



Morocco

Includes »

Mediterranean Coast & The Rif	874
Tangier	874
Tetouan	876
Chefchaouen	877
Rabat	879
Casablanca	880
Essaouira	883
Fez	885
Meknès	889
Volubilis	890
Marrakesh	891
High Atlas Mountains	894
Drâa Valley	895
Understand Morocco	896
Survival Guide	897

Why Go?

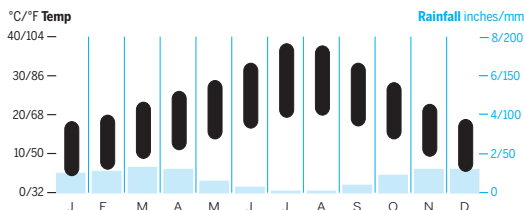
For many travellers, Morocco might just be a short hop away by ferry or by one of the myriad budget airlines from Spain, but it's a much greater distance to travel culturally. The regular certainties of Europe are suddenly swept away by the arrival in full technicolour of Africa and Islam. For the traveller, it's a complete sensory overload.

Atlantic winds blow through cosmopolitan Tangier and Casablanca and the whitewashed coastal gem of Essaouira. The great imperial cities of Marrakesh and Fez have enough surprises hidden in their winding streets to fill a dozen visits.

The High Atlas Mountains seem custom-made for hiking boots, with trails between Berber villages, and North Africa's highest peak to conquer. Or if you prefer someone else to do the walking, saddle up your camel and ride into the Sahara to watch the sun setting over an ocean of sand.

When To Go

Marrakesh



Best Places to Eat

- » Outdoor fish grills, Essaouira (p884)
- » Café Clock, Fez (p887)
- » Earth Café, Marrakesh (p893)

Best Places to Stay

- » Dar Nour, Tangier (p874)
- » Jnane Mogador, Marrakesh (p891)
- » Auberge Restaurant Chez Ali, Draa Valley (p895)

Mar–Jun Spring blooms; it's hot but fresh with a chance of rain. Morocco's at its greenest.

Jul & Aug During Ramadan; many restaurants close during the day and reduced business hours.

Nov–Jan Warm days of winter sun that are perfect for Marrakesh and the south.

Connections

The cheap flight revolution has well and truly arrived in Morocco, and budget airlines link Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez and Tangier to the major European air hubs (there are plenty of scheduled carriers, but most stick to Casablanca). If you have time, a more enjoyable way of connecting to mainland Europe is by ferry, either zipping across the Straits of Gibraltar from Tangier to Algeciras or Tarifa in Spain, or from Spain's enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla to connect with the Spanish rail network.

ITINERARIES

One Week

From Tangier, make a beeline for Fez and Marrakesh, former imperial cities turned tourist hubs in the Moroccan interior that deserve as much time as you can spare. After that, a detour to artsy Essaouira is a wonderful way to step down a gear after the onslaught of Morocco's most clamorous cities.

Two Weeks

Follow the itinerary above, but en route south stop at chilled-out Chefchaouen, tucked into the Rif Mountains. Meknès is a great detour from Fez, but once into the south past Marrakesh, make time either to head into the High Atlas for mountain hiking (possibly tackling Mt Toubkal, north Africa's highest peak), or saddle up your camel and ride into the great Saharan sand sea at Merzouga or M'Hamid.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Tajine** Slow-cooked stew in a conical-topped earthenware dish. Classic varieties include chicken with olives and lemon, kefta (meatballs), and beef with prunes and almonds.
- » **Couscous** Slow-steamed hand-rolled semolina, served with a light broth and meat or vegetables. Usually the centrepiece of a meal.
- » **B'stilla** Parcel of layered filo pastry, stuffed with pigeon or chicken, nuts and cinnamon.
- » **Khoobz** Traditional Moroccan bread, baked in communal wood-fired ovens.
- » **Harira** Classic thick soup with onion, lentil, chickpeas, tomato and lamb.
- » **Mint Tea** Morocco's famed 'Berber whiskey': gunpowder tea steeped in bunches of fresh mint and enough sugar to dissolve your teeth.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Moroccan dirham (Dh)
- » **Languages** Moroccan Arabic (Darija), French, Berber
- » **Money** ATMs wide-spread; credit cards widely accepted
- » **Visas** Schengen rules apply; see p1319

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 446,550 sq km
- » **Capital** Rabat
- » **Country code** ☎212
- » **Emergency** ☎190 Police

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	Dh8.35
Canada	C\$1	Dh8.10
euro zone	€1	Dh11.30
Japan	¥100	Dh9.80
New Zealand	NZ\$1	Dh6.50
UK	UK£1	Dh13.03
USA	US\$1	Dh7.91

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** from Dh250
- » **Two-course evening meal** Dh70-150
- » **Local taxi ride** Dh10
- » **Rabat-Marrakesh train (2nd class)** Dh90

Resources

- » **The View from Fez** (<http://riadzany.blogspot.com>) News and what's on
- » **Visit Morocco** (www.visitmorocco.com)
- » **Al-Bab** (www.al-bab.com/maroc) Handy links