

World66's guide to Morocco

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Morocco

Morocco is a safe place to visit. For any traveler, even post September 11th, Morocco is still a fascinating country filled with mysterious beauty and extreme contrasts. Even though it is only one hour by ferry from Spain, it seems worlds apart with a deeply traditional culture based on Islam, that might be quite unknown to some of you. In one day, you will see young ladies in short skirts, women totally covered and only revealing their eyes, old men in 'jellabas' (long robes with a hood) and water sellers in traditional costume. You can explore thousand years' old medinas, where you may feel as if you are walking in medieval times. Feel the modern rush of cosmopolitan cities, the quiet beauty and solitude of sand dunes in the desert near Merzouga or see snowcapped mountains dotted with Berber villages and beautiful beaches.

Travel in Morocco is intense and rewarding but not without complications. Young men will present themselves as guides, women may get more attention than they are use to and simply ignoring these complexities of daily Moroccan life doesn't always do the trick. But don't let this stop you. Like many contrasts in Morocco, there is another side of the coin: Moroccans generosity and hospitality. Once you have adapted to their way of life, there is a universe of intriguing travel opportunities and many hands to shake less than 50 miles from Europe.

The great imperial cities of Rabat , Fez , Meknes and Marrakesh have medieval rhythms about them with their dynastic monuments, medinas and squares filled with snake charmers and story-tellers.

Three mountain ranges present diverse landscapes and three different ways of life: the Rif in the north, with my favorite mountain village, Chefchaouen , the High Atlas and the Anti-Atlas, that remains mostly undiscovered. Azrou is a quiet Berber town only 2 hours drive from Rabat, worth visiting for its forest and calm atmosphere. Three different Berber groups inhabit these mountains and, on the whole, these areas are more relaxing than the large cities. You should consider trekking, even if you are a beginner, so you'll catch a glimpse of one of the many aspects of authentic Moroccan life.

If you only have one week and you would like to see amazing geological landscapes, palm oasis, painted rocks, and the Berber way of life, Tafraoute is not to be missed. Only two hours drive from Agadir , the drive is almost as stunning as the destination.

The oases of the pre-Sahara present yet another timeless image of the Arab world with immense palm groves in the desert. Not to be missed are the fabulous mud kasbahs and ksours (palaces and family houses) which you can find near Zagora , Tineghir , and Erfoud . There is so much to see in this country, you may decide to stay for awhile

Morocco – History

Before Oqba bin Nafi brought Islam to Morocco in 680 AD. the Berber population had seen their fair share of invaders: Romans, Byzantines and Vandals. But this time things were different. Both the Arab conquerors and their new faith took firmly root in all of North Africa. From Morocco, the Arab conquest continued: fifty years later, the army of Islam, strengthened by new Berber converts was half way in France, having taken hold of almost all of Spain.

However, it did take some time before Morocco was an established part of the Islamic Empire. In many remote parts of the country, Berber tribes were either still not converted or had made their own religious mix of old habits and new influences. An important step towards mainstream Islam was set by the Idrissids. Moulay Idriss, a refugee from the family of the Prophet Mohammed, set up a court near the still existing Roman town of Volubilis. His son Moulay Idriss II founded Fes and a dynasty: The Idrissids. It was to control most of Morocco for the coming centuries.

When the Almoravids, the zealous defenders of the faith, came from the Mauritanian desert, the Idrissian empire had crumbled into warring principalities. In 1054 Youssef bin Tachfin led his warriors to Ghana in a holy war. Having conquered Ghana, he turned North and in 1062 set foot in Marrakech. It didn't take them much longer to subdue the whole of Morocco and a big part of Spain.

As fast as the Almoravides took control of North–Africa, they lost it. In 1145, a new group of Berber puritans led their troops down from the Atlas mountains into the fertile valley of Marrakech: The Almohads. Led by Ibn Toumert, they attacked Almoravides for being subject to Andalucian corruptions. The Almohads were extremely succesful. The third Sultan Yaqoub el Mansour had conquered all of North–Africa and hab given the Christians a beating in Spain by the time of 1195.

Almohad rule ended during the first half of the 13–th century. Other dynasties followed: Merinids, the great builders of Fes and Marrakech, the Wattasids, their Viziers, and the Saadians, who did their best to expulse the Christians from Morocco. But none of them had the power and the success of the earlier ones. Morocco became a bit of a backwater under their rule. In these years of relative weakness and isolation, Moroccan society and culture did find its shape, e.g. the institution of the Makhzen (the governing power) was firmly established.

In 1665 the Alouites, the shereefs from the Tafilelt Oasis, came to power. Their dynasty proved, in some ways, to be the most succesful. Morocco had a last touch of Imperial Grandeur under Moulay Ismail, the Louis XIV of Morocco. The rule of his heirs extends to our present day with King Hassan II.

During the long reign of the Alaouits, the French colonization made a 50 year interception. In 1912, the Moroccan Sultan Moualy Hafid was forced to sign a treaty by which he placed the throne under the protectorate of the French. In the following fifty years, Morocco was modernized quickly by the French and all of the land was brought under central control, something that had been quite rare in the predecing centuries. The end of French rule in Morocco was hastened by the brave conduct of Mohammed V. He formed the head of the resistance and thus not only got his countries' independence but also made sure his dynasty could continue.

His son Hassan II took control after his death in 1961. He has tried to combine the roles of the progressive head of the state, the traditional ruler and the religious leader in his person. To some extent, he has succeeded well. Morocco did go through some rough times in the seventies, but is back on its feet again. Political change, a bigger focus on human rights and economic growth make the Moroccan model stand out in both Africa and the Arab world.

all

The last Sultan

Walter Harris, an American journalist, has written an extremely funny account of the last Sultans to reign without the tutelle of Paris in Fes: 'Morocco that was'. See the section books.

Morocco – Getting Around

Morocco's Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF) operates one of the most modern rail systems in Africa linking most of the main centres. The trains are generally comfortable fast and a better option than the buses – if only because sleeping cars are available for many overnight trips. Lines go as far south as Marrakesh. For a time–table see: ONCF.

But if you miss the train the buses and grand taxis are by no means a last–ditch option.

Traveling Between Cities:

CTM: The national bus line, very comfortable, on schedule, seats are reserved and can be purchased in advance.

Souk buses: Souk buses do not always leave or arrive on time. They may stop in the middle of nowhere or in towns along the way looking for passengers. You'll have to bargain for the price to store your luggage on top of the bus. It's advisable to carry smaller pieces of luggage you can store on the bus with you.

Grand taxis: These large Mercedes travel between large towns and cities. They carry 6 passengers, however you can pay for empty seats so that the taxi goes earlier and you have more room. Ask the other passengers in the car what the fare is, if they don't know ask the driver. Baggage does not cost extra in a taxi.

Pick–up trucks (camio): In areas where there is no public transportation, people use these trucks to carry supplies and people to their village. They also take travelers at a rate they determine themselves.

If time is your enemy and you've got a bit cash to splash about consider the occasional internal flight to make the most of this beautiful country.

Airport transportation: There is a train from Rabat ville to the Casablanca airport. You can also hire a grand taxi from the bus station for \$60.

Renting a car isn't cheap in Morocco but deals can be struck with the smaller dealers. Gas is available pretty much everywhere. Take note that Moroccan roads are festooned with police and customs roadblocks.

Within cities:

Petit taxis: Every city has petit taxis which carry only three passengers. The fare is calculated by a meter. If there is no meter, or it does not work, ask the price before you begin. He may pick up other passengers. At night until sunrise the fare 50% more than daytime.

The bigger cities have public bus services and the average ticket price is about Dr2. Petits taxis are a common sight in most cities and major towns. They're licensed to carry up to three passengers and can be a useful way to avoid heat exhaustion and/or hustlers. .

Morocco – Getting There

air

Morocco's national airline is *Royal Air Maroc (AT)*. Airlines serving Morocco include *Air France Alitalia British Airways KLM Sabena Belgian World Airlines Lufthansa* and *Swissair*.

For free information on air travel from the UK only call the Air Travel Advisory Bureau in the UK on (0171) 636 5000 (London) *or* (0161) 832 2000 (Manchester).

Approximate flight times

From London to *Rabat* is 3 hours and to *Tangier* is 2 hours 30 minutes.

International airports

Casablanca (CAS) (Mohammed V) is 30km (19 miles) south of the city (travel time 35 minutes). Airport facilities include outgoing duty-free shop (closed after last arrival) post office banking and currency exchange facilities (open 24 hours) restaurant and bar (0800–2300) and car hire (*Avis Hertz* and *Europcar*). There are bus and taxi services into Casablanca and coach services available to Rabat.

Tangier (TNG) (Boukhalef Souahel) is 12km (7.5 miles) from the city (travel time 20 minutes). Airport facilities include outgoing duty-free shop banking and currency exchange facilities restaurant and bar (0900–2100) car hire facilities (*Avis Omnium Starc–Hertz* and *Moroccan Holidays*). Bus and taxi services are available into Tangier.

Sea

Principal ports are Tangier Casablanca and Ceuta. Lines serving these ports are *Transtour Compañía Trasmediterránea Limadet Bland Line* (from Spain and Gibraltar) *Polish Ocean Lines* and *Nautilus* (from Spain and the USA) and *Comanav*.

Car/passenger ferries

There are cheap and regular car- and passenger-ferry links between southern Spain and Tangier and the Spanish enclaves on the north Moroccan coast. Most links are roll-on roll-off car ferries except where shown. The routes are from Algeciras to Ceuta (Sebta) (car ferry); Algeciras to Tangier (hydrofoil and car ferry); Tarifa to Tangier (hydrofoil only); Gibraltar to Tangier (hydrofoil and car ferry); Almería to Melilla (car ferry) and Málaga to Melilla (car ferry).

There are also car ferries between Sète on the French coast (between Béziers and Montpellier on the Golfe du Lyon) and Tangier run by *Compagnie Marocaine de Navigation*.

Rail

Rail links between Morocco and Algeria are currently suspended. The main international routes are from Oujda to Algiers or from Oran to Algiers.

Road

The best road link is from southern Spain or France via passenger/car ferries (see above under *Sea*). The road link on the north Algerian border is currently closed. When it will be opened again, there will be two options at Oujda and at Figuig. The one in Figuig brings you directly on the road to Mali

The border with Mauritania is not closed if you're going south, but it isn't very easy either. The only way to do it is follow the coast and get your paperwork done in ed-Dakhla. Look in the ed-Dakhla section or see this site for more details: [GPS points](#)

Morocco – Festivals

ALMOND BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Tafraout/2nd Week in February

The Tafraout Valley, where almond-trees reign supremely, is enchanting to the eye at blossom time. Ranging from immaculate to blushing pink, the blooms do not last a very long life. This brief existence makes them even more attractive, drawing more and more visitors to face this spectacle.

WAX LANTERN FESTIVAL

Sale/Eve of Mouloud

The white town of Sale, twin sister of Rabat on the Bouregreg estuary, has preserved one of Morocco's most picturesque traditions; the wax lantern procession or 'Mawkib Esh Shomouaa'. The procession is said to date back to the Barbary period in Sale, when the Corsairs carried wax lanterns in procession to the sanctuary of Sidi Abdallah Ben Hassoun, the town's patron to implore his protection before a long voyage. It has become a beautiful and entertaining event. ROSE FESTIVAL

Kelaa of MGouna (Ourzazate Province)/Mid-May

In this grandiose setting, the day is marked by numerous events like folk-dancing and singing, handicrafts exhibitions, Diffa-banquets in tents, flower-decked floats, the election of Miss Rose, camel-rides and a splendid excursion by bus from Ourzazate down the valley of the Roses.

CHERRY FESTIVAL

Sefrou (Fez Province)/June

A three-days festival of entertainment. Numerous sporting competitions, a fantasia, a torch-light procession, fairground and finally the election of Miss Cherry with a parade by her cortege.

OLIVE FESTIVAL

Rafai (Fez Province)/Mid-December

A very pretty festival where one can see the traditional olive-picking ceremony, numerous 'Diffa' feasts and folklore events in a surprisingly vast area of olive groves.

HONEY FESTIVAL

Imouzer of Ida Ou Tanane (Agadir Province)/Early May

Argana is said to be the largest collective beehive in the world and also one of the most curious because of its construction, history and the way it is run. Most of the hives are made of split reed cylinders covered with clay. With the aid of a smoking brazier made out of baked earth, the bees and their queen are made to crawl out of the hive into a basket so that the honey can be classified as a historic monument.

FESTIVAL OF FIANCES

Imilchl Moussem/ 4th Week in September

Imilchl is a small high Atlas village at an altitude of 8,430 feet. For the young men and girls of the area, it is a tradition to get married on the day of the Moussem in ancient times. A holy man uses to bless the betrothed at Abdgoul and the legend goes that they will remain happy for the rest of their lives. The Finance Festival is staged on the site of the tomb of the old wise man, who is venerated in the High Atlas. It is a time for some 30,000 people from the mountains to assemble in tents for three days with their flocks, horses and camels. It is an occasion for the young girls to wear and show their finery, and their sumptuous silver jewelry and to dance the day and night away under the sun and the stars.

DATE FESTIVAL

Erfoud/Early October

This magnificent festival is held annually in the Erfoud area where nearly a million date-palms grow. There is grown a wide range of types of dates. Take for instance the majestic palm-tree, waving lazily in the warm breeze providing shade and a livelihood. The peasants who cultivate them rely on them for almost everything.

HORSE FESTIVAL

Tissa (Fez Province)/October

The picturesque center of Tissa, located a few miles off the main road in the Fez province, is the site of a gigantic competition between the various horse breeds. Every year in October, hundreds of riders assemble wearing their finery to present their mounts. Prize-giving and festivities create a very animated scene.

FESTIVAL OF FANTASIA Meknes/Beginning of September

It offers thousands of horsemen and their mounts the chance to meet and display their skills. This festival has become a major success.

Morocco – Eating Out

The Moroccan cuisine has a lot more to offer than just couscous. Delicious Tajines, soups, fantastic sweets, and the world famous pigeon pie, Pastilla. It would take us way too long to go into the specialities of the country, but here you'll find some useful info on Moroccan cooking. Bon Appetit / Bismillah!

all

Chicken with Chickpeas recipe

A recipe for a delicious typical Moroccan dish. Be sure to try this, or something else before you leave, it will already give you the taste of the country.

Morocco – Things to do

There are many sports to be done in Morocco. Golf, Hiking (see separate section), Skiing and Horseback riding offer great timepasses. For information about surfing see the Essaouira section.

Golf

Morocco has superb facilities in a setting of varied and magnificent landscapes. The Royal Dar–Es–Salaam Golf Club in Rabat classified among the most spectacular golf courses in the world.

There are fourteen courses in the country, a number that rises every year. You can contemplate the eternal snows on the Atlas in Marrakesh, breathe the fragrance of the pines and cedars on the hills around Tangier, enjoy the hundred–year–old oaks in the forest at Rabat, the joyful colours of the heather, tamarisk and junipers at Cabo Negro, the dunes at Agadir, at Benslimane, El Jadida, Mohammedia, Ouarzazate, Fez, Casablanca, Settat and play right at the heart of the Imperial city of Meknes, in the Splendid park of the Royal Palace. The green fee varies from 100 to 500 DH (US\$12 to US\$60). You can rent clubs, and electric vehicles as well as hire private caddies at most of the clubs. Some are closed one day a week (most commonly on Monday).

For more information contact: THE ROYAL MOROCCAN GOLF FEDERATION

Royal Dar–Es–Salaam Golf Club, Rabat, Morocco. Tel: (07) 75 59 60 / (07) 75 56 36 – Fax: (07) 75 10 26.

Skiing

You can ski in the High Atlas from January to March. Alpine skiing is best at Oukaïmeden, 70 km south of Marrakesh, otherwise go to Mischliffen in the Middle Atlas on the doorstep of Meknes and Fez. These resorts are equipped with ski lifts. Fans of cross–country skiing also have a wide choice: the massifs in the Rif, the Middle and High Atlas all offer exciting itineraries.

For information contact: ROYAL MOROCCAN SKI AND MONTAINEERING FEDERATION, Parc de la Ligue Arabe, BP 15899, Casablanca, Morocco. Tel: (02) 47 49 79 – Fax: (02) 47 49 79.

Riding

The horses are superb and the country ideal, so relax and enjoy the pleasures of riding amid fabulous scenery. Gallop the length of the long white beaches, among the dunes and through the forest of century-old oaks.

For more information contact: ROYAL MOROCCAN FEDERATION OF RIDING, Dar-es-Salaam, B/P/ 742 Rabat, Morocco. Tel: (07) 75 44 24 – Fax: (07) 75 47 38.

Morocco – Books

Literature about Morocco is rich and diverse. Storytelling is an ancient Moroccan tradition, as many of the dialects of Morocco are, in fact, oral and not written. Visit a weekly souk or the Djemma al Fna square in Marrakesh and you will see storytellers in action. Paul Bowles, an American writer and composer, began tape recording, transcribing (into Moroccan Arabic) and translating these stories in the 1950s. Mohammed Mrabet, Larbi Layachi and Ahmed Yacoubi collaborated with Bowles. Paul Bowles' stories reflect the darker side of the human spirit, Morocco and its people serving as his characters environment.

Both Moroccan authors (some in exile because of their writings) and authors from other countries living in Morocco have depicted a lively image of the country. Paul Bowles, Elias Canetti and Tahar Ben Jelloun are among the most famous. Many writers, like Tahar Ben Jelloun and Driss Chraïbi, live in exile and write in French, throwing an interesting, almost critical light, on Moroccan culture.

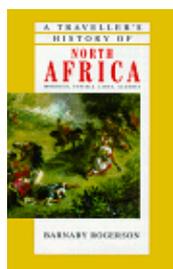
Anthropology is a hot topic and there are plenty of excellent writers on gender, politics and human rights. Fatima Mernissi is the most famous and writes for and about Moroccan women. Her studies on Moroccan culture and women are well worth reading, they may change your experience while traveling in Morocco.

all

Morocco that was

author: Walter
Harris
isbn: 0907871402
subject: history

A Traveller's History of North Africa



author: by Barnaby Rogerson, Barnby Rogerson, Denis Judd
isbn: 156656252X
subject: travel

A Dictionary of Moroccan Arabic

author: Richard S. Harrell
isbn: 0-87840-007-9
subject: language

Sacred Night

author: Tahar Ben
Jelloun
isbn: 0345364171
subject: Literature

The Land of the Moors

author: Budgett
Meakin
isbn: 1850771006
subject: history

A Dictionary of Moroccan Arabic

author: Richard S. Harrel
isbn: 0-87840-007-9
subject: Language

Morocco the Travelers' Companion

author: Margaret and Robin Bidwell
isbn: 0850435561
subject: Travel

Morocco The Traveller's Companion

author: Margaret and Robin Bidwell
isbn: 0-85043-556-1
subject: travel

A Dictionary of Moroccan Arabic

Dar

subject: Language

Let's Go Spain and Portugal '99



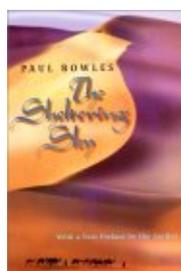
author:
isbn: 0312194994
subject: travel

Lonely Planet Morocco



author: Frances Linzee Gordon,Frances Linzee Gordon,D..
isbn: 0864425015
subject: travel

The Sheltering Sky



author: Paul
Bowles
isbn: 0880015829
subject: travel

Culture Shock!:Morocco



author: Orin
Hargraves
isbn: 1558682414
subject: culture

Albert Watson:Maroc (Signed)

author: Albert
Watson
isbn: 0737294213
subject: culture

Jean Genet in Tangier

author: Mohamed Choukri,Paul Bowles (Translator)
isbn: 0880012463
subject: culture

In Morocco

author: Edith
Wharton
isbn: 088001430X
subject: history

Jean Genet in Tangier

author: Mohamed Choukri,Paul Bowles (Translator)
isbn: 0880012463
subject: history

Matisse in Morocco:Paintings & Drawings, 1912–1913



author: Jack Cowart, Henri Matisse (Artist)
isbn: 0810925273
subject: history

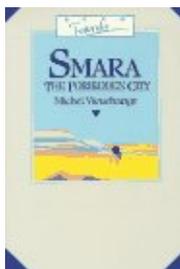
Morocco The Traveller's Companion

isbn: 0-85043-556-1

Long Distance Walks in North Africa

author: Matt Dickinson
isbn: 1-85223-523-3
subject: hiking

Smara



author: Michel
Vieuchange
isbn: 0880011467
subject: Literature

Morocco The Traveller's Companion

author: Margaret and Robin
Bidwell
isbn: 0-85043-556-1
subject: Travel

Morocco – People

Population: 29 114 497 (July 1998 est.)

Age structure:

0–14 years: 36% (male 5 398 692; female 5 200 660)

15–64 years: 59% (male 8 525 344; female 8 682 277)

65 years and over: 5% (male 606 203; female 701 321) (July 1998 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.89% (1998 est.)

Birth rate: 26.37 births/1 000 population (1998 est.)

Death rate: 6.24 deaths/1 000 population (1998 est.)

Net migration rate: –1.28 migrant(s)/1 000 population (1998 est.)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

15–64 years: 0.98 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.86 male(s)/female (1998 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 52.99 deaths/1 000 live births (1998 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 68.51 years

male: 66.49 years

female: 70.64 years (1998 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.35 children born/woman (1998 est.)

Nationality:*noun:* Moroccan(s)*adjective:* Moroccan**Ethnic groups:** Arab–Berber 99.1% other 0.7% Jewish 0.2%**Religions:** Muslim 98.7% Christian 1.1% Jewish 0.2%**Languages:** Arabic (official) Berber dialects French often the language of business government and diplomacy**Literacy:***definition:* age 15 and over can read and write*total population:* 43.7%*male:* 56.6%*female:* 31% (1995 est.)

Morocco – Economy

Economy—overview: Morocco faces the problems typical of developing countries—restraining government spending reducing constraints on private activity and foreign trade and keeping inflation within manageable bounds. Since the early 1980s the government has pursued an economic program toward these objectives with the support of the IMF the World Bank and the Paris Club of creditors. The dirham is now fully convertible for current account transactions; reforms of the financial sector have been implemented; and state enterprises are slowly being privatized. Drought conditions in 1997 depressed activity in the key agricultural sector holding down exports and contributing to a 2.2% contraction in real GDP. Favorable rainfalls in the fall of 1997 have led to forecasts of robust 8%–9% real GDP growth in 1998. Servicing the external debt preparing the economy for freer trade with the European Union improving education and living standards and finding jobs for Morocco's youthful population remain long-term challenges.

GDP: purchasing power parity—\$107 billion (1997 est.)**GDP—real growth rate:** –2.2% (1997 est.)**GDP—per capita:** purchasing power parity—\$3 500 (1997 est.)**GDP—composition by sector:***agriculture:* 14%

industry: 33%

services: 53% (1997)

Inflation rate—consumer price index: 3% (1997 est.)

Labor force:

total: 7.4 million

by occupation: agriculture 50% services 26% industry 15% other 9% (1985)

Unemployment rate: 16% (1997 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$10.4 billion

expenditures: \$10.75 billion including capital expenditures of \$1.9 billion (1996 est.)

Industries: phosphate rock mining and processing food processing leather goods textiles construction tourism

Industrial production growth rate: 4.5% (1996 est.)

Electricity—capacity: 3.788 million kW (1995)

Electricity—production: 10.8 billion kWh (1995)

Electricity—consumption per capita: 411 kWh (1995)

Agriculture—products: barley wheat citrus wine vegetables olives; livestock

Exports:

total value: \$6.9 billion (f.o.b. 1996)

commodities: food and beverages 30% semiprocessed goods 23% consumer goods 21% phosphates 17% (1995 est.)

partners: EU 63% Japan 7.7% India 6.6% US 3.4% Libya 3.4% (1996 est.)

Imports:

total value: \$9.7 billion (c.i.f. 1996)

commodities: semiprocessed goods 26% capital goods 25% food and beverages 18% fuel and lubricants 15% consumer goods 12% raw materials 4% (1995 est.)

partners: EU 57% US 6.6% Saudi Arabia 5.3% Brazil 2.8% (1996 est.)

Debt—external: \$23.4 billion (1996 est.)

Economic aid:

recipient: ODA \$297 million (1993)

note: \$2.8 billion debt canceled by Saudi Arabia (1991)

Currency: 1 Moroccan dirham (DH) = 100 centimes

Exchange rates: Moroccan dirhams (DH) per US\$1—9.822 (January 1998) 9.527 (1997) 8.716 (1996) 8.540 (1995) 9.203 (1994) 9.299 (1993)

Fiscal year: July 1–June 30

Morocco – Map

Morocco – Sights

What to do in Morocco on vacation.

all

Cascade Ouzoud

Cascade Ouzoud should be classified as one of the "natural wonders" of Morocco. Approximately 300 meters high, the cascade is northeast of Marrakech about 150km. Like some stage-plays in New York City being "off-off Broadway," the cascade is also "off-off" the beaten path. But the journey there is well worth the effort. You will find at the top quaint and cheap little hostels, good restaurants serving excellent meals and small shops selling hand-made Moroccan goods.

Journey down the well constructed path through olive trees to the bottom of the gorge and look up as the water cascades over the edge far above you. You can have your lunch served to you right at the waters edge after having taken a refreshing swim in the large pool formed by the falling torrent. Or, you can just sit quietly while drinking your mint tea and watch the Rhesus Macaques (Desert Monkeys) begging for handouts.

Ask one of the locals where the source of the water is and they will take you about 6km east to it. You will walk through olive groves for about 1 or 2 km and pass an ancient olive press that must have known the Moulay Idriss. Finally, you will come to the source; a "gush" of water from an artesian spring out of the

ground that is so cold and refreshing you will not want to leave.

To get there, take Highway P24 from Marrakech northeast which goes to Fez. When you see the road panels for Afourer turn there and scale the mountain road (S508) and pass through Bin-el-Quidane (You'll know it by the huge dam and man-made lake). Just keep following the road panels to Cascade Ouzoud.

email: admin@berbertours.net
address: Boutique Lac Iriqi, Ave Mohamed V
tel: 212-68-51-50-87
url: www.berbertours.net
zipcode: 45900 Zagora

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Notes:

Agadir

Agadir has a beautiful beach, however it tends to attract the wrong kind of tourism. As the result of an earthquake in 1960, Agadir is a completely modern city, which reminded me of towns in Northern Germany. It is also permanently full of tourists, especially German tourists (German is the second language of the land). It does have excellent luxury hotels, where activities are organized and there is some form of night-life. In addition, there are some beautiful golf courses. But if you are searching for:

- a) the real Morocco
- b) an example of traditional architecture.
- c) a break from it all.

Agadir is not a good place to spend much time. It does represent a useful transport hub and an easy point of access if your coming by plane. Cheap flights from Europe often go to Agadir.

Furthermore Agadir is a good place to make daytrips from to nearby highlights including the old walled city of Taroudannt, Paradise valley and the Massa Lagoon.

Agadir – Day Trips

Agadir is a convenient point to make daytrips from. Nearby are great beaches, the Atlas mountains, with beautiful Paradise Valley, and the ancient town of Taroudannt.

all

Taroudannt

The nicest daytrip to make to the old walled city of Taroudannt. Gives you an impression of what Agadir will have been like before the earthquake. Regular grand taxi's from Inezgane, also many organized trips by hotels.

: It Boudad *soou:* anzi

The Massa Lagoon

The Massa Lagoon is the largest bird habitat of Morocco. Many flamingoes, ducks and other water birds. If you do not have your own transport you will probably end up hiring a grand taxi from Inezgane for the whole day.

Paradise Valley

The waterfalls at Ida Ouatane and the valley, known as Paradise Valley, is one of the nicest things to do from Agadir. It does involve some real traveling and it is wise to go for a two day trip. It is possible to stay in Immouzer. The best day to go is probably on thursday, when there are more buses and taxi's due to the fact that it's market day in Immouzer. On other days there is just a bus at 2 pm, that arrives at 6 pm in Immouzer. A rental car or your own wheels give you the opportunity to go there on your own, the road is wholly surfaced until Izzoumer.

The valley itself has many Berber villages, a winding gorge lined with palm trees and at Immouzer the famous falls.

Agadir – Eating Out

Agadir has many restaurants. most of them catering exclusively for tourists. For regular Moroccan meals you should head for the Nouvelle Talbortj, where there are many cheap places.

all

Le Miramar

The most awful place to go to. Fish and seafood are awful. Also a bit expensive.

address: Bd. Mohammed V

tel: 08 – 840770

L'Etoile de Marrakesh

Good Moroccan food, near the Nouvelle Talbortj on the rue de la Foire.

address: rue de la Foire

Via Veneto

Best Italian food in south Morocco.

address: Bd. Hassan II

tel: 08 – 841467

Mille et une nuits

Good and cheap real Moroccan food. In the Talborjt area.

address: Place Lahcen Tamri

Agadir – Sights

Agadir has lost most of its sights, but a few remain. They are mostly crowded with the beach people who want to do something cultural on that particular morning, but they do give you some insight in Morocco. If you are not going inland you should at least visit them. If you are, you can just as well skip them.

all

Kasbah

The Kasbah is a bit out of the center, about 8 km. The sight from the Kasbah over the coast is great. The construction itself is not grand. It has an inscription in Dutch, saying that the Netherlands founded a trading

post here in 1746. *samir*: An excellent view of Agadir and Anza . A historic site for all tourists , and is a must see for everyone . A reminder of old Agadir but not much is left . The view alone is worth the trip .

Marche Municipal

In the center, between the Av. des FAR and Av. Sifi Mohammed, this is the major market. Not very cheap, but nice to stroll around. A bit touristy.

Souq

Rue ben Brahim. A walled market place with many shops and better prices than the Marche Municipal. *SAID OUBELLA*:

Fishing Port

The fishing port is worth a visit. Best time to come is at dusk when the boats return. You can buy cheap fish, which they will cook for you before your eyes. Always fresh. *abbas*: love maroc *abbas*:

Agadir – Accommodation

Many people in Agadir will come on a flight–plus–hotel basis, which means that most hotels near the beach are focussed almost exclusively on groups. In the nouvell Talbortj area you will find more budget places, where travelers and Moroccans on a holiday stay.

all

Atlantic Hotel

Comfortable hotel on the boulevard Hassan II, close to the city center. Value for money.

address: Bd, Hassan II

tel: 08 – 843661

Ait Laayoune

Well run, clean and cheap place in the city center.

address: Yacoub el Manzour

tel: 08 – 824375

Sud Bahai

Expensive hotel with a big swimming pool and friendly staff. In off season you can try to haggle about the prices. *marta arduino*: I'd like knowing if it's possible to book a double room for two night (30–31 july); I'd like also knowing the price. Thank you. M. Arduino *andrzej*: i have never been there so i'd like to know anything abt this hotel like rates,accomodation conditions and facilities etc..

address: Rue des Administrations Publiques

tel: 08 – 840782

Agadir – History

The history of Agadir goes way back. Unfortunately, there is nothing left to show for it. It all ended with a huge earthquake in 1960.

Before that fateful day, Agadir enjoyed the same history as most of the other coastal towns of the Sultanate. It was conquered by the Portuguese in the 15th century. The European traded directly with Saharan caravans, which cut out the middlemen from Fes and Marrakesh. A Portuguese merchant built the castle of Santa Cruz de Capo Gere. The castle rapidly became the largest and most profitable Portuguese fortress in Morocco. The Saadians, a holy family from the Draa Valley, re-conquered Agadir in the 16th century. It enjoyed some autonomy from the central state in the centuries to follow, mainly because it was on the other side of the High Atlas.

Agadir made world headlines in 1911, when the Germans sent a gunboat to the harbor. By the end of the 19th century, Spain, France, Italy and Britain had split North Africa into agreed areas, excluding the Germans. In the pretense of helping a Moroccan sultan claim independence, the Germans sent a gunboat to Agadir. After much colonial diplomacy and postponements, Morocco's independence was bought for several million square miles of French West Africa.

Shortly after midnight, in February 1960, Agadir was totally destroyed and half of its inhabitants were buried alive in an earthquake that would change the face of this coastal city.

Agadir – Getting Around

Distances in Agadir are relatively big, so you might want to use the petits taxis a little more often. You can also rent mopeds and motorbikes. They are useful if you want to go to the beaches just out of town.

To get to Inezgane, the main transport hub of Agadir and the whole region, you need to take a bus (no. 22) or a grand taxi.

Agadir – Getting There

Inezgane is most likely to be your point of entry to Agadir if you're coming by bus or grand taxi. Inezgane is a very Moroccan suburb of Agadir and it has an enormous parking lot, full of buses and taxis and people shouting the names of the towns you might want to go to.

Agadir does not have a train station.

Agadir has an international airport situated 25 km east of Town. It is not always easy to get a cheap ride into town from the airport. Grand Taxi's have fixed, stiff tariffs, and most groups arriving have their bus waiting for them. Try to team up with fellow travelers before hiring a taxi to share the fare. It is also cheaper to go Inezgane first.

Agadir – Practical Information

Agadir – Internet Cafes

all

AGADIRNET

tel: 212 8 82 11 80
email: postmaster@agadirnet.net.ma
33, 34 Immeuble OUMLIL
address: Agadir
MOROCCO
url: www.agadirnet.net.ma

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Notes:

Ait Ourir

Ait Ourir is located between Marrakesh and Ouarzazate (40 Kms from Marrakesh) and it can be seen on the way if you are going over the Tizi-n-Tichka pass. It is a typical Berber town with a very lively market on Tuesdays.

Ait Ourir is crossed by Oued Zat, Zat river. Nowadays, it's nearly empty from March to December but we still remember its last fury (1986/87) when the bridge (called "bridge of Zat") and half of "Coq Hardy", a lovely "Auberge" fell down in the river. Having a walk into that river is a unique moment. The view of salty water's effects and a good opportunity to find nice ametists should make passers by have a break there.

Ait Ourir – Getting There

You may go there by bus from Marrakesh(4 per day) or taxi (everytime but not very comfortable – 6 persons per car is the rule). We rather suggest an investment in a car rental from Marrakesh and have a hole benefit of it until Ouarzazate.

all

Oued ZAT (river)

Ait Ourir is crossed by Oued Zat, Zat river. Nowadays, it's nearly empty from March to December but we still its last fury (1986/87) when the bridge (called "bridge of Zat") and half of "Coq Hardy", a lovely "Auberge" fallled down the river. Having a walk into that river is a unique moment. The view of salty water's effects and a good opportunity to find nice ametists should make passerby have a break there.

Ait Ourir – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Al Hoceima

Al Hoceima is mainly known as a beach resort. It is a pleasant place to rest while touring the Rif. Al Hoceima was built by the Spanish in 1926, after they suppressed a Rif rebellion. The Spanish influences remain, however most new construction is cheap North African style.

The Plage Quemado is right in the center of town between two massive sea cliffs. There are a couple of quieter beaches a few km out of town on the Nador road. From certain points on this road, you can catch a glimpse of the Spanish-controlled island of Penon de Alhucemas. It can be a beautiful site, with its white church and tower in the Mediterranean-blue sea, however it is used mainly as a prison and military base.

Al Hoceima – Internet Cafes

all

PC RIF NET

price: 5 USD /Hour
tel: 011-212-9-98-2502
email: pcrifnet@enteleky.bizhosting.com
hours: 8-10 daily
address: Angle Andalous & Mouahiddin
Alhoceima, Alhoceima Morocco
url: www.alhoceima.com

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Notes:



Asilah

Asilah feels and looks a lot like a Spanish town in Andalucia. It is a lovely, old, very clean white-washed town on the Atlantic. The town has a very quiet feel, and makes for a good stop. The ramparts and towers of the town give you the impression time has stood still here, and if you walk down the small alleys at lunch time you can't help but wonder at the tranquillity.

Asilah – Eating Out

There are many good, reasonable restaurants on Avenue Hassan II serving fresh seafood. Try the paella!

all

asilah

address: 24 hanan.tangier

reastaurants in asilah

The restaurant is located in the heart of asilah,near the Bab(gate)Kasbah.It offers great choice of sea fruits with reasonable prices.The service is highly hospitable.Sitting on its terrace you can enjoy a panoramic view on the little fishermen port.Wish you a good journey to Asilah city of arts. :

address: reastaurant la place

tel: 0021239417326

reastaurants in asilah

The restaurant is located in the heart of Asilah,near the Bab(gate)Kasbah.It offers great choice of seafood at reasonable prices.The service is highly hospitable. While sitting on its terrace you can enjoy a panoramic view on the little fishermen port.Wish you a good journey to Asilah city of arts. : Beste allemaal, Hoe is het met jullie, be mij gaat oke! Ik zaal het even even kort houden, het is al laat in Nederland en ik ben een betje moe, ik wens jullie een heel fijne avond tot gauw in Asilah. Groetjes Ahmed :

address: reastaurant la place

tel: 0021239417326

Asilah – Day Trips

The Monoliths of MSoura can be found 25 km south-east of Asilah. This desolate area has an impressive neolithic stone circle. They were arranged in a perfect ellipse, of the 400 stone circles in Britian, there are only 30 perfect ellipsis, and there are no other stone circles in the world. You need a local guide and a reliable vehicle to get there.

The Roman ruins of Lixus was one of the Phoenicians most successful settlements in Morocco. It is 5 km

north of the city of Larache. Although it is not as stunning or well-excavated as Volubilis, it is seldom crowded and has an interesting feel to it. A grande taxi can take you from either Asilah or Larache for a reasonable price.

Asilah – Accommodation

Hotel Zelis on 10 avenue Mansour Eddahabi (9 41 70 69) is a wonderful, clean, three star hotel with rooms with views on the ocean. The staff is very friendly. 300 dh Hotel Patio de la luna in Plaza Zelaya N 12 (941 60 74) is a charming, newly redecorated hotel outside the medina, owned by a Spanish man. Its worth a look at the rooms just for their decoration. 300 dh Hotel Marhaba in Plaza Zelaya is cheaper but clean.

Asilah – History

Asilah has shared the fate of the other coastal towns. It was the first town to fall to the Portuguese and it took the Moroccans a lot of trouble to get it back. During the Spanish protectorate of the North not much attention was spent on this town. The Spaniards were way to busy trying to control the Rif mountains.

Asilah – Getting There

Asilah has a train station. Trains to Tangiers take about 45 minutes. There are about 4 trains a day. For a time table see ONCF.

There are about 10 buses a day going to Tanger and about 5 of those continue to Larache. Both take about an hour. Grand taxi's in both directions leave when full.

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Notes:



Azemmour

Azemmour is the least visited of all the coastal towns. It stands at the place where the Oumm er-Rabi'a (the biggest river in Morocco) flows into the Atlantic, just north of El Jadida and south of Casablanca . The Portuguese built a circuit of walls which remain intact. The most impressive views of the walls and the medina are from across the river. The old town has an interesting mellah (old Jewish town) and is worth a stroll.

The embroidery of Azemmour is beautiful and well-known in Morocco. If you are interested in bird-watching, there are some rewarding areas near the mouth of the river.

Azemmour – Eating Out

Restaurant

La Perle, a good but expensive restaurant (130 dh/person) serves delicious seafood. Its a ½ hour walk through a eucalyptus forest outside the town, there is a sign post called "Balneaire du Haouzia" (a small campground).

Azemmour – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Azrou

Azrou is a very friendly Berber town situated 80 kilometers south of Fez. It's a wonderful place to stop and relax when you can't take anymore souks and hustlers. The town lies between steep wooded hills and a volcanic outcrop, at an altitude of 1200 meters. Thus, the town's name comes from the Berber word, Azrou or "rock". Azrou has a tradition of weaving as it was an old market town of a nomadic people. Newly woven rugs and blankets can be found at the Tuesday souk or the Ensemble Artisanal. The town is famous for its green tiled roofs.

The region is exceptionally beautiful. The cedar forests, with its monkeys, is a great place to wander about. The cedar forests stretch south of Azrou for approximately 15 km, until you reach the volcanic cone called Jbel Hebri.. Nearby you can visit Le belvedere d'Ito at 15 km with great views over the mountains. The best time to go is in the morning. Bekrit is a small village about 49 km from Azrou. Close to the village lies the lake of Sidi Ali, a lovely body of water filled with fish. Other excursions include le Lac Afenouir, 21 km of bad roads in the direction of Midelt, and Mirt, 32 km in the direction of Khenifra with a good market on Thursday.

The springs of the Oum R'biaa make for a great daytrip. At about 2 hours drive from Azrou, the springs are a fantastic place to relax. Eat lunch in one of the many straw huts at the base of a waterfall. This is a very unique and beautiful excursion worth the drive. Do be careful of the small children during the drive down, who play chicken with cars by running out into the road.

Azrou – Accommodation

Hotel des Cedres on Place Mohammed V has spacious and clean rooms for a good price (50 dh). Meals are a bit expensive but worth it.

Hotel Panorama has rooms with heat, but not much of a view.

Azrou – Getting There

Azrou is on the road from Fez to Midelt and Khenifra so usually it is not hard to get there. Also from Meknes it is easy to reach.

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Notes:

Boumalne

Boumalne du Dades is a small town that overlooks the valley. It makes for a pleasant stop in the valley and it is a good base for walking expeditions.

The oasis surrounding the town are very relaxing and you might want to spend more time here than you had planned. Boumalne provides an excellent base for hiking in the mountains stretching to the south, the Djebel Saghro as well as the gorges to the north. The Vallee des Oiseaux is also a very good day trip from here.

Boumalne – Getting Around

There is not much to get around in, in town. If you want to explore the region, it is best to check in the cheap hotels. They are always able and willing to help you to arrange a trek in the Jbel Saghro or help you find a truck ride up the Gorge du Dades.

Boumalne – Getting There

Boumalne is most easily reached from Tineghir by grand taxi. They are quite regular and take less than an hour. You should also be possible to find one coming from Ouarzazate.

Boumalne – Internet Cafes

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Notes:



Casablanca

Casablanca is the economic capital of Morocco and the biggest city, with about 5 million people. Tourists coming to Casa expect to find a romantic town, as depicted in the classic Humphrey Bogart film of the same name. They will soon be disappointed. The film was actually shot in Florida. The only thing that will remind them of the film, are the piano players in the bars of the more fancy hotels. They will play the theme from the song all night long.

The town is basically a big commercial and industrial city and its medina (market) is nothing in comparison with those of Fez or Marrakesh. If you arrive in Casa, you might consider heading north to Rabat (100 km) or south to Marrakech from the train station in the airport. However, there are some interesting sites to see in Morocco's largest city. The biggest must see of Casa is the new Hassan II Mosque. One afternoon is generally more than enough to see all that the average traveler would want to see of Casablanca.

Casablanca – Nightlife and Entertainment

You must remember this... Well, Rick's Place is not to be found. There are quite a few places in international hotels, with Bogart lookalikes as waiters, and black Piano players, but not the real thing.

Casa does have quite some good nightlife. You can check out the following addresses.

all

La Bodega

A Spanish pub, restaurant they have good food and nice music if you really want to have a good dance that's a place to be and they have good service

address: 129 Rue Allal Ben Abdallah

Closing Time: 21:00

Au Petit Poucet

The restaurant on the Bd. Mohammed V has a bar attached to it, where you can drink. *Ihssan: Yubundari bin Yando:* This is the greatest place to go for a fun night.

Don Quijote

To find the real Casa drinking scene: head for the Don Quijote on Bd. Houphouët Boigny, at the junction with the Av. des FAR. For a quiet drink; move on. : it is great *vahou oble Jean Claude:* je voudrais une chambre du 27 septembre pour un séjour d'un mois dans votre établissement au Maroc. je peux savoir combien ça va me coûter. merci j.claude je viens du Sénégal et je suis ivoirien.

Le balcon 33

On 33 Bd. de la Corniche, this is the best place to go out for a nice evening of dancing.

Le Tube

Popular disco near the Corniche, on the same boulevard as Le Balcon 33. Same crowd. *4soli3ci:*
Palm Beach Club

The Palm Beach Club in Ain Diab is for serious beer drinking. They do belly dancing shows. *ih sane: joyce:*

Casablanca – Eating Out

The best restaurants are to be found in downtown Casa, near the Corniche and in the shoppings center "Centre 2000". In the Medina there are cheap places where you can eat for a dollar or two.

all

Au Petit Poucet

This is the Old Casa. Sketches of the aviator / writer Saint-Exupery on the wall, almost deaf waiters, table silver etc. The food is OK, but not spectacular.

address: 86, Bd Mohammed V

al Intissar

In the center, this restaurant does good Moroccan style cuisine. Good food and not expensive.

address: 14 Rue Chaouia

A Ma Bretagne

Africa's best restaurant is located 2 km west of Ain Diab. Not as expensive as it would be in Europe or the US, but do expect to pay about 40 dollars a person. Closed on sunday and in August.

address: Sidi Abderrahman

tel: 02-362112

Le Mekong

Best Chinese / Vietnamese restaurant in town. Reasonable prices. Closed on monday.

address: Centre
2000

tel: 02-276536

Taverne du Dauphin

Good fish restaurant in the center. A bit on the exoensive side. You might want to reserve.

address: 115 Bd. Houphouet Boigny

tel: 02-221200

Taverne du Dauphin

Good fish restaurant in the center. A bit on the expensive side. You might want to reserve.

address: 115 Bd. Houphouet Boigny

tel: 02-221200

Casablanca – Accommodation

Casablanca has a good range of hotels, ranging from the luxurious Hyatt to simple places where you can get a room with a bed and that's it. What follows is a choice, please feel free to add your own ideas.

all

Hotel Idou Anfa

This is really a great, luxurious hotel which you can book for a relatively low price: single about 60\$, double about 70\$, 130\$ for a suite. For that money you get in European capitals only shabby rooms. *Clarence Garzoli*: Spent several nights at the Idou Anfa in September. Found the room was fine, but the staff a bit surly. The view of the illuminated new Mosque from the panoramic bar at the top, was spectacular—a must do!

address: 85 Bd d'Anfa – Casablanca

tel: +212-22-20 02 35

url: www.idouanfa.com

Auberge de Jeunesse

Well maintained youth hostel. Cheap option, it is located on a small square near the walls of the old city.

address: 6 place Amiral Philibert

tel: 02-220551

Foucauld

An old French hotel in a nice neighbourhood with many eating possibilities. Cheap.

address: 52, Rue Jilali

tel: 02-222666

Excelsior

The oldest surviving hotel of Casa, going back to 1915. It has an elegant form, and is not as expensive as it probably once was. Near the Gare du Port. For a couple so one double room for 5 night, from the 10th till the 15th of January 2002. Night + Breakfast. 5 nights and 4 breakfast. Would like the location of the hotel and prices. Thank you.

Hotel de Paris

In the center of town and pretty good. It may be a wise idea to book in advance.

address: 2, Rue Sharif Amzian

tel: 02-273871

La Corniche

Your best option near the beach. Has its own swimming pool.

address: Bd. de la Corniche

tel: 02-362782

Casablanca – History

Casablanca was founded by the Portuguese as Casa Branca. It was never a very important town until the French came to Morocco in the beginning of the 20-th century. They started to develop the axis Rabat (their capital) – Casablanca at high speed, which gave Casa its position as the economic powerhouse of Morocco. The old cities of Fes and Marrakesh started slowly to lose their positions, and many of the merchant families understood that the real money was to be made on the coast. Their move to Casablanca speeded up the process.

Casa played an important role in World War II –not the one depicted in the motion picture Casablanca– when in 1943 Churchill and Roosevelt met in one of its suburbs Anfa for the Allied Leader's summit.

Casablanca – Getting Around

They will be building a subway in Casa after 2000 and this not such a bad idea. Casa is such a big town that you spend a lot of time in a taxi going to one end from the other.

There are also regular buses, but it's not always easy to find out where and when they leave.

Within town you might also consider taking the normal train, since there are four different train stations in Casa.

Casablanca – Getting There

Casa is the transport hub of the country, so you shouldn't have any difficulty getting there and away. Going to Rabat, Marrakech, Fes, or Meknes the train is a wise choice. Moroccan trains are reliable, clean and fast. For a time-table see: ONCF.

For destinations down the coast (Azemmour, el-Jadida, Safi Essaouira) there are many buses at the bus station in the centre of town. Count about half an hour to get out of Casa and the 2 hours for every 100 km.

Casablanca – Shopping

Casablanca – Sights

all

Ain Diab

The beach at Ain Diab is actually quite nice. Many beach clubs line the Ocean front with names like Le Tonga, Miami or Tahiti. Daycards can be expensive, but you can shop around and as a tourist you might have a chance to be let in at a reduced price. *sara:* reola *mona:* nice

Lusitania

Lusitania is the Jewish district of Casablanca. About 5000 jews still live in the city. The main Synagogue, the Namarroch is at the corner of the rue Rousseau and the Rue Ibn Rochd. There are also different jewish schools in the quarter. *Priscila:*

Place Mohammed V

Also known as Place des Nations Unies, this square in the centre of Casablanca is one of the nicest examples of French Colonial Architecture. This kind of architecture, known as Mauresuqe, was heavily influenced by art deco. *Benali Naima: mona:* nice

Hassan II Mosque

There is no arguing about taste; it's really the kind of thing Donald Trump would love. It's one of the biggest in the world. Its also one of the most expensive, \$800 million went into the project of building it, all Moroccans have directly contributed – a tax was imposed on them to help build it. Non–Muslims can see the luxurious homage to Allah. The entry fee is 100dh.

Casablanca – Internet Cafes

all

Cyber Espace

address: 32 Rue El Bekri
Casablanca

Hotel Sheraton

address: 1er étage
Casablanca

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Notes:

Cascades Ouzoud

Cascade Ouzoud should be classified as one of the "natural wonders" of Morocco. Approximately 300 meters high, the cascade is northeast of Marrakech about 150km. Like some stage-plays in New York City being "off-off Broadway," the cascade is also "off-off" the beaten path. But the journey there is well worth the effort. You will find at the top quaint and cheap little hostels, good restaurants serving excellent meals and small shops selling hand-made Moroccan goods.

Journey down the well constructed path through olive trees to the bottom of the gorge and look up as the water cascades over the edge far above you. You can have your lunch served to you right at the waters edge after having taken a refreshing swim in the large pool formed by the falling torrent. Or, you can just sit quietly while drinking your mint tea and watch the Rhesus Macaques (Desert Monkeys) begging for handouts.

Ask one of the locals where the source of the water is and they will take you about 6km east to it. You will walk through olive groves for about 1 or 2 km and pass an ancient olive press that must have known the Moulay Idriss. Finally, you will come to the source; a "gush" of water from an artesian spring out of the ground that is so cold and refreshing you will not want to leave.

To get there, take Highway P24 from Marrakech northeast which goes to Fez. When you see the road panels for Afourer turn there and scale the mountain road (S508) and pass through Bin-el-Quidane (You'll know it by the huge dam and man-made lake). Just keep following the road panels to Cascade Ouzoud.

Cascades Ouzoud – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Chaouen

Chefchaouen (literally "look at the peaks" in Arabic) is an enchanting town sitting at the foot of the Rif Mountains. It is a unique place to visit for various reasons: it is small and manageable yet friendly to tourists; the mountain air and atmosphere are relaxing; and one can catch a glimpse of rural life while hiking in the surrounding mountains.

The well-preserved medina is a 15th century relic from the Muslim civilization of Andalusia. Narrow streets wind through blue-white walls where children greet you in Spanish. On the northern side, you'll find ground-room floors crowded with weaving looms. Many of the artisans are friendly and will invite you in for a chat. (They may also invite you for a smoke; the town is filled with kif and hashish because of its location). The main square in the center of the medina (Plaza Uta el-Hammam) is a delightful place to sip fresh orange juice and look at the mountain peaks, the Grand Mosque and the Kasbah walls. The 17th century ruins of the Kasbah runs along one side of the square. The red-hued walls of the Kasbah enclose a beautiful garden and a small folk museum. Try to have a meal at Casa Hassan in the medina.

Chaouen – History

Chaouen was founded in 1471. It was established as a base for attacks on the Portuguese who were in Ceuta and Ksar es-Sghir. The neighboring tombs of Saint like Moulay Abdessalam Ben Mchich gave the town a regional importance on religious matters. When Muslims fled Spain and Christian held cities in North Africa Chaouen grew rapidly. After this rapid growth the town slowly declined and was of little importance when the Spaniards established themselves in 1920.

all

Walter Harris

One of the three Europeans to set foot in Chaouen before 1920 was Walter Harris. This colourful man has written a number of books on Morocco just before the protectorate. Try to get a copy of Morocco That Was, a very funny book on his days in the country.

Chaouen – Getting Around

There are less than 40,000 people living in Chaouen. That's to say you can pretty much walk from one side of town to the other without getting really tired. Streets in the Medina are always curved so it is hard to find your way, but the Medina is so small that it is just as hard to get lost.

Chaouen – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Dades Gorge

The Dades gorge is a spectacular place! It has a relaxed atmosphere, so you may want to recover if you're in need of a rest from the daily hassle. The gorge is as interesting as the valley. The valley is wonderfully colorful as the green of the riverbed is surrounded by red, scarlet and carmine rocks and soil. It starts out rather wide and then narrows at Ait Oudinar.

The Kasbah of the Rocks is a mystical landscape of dark red eroded volcanic rocks. The beauty of this place is in its visual transformation as you change perspectives. From different angles and distances, the rocks transform in front of your eyes, in shape and form. The Kasbah is marked by the Cafe Meguirne, 14 km down the road. The kasbahs of the Ait-Atta look vulnerable and fragile as they lie under a massive volcanic rock formation. The kasbahs blend in perfectly with the soil and rocks. It is a perfect place to draw, sketch, write or have a pic-nic.

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Notes:

Dades Valley

Oh the beauty of the valley of a thousand kasbahs! The Dades area is filled with lush valley oasis towns, set against the immense blue Moroccan sky. This area is almost surreal in its ancient charm. Each town has its own distinctive trait, so dont be fooled into thinking they are all the same, as you speed by them in your car. Be ready to take breaks in your journey to step out of the car, and walk along the riverbed during the morning or in the late afternoon to fully appreciate the ruined Kasbahs and vast fields of date palms. Many of the Dades kasbahs are in ruin, which lends to the mysterious atmosphere. However, there are a few that remain in perfect condition where Berber families continue to live along the fertile bed of the river. Interesting stops on the road from Ouarzazate are Skoura, Boumalne Dades, the Dades Gorge, Tinerhir and the Todra Gorge

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Notes:

Dakhla

About 550 km south of El ayoune on the Atlantic Coast is the town of Dakhla (ed–Dakhla). This town was a Spanish outpost in colonial days. Today it doesn't have a lot to attract visitors except for the possibility of crossing the Mauritanian border. This is where you get your paperwork done and say hello to real adventure: fear of land–mines make traveling down the coast a unique experience. The atmosphere is military here, so don't be surprised if you find yourself in the company of soldiers and have to explain your presence a couple of times.

Arrive one or two days before the army convoy leaves (on Friday and Tuesday) to obtain a laissez–passer from the Suretee. Carry repellent against the tsetse fly, they can be a problem in the area. Finally, you may not be able to return over land from Mauritania to Morocco because, presently, the Mauritanian authorities don't allow exit via land to Morocco due to the mine fields.

As you can imagine, a place with so many restrictions, is filled with possibilities and isolated beauty. The town itself is on a beautiful bay and 20 minutes away from beaches. If you have your own transportation, you may be able to find a beach with no foot–prints. Many roads are blocked off because of mine–fields, so finding the way is an adventure in itself. Always cooperate with the authorities, if they inform you that you are in a restricted area, just leave.

Dakhla – History

ed–Dakhla used to be Villa Cisneros and was a Spanish administrative center for the Rio de Oro. Why they called this piece of land River of Gold is quite unclear unless they meant the color of the Sand. Since the Spaniards left this city has had quite the same fate as the rest of the Western Sahara.

Dakhla – Getting Around

ed–Dakhla is small and it is dead easy to find your way.

Dakhla – Getting There

Most people coming to Dakhla bring their own transport. The road up north is long and dusty but not hard or difficult. There are buses and shared taxi's to Laayoune, but only one a day and it's a long 9 hours.

If you are going south to Mauritania, you got some hard travelling to do. First thing you do as you get into town is register at the Surete. Then get your name on the list of one of the convoys. They leave twice a week on Tuesday and Friday, so be sure to arrive in Dakhla one or two days before that.

If you are going south, there is not any form of public transport. It might be possible to hitch a ride in one of the landrovers that are part of the convoy, but I haven't heard of anyone doing it. If you have, please let me know.

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El Jadida

El Jadida, literally meaning 'the new one' is a nice old town on the Atlantic coast, about 100 kilometer south of Casablanca. El Jadidas open stretch of beach is the towns main highlight. The beach is a Moroccan destination in the summer, large crowds of Moroccans from Casablanca, Marrakesh, and Fes arrive to tan, swim, and play soccer on the enormous beach. Its a great place to swim!

The Medina is very European in style, a walled seaside village with a few churches lining the roads. The medina was founded in 1513 by the Portuguese and named Mazagan. In 1769, the city was captured by the Moroccans and re-named "El-Jadida". The old town, also called the Cite Portugaise is constantly being restored. Dont miss a walk around the old town (especially around sunset over the Atlantic), exploring the walls and many chapels. The Portuguese Cistern (9-6) is worth a look if there is water in the underground vault. However, its a bit of a disappointment if there is not a thin layer of water to mirror its roof. The cistern was used in Orson Welles film Othello.

El Jadida – Accommodation

In summer, it would be a good idea to make a hotel reservation by phone before you arrive.

Hotel Royal, 108 Avenue Mohammed V (03/34 00 11) has large rooms with interesting indoor plumbing (take a look), a nice garden and a animated bar. Its very reasonable.

Hotel de Provence, 42 Avenue Fqih Mohammed Errafi (03/34 23 47), is a clean, central hotel with a lovely garden where breakfast is served. There is also covered parking.

Hotel de France/Hotel Maghreb, 12 rue Lescoul (03/ 34 21 81) is an old hotel with large rooms, some of have views to the sea. Showers are on each floor. Upon my visit, this hotel was less than appealing.

Hotel Doukkala, Avenue Al Jamia Al Arabi (03/34 37 37) is worth checking out off-season. Its a larger, more expensive hotel on the beach, south of town.

Camping Caravaning International, Avenue des Nations Unies (03/34 27 55) is twenty minutes from town but is quite popular.

El Jadida – Getting There

El Jadida is 100 km south of Casablanca. It is reached most easily by bus. There is a railway station but trains to it are irregular and the station itself is far out of town. Also frequent buses going south to Safi, Oulidia and Essaouira. You can find shared taxi's to Azemmour.

El Jadida – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

El ayoune

Laayoune is the largest city in the Western Sahara with over 100,000 inhabitants. It is also the most interesting as it has seen rapid growth since the Moroccans took over the region. It has the highest per capita government spending in Morocco, mostly because the Saharan provinces is somewhat of a prestige project. The population could very easily be the setting for a mystery novel—Moroccan soldiers, UN employees, Saharawis and Moroccan immigrants looking for work have all come together in this city—most of them have settled recently.

The southern part of town, or "lower" town was built by the Spanish, while the "upper" town has been developed since the Green March. Most of the lower town is run-down, but makes for an interesting walk. There is an old Spanish cathedral that still has a rusting sign which says property of the Spanish government. The area called the chicken market (Souk Djaj) has some cheap hotels and displays some interesting architecture—eggshell-domed roofs that are meant to keep the houses cool. The modern monuments are very striking in comparison with the rest of the Western Sahara. The Great Mosque stands in the Place Mechouar. Not far, the new 30,000 seat stadium, with real grass, waits to be nominated the home of a World Cup soccer match. The Colline des Oiseaux is in a landscaped garden and makes for a pleasant visit. Exotic birds are housed in cages with blinds, to protect them from sandstorms.

Do be careful though, Laayoune is in a politically sensitive area so check with your embassy to determine whether its safe to visit.

El ayoune – Accommodation

p>Many of the hotels have been mass reserved by the UN. Make sure to make reservations ahead of time.

Hotel Nagir in Place Bir Anzarane (08 89 41 68) is modern and very comfortable. It houses a restaurant, bar and the only disco in the Western Sahara.

Hotel Lakoura on Avenue Hassan II (08 89 33 78) is a moderate priced hotel, sometimes it is booked by the UN.

Hotel Marhaba on Avenue de la Marine (08 89 32 49) is a reasonable, inexpensive hotel.

El ayoune – History

el Ayoune was the main Spanish settlement in area called 'Saguiet al Hamra'. This region was mainly inhabited by nomads.

The capital of these nomads was Smara, also in the Saguiet. It was founded by the leader of the resistance against the Spanish and French occupation of the Western Sahara, Sheikh Ma al-Aynayn.

After the departure of the Spanish the Moroccans starting developing the town.

El ayoune – Getting Around

el Ayoune is on the south bank of the Saguiet el-Hamra. The town is new, so all the streets are straight, which is nice for a change. Center of town is not big, it is a few blocks around where Av. Hassan II and Av. Mohammed V meet. Parallel on Hassan II is the Av. de la Mecque which leads to the local bus station and the offices of the RAM. Four good hotels are on the banks of the river, just north from the center.

El ayoune – Getting There

Unless you are flying, getting to al Ayoune involves a lot of desert. Both Dakhla and Goulmime are 5 hours of sand away. There are regular buses and grand taxis going to Agadir, along the coast, over Goulmime and Tiznit. Only one going to ed-Dakhla. To Smara there is one bus, so you might try and find a grand taxi (3 hours). Driving yourself isn't hard, but always long.

If you aren't here on you're own wheels, you could consider flying. There are regular flights from Casa and Agadir. From here you can also go to Las Palmas on the Canary Islands.

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Notes:

Erfoud

Erfoud is much like Er-Rachidia a French-built administrative town built in the thirties. The town, with its dusty red buildings, has a ghost town atmosphere but is surrounded by some of the best scenery in Morocco. The road from Er-Rachidia has some of the most spectacular scenery, with ancient Berber fortress set in palm groves as far as the eye can see.

Tourists usually come to Erfoud on the way to Merzouga, the most beautiful dunes in Morocco, or to explore Rissani, the last oasis village with an interesting palace. You may be lucky enough to experience a sandstorm, a totally surreal experience.

Erfoud – History

Erfoud is in the Tafilelt. This region used to be the most important place of departure for the cross saharan caravans. From the city of Sijilmassa, which is not far from Erfoud, they would leave for Ghana and Tombouctou. In the 14-th century the Genoans had an embassy here.

Since then things went down the slope gradually. Rissani is however the place where the present dynasty settled before they took power. The tomb of the founder of the Alaouite dynasty is still to be found here.

Erfoud – Getting Around

Erfoud itself is very small. The Hassan II and the Mohammed V come together and that's where most things happen. From the center you can do nice walks to a couple of Casbah's near by, or you can rent a bike and do the same.

To get to Rissani find a place in a grand taxi, they fill up quickly, especially on market days.

Erfoud – Getting There

You will probably come from Rachidia if you're going to Erfoud and this is most likely also the way you leave. The road that leads there is spectacular. There are frequent grand taxis to take you to Rachidia. If you want to go in another direction, you will need your own set of wheels.

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Notes:

Essaouira

Essaouira is one of Morocco's most enjoyable and attractive towns on the coast. Its charm is undeniable with its white washed and blue shuttered houses, art galleries, wood workshops, fishermen and colorful boats– all enclosed by ancient red walls. The town faces a group of rocky islands and is surrounded by an expanse of empty sandy beaches and dunes. Everything in the small center is within walking distance and the beaches are quite clean. In summer many people from the big cities come for a day or two to escape the heat and tension of Casablanca and Marrakesh. Interestingly, it is also the city that contains the "castle" from Jimi Hendrix's song "Castles in the Sand" – and it *is* melting into the sea, on a beach, on the outskirts of town.

Many tourists are attracted by the constant wind, good for wind–surfing and surfing. The windy city has become internationally famous for its contests and has brought windsurfers from all over the world.

Essaouira – Shopping

Essaouira is good for souvenirs. There are many tuya wood souvenir shops with reasonable prices. In the market you can also buy Argane oil, which is delicious, it can be quite expensive, but I think it is worth it. Essaouira is also the city of art. There are quite a few good Art galleries, the most famous one being that one run by mister Damgaard.

There is a government artist collective locally. Prices are fixed (though you may be able to haggle a little still) While you might not get the best deal, at least you know you won't be getting ripped off.

all

Tuya

Essaouira is a great place to buy Tuya wood. They make the most fantastic sculptures of the stuff. They make good souvenirs

Galerie la Kasbah

4, rue de Tétouan Tél. : (212 4) 447 36 82

Galerie Frederic Damgaard

Avenue Oqba Ibn Nafiaa Tél. : (212 4) 478 44 46

Essaouira – Sights

all

Sidi Mohamed ben Abdallah

Museum dedicated to local traditions, local music and arts. Tel: (212 4) 47 23 00

Sand castle

There is a sand castle about two kilometres to the south from the city. Jimi Hendrix was inspired by the castle to write the song "Castles made of sand". Definitely worth the walk or buy a camel ride from one of locals.

Essaouira – Accommodation

Hotel des Ramparts at 18 rue Ibn Rochid (044/47 25 08) overlooks the sea walls. Its very welcoming—with a roof terrace where you can escape from the wind and sunbathe. However, it is a bit damp.

Hotel Majestic on 40 rue Derbe Laalouj (044/47 24 98) has good, cheap, clean rooms in a central location. Fills up fast in the summer.

Hotel Villa Maroc on 10 rue Abdallah Ben Yassin is a gorgeous, five star hotel. At low season, prices can be negotiated. The rooms and suites, decorated with the finest Moroccan taste, are grouped around a courtyard in an old, converted mansion.

Camping dEssaouira is 300 meters outside the walls past the Hotel des Iles.

all

Essaouira Riad Mada Mogador

Under the influence of the blue of the ocean, Madada Mogador is an intimate address hidden behind the ramparts. The magic and absolute calm of the house comes from the subtle blending of orientalism and zen. .

zipcode: Medina

address: Essaouira

url: www.terremaroc.com

Hotel Villa Quieta

Charming hotel – luxurious accommodation The hotel, Villa Quieta, in Essaouira , Morocco , at 86 blvd Mohamed V (tél:44785004, fax:44785006)is situated on the ocean less than a km south of the city center. designated a (Hotel de charme) , it was private palatial home and now has 12 sun–filled rooms (singles / doubles for 480/670 Moroccan dirhams) and 2 four–person suites (1450 Md). The hotel is scrupulously clean, very quiet and exquisitely furnished. Every room has fresh flowers,original art , huge bath towels and is richly furnished with traditional Moroccan furniture.There is one large common salon in traditional Moroccan style for guest and several smaller common salons with fireplaces. All are luxuriously furnished with berber carpets, sculptured local thuya wood, antique cooper and brass. Parking is on site. Because of the small number of rooms available, the hotel cannot accept large groups. English and french spoken.

address: 86, Bd Mohamed V

tel: 21244785004

url: villa.quieta@iam.net.ma

Dar Suki

In the heart of the old town of Essaouira, an apartment, like a small house built on a terrace. Near the beach, it's an ideal place to rest and listen to the music of the sea. The apartment has three rooms organized around a small "patio". On the roof, a large private terrace of approximately 40 m2 offers a great point of view on the medina.

email: michel_campan@yahoo.fr

CostOfDoubleForANight: 38 GBP

tel: +33 6 07 44 55 72

costofdoubleforanight: 38 GBP

Essaouira – Eating Out

Seafood! With its fishermen galore, Essaouira offers excellent seafood. Try Chalet de la Plage on the seafront and Chez Sam at the end of the harbor.

all

Petit Pearl Restaurant

A wonderful Moroccan style Restaurant with comfortable seating and low candlelit tables. Marvelous food and very nice staff. It is found be entering the old city via the Bab Saba and walking to the left hand far corner of the small square. The Petit Pearl Restaurant is located in the passageway that leads to the main shopping street. Enjoy!

Petit Pearl Restaurant

A wonderful Moroccan style Restaurant with comfortable seating and low candlelit tables. Marvelous food and very nice staff. It is found be entering the old city via the Bab Saba and walking to the left hand far corner of the small square. The Petit Pearl Restaurant is located in the passageway that leads to the main shopping street. Enjoy!

Chez Sam

Delicious seafood Moroccan style. Close to the harbour.

Essaouira – Beaches

The Plage de Safi, is to the north, is good if the sea is calm. However, if the winds are blowing, the water can be dangerous. The beaches to the south are more popular and filled with soccer games. If you continue south, you will find the ruins of an old fort called the Bordj El Berod, which was the inspiration for Jimi Hendix's song Castles in the Sand. Further south, there is a Berber town called Diabat, once a legendary hippie hangout. Nowadays, it has reverted back to a normal, Berber farming village where foreigners are no longer able to rent rooms because of a police crackdown.

Essaouira – Things to do

all

Watch the Waves

If you can get up on the Rampart walls on the ocean side of the city, you will witness some impressive waves crashing into the rocks. The ongoing, thunderous, rolling crash is both mesmerising and soothing to take in for a while.

Horseback Riding

The Club Equestre Sidi Mgdoul, on the road to Marrakesh has horses to ride for rent, even for absolute beginners.

Moulay

This is north of Essaouira, and is a reef break and point break. The waves are big but not that powerfull when small so intermediates can go out but best left to the experts. At low tide beware of the reef, it is very shallow. Getting to Moulay is not easy as it is across barren rocky sandy terrain for about 4 miles to get to the beach from the road by car. Wind is side shore with starboard jumping. The town here is home to about 100 people with no electricity or running water (got from a well) and transport is by donkey.

Essaouira–bay

Just south of town is the big sandy bay. This is where you find The Wet Centre, your best bet if you want to rent equipment, The wind blows from the port in the town across the beach. Up close to the port the water is flat for slalom sailing and further to the left away from the town the wind becomes side shore and the waves pick up. There is a small island in the centre of the bay.

Sidi Kaouki

South of Essaouira. There is some sort of a hotel here. It is run by a windsurfer. This beach is warmer than Moulay with the wind side off with starboard jumping. The wave is a beach break and more powerfull than Moulay, better for wave riding. It is easy to break equipment here.

Essaouira – History

Essaouira was founded by the Poruguese in the 18th century. Although Essaouira (then called Mogador) was home to a series of forts beginning in the 15th century, it was only in the 1760s that the town, then called Mogador, was established and the walls were constructed. The towns blend of Moroccan and French architecture is due to the fact that a French captive architect, Theodore Cornut, designed it under the orders of the Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah.

In the 19th century, Mogador was the only port (outside of Tangier) that was open to European trade. This protected trade status attracted British merchants, who settled in the Kasbah and a large Jewish community. The town went into decline during the beginning of the 20th century as the French protectorate favored Casablanca and the Jewish community left. However, thanks to tourism (Gnawas Festival) and its fishing port, it is again on an upward swing.

Essaouira – Getting Around

Everything you want to do or see is in the walled city, or on the beach. The main street in the old town, is the Avenue de l'Istiqlal, that goes from Bab Doukkala to the port. At the clocktower, place Cehfchaoui, there is a street leading north to the main square, place Prince Moulay Hassan. Just behind this is the Ksabha and the Skala. South of the Medina is the beach.

If you arrive by bus or taxi, they will drop you off north of the Medina. It is best to take a cab. They don't go into the old town, but will drop you off at the Clocktower.

Essaouira – Getting There

From Essaouira you can go south to Agadir north to Safi and on to el-Jadida, Azemmour and Casa but most people will go to Marrakech. There is no trainstation in Essaouira. There is a small airport, but you are unlikely to fly in or out.

Essaouira – Festivals

all

Gnawas festival

Gnawas are traditional (black – most of the time) singers that used to perform on parties called "Lila" . Their performances are very spectacular. Due to their former slavery, rhythmic trance like music and mystical influences are important elements of their show. Once a year there is Gnawas festival in Essaouira (generally at the end of spring ~ June 18th for 3 or 4 days). If you are around, check it out.

For those who are interested in Gnawas Music, Great Gnawas M'allems/Masters have recorded CD's. We recommend : H'mida BOUSSOU, Mohammed CHAOUKI, Mahmoud L'GUINIA, Mohammad ZOURHBAT, Hassan HAKMOUN, PACO – Nass El Ghiwane... See also Randy Weston's "The splendid Master Gnawa Musicians of Morocco" and Ray LEMA "TYOUR GNAOUA". Wonderful !

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Notes:

Fez

It's hard to get your grip on Fez. This may be partly because there are three towns in Fez: the two ancient walled areas Fes–l–Bali (the old town) and Fes–l–Jdid (the new town) and the more modern French–built Ville Nouvelle.

But let this not scare you! Fez is one of the best sights in the world. The walled cities are the main attraction of Fez. The whole old city of Fez has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The immense medina of Fes–l–Bali is a huge labyrinth. In order not to get lost it is best to keep in mind that when you walk down you go towards the center, when you walk up, you leave the center.

The gates that are part of the walls are part of some amazing architecture. Within the walls you should at least try to find the Medersa Attarine, the Medersa Cherratine and Medersa Seffarine, three stunning old buildings near the center of the maze. The other thing you shouldn't miss is the people at work in the median: coppersmith, tanners, dyers. Spectacular colours and lousy working conditions make for great pictures.

Just outside the walls are two good museums Borj Nord (exhibiting weapons) and Dar Batha (Moroccan arts) and the Royal Palace.

Fez – Nightlife and Entertainment

You'd better not expect much of Fez' nightlife, because you will be disappointed. Try a café or bar instead.

For cafes have a look around Place Mohammed in the Ville Nouvelle, or stroll AV. Mohammed Es Slaoui, Av. Hassan II and Bd. Mohammed V.

Bars are hard to find but if you want to visit one try the Av. Es Slaoui otherwise you can also go to a hotel bar in the Moussafir, Mounia, Lamdaghri, Splendid and Grand.

all

Dalilla

Seedy but cheap place at 17, Bd. Mohammed V **TAOUFIK: MANIFIC 234324:**
Café Floria

For excellent croissants, a popular place; Av. Hassan II.
Es Saada

Lively place at Av. Es Slaoui **Richard Osinga:** I wuite enjoyed myself here. They have Heineken beer at reasonable prices.
Café de la Renaissance

This is a former Foreign Legion hangout at the Place Mohammed V.

Fez – Sights

The main sight of Fez is of course the old town. There is not a particular route you need to take, but here are a few highlights you will want to include in your walk through the maze.

all

Zaouia Moulay Idriss

Moulay Idriss is the founder of Morocco and of Fes. His Zaouia is considered the holiest building in the holy city of Fes. Although you can't get in, you can walk around. A thing a non-muslim wasn't permitted to do before the French Protectorate. **Omar KANE: Shore Griffin:** Not being Muslim we were only able to view from behind the lovely brass dividers. Quiet and serene this place is beautiful and peaceful.

zipcode: y6k 8d1

address: 8624 rumble

tel: 778 388 3105

Dar Batha

Dar Batha museum has a large arts and handicrafts collection. It is open daily, except tuesday. Closed between noon and 2:30. The gardens are a great place to relax. The museum is near the Bab Boujeloud, just outside of the entrance of the old town.

Medersa Bou Inania

The most outstanding example of Merinid architecture. Even if you skip all the other Medersa, this is the one you shouldn't miss. Since it is still in use, you may be asked to leave at prayer time. The Medersa is just behind the Bab Boujeloud and easy to find.

The Attarin Medersa

Near the Kairouiyine. Another fine example of Medersa architecture. Although it is less imposing than the Bou Inania, the views from the roof definitely make it worth your while to come and visit.

The tanneries

Souq Dabbaghin is the Tanneries quarter. It is quite easy to miss. Try to go towards the river and to the north from the Kairouiyine. There are a few signs. For a small fee you can climb on the rooftops and get a really good look of the work that's done in the tanneries. **Shore Griffin:** Something not to miss in Fes—Try to access from high up so the smell is not too bad. It is a bit overwhelming so make sure you have a batch of mint to hold to your nose—but it is absolutely a must see! :

Medersa's

There are several beautiful Medersa's in the old city, examples of Merinid architecture. **Gautier:** :

Qaraouiyine

Very important mosque and university. Non muslims can't enter, unfortunately. The University was the most important center of learning of the Maghreb for centuries. The mosque was founded in 857 by a woman from Kairouan in Tunisia. If you're not a muslim you can't go in, but you can peek through the open gates.

knaperd: It was really worth visiting this pretty city: friendly people, good food and a hot sun. I'd like to come again. Cheers! **hamdouni–alami:** just a mosque now. the university has been transferred to the new city :

Fez – Practical Information

Tourism Delegation · Place de la Résistance, Tel: 62.34.60 / 62.62.97

Central Post Office · Grande Poste, Angle Av. Mohammed V et Bd. Hassan II

Police–Emergencies · Tel: 19 Fire Brigade · Tel: 15 Car accidents–breakdown · Tel: 177

Night Chimist · Av. Abdelkrim El Khattabi – Tel: 62.33.80

Omar Drissi Hospital · Place de l'Istiqlal – Tel: 63.45.51 Ghassani Hospital · Tel: 62.27.76 / 77

Car rental · 41, av. Hassan II – Tel: 62.65.45 Avis · 50, bd Chefchaouni – Tel: 62.67.46 Hertz · Hôtel de Fès, av. des FAR – Tel: 62.28.19

Railway Station · Rue Imarate Arabia – Tel: 62.50.01

Fès – Saïss Airport · Route d'Imouzzer – Tel: 62.47.12 / 62.43.00

Royal Air Maroc · 52, avenue Hassan II – Tel: 62.04.56 / 57

Fez – History

Fez is the oldest city of Morocco. As with other Moroccan cities it consists of two parts; the Medina and the Ville Nouvelle. Fes differs from other cities by its divided Medina which include New Fez (Fes–el–Djedid) and old Fes (Fes–el–Bali). New Fez was built in the 14–th century so imagine how old Fes–el–Bali (old Fes) is. This city was founded in the 9th century by the first Muslim dynasty to rule Morocco, the Idrissids. Since then Fez has always played a pivotal role in the history of Morocco, right up to the revolt against the French.

Fes–el–Djedid is an outcome of the glorious times in 1248 during the conquest of Fes by the Merenids and therefore it reflects a massive royal city.

Most Fassis –the people of Fes– continue to live in in the Medina–city Fes–el–Bali instead of moving to the Ville Nouvelle; the modern urban and more European city.

Fez is no longer the capital of Morocco, and is not the biggest nor the most important town, but more than any other town it is immersed with the history of Morocco.

Rachelita: By now, most of the original Fassis who trace their heritage back to the time of the Andalusians have either moved to the Ville Nouvelle or to other cities like Casablanca and Rabat. The old medina is now crowded with rural–to–urban migrants and among the old families, very few still occupy their houses there.

Fez – Getting Around

Within the old town: walk all you can. Walk until your feet can no longer bear you. It's the best way to see what you need to see. Within the old city there are no other means of transport except for donkeys (and there are streets with signs 'donkeys not allowed'), so you don't have a lot of choice, anyway.

To get from the Ville Nouvelle to the old town, you can find the normal cabs, with a meter the driver is unwilling to use. There are also buses, but they tend to be crowded.

Fez – Accommodation

Fez is a little more expensive than other Moroccan towns, now don't worry, there are still plenty of opportunities here. In the old city most hotels are around the Bab Boujeloud area. Most of these are pretty basic. In the Ville Nouvelle there is a somewhat wider range of choice.

On the top end there are some incredible palaces you can sleep in, old Palaces in the old Medina. These places are not cheap.

Have a look at the hotels mentioned here and pick your choice.

all

Hotel du Maghreb

one of the cheaper choices in the Ville Nouvelle; basic but clean

address: 25, Av. Mohammed Es Slaoui

tel: 05/625999

Hotel Central

a popular and often full hotel

address: 50, Rue du Nador

tel: 05/622333

Auberge de Jeunesse

This is one of the best Moroccan youth hostels situated in the Ville Nouvelle

address: 18, Rue Abdeslam Seghrini

tel: 05/624085

Hotel du Commerce

A nice place; old but comfortable and friendly

address: Place des Alaouites

tel: 05/622231

Hotel de Jardin Public

A popular choice, although you'll have a cold shower.

address: near the Boujeloud Mosque

tel: 05/633086

Hotel Palais Jamaï

the most famous and historic hotel in Morocco, besides Mamounia in Marrakesh. Expensive choice. *Miquel Gascon*: Quiero informacion para reservar del 1 al 9 de Junio 2001 con motivo del Festival de Musicas Religiosas de Fez 1 habitacion para 2 personas

address: Bab Guissa

tel: 05/634331

Hotel Erraha

a reasonable and cheap place

address: Place Boujeloud

tel: 05/633226

Hotel Kaskade

this hotel is full most of the time because it's such a cheapie

address: Place Boujeloud

Old houses to Rent in the Medina

Fez Medina rents small palaces, royal suites, and traditional houses in the medina of Fez. Full-time guide service.

tel: (800) 714-3390

url: www.fesmedina.com

Fez – Eating Out

Fez a good reputation when it comes to restaurants. The better places are to be found in the Ville Nouvelle. In Fes-I-Bali you will mainly find cheap food stalls or expensive palace-type restaurants that prefer to cater to tourist groups.

all

Restaurant Chamonix

Small and cheap place in the ville nouvelle (5, rue Mokhtar Soussi). In summer you can eat outside.

Restaurant Zagora

If you're hungry, this is a good choice. It's on the Boul. Mohammed V, at number 5. *Steff*: Depending on when you get there, a quiet little place with the nicest waiter in Fez (go twice and he'll start calling you brother or sister!). On the other hand, go at the wrong time and you are bound to be packed in with several other groups of tourists. Never fear – it IS good food, Moroccan or French, and there are always locals there (always a good sign!). A bit hard to find off the boulevard, look for the Au Derby shoe store, it's behind there.

Bab Boujeloud

This is not a particular restaurant, but a whole area, where you can find cheap places. Most of them don't stay open to late, however.

Restaurant el-Fassia

In one of the Palaces (Bab Guissa) of the old city, this definitely a nice way to spend your money. If you think it's expensive, imagine what you would be paying back home.

Fez – Getting There

There are four options to get in Fez.

1. By train

You find the train station in the Ville Nouvelle at ten minutes walk from the hotels around Place Mohammed V. To get in Fes El Bali you can take a *petit taxi*.

2. By bus

When traveling by bus you will probably arrive at the main bus station (tel. 05/636032) just north of Bab Mahrouk (Fes El Bali). The other possibility is that you arrive at the CTM Station on Av. Mohammed V in the Ville Nouvelle. If you planning to go to Marrakesh take the convenient night bus from Bab Ftouh.

3. Grand taxis

The grand taxis you are likely to find around Place Baghadi

4. By air

Fez has a rather little airport about 15 km of the city. To get there it's best to take a grand taxi (30dh for the taxi; 5dha place). Here you can take several internal flights and for other destinations you have to go to Casablanca.

Fez – Internet Cafes

all

ANASOFT

Very Speed Internet 512Kb/s Future 1Mo/s Server Unix Linux Hosting and email service

price: Fax. We serve coffee and soft drinks with light snacks.
Fax. We serve coffee and soft drinks with light snacks.

email: 9h00 to 00h00

hours: 1\$

address: Anasoft Res Alami Atlas,
Fes,30000,
Morocco

url: www.anasoft.ma

Hotel Sheraton

We provide full business services as well as faxing, photocopying, colour + mono printing, scanning, digital photos, web design,

price: program development, computer and accessories sales and IT support. (ALL SERVICES).

We provide full business se

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Notes:

Figuiq

If you are the adventurous type, the desert trip from Er-Rachidia to Figuiq will blow your mind. It is a 10 hour journey through the isolated lands of Morocco, dominated by spectacular red mountains. While peering out the window of your bus, you'll notice there is very little human presence in the arid landscape, only a couple mining villages and military outposts. You'll probably have to change buses at Bouarfa, a lovely place with a couple of hotels, if you need to rest.

Figuiq is a great medieval desert town situated in a date palm oasis. Figuiq is the largest date palm oasis in the country with over 200,000 trees. There are many ksour off the main road, each one within its own palm oasis and enclosed with walls. Each ksour was fiercely independent, fighting each other over limited water and other family feuds, until the 20th century. For the best panoramic view, go to the platform above the Zenaga ksar where you can see most of the palm oasis and the surrounding mountains. The prettiest ksour is called El Maiz. Until 1960, there was a large Jewish population. Now, the population is predominately Berber.

If the border is open, you can continue on to Algeria. However, the border is closed currently and I would not recommend a trip to Algeria for safety reasons.

The area is good for long hikes. Accommodation is not easy, like transport. One hotel, one bus a day, that sums it up. But it's great to get a feel of a desert border town.

Figuiq – Accommodation

The best hotel is Hotel Figuiq

Figuiq – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Goulimime

Goulimime is situated at the edge of the Sahara. this is where the blue men, the nomads and sedentary populations used to meet. However, you have to watch out for theatrical cons, where the locals bring people out to tents to see the "blue men" in tents outside of town. The landscapes surrounding the area are spectacularly bleak, but you are far from the Saharan dunes. For a better feel of desert life, you could head for Merzouga. However, if you do decide to come, make sure it's on a Saturday, when the people from the region come to the city for market day. This is your chance to meet real nomads, in blue garments. In earlier days the dye in their clothes would tint their skin, hence the name Blue Men. If you could plan your trip to coincide with the regions moussem (in June), you will see crowds of Tuareg Blue Men.

Goulimime is also a good base to go to nearby Sidi Ifni. Sidi Ifni was a small Spanish enclave until the sixties, and still has a very Spanish colonial feel to it.

Goulimime – History

Goulimime – Getting Around

In Goulmime everything is located within walking distance from the Place Bir Anzarane. This also happens to be where the Av. Hassan II meets Mohammed V. The Gare routiere is to the east, and the grand taxi's stop at a place somewhat to the south west. The camal market is further to the north.

Goulimime – Getting There

There are 8 buses north to Agadir a day. Four of those make it to Marrakesh, 1 all the way to Rabat. Going South you can take the bus all the way to Dakhla. This is a long ride, but it puts a lot of desert behind you. If you're going down to Mauritania, there is no need to stop at el Ayoune anyway. Smara makes a better stop, but is slightly off the route. From Goulmime to Smara there is one bus daily, it goes via el Ayoune.

Goulimime – Accommodation

Hotel Salam, on the Route de Tan Tan (08/87 20 57) is Goulimime's nicest hotel and is worth the extra money. The rooms are quite large with an open patio and good restaurant

Hotel l'Ere Nouvelle, on Boulevard Mohammed V (08 87 21 19) is the cheapest hotel in town with showers and a small cafe.

Goulmime – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Ifrane

Ifrane is a nice, and interesting place with pseudo–Alpine villas and large suburban streets. It was created by the French in 1929 and is probably one of the cleanest cities in Morocco. There is an interesting pre–fabricated feel about the place, however everything is expensive. The Al–Akhawyn, an American university funded by the US, Saudi Arabia and Morocco was built here in the early 1990s and is the best university (with the most resources) in Morocco.

Ifrane – Accommodation

Hotel Mischliffen (05/ 56 64 16) has beautiful views and nice rooms, but it is expensive

Grand Hotel (05/56 64 07) is a simple hotel.

Hotel les Tilleuls (05/56 65 58) is a comfortable hotel with a restaurant.

Ifrane – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Imilchil

Imilchil – Getting Around

Getting around in this mountainous region involves bringing enough cash for food and transport (more expensive than in the rest of Morocco) and knowing when Market days are. On market days it's always easier to find transport on a lorry. Lorries and Renault 4's are most used form of transport, after the donkey of course.

Here are a few important towns in the region with their respective market days.

all

Ait Hani

Thursday

Imilchil

Saturday

Rich

Sunday

Imilchil – Getting There

There are three ways to get to Imilchil, all are hard. The one from the south is described in the Tineghir section.

The one from Fes, goes through Midelt and Rich. From Rich there is a piste P3443 by way of Outerbate and Sountat a wonderful trip, doable in summer in a Renault 4. Also Truck rides available. Two hotels in Rich, the Salama an al–Massira, both cheap and basic. Latter is better.

From the North last big town on paved road is Kasba Tadla, between Khenifra and Beni Mellal. The paved road takes you up to Cherket. From there its hard, but rewarding work. Aghbal, just of the Kasba Tadla Imilchil road is a place to spend the night.

Imilchil – Internet Cafes

World66 is Open Content. All content is free for everybody to use, but we're also dependent on travelers for updating our contents. Please use the space below for notes and when you get back home, please take the time

to add your notes to World66 so everybody can profit.

Notes:

Imlil

Imlil is the ideal base for trekking, hiking or camping in the Atlas mountains. If you are coming from Marrakesh your first stop will be Asni. Asni is the end of the line for bus and taxis coming from Marrakesh. From here, you can take a pick-up or taxi. The 17 km trip from Asni to Imlil is startling in its natural beauty. As the road begins to climb, the beauty of the valley, river and small villages look more like paintings than reality. The air in Imlil is crisp and clear as the town stands at an altitude of 1740 meters. Although the town has no particular sights it has a relaxed and refreshing atmosphere. Paths and streams are plentiful in the area, if you need to stretch your legs after the trip.

For mountain guides, check out the "Shopping Center", the Ribat Tours, and the CAF refuge where there is a noticeboard. The most experienced of the qualified guides listed are, Lahcen Esquary, Aziam and Ibelaïd Brahim and Ait Idir Mohammed. They can arrange treks, mules, camping and food.

The big hike is from here to the top of Toubkal. After the snow has melted, it is a walk rather than a climb, but it is a serious effort. The first stop is Around (4,5 km), the largest village of the valley and a spectacular village with one of the most fertile stretches of the Atlas.

From there you can walk to Sidi Chamarouch (8 km) which is stands near a small waterfall. Moroccan pilgrims come here to visit a marabout shrine (strictly forbidden for non-Muslims). The shrine probably originated from an ancient nature cult. There are a couple grocery shops and rooms here, if you need a refresher.

The Toubkal refuge, marking the spring snow line at 3200 meters, is your next stop. You can sleep at the refuge for 30 DH. They also prepare dinner for 25 DH. The hut can be quite full in summer. This is where the trail begins so you may want to talk to trekkers coming down about the conditions of the trail. The climb up the mountain should take about 3 hours from here doing the Southern circuit. The Northern circuit is a more ambitious ascent (4 h30 m) and a bad way to descend. The Southwest circuit is recommended only for experienced rock climbers.

Imlil – Things to do

all

Ribat Tours

Reliable source of information on hiking. Has experienced guides. *Warre: Susanne:*

CAF Refuge

The Club Alpine Français refuge in Imlil is also a reliable source of information. *David McInnes:* I've stopped over on many of my visits to the Atlas at the CAF Refuge at Imlil over the last ten years or so and found the guardian most helpful with the rooms both clean and tidy. The toilets and wash room are clean by Moroccan standards.

Imlil – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Larache

With little hassle and few tourist traps, Larache is worth a short visit to feel what a typical Moroccan town is like. Larache is next to an estuary which wanders into the Atlantic ocean. The west of the town is bordered by sea cliffs and the south is covered with tangerine and orange groves. A nice morning activity is to take a boat taxi across the estuary to the beach.

The old medina, a fortress known as the Casbah de la Cigogne and an archeological museum built in a Spanish citadel are worth a visit. The walls that surrounded the medina and the kasbah, now in ruins, add an interesting air to the town. Although the town has seen better days, it still has a nice atmosphere. The new town is a good example of Spanish colonial architecture. The colors of the buildings in the town are a beautiful white-washed white and blue.

Four to five kilometers outside of Larache are the Roman remains of Lixus. They are not as impressive as the ones in Volubilis., but to watch the sunset into the sea from the Phoenician temple can be a beautiful experience.

Larache – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Marrakesh

Known as the "Red City" Marrakesh is the capital of the south. The atmosphere is distinctly more African than that of the other Imperial cities, Fez, Rabat and Meknes. The setting of the city is stunning with ochre stucco buildings surrounded by the snow-peaked Atlas mountains. If you have the time, Marrakesh is definitely worth a stay of several days.

The Jma-l-Fna is an unbelievable experience. It is a market scene straight out of the movies with snake charmers, musicians, dancing bears, acrobats and storytellers. Around the square there are numbered stalls that sell very cheap freshly-squeezed orange juice in the morning and afternoon. At night there are tables set up that you can eat at for a very reasonable price. Other sights include the impressive Koutoubia minaret and the Ben Youssef Medersa and the Saadian Dynasty tombs, the ruined 16th-century El Badi Palace the Dar Si Said Museum.

The artistic colors of the museum and beautiful gardens donated by Yves St. Laurent are a refreshing break from the heat of the city. Spring is a good time to visit.

Marrakesh – Bookshops

Marrakesh has a few good bookshops, most in Gueliz, who have a good collection of French books. English books are harder to find. Some of the budget hotels do book exchanges. Try hotel Essaouira.

all

Librairie Gilot

Accross the street form Chatr, at no. 44 on the Avenue Mohammed V.

Librairie Chatr

Address: 19, Avenue Mohammed V (Gueliz).

Marrakesh – Internet Cafes

all

Hotel Ali

Hotel Ali offers Internet access at good rates. The hotel is located about 200 meters from the Jma el Fna, behind the post office. *el Maroudi*: happy ramadan to all my friend *hendriks*: I am the productmanager of Sindbad reizen and Cycletours. Many times groups of ours have stayed in Hotel Ali, and we enjoyed ourselves. *Ewa Westling*: Does Hotel Ali have an e-mailadress where you can book rooms?

Cybernet

tel: (212) 4 43 91 17 – (212) 4 43 84 04

email: info@cybernet.net.ma
04 MULTIMEDIA – CYBERNET
address: 14, Avenue Yacoub Al Mansour –Guéliz
Marrakech MAROC

LaBanquise Café Snack

the best Cyber of town

price: 8 Dh
tel: 21261255025
email: Myhadi@hotmail.com
devant la Faculté des Sciences Semlalia,
address: Marrakesh,40000,
Morocco

Marrakesh – Day Trips

Marrakesh is an ideal starting point to make daytrips to the Atlas mountains. Then best way to arrange for such a trip is to find a grand taxi. If you are a group of people it may even be affordable to have the grand taxi all to yourself and have it wait for you, while you explore the valleys of the Atlas.

all

Berber Tours

Although Berber Tours is based in Zagora, our area of operation reaches as far north as Fez and Rabat or as far south as Agadir, which places Marrakech in the "heart" of our 4x4 tours region. Our camel treks originate from either Zagora or M'hamid in the southeast of Morocco due to the proximity of the Sahara Desert.

Berber Tours organizes custom itineraries for both small and large (max. 15 people) camel camping treks into the Sahara Desert. Usually starting from either Zagora or Mhamid these camel treks can range from just a few, or up to 15 days in length and can encompass all of the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Berber Tours will also organize for your pleasure custom itineraries of 4x4 camping treks into the desert or from Ouarzazate, into the High Atlas Mountains. Small sightseeing itineraries (max. 6 people) by car or 4x4 are organized around Southern Morocco and visit cities, towns or mountain villages. All of Berber Tours itineraries and adventures are reasonably priced. Berber Tours can even arrange hotel bookings if needed by the clients!

email: admin@berbertours.net
url: www.berbertours.net
tel: 212–68–51–50–87

Ourika

Ourika is one of the charming mountain valleys south of the city. Excellent day-trip. A whole lot cooler than downtown Marrakesh. *samir*: I would like to see it *charles zalber*: one of the most flabbergasting scenery I have ever seen *soumia* : One of the most gorgeous valleys in north Africa. *justin*: You can make great hikes in the valley.

Imlil

Imlil is south of Marrakech and a good starting point for treks in the high Atlas, but also nice as a daytrip from Marrakech.

Berber Tours

Although based in Zagora, Berber Tours operates as far north as Fez, as far west as Rabat, and as far south as Agadir taking in all of southern Morocco with its 4x4 tours. Its camel treks are organized from either Zagora or M'hamid which are both in the southeastern part of the country.

Berber Tours organizes custom itineraries for both small and large (max. 15 people) camel camping treks into the Sahara Desert. Usually starting from either Zagora or Mhamid these camel treks can range from just a few, or up to 15 days in length and can encompass all of the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Berber Tours will also organize for your pleasure custom itineraries of 4x4 camping treks into the desert or from Ouarzazate, into the High Atlas Mountains. Small sightseeing itineraries (max. 6 people) by car or 4x4 are organized around Southern Morocco and visit cities, towns or mountain villages. All of Berber Tours itineraries and adventures are reasonably priced. Berber Tours can even arrange hotel bookings if needed by the clients!

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zipcode: 45900 – Zagora

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Marrakesh – Sights

The main attraction of Marrakesh is of course the Jma–l–Fna and the souqs to the north of it. Here you will find listed a series of sights you can visit.

all

Jma–l–Fna

The Jma el Fna is where it all happens: snake charmers, acrobats, story tellers, small restaurants, fresh orange juice. It changes during the day, from a juice and nut selling area with additional entertainment in the morning to a more tourist oriented "side show" in the afternoon. It then becomes full of food stalls and entertainment for the evening and night.

Jma–l–Fna is great for a morning orange juice, an afternoon stroll or a dinner at night. It's a genuine 5* attraction at night & it's not done especially for tourists, most of it is 100% for Moroccans, by Moroccans. Avoid the sheep's head stew & head for the little sausages with the dynamite chili sauce (you have to ask for the sauce). Mostly for meat–eaters but there are excellent salads so veggies certainly won't starve—the spicy aubergine (egg plant) is fantastic.

One warning: the snakes and the bears are less dangerous than pickpockets.

Bahia Palace

This was the mansion of Si Ahmed ben Moussa, the vizier of Moulay Hassan. It was built as late as 1894. After his death in 1900 the palace was sacked. You can get guided tours to the palace. *Ghanima*: The guided tour is not really worthwhile. The guides tend to talk to long about things which aren't really interesting.

Saadian Tombs

A unique example of Moroccan Saadian architecture. Very elaborately decorated rooms harbour tombs of saadian Sultans. There is a small passage way, in order to get in without setting foot inside of the Mosque. The gardens are lovely and the way the tombs are carved very beautifully.

Medersa Ben Youssef

North from the Jma–l–Fna, a good walk through the souqs, is the Medersa Ben Youssef. It's not easy to miss, because it's the biggest building in the neighborhood. It is the best example of Merinid architecture in Marrakesh.

Criee Berbere

A small square just north of the Jma–l–Fna. Has lots of shops where they sell the stuff magig is done with. dead lizards and the likes. You can also find carpets here, they are sold in a small auction here at the end of the afternoon. It is not a cheap place to get your carpets. In earlier days slaves were sold in a quite identical manner.

The tanneries

I don't recommend this for everyone & I'm not sure I'd especially want to go there again for some time, if ever. But, for an experience of a life so different from our own & to assail your jaded traveller's senses with sights & smells of an intensity (mostly the smells!) which you won't forget in a hurry, just go!

Avoid being shaken down for lots of money by the "guides" & do not enter the kilim & handicraft showrooms unless you can be very assertive or you really do want something. I bought a kilim (well, two actually...it seemed like a good deal at the time) and I really like it but I've no real idea if it was great value for money, though I did end up paying approx 40% of the original asking price which is about right for haggling, don't you think? The smell of that place came back to me several times over the next couple of days. I've never experienced anything quite as intense. It was the pidgeon guano they used for softening the leather. They give you sprigs of mint to take the edge off it but for real connoisseurs just take shallow breaths & go for it! Enjoy!

address: Bab Debbagh, a gate in the East side of the city wall

openinghours: All day, give or take

Yves St. Laurent Garden

Majorelle Gardens are a must. This beautifully layed out garden was designed by The Yves St. Laurent himself. It is decorated with bright colors and VERY blue pots and vases.

address: Yacoub El Mansour

Marrakesh – Practical Information

all

CTM Coach Station

Place El Mourabiten à Bab Doukkala – Tel: 43.46.51 · Autocars pour Agadir, Casablanca, Essaouira, Fès, Tineghir et Zagora *daniel:*

Railway Station

Avenue Hassan II, Guéliz – Tel: 44.77.68 · Trains pour Casablanca

Royal Air Maroc

197, av. Mohammed V, Guéliz – Tel: 44.64.44 et 43.62.05

Ibn Tofail Hospital

Rue Abdelwahad Derrag, Guéliz – Tel: 43.00.11 Polyclinique Sud Hospital · Rue Ibn Aïcha, Guéliz – Tel: 44.79.99

Emergencies

Tel: 44.37.24

Central Post Office

Place du 16 novembre, Guéliz · Bureau auxiliaire, place Jemaa-el-Fna

Police

Tel: 19

Fire Brigade

Tel: 15 ou 43.04.15

Hamman

Rue Fatima Zohra in the old médina. Until 11 it's open for men after 11 for women.

Marrakesh – Shopping

The souqs of Marrakesh are a lot like a mall. But a very arabic, and somewhat medieval mall. There is some system in this madness, however. Here we would like to give you a few hints regarding where to find what in the Medina.

Starting from the Jma el Fna, there are two major lanes going north. Coming from the Jma, you have the Rue Mouassin on your left, and the Rue Souq Smarine on your right. Along these you will find many touristic shops and boutiques, most of them will be specialized in either carpets, leather, silver or antiques. These are just resellers.

When you look more closely and go into the side streets you can find the different trades. Going north on the Rue Souq Smarine you find the following trades: Textiles, Wool, Apothecary stalls (on Rehba Qadima), Carpets, Jewellery and Leather. After the Leather souq, you are almost at the Almoravid Koubba and it is time to turn right. Now you find blacksmith, carpenters, dyers and slipper makers. This is where prices are really low since you are quite a way from the Jma.

The streets are a bit dirtier here, and people are really at work, so sparks may be flying. This is both the place to get the best bargains, and the place to have a unique experience.

all

Moroccan Lamps

Moroccan lamps have become en vogue over the last past years. You can buy them pretty much all over the place, but to get better prices it is worthwhile to venture a bit deeper in the Souqs. Starting from the Jma al Fna, head for the Ben Youssef Medersa and turn left. Now you are close to the area where the lamps are made and in the workplaces you can get the best prices.

It's pretty hard to give a more accurate description of how to get there, but getting lost a bit is quite nice in itself.

Magical Herbs

Most of the shops selling herbs are centered around the Rahba Kedima, near to the Jma. Although most of the shops just sell normal herbs (mostly to tourists), and have the dead lizards and frogs just for the looks of them, there are some true magicians here. They are hard to spot and they are not very interested in selling things to tourists. They specialize in a form of magic using Coranic verses to heal people.

Carpets

Generally speaking Morocco is a good place to buy a carpet, but Marrakesh isn't the best place in Morocco. Smaller, less touristy places have lower prices, but Marrakesh has the advantage of having the biggest choice. Buying a carpet is an experience. Allow at least half a day to sip tea, discuss the price, discuss everything else in life, before you discuss the price again. Sellers claim all carpets are old. In fact most of them, aren't.

Boutique Lac Iriqi

Boutique Lac Iriqi offers for purchase some of the finest Berber carpets, ceramics, and finely made silver merchandise in Southern Morocco.

Morocco's history and the story of Moroccan weaving begin with the Berbers, the indigenous people of North Africa who had inhabited Morocco for centuries before the first Arab invasion in the seventh century. Today, the major weaving groups of the Middle Atlas and High Atlas mountains are Berber tribes, many of whom still live much as they did centuries earlier.

While remarkably diverse, Moroccan flat-woven and knotted pile rugs are almost without exception bold in color and lively in pattern. Designs are made up of geometric motifs arranged in seemingly endless variations. Each tribe has its own distinct repertoire of designs and colors significant to the ceremonial and day to day life of the group. These same patterns can be seen in the art forms relating to other areas of tribal life such as in ceramics, architectural decoration, and tattoos worn by Berber women. Although a weaver draws from the vocabulary of designs particular to her tribe, she works at her loom without a diagram or pattern to guide her. As a result, each rug is a unique creation, a celebration both of her tribal identity and her own artistic imagination.

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url: www.berbertours.net

zipcode: 45900 – Zagora

Marrakesh – A perfect day in

Your first destination on your perfect day is the Jma'l Fna. You can have breakfast with croissants and coffee in one of the restaurants on all sides of the square, but be sure to buy your orange juice from one of the hundred stalls.

Now that your tummy is filled, you are ready for a journey into the Medina. The best way to explore is to just walk and not worry about getting lost. You will anyway, probably. But the major attraction of the whole thing is the walking around, seeing people work on their handicrafts and haggling with shopkeepers. Even if you get really lost, you will not miss those things.

You can walk for an hour or two through the winding streets, but then it is time to sit down and have tea. A good way to do this is go to a carpet shop and let them show you all the nice coloured carpets they have for Sale. The tea is on the house.

Now is the hard part. You have to try and go back to where you came from. the Jma'l Fna. You can do this in two ways. Either by trying to walk on and on, until you reach the end of the old city and then take a taxi, or by

trying to go to the south with a compass. The square is at the south end of the Medina.

It's time for lunch. I suggest you just buy some bread & cheese and some juice or yoghurt and you have your lunch. If it is a hot perfect day, you might want to go and have a small siesta. If it isn't, we suggest you take a caleche (horse-drawn cart) to the Tombes Saadiens. In the garden you can relax. The architecture is stunning.

For the rest of the afternoon we suggest you go to the Rahba al Kedima and sit down in one of the stalls where they sell herbal medicine. Listen to all the nice stories the sellers tell you about the different spices.

It is getting late and you are heading back to the Jma'l Fna. More and more people are coming here. Eating stalls are put up, snake charmers, dancers and sooth-sayers are surrounded by interested spectators. Walk around at ease.

When you start feeling hungry, try one of the restaurants on the north side of the Jma with a terrace facing south. You have a beautiful view of the mountains, and on my perfect days a very nice sunset that makes the snowcapped mountains of the High Atlas turn a warm pink.

You must be exhausted by now! Have a coffee on the terrace and some Moroccan sweets and then take a cab back to your hotel.

Marrakesh – History

Marrakesh was founded in the 11-th century by the Murabitun. Coming from the south, from the Mauritanian desert, these fierce warriors of the faith, made a capital in the lush valley on the foot of the Atlas mountains.

Since then Marrakesh has always been one of the capitals of the Moroccan Empire, the great Rival of the Northern capital of Fes. Some Sultans preferred Fes, some Marrakesh.

In the beginning of this century the Glaoui, lord of the Atlas, became Pacha of Marrakesh.

Marrakesh – Getting Around

Marrakesh is Bicycle capital of Morocco. You can rent them on the Jma-l-Fna, the big square. Don't expect the cars to really notice bikers.

The Medina and the souqs are best explored on foot. You now and then see a car or a motorbike trying to pass through the crowded streets, but this doesn't make sense.

If you want to go to the ville nouvelle, taxi's are easily found. There is a taxi stand near the Jma-l-Fna. When a train arrives it is sometimes hard to find a taxi.

Another good option is to take a horse cart (caleche). There is a stop near the Koutoubia tower, not far from the Jma-l-Fna. Bargain hard.

all

Avis

137, av. Mohammed V – Tel: 43.27.27

Budget

213, av. Mohammed V – Tel: 43.46.04

Hertz

154, av. Mohammed V – Tel: 43.46.80

Citer

1, rue de la Liberté – Tel: 43.06.83

Marrakesh – Getting There

Marrakesh is the southern transport hub of Morocco. To the north trains are the best option. There are frequent and comfortable trains to Rabat, Casablanca and even all the way to Tangier.

To Essaouira there are frequent buses. To Asni and Ourika your best option is a shared taxi (grand taxi).

To the south the choice is between bus and grand taxi, the latter gives you a little more freedom of movement. To Ouarzazate there's only one route you can take (Tizi–n–Tichka), but to Agadir and Taroudant there are more passes across the atlas. I prefer the Tizi–n–test, but drivers may be unwilling to go this way.

Marrakesh – Accommodation

Most of the cheaper hotels are located in a small area south of the Jma–l–Fna. Two or three small streets meander through the old Medina and are filled with cheap and decent hotels.

For those who are willing to spend a little more, Marrakesh has more than the Club Med, the Maimounia is one of the most famous and expensive hotels. If you can't afford it, you might want to try and get a drink there.

all

Hotel Essaouira

about 10 US dollar a double. Good and clean place, nicely decorated. Breakfast on rooftop. The rooms are really small and douches are shared, but it has a nice atmosphere. *Vera:*

address: 3, Derb Bouloukat

tel: 044 44.38.05

Dar el Souk Guesthouse

Magnificent riad located in the medina of Marrakesh, Dar el Souk offers a relaxing stay where every guest is warmly received.

Dar el Souk is close to Jemaa el Fna Square, beside Riad Zitoun Kedim, near the Badii Palace, the Bahia Palace, Dar Si Said and Tiskiwin Museums.

zipcode: 40000 MARRAKECH
email: contact@darelsouk.com
address: 56 Derb Jdid – Riad Zitoun Kedim
CostOfDoubleForANight: 60 euros
url: www.darelsouk.com
tel: 00212 61 170 470

Le Tikida Garden

Excellent Hotel for the traveller

address: Circuit De La Palmeraie, po box 1585 Daoudiate, Marrakech, Morocco
tel: 212 4 309099

Dar El Karfa

An lovely 18th century Riad which is a sanctuary in the heart of the medina only about 6 rooms at about 90 Euros each.

address: 2, Derb Maaroufi, Ksour Marrakech Morocco
tel: +212 (0) 44 42 64 84

Villa Dar Zina

Incredibly beautiful place to stay. 1001 Nights!

address: Just outside of M'kech
tel: + 212 44 34 66 45
zipcode: Villa Dar Zina BP 89 Hay Hassani
url: www.villadarzina.com

Hotel Ali

Good hotel, real travelers hangout. Has internet–cafe and a good restaurant in summer on rooftop with life music. Restaurant is a option for vegetarians. *hakima guelmoussi*: it's a lovely place to spend your vacation at. just go to it and i guarantee you that you want regretted.

address: 'Rue Moulay Ismail, just south of Jma–l–Fna.
tel: 044 44.49.79

La Mamounia

Overpriced but nice. Leisure facilities include swimming pool, sauna, turkish baths, massage, squash and tennis courts and golf. Horse riding available near by.

A large hotel set in tropical gardens. Villas, suites and rooms available. Facilities for disabled.

address: Avenue Bab Jdid,
Marrakech

tel: +(212) 444 8981

Sheherezade

The Scherherezade, just south of Djemma al Fna, is a fantastic, huge palace-like hotel with rooms facing wonderfully tiled courtyards with fountains. Its a good deal for the wonderful decoration. Book at least 2 weeks in advance.

address: small street south of Jma-l-Fna

tel: (044) 42 93 05,

Ibis Hotel

A clean, chain hotel, near the train station with a swimming pool, restaurant and bar. Its a good place to stay if you are getting in late from the train station, although a bit on the expensive side.

address: Avenue Echouhada

tel: 044 43 59 29

Kenza Hotel

Near the Jardin Marjorelle is a wonderful hotel with luxurious decoration in the rooms and lobby. There is a great pool, two bars and two restaurants

address: Avenue Yacoub El Mansour

tel: 044 44 83 30

Hotel Toulouseian

Friendly, cheap hotel where Peace Corps volunteers tend to stay. Some rooms have showers. *Eric Quailles: kasiaenglert@yahoo.com:*

address: 44 rue Tariq Ben Ziad

tel: 044 43 00 33

Hotel Farouk

One of the best cheaper hotels with hot showers in every room and an excellent restuarant. *Newton Campos:* I went to this place in December 2002 with 2 friends and we had a great time. The owners make everything to make you feel happy, the restaurant and breakfast are delicious. Rooms and beds always clean and the place is amazingly safety for the price you pay. Definitely one of the best cheap places in Marrakesh. *taoui .m.*

taoufik: nice place *Suzanne Irwin:* I stayed here for a week whilst on a expedition with Newcastle College in 2000. Owned by the same family as that owns the Hotel Ali in the main square of Marrakesh. Excellent value

for money (dirt cheap!), clean, comfortable beds, en-suite rooms all with hot showers, friendly & english speaking. Good food. Approx 15 walk to the main square. I highly recommend this hotel if you're a bit strapped for cash!!! I'm planning my return to Marrakesh, and will be staying at the Farouk again.

A good hotel in Marrakesh–

One of the best hotels in Marrakesh is called Hotel Farouk, you can have a triple room, en suite for around £12.00 a night. The beds are comfy and clean and the showers are hot. I stayed there in october 2003 and it was probably one of the best hotels I stayed in, in Marrakesh. The restaurant is excellent, the owners speak good English, there are shops nearby and it is fifteen minutes away from the main square. if this hotel is full then another hotel, hotel Ali which is in the square is owned by the same people and costs exactly the same. So if you dont want to spend to much money but you want a clean & comfy nights sleep then try Hotel Farouk/Ali. (JRW – 29/12/03)

La Maison Arabe

Beautiful nineteenth century mansion with luxurious suites with private patios. Another treat if you have the money to splurge.

address: 1, derb asseheb bab doukkala

tel: 0021244387010

email: lamaisonarabe@info.com

CostOfDoubleForANight: 170\$

costofdoubleforanight: 170\$

Hotel Islane

Islane faces the Koutoubia and has fantastic views at a reasonable price. Certain rooms are noisy because of traffic. : The room and bath was large and clean. The most noticeable noise was from the 10:00 pm table shuffle due to tables being moved in the roof top restaurant above. The street noise was not a problem and my room was facing ave Mohammed V. and the Mosque. I closed my double pane windows and slept with the AC on. I was advised that the credit card machine "often does not work" when I checked in and low and behold when I checked out, cash was needed. I recommend this hotel as a cash payment hotel. Dirhams or Euro will work. My room had a full private bath and all rooms, I think, have AC. Ask for a room facing the Mosque. The view is worth it provided you do not mind the early morning call to Mosque. I did not use either of the on site restaurants therefore I have no comment regarding them. The location is excellent relative to the action at Djemma el Fna and the cool action on ave. Mahammed V. From hotel Islane, I found it an easy walk to Gueliz.

Marrakesh – Festivals

all

National Festival of Popular Arts

The Festival of Popular Arts takes place in June and lasts for two weeks. It mainly takes place amid the ruins of the El Badi Palace. Traditionally, the festival is a showcase for the Moroccan arts and folk culture, with performances of Moroccan dance, Berber music and interpretations of Moroccan plays. Groups of musicians

and dancers gather in the city from all regions of Morocco to show off their skills.

Tourist Fantasia

A fantasia is a traditional Moroccan celebration with armed horsemen in full combat dress showing off their agility. Real fantasias are held when there is a Moulou or an occasion like the Fete du Throne. If you are not so lucky as to be on the right spot at the right time, you can go and see a tourist fantasia.

From every tourist office or hotel you can arrange a complete package including the trip, a dinner, a (belly) dancing performance and a Fantasia. Prices are pretty flexible...

Fete du Throne

On the 3 of march the Fete du throne is celebrated. Often big Fantasias are held just outside of the city gates –better than the tourist ones– and bands perform on the Jma–l–Fna.

Marrakesh – Books

There are many books on Marrakesh. The city has inspired numerous authors. Here are a few well readable books about the Red city.

all

A year in Marrekesh

Justin : Well written account of a year long stay of an American family in the Medina of Marrakesh.

author: Peter
Mayne
isbn: 0907871305
subject: Travel

The Voices of Marrakesh

Yael: Inspiring! Canetti autobiographical account of his short stay in Marrakesh manages to convey the uncompromising tension of being an outsider and trying to penetrate a foreign culture. The brief but intense interviews in the Marrakesh life give way to long spells of resignation to the impossibility of going beyond the surface. The author, however, finds a way of relating to the people and the berberic/arabic culture by drawing from his own biographical experiences. The book goes far beyond the nattraive into the realm of painting and sheer sounds.

author: Elias
Canetti
isbn: 0826402135
subject: Literature

Marrakesh – Nightlife and Entertainment

Traditional nightlife is centered around the Jma el Fna. For more modern nightlife head to Gueliz, the new part of town.

all

Mamounia Casino

The Hôtel La Mamounia, has a Grand Casino, with roulette, craps and blackjack. Jacket is required. Entrance is free.

address: Avenue Bab Jedid

tel: (04) 448 981

Es Saadi Hôtel

It's no match for the Maimounia Casino if you are looking for style, but the drinks are cheaper here. Entrance free, jacket and tie required.

address: Avenue Kadissa, Hivernage

tel: (04) 448 811

Palais des Congrès

Several bars and discotheques in one. But be prepared to pay the same as you would in France.

address: Avenue de France

Le Byblos

Le Byblos is a discotheque. It is located in in Hotel N'fis on Avenue de France. *LEANNE: VERY VERY VERY NICE + U CAN GET DRUNK QUICK CUZ THE MUSIC MAKES YOU HIGH***** LEANNE Cotton Club*

Pretty posh.

address: Hôtel Tropicana, Lotissement Semlalia

Le Churchill

The bar of the Mamounia is named after one of the most famous guests of the hotel. The bar has a sumptuous Moorish and Art Deco interior.

address: Av. Bab Jedid

Iceberg

Iceberg is a popular place in Gueliz and one of the few bars which is not part of a hotel. *cory: David Tapp: I can't really give Iceberg 4* overall. It's a small dark bar serving almost exclusively locals, with mint tea etc. It*

isn't in Gueliz but it is on Ave el Mouahadine, just south of the square Djemaa el Fna, in the medina area of the city. Ave el Mouahadine is a main street which runs into Ave Mohammed V & off West towards the Gueliz & Ville Nouvelle areas. The bar Iceberg is more or less opposite Hotel de Foucauld (which has a rooftop area but does NOT serve alcohol). Bar Iceberg, on the other hand DOES sell beer! I must say that I felt a bit like a tainted infidel, sitting there drinking beer with my girlfriend while tables of men sat drinking tea & coffee. They weren't especially curious though so I think it was more my problem than their's. Suffice it to say that the Iceberg is a place to go to drink beer, not really to have a drink & carouse with your mates!! However it was polite & atmospheric & I give it 3* overall, and 5* for the beer. I was gasping!

address: Avenue el Mouahadine

Hôtel de Foucauld

Great rooftop bar. *David Tapp*: "No Beer, and proud of it" was the feel here. Didn't get as far as the rooftop bit cos we wanted a beer---see bar Iceberg!

address: Av. El Mouahidine

Marrakesh – Eating Out

all

Catanzaro

Good pasta in a nice atmosphere.

address: 11, Rue tarik Ben Ziad

Pizza Hut

For a real American Pizza, head for the Hut.

address: Bd Med V – 40 000 Marrakech

Dragon D'Or

Nice springrolls, if you are fed up with couscous and tajine, come here.

address: 10bis, Bd Zerktouni

Borj Bladi

Great experience!

address: 57, R. de la Mauritanie

Hotel Ali

Great Buffet with Tajines, salad and couscous. Suitable for vegetarians. Rue Moulay Ismail, just south of Jma-l-Fna. *hakima guelmoussi*: it's a great place to go to

Restaurant Argane

More expensive than the stalls on the Jma-l-Fna but with an excellent view of the square with the mountains on the back (weather permitting). Good option.

Chez Chegrouni

A cheapy just north of the Hotel de France on the Jma-l-Fna. Nothing fancy, but a good bowl of soup and a nice tajine for a few dirhams.

Marrakesh – Tours and Excursions

Although Berber Tours is based in Zagora, their area of operation reaches as far north as Fez and Rabat or as far south as Agadir, which places Marrakech and Ouarzazate in the "heart" of their 4x4 tours region. The camel treks offered originate from either Zagora or M'hamid in the southeast of Morocco due to the proximity of the Sahara Desert.

Berber Tours organizes custom itineraries for both small and large (max. 15 people) camel camping treks into the Sahara Desert. Usually starting from either Zagora or Mhamid these camel treks can range from just 2 days, or up to 15 days in length and can encompass all of the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Berber Tours will also organize for your pleasure custom itineraries of 4x4 camping treks into the desert or from Ouarzazate, into the High Atlas Mountains. Small sightseeing itineraries (max. 6 people) by car or 4x4 are organized around Southern Morocco and visit cities, towns or mountain villages. All of Berber Tours itineraries and adventures are reasonably priced. Berber Tours can even arrange hotel bookings if needed by the clients!

Contact Berber Tours by telephoning: 212-68-51-50-87 or by email at admin@berbertours.net

Web address: www.berbertours.net

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Notes:



Meknes

Meknes is one of the four Imperial cities and its name and fame are closely linked to that of the Moroccan Sultan Moulay Ismail. He made Meknes the center of his empire and built many of the monuments that remain today.

Moulay Ismail was a tough guy: he used 25,000 captives to build the city's massive ramparts and monumental entrance gates as well as stalls for his 12,000 horses. His tomb is one of the most beautiful monuments in Morocco and one of the few religious buildings that non-Muslims can enter.

The souqs (markets) of Meknes are small in comparison to those of Fez. There are a few covered streets where you find leather, djellaba's, carpets and silver. In an hour or two you can see most of the nice shops.

Also visit the Bab Mansour and the Museum of Moroccan Arts (in the Bab Jamai).

Near Meknes is Volubilis, Roman ruins you just can't miss.

Meknes – History

The history of Meknes is partly the history of Moulay Ismail. This great-grandfather of present day King Mohamed VI, reigned over Morocco with a strong hand. He made expeditions as far south as Timbuctou and regained lost Moroccan possessions in every direction.

The Sultan and Meknes were however most famous for their role in the international slave trade. Moroccan pirates caught European vessels every now and then and the Sultan had the Europeans brought to his capital to work for him. Several attempts were done by European powers to get them back. The image of Moulay Ismail in the west is still very much tainted by this episode. In Morocco however he is still widely seen as a Sultan, who may have had his rough edge, but was good for the Empire and got Morocco back on the map.

Meknes – Getting Around

Finding your way in Meknes is not very hard. The Ville Nouvelle is built along the east bank of the Oued Boufekrane river. This is where most of the hotels are and the railway station. On the other side of the river is the rather compact Medina. The Jewish quarter, the Mellah, is on the south west side of the Medina, most of the impressive Moulay Ismail monuments on the south east side.

Within the Medina everything is at walking distance. The Moulay Ismail monuments are quite big, so this involves some more walking. To get from the new to the old part of town you can take a cab. They're not expensive and easily found.

Meknes – Getting There

Meknez is linked by rail to Fez (1 hour) and Rabat (3 hours). From Fez you can go further east to Oujda (nighttrain possibility). The trains are good and reliable. There are two stations in Meknez not far from each other. Trains stop at both.

Buses run in all directions (Rabat, Casa, Tangiers, Rissani, Fes, er–Rachidia). An impracticality is that they leave from one of the two bus stations. The old one is in the Ville Nouvelle (av. Mohammed V, for the CTM buses), the new one in the old city, near the Mellah.

Meknes – Sights

There are three categories of sights in Meknes. These are the constructions of Moulay Ismail, mostly south east of the Medina, the souqs and Medersa of the old Medina and the Roman ruins of Volubilis. Volubilis is dealt with in a separate section, so here you'll find the highlights of the first two. In any case be sure not to miss the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail. This is one of the very few religious buildings you are allowed to enter in Morocco, and the architecture and colors are really breathtaking.

all

Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail

This site is still an important place of veneration for Moroccans, so you are requested to wear modest dress and you'll be asked to step out during prayers (prayer time is 5 minutes, 5 times a day; great opportunity for bathroom calls or other errands).

The inside of the Mausoleum consists of a series of chamber, decorated with bright zellige and kufic writing. The mausoleum is not open to visitors neither during the siesta nor on Fridays. *karima:*

The Imperial City

The constructions of the Imperial City will give a good idea of how the Sultan who built them, thought: on a huge–scale. A good morning of walking is needed to explore the stables and the storerooms of the palace complexes.

Dar Jamai

This museum (closed Tuesdays) is at the entrance of the Medina (place al Hedim) if you are coming from the mausoleum. The museum is one of the best in Morocco and has a very nice garden with fruit trees.

The Souks

The souks of Meknes are not as special or big as those in Fez or Marrakesh, but they are worth a visit. The main street is the covered bazar of Souq es–Sbat. It goes from the Grand Mosque to the flea market at Souq Bezzarin.

Bou Inania Medersa

Open daily. Another good example of a Moroccan Koranic School. It was built in the 14–th century under the Merinides. There is a good view from the roof.

Meknes – Accommodation

Most of the better hotels are in the Ville Nouvelle. In the Medina there are a couple of basic places that are quite cheap.

all

Riad Didi

Didi is a descendant of sultan Moulay Sulaiman(1796–1822), and grand–father to the present owners. Didi had 4 wives, each of them had her own quarters on the ground floor of what is now referred to as Riad Didi. Today Riad Didi is a real masterpiece of Moroccan craftsmanship. Restored in the purest Moroccan style, it is organized around a large patio and a nice fountain where you would eventually refresh during the long summer days A splendid terrace would make it possible to marvel at the general view of the ancient medina and the Royal Golf of Meknes; one of the fewest links in the world that can be played at night and the only one in the vicinity of the 17Th century ruins of an Imperial Palace. Staffed to welcome you with conviviality and professionalism in the purest traditions of the Moroccan hospitality, Riad Didi offers you 5 exotic Suites and 6 sumptuous double rooms alternating with European and Eastern lounges and terraces providing exceptional Panoramic views on the old Imperial city.

address: 30 Derb Al Hammam

tel: 011–212–61–15–04–07

url: www.palaisdidi.com

Maroc Hotel

If you want to stay in the Medina, this is your best bet. Showers tend to be on the cold side of tepid.

address: Rue Rouamine, at no. 7

tel: 05/530075.

Youth Hostel

Open all year. It's a bit outside of the center. Take bus no. 5. Very good option

address: Av. Okba ben Nafi

tel: 05/524698

Meknes – Eating Out

Most of the restaurants in the ville nouvelle are around the Place Administrative. They mainly serve French style and Moroccan food. In the Medina you can eat a simple meal at a very decent price, but don't expect anything spectacular.

all

Collier de la Colombe

67, Rue Driba. Your best bet in the Medina. Situated in an old Mansion. To find it follow the signs from Place Lalla Aouda (near the Mausoleum).

La Coupole

Av. Hassan II and Rue du Ghana. Has good Moroccan food and slightly less tasty European dishes. The nightclub tends to be rather noisy.

Restaurant Merhaba

23, Av. Mohammed V. Decent meals at a good price..

RYAD BAHIA

It's a typical ryad in the heart of the medina in Meknes, not far from the famous gate BAB MANSOUR, between the museum DAR JAMAI and the MEDERSA BOUANANIA ..

we have a moroccan restaurant, you can try all moroccan tagines, they are served for lunch and dinner .

we are open from 11.30 until 16h00 pm in the evening : 18h00 to 23h00

We have also four rooms for guests, all furnished with a moroccan style, where you can share a moroccan life with a family.

for more informations please open our site: www.ryad-bahia.com

address: tiberbarine, ancienne medina, meknes, maroc

email: oasis.ja@caramail.com

PriceOfMenu: 110dh-170dh

tel: 061815237 or 055554541

priceofmenu: 110dh-170dh

zipcode: 50000

Meknes – Practical Information

Tourism Delegation · Place Administrative – Tel: 52.44.26 Tourist Office · Esplanade de la Foire – Tel: 52.01.91

Central Post Office · Place de la France

Police – Emergencies · Tel: 19 Fire Brigade · Tel: 15

Night Chemist · Hôtel de Ville – Tel: 52.26.64

Mohammed V Hospital · Tel: 52.11.34 Polyclinique Cornette–de–Saint–Cyr Hospital · 22, esplanade du Dr Giguet – Tel: 52.02.62 / 63

Zeit Car Rental · 4, rue Antissade n°1 – Tel: 52.59.18

Airlines – Royal Air Maroc · 7 av. Mohammed V – Tel: 52.09.63 / 64

Railway Station · Rue de l'Émir–Abdel–Kader – Tel: 52.10.60 / 52.06.89 / 52.24.07 · Trains pour Casablanca, Oujda, Tanger

CTM Coach Station · 47 av. Mohammed V – Tel: 52.25.83 · Autocars pour Casablanca, Erfoud, Fès, Marrakech, Tanger

Meknes – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Merzouga

Watching the sun rise or set over the sand dunes of Merzouga may be the most spectacular experience you have on your trip to Morocco. The Erg Chebbi, the name of these sand dunes, is said to have some of the highest dunes in Morocco. Indeed, the dunes and the desert wildlife are impressive. Merzouga is an excellent base from which to explore the desert and bird-watchers will be enthralled with what they see. In spring, a lake forms near Merzouga which attracts pink flamingos. Other rare birds stop here during spring migration. The desert is also the year round environment for many desert reptiles and mammals.

A camel trip, for a couple hours, is a great way to see the dunes. For those who are used to getting saddle-sore, or are up for the ultimate adventure, there are two to three day desert tours on camel. You wont have to look hard for a guide, its better to ask the management at your hotel for a reliable one. Guides are much more aggressive in this part of Morocco. Seeing the sun set over the dunes is worth it though.

Merzouga – Accommodation

all

Chez Gerard et Francoise

Near Merzouga (1 1/2 km south from town), is my personal favorite. You can either camp out in the dunes or stay in a wonderfully decorated room. The restaurant serves delicious, huge Moroccan meals.

address: Ksar Sania

tel: 00212(0)55 57 74 14

Auberge La Caravane

Auberge La Caravane, is situated facing the spectacular dunes of Erg Chebbi, They have comfortable rooms to stay as long as you like, or you can stay the night in a traditional berber tent. With Camel rides also available. This is a wonderful place to simply relax in the desert for e few days. You will be more than well looked after by the lovely people that work there. Contact : Ibrahim Boumia 00212 660039175 **Bill Ward:** They also now have a swimming pool. **Bill Ward:** Tel :- 00212 660 39175 or 00212 613 51654 for reservations and information.

email: famleinker@aol.com

zipcode: Bad Essen / Germany

Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua

Also known as Chez Michel. is one of the most beautiful places to stay in Morocco. It's more expensive, but worth it.

tel: 05 57 71 40

Hotel Merzouga

One kilometer before you arrive in Merzouga. It is close to the dunes, well managed and clean. *iosune diaz*: i find it ok

atel: 05/576535

Yasmina

Yasmina is a small place, sometimes near a lake with flamingos.

Les Dunes dor

Has rooms around a court-yard and good food.

Auberge SAHARA

E mail: aubergesahara@hotmail.com *Fabrice tollier*: Nice and clean place (rooms.restaurant.wc.hot showers)with helpful persons.Berber music at night.They organise tours on camels and arround erg chebbi by 4x4.Good camping place and correct prices.125 dhs double room with private wc and hot showers.60 basic double room/85 triple one/100 quadruple one.No more than 50 dhs for dinner or lunch.

www.geocities.com/aubergesahara. *Roger Chapman*: Quiet place for camping in a small oasis at the edge of the dunes of erg chebbi.Clean rooms(basic and double)with delicious meals in the restaurant. Gentr and helpful hostels who also organise tours on camels for some hours or days (trekking)in the desert.At night we listen to berber music. Roger *Emmanuel la roche*: Very quiet and clean place to stay for many days in rooms or berber tents or on the roof .Delicious meals are served in the restaurant for no more than 50 dhs for person.Hassan–the camelman–organise tours on camels and also trekking in the desert.He is very helpful.Double room is only 125 dhs and baic one is only 60 dhs and showers are always hot.It is also good place for camping under palm trees at 10 meters far from dunes of Erg chebbi. Emmanuel *Emmanuel la roche*: Very quiet and clean place to stay for many days in rooms or berber tents or on the roof .Delicious meals are served in the restaurant for no more than 50 dhs for person.Hassan–the camelman–organise tours on camels and also trekking in the desert.He is very helpful.Double room is only 125 dhs and baic one is only 60 dhs and showers are always hot.It is also good place for camping under palm trees at 10 meters far from dunes of Erg chebbi. Emmanuel

address: Ksar Hassi labiad

tel: 0021255577039

Merzouga – Getting There

There is no asphalt road to Merzouga, you go over dirt pistes that are not very well marked. Its recommended to travel with a group in a land-rover or take a very good map of the area. If you leave from Erfoud, you can go in a land-rover, contact Hotel Ziz or Hotel Tafilalet. You could also join up with other tourists. You can also get there from Rissani by taking a land-rover taxi (best time is around 7 am).

Merzouga – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Moulay Idriss

The creator of the first Arab dynasty and most sacred saint, Moulay Idriss, is buried in the center of this very holy town. Non-muslims are not permitted to visit many of the shrines, however a wander through the hilly streets is very interesting. Moulay Idriss shrine is the destination of constant pilgrimages. There is also a September moussem. You can get a view of the shrine from the Terrasse Sidi Abdallah El Hajjam above the Khiber, find a young guide to lead the way.

Its better to move on to Volubulis or Meknes because it has only be recently that they even allowed Christians to enter the town. Accommodation is sparse but possible.

Moulay Idriss – History

Moulay Idriss is the site of the first Mosque in Morocco. It is one of two mosques with a round minaret in the country.

Moulay Idriss – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Oualidia

Oualidia is a spectacular resort with a lagoon beach on the Atlantic coast between Safi and El Jadida. It is a wonderful place to relax, eat delicious seafood, swim, surf, wind-surf and walk on the beach. If you have your own car, its an easy drive from El Jadida. Its possible to take a grand taxi from El Jadida.

Oualidia is a great place for families, offering much during the day and at night. From discotheques to great beaches, this is the place to be during the month of august (thats when its full).

Oualidia – Accommodation

Hotel Hippocampe (03/34 64 99) is a lovely hotel with its own private beach. Rooms are off a courtyard filled with flowers. The restaurant is quite good but the service could be better.

Auberge de la Lagune (03/ 34 64 77) is a nice hotel restaurant. However, the owner and staff can be quite rude.

Campsite Ouilidia is in a garden behind the dunes, quite nice.

Oualidia – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Ouarzazate

Ouarzazate is a useful base from which to explore the ksour and Kasbahs of Ait Benhaddou. However, there is not a lot to do in the town itself. During the 1980s, the Moroccan government had big plans for this town, as the first stop on the "Saharan Adventure", there is even an airport here. The town became known as "Morocco's Hollywood" as it has been used as a base for many "exotic" film like David Leans "Lawrence of Arabia", Bernardo Bertolucci's "Sheltering Sky" and "Jesus of Nazareth". However, because of a recession, it now just seems to be a very clean, nicely built ghost town.

The local Glaoui Kasbah Taorirt and the centre artenasal (across from the Kasbah) are worth a visit. Ait Benhaddou is one of the most fantastic sights of the Atlas as the kasbahs are the most elaborately decorated and best preserved (thanks to UNESCO). They have been built and re-built as sets for such movies as Jesus of Nazareth, Lawrence, and Orson Welles Sodom and Gomorrah.

Ouarzazate – Day Trips

all

Berber Tours

Berber Tours organizes custom itineraries for both small and large (max. 15 people) camel camping treks into the Sahara Desert. Usually starting from either Zagora or Mhamid these camel treks can range from just a few, or up to 15 days in length and can encompass all of the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Berber Tours will also organize for your pleasure custom itineraries of 4x4 camping treks into the desert or from Ouarzazate, into the High Atlas Mountains. Small sightseeing itineraries (max. 6 people) by car or 4x4 are organized around Southern Morocco and visit cities, towns or mountain villages. Through Berber Tours associates, horseback riding itineraries can be arranged in the winter from Zagora, or from Agadir in the summer, and all of these adventures are reasonably priced. Berber Tours can even arrange for hotel bookings if needed by the clients!

Jeffrey Teachout: The services offered by Berber Tours are first rate! I have been to Morocco several times now and have always used Berber Tours as my Moroccan "guide." I like Berber Tours because it is a small operation which gives personal attention to it's clients, and therefore, they do not become lost in a "touristic shuffle." Berber Tours also makes sure that their clients are treated fairly by the "locals" and that they do not pay too much for anything that they might wish to purchase. Berber Tours will make your time in Morocco as enjoyable as possible and they are quite knowledgeable of the customs, traditions, and history of the country. If you are looking for a fair and honest guide while you are in Morocco....contact Berber Tours....you won't go wrong!

email: jeffrey.teachout@wichita.edu

address: Wichita, Kansas USA

Ouarzazate – Accommodation

Hotel Azghor on Boulevard Prince Moulay Rachid (044/88 26 12) is a bit expensive, but has excellent views to the south and a refreshing swimming pool.

Hotel La Gazelle on Avenue Mohammed V (044/88 21 51) rooms are attractive and clean, plus theres a pool.

Belere Kenzi 044 88.28.03 and Karam Palace (044) 88.22.25 are nice 4 star hotels.

all

Berber Palace/Meridien

Beautiful hotel, on the luxurious side.

tel: (044) 88.31.05

Ouarzazate – Eating Out

Restaurant Chez Dmitri on Avenue Mohammed V has great dishes for reasonable prices. It used to be a foreign legion bar and has an interesting atmosphere.

Ouarzazate – History

Ouarzazate – Useful addresses

Tourism Delegation · Av. Mohammed V – Tel: 88.24.85

Travel Agency Ksour voyages · 11, place du 3 mars – Tel: 88.28.40

Holiday Village Club Méditerranée · Tel: 88.26.50 – Fax: 88.28.14

Central Post Office · Av. Mohammed V · Opening hours : 8h30 – 12h00 / 14h30 – 18h00.

Police – Emergencies · Tel: 19 Fire Brigade · Tel: 15

Night Chemist · Au siège de la municipalité · Av. Mohammed V – Tel: 88.27.08

Sidi H'Cein Hospital · Au siège de la municipalité · Av. Mohammed V – Tel: 88.27.08

Car rental Avis · Av. Mohammed V – Tel: 88.43.10 Budget · Place du 3 mars – Tel: 88.20.43 Europcar Interrent · Place du 3 mars – Tel: 88.20.35 Hertz · Av. Mohammed V – Tell: 88.20.84

Airport · A 1 km au Nord–Est – Tel: 88.22.97 / 88.23.83

Ouarzazate – Tours and Excursions

all

Berber Tours

Although based in Zagora, Berber Tours operates its 4x4 tours throughout the southern region of Morocco which includes Marrakech, Agadir, Touradant and Ouarzazate.

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Contact Berber Tours by telephone at: 212-68-51-50-87 or by email at admin@berbertours.net

Web address: www.berbertours.net

email: admin@berbertours.net

address: Ave. Mohamed V

tel: 212-68-51-50-87

url: www.berbertours.net

zipcode: 45900 – Zagora

Ouarzazate – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Ouirgane

Ouirgane is a lovely small town nestled in the Atlas mountains equipped with surprisingly beautiful hotels. Its a wonderful place to stop before driving the terrifying but spectacular hairpins in the Atlas mountains called the Tizi n Test. It is a pleasant base for walking, mountain-biking and horse riding. The Residence de la Roseaie is a four star resort hotel, astronomically priced, but worth every dirham. Rooms are surrounded by beautiful gardens, there are two pools, a sauna, tennis and horse-back riding. The food is fantastic. A cheaper, but attractive option is across the river at the Au Sanglier Qui Fume. There is good food to be had here also, and mules to be hired for local treks.

Ouirgane – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Oujda

Oujda is the easternmost city of Morocco and has been influenced by Algerian music and culture for years. This is, for example, where the best Rai (a kind of Arabic music) is made. When the Algerian border was closed in 1994, Oujda suffered from the drying up of cross-border traffic.

The distinctive atmosphere of Oujda makes it a place worth visiting when in Morocco. It does not have any major sights, but should be included in any itinerary to the east of Morocco. The center of Oujda, along Boulevard Mohamed V is where you will find hotels, banks and the tourist office.

Oujda – Getting There

Oujda is served by road and rail connections from Fes. It is the travel hub for the east, so if you are going to or coming from Berkane, Nador, Bouarfa or Figuig, this maybe the place to change bus or train.

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Notes:

Oukaïmeden

1.30 hrs drive outside Marrakech in the Atlas mountains you can find the ski resort Oukaïmeden. It is possible to rent ski and snowboard equipment on arrival. Probably one of the funkiest places to go skiing.

Oukaïmeden – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Ourika

A trip to the Ourika Valley is a great escape from the heat and noise of Marrakesh. The first thirty minutes, you drive through a rather dull, flat plain. At the village, souk tnine de lourika, the breathtaking views of Berber villages and landscapes begin. There is a great Monday souk at this roadside village.

Setti Fatma is the place to go, if the road is not too washed out. If you take anything but a four-wheel drive, especially during spring, you will be dropped off beside a stream of icy water. Above the village, you can wander around waterfalls. The higher waterfalls can be difficult to climb, and especially to come down. Wear good foot-wear!

Its possible to set out for trekking to Toubkal from Setti Fatma. The valley is in the middle of the Atlas mountains. The Djebel Yagour with prehistoric rock carvings, the Djebel Tougledn (at least 1 night overnight) are for adventurous trekkers. A three day trek across the Zat Valley, beginning at Setti Fatma and ending beneath Taddert on the Tizi nTichka is spectacular but challenging. For guides, go to the Cafe Azagza.

Ourika – Getting There

Grand taxis, buses and minibuses leave from Bab er Robb in Marrakesh, from 6 to 12. They return in the late evening if you want to make it a day-trip. You could also rent a car or a 4x4 to explore the valley. It takes about 2 hours to Setti Fatma from Marrakesh.

Ourika – Accommodation

Hotel Tafoukt has the nicest rooms with shower and toilet at the beginning of Setti Fatma.

Cafe-restaurant Asgaour have basic rooms that overlook the river. Excellent food.

Cafe des Cascades has decent rooms.

Ourika – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Rabat

About a million people live in the capital Rabat and its sister city Sale, but wandering around the Medina, the Kasbah or the Modern Town this is not the impression you get. Life is easy. Not many people harrass you. Shopowners are very nice.

For this reason Rabat is a good first base to start exploring Morocco. You can get in touch with life the morrocan way at your own pace.

Watch the changing of the Royal Guard at the Royal Palace (Friday mornings) walk the narrow streets of the Casbah des Oudaya and visit the 12th-century Tour Hassan.

Several other interesting sights should be visited if time permits. Chief among these are Bouknadel and its Jardins Exotiques (fascinating gardens) and Chellah which has interesting museums a 17th-century fortress and Roman ruins. And dont neglect Rabats sister city Sale with its Grand Mosque, city gates, markets, small back streets and harbor filled with fishing boats.

You might also consider going to the beach in Rabat, although the beaches south of the city are somewhat better than those in town itself.

Rabat – Practical Information

Moroccan National Tourism Office · 2, avenue d'Alger – Tel: 73.05.62

Central Post Office · Av. Mohammed V · Open Monday–Friday from 8.30 to 12.15 and 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. · In the Summer from 9.00 to 3 p.m. Telephone and Poste Restante · Rue Soekarno, in a side–building of the Post Office. · Open 24 hrs a day, seven days a week.

Police – Emergencies · Tel: 19 Fire Brigade and Ambulance · Tel: 15

Night Chemist · Rue Moulay Sliman · Open 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Ibnou–Sina Hospital · Sur la route de Casa, à côté de la gare des bus – Tel: 67.44.11

Car rental Europcar · 25 bis, rue Patrice Lulumba – Tel: 72.23.28 Avis · 7, rue Abou–Faris–al–Marini – Tel: 76.75.03 Budget · Gare ONCF – Tel: 76.76.89 Hertz · 291, av. Mohammed V – Tel: 70.73.66

Railway Station Central Station · Av. Mohammed V – Tel: 76.73.53 Rabat–Agdal Station · Tel: 77.23.85 – Trains to Casablanca, Fès, Oujda, Tanger

Sport Royal Golf Club · at Dar es Salam. · Tel: 75.58.64 / 65 · 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones. · International Golf Championship in March. · Red course (handicap 18 required) · Blue and green courses(no handicap required).

Rabat – History

Rabat has been the capital city of the Moroccan kingdom since 1912. It was built on Chellah ruins whose history may be traced back to the VIIIth century. By the end of the Xth century, the Zenetes, a Berber tribe, made of it a place for their military barracks. Casbah of Oudayas is now what remains of that military site. In the XIIth century, the city became the capital city of Almohades and Yacoub EL MANSOUR gave it the name of "Ribat El Fath" (Victory Fortress). Rabat owes its beautiful architecture and wonderful old buildings to Yacoub EL MANSOUR. A six kilometre–long–wall with five big gates, Hassan Mosque, which had it been completed, it could have been one of the biggest mosques in the Arab world at that time, and the great old gate of Oudayas Casbah are some interesting historical sites which are really worth visiting. Andalousians, Arabs who were chased off Spain, came and settled in Rabat.

In 1666 and under the reign of Moulay Rachid, the city got prosperous. He built more walls to protect it and finished building the Casbah and the port.

In 1912, Rabat has become the capital city of the Kingdom; offices, universities and embassies with their modern architecture draw a contrast with old walls and towers.

Mohammed V mausoleum, a typical sample of Moroccan architecture, stands mejestically near Hassan mosque overlooking the Atlantic ocean and its neighbouring river, Bou Rereg.

all

History of Rabat

The earliest settlement at the mouth of the Bou Regreg river date back to preroman times. During the Roman Empire there was a fortress, Sala, at the location of the Chellah. It was the southernmost colony in Morocco of the Romans.

It was the Almohads who founded Ras we know it, abat in the twelfth century. Rabat and Sale had their finest hour in the seventeen century, when the Republic of the Bou Regreg was a major basis of Piracy in the world. Moroccan pirates went as far as Ireland. Rabat has been the capital of Morocco since 1912 *oussama alaoui mdaghri*: if you tell the link between the different cities and the quasba's in the city

Rabat – Getting Around

In the old part of town the best way to get around is on foot, or as the Moroccan's call it, bus number 11. To get to the museum of Antiquities, the Chellah or an other part of town, take one of the blue cabs, fix a price, or ask them to use the meter. To get to Sale or the Jardin Exotique you can get a seat in a grand taxi. Make sure your not renting the whole thing. Taxi's leave when there full. To Sale there's also the option of taking the boat. It's nice, but you always end up walking a lot on the Sale side of the river.

Rabat – Getting There

Rabat is easily reached from other cities in Morocco. All travel from the south goes via Casa, which is the travel hub. Tanger in the North and Fez and Meknes in the east are also easily accessible from Rabat. The train station is right in the center of town. The bus station is somewhat out of town, so if you have the choice, the train is easier.

Rabat – Accommodation

Most of the cheaper hotels are in the Medina or in the new city just near the Medina. Most of the times the ones in the Medina are better and cleaner. In summer it can be a little hard to find a good room, but at all other times it isn't necessary to book in advance.

Unique option: Dar Al Batoul, 037 72 72 50 – 7 derb al jirari – laalou– medina old traditional house in the medina – easy access– 8 rooms + 1 suite – all comfortable – computer available, typical moroccan cuisine–walking distance from historical monuments, the beach, handicrafts shops. www.riadlbatoul.com

all

Le Meridien Tour Hassan

A beautiful, luxury hotel with rooms for about \$180. The best hotel in Rabat.

tel: (037) 23.90.00

Sofitel Diwan

Nice 4 star in the center of Rabat.

tel: (037) 26.27.27

Hilton

5 Star hotel, my second favorite luxury hotel at about \$250

Campsite

I have heard this is quite an acceptable campsite.

address: 'Sale, just across the river from Rabat.

Hotel Majestic

40 rooms. 15 US dollar a double. Good option, friendly staff, clean rooms with balcony facing the Medina'121 Av. Hassan II

address:

tel: 037/722997

Hotel Balima

20 US dollar a double. 15 US dollar a single. This used to be the hotel in Rabat. Now the glory has faded, but this means you can afford it! Has an excellent terrace.

address: Corner Rue Jakarta, Av. Mohammed V

tel: 037/708625

royal hotel rabat

located in the city center, at the corner of allal ben abdelah and rue amman, 67 renovated rooms 2003, with hot water 24 hours, a restaurant serving 3 meals a day...

address: 1 rue amman

CostOfDoubleForANight: \$34

tel: 212 37 721172

email: royalhotel@mtds.com

costofdoubleforanight: \$34

url: www.mtds.com

Rabat – Eating Out

The best and cheapest place for Eating out are in the Medina. Eat a bowl of soup and cold fries with the locals and you won't spend more than a dollar. You have more choice in the restaurants in the Ville Nouvelle.

all

Restaurant Saadi

Not easy to find, at 81 Av. Allal ben Abdallah. Serves good traditional Moroccan food. Serves alcohol. Reasonable prices.

Restaurant Hong Kong

The place to be if you want Chinese food in Rabat. On the Mohammed V, number 261, first floor.

La Mamma

Italian restaurant, in the small street just behind Balima Hotel. Packed at lunchtime.

L'Entrecote

High-class French gastronomy served at this charming well-rounded restaurant.

Saidoune

Saidoune does good Lebanese food. The owner is a friendly Iraqi.

address: 467, Av. Mohammed V

Rabat – Sights

Within the big walls surrounding both Rabat and Sale there are quite a few sights. Most of the fun in Rabat is, however, just wandering through the narrow streets and shopping in the souqs. Rabat does have a few places you can really go in, but they're not many, and you will spend most of your time outside.

all

Bab Rouah

The Bab Rouah is one of the most beautiful city wall gates in Morocco. It is located at the th south east end of the walled city, near the Royal Palace. You can enter the gate free of charge. There are frequent expositions, mostly focussing on modern Moroccan art and generally speaking they are not too bad.*Richard Osinga:* There is an small galerie inside which does pretty good expositions.

Museum of Antiquities

Rue Brihi, closed tuesday. It's the best in its kind in Morocco. Especially the collection of bronzes is nice.

Chellah

Just outside of town. Very nice ruins. This was the town until it was abandoned in the 12–th century. Now there are ruins of a Mosque and graves of Merinide Sultans. This is one of the view mosques you'll see from the inside. The surrounding garden is great, especially when there are storks.

Tour Hassan & Mausoleum

The Tour Hassan, built in Almohadic times, still stands tall. Although it was never finished it is still am very remarkable monument. The tower was built at the same time as the Giralda in Sevilla.

Facing the tower is the Mausoleum of King Mohammed V. On fridays you can see the change of the guards.

reda: good

Kasbah des Oudaya

With a small museum, a terrific garden, small streets and the best cafe in town, the Casbah should be on top of your list. Entrance is free, except for the museum (10 DH).

Old City of Sale

The old city of Sale is definately worth a visit. There is a good Medersa, there are small winding streets lined with shops as well as very impressive city gates.

Bab Mrisa

The Bab Mrisa is the most interesting Gate of the Walled city of Sale. The gate is higher than you will normally see, this is due to the fact that there used to be a canal going through it, so in the pirate days of the city, the ships could go into the city directly.

Rabat – Shopping

all

Bab Rouah

Bab Rouah is one of the better galleries in town. The address is: Galerie Nationale de Rabat : Bab Rouah, Place de la Victoire Tél.: 70.05.30. *imane: Richard Osinga:* Very beautiful old city gate. The expositions are pretty small most of the time, but entrance is free.

Rabat – Internet Cafes

all

Acdim CC

hot drinks, Real Italian coffee, cappucino, espresso, latte etc.

tel: 07 67 36 00
email: webmaster@acdim.co.ma
address: 44 Rue Abou Derr, Agdal
Rabat 10000, Marocco
url: acdim.co.ma

Cyber–Info, Cyberclub

tel: (212) 7 68 37 12
email: webmaster@cyberinfo.net.ma
68 Ave. Fall Ould Oumeir
address: Agdal
Rabat 10000
url: www.cyberinfo.net.ma

Fusion Engineering

20 PCs. 128kbps. Nice setting, modern furniture in a traditional ornament.
Competent and hospitable staff.

price: 15 DH (\$1.50)
tel: 212 7 683858
email: info@fusion.net.ma
hours: 8 am – 12.30 pm 2.30 pm – 9.30 pm
address: 13 Rue Aguelmane Sidi Ali
Rabat 10100 Morocco
url: www.fusion.net.ma

interPLANET

tel: (212)(7) 68 22 44

email: planet@maghrebnet.net.ma
address: 6 Rue Ibn El-Yasmine . Avenue de la Victoire
10000 Rabat

Post

tel: (07) 77.73.39
email: poste@baridalmaghrib.net.ma
address: La poste Rabat Instituts à Madinat Al Irfane
Rabat

WebCafé

email: interice@marocnet.net.ma
address: 7, Zankat Al Maarif, Souissi
Rabat

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Notes:

Rissani

Rissani is the last village on the Ziz River, the desert begins here. Most of the inhabitants still live in the 18th century ksar, a maze of dark almost troglodyte passages. Five minutes walk west of Rissani lies the ruined site of the first independent kingdom of the south , the Sijilmassa, from the 8th to the 14th century. These are the ruins of the first Arab and Islamic city of Morocco. The ruins now have more or less disappeared.

Well worth visiting is the the kasbah of Oulad Abdelhalim, a magnificent imperial building. There is a circle tour of the other ksours beginning at Asserehine and ending at Sijilmassa. The ksour Tinrheras is a ruined ksour on a hill with an excellent view of the Tafilalt region.

Rissani – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Safi

If you want to buy beautiful pottery at good prices, Safi is the place to come. Its not the most beautiful Moroccan town as it is surrounded by factories, however, it is a good place to get to know what a real Moroccan town is all about. There is a whole neighborhood of pottery workshops, where you can pick out and haggle over some of the most unique pottery in Morocco. The medina, surrounded by a Portuguese wall, is worth a visit. Also the Portuguese citadel offers good views over the town and the sea.

Unfortunately, the beaches are not very pleasant because they are mostly polluted and industrialized. Your best bet is to go north to Cap Beddouza.

Safi – Accommodation

Hotel Assif (04 62 23 11) on avenue de la liberte, has nice airy rooms and a good restaurant.

Hotel Safir (04 46 42 99) is a modern hotel with great rooms and good views over the city.

Hotel lAvenir (04 46 26 57) on Impasse de la Mer, has cheap rooms and spectacular views of the sea.

Safi – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Sefrou

Sefrou, an ancient walled town, is located at the foothills of the Middle Atlas. Until the 1950s, one third of the population was Jewish. Even before the coming of Islam, a Jewish–Berber town thrived here. There are seldom many tourists here, except for during the cherry festival in June. Its untouristy atmosphere, cooler air and well–preserved medina make it a very pleasant place to explore. The Mellah, or Jewish quarter, is also an interesting place to explore with its tall houses and tunneled streets.

Sefrou is an excellent place to do some walking since it is usually cooler in the summer. There are refreshing spring above the town and at times, waterfalls.

Sefrou – Getting There

Sefrou is most easily reached from Fes. Fes is the big travel hub in the region, so even when you are going somewhere else, consider doing in via Fes.

Sefrou – Accommodation

Hotel Sid Lahcen Lyoussi (05/66 04 97) is a bit like an alpine chalet with a good restaurant.

Campsite (05/67 33 40) has a swimming pool and cold showers.

Sefrou – Internet Cafes

all

nidal el mehrez

there are a lot of internet cafes in, but the only one that i know is in when you re coming from fes to sefrou it's in the right next to the "red light"! it's just when you arrive to this small town...

zipcode: 3100

hours: 15:10

email: nidal28@hotmail.com

price: ?

address: municipalite de sefrou

tel: 061228977

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Notes:

Settat

Settat – Internet Cafes

all

Sett@ Net

tel: 212 3 40 01 70
email: Settanet@settanet.net.ma
hours: 30 DH
Settat
address: N° 15 Bd Zerktouni A8
Settat Morocco
url: www.settanet.net.ma

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Notes:

Sidi Ifni

The Spanish atmosphere and the Art Deco architecture are two reasons to visit this coastal town. It was not too long ago, 1969, that Spain relinquished its enclave. It sits on a cliff top and is full of fantastic architecture and ironwork. Wander in the Andalusian garden and tiled fountain in the main square, Place Hassan II. Dont miss the buildings, the Spanish consulate, which is now closed, makes the city look like it belongs in a country of itself. All of the buildings are painted in pastel shades and are in quite good condition. The PTT and the lighthouse are other examples of this towns unique art-deco architecture.

There is a Sunday souk, filled with storytellers and musicians in an abandoned airstrip near town. The beaches are ok, but not great. The overall relaxed atmosphere of the town makes for a pleasant visit.

Sidi Ifni – Accommodation

Hotel Ait Ba Hamram (08/ 87 51 73) on Rue de la plage has good rooms in a grand building.

Hotel Suerte Loca (08/ 87 53 50) is very much like a Spanish fonda with cheap rooms and suites. It is managed by a friendly family who speak English.

Camping Sidi Ifni has good shade but is very basic.

Sidi Ifni – Practical Information

If you want learn and view more about Sidi Ifni visit this non commercial site (in spanish)...

<http://www.izquierdo.net/ifni/>

all

Sidi Ifni

Interesting addresses about Sidi Ifni (and Morocco) in http://es.geocities.com/cosas_correos/ (in Spanish. Go to "enlaces", the links page).

email: agustin.pascual@ozu.es

url: es.geocities.com

Sidi Ifni – Internet Cafes

all

abdel-malek LACHGAR

now Sidi Ifni have a couple of Internet Cafes, one is next of the state house

(bachaouiya) and it's only 60cent per hour (6dirhams).

Y'all need to check this beautiful city, it's very peaceful and the people are very friendly. how i know all that? cuz i was born there.

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Notes:

Skoura

The trip from Ouarzazate to Skoura is through a dull plain. However, the Restaurant du Lac, 19 km from Ouarzazate, is a lovely place to take a break (from May to September). It has a impressive view over a lac and a kasbah, at times, partially underwater. The road takes you close to the Dades where you can stop for a walk through the palm groves. You will probably be accompanied by a local guide, nothing to fear, its part of life here. Kasbah of Amerhidil and Dar Ait Sidi El Mati Kasbah are on the north bank of the river. If you can find them, they are beautiful!

The town of Skoura is of little interest itself. However, the maze of paths in the palm groves start here, as well as a search for a local guide. A local guide is invaluable if you would like to spend half a day exploring the palm grove paths and the kasbahs in the area.

El-Kelaa MGouna lies between the two valley floors of the Dades and the MGoun. It is an excellent base for dramatic hikes through the mountains and the kasbahs. This are is know for its rose festival, held in May as well as its rose-water, which is exported throughout the Islamic world. I strongly recommend taking an organized tour (1 hour, whole day walk or two ride) around the local kasbahs. The Roses du Dades Hotel organizes official tours (9 a.m. to 3:30). There is also a Bureau des Guides et Accompagnateurs on the main road, they can organize longer tours throughout the region.

Skoura – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Smara

Smara – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Sous Valley

The semi-tropical Sous valley and the Anti-Atlas mountains are two of the most unique regions of Morocco. The stunning physical beauty of the country, the welcoming Berber people and the availability of cheap flights to Agadir make it an excellent introduction to Morocco.

The people of these regions have a tradition of independence from the central government, as well as an independent culture and language. The regions are dominated by the Chleuh group of tribes who speak the Tachelait Berber dialect. The Chleuh are famous for their industry and business skill, as well as for their very unique music.

The center of the region is Agadir with an international airport, buses (the train line doesn't yet reach this city) and car rentals. The appeal of this city is small, however outside of Agadir, you can explore the splendor of the mountains and the coast. Taroudant, the ancient capital of the region, lies to the east. Surrounded by ancient ochre walls, this relaxed city is worth a stay with its old hotels, wonderful cooking and busy souk. To the south, the pink-walled city of Tiznit has an interesting atmosphere with its reputation as a center of prostitution (in the not so recent past), exquisite silver jewelry and blue men from the Sahara. The oasis village of Tafraoute is surrounded by splendid rock formations in the Anti-Atlas mountains. This region is filled with fascinating people and fantastic natural beauty, one could spend one month exploring the region and still not be full of the famous Berber tajine (stews).

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Notes:

Tafraoute

Tafraoute is a nice and easy going mountain village east of Tiznit, south-east of Agadir. After the barren landscape, it is a welcoming site to feel the cool air coming from the palm grove at the edge of the town. The Anti-Atlas mountains are spectacular! Also, the lunar landscape around Tafraoute is one of the major physical attractions. The dress, architecture and general independence of the Berbers in the area are also a welcome change. It is an excellent place to walk, ride bikes or just relax.

It is an excellent starting point for hiking or bicycling in the nearby Ameln valley. Getting around in the Ameln villages you can use taxis or rent mountain bikes from across the PTT.

Tafraoute – History

Tafraoute doesn't have a lot of history. It was build as a French administrative center and after independence it became a Moroccan one. The region itself has more history. Not far from Tafraoute is the zaouia of Sifi Ahmed ou Moussa, which used to be the centre of the sufi state of Igh.

Tafraoute – Getting Around

The town is very small, just go on foot. If you want to explore the region, the best thing is to rent a bike. You can rent bikes at the Maison Touareg Carpet store, which is on the road to the Hotel des Amandiers.

Tafraoute – Getting There

There are busses going to most places north, almost all of them take the road to Tiznit. There are two to three buses a day. Book in advance, the offices of all the lines are in the main street.

You can take a grand taxi to Tiznit as well and from there find a bus or a grand taxi onwards.

Tafraoute – Sights

all

Ameln Valley

You can spend an unlimited time exploring the 26 Berber villages in this valley. The houses and mosques are brightly painted and the people, welcoming.

Painted Rocks

The mysterious Painted Rocks is a plain of boulders painted red, blue and black by a Belgian artist. The Rocks

are in the valley and are easily accessible. Best time to visit is February, when the almond trees are blossoming.

Tafraoute – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Tangier

An absolute dump, it still is a major port of entrance from Spain to the otherwise beautiful and lovely Kingdom of Morocco. Expect to be pestered by dodgy characters from the second you exit the port to the second you get back on your ship. Locals will do anything to separate you from your money, so it is best not to do business, change on the black market or hang around longer than necessary. Don't trust the guys with badges who pretend to work for the shipping lines or to be immigration. That will have been the last time you see your passport! Only hand over your passport if demanded by police in uniform. Even then, if you are not 100% sure, ask/demand to go to the police station with him to verify his authenticity. It is best to get out of Tangier asap; this beautiful country has much more and much better to offer.

Tangier – Getting Around

Tangier is a fairly big city, but the part that interests you is small. You have the Medina, with all its small, winding streets, usually found in the old Moroccan part of town, with the petit socco, where rue es-Siaghin, rue des Postes and Rue des Chretiens meet. Take the first of these streets to go to the Grand Socco, the second to the port and the third to go to the Casbah.

The new part of town just facing the Medina is full of interests as well. The Avenue d'Espagne / Avenue FAR (same street, different names) is easily found, it goes east from the port along the shore. Higher up in the new city, you'll find the Belvedere near the Place the France and the big Boulevard Pasteur as central points. Rue de la Liberte leads you back to the Grand Socco.

Petit Taxis are the best way to move around in the new city. You find them at the Grand Socco.

Tangier – Sights

You have one of the best views of the world standing on the top of the hill on which Tangier is built. There aren't many places where you can see two continents at once. This definitely rates as a major attraction of Tangier. The road all the way up, is steep and colorful. While walking to the highest point you will get a good impression what the town is all about.

But Tangier has more to offer. It has nice markets, some excellent museums and hotels with stunning views. You will also find one of the largest trees I have ever seen in a park near the Petit Socco. Here you find a selection of what's offered.

all

The Grand Socco or Place du 9 avril 1947

It was in this square, on April 9th 1947, that sultan Mohammed V made a famous speech in which he referred to independence for Morocco. This vast marketplace is dominated on the south-west by the minaret of Sidi Abib mosque (1917), decorated with multi-coloured ceramic tiles. The Grand Socco is the center of Tangier

and a good place to start a tour as it links the medina and the new city. It was once full of snake charmers, musicians, storytellers much like the Djemaa el-Fna in Marrakesh. It is still busy on market days (Thursday and Sunday) when Rifian berbers come from the nearby Rif Mountains to the city to sell their wares. They add to the bright spectacle with their strange straw hats and colorful red and white clothes. If you pass under the right-hand of the two medina arches leading out of the Grand Socco, you will be on the Rue des Siaghines. It is one of the busiest market streets in the medina. The old Jewish quarter or the mellah is off to the right. More than ten synagogues and a locked Spanish Catholic church reveal Tangiers richly diverse past.

The Petit Socco

Located in the heart of the Medina, this little square is one of the most picturesque sites in Tangier. The noisy bustling crowd in multi-coloured clothing contrasts with those who have time to idle away over a cup of mint tea at the terraces of the cafés. The Petit Socco is at the end of the Rue des Siaghines. This is an interesting place to have a cup of mint tea and ponder on this busy little squares colorful past. Not too long ago, this was the center for male prostitution, pornographic films and drug-related activities. The area still holds onto its sleazy atmosphere. Its not hard to imagine artists such as William Burroughs, Jean Genet, Jack Kerouac, sipping their tea and dreaming up their fictional worlds. From the Petit Socco, there are two alleyways at the east end, Rue de la Marine, on the left and you will pass the grand mosque. The building itself is forbidden to non-Muslims, but is said to be built on a Roman temple site.

The Tangier American Legation

Morocco was the first nation to recognize the United States in 1776. This building, purchased in 1821, is the oldest American overseas legation. The museum houses documents which retrace the history of the relations between Morocco and the United States since 1776. Other collections are also on display : furniture, ancient doors, maps, paintings. It is here that the Allied Forces prepared part of the 1942 landings in North Africa.

Forbes Museum of Military Miniatures

Millionaire and press tycoon Malcolm Forbes (1919–1990) purchased the ancient palace of the mendoub in 1970. From 1978, Forbes decided to set in this palace his collection of military miniatures which he had started as a child. Today, the collection contains over 120 000 miniatures, arranged to feature famous battles of history, and was bequeathed to the city of Tangier. The garden offers an exceptional view of the Gibraltar Straits and Spanish coast.

Tangier – Practical Information

Tourist Office · 29, bd Pasteur – Tel: 94.80.50 – Fax: 94.86.61

Post Office · 33, bd Mohammed V · Open Monday–Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Police / Emergencies · Tel: 19 Fire Brigade · Tel: 15 Secours routiers · Tel: 177

24-hour Chemists · 22, rue de Fès – Tel: 93.26.19

Polyclinique de la Sécurité Sociale · Route de Malabata – Tel: 94.01.99 · 24 hour casualty department

Garage Renault · 2, av de Rabat, km 2 – Tel: 94.14.87 / 93.69.38 Garage Peugeot · 37, rue Quevedo – Tel: 93.50.93

Car Rental Avis · 54, bd Pasteur – Tel: 93.30.31 Budget · 7, av. du Prince–Moulay–Abdallah – Tel: 93.79.94
Hertz · 36, bd Mohammed V Tel: 93.33.22 Dany's Cars · 7, rue Moussa–ibn–Noussair – Tel: 93.17.78

Taxi · Tel: 94.55.27

Coach and Taxi Station · Place Sahat Al Jamia Al Arabia – Tel: 94.66.82

Railway Station · Place de la Marche Verte – Tel: 93.45.70 / 93.11.52

Boukhalef Souahel Airport · Tel: 93.51.29 / 93.47.17

Ferries Comanav · 43, av. Abou–Allal–el–Maari Tel: 94.23.50 / 94.05.04 – Fax: 94.40.22 Limadet · 13, rue
du Prince Moulay Abdallah Tel: 93.36.26 – Fax: 93.29.13 Comarit · 7, rue du Mexique – Tel: 93.12.20

Airlines Royal Air Maroc · 1, pl. de France – Tel: 93.55.01 / 02 – Fax: 93.26.81 · Réservations – Tel:
93.47.22 / 93.40.45 Iberia · 35, bd Pasteur – Tel: 93.61.77 / 78

Banks BMCE · Bd. Pasteur (VISA card) Crédit du Maroc · 19, bd Pasteur (VISA card) SGMB · Bd.
Mohammed V, opposite the post office (VISA)

Holiday Village : Club Aquarius Malabata · Baie de Tanger – Tel: 94.06.88

Tangier – Accommodation

Tangier has some really nice places. Old thirties style hotels with great views, most of these are on the waterfront, with the exception of the Continental. You will also find a wide variety of small cheap places in the Medina.

all

Movenpick

Nice hotel.

tel: (039) 32.93.00

Le Mirage

A great hotel, on the beach outside of Tangiers. A totally relaxing, delicious experience.

tel: (039) 33.34.90

Les Almohades / Mercure

Nice 4 star hotel.

tel: (039) 94.00.26

Pension Palace

Bertolucci shot 'The sheltering sky' here, and when you check in you know why. It's all past glory. The rooms are pleasant

address: 2, Rue des Postes

Continental

I like this place. The view from the terrace is great, but be sure to get a room with a window facing outside. It's at rue Dar-l-Baroud, but you can't miss it if you come from the port and go into the Medina. It's not as expensive as it looks, but not one of the cheapest places. **Richard Osinga:** If you are in a room with a window on the courtyard you are really missing out on something! The views over the harbor are great – and over the courtyard they are really lousy.

address: Rue Dar el-Baroud

Hotel el Munia

Lots of history here. Burroughs, Kerouac and Ginsberg stayed here. The bar stays open late and is a nice hangout

address: 1, rue Magellan

Tangier – Eating Out

For eating out in Tangier you have three options. Cheap places in the Medina, or more upmarket places in the Ville Nouvelle or try the restaurants on the Seafront. When you eat out in Tangier you should at least try the fish dishes. The Swordfish Tajine is one of my personal favourites.

all

Restaurant Andaluz

7, rue de Commerce. There are a few restaurants in this street. This seems to be one of the better ones. Does good swordfish. **hendrickx :**

Raihani

In the ville nouvele, 10 rue Ahmed Chaouki. Not the cheapest of places, but very doable. Great Moroccan cooking. Tel 09/934866

Avenue d'Espagne

On the Avenue d'Espagne you'll find the following restaurants worth recommending: Bab el Maghreb (no. 30) our number 1. l-Marsa. Good pizza's and spaghetti. Miramar (no. 168) Not a bad place to get your meal. **hendrickx :** restaurant **Richard Osinga:** Bab le Maghreb is indeed pretty nice, but service can be a bit slow.

Tangier – Beaches

Tangier – Internet Cafes

all

Cyber Cafe Mamnet

tel: (212–9) 324248
email: AZZOUZ@MAMNET.NET.MA
address: Av Moulay ABDELLAH, 53
TANGER MAROC
url: www.mamnet.net.ma

Cyber espace Pasteur

A spacious internet cafe in the center of Tangier with other services like public phones, fax.

Welcome and enjoy our services

price: 2
tel: 212.9.33.11.63/67
email: pasteur@mamnet.net.ma
hours: 24/24 7 days a week
address: 31 Bd Pasteur.
Tangier 90000 Morocco

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Notes:

Taroudant

Taroudant is a beautiful place to stop—explore the enchanting souk, take in some of the best preserved walls in Morocco, and eat some of the best cooking in the south. The city is enclosed by medieval walls which look best at dusk, when the gold, pink and orange colors are brought out by the setting sun.

Olive and orange groves surround the walls and spread in all directions. On a clear day you can see the High Atlas towering over the walls, an impressive sight. The walls and the groves are best seen by bike, which can be rented from Hotel Salem and from a shop near Hotel Taroudant. Another option is taking a horse—drawn carriage at sunset. The town's ambiance reflects its past splendors as it was once one of the most important towns in Morocco (and in the 16th century the capital of the Saadian empire). It remains a friendly Berber market town and has more of an African than a Mediterranean identity.

Try to be there on a market day (Thursdays and Sundays) look for Berber handicrafts—especially jewelry— but try to avoid the groups of tourist coming for a day—trip from Agadir. The town is also a convenient base for trekking into the Western High Atlas or Djebel Sirwa.

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Notes:

Taza

In earlier days controlling Taza meant controlling the road from Fez to Tlemcen; it was the key to controlling the whole east of Morocco.

Since the arrival of the French, first in Tlemcen (Algeria) and later in the west of Morocco, the whole eastern region dwindled, while the west flourished. Taza lost its importance.

What remains is a pleasant market town, with some monuments, although the religious once are not accessible for non-muslims. Taza is also a good starting point for exploration of the Djebel Tazzeke, with its great mountain views.

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Notes:

Tetouan

For people coming into Morocco through Ceuta, Tetouan is most likely to be their first encounter with Morocco. Take a deep breath when you get out of the bus, because you will be besieged. Students and touts will try to get your attention, try to make you buy hashish and pickpockets are never far away. The people of Tetouan have a reputation of being influenced by the aggressive mentality of the Rif Berber tribes and thus the tourist hustlers seem even more assertive. Once you've gotten used to Moroccan street life, it can be a very rewarding city.

It's a shame to just change buses here, because the medina is filled with beautifully white-washed and tiled buildings. It may be wise to employ an official guide from the tourist office to lead you through the medina. The tourist office is at 30 Rue Mohammed V. Much like Tangier and Chefchaouen, the architecture of the medina is dominated by an Hispanic influence, as it was built by Muslim refugees from Spain in the 15th century. The Mellah, or Jewish quarter, is an interesting place (south of the Place Hassan II on the Rue de la Luneta) with its tall, square houses and iron balconies with ornately decorated windows. The fascinating, winding disorder of the Andalucian medina contrasts well with the grandeur of the Spanish new town.

You do not need a guide to visit the new town, to walk around the ramparts or to visit the museums. The impressive and formal buildings built by the Spanish in the early 20th century are set on broad streets and very easily navigated. Most of the hotels, banks and restaurants can be found here. The ramparts (the city walls) can be admired by walking down Avenue Hassan II, just below the bus station. There is a garden beneath the walls and a craft school (Ecole de Metiers d'Arts Traditionnels) opposite the Bab El Okla. Do not miss a tour around the center where you can see traditional crafts being taught like the making of tiles and carpet-weaving. There is also a Folk Museum (Musee Ethnographique) south of the Bab el-Okla where there is a beautiful collection of Andalucian Jewish and Islamic embroidery and rooms displaying pictures and costumes of traditional marriage ceremonies.

There is a reasonable beach town 8 km from Tetouan called Martil. Martil has a couple of waterfront cafes. There is no train station at Tetouan, the bus station is a bit frightening with buses downstairs and tickets upstairs. A grand taxi can be a good mode of transport to get to Tangiers or Chefchaouen after a bit of haggling.

Tetouan – Sights

Besides the old town in general Tetouan has the following sights that are worth checking out.

Tetouan – Internet Cafes

all

The Cyber Space

The Cyber Space is linked directly to the backbone of the Internet via at 64Kbps

connection. 10 Pentium computers.

tel: +212.9.704987 and +212.9.961141

email: info@cybermania.net.ma

address: Cyber Mania
68, Boulevard Mohamed V, Tétouan, Morocco

url: www.cybermania.net.ma

Tetouan – Eating Out

There are many good places offering real Moroccan food.

all

Hotel Safir

On the main street, 4 star hotel that also serves decent food (and beer). It is closed (2004) but should reopen soon.

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Notes:

Tin Mal

Tin Mal is an excellent sight, but it is pretty hard to reach if you don't have your own wheels. Tin Mal is located roughly half way between Marrakesh and Taroudant on the Tizi-n-Test Pass. It used to be a very important place for the Almohads, who used it as a base to conquer the North of Africa and Spain. All that is left now are the ruins of the Mosque. The setting is lovely, however. This is one of the few mosques you can enter (maybe because there no longer is a roof on it) as a non-muslim.

The trip to come here from either side is quite spectacular as well, and if you plan to combine Taroudant and Marrakesh in the same trip, taking the Tizi-n-Test is not a bad idea. The best thing to do would be finding a few other travelers who are thinking of making the trip team up and hire a grand taxi together. You will need to bargain a bit, but in the end it will not be more than twice the price of the bus fare – and a lot more fun.

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Notes:

Tineghir

Even though Tineghir (sometimes written as Tinerhir) is a good base from which to visit the Todra Gorge, it is also a very beautiful and relaxing place to stay. The Tineghir palm grove is a must see, before or after a visit to the gorge. The palmery is like a fantasy world in itself, with its many crumbling ksours (mud-like family houses) and miles of date palms blowing in the wind. Its a comfortable place to just get lost. An interesting way to explore them is by renting a mule and a guide in town.

The ruined Glaoui Kasbah stands in ruin on a hill above the town. This a spectacular place to go at sunset as the view of the palmery is one of the best in Morocco (it is the largest and richest oases of the Moroccan South).

About 10 km from Tineghir, the Gorge reaches a very narrow point, where the paved road stops (you may have to take off your shoes and roll up your pants to cross a stream). There is a hotel, a restaurant and a cool spring. Best time to visit is February to June.

Good quality Berber crafts can be found, for a reasonable price, at the Maison Berbere.

Tineghir – Accommodation

Hotels

Hotel Saghro (04 83 32 05), near the Kasbah, is the towns most expensive hotel has splendid views and a swimming pool.

Hotel Todra (04 83 42 49) on Avenue Hassan II, is an old building with tacky decorations, however the rooms are large.

Hotel El Qods also on Avenue Hassan II, is a small, reasonable hotel with hot showers. Campsites

Camping Ourti on Avenue Mohammed V has lots of facilities, like hot showers and a swimming pool.

Camping Almo off of Avenue Mohammed V is another good camping ground with more shade.

Tineghir – Getting Around

The town of Tineghir is so small you won't need a mapp. getting around in the oasis is also easy enough. There is a big road leading up to the Gorges via Taorirt, Ait Oujena and Ait Ouaghitine, but if you are walking you might as well try to find your way through the palmery. There is also a smaller road starting at Tidirini and going to Imarirene via Ihajamen and Ait Bujan, but this does not take you to the Gorge. Good walk though.

You can also follow the Oued Tineghir south to Ait Aissa ou Brahim via Ait Mohammed and el-Herat.

Tineghir – Getting There

Tineghir is on the road from Ouarzazate to Rachidia and ten to one this is how you'll be coming from there. There are buses and taxi's linking Tineghir to the mentioned towns.

The other possibility (the one to ten one) is that you are crossing the Atlas from Imlilchil. For more infor see the General section of Tineghir.

Tineghir – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Tiznit

Tiznit is a pretty town with ochre walls around the city center.

The market is nice (the buses stop on the square opposite the market), there is an old spring you can visit, and a mosque more characteristic of sub-Saharan Africa. The people are very friendly and the town is pretty relaxed. There is a new plastics factory on the outskirts, and much other new industry. Many people have solar heating, and most people have satellite dishes.

It is a stop on your way south from Agadir on to Tafraoute , to Aglou Plage or Sidi Ifni, or to Guillimine, or further south to the West-Saharan.

Tiznit – People

Tiznit – People

Tiznit – Internet Cafes

Tiznit – Accommodation

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Notes:



Todra Gorge

The Todra Gorge is one of the most spectaculars trips you can make by 4WD. The countryside is spectacular. There is a wonderful hotel at the mouth of the Todra Gorge on the south side. You stay right between the rock walls. Beautiful and recommended. (www.todragorge.com) A little further out the gorge is a collection of smaller and cheaper hotels and restaurants.

If you like rock climbing, Todra Gorge is a good place to do it. As you walk on the road at the bottom you'll see many preanchored routes up the faces.

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Notes:

Volubilis

Volubilis is the best preserved Roman site in Morocco and is an easy excursion from Meknes. It is on the same winding road as Moulay Idriss, the birthplace of Moulay Idriss, the creator of the first Arab dynasty. Both sites (they are 4 km apart) are definitely worth a visit, especially if you are interested in Moroccan/Roman and Arab history.

As you approach Volubilis, you will see the ruins on a long, high plateau. This is where the Roman imperial road ended. After conquering France, Spain and Tangier, the Berber tribes stopped the Romans from entering the Atlas mountains. The Roman rule lasted two centuries, and when they left, change came very slowly. Christian churches survived until the arrival of Islam and the local population of Berbers, Greeks, Syrians and Jews spoke Latin until the seventh century. The city remained an active agricultural center and trading post until the 18th century when most of the marble was transported to build Meknes. This region's land is some of the most fertile in North Africa, and the city exported wheat, olives and wild animals hunted in the hills to Rome. The ruins remaining are buildings from the second and third AD. They are impressively maintained and excavated.

The entrance to the site is through a small gate, built in 168 AD. There is a ticket office and a cafe with a terrace, where you can get cool drinks and a reasonable tajine. The best time to come is early morning or late afternoon, because it can get real hot at the site. The site is open from sunrise to sunset.

Coming from the entrance the first sight is the olive press, which reflects the olives importance to the city. When you walk on you see the Forum, the Basilica and the Capitol. Continuing on you get to the Triumphal Arch. To your right, you will find most of the Mansions with their beautiful mosaic floors. Make sure to see Diana bathing and Bacchus surrounded by the Four Seasons.

Volubilis is a lovely place to be for sunset, just make sure you have a ride back to Meknes.

Volubilis – History

Volubilis was the Roman Capital of Mauritania. It was an important economical base for the Romans because this region was big in olive oil, as it still is.

The roman garrison left in 285 AD and after that day the town slowly degraded. Latin was still spoken here when the Arabs came in the 8th century and the town still had a mixture of Greek, Syrian, Jewish and Berber population. People continued to live here until Moulay Ismail needed all the marble he could get.

Volubilis – Getting There

The two easiest ways to reach Volubilis are by bus and car. While bus is definitely cheaper and in my opinion more interesting, hiring a car is faster, sometimes more flexible and to a certain degree more reliable. In either case, it is best to leave as early in the morning as possible since a ride back to Meknes is much harder to get in the evening than in the afternoon.

To go by bus, buy a ticket to MOULAY IDRISSE at the Meknes bus station. When getting on the bus, tell the driver you would like to go to Volubilis. You may want to have a piece of paper with the Arabic and/or French spelling of "Volubilis" so he knows what you mean. It also helps to sit at the front of the bus so he can't forget about you.

After a while, the bus driver will (should) let you off at a fork in the road. Obviously, you should watch the bus go one way, and then choose the other fork. You will have to walk about a mile or so, but losing your way should not be a problem as long as you stay on the road. Before long you will see Volubilis itself. Just keep going towards it (staying on the roads of course) until you arrive.

Going by car is quite easy. Simply hire a driver to take you there and arrange for him to pick you up later.

To get back to Meknes without a car, make sure to get back to the fork in the road before the last bus returns from Moulay Idriss (ask several people at the bus station to be sure). Flag it down and hop on. Make sure to have enough money to buy a ticket on the bus.

Volubilis – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Zagora

At first sight, Zagora is a dusty, single street town. However, its location and festivals save it from being just another dust-filled desert town. In many ways Zagora is the end of the line. If you follow the road from Ouarzazate through the gorgeous Draa Valley until the road ends, this is where you wind up. Zagora also used to be the beginning of another line. It is not far from this town that the famous sign "Timbouctou: 52 days" can be found. If the border were open, and you traveled by camel, this may be true as it was a caravan route in the past. The biggest festival in the Draa – the Moussem of Moulay Abdelkader Jilali – is celebrated here.

Zagora is a pleasant place to stay and explore the palm groves and kasbah. There are also some very nice hotels in the area. There is however, a lot of persistent children who will want to guide you or sell you a craft. As it is extremely hot, take it easy, don't lose your temper and just expect the following. This is a place where you might even see real Tuaregs, and not just normal Moroccan posing as blue men.

There is a Wednesday souk, make sure to try the different types of dates – this place is known for their delicious and diverse dates.

The palm groves of Amazrou are across the bridge and are a wonderful place to wander or stay an evening. The hotel la Fibule is a great place to stay in grove itself.

Zagora – Day Trips

all

Berber Tours

Berber Tours organizes custom itineraries for both small and large (max. 15 people) camel camping treks into the Sahara Desert. Usually starting from either Zagora or Mhamid these camel treks can range from just a few, or up to 15 days in length and can encompass all of the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Berber Tours will also organize for your pleasure custom itineraries of 4x4 camping treks into the desert or from Ouarzazate, into the High Atlas Mountains. Small sightseeing itineraries (max. 6 people) by car or 4x4 are organized around Southern Morocco and visit cities, towns or mountain villages. All of Berber Tours itineraries and adventures are reasonably priced. Berber Tours can even arrange hotel bookings if needed by the clients!

Jeffrey Teachout: The services offered by Berber Tours are first rate! I have been to Morocco several times now and have always used Berber Tours as my Moroccan "guide." I like Berber Tours because it is a small operation which gives personal attention to its clients, and therefore, they do not become lost in a "touristic shuffle." Berber Tours also makes sure that their clients are treated fairly by the "locals" and that they do not pay too much for anything that they might wish to purchase. Berber Tours will make your time in Morocco as enjoyable as possible and they are quite knowledgeable of the customs, traditions, and history of the country. If you are looking for a fair and honest guide while you are in Morocco....contact Berber Tours....you won't go wrong!

url: www.berbertours.net

email: admin@berbertours.net

tel: 212-68-51-50-87

address: Avenue Mohamed V, Zagora, Morocco

Zagora – Practical Information

all

BMCE Bank

This bank as an ATM teller that takes most international cards. Opening hours can be somewhat erratic.

Sand Dunes

There are sand dunes in the vicinity of Zagora. There are not as spectacular as Merzouga, but if you are there, might as well check them out.

Boutique Lac Iriqi

Boutique Lac Iriqi offers for purchase some of the finest Berber carpets, ceramics, and finely made silver merchandise in Southern Morocco.

Morocco's history and the story of Moroccan weaving begin with the Berbers, the indigenous people of North Africa who had inhabited Morocco for centuries before the first Arab invasion in the seventh century. Today, the major weaving groups of the Middle Atlas and High Atlas mountains are Berber tribes, many of whom still live much as they did centuries earlier.

While remarkably diverse, Moroccan flat-woven and knotted pile rugs are almost without exception bold in color and lively in pattern. Designs are made up of geometric motifs arranged in seemingly endless variations. Each tribe has its own distinct repertoire of designs and colors significant to the ceremonial and day to day life of the group. These same patterns can be seen in the art forms relating to other areas of tribal life such as in ceramics, architectural decoration, and tattoos worn by Berber women. Although a weaver draws from the vocabulary of designs particular to her tribe, she works at her loom without a diagram or pattern to guide her. As a result, each rug is a unique creation, a celebration both of her tribal identity and her own artistic imagination.

email: admin@berbertours.net

address: Av. Mohamed V

tel: 212-68-51-50-87

url: www.berbertours.net

zipcode: 45900 – Zagora

Zagora – Accommodation

all

Territoires Sud

This skilful blend of earth, sand and straw has given birth to an edifice in which five comfortable bedrooms await you. In the garden, filled with a myriad of perfumes, you can dream away while sipping a mint tea.

zipcode: Zagora
 address: 27, Zaouiat El Baraka – BP 107 – Zagora
 CostOfDoubleForANight: 41
 url: www.terremaroc.com
 tel: 00212 44 84 69 53

The Kasbah Sirocco

The Kasbah Sirocco faces the desert in the heart of the Zagora palm grove. Inaugurated in 2000 this beautiful private kasbah is inspired by the architecture of Southern Morocco. 20 bedrooms – air–conditioned or heated depending on the period – are situated on two floors. Swimming pool.

address: Zagora
 url: www.terremaroc.com
 tel: 212 44 84 61 25

Hotel la Fibule

It's a bit of a splash, but a very comfortable one. The hotel has a pool, a luxurious garden and enough shade to compensate for all the desert around. The restaurant is not bad either, try the pancakes for breakfast

La Fibule du Draa (04 84 73 18) is on the other side of the Draa bridge, set in a palm grove. It is a four star hotel, but there are some reasonably priced rooms on the roof. It is one of the social centers of Zagora, a great place to eat, rent a bike or a camel or organize a Landrover trip into the desert.

Hotel de la Palmeraie

Hotel de la Palmeraie on Boulevard Mohammed V is a comfortable but noisy hotel. The hotel runs tours into the desert.

Hotel des Amis

Hotel des Amis on Boulevard Mohammed V have the cheapest rooms in Zagora, there is no hot water, but you dont really need hot water in this heat!

Zagora – Sights

all

Jbel Zagora

There is good hiking across the valley on Jbel Zagora, a beautiful place to watch the sunset. The view is spectacular.

Islamic library in Tamegroute

Tamegroute is a fascinating little village. Take a guide (there will be plenty) to the Zaouia Naciri – a marabout (a tomb), a theological school and a library. This library houses manuscripts dating from the 14th century, incredible to find so far out in the desert. The area has a tradition of being a refuge for the mentally ill and sick, who come hoping for miraculous cures or charity from visitors.

M'hamid

Small genuine village at the edge of Sahara. Population 4.000. Nomads – Sharawi people. A startingpoint for cameltrekking and 4x4 into the desert. Visiting the dunes Erg Chagaga at sunset is just fantastic.

Zagora – Getting Around

Most of Zagora is north of the Ouad Draa. There are two main boulevards, as you would have guessed by now, Mohammed V, and Hassan II. This is where you will find shops, banques the Gare Routiere where taxis and buses stop, hotels and restaurants.

Zagora – Getting There

Almost all people coming to Zagora arrive from Ouarzazate. There are four buses daily and several grand taxis taking about four hours. You can go further south to Mhamid from Zagora, but there is only one bus. It is far better to have your own wheels if you want to do this. The trip is rewarding though.

If you want to go to Rissani, it is not necessary to go all the way back to Ouarzazate, there are lorries that take a shorter route, south from the one over Tineghir.

Zagora – History

Zagora has always been there as a staging post for cross Saharan travel. But at the same time, it never was much of a city. The settlement you see now has been here since the installation of a French Foreign Legion post here. When you wander about a bit you see that most of the villages nearby go back a lot further.

Zagora – Internet Cafes

all

Cyber Draa

In this air conditioned cyber cafe, there are 8 computers allowing to access on Internet for mailbox, surfing, instant messaging and also to work with software.

price: 15 Dh/hour

tel: 212 66 943 855

email: cyberdraa@free.fr

hours: 9 am to 1 pm then 3:30 pm to midnight

address: 82 av Mohammed 5
Zagora 45900 Morocco

url: cyberdraa.free.fr

Zagora – Tours and Excursions

Berber Tours organizes custom itineraries for both small and large (max. 15 people) camel camping treks into the Sahara Desert. Usually starting from either Zagora or Mhamid these camel treks can range from just a few, or up to 15 days in length and can encompass all of the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Berber Tours will also organize for your pleasure custom itineraries of 4x4 camping treks into the desert or from Ouarzazate, into the High Atlas Mountains. Small sightseeing itineraries (max. 6 people) by car or 4x4 are organized around Southern Morocco and visit cities, towns or mountain villages. All of Berber Tours itineraries and adventures are reasonably priced. Berber Tours can even arrange hotel bookings if needed by the clients!

Contact Berber Tours by telephone at: 212–68–51–50–87 or by email at admin@berbertours.net

Web address: www.berbertours.net

Zagora – Shopping

Morocco's history and the story of Moroccan weaving begin with the Berbers, the indigenous people of North Africa who had inhabited Morocco for centuries before the first Arab invasion in the seventh century. Today, the major weaving groups of the Middle Atlas and High Atlas mountains are Berber tribes, many of whom still live much as they did centuries earlier.

While remarkably diverse, Moroccan flat-woven and knotted pile rugs are almost without exception bold in color and lively in pattern. Designs are made up of geometric motifs arranged in seemingly endless variations. Each tribe has its own distinct repertoire of designs and colors significant to the ceremonial and day to day life of the group. These same patterns can be seen in the art forms relating to other areas of tribal life such as in ceramics, architectural decoration, and tattoos worn by Berber women. Although a weaver draws from the vocabulary of designs particular to her tribe, she works at her loom without a diagram or pattern to guide her. As a result, each rug is a unique creation, a celebration both of her tribal identity and her own artistic imagination.

all

Boutique Lac Iriqi

Boutique Lac Iriqi offers for purchase some of the finest Berber carpets, ceramics, and finely made silver merchandise in Southern Morocco.

email: admin@berbertours.net
address: Ave. Mohamed V
tel: 212-68-51-50-87
url: www.berbertours.net
zipcode: 45900 – Zagora

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igheem

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igheem – Internet Cafes

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