

Morocco tour for senior travellers

Reading List

A Concise History of the Arabs

by John McHugo

The key to understanding the Arab world - today and in the future - lies in unlocking its past. John McHugo unfolds centuries of political, social and intellectual development, from the Roman Empire right up to the present day. Taking the reader beyond the headlines, McHugo presents a series of turning points in Arab history: the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, the expansion of Islam, the conflicts of the medieval and modern ages, the struggles against foreign domination, the rise of Islamism, and the end of the rule of dictators. Accessible and penetrating, this concise history reveals how the Arab world has come to assume its present form and illuminates the choices that lie ahead in the wake of the Arab Spring. 'A lucid and highly readable history of the Arab peoples up to the present day. John McHugo has managed to show, with compassion, a good deal of humour and unerring historical judgment, the power of the ideas and the forces that have shaped what we now think of as the Arab world. In doing so, McHugo has provided a way of understanding this complex and ongoing story that will enlighten all who read it.' Charles Tripp, author of *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East*

Lords Of The Atlas: Morocco And The Rise And Fall Of The House Of Glaoua

by Gavin Maxwell

Maxwell is best known for *Ring of Bright Water*, the still selling account of his West Highland seaboard cottage and pet otters. He was also a distinguished travel writer on Iraq and Sicily. This posthumously published book (he died in 1968) is sub-titled *The Rise and Fall of the House of Glaoua, 1893-1956*, and is a history of Morocco's tribal dynasty which is informed by his own travels in North Africa. It's a fascinating slice of Moroccan history that is also a substantial chapter in the story of French colonialism. And, considering how far the writing of history has moved on since Maxwell's time, his own style seems remarkably fresh, readable and well-informed. The vividness of that writing is enhanced by lavish pictorial illustration, with 50 colour and 100 hundred black and white relevant photos, both contemporary and archival.

The Voices of Marrakesh

by Elias Canetti

Nobel Prize-winning author Canetti spent only a few weeks in Marrakesh, but it was a visit that would remain with him for the rest of his life. In *The Voices of Marrakesh*, he captures the essence of that place: the crowds, the smells - of spices, camels and the souks - and, most importantly to Canetti, the sounds of the city, from the cries of the blind beggars and the children's call for alms to the unearthly silence on the still roofs above the hordes.

In these immaculately crafted essays, Canetti examines the emotions Marrakesh stirred within him and the people who affected him for ever.

Elias Canetti (1905-1994) is best known in the English-speaking world for *Crowds and Power*, *Kafka's Other Trial* and for the classic *Auto-de-Fe*. His family moved from Bulgaria to England, then Vienna, and he settled back in England in 1938. In 1981 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was cited by the Swedish Academy for his 'writings marked by a broad outlook and wealth of ideas and artistic power'.

A House in Fez

by Suzanna Clarke

When Suzanna Clarke and her husband bought a dilapidated house in the Moroccan town of Fez, their friends thought they were mad. Located in a maze of donkey-trod alleyways, the house - a traditional riad - was beautiful but in desperate need of repair. Walls were in danger of collapse, the plumbing non-existent. While neither Suzanna nor her husband spoke Arabic, and had only a smattering of French, they were determined to restore the building to its original splendour, using only traditional craftsmen and handmade materials. But they soon found that trying to do business in Fez was like being transported back several centuries in time and so began the remarkable experience that veered between frustration, hilarity and moments of pure exhilaration.

But restoring the riad was only part of their immersion in the rich and colourful life of this ancient city. *A House in Fez* is a journey into Moroccan culture, revealing its day-to-day rhythms, its customs and festivals; its history, Islam, and Sufi rituals; the lore of djinns and spirits; the vibrant life-filled market places and the irresistible Moroccan cuisine. And above all, into the lives of the people - warm, friendly, and hospitable.

Beautifully descriptive and infused with an extraordinary sense of place, this is a compelling account of one couple's adventures in ancient Morocco.

White Gold: The Extraordinary Story of Thomas Pellow and North Africa's One Million European Slaves

by Giles Milton

This is the forgotten story of the million white Europeans, snatched from their homes and taken in chains to the great slave markets of North Africa to be sold to the highest bidder. Ignored by their own governments, and forced to endure the harshest of conditions, very few lived to tell the tale.

Using the firsthand testimony of a Cornish cabin boy named Thomas Pellow, Giles Milton vividly reconstructs a disturbing, little known chapter of history. Pellow was bought by the tyrannical sultan of Morocco who was constructing an imperial pleasure palace of enormous scale and grandeur, built entirely by Christian slave labour. As his personal slave, he would witness first-hand the barbaric splendour of the imperial court, as well as experience the daily terror of a cruel regime.

Gripping, immaculately researched, and brilliantly realised, **WHITE GOLD** reveals an explosive chapter of popular history, told with all the pace and verve of one of our finest historians

Marrakech Express

by Peter Millar

Back in 1969 when Morocco's ancient capital was a hashish clouded happy mecca, Crosby, Stills and Nash recorded their cheesy (and hopelessly inaccurate) foot-tapping anthem 'Marrakech Express'. A generation on, award-winning journalist, author, and one-time glamrock fan Peter Millar uses what is now the country's best visited tourist destination as the embarkation point for a literally reverse-engineered train journey through this still exotic, diverse and challenging North African country, struggling to maintain its unique blend of tradition and tolerance in the turbulent winds of the Arab Spring.
