
The guide will explain the history of the **Seven Saints of Marrakech**, a revered group of religious figures, and their significance to the city's spiritual and cultural heritage. Focus will be placed on **Sidi Bel Abbas**, whose tomb is located here and is a site of pilgrimage.
 - **Irrigation System:**
Learn about the traditional **irrigation systems** in Morocco, particularly in Marrakech, and how they have shaped the agriculture of the region. The guide will discuss how water is distributed through complex systems like **khetaras** and **qanats**.
 - **Languages in Morocco:**
The guide will also discuss the diverse languages spoken in Morocco, including **Arabic**, **Berber**, **French**, and **Spanish**, and how they influence the daily lives and culture of Moroccans.
-

Second Stop: Local Moroccan Bakery

The next stop is at a **local Moroccan bakery**, where you will be able to witness the art of Moroccan bread-making.

- **Cultural Insight:**
The guide will explain the importance of bread in Moroccan culture and its role in daily life. Bread is not just a food item in Morocco, it's a symbol of hospitality and community.
- **History of Moroccan Baking:**
Learn about the **traditional techniques** used in Moroccan baking, including the use of **tandour ovens**, which are similar to clay ovens, and how various types of bread are made, such as **khobz** (round flat bread) and **msemmen** (layered pancakes). You may even have the chance to sample fresh, warm bread straight from the oven!

Third Stop: Moroccan Tile Workshop

The third stop takes you to a **Moroccan tile workshop** to learn about the intricate process of creating the famous **zellige** tiles from **Fes**.

- **Tile Making Process:**
The guide will explain the entire process of how **Moroccan tiles** are made, starting from hand-cutting and shaping the tiles, to the colorful **mosaic designs** that adorn walls, floors, and fountains throughout the country.
- **History of Zellige:**
Learn about the centuries-old tradition of **zellige tile-making** and its influence on Moroccan architecture, particularly in the medinas, palaces, and mosques of Marrakech. You'll get the chance to see artisans at work and appreciate their skill firsthand.

Fourth Stop: Jewish Neighborhood (Mellah)

The next stop takes you to the **Mellah**, the old Jewish quarter of Marrakech.

- **Historical Overview:**
The guide will share the rich history of the **Jewish community** in Marrakech and Morocco as a whole, tracing their arrival, contributions to Moroccan culture, and their place in modern Moroccan society.
- **Cultural Insights:**
You'll learn about Jewish traditions, architecture, and the influence of Jews on Moroccan trade, science, and art. The guide will also touch on how the Mellah neighborhood reflects the **coexistence of Jewish and Muslim communities** in Morocco over centuries.

Fifth Stop: Royal Palace (Dar El-Makhzen)

The **Royal Palace of Marrakech** is your next stop.

- **Historical Insight:**
The guide will explain the significance of the **Royal Palace** (Dar El-Makhzen) in Moroccan history and its role as the residence of the king during official visits. Although the palace is not open to the public, the exterior and the surrounding gardens are beautiful and rich in history. You'll learn about the traditions of Moroccan monarchy and the architectural grandeur of the palace.
-

Sixth Stop: Moroccan Hammam (Public Bathhouse)

After cycling through the historical sites, you'll visit a **traditional Moroccan Hammam** (public bathhouse).

- **Moroccan Bath Culture:**
The guide will explain the history and significance of **hammams** in Moroccan society. A hammam is not just a place for bathing, but a social gathering spot where people come together to cleanse, relax, and rejuvenate.
 - **How Hammams Work:**
Learn how **Moroccans take public showers**, the different stages of the bath (steam room, scrubbing, and cooling down), and the cultural importance of **rituals of cleanliness**. If available, you may get a demonstration of the traditional **black soap** and **kessa gloves** used for exfoliation.
-

Final Stop: Gueliz and Hivernage Districts

The last stop of the tour takes you on a leisurely cycle around the more modern and vibrant neighborhoods of **Gueliz** and **Hivernage**.

- **Contrast Between Old and New Marrakech:**
As you cycle through these areas, you'll experience the **contrast between the old town (medina)** and the newer districts of Marrakech. Gueliz is known for its modern cafes, boutiques, and wide streets, while Hivernage is home to upscale hotels, restaurants, and luxury establishments.
 - **Urban Development:**
The guide will explain how **Marrakech has evolved** from a traditional medina to a more cosmopolitan city. This will give you insight into the changing face of Moroccan urban life, including the balance between preserving traditions and embracing modernity.
-

End of Tour: Pikala Café

The tour ends back at **Pikala Café** where you can enjoy a refreshing drink and relax after an exciting and informative day of exploration. You'll have time to ask any remaining questions, take pictures, and reflect on the highlights of the day.

Tour Highlights

- History of the **Seven Saints of Marrakech** and the importance of Sidi Bel Abbas.
- Insights into Moroccan **irrigation systems** and how water management has shaped the region.
- **Traditional Moroccan baking** practices and the cultural significance of bread.
- The art of **zellige tile-making** and the history behind Morocco's famous mosaics.
- The fascinating history of the **Jewish community** in Marrakech.
- Exploring the grandeur of the **Royal Palace** and its importance in Moroccan monarchy.
- A cultural immersion into the **hammam (public bathhouse)** tradition.
- A cycling tour through the contrasting neighborhoods of **Gueliz** and **Hivernage** to experience both old and new Marrakech.