

IBERIAN INTERLUDE & MARVELOUS MOROCCO

A 4-WEEK PAINTING TOUR WITH EV HALES IN 2016



Monsaraz, Portugal



Erg Chigaga, Morocco

In 2016 Pam and her husband Paul are organizing a four-week tour in Iberia (Portugal and Spain) and Morocco. The Painting Tour will be led again by our tutor and internationally recognized watercolor artist, Ev Hales.

We have constructed what we believe will be a very exciting itinerary from Sunday, September 18 to Monday, October 17, 2016, with ample time devoted to tutored painting and plenty of opportunities for non-painting partners to explore the wonderful locations that will both inspire and delight.

The tour program in southern Morocco will avoid areas over-populated with tourists and encompass “only in Morocco” experiences, such as a night in the desert in a luxury tent (complete with en suite facilities). The itinerary involves a brief flight from Agadir in the south to Casablanca and then on by coach to Fès, thus reducing what could have been a nine-hour bus journey to three hours and the chance to visit Rabat for lunch.

Our Iberian tour begins in the northern Portuguese city of Porto on Monday morning, September 19, where your rooms will be reserved at the gracious Grande Hotel do Porto from the Sunday evening for four nights.

Painting and exploring will cover the highlights of this World Heritage city over two days, and we will enjoy a welcome dinner together at a wine lodge across the Douro River in Vila Nova de Gaia on the Monday night. On Wednesday, we will travel in our private coach north to the picturesque village of Ponte de Lima, returning to Porto via Matosinhos for a feast of seafood.

On Thursday, September 22, we take our coach east along the Douro to Pinhão in the heart of Port wine country for two nights in the five-star Vintage House Hotel and where we enjoy a visit to a vineyard for lunch and a dinner under the stars (weather permitting) beside the river.



Plaza Mayor, Salamanca, Spain



Roman bridge in Mérida, Spain

Saturday, September 24 sees us traveling in our bus over the mountains and into Spain for three nights in the charming old university city of Salamanca at a four-star hotel that is within walking distance of everything we want to see and paint.

On Tuesday, September 27, we move south to Mérida, the old Roman capital of Lusitania, for an opportunity to view and paint some of Europe's best preserved ruins.

The following day we make our way back to Portugal, stopping en route at a lovely little pueblo (village) for lunch and a painting op. For our next four nights we will be based in the Alentejo town of Monsaraz at a guest house perched atop a hill with panoramic views across the lakes to Spain.

During our time here we will be painting in this lovely whitewashed village and exploring some of the countryside, including a visit to the regional capital city of Évora.

The Iberian portion of the tour ends in Lisbon on Monday, October 3 before we regroup in Morocco on the evening of Wednesday, October 5. We have allowed free time between these portions of the tour for sightseeing in Lisbon or for some of our guests to travel earlier to Morocco.

We begin with three nights in Marrakech. We have selected three stunning riads (old Moroccan homes built around a courtyard and converted to hotels) where our guests will be accommodated. Only the very large, and impersonal, hotels could host all of us in one establishment whereas the boutique riads we have chosen in southern Morocco provide first class comforts in a traditional Moroccan atmosphere.



500 year old riad in Tata



Riad in Taroudant

We have two full days painting in the fabled city of Marrakech. We have permission to paint in the private section of the Jardin Majorelle (Yves Saint Laurent's blue villa) as well as in the gardens at the Mamounia Hotel (where Winston Churchill liked to paint). We'll spend time in the Medina (market) and at the El Badi Palace as well as allowing time for bargain hunting and haggling in the souks. On Friday night we will all dine at the iconic Dar Yacout restaurant.

On Saturday, October 8 we will be driven in a number of air-conditioned four-wheel drive vehicles over the High Atlas Mountains, 2200 metres high, to the majestic ruins of a former pasha's palace and the spectacular Ounila Valley canyon for painting. In the afternoon, we will visit troglodyte grottos and a Berber village before settling into our riad for the evening in Ait Benhaddou.

The next three days will be highlights of the entire tour as we travel south into the Sahara Desert. We'll visit oases and waterfalls, gorges and escarpments for painting and spend one night in a luxury tent (complete with en-suite) among the sand dunes of Erg Chigaga. There's even a chance for a camel ride to reach the tent, for those who wish for a further adventure.



Camp in Erg Chigaga, Sahara Desert, Morocco



Ait Benhaddou, Morocco



View of the Medina from our hotel in Fès

The evening of October 11 will be spent in a 500-year-old riad in the village of Tata before taking one of the most scenic routes in the Anti Atlas the following morning north to Taroudant, a lovely old village that locals say is what Marrakech used to be like 50 years ago.

On October 13, we will be taken to Agadir airport from our Taroudant riad for a 55 minute flight by Royal Air Maroc to Casablanca where we will be met by private transport for the three hour drive north to Fès, stopping for lunch at the country's capital city of Rabat overlooking the Atlantic.

We have three nights in the fabulous five-star Riad Fès where we can paint the Medina from the hotel's spacious balconies. We will have a side trip one day to the whitewashed town of Moulay Idriss and lunch and painting at the Scorpion House. We will be taken on a guided tour of the Medina in small groups (you'll know why that's a good idea when you get there!) with opportunities for more bargain hunting in the souks.

After breakfast on Sunday, October 16 we will retrace our journey on the motorway back to Casablanca in time for a quick lunch snack before painting at the Hassan II Mosque, one of the few mosques in Morocco that non-Muslims are allowed to enter. Our accommodation will be at the Sofitel Tour Blanche Hotel and our farewell dinner will be very special at Rick's Café, the movie legend brought to life by our friend Kathy Kriger. Sunday nights at Rick's is a jam session with Issam at the piano (and yes, he will play *As Time Goes By*).



Mosque Hassan II in Casablanca



Fès

Monday, October 17 will be our last day of the Marvelous Morocco tour and we will spend it exploring and painting some of the art deco buildings of Casablanca before lunch at Rick's and an opportunity in the afternoon to review our tour and our art. We have arranged a late check-out from the Sofitel to suit those who wish to return to Australia that evening. Emirates has a flight to Dubai at 10 pm and there are flights also to European destinations in the afternoon and evening.

TOUR PRICES AND BOOKINGS

We have priced the four-week Iberian and Morocco tour at €6800 (about \$9,500 at the exchange rate in late March 2015) for artists and €6300 (about \$8750) for non-painting partners. This pricing is based on twin-share accommodation. The single room supplement is €1000 (approx. \$1390). Airfares, apart from Agadir to Casablanca, are not included. A deposit of €800 is required to confirm a booking.

A booking form can be downloaded [here](#). Further information can be obtained from Pam at pam@pamadamsart.com or Paul at pbadams@ozemail.com.au.

March 31, 2015