

# Morocco 2012

Unfortunately we could not make this one , so the rest of the group had to go with out us. It was a fantastic trip and so good Mark is heading back in October.

Thanks to Mark for the travel report ([www.landroversandwine.com](http://www.landroversandwine.com))

Well that was a trip! What a country Morocco is; outstandingly beautiful, deserts, forests, good tarred roads, great dirt tracks, awesome mountain passes, stunning lakes, lush green valleys, it's got it all! Friendly, sunny, cheap, and easy to get around, thoroughly enjoyed it!  
UK - Spain - Ceuta - Chefchaouen - Fez - Dades Gorges - Erg Chebbi - Zagora - Ouarzazate - Tizi n Test pass - Marrakech -Ceuta - Spain - UK.  
3,336mls.



## Moroccan Meander

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Southampton – Plymouth – Santander

Left home far too early, just too excited, breezed a steady pace all the way and got to the ferry terminal at around 12:30, met up with Lu and Tweedie, Steve and Andrea arrived shortly after. We boarded a small cruise ship that is;

<http://www.brittany-ferries.co.uk/fleet/pont-aven>

And enjoyed the calm crossing all the way to Spain, far more civilised than the 1000mls each way by Dover-Calais, and toll road. We're off to Africa! Some say it's not the real Africa, some even say Morocco is not in the real Sahara, who cares, we're off to the Africa and the Sahara! Enjoy your Land Rover; it's what it was built for!

4<sup>th</sup> Santander – Carcares

A stunning long sunny drive down via Valladolid and Salamanca, not many toilet/fuel stops, but great roads, no tolls and mostly level, arrived at an excellent campsite, with excellent facilities, for a much needed break. A long tiring drive, but found this excellent campsite, even had on suite toilets and showers per pitch, and at a reasonable cost. Would have loved to see more of these parts of Spain, but Morocco beckoned and Spain was just a way of getting there, so no stopping this time, hopefully next time. Enjoyed the evening sunshine, with great company, and a bbq.

<http://www.eurocampings.co.uk/en/europe/spain/extremadura/caceres-camping-106558/>



#### 5<sup>th</sup> Carcares – Algercias - Ceuta – Chefchaouen, Morocco

A lovely start to the day, made some good miles, paid the only toll 6.10Euros between Sevilla and Jerez, and headed towards the coast. We're all getting excited about crossing into Africa, then the wind picked-up. And did it! It made for very slow progress, but we made good time to the ticket office, the famous Carlos from the Hubb/Overland forums, brought tickets and some 5mins later told all ferries cancelled today, rough seas. Bummer! Discussed options over a burger and decided to head for the ferry port in spite of no ferries, it took an hour or so to find out there was only one ferry at 17:45, but to Ceuta, not Tangier Med. Oh well, at least we'd be on our way, the crossing wasn't that bad, but by the time we got off the ferry, through immigration and customs, which weren't that bad at all and mostly friendly, stopped to get some local currency, which you'll need if you go on the toll roads. We hit a toll road into and out of Tetouan before heading south. Unfortunately it was well after dark, with little option but to head for Chefchaouen, it was about midnight by the time we got to the campsite. Very late, very tired, but we're here; in Morocco!

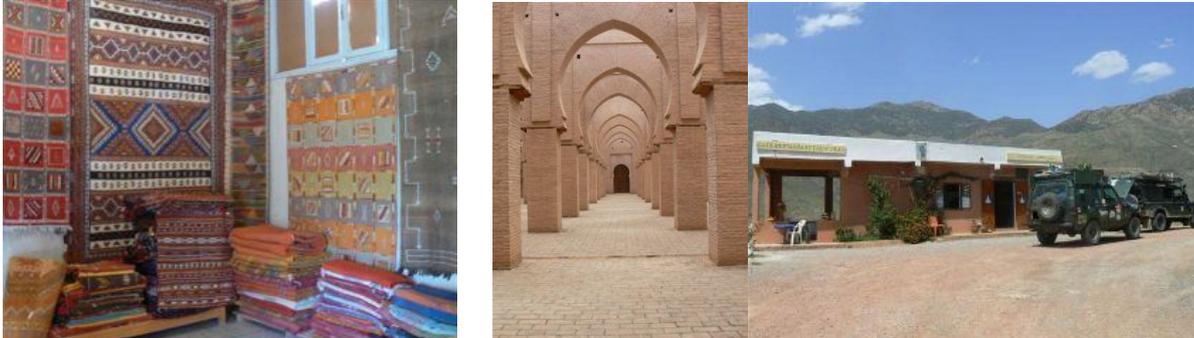
<http://www.campingchefchaouen.com/>

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Chefchaouen – Fez

A late night, a late start. Drove into town briefly, a pretty little place on the edge of the Rif Mountains, would have liked to see more, but hey ho, next time. Made good steady time to Fez enjoying our first day in Morocco and Africa, some very scenic areas on the way, became a fan of Morocco instantly, I've only have seen a couple of tourist areas before, but now seeing the real Morocco and her beautifully varied landscape, amazing, or should I say phenomenal. :) We arrived at the excellent campsite that is Diamant du Vert which is south of the city, better than the camping international site, seemed to be the opinion of

many. Too late to go to town, so we camped in the warm evening sunshine, enjoyed a bbq along with great company. Just enjoying the whole experience that is Morocco.

<http://www.diamantvert.ma/>



### 7/8<sup>th</sup> Fez – Imichil - Dades Gorges

7<sup>th</sup> Saw beautiful Fez, an excellent service from the campsite, had a great guide around the souks, tanneries etc. Got back to camp at about 13:00hrs and left, but with a shortened day, we hoped to make some of the way, but we didn't, no camping in El Kebab, nor anywhere along the route we were on, Auberges yes, but weren't happy with security, even less happy about driving in the dark again, missing some beautiful scenery. We eventually found our way to our planned campsite, Camping and Auberge Tiste about 4kms north of Imilchil late at night. Turned in late, thankful we had made the drive in the dark safely, but miffed having missed some great scenery. C'est la Vie!

8<sup>th</sup> Only to awake and find we had camped on the edge of a beautiful lake, surrounded by mountains, showered and had an excellent breakfast at this great, friendly but basic place. Met up with some overland bikers, and discussed various things. Drove through Imichil and onto Agoudal, we decided with time shortened because of the late nights and after meeting some nice knowledgeable Portuguese in their disco and frontera, we chose the drive (MH1 in Chris Scott's Morocco overland book) to the Dades Gorges only, and what a drive, absolutely stunning and in places a bit hairy, we topped out at 2920mtrs before dropping down a long narrow dirt track into the start of the gorge. Found an excellent campsite, the Berbere de la Montagne (or sometimes called Camping International on gps data from the Olaf maps) at the top of the gorge on the right, arrived at about 17:00hrs, pitched tents, had a great time chin wagging, and an excellent meal inside the Auberge. A brilliant end, to a brilliant day.

<http://berbere-montagne.ift.fr/>



### 9<sup>th</sup> Dades Gorges – Rissini – Mergouza

From the start, Morocco has been hot, mid-late 30's. But later today and for a couple of days it would be into the 40's, HOT. And today was again stunning, but although we had a long hot day on tarmac, the views were incredible, and I still can't believe WE'RE IN AFRICA! Morocco's landscape is so varied, a truly beautiful country, thoroughly enjoying it! A great drive out of this glorious gorge, steep sides, nice flowing river, date/palm trees all over the place. Through a bustling town called Tinehir, picking up the MS4 to Alnif which is now tarred, where we stopped refueled and a cool drink, and along to Rissini, miles and miles of straight roads along with just stunning views, and then south to Mergouza. After some experience of sand and dirt tracks getting to the campsites along a "road", found the tracks weren't that bad, corrugated tracks can cause the rear of your landy to be rearranged whether you wanted it or not, and in sand we just sunk, made hard going and this was flat, in the dunes with a 110 with a loaded rack could be easily rolled, didn't mind if I got stuck, but the idea of rolling didn't appeal to me, or any of us I think. But with the hope of doing some dune-bashing tomorrow, and it being late afternoon we found an excellent site on the edge of the dunes of Erg Chebbi and camped, what a great day! Enjoyed great hospitality from owner Hassan and all the others there, enjoyed the good company in the hot evening sunshine with hot food and a cool glass of something.

<http://www.aubergesahara.com/>

### 10<sup>th</sup> Mergouza

2 Days on a Dirt track M6/MS6, and then another dirt track M7/MS7 to Fom-Zguid. Was the idea, but after speaking with locals who know the route were told that about 8kms of the river we were going to cross was soft underneath, and after experiencing our vehicles are far too heavy for the sand, we decided to cut the existing route short and go to Zagora directly on dirt and then on up. So we set off, got about 10kms from camp, clutch fork goes in one of the vehicles, so back to camp to try and fix it. A day's rest, and re planning a route, to miss the dirt tracks south. Such is life!

### 11<sup>th</sup> Mergouza – Zagora

Clutch fork fixed wahoo good effort by Mr Tweedie, thoroughly enjoyed our stay at Camping Sahara on the edge of the dunes. Because of the known clutch fault, along with local knowledge about the state of the piste, a couple of options arose; 1. Take a shorter dirt piste M6 route direct to Zagora or hit tarred roads, after a brief discussion it was

decided to hit tar and head for Zagora. Even on tar, the views were absolutely stunning, a really beautiful friendly country, back through Alnif, and then onto the pretty villages of Tazzarine and Nekob. We arrived in Zagora late afternoon, found a Landy mechanic, Mohammed, even though we didn't need him. Strange place Zagora, expected more I suppose, didn't see the famous '52 days to Timbucto' sign anywhere, sadly. Sindibad campsite is a nice shady, basic, rustic and noisy site, but friendly and close to the shops and the odd hotel. Relaxed in the evening sunshine, with good company and refreshments.



### 12<sup>th</sup> Zagora – Ouarzazate

A beautifully stunning drive up the lush green Draa Valley, into pretty, modern and bustling Ouarzazate, found the campsite and went off to visit the Ait Benhaddou, famed for being in the film "Gladiator" among others, rather than park and walk there, followed the gps along a dirt track crossing the river few times before we arrived at the base of this old scenic town. A few photos later and we headed back, found a great campsite 20kms north of Ouarzazate near Tamissint, set-up camp in the hot afternoon sunshine, while others went off to visit the Atlas Film Studios, some just relaxed and tried to keep cool, and later we all relaxed with a bbq in good company, and chatted about this marvellous country and findings.

### 13<sup>th</sup> Ouarzazate – Tazenakht – Tizi n Test pass- Marrakech

Yet another sunny hot day, drove to Tazenakht, famous for its carpets, haggled and got one, a lovely, scenic little town, and then headed for the Tizi n Test pass, this is one of the most scenic, stunning mountain roads I've ever been on (including the Alps and Pyrenees), tarred yes, but a total driving pleasure of pure exhilaration. Visited the famous Tinmel Mosque, then with the idea of camping near by, couldn't really find anywhere, thought with 100kms to Marrakech, just go there and have a days rest there, and we did, we meandered our way through the suburbs of this big, beautiful city and found one of the best campsites yet.

<http://lerelaisdemarrakech.com/>



## 14<sup>th</sup> Marrakech

A day's rest is in order, or so I thought, visit the city, or so I thought, then do some swimming and enjoy the experience that is Morocco. A vehicle had gone south via Agadir to miss the pass, and made Marrakech at around 12:00, enjoyed catching-up with stories, some swimming, relaxation and headed for the city. Got a taxi, wandered around for about 10mins and then my phone was promptly stolen, rather stupidly I'd put in a holster on my belt, but with my haversack, camera and the excitement visiting a new city, had briefly dropped my guard. By the time I spotted the culprit on a bike, Mr Tweedie gave chase, sorted myself out and I gave chase, passed by a number of scooters all asking what the problem was, one even passed Mr "Linford Christie" Tweedie, and this guy on his scooter apparently knocked the guy off his bike and then grabbed his front wheel to stop the culprit getting away, by the time I arrived about 20 other people were around him. Mr Tweedie passed my phone back, given to him by the Moroccan on his scooter, and not wanting to make further hassle, was told in no uncertain terms to make a police report, to stop the culprit from doing it again. By this about 30 odd people were around us, including, I found out later plain clothes policemen, so made a police report, which took quite a while, but we're in Morocco, some things take time. At least the police seemed concerned and interested, unlike some other countries I could mention.

All I can say apart from the obvious, thanks to Mr Tweedie, but also thanks to the Moroccan people, police and apart from a few persistent touts, most Moroccans have been very friendly, very helpful and seemly grateful of foreign visitors, even at police checkpoints, which we passed a lot of, no problems, some even waved. What a great country!

Another great evening, with good company, good food and chilled refreshments overlooking the lovely pool and small garden that surrounds it.

## 15<sup>th</sup> Marrakech – Moulay Bousseham

The long drive back starts, no problems, just a great cheap toll road (about £16, with interesting traffic; at anytime seemly, people including school children just cross in front of you, also the odd goat herder, livens up the toll roads) along the coast, skirting Casablanca and Rabat, stopped at a good campsite just north of Kenitra in Moulay-Bousselham. A nice little costal town with a lagoon full of wildlife.

There are two campsites as you enter the town on the left, the first we stayed at; nice but ageing the guidebook said, the other near a river apparently is pestered by mosquitoes. Either way it's a delightful and grateful, convenient stopover on the coast of this wonderful country. And like all campsites very cheap or reasonable, with friendly, helpful staff.



### 16<sup>th</sup> Moulay-Boussleham – Ceuta – Algercias – Dos Hermanas

Our last day in Morocco; straight drive to Ceuta, got through passport control, customs etc in about half an hour, Steve won the sweepstake in terms of time, excellent, into the Spanish enclave, boarded a fast catamaran and about 40mins later arrived in mainland Spain. A nice drive, albeit a sad one leaving behind Morocco, up to Dos Hermanas, found the campsite easily, which is excellent and not far from the motorway, pitched tents, opened wine and enjoyed the company, like all my trips I am luckily to know and travel with some really good people!

<http://www.eurocampings.co.uk/en/europe/spain/andalusia/campsite-villsom-106564/>

### 17<sup>th</sup> Dos Hermanas – Nr Valladolid

An amazing, yes amazing, Lu, drive up the great Spanish roads to just North of Valladolid, a long hard hot day on humans and Landys, but we all enjoyed the sunny evening in the campsite, in spite of it being next to a landfill site and the motorway we've just come off. Oh well! A good clean campsite with excellent facilities, friendly staff, a shop and a restaurant also onsite, never the less, it did wiff a bit. Enjoyed the company, in spite of our journey's end, we're all glad today was over and we'd have an easier day tomorrow in terms of mileage.

<http://www.eurocampings.co.uk/en/europe/spain/castile-and-le%{3n/campsite-cubillas-110240/>

### 18<sup>th</sup> Nr Valladolid – Santander

Well an easy, almost lazy days drive to the port, left in plenty of time and arrived in plenty of time. Some had breakfast upon arrival, some went into Santander shopping, all, I humbly think, thankful to be at the port in time for the ferry with few real mishaps. Personally I'd lost less than a pint of water and a rubber axle end cap. We passed though

parts of Spain which were stunning, and need further exploration; Santander is a lovely large seaside town, part of a beautiful coastal area, just love the whole driving experience of this route through Spain. I'll be back to explore more of it. Boarded the ferry and watched Spain disappear.

### 19<sup>th</sup> Santander – Portsmouth

Nothing to report really; enjoyed a thoroughly good time onboard the ship, reasonable but excellent quality food and drink, along with excellent facilities. Docked in Portsmouth, and arrived home about 30mins later. Sadden! But, wanting more! Another great trip with good company, good hospitality, good food and drink, and stunning weather. 3,336mls

*Go there, leave your empire builders hat at home, and enjoy the experience that is Morocco!!!*

### Some information;

Hubb Sahara forum is an excellent source, as is Chris Scott's book Morocco Overland.

<http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/hubb/>

<http://www.morocco-overland.com/>

Ferries; UK/Spain only Brittany ferries now, but excellent service.

Spain/Morocco we/I chose to use Carlos from the overland forums, met some Portuguese, some Germans and some French people you also used him. Very good service, and nicely located near supermarkets and fuel stations, not far from Algeciras.

### Carlos's details;

#### DIRECCIÓN:

Pol. Ind. Palmones I, salida 112

C/ Fragata, local 3

11379 Los Barrios (Cádiz)

Tfnos: (0034) 956 675 653/ Portable: (0034) 606 288 880

Fax: (0034) 956 675 719 Email: [ticket.gutierrez@telefonica.net](mailto:ticket.gutierrez@telefonica.net)

<http://www.viajesnormandie.net/situacion-agencia-viajes-algeciras.htm>

36° 10' 45 N, 5° 26' 28 W

Fuel;– Spain 1.30Euros a litre (approx) not many stops on our route – Morocco 70p a litre (approx) stations everywhere, humbly suggest stick with the bigger named ones.

Food/drink; – Morocco, cheap enough, some big supermarkets in major cities, plenty of little shops all over the place. Bottled water everywhere, but found to be high in chemicals, can give you the squits if you drink a lot, but you'll need to drink plenty of fluids.

Time; – Spain +1hr – Morocco same as UK.

Camping; – Spain 12/20 Euros a night – Morocco £4/8 per night.

**Local currency; – you can only get in Morocco, banks and ATM's are good. As you enter Morocco from Ceuta head straight into Findeq there's an exchange bureau about 2kms on the right.**

**Ceuta/Moroccan customs entering;**

**Drive up to (passing all the “helpers”? they are badged officials if you need them, but they will expect a tip) the 1<sup>st</sup> checkpoint booth, have an entry slip filled out ready (given when got tickets) and passport to be stamped.**

**About 20yds is the 2<sup>nd</sup> booth, here your passport and D16 (printed off the web and filled out) and your original V5/logbook, pass all over, get D16 stamped and keep 2 of the 3 copies.**

**Drive forward to the customs, he'll check the vehicle and take the D16 away and get them stamped officially, he'll give you a copy back, DO NOT lose this, you'll need it to get out of the country.**

**Ceuta/Moroccan customs leaving;**

**Pull over at the booths on the right to get your passport stamped.**

**Drive forward to the customs, give them your passport and D16, they'll check them and sign the D16 and give it back to you, through customs and that's it. KEEP the D16 if you want to return to Morocco in the same vehicle.**

**£££ approx Spent; £500 ferry UK/Spain - £600 Fuel - £600 ferry Spain/Morocco, camping, food, drink, gifts, tolls, misc extras etc etc. Around £1700.00 in total, not too bad actually.**

**Where to next?! Let's start again. Maps, wine.**