

Agadir Aguelluy, in the Anti-Atlas Mountains, is one of Morocco's best-preserved granaries.



## Seeking Shelter

On a tour of ancient granaries in the arid landscape of southern Morocco, **Eve Kahn** discovers the picturesque history of these architectural marvels—and the plan to rescue them from ruin. PHOTOGRAPHS BY **AMAR GROVER**

**THE ZIGZAGGING PATH LED TO** a stone fortification on a cliff. Its curved, monolithic walls faced a towering mountain range, almost disappearing into the landscape. For centuries, ancient Berber tribes and nomads locked up food and other valuables here and fought off any marauders who made it to this remote spot. As I maneuvered along the loose-rock trail, I was far outpaced by the fortress's aged caretaker, Mohamed Amarir, who led my family and our guide, Hassan Idfath. Inside the entry gate, we ducked through hobbit doorways into mazes of storerooms. Crouching along the sandy floors, we found ourselves in a cool, tall cavern, with storage jars half-sunken into the earth. Slit windows overhead reduced the Moroccan sun to dusty gold rectangles. At eye level, I glimpsed an oasis, an improbable blaze of green palms, carob, and oleander in a rust-colored canyon. >>



# ANY AIRLINE, ANYTIME



## THE CARD THAT TRAVELERS LOVE

People love their Capital One Venture® card. With Venture, they can use their reward miles to fly on any airline, anytime.

Venture earns sky-high ratings—**4.6 out of 5 stars**—and praise like this:

*"I love being able to use miles for travel on different airlines."*

—Sally

*"The Venture card earns me miles without tying me down to any particular airline, giving me flexibility in my travel plans."*

—Steve

*"Love the double travel miles and the flexibility to use the miles with different airlines or hotels."*

—Jon

Learn More at [www.capitalone.com](http://www.capitalone.com).



Ratings solicited from Capital One Venture Card customers as of June 2015. Credit approval required. Offered by Capital One Bank (USA), N.A. ©2015 Capital One.



Agadir Tasguent's stacked chambers are visible from its inner courtyard.

The building, called Agadir Aguelluy, is one of Morocco's hundreds of communal granaries, known as *igoudar* in a Berber dialect (the singular is *agadir*). Communal granaries exist elsewhere in North Africa, but the Moroccan structures are the most attractive. They've also become a cause célèbre among philanthropists and travelers, offering a fascinating glimpse into a quickly disappearing North African culture. Donors, including the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation and Moroccan royal agencies, are financing *agadir* restorations to boost tourism and create jobs.

This spring, I visited half a dozen *igoudar* in a three-day whirlwind. Many still serve as storage spaces for provisions, but most are abandoned. They range in shape and height, some honeycombed into hillsides, others surrounded by villages or perched on hilltops. I based my itinerary on suggestions from Salima Naji, a charismatic architect and anthropologist working to preserve *igoudar*, and Zhor Rehihil, the brilliant and feisty curator of the Moroccan Jewish Museum, which is helping document traces of vanished rural Jewish communities.

I began in Idfath's coastal-resort hometown, also called Agadir. From there, the drive inland to Aguelluy takes about 2½ hours—often on newly

paved highways—and there are granaries scattered across the hills for hundreds of miles around. Imagine a road trip across a sunbaked landscape, with no souvenir stands and hardly any signs or tourists. Wherever we stopped, even just to ask directions, the locals invited us to share mint tea with them. The Moroccan government is a stable American ally, and the people are endlessly hospitable. Though most old customs remain, a little modernity has crept into these parts. Nomads install solar panels outside their tents. Teenage girls, in billowing robes called *haiks*, ride donkeys while chatting on cell phones.

Standing within the fortress at Aguelluy, Idfath translated as caretakers explained the repairs under way and the traditional uses of the compartments. Locals still lock hewn-plank doors with wooden keys the size of spatulas to safeguard grain, honey, oils, and jewelry. Long ago, sentinels would have kept a lookout, which allowed nomadic families to roam for weeks on end. After harvesting the land, they would have lugged their stockpiles back to the cool, dark *agadir*. I imagined them feeling safe and secure as they left the stronghold, heading back into the Moroccan sun. ☼

**THE DETAILS** Create your own itinerary to visit Morocco's granaries, page 186



# the Details

Our guide to this month's featured destinations, including the best places to eat, sleep, and explore.



## JOSHUA TREE, CALIFORNIA (A Desert Blooms p. 63)

### HOTELS

**Joshua Tree Highlands Houses** Four private vacation rentals near the park, all with mountain views. [joshuatreehighlandshouse.com](http://joshuatreehighlandshouse.com); two-night stays from \$500.

**Joshua Tree Inn** Country-rock legend Gram Parsons famously died in room No. 8 of this cheap and cheerful spot with 11 rooms and a courtyard strung with fairy lights. [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); [joshuatreeinn.com](http://joshuatreeinn.com); doubles from \$89.

**Mojave Sands Motel** This eco-chic five-room inn—on the grounds of the 1950s Oleander Motel—is an upscale hideaway in the middle of the desert. [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); [mojavesandsatjoshuatree.com](http://mojavesandsatjoshuatree.com); doubles from \$200.

### RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS

**Crossroads Café** A popular lunch counter known for its incredible corn bread and burgers. [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); [crossroadscafejtree.com](http://crossroadscafejtree.com); entrées \$8–\$14.

**Natural Sisters Café** The patio of this vegetarian spot is filled with cool characters digging in to salads and smoothies. [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); [thenaturalsisterscafe.com](http://thenaturalsisterscafe.com).

**Pappy & Harriet's Pioneertown Palace** Come for delicious barbecue cooked on a mesquite grill; stay for the live music. [pappyandharriets.com](http://pappyandharriets.com); entrées \$6–\$30.

### SHOPS

**The End** A costume designer who worked on *90210* owns this well-curated shop, filled with vintage clothing, art, and more. [Yucca Valley](http://YuccaValley.com); [theendyuccavalley.tumblr.com](http://theendyuccavalley.tumblr.com).

**Grateful Desert Herb Shoppe & EcoMarket** Residents and tourists alike come here to stock up on handcrafted lotions and tinctures. [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); [gratefuldesert.com](http://gratefuldesert.com).

**Hoof & the Horn** A husband-and-wife team oversees this Americana-themed clothing shop. [Yucca Valley](http://YuccaValley.com); [hoofandthehorn.com](http://hoofandthehorn.com).

### GALLERIES

**A-Z West** Call ahead before visiting artist Andrea Zittel's 35-acre experimental art complex—hours are limited. [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); [zittel.org](http://zittel.org).

**Noah Purifoy Foundation** This outdoor museum covers the work of the late assemblage artist, who spent his final years in the Mojave. [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); [noahpurifoy.com](http://noahpurifoy.com).

**Taylor Junction** Gallerist Terry Taylor-Castillo showcases a rotating roster of local talent. 61732 Twentynine Palms Hwy., [Joshua Tree](http://JoshuaTree.com); 760-974-9165.

### ACTIVITIES

**Joshua Tree National Park** No trip is complete without a visit to this 800,000-acre park, home to the distinctive, Seussian flora for which the area is named. [nps.gov](http://nps.gov).

## PECKHAM, LONDON (On the Fast Track p. 88)

### RESTAURANTS & BARS

**Artusi** Order the tagliatelle with ox-cheek ragù at this refreshingly unfussy Italian spot. [artusi.co.uk](http://artusi.co.uk); entrées \$16–\$24.

**Bar Story** Tucked in an arch under the Overground railway, it's one of Peckham's best cocktail bars. [barstory.co.uk](http://barstory.co.uk).

**Begging Bowl** The Thai dishes at this Bellenden Road restaurant stand out for their authenticity. [thebeggingbowl.co.uk](http://thebeggingbowl.co.uk); small plates \$10–\$23.

**Bussey Building** A former factory is now home to fringe theater productions, rooftop movie screenings, and a great café. [thebusseybuilding.org.uk](http://thebusseybuilding.org.uk).

**Frank's Café** The pop-up that put Peckham on the map. It transforms the roof of a parking garage into a buzzy bar for four months each year. [frankscafe.org.uk](http://frankscafe.org.uk).

**Ganapati** South Indian food by one of Peckham's culinary pioneers. [ganapatirestaurant.com](http://ganapatirestaurant.com); entrées \$12–\$23.

**The Gowlett** An unpretentious pub with impressive stone-baked pizza. [thegowlett.com](http://thegowlett.com).

**Peckham Springs** The bar attached to Sassoon Gallery is a favorite with Peckham's young creative crowd. [peckham-springs.co.uk](http://peckham-springs.co.uk).



## SOUTHERN MOROCCO (Seeking Shelter p. 102)

### GETTING THERE

The most convenient airport is in Agadir, easily reached via Casablanca. You can skip the plane connection, rent a car, and drive five hours south.

### HOTEL

**Dar Infiane Tata** A spectacular desert oasis with views of red-rock formations. [darinfiane.com](http://darinfiane.com); doubles from \$101.

### GUIDES & RESOURCES

**Bart Deseyn** The Belgian photographer, who knows the region well, offers an online visual record of Moroccan granaries. [assarag.net](http://assarag.net).

**Hassan Idfath** This Berber-speaking guide brings a tireless enthusiasm to his custom-tailored itineraries. [hassanidfath.com](http://hassanidfath.com).

**Salima Naji** The architect's website has a comprehensive list of restoration projects worth visiting. [salimanaji.org](http://salimanaji.org).

