

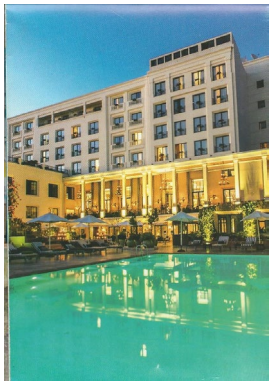
## Morocco and Paris September 15 – October 1, 2022

Thursday, September 15 – Leaving Home

Do our typical thing of leaving the car in the UC garage and picking up the van at the “Graduate” (the new name for the “Kingsgate”). The van is waiting when Randy gets back from the garage. At check-in, American checks our bags all the way through to Casablanca (first worry eliminated). Flight to JFK goes without a problem. At JFK, transfer terminals. Try to get through security. Find we need another boarding pass. Have to wait 2 ½ hours for the Royal Air Morac ticketing station to open. Get moved to the head of the line and we get through quite quickly. Go through security quickly also. Go to the wrong gate and get in line to go to Istanbul. Get to the right gate finally (right next door) and finally get on board. Take off about an hour late.

Friday, September 16 – Arrival in Casablanca

Even though we take off an hour late, we get in about 15 minutes late. Like those tailwinds. Meet first National Geographic representative as we get off the plane. He has a Pad with Jan’s name on it. He gets us through passport control and customs without a problem. We get passed off to our tour guide – Ismail. Drive to the hotel and there we have to wait about an hour to get a room. Nap for four hours. Get up, shower and shave. Walk to the bank and get some local money (dirham). Walk around the hotel area. Buy some pastries and walk through a park on the way back to the hotel. Have a couple glasses of wine at the hotel and then go back to the room.



Saturday, September 17 – Tour begins

After a nice breakfast at the hotel, we take a (petite) taxi to the beach and walk along the beachfront. First part is full of beachfront properties right down to the water’s edge. Then comes a long wide public beach with pick-up soccer games and surfers. We walk almost its full length in the sand (the water is quite warm) and then back along the sidewalk. Have a lunch of chicken lasagna in a small restaurant. Return by cab and start the tour. First go the big “Grande Mosque Hussan II”. It is a big ornate mosque with tiles on the columns and a hand-painted cedar ceiling. Get back on the bus and go through old town taking a very short walk through the area where *Casablanca* was shot. Get back on the bus again and ride past the “Art Deco” buildings (looks like turn of the century French buildings to me except one office building with rounded corners). Back to the hotel for a shower before dinner. Very nice dinner at a long table. Very local conversation with just people near us (it was a long table). Back to the room for packing and bed.

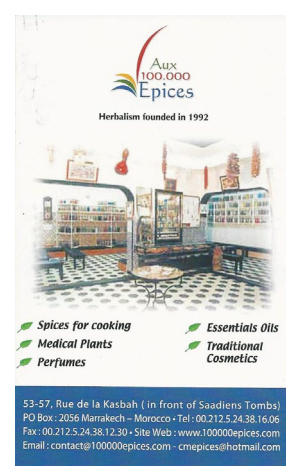
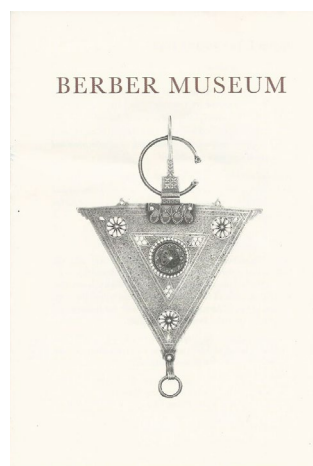
Sunday, September 18 – Marrakesh

Get on bus and drive to Marrakesh. Country was very monotonous: many plowed fields and few crops. Bus ride is about three hours. Once there, stop, have lunch, and start sightseeing. First stop: the Koutoubia Mosque. Don’t go inside (must be Muslim to go inside). Next on to the Bahai Palace with ornate tile work and carved and painted ceilings. Go through the husband’s rooms and two of the four wife’s rooms. On to the rug museum, Musée Boucharouite, for its display of old Berber rugs. Back through the old Medina square where vendors wanted to get tips for being pictured with monkeys and snake charmers (with real cobras). Dinner was at a Moroccan restaurant and consisted of a number of hors d’oeuvres, a chicken dish, a lamb dish, plenty of wine, and a large pastry with a sweet white

topping. Before dinner, we have a glass of wine on the restaurant roof with some Moroccan music. Ismail joins in. Back to the room about 10:30 and head for bed.

### Monday, September 19

Start early at the Majorelle Gardens and go through the Berber Museum. Incredible silver jewelry. Also tools and outfits. Then wander through the gardens with cacti and succulents from all over the world. Next on to the Saadian Tombs. Tiled graves on the floors both inside and out. No markers so it is unclear whose tomb is whose. In the vaults, the walls are tiled. Gold leaf on the ceiling. Then on to the pharmacy (really spice market) where a woman tells us the use of each concoction and then sells them off almost auctioneer style. Next on to the rug market. There are many very nice Berber rugs, but the sales pressure puts us off. Then through a crowded bazaar along very narrow streets with side-by-side vendors, noisy mopeds, bicycles and lots of people. Go into a restaurant for lunch. I have tangia, a meat stew, and Jan has an eggplant pizza. Leave there about 3:00. Go back to the hotel (while others continue to shop or get a massage). Take a nap, journal, and have the rest of Jan's pizza for dinner.



### Tuesday, September 20

Drive from Marrakesh to the high Atlas Mountains. The plains in front of the mountains are very flat and the mountains rise very abruptly. Once in the mountains, the driver does a fantastic job on narrow windy roads. Arrive at Ilmil and take donkeys up to Kasbah du Toubkal. I have a hard time getting on the donkey. Two men have to push me upright on the animal. Have lunch on the terrace (the roof of the lodge) overlooking the mountains. Go back to the room and sit on the balcony. Take a short hike to a waterfall. Before dinner, have a lecture by Gwen about horses and women competitors in Morocco. Dinner and then back to the (very small) room.



Wednesday, September 21

Breakfast is mostly cold except for hard-boiled eggs. Go on the “short” hike of 3 ½ miles with Ismail. Can see Toubkal (the tallest mountain in North Africa) from the summit of our hike. We have tea with a family in a very old house there. We have a very pleasant guide who always want to take our picture. Randy has a fit of diarrhea on the way down. Back in the lodge for lunch on the roof again. Rest and relax until dinnertime.

Thursday, September 22

Long bus ride. First drive down the windy road from the lodge (we had walked to the bus and watched our luggage come down on the donkeys) and then up the road to the Tichka Pass. There we transferred to 4x4s to go down the mountain to the Kasbah built in the 1920s by “Bad Boy” of the Glaoui family. The Kasbah was crumbling, but there were some very ornate interior rooms. Randy has a second round of traveler’s diarrhea and runs out early. After the tour and the bathroom stop, we continue down the mountain in the 4x4s. Jan freaks out when our drive tailgates the 4x4 in front of us. Have lunch and then visit the fortified village of Ait Ben Haddou. Jan stays on the lower levels and Randy hikes with the group to the top. See an artist painting with various teas and other solutions that turn darker colors when heated with a flame. Buy a small picture. See scenes from various movies made at the village including the arena for the Gladiator and the gate for Ben Hur.

Friday, September 23

Head out to the Sahara. First stop, a big movie studio where they have various Egyptian statues out in front. Just a photo stop. We didn’t get to see the studios. Then drive to the Toairt Kasbah, a huge fortified Kasbah. Go through various rooms. Interesting. Perhaps a little less well decorated than the other kasbahs we have seen, but much bigger. Nice view from the roof. Drive on to the Dades Gorge and look at the “Monkey Fingers” (which some people see as phallic symbols). We were promised a short walk in the itinerary, but that ends up being only a few hundred yards along the road. Have tea at a small café.

Saturday, September 24

Drive to the Sahara tent camp. Until we get there, the desert’s sands are most covered with small black igneous rocks, not pure sand. Our hotel has some beautiful large fossil rocks in the lobby. Later in the morning, we stop at a place where such fossils are prepared. See the big saws that are used on the rock. We buy a nautilus fossil for Becky and a small fossil for a necklace for Jan. Back into the bus for what seems like forever. Finally, we change to 4x4s for going across the dunes. There are multiple tracks. We have no idea how the drivers know where they are going. They all seem like they are racing each other. Finally, we get to the camp. Truly a permanent tent camp but with running water, toilets, and showers. We move in and then saddle up for a camel (actually a dromedary) ride

through the dunes. Here the rocks have given way to true sand dunes. The sand is not nearly the deep red of Namabia; it must not be as old. The camel ride was fun but not too scary except when the camel gets up or down for mounting or dismounting. Have dinner back at the camp followed by a lecture on the constellations. The sky is cloudy; so we can't do any star gazing. There is a drum concert around a fire. Abdellaj joins in. Overnight it rains. (And it never rains in the desert!).

Sunday, September 25

Basically, a travel day with stops for lunch and a couple of bathroom breaks. Stop along the way to see a troop of apes (apes because they are tailless, unlike monkeys). A few people have been feeding them so that they come down to the side of the road. Undoubtedly, our tour guide tips them. They give us fruit to feed to the apes. It is fun to see the social dynamics of the troop. Finally get to the hotel. It is actually a number of houses combined into a single hotel. We are in the house next door and up on the European second floor. Meet for a drink at the bar and have dinner in the hotel.

Monday, September 26 - Fez

Start the day by going to the royal palace. All one can see is the exterior and the great doors. Take a lot of pictures. Then up to an overlook point to see the layout of the city. Next on to a pottery and mosaic studio where they are making the classic pottery shapes and designs of Morocco and large mosaic panels. Large show room, but we don't buy anything. Then we go into the medina (the old part of town). Very narrow streets. Wider streets have vendors on both sides. We stop at a leather-processing factory. Go up onto the roof and see the vats where the leather is tanned. Back down in the showroom we buy a goat-skin coat for Jan. Continue up and down the streets of the medina. Stop in at a pre-school classroom where the children recite part of the Koran for us. Finally end up at a house for dinner where we are entertained by a Soufish group that chants and dances. Their chants are more like songs in that they seem to have a melody rather than just vocalizing on one or two notes.

Tuesday, September 27

Bus to the Roman ruins of Volubitis outside of Fez. Large community with stunning mosaics. Visit a winery on the way back. Back to the hotel, many people go for a hammam (a Moroccan massage). We pack while they are gone. Go to a very fancy Moroccan restaurant for our farewell dinner. Lots of wine and lots of food. Back to the hotel and into bed for an early morning departure.

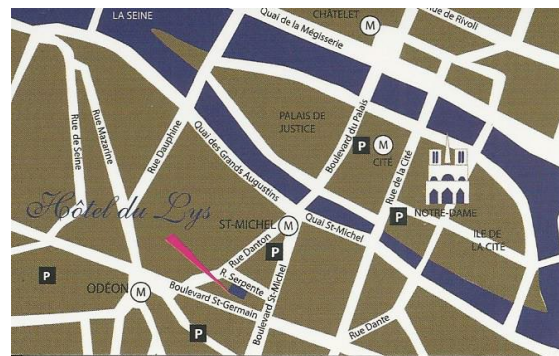
Wednesday, September 28 – Depart from Morocco

Up at 5:00 for cab ride to Casablanca airport (decide to skip 5:30 airplane from Fez). Hotel send up coffee and bakery items almost immediately after we get up. Very nice and unexpected. Also come up for our luggage before we have it packed. Have to call down later for a porter. Pay bill for laundry. Close to being ready when they call up and say the cab is there (about 10 minutes early). Race down. Gwen and the Gottsackers join us in the van. Things go well until the van's engine quits about ½ hour outside of Rabat. We wait for the 7:00 bus which picks us up about an hour later. Get to the airport in plenty of time even for the Gottsackers whose plane is about an hour before ours. Have to go through screening even before entering the airport. There is a hiccup at ticketing since we didn't take the first leg of our trip this morning. Have to go downstairs to revalidate our tickets. Once that is taken care of, our guide gets us through luggage check in quickly and on to passport control. Our airport guide gets us to our gate. Have a quick lunch and wait for boarding to begin. It finally does. They send too many people down the escalator and people start backing up at the bottom. Jan tries to get them to stop, turns around, falls, gets bashed by the moving steps, gets





multiple bruises on her arms and a big gash on one. A stranger helps her get back on her feet. Once in the air, the flight attendants bandage her up. We get off about 40 minutes late but get to Paris about on time. We get through passport control rather quickly but have to wait for our luggage a rather long time. Find the train station and get tickets. Take the train to St. Michel-Notre Dame station. Find our street on the station map, but, when we get to street level, we have no idea where we are. After a short disagreement, we find a cab that takes us to our hotel. Our room is on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor (European numbering system) and there is only a midget elevator. We get everything up in two lifts. Settle into our room. Go out and get a very thin crust pizza and wine. Come back and hit the hay.



Thursday, September 29 - Paris

Sleep until about 10:00 (oops – missed breakfast). Head for the Musée d'Orsay. Randy had trouble trying to order tickets by the phone but finally succeeded. Walk to the museum having lunch along the way. Sail right in. Start with a few galleries on the ground floor but then head to the top floor for the Impressionists. Go through all of the galleries there. Then go back to the ground floor and catch a couple of galleries there including a special exhibit of Munch (of the "Scream" fame). Didn't find much we liked there. Leave the museum and have a glass of wine along the Seine. Walk back to Rue St. Michel and have an Indian dinner. Go back to the room for the evening.

Friday, September 30

Walk around the burnt out remains of Notre Dame. The most reconstruction progress that can be seen is in supporting the central arches. It looks like it will take years before it is restored. The fire occurred in the central transept and the steeple collapse there. However, there was a lot of damage everywhere. Then went over to Sainte Chapelle to see its beautiful stained glass windows. Even though we have timed tickets, there is a huge line and we have to wait 20 minutes to get in. We eventually do so. There is not much here that Randy remember except the windows. He has been here before with Jan 20 years ago and with Deb long before that. Initially go into the undercroft and then up into the chapel where the windows were. Eat lunch across the street (quiche – quite good) and then walk through Tuileries Gardens. Walk back along St. Germain and have a glass of wine along the way. Get to the hotel and do a bit of packing. Go out for dinner and then shower. Need to get another early start in the morning.

## Saturday, October 1 – Heading Home

Up early (5:45 am) and get ready to go. Realize that we got up an hour early, but, as it happens, it was a fortunate accident. Lollygag at the hotel until about 7:00 and then head for the train station. Find the same elevator that we came up in on Wednesday and head down onto the platform. Despite my poor French, we realize that the overhead monitor states that the train to CDG is not operating this morning and that we have to take a bus from the train station. Get on the train (which happens to be an express) and get off at Aulnay-sous-Bois where the line splits. Get informed by a station attendant that we have to go to the end of the line to get the bus. Get back on the train and go to the end. Get off the train and follow the crowd to the bus. A very nice young woman offers to take on of our suitcases down and up the stairs for us. Get on the first bus to terminal 2 (standing room only). Get off at the airport and go to the wrong half of the terminal at first. Get directed to the right half and find the Delta check-in quite easily. Work our way through passport control (no agents, just machines taking pictures of you) and security without too long a wait. Find our gate and sit down to a chocolate croissant and a Coke free. Board plane and head for home. First meal, quiche and ice cream, isn't bad; second meal, spinach and cheese roll, is way over-cooked. Get to Cincinnati and go through Global Entry but get flagged for the spices in our baggage. Suitcase get a special scan, we show the agent the spices, and we are sent on our way. Recheck baggage and go through security at CVG. Get to baggage claim and our bags are there. Get our Executive limo who takes us to the UC garage. Luckily it's not a football weekend. Find car quickly and drive home. We are exhausted!!!