

Marrakech: Gardens, Culture & Cuisine

March 11 – 20, 2015

Sponsored by the University of California Botanical Garden

Escorted by Katherine Greenberg

Come with us to the exotic city of Marrakech and explore its fascinating medina, the Palmeraie, and Berber villages in the High Atlas Mountains. Once the capital of southern Morocco, the Imperial City of Marrakech is an alluring oasis with a temperate climate and fascinating sights. We have special invitations to visit private homes and gardens as well as historical palaces and monuments dating from the 12th century. Tour escort Katherine Greenberg, garden designer and UCBG board member, will be speaking at a seminar sponsored by The Majorelle Garden.



Gary Martin, an ethno-botanist and director of the Global Diversity Foundation, will be our host. Our home for the week will be Jnane Tamsna, the private estate created by Gary and Meryanne Martin in the Palmeraie. This property features elegant architecture, 'ryads' or interior patio gardens, and gracious hospitality in a tranquil setting. The cuisine is a fusion of Moroccan and modern European, using organic fruits and vegetables sourced from the estate's orchard gardens. Jnane Tamsna is featured in [Gardens of Marrakech](#), by Angelica Gray.

Wednesday, March 11: USA to Marrakech, Morocco

Thursday, March 12: Arrival in Marrakech (D)

Independent arrivals and transfers to Jnane Tamsna.

Enjoy a refreshing swim or a stroll in the garden. This evening we will meet for drinks and a welcome dinner with our hosts Meryanne and Gary Martin. Jnane Tamsna is a nine-acre paradise with several guest houses and pools, surrounded by aromatic herb gardens, olive groves, lemon trees, and date palms.



Friday, March 13: Jnane Tamsna and Medina (B, L, D)

After breakfast at Jnane Tamsna, we will visit the oasis gardens cultivated by Gary and explore with him the *khattara* water harvesting tradition whose vestiges are still evident in the *Palmeraie*. Meryanne will show the architectural and design elements of Jnane Tamsna.

After lunch, we will spend the afternoon getting to know Marrakech with a local guide. The historic medina of Marrakech is a World Cultural Heritage Site. Among other historic places, we will visit the 16th century *Badi* Palace containing the 12th century minbar of the *Koutoubia* Mosque, the city's dominant landmark and a reference of world Islamic art; the 19th century *Bahia* Palace, which features a remarkable *ryad* garden and Moorish-Andalusian architecture; and *Place Jemaa El Fna*, the city's lively main square.

After a late afternoon look at the souks, we return to Jnane Tamsna for drinks and dinner.

Saturday, March 14: The Majorelle Garden Botanical Symposium (B, D)

After breakfast, we head to the venue of The Majorelle Garden Botanical Symposium for a fascinating exploration of Mediterranean and Moroccan horticultural trends. The speakers will include renowned botanists, horticulturalists, and garden designers. A buffet lunch will be available.

Time permitting, we may visit a private garden in the *Palmeraie* before returning to Jnane Tamsna for a late afternoon rest and dinner.

Sunday, March 15: Berber Villages in the High Atlas Mountains (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we will drive to the High Atlas Mountains. Our day-long tour will begin at a native plants landscape in *Tahanaout* and then an early lunch at one of the charming *auberges* in the mountains. We will explore the southern Moroccan flora as we pass through conifer woodlands dominated by *Tetraclinis articulate* and various *Juniperus* species. We will be close to populations of *Cupressus atlantica*, an endemic species. We may also visit the *Tinmel* mosque.

The afternoon will be spent in the village of *Imegdale*, where the Global Diversity Foundation is collaborating with the High Atlas Foundation on community development projects, including cultivation of fruit and nut trees and sustainable harvest of aromatic and medicinal plants. We will engage in plant collecting with community members and visit their community plant nursery before heading back to Marrakech for tea at another mountain retreat on the way. We will return to Jnane Tamsna for dinner.

Monday, March 16: Marrakech and The Majorelle Garden (B, L)

After breakfast, we will visit the *Menara* Garden to see the pavilion and pool and Moroccan families enjoying the space. We may also visit Casa Botanica, the best local plant nursery, to see the diversity of plants and meet its owner.

We have a special invitation to join Madison Cox for lunch at Villa Oasis, Yves St. Laurent's private home and garden adjoining The Majorelle Garden. Later we will visit The Majorelle Garden, the former home and garden of the French painter Jacques Majorelle, with Director Madison Cox. The painter came to Marrakech in the 1920s and was enchanted by the villages and people living in the High Atlas Mountains. French Governor Lyautey gave him a large orchard in what was then the outskirts of Marrakech, where Majorelle imported plants from all over the world to create a private paradise. The garden was restored to its original beauty and color by the Late Yves St. Laurent. The painter's studio within the garden is now the Berber Museum, which has an amazing collection of decorative arts and artifacts.

This evening we will have drinks at Jnane Tamsna and return to *Gueliz*, the French quarter of Marrakech, for dinner at *Al Fassia* (at own expense).

Tuesday, March 17: Cooking Class and Medina (B, L)

After breakfast, there will be an introduction to the diversity of culinary and medicinal plants available in Marrakech, followed by a cooking class at Jnane Tamsna using the garden's herbs and vegetables, and lunch to measure the success of our efforts.

Mid-afternoon, we will embark on a deeper tour of the souks of the Marrakech medina, focused on herb and spice sellers, to gain a connoisseur's appreciation of the quality of ingredients, learn to identify true saffron and learn about *ras-el-hanut*, the mixture of spices and herbs used in many Moroccan dishes, including *tagines*. After an evening visit to the *Place Jemaa El Fna*, we will proceed to *Fondouk*, a mythic *caravanserai* converted into a trendy restaurant, for drinks and dinner (at own expense).

Wednesday, March 18: Ourika Valley (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we depart for a tour of the *Ourika* Valley in the High Atlas Mountains. Our first stop is the *Dar Taliba* boarding school, where Global Diversity Foundation is assisting *Amazigh* girls to retain traditional knowledge and use of local plants through botanical and horticultural practices, including cultivation of an ethnobotanical garden and creation of an herbarium. Later we will visit the *Jardin Bio-Aromatique*, an organic aromatic herb garden, where we will observe local bread-making, enjoy a picnic lunch, and indulge in some aromatic salt and herbal footbaths using *Nectarome* products made here.

In the late afternoon, we will return to Jnane Tamsna for some free time and dinner at home.

Thursday, March 19: Marrakech (B, D)

After breakfast, there are several options. Some may choose to go on an architecture and design tour with Meryanne Loum-Martin or visit Casa Botanica nursery. Others may wish to shop and have lunch in town or visit some additional historical monuments and green spaces, such as the gardens of *La Mamounia*. Another option is to enjoy a swim and lunch in the gardens of Jnane Tamsna. Lunch at home or in Marrakech will be at own expense.

This evening we will enjoy a gala dinner at Jnane Tamsna, with music and entertainment.

Friday, March 20: Marrakech to USA (B)

After breakfast, private transfers to Marrakech airport for return flights. Lunch will be available at Jnane Tamsna (at own expense) for those with afternoon flights.

Post-tour Activities: Additional activities in Marrakech, such as cooking classes with *Bahija Lafridi*, specialized shopping, and visits to various sites may be arranged. Further explorations of Morocco may also be arranged upon individual requests.

Physical Endurance Level: The tour includes a moderate amount of walking, and some of the places that we will be visiting can only be seen on foot. Walking surfaces may be uneven, and comfortable shoes are recommended.

Tour Escort: **Katherine Greenberg** is a garden designer and author from California. Katherine first traveled to Morocco over 30 years ago when her father was working there as an agricultural consultant, and she has led a number of tours to Morocco. Katherine is on the Advisory Board of the UC Botanical Garden and a past president of the Mediterranean Garden Society, the Pacific Horticulture Society, and the Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden. She is the author of *Growing California Native Plants*, 2nd edition, published by UC Press in 2012, as well as several cook books.

Global Diversity Foundation: **Gary Martin**, Director of the Global Diversity Foundation (GDF), has been involved in conservation and ethnobotanical work for over 30 years. After receiving his PhD from UC Berkeley, he founded the GDF to help local communities maintain their agricultural, biological, and cultural heritage through projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Gary will take us to see several of his projects in the High Atlas Mountains and share his knowledge of Moroccan culture and traditions. His garden in the palm groves of Marrakech reflects his interest in Mediterranean and Moroccan plants and their uses.

Cuisine: Moroccan cuisine is a unique blend of Berber, Arabic, Spanish and French culinary traditions. Spices are an essential part of Moroccan cooking, used to enhance the flavors of meats and vegetables, and we will visit the medina of Marrakech to see the amazing displays of Moroccan spices, olives, and herbs. According to the season, meals feature a selection of salads, soups, couscous or *tagine*, fragrant *bstilla*, and delicate pastries served with mint tea.

Shopping: Morocco is known for its outstanding arts and crafts, and there will be limited time for shopping during the tour. There is a tradition of bargaining in the medina, and mint tea may be offered in some of the shops.

TOUR LAND COST PER GUEST BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY:

Based on a minimum of 12 guests: \$4995.00 per person for members of the University of California Botanic Garden. Non-members pay \$50.00 supplement. We suggest non-members join before registering for the tour.

Single supplement: \$995.00

COSTS INCLUDE:

- 8 nights accommodations, all rooms fully en suite
- All hotel taxes and service charges
- Breakfast daily, lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Deluxe private coaches and top drivers
- English speaking local guides in Morocco
- All sightseeing and entrances as per the itinerary
- Airport transfers
- Deluxe portfolio of documents
- Escorted by Katherine Greenberg.
- Donation of \$450 to the University of California Botanic Garden

COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Airfare
- Travel insurance
- Passports

To make a reservation, please complete and submit a printed booking form

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