



MOROCCO



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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: North Africa.

Office National Marocain de Tourisme
Angle 31 rue Oued Fès et avenue Abtal, Agdal, Rabat, Morocco
Tel: (7) 681 531 or 681 532. Fax: (7) 777 437.
E-mail: visitmorocco@mbox.azure.net
Web site: <http://www.tourism-in-morocco.com>

Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
49 Queen's Gate Gardens, London SW7 5NE
Tel: (020) 7581 5001 or (0891) 171 260 (recorded visa information; calls cost 60p per minute).
Fax: (020) 7225 3862. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 0930-1700; 1000-1300 (visa section);
closed UK and Moroccan national holidays.

Moroccan Consulate
Diamond House, 97-99 Praed Street, London W2 1NT
Tel: (020) 7724 0719. Tel/Fax: (020) 7724 0712. Opening hours: 0930-1300 Monday to Friday.
Enquiries from Moroccan nationals only.

Moroccan National Tourist Office
Second Floor, 205 Regent Street, London W1R 7DE
Tel: (020) 7437 0073. Fax: (020) 7734 8172.
E-mail: mnto@btconnect.com
Web site: <http://www.tourism-in-morocco.com>
Opening hours: 0900-1730 Monday to Friday.

British Embassy
BP 45 RP, 17 boulevard de la Tour Hassan, Rabat, Morocco
Tel: (7) 729 696 or 731 403. Fax: (7) 704 531.
E-mail: britemb@mtds.com
Consulates in: Casablanca, Tangier, Marrakech and Agadir.

Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
1601 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009
Tel: (202) 462 7979. Fax: (202) 462 7643. E-mail: sifarausa@erols.com

Moroccan National Tourist Office
20 East 46th Street, Suite 1201, New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 557 2520. Fax: (212) 949 8148.
Office also in: Orlando.

Embassy of the United States of America
BP 120, 2 avenue de Marrakech, Rabat, Morocco
Tel: (7) 762 265. Fax: (7) 765 661.
Web site: <http://www.usembassy-morocco.org.ma>
Consulate in: Casablanca.

Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco

38 Range Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J4
Tel: (613) 236 7391. Fax: (613) 236 6164. E-mail: sifamafa@videotron.net
Consulate in: Montréal.

Moroccan National Tourist Office
Suite 2450, 1800 avenue McGill College, Québec H3A 3J6
Tel: (514) 842 8111. Fax: (514) 842 5316.

Canadian Embassy
BP 709, rue Jaafar As-Sadik 13, Rabat-Agdal, Morocco
Tel: (7) 672 880. Fax: (7) 627 187.

Country dialling code: 212.

2 GENERAL

Area: 710,850 sq km (274,461 sq miles).

Population: 28,000,000 (1999).

Population Density: 39.3 per sq km.

Capital: Rabat. Population: 1,385,872 (1994).

Geography: Morocco is located on the westernmost tip of north Africa, bordering Algeria to the east and Mauritania to the south and southeast, the Atlantic ocean to the west and the Mediterranean to the north. Running through the middle of the country is the Atlas mountain range, which leads to the fertile plains and sandy beaches of the Atlantic coast. The Middle Atlas range sweeps up from the south, rising to over 3000m (9850ft), covered with woodlands of pine, oak and cedar, open pastureland and small lakes. The Rif Mountains run along the north coast. The ports of Ceuta (Sebta) and Melilla on the north coast are administered by Spain.

Government: Constitutional monarchy since 1956. Gained independence from France in 1956. Head of State: King Mohammed VI since 1999. Head of Government: Prime Minister Abderrahmane Youssoufi since 1998.

Language: The official language is Arabic, but Berber is spoken by a large minority. French is widely spoken throughout the country, except in the northern regions where Spanish is more predominant. English is also understood, particularly in the north and the main tourist areas.

Religion: Predominantly Muslim with Jewish and Christian minorities. Morocco's population and culture stems from a cross section of origins, including Berbers, Arabs, Moors and Jews.

Time: GMT.

Electricity: 110/220 volts AC, 50Hz, depending on age and location of building.

Communications:

Telephone: IDD is available. Country code: 212. Outgoing international code: 00.

Mobile telephone: GSM 900 networks exist, the operator is ONPT (web site: <http://www.onpt.net.ma>). Coverage is mainly available in the cities in the west of Morocco. Other network operators include Medi Telecom.

Fax: Available in hotels.

Telegram: Facilities are available throughout the country at main post offices.

Internet/E-mail: Access is widely accessible in business centres, hotels and in cybercafés.

Post: Airmail to Europe takes up to one week and can be unreliable. Post offices are open from 0830-1200 and 1430-1830 Monday to Friday, 0830-1400 Saturday.

Press: Daily newspapers are published in French and Arabic. The main French newspapers are Le Matin du Sahara, L'Opinion and Al Bayane. The main Arabic newspapers are Al Alam and Al Muharir. A monthly magazine, Success, is published in English.

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC:

MHz17.7015.4012.096.005

Voice of America:

MHz15.2511.979.7600.792

3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	No	Yes
Australian	Yes	No	Yes
Canadian	Yes	No	Yes
USA	Yes	No	Yes
OtherEU	Yes	No/1	Yes
Japanese	Yes	No	Yes

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for at least 6 months from date of entry required by all.

Note: Children under 15 and under may travel on their parents' passport, but must have photographs included in these passports by the relevant passport authorities.

VISAS: Required by all except the following:

(a) nationals of countries shown in the chart above for stays of up to 3 months; (nationals of France and Spain may stay for an unlimited period, provided they report to a police station within 3 months of arrival);

(b) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Chile, Congo (Rep. of), Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Kuwait, Libya, Liechtenstein, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Qatar,

Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela for stays of up to 3 months;

(c) transit passengers continuing their journey by the same or first connecting aircraft provided holding onward or return documentation and not leaving the airport (except nationals of Algeria, who always require a transit visa).

Note: In order to get a visa, nationals of Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan, Syria, Togo and Zimbabwe must have their application approved by the relevant authorities in Rabat, which generally takes at least 6 weeks.

Types of visa and cost: Single-entry: £13. Double-entry: £20. Transit: £5. Prices may fluctuate in accordance with the Moroccan Dirham/Pound Sterling exchange rate and must be paid by postal order only.

Validity: Entry visas are valid for 3 months; visitors wishing to stay longer should apply to the local police station within 15 days of arrival. For other visa enquiries, contact the Embassy.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see address section.

Application requirements: (a) 4 completed application forms. (b) 4 passport-size photos. (c) Passport (valid for at least 6 months from date of entry into Morocco), with a photocopy of the first 4 pages. (d) Fee (payable in cash or postal order only). (e) Evidence of employment, enrolment as a student or a bank statement. (f) Return ticket. (g) Hotel reservation. (h) Self-addressed, stamped, registered envelope for postal applications (for those living outside of London only).

Working days required: Normally 48 hours upon receipt of all necessary documents. First-time visitors should note that their application forms are sent to Morocco for clearance and processing can take up to 3 weeks.

4 MONEY

Currency: Moroccan Dirham (Dh) = 100 centimes. Notes are in denominations of Dh200, 100, 50, 20 and 10. Coins are in denominations of Dh10, 5 and 1, and 50, 20, 10 and 5 centimes.

Currency exchange: Moroccan Dirhams can only be obtained in Morocco. National currencies should be exchanged at official bureaux de change only (identified by a golden sign); changing money in the streets is illegal. There is no commission charge and visitors will be issued with a receipt which they must keep in order to exchange Moroccan currency back into the original national currency at departure. Money can be withdrawn in banks with a credit card and a cheque book or directly from a cash dispenser in some larger towns.

Credit cards: Some credit cards are accepted. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travellers cheques: To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling.

Exchange rate indicators

The following figures are included as a guide to the movement of the Moroccan Dirham against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date May '99 Aug '00 Nov '00 Feb '01 £1.00 = 16.08 15.95 16.02 15.65 \$1.00 = 10.82 10.63 11.07 10.72

Currency restrictions: The import and export of local currency is prohibited; all local currency must be reconverted prior to departure. The import and export of foreign currency is unlimited but must be declared if in excess of the equivalent of Dh15,000. Upon production of bank vouchers, half the Moroccan currency purchased during a visitor's stay may be re-exchanged for foreign currency (subject to some limitations) and all of it if the stay is less than 48 hours.

Banking hours: 0830-1130 and 1415-1630 Monday to Friday.

5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Morocco without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; 1 litre of spirits and 1 litre of wine; 50g of perfume.

Restricted items: A special permit is required for sporting guns and ammunition which is obtainable upon arrival from the police authorities for passengers holding a permit from their country of origin.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Jan 11 Manifesto of Independence. Mar 8 Aïd al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice). Mar 18 Fatih Mouharram (Muslim New Year). May 1 Labour Day. May 23 National Day. Jun 6 Aïd al-Mawlid (Prophet's Birthday). Jul Feast of the Throne. Aug 14 Fête Oued Eddahab (Oued Eddahab Allegiance Day). Aug 20 Révolution du Roi et du Peuple (The King and the People's Revolution Day). Nov 6 Marche Verte (Anniversary of the Green March). Nov 18 Fête de l'Indépendance (Independence Day). Dec 20-21 Aïd al-Fitr (End of Ramadan). Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Jan 11 Manifesto of Independence. Feb 25 Aïd al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice). Mar 8 Fatih Mouharram (Muslim New Year). May 1 Labour Day. May 23 National Feast. May 27 Aïd al-Mawlid (Prophet's Birthday). Jul Feast of the Throne. Aug 14 Fête Oued Eddahab (Oued Eddahab Allegiance Day). Aug 20 Révolution du Roi et du Peuple (The King and the People's Revolution Day). Nov 6 Marche Verte (Anniversary of the Green March). Nov 18 Fête de l'Indépendance (Independence Day). Dec 10-11 Aïd al-Fitr (End of Ramadan).

Note: Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the Moon and the dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Aïd al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Some disruption may continue into Aïd al-Fitr itself. Aïd al-Fitr and Aïd al-Adha may last anything from two to ten days, depending on the region. For more information, see the World of Islam appendix.

7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
Yellow Fever	No	No
Cholera	No	No
Typhoid and Polio	Yes	-
Malaria	1	-
Food and Drink	2	-

1: A minimal malaria risk, exclusively in the benign vivax form, exists from May to October in rural areas of the following provinces: Beni Mellal, Chefchaouèn, El Kelâa Srarhna, Larache, Khouribga, Khénifra, Khémisset, Settât, Taounate and Taza.

2: Bottled water is available and is advised for the first few weeks of stay. Drinking water outside main cities and towns may be contaminated and sterilisation is advisable. Milk is unpasteurised and should be boiled. Powdered or tinned milk is available and is advised, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure water. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled. Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. For more information, consult the Health appendix. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is present in small foci. Avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water. Swimming pools which are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe. Soil parasites are also present; visitors should wear shoes. Hepatitis A and E also occur.

Health care: There are good medical facilities in all main cities, including emergency pharmacies (sometimes in the Town Hall) outside normal opening hours. Government hospitals provide free or minimal charge emergency treatment. Full health insurance is essential.

Travel - International

AIR: Morocco's national airline is Royal Air Maroc (AT). Other airlines serving Morocco include Air France, Alitalia, British Airways, KLM, Sabena Belgian World Airlines, Lufthansa and Swissair. There are frequent direct flights from all major European cities, from North America and from the Middle East.

Approximate flight times: From Casablanca to London is 3 hours; from Tangier is 2 hours 30 minutes. From Casablanca to New York is 6 hours and 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 taxi services into Casablanca and train 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); Málaga to Melilla (car ferry) and Almeria to Nador (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.

Travel - Internal

AIR: Royal Air Maroc (AT) operates regular services from Casablanca airport to Agadir, Al Hoceima, Dakhla, Fès, Marrakech, Ouarzazate, Oujda, Rabat, Tangier and Tetouan. There are cheaper deals for those under 26 years of age depending on their destination in Morocco. Contact Royal Air Maroc for further details. There is also a new airline company (Regional Airlines).

RAIL: The Moroccan rail system is all standard gauge and, though limited, provides regular and cheap services with first-class travel available between major centres. Rail fares are amongst the cheapest in the world, although a supplement must be paid for air-conditioned trains. Sleeping cars and restaurant cars are available. The network runs from Oujda in the northeast to Casablanca on the west coast, Tangier on the north coast and Fès and Marrakech in the interior. The main routes include (a) Marrakech-Casablanca-Rabat-Meknes- Fès-Oujda; (b) Marrakech-Casablanca-Rabat; (c) Marrakech-Casablanca-Meknes-Fès and Casablanca-Rabat-Tangier. The most useful route is from Fès to Rabat and Casablanca, with five daily and two overnight trains. There are also two daily trains and one overnight train (without sleepers) which run from Casablanca to Marrakech. Also, from Monday to Friday, a train runs every half an hour from Kenitra to Rabat.

Cheap fares: Children under 4 travel free and children from 4-10 may travel for half-fare. The European Inter-Rail pass is valid in Morocco; holders may be entitled to a discount on the fare of a ferry ticket - check with the company concerned for details. Discounts of up to 30% are available for groups of more than ten. First- and second-class seats can be reserved in advance. Trains can also be chartered.

ROAD: Traffic drives on the right. The major Moroccan roads, particularly those covering the north and northwest of the country, are all-weather highways. In the interior, south of the High Atlas Mountains, road travel becomes much more difficult, especially across the Atlas Mountains in winter. Coach: The main centres are connected by a wide variety of coach services, many of which are privately run. The two largest firms are CTM (covering the whole country) and SATAS (between Casablanca, Agadir and south of Agadir). Bus: Connections between most major towns and villages are regular and frequent, although buses can be very crowded and it may be wise to buy tickets in advance and arrive well before departure to secure a seat. The price of tickets is

very low, especially with some of the smaller local bus companies. It is customary to tip the guard for loading luggage. For charter purposes, air-conditioned motor coaches are available from several companies. Taxi: Those available in major towns, the petits taxis, are metered (see below under Urban). Other larger taxis, usually Mercedes cars, are used for travel to areas outside towns. These can be shared, but fares should be agreed before departure. Car hire: Avis and Hertz can deliver cars to Gibraltar or Tangier from London. Major hire companies have offices in Tangier, Casablanca and Agadir. Car hire is generally expensive. Documentation: Foreign driving licences are accepted, as well as International Driving Permits. Third Party insurance is required. A Green Card is also necessary. Insurance can be arranged locally.

URBAN: There are extensive bus services in Casablanca and other main towns. Pre-purchase tickets are sold. Urban area petits taxis are plentiful and have metered fares. Taxi drivers expect a 10% tip.

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Casablanca to other major cities/towns in Morocco.

	Air	Road	Rail
Rabat	0.30	1.30	1.00
Marrakech	0.30	4.00	4.00
Agadir	0.55	9.00	-
Fès	0.40	5.00	5.00
Meknès	-	2.30	4.00
Tangier	0.50	6.00	6.00
Oujda	1.05	12.00	12.00
Laayoune	1.30	20.00	-
Er Rachidia	1.35	12.00	-

Note: These represent times by the main air link from Casablanca.

8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS: Morocco has 100,000 hotel beds to cater for its thriving tourist market. In all sizeable centres there is quite a wide choice. The upper end of the market is represented by internationally known hotels in most main towns, notably Agadir, Marrakech and Tangier. For more information contact the Fédération Nationale de l'Industrie Hôtelière, Angle avenue Nador et rue 3, Quartier Polo, 20550 Casablanca, Morocco (tel: (2) 800 487; fax: (2) 800 315, e-mail: fnih@iam.net.ma). Grading: Hotels are rated from 1 to 5 stars.

SELF-CATERING: Self-catering apartments are available in Agadir, Marrakech and Tangier. Full details are available from the National Tourist Office.

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: There are established campsites with good facilities in many parts of Morocco. Full details are available in a brochure from the National Tourist Office.

Youth Hostels: There are hostels in Asni, Azrou, Casablanca, Fès, Ifrane, Meknes and Rabat. Up-to-date information is available from the Fédération Royale Marocaine des Auberges de Jeunes, BP 15998, Casa Principale, Parc de la Ligue Arabe, Casablanca 21000 (tel: (2) 470 952; fax: (2) 227 677).

Imperial Cities

For the purpose of this guide Morocco has been divided into three parts: Imperial Cities, The Coast and The South.

Fès, Marrakech, Meknès and Rabat are known as the Imperial Cities, each having been the country's capital at some time during its history.

Rabat: Rabat, the present capital of Morocco, was founded in the 12th century. It is a town of trees and flowers, and many monumental gateways, including the Gate of the Ambassadors and the Oudaias Kasbah Gate. There is a good selection of hotels and numerous pavement cafés. The nearby Mamora forest and the many beaches are popular tourist attractions, particularly during the summer.

Other attractions include Tour Hassan, the grandiose minaret of a vast, uncompleted 12th-century mosque; the Mohammed V Mausoleum, an outstanding example of traditional Moroccan architecture; the Royal Palace; the Chellah, with superb monuments, delightful gardens and Roman ruins; the Oudaias; the Archaeological Museum; the National Museum of Handicrafts and the antique Moorish café. The battlements surrounding the old town, and part of the new city, date from the mid-12th century. Also worth a visit is Salé, Rabat's twin city, at the opposite side of the river, believed to have been founded in the 11th century.

Meknes: Meknes is protected by 16km (25 miles) of battlements, flanked by towers and bastions. The city reflects the power and the constructive genius of King Moulay Ismail, a contemporary of Louis XIV, who ruled the country for 55 years. The Michlifen and Djebel Habri are two ski resorts above Meknes. The city boasts a wonderful souk (market) and the old town is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. About 30km (19 miles) from Meknes, the Roman ruins at Volubilis are also on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Excavations and ruins dating back to the 3rd century can be visited for a small admission fee and there is also an interesting archaeological museum.

Fès: Fès is the most ancient and impressive of the imperial cities. Built in the 8th century it has more history and mystery than anywhere else in Morocco. Officially encompassing two cities - El Bali and Jadid - Fès is famous for the Nejjarine Square and Fountain, the Er Rsif and Andalous mosques, the Royal Palace, the Kasbah and Karaouine University, which is older than Oxford University. The Dar Bath Museum is also worth a visit. The old part of the city - Fès El Bali - still retains the magical, bustling atmosphere of an ancient time and it is centred around the two famous mosques of Al-Qarawiyyin and Al-Andalus. It is a huge maze of winding streets and covered bazaars where, if one is not careful (it is a good idea to hire an official guide), it is easy to become lost. There are magnificent examples of Hispano-Arabic architecture as well as numerous opportunities to see traditional craftsmen at work. The medina (market) in Fès El Bali is one of the largest in the world and is also on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Here one can buy almost anything. It is particularly good for carpets, rugs and ornate metalwork. As in all of Morocco, the market business is conducted in a leisurely, although deadly earnest way, with the accompaniment of endless glasses of sweet mint tea. Fès is, perhaps, one of the most fascinating cities anywhere in the Middle East or north Africa.

The valley of Ouergha to the north is famed for its souks and Morocco's most celebrated gathering of riders, which is said to have been attended by Pope Sylvester II prior to his accession in AD999 and resulted in him introducing Arab mathematics to Europe. Other attractions are the Karaouine Mosque and Mesbahai Medersa, an old school, remarkable for its traditional architecture and late afternoon auctions in the Kissaria, the shopping area. Founded in 1062, Marrakech was once the capital of an empire which stretched from Toledo to Senegal. Called the 'Pink City' because of the colour of the local earth used in its construction, it is a city of labyrinthine alleyways, secluded palaces, museums, mosques and markets. The city's gardens are still supplied with water from 11th-century underground irrigation canals. The

Djemmaa-el-Fna (Place of the Dead), the city square, comes alive after nightfall; thronged with dancers, fortune-tellers, musicians, acrobats, storytellers and snake charmers, it is an exciting and occasionally bewildering place - an exotic spectacle that is striking and endlessly surprising. Koutoubia, the 12th-century mosque, is as tall as the towers of Nôtre Dame and dominates the Marrakech skyline. The Ben Youssef Medersa, with its mosaics, marbles and carved woodwork, is the largest theological site in the Mahgreb. It forms part of Marrakesh's UNESCO-listed medina, now a World Heritage site, crammed with architectural masterpieces. Other interesting places to see are the sumptuous Bahia Palace; the beautiful Saadian Tombs housing the remains of rulers of the Saadian Dynasty; the Dar Sisaid Museum; the Menara and Aquedal gardens and the famed camel market.

An hour's drive from Marrakech is Oukaimeden, Morocco's best ski resort. This trip can be combined with a visit to Ourika (which has a donkey market) and Asni. The latter is an excellent base for visiting Jebel Toubkal, Morocco's highest mountain, set in spectacular countryside.

The Coast

The Mediterranean coast between Tangier and Nador has a string of creeks, bays, sheltered beaches and cliffs along the Mediterranean shore, ideal for swimming, boating and fishing. Al Hoceima, MDiq, Taifor and Smir-Restinga are all new resorts, offering a wide variety of accommodation, from luxury hotels to well-situated bungalows.

The Atlantic coast is often rocky, with some long stretches of fine sand and calm bays.

Tangier: Tangier, gateway to Africa, is the country's most cosmopolitan town, a place where - surviving from the days when Tangier was a free port - the street signs are in three languages; in fact, no less than 12 nations have occupied the city at one time or another since the 5th century. The city has a picturesque and active market called the Grand Socco. Other places worth visiting include the Mendoubia Gardens; the Sidi Bounabib Mosque; the Moulay Ismail Mosque; the Forbes Museum; and the Merinid College. Excursions in the region include visits to the mountain town of Chechaouen, the fishing village of Asilah and the Caves of Hercules at Cape Spartel. About 40km (25 miles) southeast of Tangier, the city of Tetuan may not be to everyone's taste: muggers, tricksters and hustlers are reputed to haunt its narrow streets. However, Tetuan is beautifully located on a hillside with a view over the Mediterranean and its medina (market) in the old part is a listed UNESCO World Heritage site.

Also on the Atlantic coast is the newer city of Casablanca. Founded at the beginning of the century, it is the country's principal commercial town, the second-largest town in Africa and one of the continent's biggest ports. Here stands the Hassan II Mosque, the world's largest mosque with one of the world's tallest minarets. Just south of Casablanca is Azemmour, in a picturesque location along the banks of the Oum er-Rbia, with its abundance of violet bougainvillea and its purple ramparts (which visitors may walk along after agreeing a fee for the guardian to unlock them). Slightly further south is El Jadida which has a remarkable Portuguese fortress and one of the most beautiful beaches on the Atlantic coast. It also boasts the Church of Assumption, and enormous underground Cistern and the 'Gate on the Sea' and fortifications. Travelling further south along the coast brings visitors to Safi, a fishing port with a Portuguese palace, pottery shops and a medina.

Agadir: Agadir is a modern holiday city with superb beaches, excellent resort hotels and self-catering accommodation, which offers all types of sports activities. From here there are excursions to the towns of Taroudant, Tiznit, Tafraout, Goulimine, Essaouira and, of course, the famous Marrakech. Mohammedia is another popular resort in this region.

The South

The South is a region rich in folklore and spectacular scenery, dotted with small oasis villages and quiet towns surrounded by orchards and olive groves. Erfoud is the centre for excursions to the oasis of Tafilalt, kept green and fertile by the underground waters of the Ziz and the Rheris. Er Rachidia is the provincial capital of the Tafilalt region, and has a bustling market on the main square. On the road between Er Rachidia and Erfoud are the 'Blue Springs' at Meski and the natural amphitheatre of Cirque de Jaffar near Midelt. Tinerhir, once a garrison of the French Foreign Legion, is worth visiting for its kasbahs. Near Tinerhir is the outstanding scenery of the Drâa Valley (famous for its red-earthern kasbahs) and the magnificent Todra gorge.

Ouarzazate: Ouarzazate: This former French garrison can be reached via a beautifully scenic route from Marrakesh over the Tizi n'Tichka pass. Ouzrazate is a good starting point for tours to the deep south. Of particular interest is the kasbah of Taourirt, the Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Carpet Weavers' Co-operative Shop. About 30km (19 miles) from Ouarzazate lies the exotic and UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ksar of Ait-Ben-Haddou. The ksar is a traditional pre-Saharan habitat and consists of a group of earthen buildings surrounded by high walls. Ait-Ben-Haddou has featured in several films including Lawrence of Arabia and The Sheltering Sky, which were partly shot here. The magnificent ochre-coloured cliffs and rock formations of the Dadès Gorge, one of Morocco's highlights, lie approximately 100km (63 miles) east of Ouarzazate. Nearby is the pleasant village of Boumalne du Dadès which has several hotels and guesthouses offering accommodation.

Zagora: Zagora: From the top of the Djebel Zagora there is a spectacular view of the Draa Valley and desert. The oasis of Tamergroute, 18km (11 miles) away from Zagora, has a library containing some of the earliest Arabic manuscripts, written nine centuries ago on gazelle skins. They are on display at the Zaouia Nasseria. Nearby, Mhamid and its palm groves are at the gates of the great sand desert. South of Agadir, the pink kasbahs of Tafraoute perch on spurs of rock, their façades often painted with strange designs in white or ochre. Goulimine is the site of the Blue Men's souk, held each weekend. A camel market also takes place once a week, on Saturday.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Morocco's varied landscapes, which range from a 3500km- (2170 mile-) coastline to the forests, rivers and mountains of the Middle and High Atlas and the Sahara Desert, offer a wide choice of sports and leisure activities.

Trekking: Trekking: With its four distinct mountain ranges - the Rif, the Middle Atlas, the High Atlas and the Anti-Atlas - Morocco offers outstanding opportunities for hiking and trekking. Various trekking tours can be organised through the National Tourist Office. Specialist tour operators offer a variety of treks including guided horse trekking in the mountains, and camping trips. One of the most popular treks in the High Atlas is the ascent of Jebel Toubkal (4167m/6668ft), North Africa's highest peak. The Toubkal area is around one-hour's drive from Marrakech and the usual starting point for this trek is the picturesque village of Imlil. Official mountain guides with mules are recommended for trips lasting longer than one day; guides are widely available in Imlil. Accommodation is provided in refuges, gîtes (resting places) and small hotels along popular trails. Trekking is possible all year round, but the best time is from April to October. The canyons and gorges are best tackled from June to October (in summer, storms can make the gorges impassable). The combination of travelling by mule and skiing (known as mule-skiing) is characteristic to the High Atlas and can be carried out from February to April. A useful brochure, 'The Great Trek through the Moroccan Atlas', is available from the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism or the Moroccan National Tourist Office (see address section). Camel riding (méharrées)

is also available, both in the Atlas mountains and around the Sahara Desert area in the southwest.

Also available throughout Morocco are four-wheel-drives, incorporating visits to natural and cultural sights such as the 300m- (984ft-) deep Gorge of Todra, the massive sand dunes of Merzouga and the Berber region of Ouarzazate. Most of these tours feature typical Moroccan feasts and barbecues. The famous Paris-Dakar motor rally passes through Morocco every year.

Watersports: Watersports: Sandy beaches offer safe swimming, although the Atlantic can be cold even in summer. Mohammedia, Agadir, El Jadida, Oualidia, Safi and Essaouira are all good bathing resorts. The Mediterranean coast in the north, opposite Spain, is being developed, and resorts such as Cabonegro (14km/23 miles from Tetouam) offer superb swimming and diving. Other dive sites can be found at Agadir and Essaouira. The rivers in the High and Middle Atlas ranges, particularly the Oum-er-Rbia, offer whitewater rafting throughout the year (visitors are strongly advised to use experienced guides).

Wintersports: Wintersports: Skiing is possible during several months per year. Ifrane in the Middle Atlas and Oukaïden in the High Atlas (70km/44 miles from Marrakech) offer skiing facilities. Other ski resorts include Mischliffen in the Middle Atlas, on the doorstep of Fès and Meknes. Mount Tidiqin in the Ketama district and Djebel Bou Volane in the Middle Atlas are popular areas for expedition-type skiing and walking trips (with few amenities).

Fishing: Fishing: Permits are necessary for trout streams, lakes and pike lakes, and are issued by the Waters and Forests Department or local clubs. Several ports are equipped for deep sea-fishing, such as Dakhla in the Sahara and Mohammedia near Casablanca.

Horseriding: Horseriding: There are horseriding clubs in all major towns, notably Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakech, Agadir and Fès. Several clubs organise pony treks in the Middle Atlas.

Golf: Golf: Golf is very popular in Morocco, partly because King Hassan II was an internationally ranked practitioner of the game. Some of the best-known of the country's 16 golf courses are located at the Royal Dar es Salaam Golf Club in Rabat, which has three courses and annually hosts the internationally renowned Hassan II Trophy. Agadir has three courses: the Agadir Royal Golf Club is a par 36 while the beautiful Dunes Golf Club has three 9-hole par 36 courses (designed by a disciple of Robert Trent Jones). The third course, set around lakes, palm trees and eucalyptus, is the 5 star Golf du Soleil, which is a 27-hole par 72. The Marrakech Royal Golf Club is an 18-hole par 72 course located at the foot of the Atlas mountains. Marrakech has two other 18-hole courses: the Palmeraie Golf Club, designed by Robert Trent Jones in a setting with views of the Atlas mountains as well as easy access to the Atlantic beaches nearby; and the Amelkis Golf Club. Other 18-hole courses are include Ben Slimane and El Jadida (both near the Atlantic coast), Mohammedia Royal Golf Club (near Casablanca) and the Tangier Royal Golf. Apart from the Hassan II Trophy (see above), the Moroccan Open and Hassan II Challenge are noteworthy tournaments. The Mahammed VI Golf Trophy is held in Dar Essalam Royal Golf course in Rabat at the end of March. Altogether, there are approximately 30 golf courses in the country, including several new ones. A useful golf brochure and information on golfing holidays can be obtained from the Moroccan National Tourist Board (see address section).

10 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: Morocco's traditional haute cuisine dishes are excellent and good value for money. They are often exceedingly elaborate, based on a diet of meat and sweet pastries. Typical specialities include: harira, a rich soup, and pastilla, a pigeon-meat pastry made from

dozens of different layers of thick flaky dough. Couscous, a dish based on savoury semolina that can be combined with egg, chicken, lamb or vegetables, is a staple Moroccan dish. Tajine are stews, often rich and fragrant, using marinaded lamb or chicken. Hout is a fish version of the same stew, while djaja mahamara is chicken stuffed with almonds, semolina and raisins. Also popular are mchoui, pit-roasted mutton, and kab-el-ghzal, almond pastries. Hotel restaurants usually serve French cuisine. Restaurants offer a good selection of food, including typical Moroccan dishes, French, Italian or Spanish meals. The 3-course fixed menus are not expensive. Many of the souks have stalls selling kebabs (brochettes) often served with a spicy sauce. Most restaurants have waiter service. Drink: The national drink is mint tea made with green tea, fresh mint and sugar. It is very refreshing and its consumption is an integral part of Moroccan social courtesy. Coffee is made very strong, except at breakfast. Bars can have either waiter or counter service. Laws on alcohol are fairly liberal (for non-Muslim visitors) and bars in most tourist areas stay open late. Wines, beers and spirits are widely available. Locally produced wines, beers and mineral waters are excellent and good value, but imported drinks tend to be expensive.

Nightlife: Morocco offers a variety of entertainment from casinos, discotheques, restaurants and nightclubs, often with belly dancing. There are modern nightclubs in all the cities and resorts around the country. There are casinos in Marrakech, Mohammedia and Agadir. Traditional Moroccan entertainment, such as folk dancing, can be seen in every town.

Shopping: The co-operative shops of Moroccan craftsmen, coopartim, operate under state control selling local handicrafts at fixed prices and issue an authenticity receipt or a certificate of origin for customs when exporting. Souks are also worthwhile places to visit for local products. Special buys are leather, tanned and dyed in Fès; copperware; silver; silk or cotton garments; and wool rugs, carpets and blankets. Bargaining is essential, and good buys generally work out at around a third of asking price. In the south there are Berber carpet auctions, especially in Marrakech, Taroudannt and Tiznit. Visitors will need a guide to make the best of these occasions.

Shopping hours: 0830-1300 and 1430-1930 Monday to Saturday (0830-1200 and 1400-1900 Monday to Saturday in Tangier); souks (traditional markets) are open 0830-1300 and 1430-1800 seven days a week.

Special Events: Festivities often mark the seasons and celebrate local resources. Festivals are dedicated to popular art and tradition while moussems are large gatherings paying homage to a holy figure. Events are often organised at the last minute and largely depend on the lunar calendar. For further information contact the Moroccan National Tourist Office (see address section). The following is a selection of major festivals and events held in Morocco in 2001: Jan 2001 Marrakech International Marathon. Feb Economic and Tourism Week, Laayoune. Mar 14-28 8th Edition Moroccan Classic Rally. Apr 9-15 Sands Marathon, Moroccan Desert. Apr International Week for Mediterranean Cinema, Tetouan. May World Sacred Music Festival, Fez; The Rose Festival, Kelaa M'Gouna. Jun 10-24 International Festival of Rabat. Jun 16-25 National Festival of Popular Arts, Marrakech. Jul Camel Festival, Guelmim. Aug International Festival of Culture, Asilah; Moulay Abdallah Amghor Fantasia Mousseem, El Jadida. Sep Imilchil Marriage Festival, Imilchil Village; Tissa Mousseem (Horse Festival), Fez. Oct 13-15 Marrakech Palmeraie Open. Dec Agadir Festival.

Social Conventions: Handshaking is the customary form of greeting. Many of the manners and social customs emulate French manners, particularly amongst the middle class. The visitor may find, in some social situations, that patience and firmness will pay dividends. Often visitors may find themselves the centre of unsolicited attention. In towns, young boys after money will be eager to point out the way, sell goods or simply charge for a photograph, while unofficial guides will always be offering advice or services. The visitor should be courteous but wary of the latter. Normal social courtesies should be observed in someone's home. Casual wear is widely

acceptable, although swimsuits and shorts should be confined to the beach or poolside. Smoking is widespread and it is customary to offer cigarettes. Tipping: Service charges are usually included in hotel bills; it is customary to tip hairdressers, cinema usherettes and waiters between Dh1-2.

11 BUSINESS PROFILE

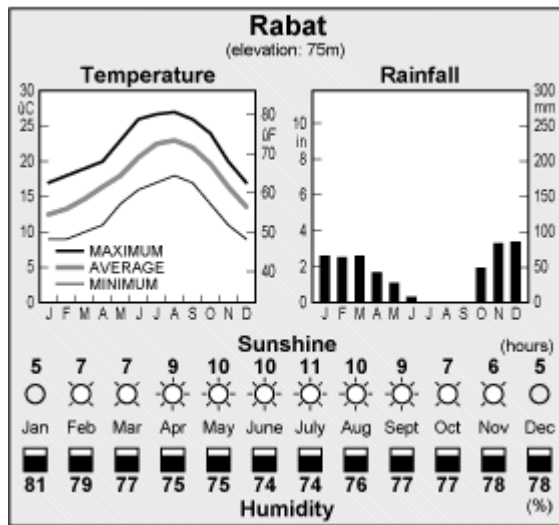
Economy: Agriculture employs one-third of the working population, the principal crops being cereals, citrus fruits and vegetables. Livestock farming produces enough meat to fulfil the country's needs. Fishing is important for both the domestic and export markets, as well as for the revenue accruing from the sale of licences allowing foreign fleets to fish in Moroccan territorial waters. Mining is the country's principal industry: Morocco is the world's largest exporter of phosphate rock (which is the principal source of export revenue), and has other considerable mineral assets, including iron ore, coal, lead, zinc, cobalt, copper, silver and manganese. Morocco has small reserves of oil and gas, but must import the bulk of its needs. The main components of the manufacturing sector are food processing, textiles and the production of leather goods. In the service sector, tourism has grown rapidly, benefiting from the fact that Morocco has one of the best infrastructures on the African continent: this is also an important consideration for foreign investors. Remittances from Moroccan workers abroad (mostly in Europe) is another major source of revenue. Morocco's economic performance is still vulnerable to the effects of a high birth rate, an inefficient public sector, and, most of all, a huge foreign debt. It also suffers from a persistently high rate of unemployment. Moreover, the agricultural sector is especially vulnerable to periodic drought. Following the settlement of the Saharan war in 1993 (a huge drain on the Moroccan exchequer), the Government introduced a series of IMF-sponsored reforms, including trade liberalisation and public expenditure cuts in exchange for successive assistance programmes. A trade agreement with the EU has been signed. Morocco is also a member of the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, and a founder member of the Union of the Arab Maghreb. Morocco's main trading partner is France, followed by other EU countries. Spain, Germany and the USA are Morocco's main suppliers. Morocco's principal exports are phosphates, seafood products and fertilisers.

Business: Business people should be of a smart appearance, although a suit is not necessary in very hot weather. Appointments should be made in advance. Negotiations often involve a great deal of bargaining and a visitor should expect to deal with a number of people. Office hours: 0830-1200 and 1430-1830 Monday to Friday.

Commercial Information: The following organisation can offer advice: La Fédération des Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie du Maroc, 6 Rue Erfoud, B.P. 218, Hassan-Rabat (tel: (7) 767 881 or (7) 767 051; fax: (7) 767 076 or (7) 768 381; e-mail: fccism@maghrebnet.net.ma).

Conferences/Conventions: The Pullman Conference Centre in Marrakech provides meeting facilities for up to 5000 people. Additional facilities can be found at the Palais de Congrès. Further information and a special brochure on conferences and conventions, 'Morocco, A Feast for the Senses', can be obtained from the Moroccan National Tourist Office (see address section).

12 CLIMATE



The climate varies from area to area. The coast has a warm, Mediterranean climate tempered on the eastern coast by southwest trade winds. Inland areas have a hotter, drier, continental climate. In the south of the country the weather is very hot and dry throughout most of the year, with the nights coolest in the months of December and January. Rain falls from November to March in coastal areas. Mostly dry with high temperatures in summer. Cooler climate in the mountains. Marrakech and Agadir enjoy an average temperature of 21°C (70°F) in the winter.

Required clothing: Lightweight cottons and linens are worn during summer, with warm mediumweights for the evenings during winter and in the mountains. Waterproofing is advisable in the wet season, particularly on the coast and in the mountains.

13 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Formerly divided between French and Spanish colonies, Morocco became independent in 1956, although Spain retained (and still retains) the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in the north, which remains a bone of contention between the two countries. Morocco's first head of state was Sultan Mohammad V, who later changed his title to King, and after whose death in 1961, was succeeded by his son, Hassan II. Among the major issues for Morocco since the mid-1970s has been the dispute over the territory formerly known as Spanish Sahara. Originally claimed also by Spain and Mauritania, the main protagonists for the last two decades have been an indigenous guerrilla movement, the Polisario Front, and the Moroccan armed forces, who have fought a largely inconclusive conflict. Polisario has established a government in exile, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), based in Algeria. The latest phase of the protracted attempt to find a settlement, in which the UN has been heavily involved, began in the late 1980s. By September 1991 a ceasefire was in place. However, a referendum in Western Sahara to determine the status of the region was repeatedly postponed in the face of what appeared to be registration and logistical problems for the UN implementation force in the region (MINURSO). As a decade passed, with occasional inconclusive outbreaks of fighting between the two sides, it became clear that the Moroccans were stalling while they attempted to adjust the population balance in the region to ensure a victory in any future poll. In September 1995 the SADR announced the formation of a 14 member Government, headed by Mahfoud Ali Beiba; and in October the first

elected Saharan National Assembly was inaugurated in Tindouf, Algeria. The voter registration process continued apace, with the referendum provisionally slated for December 1998. Again it was postponed. The death of King Hassan may augur a more sympathetic attitude from his successor, Mohammed but, having invested much in its strategy, the Moroccan military will be loath to cede control of the territory despite its largely barren and unproductive nature. Within Morocco, the most prominent opposition to King Hassan for many years was the left-wing Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP), although it has latterly been overshadowed by the emergence of Islamic groups. Hassan maintained a firm grip, however, through a combination of repression and political concessions. Several parliamentary elections were authorised, notably one in 1993, which produced a roughly equal five-way split between the USFP, the Islamic organisation Istiqlal, the pro-monarchy Union Constitutionnelle, the centrist Rassemblement National des Indépendants, and another established secular opposition party, the Mouvement Populaire. After protracted negotiations, the King confirmed his original temporary appointment, Abdel Latif Filali, as premier leading a largely technocratic government. During 1995, the regime reacted to the growing influence of Islamic groups with its customary two-pronged approach: as well as imposing restrictions on the activities of religious leaders, it issued public reminders that King Hassan can trace his lineage back to the Prophet Mohammed, and that a challenge to him therefore represents a challenge to Islam. Political unrest, especially in the impoverished urban areas, continued nonetheless and outbreaks of rioting and a wave of general strikes were met with mass arrests and detentions, particularly in the run up to elections in June 1997. In a poor turn-out at both these and the poll for the second chamber in November the same year, the Bloc Démocratique won the largest number of seats - a result disputed by most of the other participants. In February 1998 King Hassan appointed Abd ar-Rahman el-Yousoufi (USFP) Prime Minister - perhaps looking to appease opposition parties still disgruntled with the outcome of the legislative elections. It was, in fact, the first time since independence that a socialist had been appointed premier. However, aged and infirm, Hassan's health was by this stage deteriorating and eighteen months later in July 1999, he died. His son, Sidi Mohammed, was enthroned as King Mohammed VI within days of his father's burial. Mohammed is keen to promote a more liberal image than his father, but is constrained by both internal and external forces. He is unlikely to make significant changes to Moroccan foreign policy which is broadly pro-western, with close ties to the USA and the European Union, especially France and Spain. (Hassan even aspired to membership of the EU at one time). Closer to home, despite political differences with its North African neighbours, Morocco remains an enthusiastic member of the Union of the Arab Maghreb which it helped to create and functions as an effective regional lobby.

Government: The 1992 constitution vests legislative power in the unicameral 33-member House of Representatives, of whom two-thirds are directly elected and the remainder chosen by an electoral college. The monarch retains executive power and appoints the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers. In August 1997, amendments were introduced regarding the new bicameral legislature: henceforth the Chamber of Representatives would comprise 325 members, directly elected for a five year term; the 270 members of the Chamber of Advisers would be indirectly elected by local councils (162), chambers of commerce (81) and trade unions (27) for a nine year term.

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