

Fez, Meknès and the Middle Atlas

Includes ➔

Imperial Cities	286
Fez	286
Sefrou	313
Bhalil	315
Meknès	320
Volubilis (Oualili)	331
Moulay Idriss	334
Middle Atlas	337
Ifrane	337
Azrou	340
Midelt	344
Taza	347

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ruined Garden (p307)
- ➔ Café Clock (p307)
- ➔ Dar El Mandar (p305)
- ➔ Dar Hatim (p308)
- ➔ Hôtel des Cèdres (p343)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Ryad Mabrouka (p304)
- ➔ Funky Fes (p299)
- ➔ Ryad Bahia (p326)
- ➔ Dar Kamal Chaoui (p315)
- ➔ Dar El Mandar (p305)

Why Go?

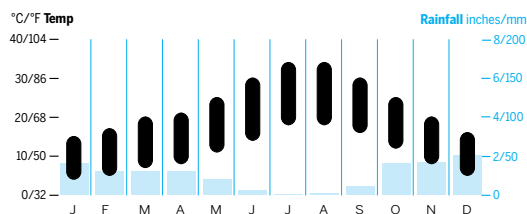
Humble villages and gentle mountain trails offer a charming counterpoint to imperial cities and ancient ruins in this area of Morocco. The fertile plains of the north have acted as Morocco's breadbasket for centuries. The Romans left remains at Volubilis, followed in turn by Muslim dynasties who created Morocco's grandest imperial city: Fez.

The narrow streets of the Fez medina are this region's major drawcard. Meknès, another old imperial capital, offers a more pocket-sized experience but some epic relics from Moulay Ismail's reign. Nearby, the picturesque pilgrimage town of Moulay Idriss – for centuries off-limits to non-Muslims – still quietly exerts a mystical force but remains little-visited.

The Middle Atlas, home to the Barbary macaque, rise to the south: the area is made for tranquil ambles and forest picnics. Across the mountains, Morocco's distinctive kasbahs begin to make an appearance – a sure sign that the southern desert isn't far away.

When to Go

Fez



Apr Perfect spring weather and markets full of orange blossom scenting the air;

the best time to visit Volubilis.
Jun Hit Fez for the Festival of World Sacred Music.

Sep Summer's heat has burned off making for perfect sightseeing conditions.



Fez, Meknès & Middle Atlas Highlights

- 1 **Fez** (p286) Diving into the warren of this ancient city's medina looking for souqs and souvenirs, and enjoying the sound of the sublime at the Festival of World Sacred Music.
- 2 **Volubilis** (p332) Time travelling through Morocco's finest Roman ruins, strewn

with spectacular floor mosaics.

- 3 **Meknès** (p320) Exploring the outsized imperial architecture that characterised mighty Moulay Ismail's reign.
- 4 **Moulay Idriss** (p334) Spending a day and night on pilgrimage in this holy town.

- 5 **Ifrane National Park** (p338) Hiking in the rolling Middle Atlas mountains around Ifrane and Azrou, perhaps catching sight of a native monkey or two.

- 6 **Bhalil** (p315) Making like a troglodyte with a stay in this hilltop village famed for its cave dwellers.