

Grinnellian Adventures: Northern Africa

October 8-18, 2025



“When you go to Morocco, you go to Africa. And specifically, you go to Northern Africa. The Eurocentric/American point of view is to suggest that Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt are not African. African scholars are now more present in writing African history, and one of the things they push back on is to say that this is North Africa.” - Professor Kesho Scott

We invite you to join Grinnell College faculty experts **Will Freeman** and **Kesho Scott** and your fellow alums on this very special adventure in the North African country of Morocco. Professors Scott and Freeman will engage alums in the educational back stories of Morocco’s many intersections: of ancient history and modernity, of a multitude of religions, and of a broad diversity of migratory and nomadic tribes, colonists and settlers, and of course, invaders. The stories of these centuries of change provide for rich conversations on the wide variety of topics that Professors Scott and Freeman will share with alums throughout the trip.

- The North African Story of Africa (tourist lens and political economy)
- The Arab Diaspora and Arab Identity (and the formation of it, past and present)
- Cultural Contrasts to the East and West (in music, sports, movies, and art)
- Religious Nationalism, Westernization, and Global Citizenship
- Youth Culture and the Moroccan Monarchy

With international bestselling novelist and tour operator John Shors as our travel leader, Grinnellians and their guests will begin their trip in Morocco's largest city, Casablanca, and then journey to the small mountain village of Chefchaouen (The Blue City). From this spiritual gem, the group travels to the medieval city of Fez for spectacular immersion in the heart of this ancient city. En route to the seaside capital city of Rabat, we will visit the ruins of the Roman city of Volubilis. The adventure completes in the imperial city of Marrakesh. Visiting in the optimal weather of October, travelers will stay in carefully selected hotels, ranging from traditional Moroccan riads to modern-day hotels. Along the way, **all** meals, tips, and entrance fees are included.

John Shors Travel has been in existence since 2013, and specializes in small-group, immersive tours. They have taken about 1,000 people on trips to six continents, providing tailored service from the first moment at the arrival airport to the private transportation to the return airport. Read more about John Shors Travel and their reviews at <https://johnshorstravel.com/>.

This program is limited to a maximum of 18 participants plus Kesho Scott, Will Freeman, John Shors, our local guide Youssef, and 1 DAR staff support.

Highlights

- Discover the beauty and history of the growing cosmopolitanism of Morocco today within the imperial cities of 8th century Fez, 12th century Rabat, and 11th century Marrakesh.
- Explore centuries-old markets and trades as they thrive in current times in the ancient medinas of Casablanca, Fez, and Marrakesh, gaining insight into how Morocco as a Muslim country has been a leader in gender issues.
- Plumb the convergence and traditions of multiple spiritualities in the mystical blue city of Chefchaouen, from the 15th century Grand Mosque through the Kasbah to the Jewish Quarter behind the jewelry souk in the medina.
- Enjoy a wide variety of spectacular and memorable meals, from classic North African cooking, known for its refinement and subtle use of spices, to a multi-course

meal in a former palace with city views, to lunch on a docked sailing ship at a seaside port, to meals accompanied by live music and belly dancers.

- Visit more sites than are possible to list in the highlights, including the Al-Attarine Madrasa, a 14th century center for religious studies in Fez, and the ancient Roman city of Volubilis, often called the Moroccan Pompeii. Review the itinerary for more!
- In each location, hear from faculty leads **Kesho Scott** and **Will Freeman** about the connection between what you see, Morocco's growing cosmopolitanism, and your journey as a global citizen. Discuss the complexities of each site with your fellow Grinnellians.

Email john@johnshorstravel.com for additional details, or to reserve your spot on this tour.

Faculty Leaders & Tour Operator



Will Freeman

Associate Professor

**American Studies and Physical Education,
Former Head Men's Cross Country and Track/Field
Coach**

After a highly successful 42 years of coaching and teaching sport psychology and sport sociology at Grinnell College, Will Freeman has retired from coaching to teach exclusively in the American studies department at Grinnell. His innovative and successful athlete-centered model of coaching is now the model for his student-centered classroom. He is respected nationally and internationally as a teacher and mentor of coaches and athletes. He speaks regularly around the U.S. and beyond.

Working at the intersection of pedagogy, wellness, and psychology, his outside-the-box ideas have resulted in his writing or co-writing six books, multiple articles, and 19 videos for teachers and coaches. As well, his teams have won 33 Midwest Conference team championships during his tenure.

Freeman attended the University of Florida where he was a successful All-America pole vaulter, competed at two Olympic Trials and as a member of the U.S. national team. After his undergraduate work at Florida, he studied Biomechanics/Kinesiology at Indiana

University and Sport Psychology at the University of Iowa. A lifelong learner, Freeman continues to learn, teach, and add to the body of knowledge in education.

Education and Degrees

- B.S.P.E., University of Florida
- M.S.P.E., Indiana University



Kesho Scott
Senior Faculty
Sociology and American Studies

Kesho is an internationally renowned Diversity Trainer/Consultant, an Associate Professor of American Studies and Sociology at Grinnell College, and an award-winning writer. She was a founding member of International Capacity Building Services, a cultural competency training team that specializes in facilitating both “unlearning isms” and Human Rights workshops as well various seminars and training programs that have been successfully adapted for audiences throughout the United States and abroad. In over two decades of developing unlearning racism work, Kesho has led hundreds of professional and community-based workshops; she has been keynote speaker for national conferences as well as a participant on several dozen national and local radio debates, discussions and public service announcements. Grounded in this extensive experience, Kesho developed an “affirmative duty” technique for facilitating unlearning racism workshops. It is a method that helps shift participants’ awareness, commitment and skill-set toward being actively and personally anti-racist and anti-sexist, rather than remaining merely passive observers.

Education and Degrees

- B.A. Sociology, Wayne State University, 1974
- M.A. Political Sociology, University of Detroit, 1975
- Ph.D. American Studies, University of Iowa, 1988



John Shors
Tour Operator
Founder and President, John Shors Travel

John Shors is an internationally bestselling novelist. His eleven novels have been translated into nearly thirty languages. Inspired to take readers on literary tours to the settings of his stories, he launched John Shors Travel in 2013 and has taken more than 1,000 guests on trips to six continents. A native of Des Moines, John attended a writing

workshop at Grinnell College as a teenager. He currently lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife and two children.

<https://johnshorstravel.com/>

Education and Degrees

- B.A. English, Colorado College

Trip Itinerary

October 8 — 18, 2025



DAY ONE/WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8:

- Arrive at Casablanca International Airport
- All guests will be met at airport by a private driver, who will take them to our five-star hotel, which will either be The Sofitel, The Hyatt Regency, or a similar hotel. The hotel will be in the heart of the old city, near the most famous monuments. The Sofitel:



- 6 p.m. Meet with faculty leads Kesho Scott and Will Freeman and your travel host, John, for a welcome drink at the hotel's rooftop bar, and then walk to a nearby restaurant for dinner
- Retire to rooms
- *(Note: If guests want to arrive one day early, to acclimate to the time change, they may do so. Such guests will be charged for an extra night at the hotel)*

DAY TWO/THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9:

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the hotel
- 10 a.m. Begin our tour of some of the most important historical sites in Casablanca

- With our local guide, Youssef, take a walking tour of the magnificent King Hassan II Mosque complex, which features the tallest minaret in the world, and can hold more than 100,000 people. The King Hassan II Mosque:



12 p.m. Enjoy lunch at Rick's Café, which was designed to replicate the iconic atmosphere of the Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman classic film, "Casablanca". Rick's Café:



- 1:30 p.m. As it's our first full day on tour, guests will have the option to go back to the hotel to relax, and perhaps enjoy the swimming pool, the spa, etc. Or guests may join John in an excursion to the nearby medina (ancient walled part of the city) to explore. For this excursion, John will take interested parties to a store

which sells a variety of watches, purses, etc. *Note, we will explore better medinas later on in the trip*

- 3 p.m. Anyone who went to the medina with John will now return to the hotel to enjoy free time
- 6:30 p.m. Meet in our hotel lobby, and walk to a nearby restaurant
- Retire to rooms

DAY THREE/FRIDAY OCTOBER 10

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the hotel
- 9 a.m. Meet in hotel lobby, with bags packed, and depart on a private bus for Chefchaouen (The Blue City). This five-hour drive will follow the coastline of northwest Africa
- We will eat lunch at a simple restaurant along the way
- 3 p.m. Arrive in Chefchaouen:



- Check into our hotel, which will be a local riad (a century-old family residence) or a boutique hotel. From one of the many riads in Chefchaouen:



- 4 p.m. Enjoy a one-hour walking tour of the area alongside our local guide, Youssef
- 6:30 p.m. Meet for dinner at the riad's or hotel's restaurant
- Retire to rooms

DAY FOUR/SATURDAY OCTOBER 11

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the riad
- 9 a.m. Alongside Youssef, depart for an extensive walking tour of “The Blue City”
- Begin by exploring the Chefchaouen medina:



- 11:30 a.m. Return to riad or hotel and check out of room, begin the drive to Fez.

- 1 p.m. Stop at a local restaurant for lunch
- 3 p.m. Arrive in Fez:



- Check in to our four-star hotel, the Fes Marriott Hotel Jnan Palace, in the city center, enjoy free time. This is a sprawling, Moroccan-style hotel with many amenities, including a great outdoor pool, multiple restaurants, shops, tennis courts, a gym, etc. In a bustling city, it's a peaceful oasis of tranquility
- 6:30 p.m. After a long day of travel, we will eat at the hotel's excellent Moroccan restaurant for dinner, enjoying live music
- Retire to rooms

DAY FIVE/SUNDAY OCTOBER 12

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the riad

- 10 a.m. Meet in the hotel lobby and depart for a walking tour, with a local guide, of Fez. Visit the Medina of Fez, which is the ancient quarter of the city, and is a maze of shops, mosques, and open markets. This area, with its 9,000 alleys, is one of the best preserved and authentic ancient cities of the Arab world. One of the countless sights of the Medina of Fez (above).

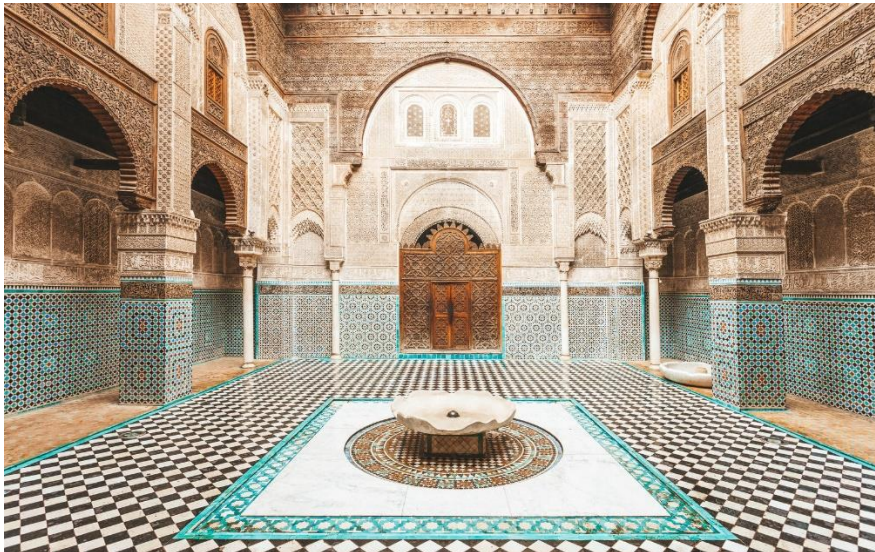


open markets. This area, with its 9,000 alleys, is one of the best preserved and authentic ancient cities of the Arab world. One of the countless sights of the Medina of Fez (above).

- While in this area, we will take a walking tour of the Tannery of Fez, where for centuries artisans have used vast vats of dye to color fabrics:



- 12 p.m. Enjoy lunch at a nearby restaurant, Palais Lahlou
- 2 p.m. Visit the Al-Attarine Madrasa, a 14th Century center for religious studies and a famous representation of some of the area's best architecture and mosaics. The Al-Attarine Madrasa:



- 4 p.m. Return to hotel, enjoy free time
- 6:45 p.m. meet in hotel lobby and walk to nearby restaurant for dinner. Tonight, we will dine at MB Fez Restaurant, considered to be one of the city's best
- Retire to rooms

DAY SIX/MONDAY OCTOBER 13:

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the hotel
- After several busy days of sightseeing and travel, today is designed to be a free day to relax at the spacious hotel complex or do some shopping in the city
- The hotel complex features multiple tennis courts, paddleball courts, a gym, a spa, an outdoor pool, shopping, etc.
- Our hotel's pool:



- 10:30 a.m. Your guides, John and Youssef, will take whoever wants to go shopping to a special tile store near the medina. Here we will see how craftsman use centuries-old techniques to create intricate tables, fountains, platters, and much more
- Everyone who visits the tile store will have lunch at a nearby restaurant
- For those who stayed at the hotel, lunch will be enjoyed at the hotel, at everyone's leisure, with the bills being charged to John's room
- 1:30 p.m. For anyone wishing to go on another shopping excursion, we will visit a wonderful carpet store, where weavers make traditional Moroccan carpets
- 6:45 p.m. All guests will meet in the lobby and depart in our private bus, for a nearby restaurant, Palais Faraj, which is housed in the former Bensouda Palace and features wonderful views of the city. Here we will savor a special, multi-course meal, while enjoying a wonderful view of Fez:



- Retire to rooms

DAY SEVEN/TUESDAY OCTOBER 14:

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the hotel
- 8:30 a.m. Meet in lobby, with bags packed, and depart for Rabat
- Along the way, we'll enjoy a distant view of the Atlas Mountains:



- Continue the drive to Rabat, taking a slight detour to visit the ancient Roman city of Volubilis, which is often called the Moroccan version of Pompei
- 10:30 a.m. Arrive at Volubilis:



- While at Volubilis, we will marvel at the famous Roman mosaics found in the area:



- Finish the tour of the Roman site and begin the final leg of our drive to Rabat
- 1 p.m. Enjoy lunch at a seaside port, on board a docked sailing ship, at a famous restaurant called Le Dhow
- 3 p.m. As we approach Rabat, we will stop at The Mausoleum of Mohammad V, who was the Sultan of Morocco during World War Two, and is credited with saving thousands of Jews, as well as then leading the push for Morocco's independence. His mausoleum:



- 4:30 p.m. Arrive at our four-star hotel in Rabat, and check into our rooms
- 6:30 p.m. Meet in the hotel's restaurant for dinner
- Retire to rooms

DAY EIGHT/WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 15:

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the hotel
- 10 a.m. Meet in hotel lobby and depart for Marrakech
- Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant
- 2 p.m. Arrive in Marrakech:



- Check into our riad-style hotel, located within the medina of Marrakech. This riad will be The Riad Dar Anika, or something similar. The Riad Dar Anika:



- 6:30 p.m. After a busy day of travel, we will enjoy dinner at the riad
- Retire to rooms

DAY NINE/THURSDAY OCTOBER 16:

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the riad
- 10:30 a.m. Meet in the riad's lobby and depart with Youssef for a walking tour of Marrakech. We will start by passing by the Koutoubia Mosque:



- Explore the Medina of Marrakesh, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Medina is the original fortified citadel of Marrakesh, a nearly thousand-year-old fortress surrounded by more than twelve miles of pink walls and dominated by endless alleys. The interior of the Medina:



- 12:30 p.m. Enjoy a rooftop lunch at L'Mida
- 2 p.m. As the restaurant is in the medina, guests will have the opportunity to do additional shopping or return to the hotel for free time
- 7:30 p.m. Meet in the hotel lobby and depart on our bus for Le Salama Skybar. This rooftop restaurant is in a lively part of the city. Our reservation is for 8 p.m. and belly dancers will entertain us beginning at 9 p.m.
- Retire to rooms

DAY TEN/FRIDAY OCTOBER 17:

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the riad
- 10:45 a.m. Meet in hotel lobby and depart, with a local guide, for our continued walking tour of Marrakech
- 11:30 a.m. We will have tickets for this specific time to visit Jardin Majorelle, a beautiful French garden created by the French painter, Jacques Majorelle, and later restored by the famous French designer, Yves Saint-Laurent. Jardin Majorelle:



- 12 p.m. Enjoy lunch within the garden
- 1:30 p.m. Tour the nearby Yves Saint-Laurent Museum, which includes countless sketches of his dresses, the dresses themselves, as well as a 20-minute movie about his life, which included a lot of time in Marrakech. The Yves Saint-Laurent Museum:



- 2:30 p.m. As this will be our last afternoon of the trip, the group will split up into optional activities such as shopping, exploring the Jewish Quarter, wandering through the endless alleys, returning to the hotel, etc.
- 7 p.m. Meet in the riad's lobby and walk to a nearby restaurant, where we will enjoy our farewell dinner in a private room
- Retire to rooms

DAY ELEVEN/SATURDAY OCTOBER 18:

- Enjoy a breakfast buffet at the hotel
- Tour concludes
- Private transportation provided to Marrakech International Airport

Email john@johnshorstravel.com for additional details, or to reserve your spot on this tour.

Pricing

- \$8,595 per person, based on double occupancy
- \$10,995 per person, based on single occupancy

PRICE INCLUDES:

- Accommodations at excellent hotels and riads
- All transportation within Morocco
- Meals and non-alcoholic drinks
- Fees (museums, tours, guides, etc.)
- Excursions
- Tips

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Airfare to and from Morocco
- Alcoholic drinks
- Activities that guests arrange on their own
- Hotel incidentals such as room service, mini bar, Internet and phone charges, laundry, etc.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- John Shors and three representatives from Grinnell College will accompany the group for the entire trip. Local tour guides will also be present. The maximum size for any group is 18 guests, plus guides
- Restaurants, depending on availability, may end up being different than those listed above, but will be excellent
- Exact tour details may differ slightly from what is listed above, depending on recommendations from local guides
- To reserve a spot for this tour, a nonrefundable \$2,000 deposit is due to John Shors Travel by June 23, 2025

Email john@johnshorstravel.com for additional details, or to reserve your spot on this tour.

FAQs

What travel provider is the College partnering with for the trip?

Grinnell College has contracted [John Shors Travel](#) to provide the organization and support for this trip.

What can I expect on the trip?

Lots of time to reconnect with your Grinnell self as a student, as well as bonding with Grinnell faculty and other alums as together you experience the magic of travel. This will be a fun and intellectually engaging adventure.

Expect a moderate amount of walking each day, with time to rest between visits. To enjoy this trip, you should be prepared to walk slightly longer distances, climb stairs, and tolerate periods of standing, for example on city walks, site visits, and other excursions.

Participants will need to be able to manage their own baggage. We will provide a suggested packing list for all trip participants after registration closes.

Do I need travel insurance for the trip?

Travel insurance is optional. Travelers may purchase from the provider of their choice.

May I bring guests?

Each alum may bring guests. Your guests do not need to be alumni.

What if I need assistance during the trip with something?

A staff member from the Office of Development and Alumni Relations will attend the trip to support all guests and our faculty leaders.

Questions?

Contact **Guinevere Natarelli**, associate director of alumni and donor relations, at wallacegu@grinnell.edu or call 641-269-4633. You may also contact John Shors at john@johnshortstravel.com.