

# Atlantic Coast

## شاطئ الأطلنطي

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### Why Go?

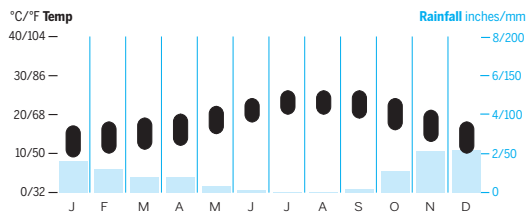
Miles of glorious sands peppered with small fishing villages, historic ports and fortified towns weave along Morocco's blustery coast. The French called it 'Maroc Utile' (useful Morocco): this is one of Morocco's most prosperous regions, home to the nation's capital Rabat and the economic hub of Casablanca. Their Mauresque architecture, excellent restaurants, stylish cafes and liberal attitudes are a far cry from traditional Morocco.

Throughout history, control of this coast was imperative for both invading forces and local tribes hoping to expand their empires. The Phoenicians, Romans, Portuguese, Spanish and French all fought for control, leaving a legacy in the beautiful walled towns, wide boulevards and relaxed attitude.

Outside the towns, farmland rolls gently down to the sea and wetland reserves showcase rich birdlife. But developers are arriving with plans for mega-resorts that may transform a region that already has more than enough attractions.

### When to Go

#### Casablanca



### Best Places to Eat

- » Outdoor fish grills (p228)
- » Restaurant du Port de Pêche (p177)
- » Le Petit Beur – Dar Tajine (p194)

### Best Places to Stay

- » Dar el-Manar (p214)
- » La Sultana (p217)
- » Riad Oudaya (p193)

#### May & June

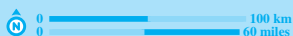
Rabat's world-music Mawazine festival in May, Essaouira's Gnaoua Festival in June

#### September

Hit the beaches after the Moroccan tourists leave, while the weather's still good.

#### December–March

Huge flocks of bird species descend on wetlands and lagoons



## Atlantic Coast Highlights

- 1 Sip tea at the Andalusian Garden in the **Kasbah Les Oudaïas** (p192) in Rabat
- 2 Swim in the warm waters of the **Oualidia lagoon** (p216), before gorging on local oysters for lunch
- 3 Hang out with trendy locals in Casablanca's smart pavement **cafés** (p180)
- 4 Kitesurf the day away on Essaouira's blustery **beach** (p224)
- 5 Twitch in **Moulay Bouselham** (p202)
- 6 Gaze at the murals in Assilah's **medina** (p209)
- 7 Marvel at the water cistern in El-Jadida's **Cité Portugaise** (p214)
- 8 Imagine yourself as a Roman at the ancient site of **Lixus** (p206)
- 9 Look up in Casablanca at the glorious **Mauresque buildings** (p172)