



InterPlay in Morocco

“WAKING HEARTS, WEAVING PEACE”

Join Masankho Banda, Diane Saliba Ault and family (the Moroccan side!) for eleven days of sacred music, sightseeing, and creating community with the people of Morocco.

- ◆ Experience the internationally renowned **Festival of World Sacred Music**. Artists from around the world gather in the ancient city of Fes to share music and dance from the spiritual traditions of their homelands. This year’s theme **“Weavers of Peace”** promises to deliver some of the most unique musical collaborations yet, bringing together American artists **Bernice Johnson Reagon, Joan Baez and Jessye Norman** with artists from **Morocco, France, Spain, Lebanon, Pakistan, Vietnam and Indonesia**, to name just a few.
- ◆ Explore the rich diversity of **Morocco’s cultures and landscapes** guided by native Moroccans and others with intimate knowledge of the country’s language(s) and culture(s). Experience real hospitality through **homestays and home-cooked meals with Moroccan families**.
- ◆ Deepen your understanding of **Islamic culture and spirituality** through **direct connection with Muslims of diverse backgrounds** in an open and peaceful part of the Middle East.
- ◆ Travel in a **spirit of ease and spontaneity** with plenty of opportunities to play along the way led by **InterPlayers Masankho Banda and Diane Saliba Ault**.



June 3-15, 2008

Morocco is a country at a crossroads. Geographically situated between Africa, Europe and the Middle East, it has for centuries been a meeting ground of Eastern and Western peoples, cultures and ideas. In modern times its status as one of the world's last true monarchies only seems to amplify the political and ideological predicaments it shares with other countries in the Islamic world -- the legacies of an autocratic past confronting the challenges of a democratic and pluralistic future, with puritanical and progressive readings of Islam competing fiercely for Muslim hearts and minds. All of these elements converge to make travel in Morocco, in the words of one observer, "a schizophrenic experience." Still, crossroads are places rich with possibilities, and Morocco offers them in abundance -- possibilities for seeing through stereotypes, finding communion with people of a different faith, and making peace with a part of the world that most Americans view through a lens of fear and mistrust.

Years ago I imagined Morocco and the rest of the Islamic world as a darkly mysterious, perhaps even dangerous place. At 19, the enigma was irresistible. I went. Alone and with no Arabic to speak of, because it appealed to my sense of adventure, and because I was eager to test my resourcefulness. Three years later I had mastered what one might consider the basics of life in Morocco. I learned Arabic, made friends, and held a job. I learned the grid of streets around my neighborhood, the buses that took me to and from town, the price of tomatoes, and even how to cook a handful of local specialties. Eventually, it felt like home. And somewhere along the way, the thirst for adventure gave way to a desire for real understanding of the place and its people, not just in passing, but in an intimate and profound way. Today, after six years of marriage and three kids with my Moroccan husband, I find the real adventures in unexpected places -- fitting three car seats into the back seat of an impossibly small Renault, visiting six dozen relatives in fourteen days, negotiating differences on every subject from making tea to raising children, and most of all, imparting to my little ones a sense of belonging to the country of their father's heart.



Though my travels in Morocco are no longer thrill-seeking jaunts into the unknown (believe me, with 3-year-old twin boys, the thrills follow me everywhere), the country still holds an almost magnetic appeal for me. I have thoroughly enjoyed sharing its treasures with friends and family on several trips over the past few years. On these trips I am the "bridge" in a mundane sense -- interpreting between languages, showing people the sights, making sleeping and eating arrangements, etc -- but also metaphorically, guiding



others down a path that mirrors the evolution of my own experience of the place, from the elusive and foreign to the intensely familiar. Today it strikes me that my journey to mutual acceptance within my Moroccan family is not so different from the journey we all undertake in growing into awareness of ourselves as part of the whole human family, its relationships brimming with complexity and possibility.

We have timed this trip to coincide with the renowned Festival of World Sacred Music in Fes. This year's theme "Weavers of Peace" could hardly be more timely, as the war in Iraq heads into its sixth year and the so-called war on terror holds no promise other than to further polarize Western and Islamic societies. The Festival is the proverbial oasis in the desert of fear and intolerance. In striving to awaken hearts through through spiritually grounded music and dance, it embodies the divine imperative to find beauty in one another despite our differences. Simply put, the Festival represents Morocco at its best. The spirit of the Festival will contextualize the rest of our travels in the country -- in the Atlas Mountains, home to indigenous Berbers whose communities thrive in spite of systematic efforts to dilute their cultures and languages; in Marrakesh, gateway to the deep South and the vast Sahara, a collage of Arab, Berber and African influences; and in the coastal cities of Casablanca and Rabat, the political and economic hubs of a country grappling with the mixed blessings of globalization.



We are committed to making space throughout the trip for real connections with our hosts, including homestays and meals together, music and movement, and sharing of InterPlay! forms and principles (for more about InterPlay see www.interplay.org and/or www.interplaytn.org). We hope you will take advantage of this unique opportunity for community-building and peace-making with the people of Morocco.

Your fellow traveller and seeker of peace,
Sara Jane Saliba

(To read more about Sara Jane and the other trip organizers, please see About the Trip Organizers on the last page.)

SCHEDULE

- June 3 Departure from New York City
June 4-5 Arrival in Morocco
Welcome and orientation
Sightseeing in Morocco's capital city (Rabat)
June 6-10 Festival of World Sacred Music (Fes)
Sightseeing in and around the city
June 11-14 Atlas Mountains, Marrakesh, and the Coast
June 15 Return to New York City

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Five afternoons and evenings of performances at the Festival of World Sacred Music
- ◆ Homestays and meals with Moroccan families as well as other traditional-style accommodations
- ◆ Sightseeing in the "Imperial Cities" of Rabat, Fes and Marrakesh, as well as optional day trips to places of interest in surrounding areas, led by Moroccan guides
- ◆ Scenic routes through the Atlas Mountains and along the Atlantic Coast
- ◆ Opportunities for participants to integrate their experiences with the forms of InterPlay, story-telling, movement, signing and rhythm play. *(Masankbo will be applying to be part of the "official" program for the Festival, and we may also create some InterPlay "alongside" the main events.)*



Space is limited... register early!



COST

\$2950 includes round-trip airfare (from NYC), accommodations, meals, in-country transportation, and most attractions and entertainment (including tickets to the Festival of World Sacred Music). For those travelling from outside the US, the cost for land only is \$2000.

Registration: Send \$300 non-refundable deposit by February 1 to InterPlay TN at 309 Canberra Ct, Hermitage, TN 37076. Contact diane@interplaytn.org, 615.594.4410 and see details at www.interplaytn.org.

ABOUT THE TRIP ORGANIZERS

Masankho Banda

Masankho, a native of Malawi, is an International PeaceBuilder, Educator, InterPlay Leader and Healer who resides in Oakland, California. He is also the founder of UcanDanc, an organization whose mission is to build Peace, inspire Diversity and Inclusion and foster Healing using dance, music, drums and stories. In 2001 Masankho was awarded the Unsung Hero of Compassion award by his Holiness The Dalai Lama. In 2007 he led a group of over forty fellow InterPlayers on a cultural tour of his native Malawi.

Diane Saliba Ault

Diane is a longtime community organizer, activist and artist who wears lots of hats! Her roles are many but her vision is one: wholeness for all. She has served on the boards and staff of many church and community nonprofit organizations, locally, regionally and nationally and has a passion for community-building across lines of race, class and culture. Diane has travelled to Morocco twice with her daughter, Sara Jane Saliba, and son-in-law, Zouhair El Maliki.

Zouhair El Maliki

Zouhair was born and raised in Morocco's capital city of Rabat and also has roots among the indigenous Berbers of the country's deep South. A computer technician and entrepreneur for more than ten years, he moved to Nashville in 2002 with his wife Sara (Diane's daughter). Zouhair and Sara make annual trips to Morocco with their three children, Ben (3 years), Sam (3 years), and Kinza (3 months, and making her first trip this summer). As a practicing Muslim deeply committed to religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue, Zouhair is eager to share the spiritual traditions of his homeland with those who seek a deeper understanding of this faith so relevant to global politics today. Zouhair speaks French and English in addition to his native Arabic.

Sara Jane Saliba

Sara Jane has spent the better of the last ten years living and working in culturally diverse environments both at home and abroad. Her chronic curiosity about the world has taken her to scattered destinations in North and Central America, Europe, Australia, sub-Saharan Africa, and of course, Morocco, where she met and married her husband Zouhair. Since returning to the US in 2002 she has worked in various capacities in Nashville's immigrant and refugee communities, and is currently the Operations Director for the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, a multiethnic collaboration that promotes civil rights for immigrants and advocates sensible and humane immigration reform. Sara Jane holds a bachelor's degree in International Studies and Development Studies and a master's degree in Social Work Management and Community Practice. Sara Jane speaks Arabic and French in addition to her native English.

