

# There's more to Morocco than 'Casablanca'

## Community News

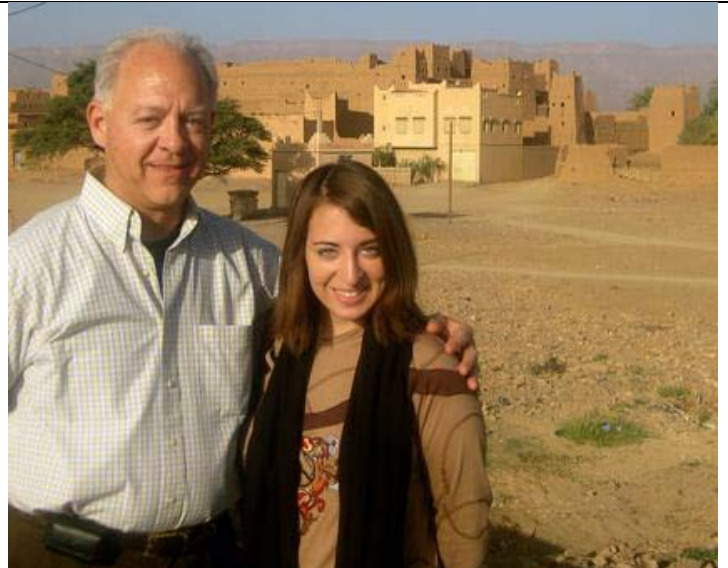
Posted Dec 08, 2009 @ 08:28 AM

Brandywine Hundred, Del. —

*If you're a regular reader of the Brandywine Community News, you're likely well-versed about Robert Weiner's work as a New Castle County Councilman. Last month, Weiner took some time off and traveled with his wife, Cindy, to Morocco, where his daughter Rachel is serving in the Peace Corps. Below are excerpts from an extensive travel blog kept by Weiner about the trip in the first of a two-part series.*



The Atlantic Ocean resort of Essaouira.



Councilman Bob Weiner with his daughter Rachel in Morocco.



Moroccan fast food.



Cindy Weiner and Rachel Weiner sit in a Moroccan cafe.

**Saturday, 14 November 2009**

We arose at 7:30 a.m. to catch the "Marrakech Express." The Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young melody kept playing in my mind...The last stop was Marrakech and now we were anticipating with great

excitement our meeting with Rachel...All the stress of being on our own, getting lost or otherwise being accosted, melted away as we were now under the wing of our beloved protector and tour guide. With no time to lose, Rachel lead us outside, where we witnessed the first of her many taxi price negotiations. This is quite an art and we were in awe of her skills...We were famished and so Rachel lead us through what appeared to us to be a maze of narrow passageways to a nondescript small door. Rachel beckoned us to enter yet another narrow hallway which opened to a quaint collection of sitting rooms. This, we were told, was the Earth Café. To Rachel's best knowledge, this is the only vegan/vegetarian restaurant in Kech. We were invited to select a room in which to dine. As we walked up a narrow flight of stairs, I lost my balance and accidentally kicked over and broke a clay vase. I felt like the proverbial "bull in a china shop." Rachel decided we should retreat down the staircase and sit in another small room which had just one table.

### **Sunday, 15 November 2009**

At noon we took a taxi out of the old walled section of the city to "Majorelle Gardens," home of the late fashion designer Yves St. Laurent. The gardens and grounds were beautifully laid out in a well-designed but peaceful setting. Then we walked to "Artisana," a government-overseen collective of artisan cooperatives. We purchased "oiseau" a brass bird for Cindy's mother...We dined with two of Rachel's star students and best friends from Tinzouline, who are now living in Marrakech attending university...They professed their love and admiration for Rachel, whom they consider to be their sister. We learned new Arabic words and letters. Since we were deemed to be their progressive American parents, we were permitted to view a cell phone video taken by Najwa of Meriem belly dancing in classic garb.

We were informed their real parents would never view this video.

### **Monday, 16 November 2009 - Wednesday, 18 November 2009**

We travel by bus to Essaouira, a delightful Atlantic Ocean resort, reminiscent of Marrakech decades ago, before being over-run by hippies and tourists. We noticed how much cleaner the streets appeared than in Casa. Tourists mixed with locals in a much more casual and laid back environment along the main pedestrian way, lined with the ancient city wall and old and new buildings...Our hotel has a roof top balcony which we visited; taking in the seascape and city views. We then began our

#### **Morocco seeks to attract tourists**

"Morocco is a tree, the roots of which are planted firmly in Africa but has its branches in Europe," according the late King Hassan II.

According to the Moroccan Embassy, the northern African kingdom as a rich culture gained from the various civilizations it encountered throughout its history, including the Roman, Byzantine, Arabic, Spanish and French. From beautiful coastlines, to stunning Saharan vistas to authentic medieval cities, the country has experiences for every tourist.

The kingdom, a constitutional monarchy, hopes to capitalize on those resources by attracting 10 million visitors in 2010. Travel to Morocco is easy for American travelers, who only need a passport, although the U.S. government recommends registering with the State Dept. for the most up-to-date travel information. Several airlines offer non-stop flights from both Philadelphia and New York to Rabat, the country's capital.

Summers can be hot and winters cold. Travel to the country should be timed based on what you want to see. Plan on May to October for the beaches, November to April for the desert, April to October for the Atlas mountains and March to June and September to November for the cities.

exploration of seaside Essaouira. The mellow atmosphere, narrow winding streets lined with colorful shops, white-washed houses and heavy wooden doors make it a wonderful place to stroll...The evening featured dinner at Le Mechouar Hotel Restaurant, a Moroccan restaurant which was great fun. We sat next to six young co-workers from France who were on holiday, who shared their experiences with us. The Berber band was a trio consisting of a three-string guitarist, a small cymbal performer who wore his instruments on both hands [who also was the lead singer] and a drummer. I danced with other patrons and then sang with the band [and] then taught a modern Moroccan young woman from Marrakech to Cha-Cha, Disco and Jitterbug to the traditional music...Wednesday morning, the featured event was our Moroccan cooking class. We learned how to prepare a Zaalouk and a Lamb Tajine with almonds and dates.

**NEXT WEEK:** The Weiner's travel to Tinzouline, where Rachel volunteers with the Peace Corps.

*Edited by Jesse Chadderdon*

# Visiting Morocco – Part II

By Jesse Chadderdon

## Community News

Posted Dec 15, 2009 @ 03:42 PM

Brandywine Hundred, Del. —

*If you're a regular reader of the Brandywine Community News, you're likely well-versed about Robert Weiner's work as a New Castle County Councilman. Last month, Weiner took some time off and traveled with his wife, Cindy, to Morocco, where his daughter Rachel is serving in the Peace Corps. Below are excerpts from an extensive travel blog kept by Weiner about the trip in the second of a two-part series.*

### Thursday, 19 November 2009

The journey [to Rachel's home village on Tinzouline] started at 5:30 a.m. and ended at around 3 p.m. Rachel told us that we had been fortunate in making all our planned connections and that we had traveled the distance in good time. When we arrived at Rachel's front door, our last obstacle was to carry the luggage up the narrow staircase and plop the luggage and ourselves onto the beautifully carpeted "living room" floor. We got a quick house tour and then unpacked the American goodies through out the apartment. Rachel prepared a delicious dinner: veggies with spices and rice, utilizing whatever was in her pantry.

### Friday, 20 November 2009

We were awakened our first morning in Tinzouline by donkeys, roosters and the call to prayer...We took a taxi to Zagora, where we transferred to a second cab to Tamegroute, a desert town with a rich history and obvious infrastructure investment for tourism. Our taxi ride took us past groves of palm, called "Palmeraie"...We visited the famous ancient library, with a collection of scholarly books dating back to the year 1063. The prophet Mohammed died in 749 and the rare book collection has great historic significance. The library was established in the 1700's. Some of the books are written on gazelle hides. The collection includes early editions of the Koran, dictionaries, astrological works, along with tomes on biology, botanical medicine, poetry and literature.



Rachel Weiner leads her father into Marrakesh in Morocco.



## **Saturday, 21 November 2009**

We walked via the neighborhood paths to Rachel's Tinzouline host family. Kbira, Rachel's host mom, greeted us at the door. She was most gracious. We were invited to a sitting room, which had many homey amenities. Precocious Asya, age 4, was full of personality and energy. Mish Mish, their cat, was also a center of attention. Asya made animal sounds and imitated different animals, to entertain us. I responded with animal noises and faces to entertain Asya, which made her laugh. Kbira served us tea, followed by chicken couscous and then fruit. Asya assisted each of us in washing our hands with a portable hand washing station. Bujma, Rachel's host father, stopped in to say hello and then retreated to his lavish parlor, reportedly to watch television and smoke...Rachel then ushered us into the Ouarzazate town plaza – large, modern, clean and filled with people – socializing, strolling, playing soccer, drinking coffee, chatting and smoking. It was a wonderful scene to behold. The whole scene spoke to us saying “chill out.” Many travel agencies advertised trips to the sand dunes adjacent to M'Hamid. We checked into “Bab Sahara Hotel,” located right on the square. For 180 Moroccan Dirham or \$30, we were able to book what appeared to be the hotel's nicest room.

### **Meet Rachel Weiner**

Councilman Robert Weiner recorded his travelogue while visiting his daughter in Morocco. Meet the Peace Corps volunteer [Rachel Weiner](#) as she talks about her life in northern Africa.

## **Sunday, 22 November 2009**

Our first stop was Atlas Studios/Hotel Oscar in Ouarzazate. For our studio tour, we joined a group of international students who were traveling together from Bulgaria, Mexico, Czech Republic and the Netherlands; but their common language was English. Our tour guide walked us through indoor and outdoor large movie sets where many classic movies were filmed – “Babel,” “The Mummy II,” and the remake of the “Ten Commandments” – and noted some of the many famous actors who had performed and stayed here – Michael Douglas, Angelina Jolie, Russell Crowe and more. Our next destination was the famous nearby Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah...originally constructed in 1345 and first inhabited by Berbers and Jews. The locals told us that the Moroccan Jewish community immigrated to Israel in the 1960s. The Kasbah was added onto over the years. As many as 150 families once lived in this ancient mud “condo”...The taxi driver returned us to our hotel and on the way home said we would be welcome to come to his home to meet his family on our next trip- “In-Sha’Allah”- so typical of the warm and friendly Moroccans everywhere during our visit.

[After saying their goodbyes to Rachel, the Weiner's were headed for the Ouarzazate Airport, where their long journey home began.]

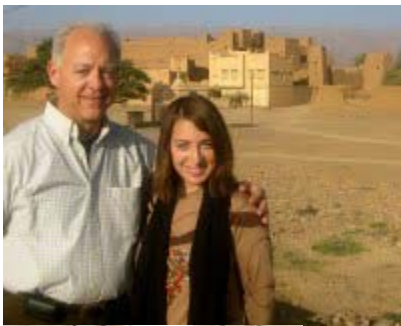
*Edited by Jesse Chadderdon*

**Bob and Cindy Weiner's Moroccan visit with daughter Rachel serving 2 years in the Peace Corps**

**November 12-23, 2009**

Here is a full account of our trip. Below is a taste of pictures from our adventures in Marrakech, Essaouira (a seaside town west of Marrakech), Ouarzazate, Tinzouline, and travels between all those places. Rachel said we handled the trials and tribulations of Moroccan travel very well. We travelled by Supratours buses, CTM buses, grande taxis, and petite taxis. One time (in a grande taxi) we had a total of 12 human beings in with us.

Bob (nicknamed "Badr") and Cindy (nicknamed "Sahar") learned new words in Arabic, charming taxi drivers, mul hanuts, and random Moroccans all over the country. Sahar even learned how to say "bread," and count to 3 in ShulHa!





**Thursday 12 Nov 2009**

Bob's brother Larry transported Cindy and Bob to the Philadelphia Airport for our 4:30 PM flight on US AIR to Frankfurt, Germany. This 8 hour flight was the first leg of our trip.

**Friday 13 Nov 2009**

We arrived at 6:15 AM in Frankfurt, Germany after a sleepless red eye flight. As we had a whole day layover, we travelled by train to the City of Frankfurt for a day of exploration. It was a bone chilling rainy day but did warm up a little by noon. Frankfurt is a world class financial center and in a sense, the economic engine of Germany. We selected the old city to explore, which featured walkable streetscapes, interesting pedestrian plazas, markets, transit oriented village-like mixes of commercial, office and residential communities, government buildings, museums and classic European architecture. We visited the equivalent of the New York Stock Exchange Building and the fashionable "Fifth Avenue" of Frankfurt. We happened upon the town tour bus around mid day, which gave us a good overview of the main section of the City. There was a week long Swedish Festival underway, sponsored by IKEA, which featured musicians, entertainers and products from Sweden for sale. We explored the ultra-modern 5 story all glass new department store which was unlike any structure we could have imagined. As we approached, the exterior appeared to have a huge worm hole which travelled from the outside of the building and then twisted its way upwards at an angle through the entire multi-tiered edifice. Once inside, each floor gave way to new visions and



perspectives. Color and form constantly morphed and drew the eye inward and upward. We continued our explorations stopping at a tony coffee shop where well dressed men and women -- stockbrokers and financiers -- were enjoying their after work lattes and other coffee concoctions. By the end of the day, after walking for over 12 hours, we were exhausted. We took the train back to the airport to await our 10:25 PM connecting flight to Casa Blanca on Luftanza.

**Saturday 14 November 2009**

Our Luftanza flight was filled with a mixture of Moroccans and Germans, all of whom warned us repeatedly of the dangers of Casa Blanca at night. We arrived at Casa Blanca Airport at 12:50 AM and secured a taxi for \$40 American to transport us 30 minutes away to the Ibis Moussafir Casablanca Hotel, Boulevard Bahmad Place de la Gare Casa-Voyageur, next to the train station. We were in no position to negotiate a lower price since we were unable to exchange funds at the airport at this late hour and we were unfamiliar with what would have been a fair price even if we felt up to the challenge to haggle. We arrived at our hotel around 2 AM. The front desk night manager wanted to keep Bob's passport since he initially could not see the Customs Officer's feint stamp. Bob gently protested and then the manager found the stamp upon further inspection. The manager insisted that we pre-purchase breakfast, but Bob explained we would not have time. By the time we collapsed in our room around 3 AM, we were both exhausted and stressed by the almost 40 hours of non stop sleepless travel. We arose at 7:30 AM to catch the "Marrakech Express" to "Kech". The Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young melody kept playing in Bob's mind. We just got on the train in time as it was about to leave. The last stop was Marrakech and now we were anticipating with great excitement our meeting with Rachel. The train station was beautiful and as we were looking around, Rachel came and met us. All the stress of being on our own, getting lost or otherwise being accosted, melted away as we were now under the wing of our beloved protector and tour guide. With no time to lose, Rachel lead us outside where we witnessed the first of her many taxi price negotiations. This is quite an art and we were in awe of her skills.

At 12 noon the taxi delivered us to a pedestrian precinct which Rachel told us was named Djemma El Fna. Cindy and Bob were wearing backpacks which were wonderfully suited for this adventure. Bob also had in tow a huge 70 pound suitcase on useless wheels with personal supplies and goodies for Rachel. This extra baggage was a logistical challenge for him until we finally delived it to Rachel's place a few days later. Rachel had anticipated this dilemma and had modified our itinerary to minimize our travel while we still enabling us to experience a stimulating cross section of Morocco. We checked into the Hotel Central Palace on an alleyway off a main pedestrian avenue which opened onto the Djemma El Fna. The location seemed perfect! We were famished and so Rachel lead us through what appeared to us to be a maze of narrow passageways to a nondescript small door. Rachel beckoned us to enter yet another narrow hallway which opened to a quaint collection of sitting rooms. This, we were told, was the Earth Café. To Rachel's best knowledge, this is the only vegan/vegetarian restaurant in Kech. We were invited to select a room in which to dine. As we walked up a narrow flight of stairs, Bob lost my balance and accidentally kicked over and broke a clay vase. Bob felt like the proverbial "bull in a china shop". Rachel decided we should retreat down the staircase and sit in another small room which had just one table. The owner told Rachel that Bob would not have to pay for the damage, which was good news to me since Bob had no idea whether or not he had broken some valuable antique vessel. Lunch was both delicious and reinvigorating. Now that we had our second wind, Rachel lead us out and through mysterious and intriguing pathways past a varied assortment of souks, stalls and shops. We stopped to sample and purchase olives. At



another carpet souk, we were graciously invited to drink delicious mint tea and then shown a dazzling array of carpets of all colors, materials and shapes -- histories and craftsmanship. We finally declined to make a purchase and our "sales representative", who had spent easily an hour with us, exhibited no hard feelings. At another souk, we sampled natural perfumes, including musk and gazelle gland scent.

It was now dinner time and Rachel somehow was able to lead us back through the cave like interconnecting passageways to the large Djemma El Fna main square. There we "ran the gauntlet" through overly eager restaurant skills; each claiming that the food at their open air stall was the very best. Cindy kept stopping because she was intent on being polite. Rachel and Bob had to literally pull her away from the clutches of pushy restaurateurs. We collectively decided that Stall 41 had the best selection for us. In fact we ate there on two successive evenings. Our dinner consisted of Tangia [a super tender and slowly cooked meat dish], Meat Tagine [also slowly cooked but not quite as long as Tangia], Vegetable Tagine, bread with mixed olives, Harisha [chile dipping sauce]. Tomato Dipping Sauce, Orangea [like orange soda] and Coke [much sweeter than its American counterpart]. We declared the dinner a great success, and then proceeded across the square to the "Ice Legends" shop for delicious double dip ice cream wrapped in waffled sugar cones. We returned to our hotel room at 9 AM and talked about our exciting day. We turned in around 11 PM

Sunday 15 November 2009

We arose and had breakfast at the "Juice Place" on Djemma El Fna. Our breakfast consisted of Omelettes with bread, apricot jam and butter, "nos nos" [half and half coffee and milk], freshly squeezed OJ, and misimmon (a fried bread with oil). At noon we took a taxi out of old walled section of the city to "Majorelle Gardens", home of the late fashion designer Yves St. Laurent. The gardens and grounds were beautifully laid out in a well designed but peaceful setting. Then we walked to "Artisana", a government overseen collective of artisan cooperatives. We purchased "oiseau" a brass bird for Cindy's mother. The artisan, who was appreciative of our convivial conversation, gave Rachel a gift of the "hand of Fatima." We walked home stopping at the "Ice Legend" ice cream parlor. We then entered the "Melah," the old marketplace of souks; asking for directions along the way at various "hanuts". Storks stood sentry over the ancient gates to the Melah. As we traveled through the narrow streets adjoining the old city wall, we were ushered into an herbalist shop where we were presented with an array of fragrances. The herbalist also had us snort the herbal equivalent of "Vics Vapor Rub"; which was somewhat shocking to the system. However, the entire interactive experience was very pleasant. We purchased Argon oil made from nuts which grow on Argon trees. These are the indigenous trees in which the goats climb, eat the nuts and then spit them out. (The nuts eaten by the goats cannot be used to make the oil). We also purchased "Rasel Hanut", which includes 35 spices; thus assuring its user to be anointed "chef par excellence". We then bought Rachel a gift of orange oil. The herbalist then lead outside where he spoke with the same man who had ushered us into the shop.

This man became our guide through a maze of back alleys which we never would have entered on our own. We had asked to go to the section of the Melah where ancient synagogues were located. We passed one ancient synagogue door, but would not have known its identity except our guide pointed out the six-pointed stars interlaced in the intricate pattern overlaying the entrance. We were told this synagogue was closed. We then traveled further into the maze past some young boys kicking a soccer ball. Then on our right was a plain door which opened into a large enclosed courtyard. Once

inside we realized that we were in a Melah Synagogue. There was a banner of Hebrew on tiles which ran across three of the courtyard walls. The courtyard was graced with fruit trees, gardens, sitting areas, three levels of apartments and old photos dating back 100 years along the courtyard walls. An old man who appeared to be dressed in a classic French style but was somewhat tattered, was described as the “Rabbi”. He appeared to speak only French and Arabic. He handed the keys to the synagogue door along the right side of the courtyard to a woman, who opened the ornate door for us. We then entered a beautifully adorned Sephardic synagogue, which appeared to be fully functional. Along the walls and shelves were a collection of Judaica, a metal tzedakah [donation] box, shofars [ram’s horns] and inscribed plaques. The altar was positioned slightly off-center and to the right front of the room. Rachel wanted to await the return of a woman who managed the facility. In response to our query, we learned visiting Israelis can stay in the adjoining rooms for free during their studies or visits. Earlier we had seen an Israeli television crew filming about the old Jewish Quarter or “Melah”. We were served tea as we waited and engaged in conversation with local residents. The woman did not return so we bid farewell and a young boy we had just met lead us to a bread oven across the way. The oven room had a low ceiling and we were encouraged to peer into a huge oven at the far end of the simple dirt floor room. Afterwards, with our young man guiding the way, we were led back to the ancient city wall. We said goodbye after giving him a tip. Rachel declared that she knew how to get us home. She was pleased to have learned more about the interconnecting city pathways.

On our way home we bought bananas, sodas and misimom bread for our anticipated guests. We planned to serve the bread with the assorted olives previously purchased atop the roof of our hotel, overlooking the mosque, minarets, the plaza and city. The upper view allowed us to both view and listen to the sights, sounds and smells of the food courts, street vendors, beggars, lights, music, prayers, and general evening excitement in Djemma El Fna. As the sun set, we dined with two of Rachel’s star students and best friends from Tinzouline, who are now living in Marrakech attending university. Meriem is the second of the three oldest daughters and Najwa is the youngest of the three oldest daughters. We enjoyed a delightful few hours getting to know each other. Rachel already had a Moroccan nickname: “Nisrine”. Bob was dubbed by them, “Badhr”; meaning “full moon”. Cindy was given the name “Sahar”; meaning “charming”. We showed each other photos, talked about our families, life’s experiences and hopes for the future. Meriem recently married to a 37 year old man from Baharain. Meriem is 21 years old and in her third and last year of college. She is majoring in English and will join her husband in Bahrain after she graduates next year. Najwa, age 19, is in her first year of college: majoring in English as well. She is interested in fashion design. We were honored to be told by them that we were their “American parents.” We told them that we considered them to be our Moroccan children. They professed their love and admiration for Rachel, whom they consider to be their sister. We learned new Arabic words and letters. Since we were deemed to be their progressive American parents, we were permitted to view a cell phone video taken by Najwa of Meriem belly dancing in classic garb. We were informed their real parents would never view this video. We were then flattered to hear that we were much younger looking than our true years. The sisters thought we were in our mid-forties. We presented two handmade packets of assorted gifts to the sisters and invited them to come to America and stay with us so we can show them New York City, Washington, DC and other sites near our residence in Wilmington, Delaware. After they left to return to campus, we went back to “Stall 41” for dinner. Our stall 41 hosts were pleased to see us return. One of the stall 41 captains was a singer and after dinner, Bob and he sang out loud to each other until Rachel suggested that our crooning end and we go home. After dinner we stopped at a confectionary shop and purchased a large assortment of Moroccan classic pastries and cookies.

Bob's favorites were dates and figs in honeyed pastries. Pastries and ice cream are considered too expensive for rural Moroccans and are not even available for residents of Rachel's province, Zagora. We retired at 11 PM.

Random observations about our time in Casa: Rachel advised us that we would be assessed a contribution if caught photographing local. Thus, from a distance I videoed a snake charmer. Five times each day loud speakers announce the call to prayer. Men engage in their favorite sport everywhere: "babe watching." Most locals are modestly attired, so that western garbed women in tight jeans and low cut blouses or form fitting tee shirts, occupy the stares of Kechi men, young and old. Rachel scolded a street urchin for brazenly demanding a pastry and refusing to retreat. Rachel was always cognizant of her mission as a roving ambassador in souk stalls and elsewhere; and we naturally enjoyed assisting her. We have received compliments on our friendliness and warmth.

Monday 16 November 2009

Rachel has sorted gifts and determined who should receive each. Cindy and Rachel packed each pile into the handmade satchels. We arose and had breakfast at "Café Toubkal"; a popular Peace Corps haunt, in the Djemma El Fna. Cheese and herb omelets, tea and honeyed misimon bread filled us as we fought off swarming bees. Bob checked emails from the hotel and then we packed and negotiated a price with the 3rd taxi we approached to transport us to the bus station. We checked our large suitcase at the bus station and retreated to a nearby café where we drank coffee and tea, while we awaited the appointed hour for our departure. Bob utilized the time to update our diary. Bob entertains all with his conversational Arabic broken phrases, earning smiles when attempting to engage anyone in conversation. We travel by bus to Essaouira [pronounced "Esweera"], a delightful Atlantic Ocean resort, reminiscent of Marrakech decades ago, before being over-run by hippies and tourists. A 3 hour bus ride started at 2:45 PM and ended at 6:45PM when our bus pulled into Essaouira bus station. We were accosted by young men who wanted to carry our luggage. We "ran the gauntlet"; saying no to all and walked with the luggage in tow to what appeared to be the resort town center. We noticed how much cleaner the streets appeared than in Casa. Tourists mixed with locals in a much more casual and laid back environment along the main pedestrian way, lined with the ancient city wall and old and new buildings. A young man engaged Rachel in conversation and recommended a hotel that Rachel recalled being highly touted in the AAA guidebook. We followed him through a series of narrow pathways, which seemed to be both safe and enticing.

At last, we entered a nondescript entrance to Hotel Riad Tahraouia, located at 31, Rue Agadir 44.100 PH: 024:472-957. I waited downstairs with the luggage while Rachel and Cindy inspected the room. After paying 300 Moroccan Dirham (\$40/nite) in Casablanca, we hoped to pay the same. We were pleased to learn that, for the same price, we were able to rent a beautiful 3 room suite, with 2 bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom, on the 2nd floor, for the same price. The French and Arabic speaking family who owned the hotel were warm and friendly. Meriem, one of four sisters, lead us to a quaint and charming French restaurant, "El Yakout", with tile inlaid walls. We dined on fish, chicken and vegetable main dishes with mint tea and sweets for dessert. Near the end of dinner, Rachel received a disturbing phone call – one of her Peace Corps friends had suddenly passed away in a Marrakech hospital this afternoon. We got lost on our way back to the hotel. We befriended a French speaking man on a bike, who helped us find our hotel. While Cindy and I engaged in conversation in broken French and English, Rachel dashed off to a nearby "Cyber" (internet café) to communicate with all other Moroccan friends about their mutual friend's sudden death.

**Tuesday 17 November 2009**

**Our hotel has a roof top balcony which we visited; taking in the seascape and city views. We then began our exploration of seaside Essaouira. The mellow atmosphere, narrow winding streets lined with colorful shops, white-washed houses and heavy wooden doors make it a wonderful place to stroll.**

**Near our hotel, Hotel Riad Nakhla seemed inviting. The fountain in the courtyard beckoned us to enter. Friendly staff invited us to look around. The rooms were well appointed. We climbed to the roof top balcony and restaurant, where we engaged in conversation with a friendly young female staff member. Afterwards we sauntered along shop lined narrow pedestrian courtyards and pathways. We stopped regularly to engage in conversation and occasionally purchase items. Breakfast consisted of cheese and ham crepes. After further exploration, we sat down at the outdoor “Café Pizzeria Le glacier”, strategically located at a busy pedestrian crossway and treated ourselves to coffee (Nos-Nos) and Moroccan tea, while enjoying a trio of musicians playing traditional instruments. Afterwards, Cindy purchased a Juniper carved camel. I bought two CD’s featuring “Tinariwen”, a world famous Moroccan group which blends traditional sounds occasionally with other musical styles. Rachel downloaded the music to her laptop. Many tourists have discovered this town. We visited a hotel owned by “Susanna”, an ex-patriot from Zimbabwe, which was magnificently decorated and appointed. The roof top had a majestic view of the ocean.**

**We found our way to Skala du Port, the harbor, and the seaside fish market. The port offered a post card like view of the walled medina, looking through a curtain of swirling seagulls. Fishermen cleaned fish while the sea gulls fed on the entrails. Rachel began to negotiate for the purchase of fresh fish to take to a restaurant for dinner but decided against the purchase. The whole working port appeared to be a bustling place with plenty of activity. Along with boats, large and small, were fishing nets awaiting repair or use. As we left the fish market area, we spoke with and eventually purchased Argon Oil from the Women’s Cooperative, a wholly female owned business.**

**Rachel went to the internet café while Cindy and Bob explored the “Skala De La Kasbah” – the old military escarpment which protected the perimeter of the town from seaside attack. Cannons still were poised ready to defend. The town’s walled medina is well preserved. It’s 18th century fortified layout is constructed in the classic European style. The old wall is intertwined with buildings throughout the seaside town.**

**Descending from the elevated fortress walls, Cindy and Bob entered a cave-like pathway which connected back to where we had been earlier in the day. Inside the wall we spoke with male artisans who displayed their paintings, leather work, costumes, weapons, jewelry, musical instruments, carpets and Berber art. Their business is named “Cooperative Artisanate des Marqueteur, Sur Bois de Thuya.” A representative explained the signs and symbols used by various regional craftspeople.**

**Evening prayers called while we were walking back to our hotel room to await Rachel’s return from the cyber café. The evening featured dinner at Le Mechouar Hotel Restaurant, a Moroccan restaurant which was great fun. We sat next to 6 young co-workers from France who were on holiday, who shared their experiences with us. The Berber band was a trio consisting of a 3 string guitarist, a small cymbal performer who wore his instruments on both hands [who also was the lead singer] and a**



drummer. Bob danced with other patrons and then sang with the band. Bob danced in a circle with the band leader and other patrons; then “conga-line danced” through the restaurant. Bob then taught a modern Moroccan young woman from Marrakech to Cha-Cha, Disco and Jitterbug to the traditional music. We finished the evening by buying pastries at the same shop where we had purchased crepes from breakfast. We ate a few in our hotel suite, talked with the hotel owners and planned the timing of our departure tomorrow – after our local cooking school class—before we leave Essaouira – to return for one day to Marrakech. Cats are everywhere. At the end of the day, we saw an old man slowly pushing his cart through the town, feeding them fish entrails.

Wednesday 18 November 2009

This morning, the featured event is our Moroccan cooking class, starting at 10:30AM at L’Atelier Madada, near the entrance of the Medina (Bab Sbaa) in the street in front of the Police Station. We learned how to prepare a Zaalouk and a Lamb Tajine with almonds and dates. The class was taught in English. There was an after class market tour, which we had to skip in order to make our connecting bus back to Kech. See [www.lateliermadada.com](http://www.lateliermadada.com). Before class, Bob walked along the Atlantic Ocean on a broad sidewalk watching soccer games and people strolling on the sands and sidewalk. After our cooking class, we were graciously assisted to the bus depot by the hotel owner. The three hour bus ride took us past a few camels, argon groves and goats eating nuts from these trees. When we arrived back in Marrakech, we checked in at the same hotel we stayed at previously. While Rachel went to the cyber, Cindy and Bob ate dinner, strolled, ordered double dip ice cream cones and checked emails. Tomorrow we arise at 5:30AM for our day long journey to Tinzouline.

Thursday 19 November 2009

The journey to Rachel’s home in Tinzouline was long but there were many scenic highlights. The first leg was a taxi to the Marrakech bus terminal followed by a CTM bus to Ouarzazate, and culminating in a taxi to Rachel’s front door. [The other bus options are “Supratours” or a Souk bus.] The journey started at 5:30 AM and ended at around 3 PM. Rachel told us that we had been fortunate in making all our planned connections and that we had traveled the distance in good time. On the way, we traversed over the scenic Atlas Mountains and the Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass, passing through many small mountain villages, and then through Ouarzazate and Agdz. Our mountain village rest stop was scenic.

At Ouarzazate, we got off the bus. Rachel selected and negotiated with our taxi driver. Taxi cab drivers have all been friendly but selecting the “right cabbie” is a special talent which Rachel has mastered. She selects the cabbie after evaluating their price demands and general aura. Bob’s back is in pain after lugging his backpack along with a 65 pound suitcase in tow. When we arrived at Rachel’s front door, our last obstacle was to carry the luggage up the narrow staircase and plop the luggage and ourselves onto the beautifully carpeted “living room” floor. We got a quick house tour and then unpacked the American goodies through out the apartment. We met fellow Peace Corps volunteer Nicole, Rachel’s next door neighbor, who had to leave soon to go to the funeral of the Peace Corps volunteer in Rabat; a long one day trip or two day trip. Then we were visited by Marissa, another Peace Corps volunteer from Zagora, who was also on her way to the funeral, but would arrive a day later, after spending the night with us. We were also greeted by Nicole’s kitty, whose name is “MoMo”. Rachel prepared a delicious dinner: veggies with spices and rice; utilizing whatever was in her pantry.

Friday 20 November 2009

We were awakened our first morning in Tinzouline by donkeys, roosters and the call to prayer. Cindy and Bob slept in Rachel's apartment while Rachel and Marissa slept in Nicole's flat. Marissa departed early and we enjoyed a leisurely morning at home. Rachel connected to the external hard drive that her sister Ellen had purchased for her. Rachel prepared Maxwell House coffee for us which we had brought for her from home. Bob checked my email for only the 3rd time since we arrived. At 11 am we strolled down the main road in Tinzouline. We "Americans" seemed to be a curiosity for all young and old. Rachel instructed us as to proper protocols: Don't speak with strangers unless Rachel introduces us. Don't take photos of people unless we have spoken for awhile and asked for permission and more. Rachel introduced us to café owners and other acquaintances of hers. Some residents engaged us in conversation. Bob's 20 phrases and words in Arabic were a big hit.

Zakia, the 23 year old eldest sister of Rachel's local "family" invited us to her home. She was caring for her 6 younger brothers and sisters. We walked across a dusty field and a dry creek bed to enter her home, which consisted of a courtyard and one room adjoining each side of the courtyard. Although there are no window screens, toilets or other modern amenities, except for a TV in another room, we immediately felt welcome and comfortable. Zakia was a gracious hostess; serving us tea, cookies, peanuts and delicious dates picked from her backyard. Zakia spoke fluent English as did her two younger sisters. She showed us her intricate and beautiful embroidery project that she has worked on for months: a bedspread and pillow covers. She recently married a man from a nearby town but they do not yet live together. Zakia was fasting today, so she was tired. When we were leaving, she asked her brothers and sisters to pack us a large plastic bag of local dates. We were very appreciative. On our way home, we again stopped at the café for glasses of avocado juice – our 1st time – yum! We bought fresh eggs, carrots and bananas on our way home, along with Coca Cola made with real sugar, rather than high fructose corn syrup. Also on the way home, Rachel had stopped to respond to a number of students who spoke to her in English. Rachel invited one girl to her all girls Saturday gathering in her apartment.

We devoured a late lunch of white beans that Rachel had soaked overnight, mixed with tomato salad, finishing at around 3 PM, as afternoon prayers were ending. We enjoyed playing with the cute Mo Mo, who demanded our willing attention. Rachel transferred the Tinariwen music CD's to her laptop: Berber/Tuareg music fused with modern touches--sort of African folk rock sound. Then we took a taxi to Zagora, where we transferred to a second cab to Tamegroute, a desert town with a rich history and obvious infrastructure investment for tourism. Our taxi ride took us past groves of palm, called "Palmeraie".

South of Zagora, we reached Tamegroute, about 18 KM south of Zagora. The Sahara Desert sands appeared to be overtaking the town. We visited the famous ancient library, with a collection of scholarly books dating back to the year 1063. The prophet Mohammed died in 749 and the rare book collection has great historic significance. The library was established in the 1700's. Some of the books are written on gazelle hides. The collection includes early editions of the Koran, dictionaries, astrological works, along with tomes on biology, botanical medicine, poetry and literature. Some are from Andalusia, Turkey, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The 82 year old senior librarian was our tour guide and answered all of Rachel and our questions in Arabic, while sprinkling in a few words of English. Rachel then took us to the pottery factory next door. A young 16 year old boy named Nordine demonstrated the ancient art of pottery, which requires the operator to place his lower torso in a hole

and pedal in order to turn the pottery wheel. The pottery is molded by hand and then baked in a kiln at 1000 degrees; after which it turns green. Colors are then added and ultimately the clay is transformed into tiles. We then returned to Tinzouline by double taxi ride again. In Zagora, we bought fresh vegetables to cook for dinner. This is the zenith of the fresh veggies season; a virtual mélange!

**Saturday 21 November 2009**

Waking again on our second morning in Tinzouline after a restful sleep, Bob arose before Cindy and Rachel to wash and enjoy the morning. Bob “showered” by the kitchen sink. Bob then took his socks to the roof top to dry. Looking around, Bob saw students, workmen and women carrying their loads on their heads. Construction is taking place next door. On his way down to Rachel’s apartment on the 2nd floor, he met two housewives, Rajae and Meriem, speaking to each other in the doorway of their respective apartments. Both are married; neither work. Rajae spoke first to Bob in English. She was talkative. She told Bob that she studied English in college and she had worked in a private school for a while but her husband now preferred that she not work. She spoke highly of Rachel, assuming I was her father. I spoke to both in Arabic and English. This pleased them both. Rajae invited us to come to her home for a meal and wanted to know how long we would be staying. Bob had to decline. Bob then accompanied Rachel as they walked to a nearby bakery to purchase just baked and still warm bread. Rachel’s breakfast was wonderful. Cindy and Bob assisted in preparing Eggs Benedict, along with fresh pomegranate, yogurt and coffee. After breakfast, Rachel transferred hundreds of Moroccan photos from Bob’s camera to her Apple computer, which she will edit later.

We walked via the neighborhood paths to Rachel’s Tinzouline host family. Kbirra, Rachel’s host mom, greeted us at the door. She was most gracious. We were invited to a sitting room which had many homey amenities. Precocious Asya, age 4, was full of personality and energy. Mish Mish, their cat, was also a center of attention. Asya made animal sounds and imitated different animals, to entertain us. Bob responded with animal noises and faces to entertain Asya, which made her laugh. Kbirra served us tea, followed by chicken cous cous and then fruit. Asya assisted each of us in washing our hands with a portable hand washing station. Bujma, Rachel’s host father, stopped in to say hello and then retreated to his lavish parlor, reportedly to watch television and smoke. He is a retired nurse who is in his mid-sixties. Samira, Rachel’s host sister, visited briefly to say hello but could not stay, as this was her weekend to work at the town pharmacy, as a pharmacist assistant. Cindy asked Kbirra for the recipe for the cous cous. Kbirra told Cindy, via Rachel’s translation, that next time [insha-allah] Cindy would come early before the meal to learn how to prepare the dish. We exchanged gifts. Asya wore her gift as a satchel around her wrist and played with the chap stick and hand wash. She slowly ate one piece of chocolate. Kbirra gave us a gift of soap in a decorative holder, 3 pomegranates and 2 bags of freshly ground henna. Cindy later gave one of the bags of henna and fruit to Rachel. The other henna bag will be one of our gifts to Ellen. After lunch, we toured the spacious home, which Rachel informed was considered upper middle class for Tinzouline. Then we enjoyed a brief visit with Sabira at the pharmacy on our way home to Rachel’s apartment.

We walked home passing many of Rachel’s students and young friends, who all wanted to chat. Zeneb, Fadua, Iptisam and Meriem all stopped us on the road to speak. Rachel gave gifts to all, telling each that there were gifts from us. We then packed and walked to the town center where Rachel negotiated our cab fare to Ouarzazate. The cab driver kept picking up and dropping off fares. At one point we had 12 people in the cab – 10 adults and 2 babies. After a perilous trip through the mountains, we arrived in Ouarzazate just as the cab driver finished the trip by striking a motor

scooter and its driver; knocking both to the ground. Although plastic shards from the cycle flew in all directions, after a few minutes the cyclist and cabbie parted amicably with no one apparently unhappy or hurt. This appeared to be most unusual to us.

Rachel then ushered us into the Ouarzazate town plaza – large, modern, clean and filled with people – socializing, strolling, playing soccer, drinking coffee, chatting and smoking. It was a wonderful scene to behold. The whole scene spoke to us saying “chill out”. Many travel agencies advertised trips to the sand dunes adjacent to M’Hamid. We checked into “Bab Sahara Hotel”, located right on the square. For 180 Moroccan Dirham or \$30, we were able to book what appeared to be the hotel’s nicest room. The spacious room with three beds featured its own bathroom with a shower curtain and toilet. The room featured one of the hotel’s few decks, which from the hotel’s 2nd floor gave us a spectacular view of the town plaza as the sun set and the night darkness brought even greater activity to the lighted pedestrian plaza. For 400 dirham, we booked a town tour with a taxi pick up at 9 AM and a return to the hotel at 1 PM; after which the same taxi driver transported us to the Ouarzazate airport for our flight to Casablanca. We then strolled the plaza. We went to dinner at a Moroccan restaurant which featured delicious cheeseburgers with bread on the side. Bob selected a burger featuring egg and onion which he loved. All dishes were served with home fries, ketchup, mustard, rice and tomato on the side. For dessert, we walked to the Patisserie on the plaza and purchased delicious French pastries, which also served as our morning breakfast. The prices were much less than in America. We returned to our hotel room and chilled as we talked and listened to the wafting sounds of an Arabic drumming group as the musicians chanted and drummed in unison from across the town square. The music ended at around 10:45PM as we retired for the evening.

**Sunday 22 November 2009**

We awoke to another picture perfect day. Bob brought up a double order of Nos Nos (Coffee with milk and sugar) – very strong – to our hotel room. Breakfast in our room consisted of pastries purchased last evening from Boulangerie Patisserie Glacier Des Habouss on the town square. Bob took some photos from the main square and then we met our taxi driver for the day – Ahmed -- who spoke only a few words of English. Ahmed, who is 58 years old, showed us photo albums of his travels and his family. Our first stop was Atlas Studios/Hotel Oscar in Ouarzazate. For our studio tour, we joined a group of international students who were traveling together from Bulgaria, Mexico, Czech Republic and the Netherlands; but their common language was English. Our tour guide walked us through indoor and outdoor large movie sets where many classic movies were filmed – Babal, The Mummy Part II, the remake of the 10 Commandments – and noted some of the many famous actors who had performed and stayed here – Michael Douglas, Angelina Jolie, Russell Crowe (The Gladiator) and more.

Our next destination was the famous nearby Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah; but we stopped first at scenic mountain overlooks along the way. Mud constructed mountain villages, such as Tabourat, clung to the mountain slopes; some of which we passed through and some we saw off in the distance. The Kasbah was a sight to behold. A more “modern” village has grown up around this ancient Kasbah. Ait Ben Haddou was originally constructed in 1345 and was first inhabited by Berbers and Jews. The locals told us that the Moroccan Jewish community immigrated to Israel in the 1960’s. The Kasbah was added onto over the years. As many as 150 families once lived in this ancient mud “condo”. We crossed a shallow river on stepping stones in order to reach the entrance. We “hired” a local tour guide to show us the Kasbah. It has been repaired over the years. Families still live in sections of the



Kasbah. Most is dedicated to shops and tourists. Two little girls followed us for awhile when we arrived, and when we were leaving, we saw they were studying their French lessons. The mud and straw built Kasbah vibrated when we walked on its raised floors. Steep steps via narrow passageways lead to a multitude of different levels. Deep in the Kasbah, our guide lead us into a dark room which opened to an air vent above. In this small space was a young woman who was baking bread the ancient way – in a mud and clay oven. First she spread the dough and kneaded it. Then she placed it on a long handled baking tray and baked it in the kiln of fire. In just a few minutes, we were eating the most delicious warm fresh bread imaginable. Bob gave her a Moroccan dirham [about 18 cents] in appreciation for allowing us to take her photo and another 2 dirhams as a contribution for her gracious offer of fresh bread. We shared it with some other French tourists. We then climbed to the pinnacle, which gave us a panoramic view of the surrounding Kasbah and valley below. On our way back down, we stopped at a Kasbah store. Cindy negotiated two purchases for 250 Moroccan “D’s [about \$33 American dollars]. She bought a Berber necklace and a silver hand with a Jewish star, made by Moroccan Jews who had once lived there. The shop owner first asked for 550 “D’s”. Cindy first offered 200 “D’s”. The final price of 250 appeared to be a credit to Cindy’s skillful negotiations.

The taxi driver returned us to our hotel and on the way home said we would be welcome to come to his home to meet his family on our next trip- “In-Sha’Allah”- so typical of the warm and friendly Moroccans everywhere during our visit. When we reached the hotel, we were unable to purchase shawls as Cindy had hoped since Rachel’s favorite store in Ouarzazate [known for its set prices and no pressure] was closed for afternoon prayers. We did buy Rachel a bottle of rum and Bailey’s Irish Cream, which she greatly appreciated, as her salary does not afford her such luxuries. We gave her some cash as well, which she was reluctant to take but we insisted – noting that the libation and cash was our early birthday gift to her. On Dec. 4, she will celebrate her 26th birthday. The taxi driver, who had been waiting, took us to the local airport, only 10 minutes away, where we boarded our short flight to Casablanca. We had a 6 hour layover in Casa before our connecting flight to Frankfurt, Germany.

Wherever we went during our visit, Bob used his 20 phrases and words of Arabic that Rachel had taught him and it was always warmly appreciated. Cindy spoke fewer Arabic words, but also reached out to many in English as Rachel translated. Rachel said she appreciated our speaking in Arabic as it reflected well on America, on us and on her. She is an ambassador for our country and for Morocco, as well as a respected teacher and role model.

Our flight took us over beautiful mountains. The attendants were most gracious at the Ouarzazate Airport. The Maroc Air counter woman left her station twice to make certain that we boarded the correct flight. Rachel said to us as we left: “now you can better understand my life here and my mission.” Rachel was exhausted when we parted, as the travel combined with all the translation had sapped her of her energy. She said she was looking forward to spending some time alone in her apartment. Bob had also bought Rachel some ginger root which she had never been able to purchase before in Morocco. Rachel knows how to make ginger ale from “scratch” as she had done so before with friends. But now she could make her own. Rachel has been a wonderful hostess for us. Cindy will send Rachel the recipe to make rum mojitos. We now more greatly appreciate the context of her communications. I asked her to please report back to me how she fares on her offer to the Tinzouline Women’s Cooperative (making henna) on teaching the woman how to use the computer that they

proudly had displayed to us, as part of our tour of their local facility.

**Monday 23 November 2009 (10AM in Germany)**

We have flown from Ouarzazate to Casablanca where we have a 7 hour airport layover. Then we fly from Casablanca to Frankfurt, Germany with another 7 hour airport layover. We could not sleep and exhaustion has overtaking us. We long to be home. Cindy has been reading a book in the airport and Bob has been trying to lay on his back across two chairs in the busy noisy airport. Bob pulled a muscle in the right side of his lower back---again! It is very painful at times. He has been stretching and flexing using some of the yoga positions he has recently learned. We await the final 9 hour flight from Germany to Philadelphia Airport, where we will shuttle home. We have been awake for 20 hours with at least 15 more hours before we arrive home.

We have learned so much about Moroccan culture and the warmth of its people, some language skills, how to travel lightly out of back packs, how to be flexible in our travel plans to deal with unanticipated circumstances, how to crowd into small taxis and crowded buses and most importantly, how to better appreciate the skill that Rachel has developed to carrying out her mission as a Peace Corps volunteer.

***Photographs follow from the layover in Germany and the full trip to Morocco***

































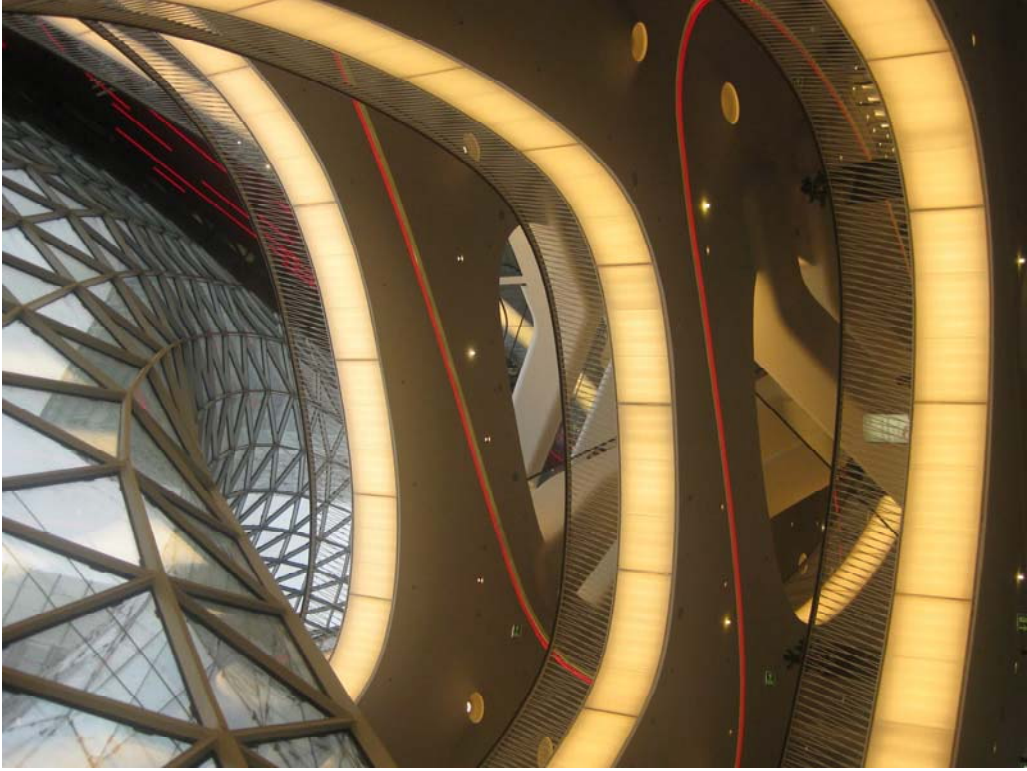


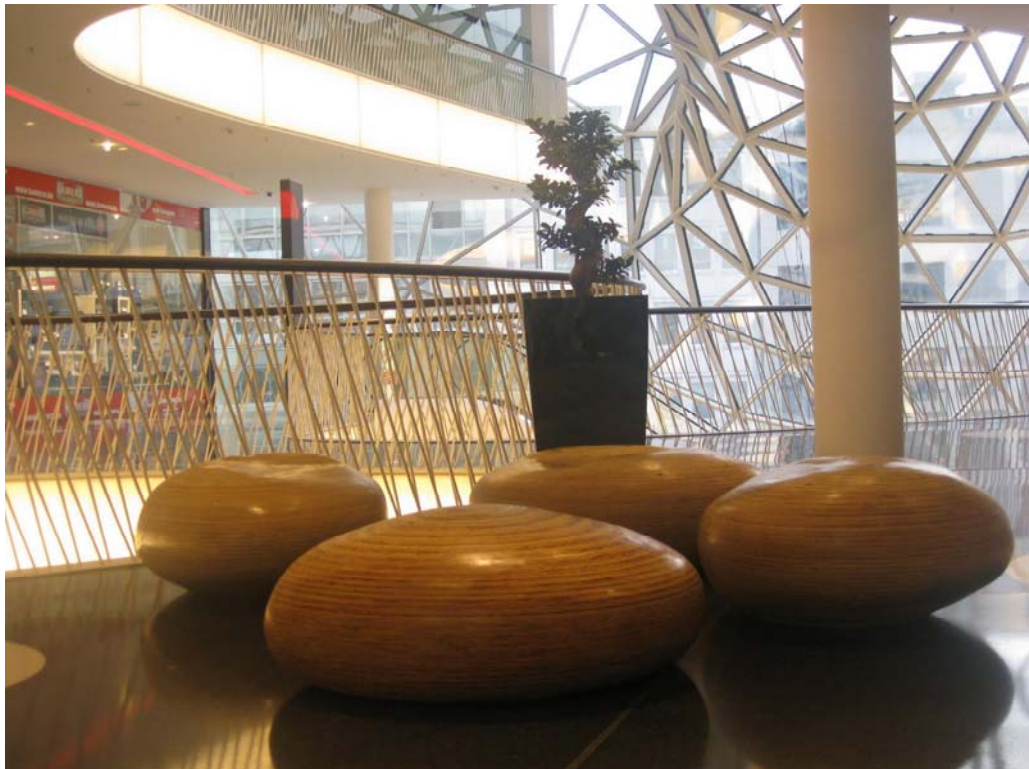




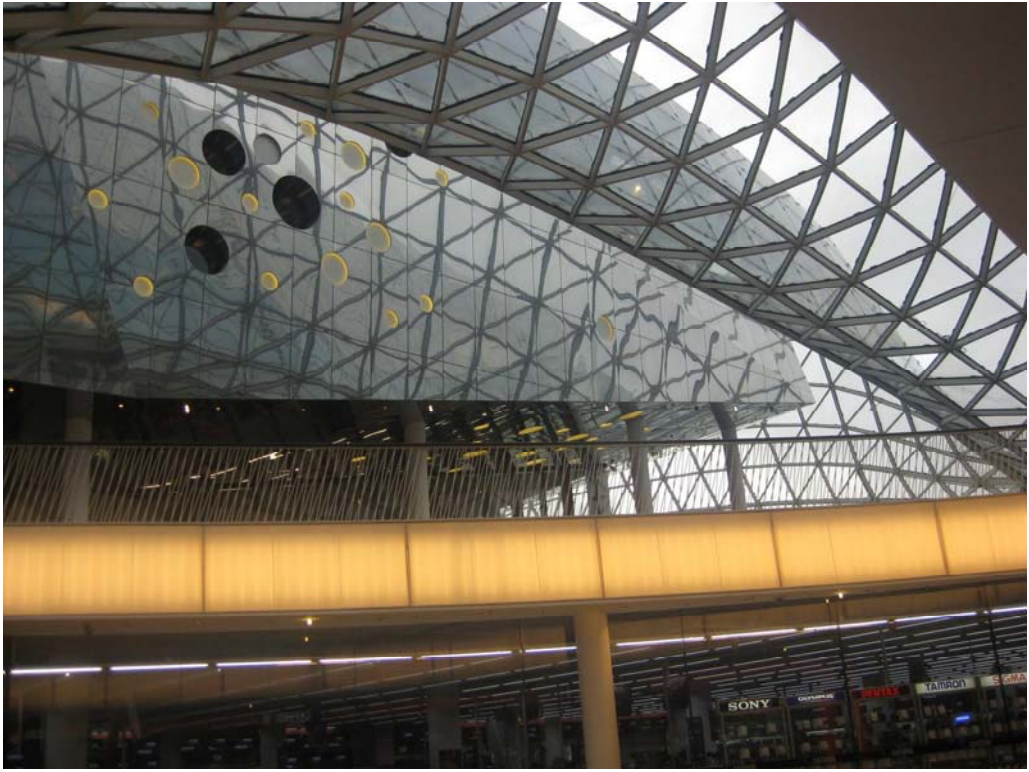






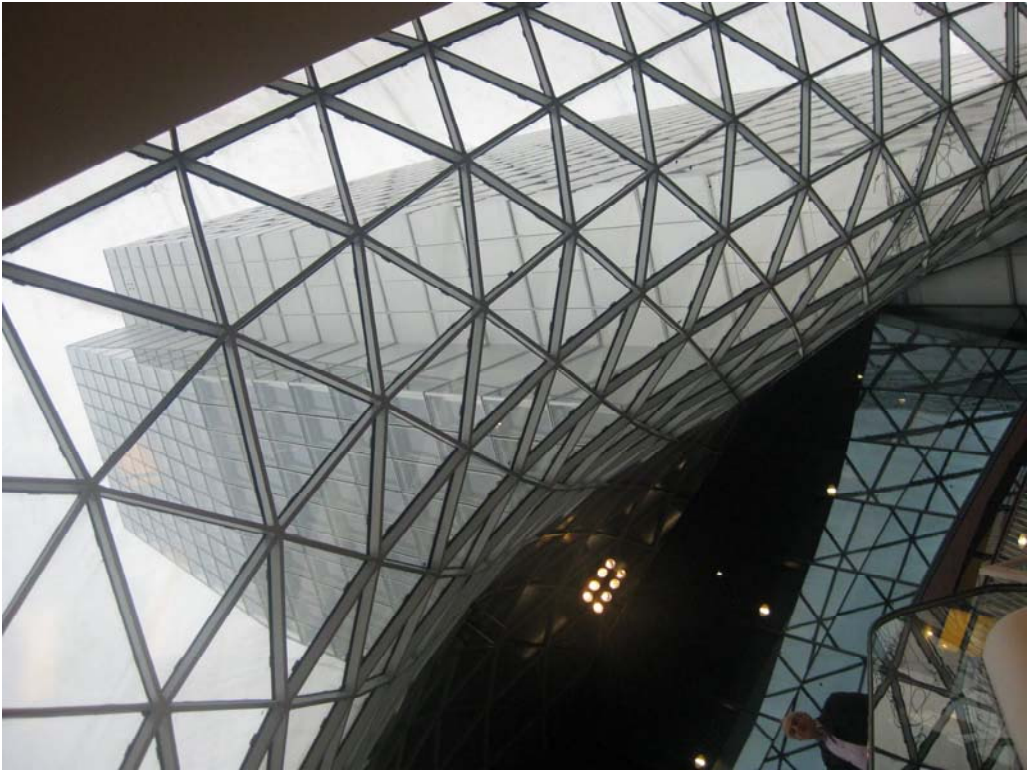




























**SCHWEDISCHE WOCHE**

7.-14. November 09

Mit verkaufs-offenem Sonntag, **8. November 2009**, 13 bis 19 Uhr

**Hauptwache:**  
Typisch schwedisches Flair mit faszinierenden Themenwelten

Kultur und Kulturgüter, Reiseziele, Brauchtum, Land und Leute, schwedische Produkte, kulinarische Köstlichkeiten und mitreißende künstlerische Inszenierungen

www.cityforum-prof Frankfurt.de





















































Casa Blanca Train Station as viewed from our Ibis Hotel room





Bob with backpack in front of Ibis Hotel, Casa Blanca-the Moroccan adventure begins!



Cindy with backpack-exiting "Marrakech Express" in Marrakech to meet Rachel



Walking to Marrakech Train Station Terminal to meet Rachel

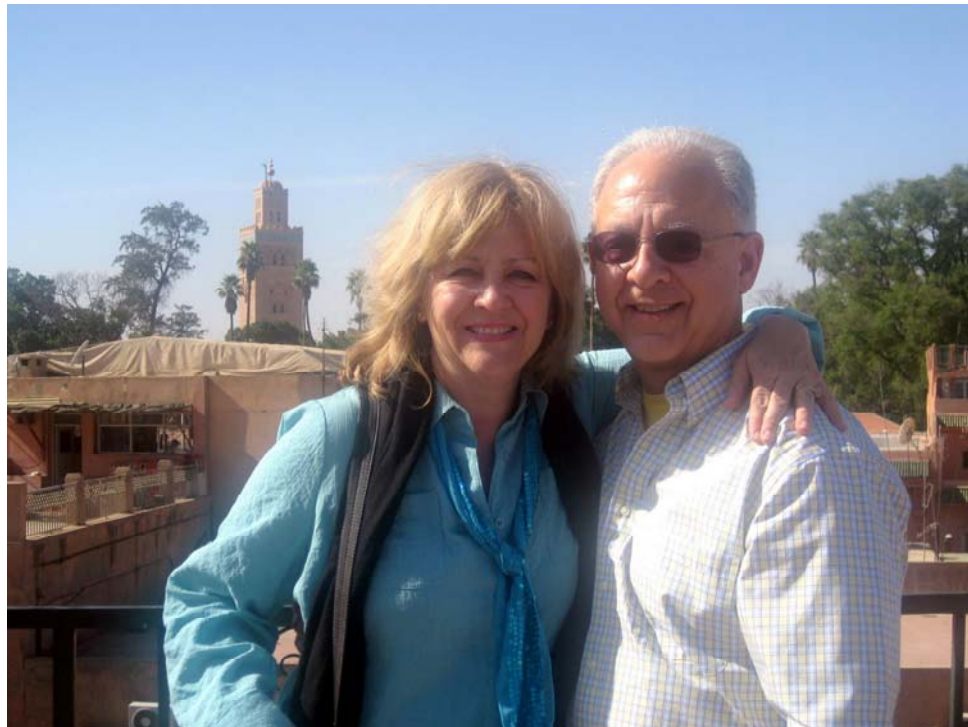


We arrive at our Hotel Central Palace room in Marrakech





Bob & Cindy atop our Hotel Central Palace roof in Marrakech



Hotel Central Palace rooftop view



Walking from our Hotel Central Palace to the Djemma El Fna Plaza in Marrakech



Marrakech Djemma El Fna Plaza shops





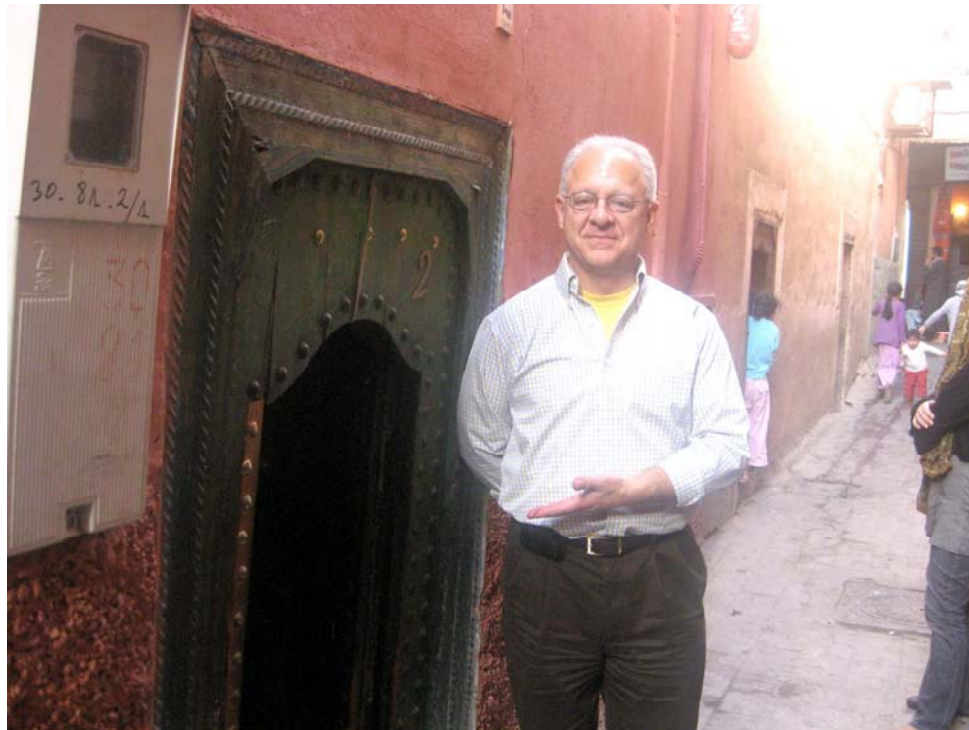


Lunch at Marrakech vegan/vegetarian Earth Cafe



Entrance way from small street to Earth Cafe





The nondescript Earth Cafe entrance, off the alleyway



Carriage rides on the Djemna El Fna



Late afternoon "nos nos" [half & half Moroccan coffee], on the Djemma El Fna square



a happy Cindy shopping in the market





An Olive Souk



Spice Souk





Weighing the spice purchase



Shopping for carpets after Moroccan tea





We are shown many beautiful carpets



So many choices!



Night time view of the Djemma El Fna Mosque



Dinner offered from many open air booths in the Djemma El Fna





Every restaurant calls us to "eat here". It is like "running the gauntlet"!



Marrakech Souk at night







Great dinner and happy diners!



Hotel Central Palace open air courtyard



We start our 2nd exciting day in Marrakech [15 Nov 2009]



morning stroll along road outside our hotel on the way to breakfast





Marrakech morning stroll outside our hotel 15  
Nov 2009



Breakfast at "Juice Place" off the Djemma El  
Fna: omelets with bread, apricot jam & butter,  
nos nos coffee, freshly squeezed OJ &  
Misimmon [fried bread in oil]



street advertisement



Some of the businesses near our hotel





Our hotel room - Hotel Central Palace



Hotel room amenities



Shower



Cindy overlooking hotel courtyard





Leaving the old city via taxi. View of ancient wall

**جمعية إنقاذ وإشعاع حديقة ماجوريل**  
 Association pour la Sauvegarde et le Rayonnement du  
**JARDIN MAJORELLE**  
 (Loi du 15 Nov. 58)

Entrée Jardin **30 Dhs**

**JARDIN MAJORELLE**  
 جمعية ماجوريل

Entrée Musée **15 Dhs**

Musée d'Art Marocain - Boutique - Café  
 Museum of Moroccan Art - Boutique - Cafe  
 متحف الفن المغربي - متجر - مقهى

Horaire des visites :  
 Ouvert tous les jours  
 Hiver : 1er Octobre au 30 Avril - 8H00 à 17H30  
 Été : 1er Mai au 30 Septembre - 8H00 à 18H00  
 Horaire du mois de Ramadan : 9H00 à 17H00

Visiting Hours :  
 Open every day  
 Winter : October 1st to April 30th - 8:00am to 5:30pm  
 Summer : May 1st to September 30th - 8:00am to 6:00pm  
 Special visiting hours for Ramadan : 9:00am to 5:00pm

أوقات الزيارة  
 مفتوح يوميا  
 الشتاء: من فاتح أكتوبر إلى 30 أبريل  
 من الثامنة صباحا إلى الخامسة والنصف مساء  
 الصيف: من فاتح ماي إلى 30 سبتمبر  
 من الثامنة صباحا إلى السادسة مساء  
 أوقات خاصة بشهر رمضان: من التاسعة صباحا إلى الخامسة مساء

Les enfants non accompagnés ne sont pas admis. Piques-niques et chiens interdits  
 Unaccompanied children are not admitted. Picnics & Dogs are prohibited



Jardin Majorelle: home of the late Yves St. Laurent



Gardens of Yves St. Laurent



















































Next we visit the Artisans Coop



Artisans Cooperative 15 Nov 2009



We purchased "Oiseau", a brass bird for Stella & artisan gave Rachel a gift of "the Hand of Fatima"





Artisier Animalier Sur Metaux



We leave the Artisans Coop



Entrance way to Artisans Coop







Marrakech Mosque Minarette



Marrakech Film Fest banner



Entrance to the Melah guarded by the storks 16 Nov 2009



Casa Blanca Melah entrance





Storks standing sentinel to the Melah Gates



Rachel leading us into the Melah



Casa Melah Mosque



more storks





Nid Cigogne--Stork Cafe Restaurant



Melah motor bikes/Busy street scene



Melah street scene 16 Nov 2009





Tour guide through the Melah



soccer in the pathways



narrow street



Closed Synagogue in the Meleh





Horse carriages by the covered garden in the Melah



Pharmacie El Malah



Melah Synagogue courtyard



Rabbi





Synagogue



Bimah







Pomegranate tree in Synagogue courtyard



another tour guide from Synagogue to bakery to city wall



sisters Najwa, age 19, Rachel, age 25 & Meriem, age 21



Cindy next to Orange tree in Marrakesh  
bus terminal Monday 16 Nov 2009





Unripe orange



pedestrians and dry river bed viewed from bus travelling  
from Casa Blanca to Essaouira Monday 16 Nov 2009



Donkey cart



traffic circle on the way to Essaouira





El Yakout Restaurant, Essaouira



El Yakout decorative mosaic tiles



El Yakout



Dinner at El Yakout





El Yakout pre fix menu



Restaurant archway



Shrimp with avocado



dates





Rachel's Fried Fish



Cindy's Chicken tagine



Bob's Fish tagine



Cindy with 3 of the 4 sisters whose family owns Hotel Riad Tahraouia on Rue Agadir in Essaouira





Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in  
Essaouira



Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



Essaouira main street





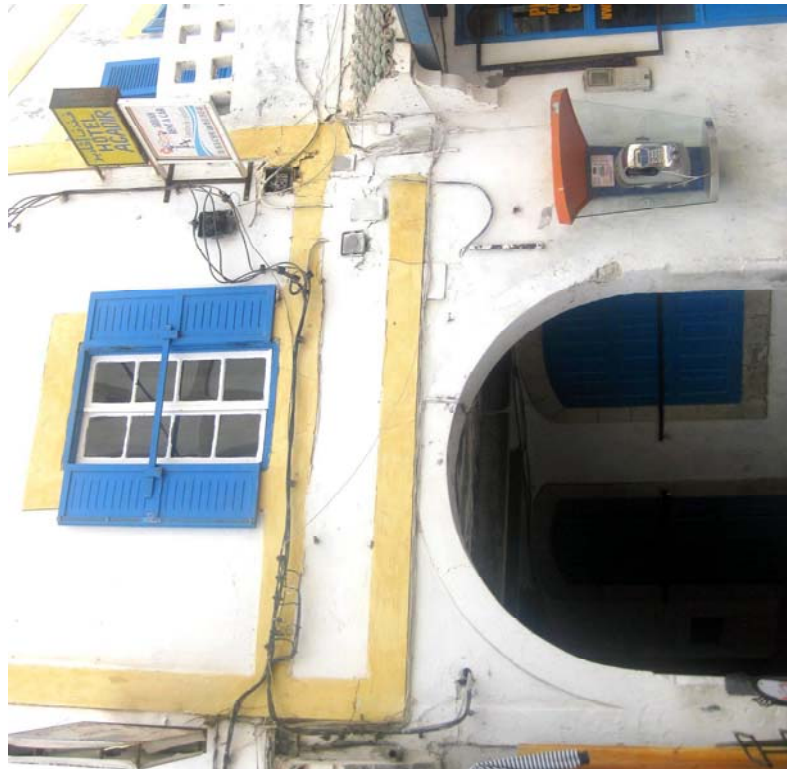
main street in Essaouira



Hanut selling Danon Yogurt and Coca cola



Hanuts along main street in Essaouira



entrance from main street to our hotel on Rue  
Agadir





old city wall crossing main street



Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



hotel interior courtyard





Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in  
Essaouira



view from roof atop Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in  
Essaouira



rooftop view from Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



rooftop view at Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira





birdseye view from roof of Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



birdseye from from roof of Hotel Riad Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



narrow entrance road below to Hotel Riad  
Tahraouia, 31 Rue Agadir in Essaouira



street cat companions





on the rooftop at Riad Nakhla Hotel, near our hotel



Essaouira



Breakfast turkey & cheese crepe



Essaouira





Cafe Pizzeria Le Glacier



Cafe Pizzeria Le Glacier



Cafe Pizzeria Le Glacier



Bob in busy market place





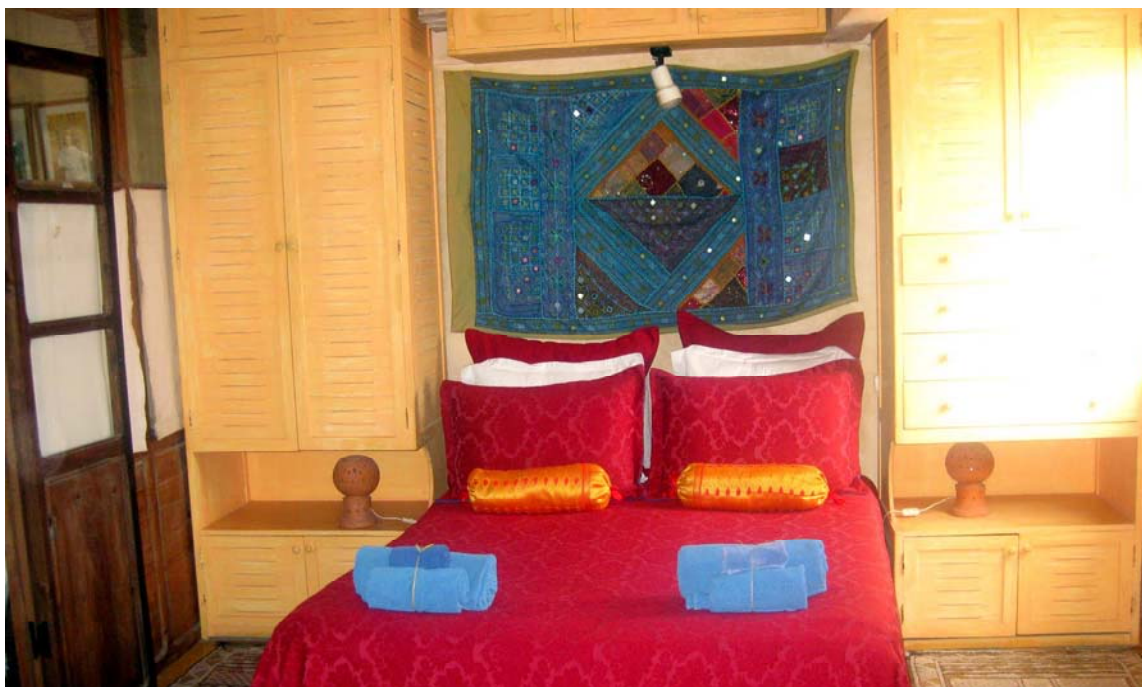
Cindy and Rachel enjoy shopping together



Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben Abdullah, Essaouira. Susanna's hotel, an ex-pat from Zimbabwe



200 year old family home, nestled in the walled medina:  
Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben Abdullah, Essaouira.  
Susanna's hotel, an ex-pat from Zimbabwe

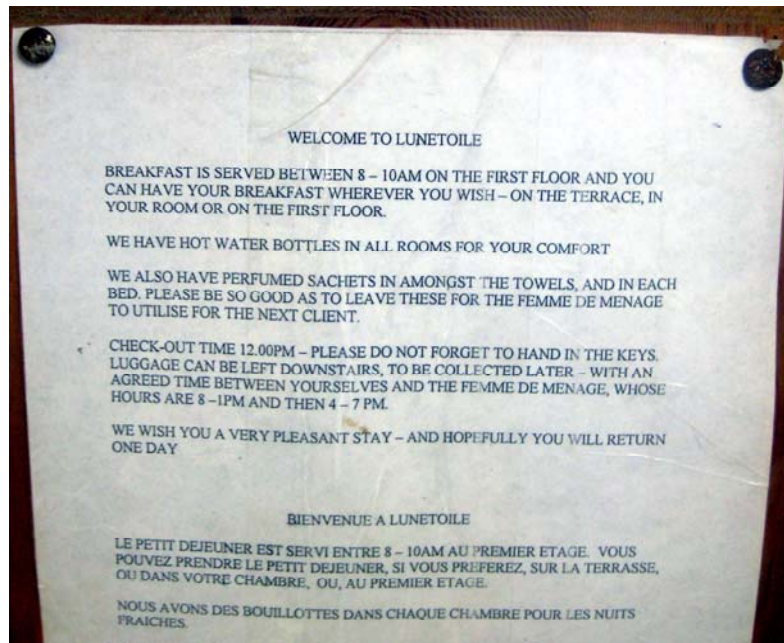


Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben Abdullah, Essaouira.  
Susanna's hotel, an ex-pat from Zimbabwe





roof top at Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben Abdullah, Essaouira. Susanna's hotel, an ex-pat from Zimbabwe



Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben Abdullah, Essaouira. Susanna's hotel, an ex-pat from Zimbabwe



Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben Abdullah, Essaouira. Susanna's hotel, an ex-pat from Zimbabwe



Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben Abdullah, Essaouira. Susanna's hotel, an ex-pat from Zimbabwe





Lunetoile, 191 Rue Sidi Mohamed, Ben  
Abdullah, Essaouira. Susanna's hotel, an  
ex-pat from Zimbabwe



open air meat hanouk



open air chicken hanouk



kittens





Le Mechouar Hotel Restaurant



Essaouira: outside the historic wall



on our way to the Skala du Port, the harbor



Skala du Port, the harbor





Skala du Port, the harbor



Skala du Port, the harbor



Skala du Port, the harbor



Skala du Port, the harbor





Skala du Port, the harbor



fishing nets and fishing boats at the Skala du Port, the harbor



fishing boats at Skala du Port, the harbor



Skala du Port, the harbor





fishermen at Skala du Port, the harbor



fish for sale at Skala du Port, the harbor



Rachel negotiates with fisherman at seaside fish market



seaside fish market view of city





sea scape



purchase of Argon Oil from the  
Women's Cooperative



purchase of Argon Oil from the Women's Cooperative



street cafe between fish market and Womens Coop

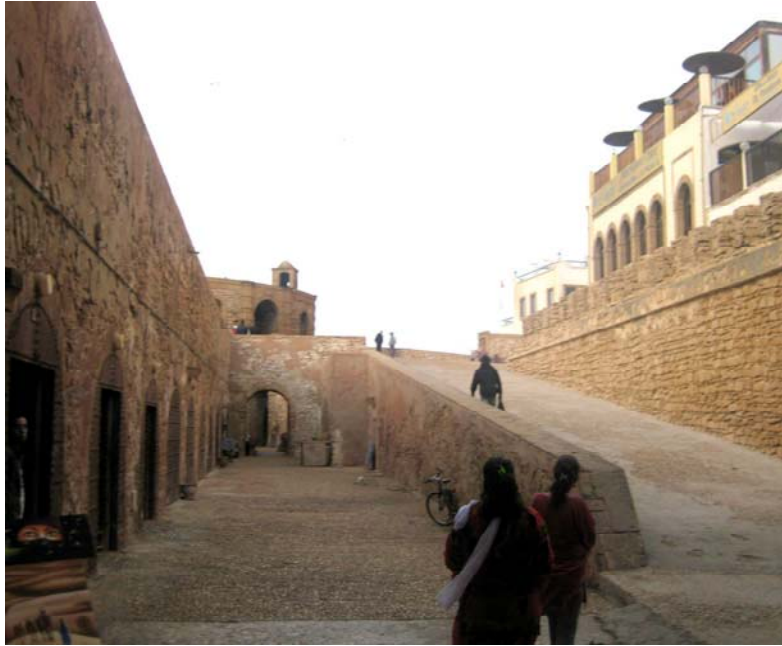




cuddling cats



“Skala De La Kasbah” – the old military escarpment which protected the perimeter of the town from seaside attack



“Skala De La Kasbah” – the old military escarpment which protected the perimeter of the town from seaside attack



atop “Skala De La Kasbah”





“Skala De La Kasbah”



“Skala De La Kasbah”



artisans selling their paintings, leather work, costumes, weapons, jewelry, musical instruments, carpets and Berber art



Cooperative Artisanate des Marqueteur, Sur Bois de Thura





fellow diners at Le Mechouar Hotel Restaurant



Le Mechouar Hotel Restaurant



map and ubiquitous photo of King



soccer on the beach in Essaouira





outside Essaouira wall



outside Essaouira wall



Place Orson Wells, a seafront square named in his honor of his 1952 adaptation of Othello filmed in Essaouira



cooking classes at L'Atelier Madada  
[www.lateliermadada.com](http://www.lateliermadada.com)





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cooking classes at L'Atelier Madada [www.lateliermadada.com](http://www.lateliermadada.com)



dining at L'Atelier Madada [www.lateliermadada.com](http://www.lateliermadada.com)





dining at our cooking classes at L'Atelier Madada  
[www.lateliermadada.com](http://www.lateliermadada.com)



Bob's first dish - dining at our cooking classes at  
L'Atelier Madada [www.lateliermadada.com](http://www.lateliermadada.com)



bus stop after leaving Essaouira



bus ride from Marrakech through Atlas Mountains and over Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass to Rachel's home in Tinzouline





bus ride from Marrakech through Atlas Mountains and over Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass to Rachel's home in Tinzouline



bus ride from Marrakech through Atlas Mountains and over Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass to Rachel's home in Tinzouline



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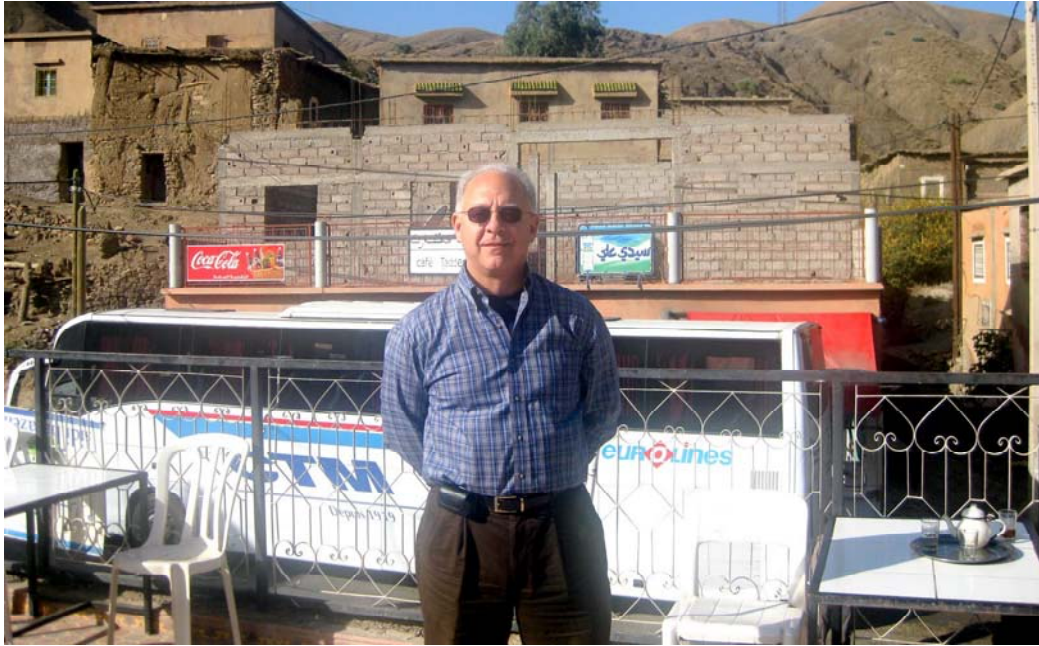




bus ride from Marrakech through Atlas Mountains and over Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass to Rachel's home in Tinzouline



bus stop in mountain village on the road from Marrakech through Atlas Mountains and over Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass to Rachel's home in Tinzouline



bus stop in mountain village on the road from Marrakech through Atlas Mountains and over Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass to Rachel's home in Tinzouline



on the road from Marrakech through Atlas Mountains and over Tizi-n-Tichka mountain pass to Rachel's home in Tinzouline





passing through Ouarzazate on the way to Tinzouline



passing through Ouarzazate on the way to Tinzouline



roadside camel



roadside camel





Rachel & Nicole



Rachel and Mu Mu



Rachel's bedroom



Rachel's bedroom







Rachel and Marissa, Peace Corps volunteer from Zagora

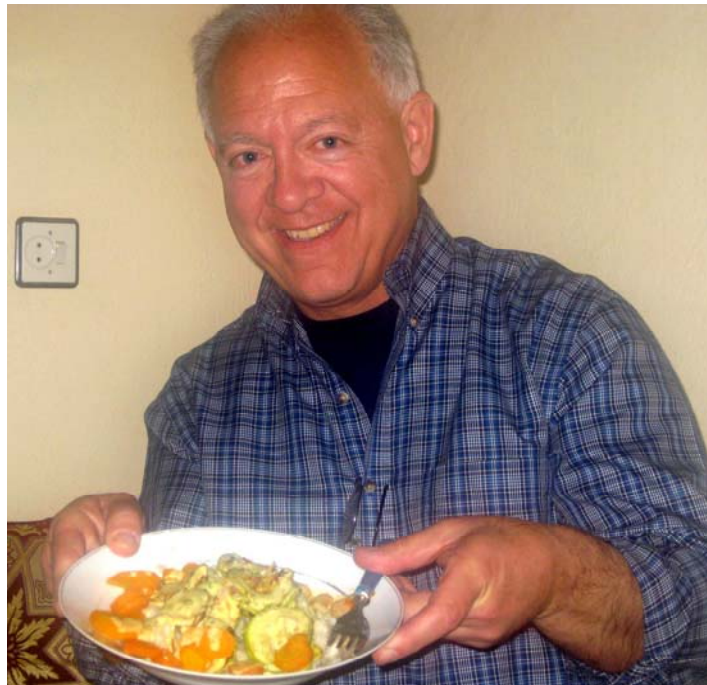


Rachel prepares delicious dinner: veggies with spices and rice





Rachel prepares delicious dinner: veggies  
with spices and rice



Rachel's delicious dinner: veggies with  
spices and rice



on the roof at Rachel's apartment



view from the roof at Rachel's apartment





view from the roof at Rachel's apartment



kasba in Tinzouline



Tinzouline Darshebab & Sports Building



Zakia, the 23 year old eldest sister of Rachel's local "family" invited us to her home





Zakia's intricate and beautiful embroidery project:  
bedspread & pillow cases



Zakia welcomes us to her home



Zakia welcomes us to her home serving fresh dates



Tinzouline Café avocado juice





We bought fresh eggs, carrots and bananas on our way home



Rachel's Tinzouline apartment in the foreground on second floor



playing with the cute Mo Mo



Mo Mo





late lunch of white beans that Rachel had soaked overnight, mixed with tomato salad



view from taxi to Zagora, where we transferred to a second cab to Tamegroute



view from taxi to Zagora, where we transferred to a second cab to Tamegroute



Tamegroute





16 year old boy named Nordine demonstrated the ancient art of pottery, which requires the operator to place his lower torso in a hole and pedal in order to turn the pottery wheel. The pottery...



16 year old boy named Nordine demonstrated the ancient art of pottery, which requires the operator to place his lower torso in a hole and pedal in order to turn the pottery wheel. The pottery is...



kiln at night



In Zagora, we bought fresh vegetables to cook for dinner. This is the zenith of the fresh veggies season; a virtual m elange! In Zagora, we bought fresh vegetables to cook for dinner. This is the zenith of the fresh veggies...





Bob took his socks to the roof top to dry



Looking around, Bob saw students, workmen and women carrying their loads on their heads. Construction is taking place next door.



view from the roof



Eggs Benedict, along with fresh bread, pomegranate, yogurt and coffee





Mo Mo on a pedestal



We walked via the neighborhood paths to Rachel's Tinzouline host family. Kbirra is Rachel's host mom.



We walked via the neighborhood paths to Rachel's Tinzouline host family.



We walked via the neighborhood paths to Rachel's Tinzouline host family, passing mud brick construction site.





We walked via the neighborhood paths to Rachel's Tinzouline host family. Kbir, Rachel's host mom, greeted us at the door



Rachel's Tinzouline host family. Acia is Kbir's granddaughter.



Kbira served us tea, followed by chicken cous cous and then fruit.



Rachel, Kbira and Acia





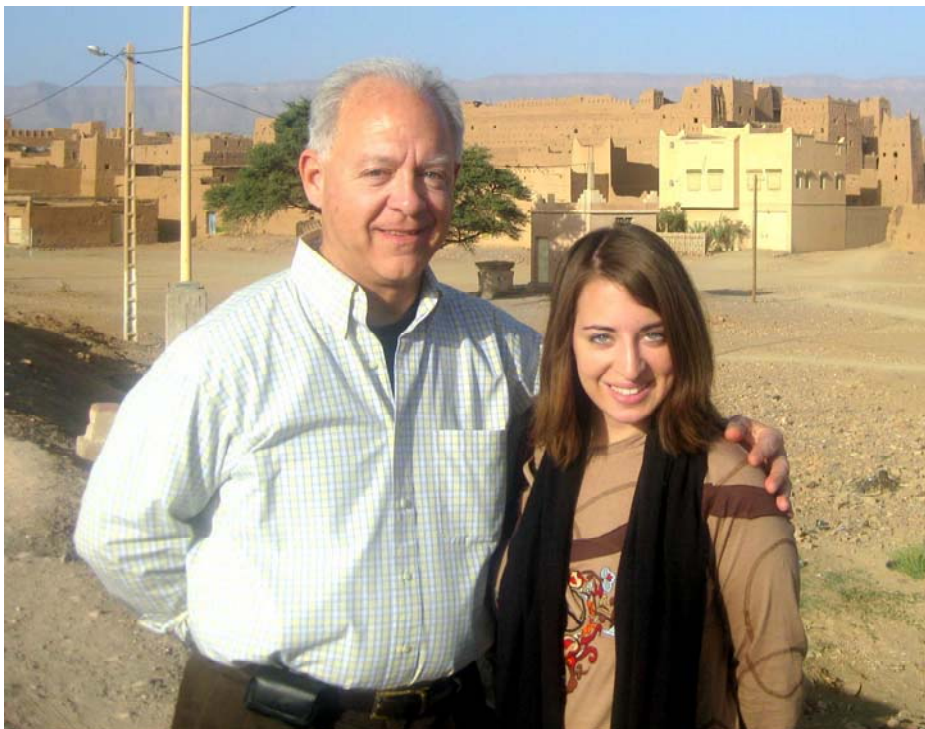
Cindy, Rachel, Kbir and Acia



Cindy, Kbir, Acia & Bob



visit with Sabira at the Tinzouline pharmacy



Bob & Rachel in Tinzouline in front of Kasbah





Bab Sahara Hotel, Ouarzazate



our 2nd floor view from Bab Sahara Hotel, Ouarzazate



view of main square from our 2nd floor room at the Bab Sahara Hotel, Ouarzazate



Bab Sahara Hotel, Ouarzazate





our room is at the end of the 2nd floor of the Bab Sahara Hotel, Ouarzazate



Bab Sahara Hotel, Ouarzazate



Boulangerie Patisserie Glacier, on Plaza in Ouarzazate



Ouarzazate Plaza





entrance to Atlas Studios, Ouarzazate



Ahmed, our taxi driver



Jewel of the Nile poster for movie starring Michael Douglas & Kathleen Turner



Jewel of the Nile movie prop

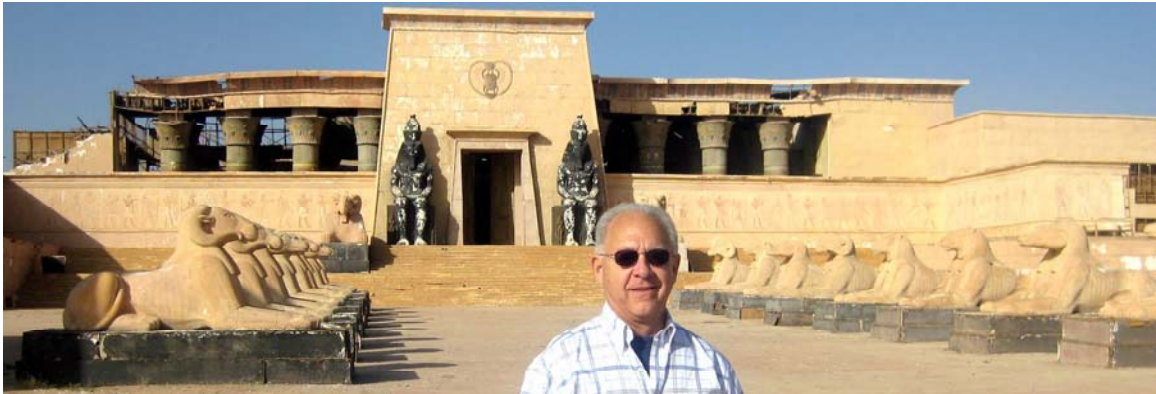




For our studio tour, we joined a group of international students who were travelling together from Bulgaria, Mexico, Czech Republic and the Netherlands



Jerusalem movie set



movie set



Luxor movie set





Luxor movie set



Atlas Studios/Hotel Oscar, Ouarzazate



Ahmed our taxi driver



Antique film camera





scenic mountain overlook along the way to Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



scenic stop on the way to Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



Ahmed holding lizard at scenic stop on the way to Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah





overlook on the way to Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



modern Ait Ben Haddou built next to Kasbah



snake salesmen





along the way to Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



along the way to Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



along the way to Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah

		<b>التعاون المغربي البلجيكي</b> <b>COOPERATION MAROC - BELGE</b> <b>MAROKKANSE - BELGISCHE SAMEN WERKING</b>			
<b>ROYAUME DU MAROC</b> <b>OFFICE NATIONAL D'EAU POTABLE</b>				<b>المملكة المغربية</b> <b>المكتب الوطني للماء الصالح للشرب</b>	
تزويد قصر ايت بن حادو بالماء الصالح للشرب و التطهير الصائل تغطية القنوات <b>TRAVAUX D'ALIMENTATION EN EAU POTABLE ET ASSAINISSEMENT</b> <b>LIQUIDE DU KSAR AIT BEN HADDOU</b> <b>LOT : CONDUITE</b>					
<b>MARCHE N°:</b>	923/DR2/2008	923/DR2/2008:	الصفحة رقم		
<b>MAITRE D'OUVRAGE:</b>	ONEP	المكتب الوطني للماء الصالح للشرب	صاحب المشروع		
<b>ENTREPRISE:</b>	AMANAR, SARL TRAVAUX DIVERS OU CONSTRUCTION CR TARMIGTE TIGMI LJADID BP:406 TEL./FAX: 024 88 22 88 OUARZAZATE	شركة امانار ش.م.م للأشغال المختلفة والبناء جماعة ترميكت تكمي الجديد صرب 406 الهاتف /الفاكس 024 88 22 88 ورزازات	المقاول		
<b>BUREAU D'ETUDE:</b>	CENTRE D'ETUDES TECHNIQUES INFORMATISE 125 LOT.DU CENTRE 3ème ETAGE APPT.N°:6 TEL: 024 88 42 56 / FAX: 024 88 42 54 OUARZAZATE	مركز الدراسات التقنية بالمعلومات 125 بحجرة المركز الطابق الثالث الشقة 6 الفاكس /الهاتف 024 88 42 54 ورزازات	مكتب الدراسات		
<b>DUREE DE REALISATION:</b>	5 MOIS	5 أشهر	مدة الاجاز		

Cooperation Maroc-Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah





walking across the creek to climb up into the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



walking across the creek to climb up into the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



shep in the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



view from the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah





Bob, Rachel and Cindy on top of the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



bread fresh from the hot oven!





view from the top of the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



view from the top of the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah





view from the top of the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



mud construction / view from the top of the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



view from the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



view from the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah





view inside the Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah



Kasbah shop



Bon Voyage! Royal Maroc flight from Ouarzazate to Casa Blanca



Bon Voyage! Royal Maroc flight from Ouarzazate to Casa Blanca





our friendly Royal Maroc steward on flight from Ouarzazate to Casa Blanca



7 hour layover in Casa Blanca Airport, awaiting connecting flight to Frankfurt, Germany



7 hour layover in Casa Blanca Airport, awaiting connecting flight to Frankfurt, Germany



we spoke with Moroccan ex-pat who lives in Oslo at Casa Blanca Airport, awaiting connecting flight to Frankfurt, Germany





7 hour layover in Frankfurt, Germany Airport



7 hour layover in Frankfurt, Germany Airport