

JOURNEY BEYOND TRAVEL

Morocco Info Packet

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Morocco: Fast Facts Part I



Name: Kingdom of Morocco

Capital: Rabat

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

Ruler: King Mohammed VI

Geographic Location: Northwest Africa; borders Algeria & Mauritania

Geography: Mountains, Desert, Beaches, Forests, Oases, Gorges, Plains, Valleys

Bodies of Water: Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Strait of Gibraltar

Population: 34 million **Moroccans Abroad:** 3 to 4 million

Area: 446,550 sq km / 172,000 sq miles (about the size of California)

Coastline: 1835 km / 1140 miles

Languages: Arabic, Berber, French, Spanish

Ethnicity: Arab, Berber, Andalusian, Sub-Saharan African

Religion: Sunni Muslim (99%); Christian (0.8%); Jewish (0.2%)

Literacy Rate: 52% **Unemployment Rate:** 7.7 to 15%

Currency: Moroccan Dirham (MAD) **Annual Per Capita GNP:** \$2000 to \$4100

Arable Land: 20% **Irrigated Arable Land:** 5% **Forests:** 12%

Agriculture: Wheat, barley, corn, potatoes, tomatoes, citrus fruits, olives; livestock

Natural Resources: Phosphates, iron ore, manganese, lead, zinc, fish, salt

Industries: Textiles, tourism, food processing, phosphate, construction

of tourists in 2007: 7.5 million

Largest Cities: Casablanca (3.3 million); Rabat (1.6 million)

Time Difference: GMT/UTC **Telephone Country Code:** 212

Climate: Coast: mild & humid; South + Inland: hot & dry; Mountains: cold & snowy

Average Winter Temp: 18°C/64°F **Average Summer Temp:** 33°C/91°F

Hottest City: Marrakesh **Coldest City:** Ifrane

Best Times to Visit: September through November; March through June

Worst Times to Visit: July, August; January & February in mountains; Ramadan can be a difficult time to visit but is not necessarily the worst time—interesting time to see the culture in a religious context.

Places to see: Marrakesh, Fez, Meknes, Volubilis, Ifrane, Sahara Desert, Ziz Valley Oasis, Dades & Todra Gorges, Ouarzazate, Ait Ben Haddou, High Atlas Mountains, Essaouira, Agadir, Taroudant, Tafraoute, Laayoune, Safi, El Jadida, Casablanca, Rabat, Salé, Asilah, Tangier, Tetouan, Chefchaouen, Saïidia

Things to Do: Mountain trek; Camel trek; Visit Imperial cities & historical sites; Shop; Take Arabic classes or Cooking lessons; Surf; Ski; Fish; Bird-watch.

Things to Shop for: Berber jewelry, hand-woven carpets, metal and woodcrafts, leather goods, pottery, spices, embroidered tablecloths, paintings, traditional clothing and footwear

Moroccan People: Social, friendly, hospitable, generous, easy-going, genuine

Touts on the street: Argumentative, aggressive, disagreeable, persistent

Things to Expect:

- Diverse landscapes & weather
- Bargaining
- Beggars
- Liberal Islamic nation
- Conservative attitudes and dress
- Men sitting in cafés
- Being offered hashish
- Squat toilets
- Confrontational-sounding conversations
- No public displays of affection between men and women
- Eating with your right hand out of a communal meal platter
- Good food
- Tipping
- Poverty
- Mosques closed to non-Muslims
- Western attire in big cities
- Staring
- Shepherds in countryside
- No toilet paper in bathrooms

Disadvantages of Travel:

- Being hustled, hassled and harassed
- Unsanitary conditions
- Faulty roads
- Delays
- Pushing & shoving
- Traveler's sickness
- Breakdowns
- Tardiness
- Petty theft

Essential when traveling in Morocco:

- Comfortable clothes and shoes
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Avoid uncooked & raw foods
- Having an open mind
- Sunscreen and/or wide-brim hat
- Tissues or toilet paper
- Drink bottled water
- Respecting the culture & customs

Morocco: A Brief History Part II

Morocco had been geographically important and historically rich long before the Arabs invaded in the 7th century. **Fossil remains** in parts of the country show Morocco was inhabited over 50,000 years ago. **Rock carvings** portray lush forests populated by elephants, ostriches, giraffes and lions. Myth has it that Hercules separated Europe from Africa, and in doing so created the Strait of Gibraltar, the Caves of Hercules (just outside of Tangier) and the Pillars of Hercules—the rocks of Gibraltar and Ceuta.

Punic tombs attest to **Phoenician** settlement from the 12th century B.C. until the 2nd century B.C. when the **Romans** took over—it was at this time that Jews started coming to Morocco after the Egyptian Exodus. There are still some Roman ruins in Volubilis (near Moulay Idriss, outside of Meknes), Lixus (near Larache) and Sala Colonia (inside the Chellah Necropolis in Rabat). After the Romans came the Vandals in the 5th century.

The **Arabs** and Islam arrived to Morocco in the 7th century. However, even before the arrival of the Phoenicians the land was already inhabited by a group of indigenous tribal people, who still inhabit much of the countryside and mountain regions, and whose origins are still being debated.

According to recent genetic testing, most northwest Africans have **Berber** origins. Science still has not definitively identified where the Berbers are originally from, but genetically, the predominant ancestors of the Berbers seem to have come from East Africa and/or the Middle East.

The Berber people succumbed to or resisted various outside invasions over Morocco's long history. While Christianity swept through, they either converted or were forced to become nomadic, seeking solace in the harshest regions of the country—the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara Desert.

When the Arabs arrived in 684, many Berbers accepted them, voluntarily converted to Islam, and formed a major part of the fighting power that helped the Arabs claim Morocco and spread into Western Europe. But, not all the Arabs were warmly received by the Berbers.

Even well into the 20th century, the Berbers were fierce warriors who managed to ward off and expel some of the Arabs, avoid paying taxes to Middle Eastern caliphs, and fight off the Spanish and French from invading Berber regions.

Of the **7 dynasties** that have ruled Morocco, the majority have been Berber. And, centuries of ruling Arab and Berber dynasties led to the flourishing of major cities such as Marrakesh, Fez, Meknes, Rabat, and even Granada, Spain.

The Idrissid Dynasty: 780s – 1060

Moulay Idriss, also known as Idriss I, was a direct descendant of the prophet Mohammed. He lived in Baghdad and fled to Morocco after disputing a caliph's legitimacy of the ruling Abbasid dynasty. In Morocco, he was accepted by various Berber tribes and even married a Berber woman. He is credited with establishing the first Moroccan state and founding the city of Fez. His tomb can be seen (by Muslims only) at the holy town of Moulay Idriss near Volubilis. Kairouiyine University, one of the world's oldest universities, was built in Fez during this dynasty in 859.

The Almoravid Dynasty: 1062 – 1147

From a Saharan Berber tribe, Youssef Ben Tashfin was the first ruler of the Almoravid dynasty. He founded Marrakesh, which became the capital, and expanded his empire into West Africa and Southern Spain. Tashfin made Marrakesh a metropolitan learning center where some remains can still be seen today—notably the red earthen walls that surround the old medina. As the city of Marrakesh was beginning to prosper, so were the empire's sister cities of Granada, Seville and Cordoba, Spain.

The Almohad Dynasty: 1147 – 1248

This next Berber dynasty to take over ruling Morocco and Southern Spain spread their empire into Algeria, Tunisia and parts of Libya. The Almohads left behind monuments such as the Koutoubia Mosque in Marrakesh, the Giralda in Seville, Spain and the Tour Hassan in Rabat.

The Merenid Dynasty: 1248 – 1465

The Merenids were also nomadic Berbers from the Sahara. The koranic schools, or *medersas*, in Fez, Meknes, Salé and Marrakesh were all built during this dynasty.

The Wattasid Dynasty: 1465 – 1549

The Wattasid empire was short, but a lot happened during their short-lived reign: the fall of Muslim Spain started; the Spanish and Portuguese began claiming outposts on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Morocco; Muslims and Jews fled into Morocco due to the Spanish Inquisition; and the Ottoman Turks arrived at Morocco's doorstep.

The Saadian Dynasty: 1554 – 1669

The Saadians were the first Arab tribe to rule since the Idrissids. They were able to get back some of the coastal outposts claimed by Portugal, and the Battle of the Three Kings finally ended most of Portugal's interest in Morocco. Basking in their new glory, the Saadians were invincible; they kept the Ottomans from invading and taking over as they had in the rest of North Africa. The Saadians also looted Timbuktu, Mali, bringing back abundant black slaves and gold. This era was the pinnacle of piracy, led by the expelled Spanish Muslims and Jews called the "Salé Rovers", who lived in the Kasbah des Oudayas in the independent state of Rabat-Salé.

The Alaouite Dynasty: 1669 – present

The Alaouites, like the Saadians, are also of Arab lineage and claim to be descendants of the prophet. The second ruling sultan was the tyrannical Moulay Ismail. He established Meknes as his capital and unified all regions of the country at the expense of many Berber tribes, black slaves, and white slaves taken by piracy along the Western European coasts and boat raids. The dynasty began its downward slope during the second half of the 19th century when several tribes rebelled and European Imperialists began carving up the African continent.

In the early 20th century, **Spain** was allotted northern Morocco and the Western Sahara along with some other small, coastal outposts along the Atlantic coastline. **France** got everything in between. During the 50 years of French “protection” in Morocco, they built roads, railways, *ville nouvelles*, or new cities, next to the old medinas, developed the Casablanca port, and established Rabat as the new political capital. Spain had a much harder time controlling the Berber tribes in the Rif Mountains. **Tangier**, due to its strategic location, was an “International zone” where Spain, France and England shared the pie together.

1956 marked the year of **Moroccan independence** from France and Spain (Spain still controls two enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, in northern Morocco). After Spain gave up its territory in the Western/Spanish Sahara in 1974, one year later King Hassan II sent over 300,000 Moroccans to march into the region to claim back its territory. However, the Algerian- and Libyan-backed **Polisario** guerillas waged war with Morocco to establish an independent Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. After the United Nations declared a cease-fire between the two, the area is still under dispute, and the situation and identity of the Western Sahara remains unresolved, but Morocco currently occupies and governs the area.

King Mohammed VI

King Mohammed VI took over the throne immediately after his father’s death in 1999. While many didn’t think the young king in his mid-thirties would be able to rule the kingdom with the same iron fist as his father, M6 chooses to follow an agenda of his own. Dubbed “the king of the poor”, Mohammed VI has already accomplished a great deal: sacking corrupt ministers; tackling the country’s high rates of unemployment, illiteracy and poverty; and granting women more equal rights under Shari’a Law (Islamic Law based on the Koran) that the Moroccan judicial system follows to govern family, marriage and inheritance issues. M6 is the first Moroccan ruler to give his wife a royal title, Princess Lalla Salma, who is the first wife of a Moroccan ruler to appear publicly. Yet, despite his liberal attitudes and modern ideas, he still keeps the countries political climate under tight control.

Morocco: A Brief Introduction – 1 of 4 Part III

Morocco is a country of varied sights, sounds, smells and tastes that will overwhelm your senses. You can look forward to a wide range of experiences while seeing the highlights of the country. Our aim is to help you enjoy the best Morocco has to offer and ease you into the culture and customs of the country by providing helpful tips and phrases.

On your trip, get ready to travel through **ecosystems & sites** such as mountains, valleys, gorges, waterfalls, rivers, lakes, desert, oases, plateaus, plains, beaches, forests, medieval cities, roman ruins, and more. From date palms to cedars, storks to Barbary apes, Morocco's plant and wildlife is abundant. Other wildlife you may spot are camels, sheep, goats, hawks, woodpeckers, foxes, lizards and scorpions, just to name a few.

Just as varied as its landscape is its **climate**. Temperatures along the coast range from 12°C/54°F to 25°C/77°F in the winter and summer, respectively. However, you can expect much hotter temperatures inland, and much colder temperatures in the High Atlas and Middle Atlas mountain ranges. While it is a relatively dry country, expect rain or snow during the winter and early spring.

Marrakesh is Morocco's hottest city with temperatures that have reached as high as 54°C/130°F in the summer. Morocco's coldest city is Ifrane, nestled in the Middle Atlas mountains. This city is reminiscent of a European alpine village with snow in the winter and temperatures plummeting to below freezing. One of the lowest temperatures recorded in Africa was in Ifrane in 1935 where it fell to an icy -24°C/-11°F.

You will see many different types of **architecture**, square, adobe huts in small, mountain villages; colonial-style buildings in the new cities and lavish palaces in the Imperial Cities. The road between Ouarzazate and Erfoud is known as the "Route of 1000 Kasbahs". There may not be exactly 1000 kasbahs, but these fortified Berber structures are primarily made from the reddish-brown mud of the region. Other notable structures to look for are mosques and minarets, medersas (koranic schools), mausoleums, babs (medina entries), and riads (traditional Moroccan houses).

Some **Unesco World Heritage Sites** in Morocco:

- Fez Medina
- Marrakesh Medina
- Essaouira Medina
- Ait Ben Haddou Ksar
- Meknes Medina
- Volubilis

In **1,000 Places To See Before You Die** by Patricia Schultz:

- Fez
- Marrakesh & High Atlas Mountains
- Essaouira
- Sahara Desert

Must See:

Marrakesh Medina: Koutoubia mosque, Jma el Fna, Medersa Ali Ben Youssef

Fez Medina: Tanneries, Souks, Qarawayne Mosque

Merzouga: Sahara Desert

Should See:

Essaouira: medina and ramparts

High Atlas Mountain villages

Ait Ben Haddou Kasbah

Dades Gorge

Meknes & Volubilis

Rabat: Chellah Necropolis, Kasbah des Oudayas

Casablanca: Hassan II Mosque

If you have time:

Chefchaouen

Moulay Idriss Zerhoun

Ziz Valley Oasis

Ifrane



Morocco: A Brief Introduction – 2 of 4

Part IV

Morocco is a **Constitutional Monarchy** with King Mohammed VI in power since 1999. With the monarchy come heightened security and various branches of royal, military and local police.

In general, Morocco is a **safe country** to travel in. But, be on the lookout for petty thieves, touts and con artists, especially in popular places and tourist attractions. Avoid being out late at night unless you are in a well-lit area with other people around.

For women, it is wise to **dress modestly**. Avoid wearing clothes that are too short, low-cut, tight or revealing. Being harassed by males on the street is common and many Moroccan females enjoy the attention. Dating and sexual relations are still taboo and not talked about in the home or at school. Therefore, the only time men and women get to meet and flirt is on the street.

If a man is **harassing** you on the street, do not make eye contact or talk to him. Ignore him and walk away. If he proceeds to follow you, continue ignoring and evading him. He will eventually realize you are not interested. If you talk back or tell him off, he might get angry and become aggressive.

Morocco is a very **male-dominated** society. You will notice, especially in rural areas, men leading businesses and sitting at cafés while the women are working inside the home or on the field.

Most of Morocco still lives in the countryside. The **literacy rate** is under 50% for women, and overall unemployment is high. The **educational system** at present is still old-fashioned, out-dated, and conservative. In the **workplace**, a bureaucratic attitude is prevalent and corruption is widespread at every level. All of these factors contribute to a lax attitude regarding health, hygiene, littering, pollution, road safety and bribery.

While Morocco does have a **welfare** and **social security** system, many people do not benefit from them. You will see many people of all ages and handicaps begging on the street. If you want to give someone money, it is best to give to the elderly or disabled. It is not good to give to children; this will encourage them to keep on begging as they get older.

Morocco is a **liberal Muslim nation** but is still conservative in certain regards. You will see many mosques and tall rectangular minarets in every village, town and city. The call to prayer can be heard 5 times a day (one in the early morning a couple hours before sunrise), reminding practicing Muslims to pray. When passing by a mosque, be respectful. You can peer in, but do not go in. If prayer is in session, refrain from taking pictures.

Most **Moroccan women** do not wear the full black gown and veil. They either wear a long, colorful gown with a hood, called a djellaba, and a scarf covering their head, or western clothing. You will also see men wearing djellabas, but in more subdued colors.

Family is very important to Moroccans and in most cases the main priority. Many families are big and include the extended family. The main married couple may have their own bedroom; otherwise, the whole family will sleep on the couches that line the living room.

Greetings are very important. Always say hello when entering and goodbye when leaving. It is considered rude if you don't. Many Moroccans, especially in the countryside, do not like to be photographed, so ask permission before doing so.

Islam is the religion widely practiced in Morocco. It is a monotheistic religion based on the revelation and teachings of the prophet Mohammed. This formal religion dates back to the 7th century. Muslims believe that God revealed the holy book, the Qur'an, to Mohammed thereby completing the previous monotheistic faiths of Judaism and Christianity. All practicing Muslims are required to adhere to the *Five Pillars of Islam*:

1. Shahadah – Professing there is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his prophet.
2. Salat – Performing the ritualistic, daily ablutions and five prayers.
3. Zakat – Giving alms to the poor.
4. Sawem – Fasting during the month of Ramadan
5. Hajj – Performing the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia at least once if you are able and can afford to.

Ramadan is the Muslim holy month when all practicing Muslims must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual relations from sunrise to sunset. This observance is meant to purify the body and soul and remind Muslims of the plight of the poor. The fast is broken after the sunset prayer. At this time Muslims will break the fast by praying then having "ftor", breakfast, with their family.

The **Islamic Calendar** is a lunar-based one adopted by many Muslim nations. It is 11 days shorter than the Gregorian, solar-based calendar. In Morocco, the majority of things follow the Gregorian calendar.

Alcohol is forbidden in Islam and illegal in Morocco--only on paper. In major cities, you will find restaurants, bars, cafés, shops, and supermarkets that do sell or serve alcohol to both foreigners and Moroccans.

Hashish production and consumption is significant, mainly in the northern part of the country. You may be approached by individuals offering to sell it to you. Male and female **prostitution** as well as **homosexuality** does exist, so do not be surprised.

Morocco: A Brief Introduction – 3 of 4 Part V

Morocco abounds with **food stalls, stands and restaurants**. Moroccan food is delicious and can be an enjoyable experience, but if you're eating at these stalls, stands and restaurants, clean and sanitary conditions aren't always a main priority. Many travelers do get sick from the food and water, so unless you have a strong stomach, drink bottled water, avoid eating uncooked salads, and make sure the places you eat at are relatively clean –check the kitchen and bathroom areas. Tip a minimum of 10%.

Moroccan food is quite rich. Most dishes are prepared with meat, spices, vegetables or dried fruit and plenty of oil. The meal will always come with round, flat bread and sometimes French fries served on the side. You eat with your right hand by breaking off a bite-sized piece of bread then taking it, gripping the food with it, and putting the medley in your mouth. It takes some practice, but no need to worry because you will also be brought utensils. Soft drinks are widely available, as is bottled water, and don't forget to try a pot of very sweet, mint tea after your meal. You may have an alcoholic beverage with your meal if you are eating in the new part of town; however, alcohol is not served in eateries in the old medinas, even in Fez and Marrakesh.

Here's a list of a few tasty things you will find:

Snacks & Appetizers:

Rghaif/melaowee (Moroccan pancakes)
Bghreer (spongy Moroccan pancakes)
Tktooka (cooked tomato + green pepper salad)
Zaalook (cooked tomato + eggplant salad)
Frites (French fries)
Salade marocaine (diced cucumber + tomato salad)
Salade du chef (varied vegetable salad)

Main Meals:

Harira (thick, tomato-based soup)
Aadiss (lentil stew)
Beessara (pureed fava bean soup)
Couscous (stewed meat + veggies over semolina)
Tajine (meat + vegetable stew)
Poulet grillé (barbecued chicken)
Brochettes (grilled meat kebabs)
Kefta (ground beef)
Pastilla (sweet + salty chicken mix wrapped in flaky pastry sheets)

Desserts:

Cab ghezal (1/4 moon-shaped cookies filled w/ almond paste)
Ghreeba (sweet almond or walnut cookies)
Braywat (triangular-shaped pastry w/ sweet or salty filling)

Morocco has lots of **spices** (cumin, coriander, turmeric, paprika, saffron, cinnamon, ginger), **herbs** (parsley, coriander, mint, oregano, chamomile, verbena), **seasonal fruits** (oranges, apples, bananas, tangerines, peaches, plums, apricots, pears, pomegranates, strawberries, cherries, melons), **dried fruits & nuts** (dates, prunes, apricots, peanuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, walnuts), and **seasonal vegetables** (potatoes, onions, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, turnips, beets, eggplant, green peppers, peas, artichokes, cauliflower, cabbage), which can be found in the open-air markets.

The **cost of things** in Morocco is not as cheap as in other developing countries.

Average prices:

- Big bottle of water: 5 – 6 ds
- Loaf of bread: 1.2 – 2.5 ds
- Espresso: 5 – 10 ds
- 1 kg/2 lbs tomatoes: 3 ds
- Lunch: 20 – 60 ds
- Small area rug: 300 – 600 ds
- Small pack of tissues: 1 – 2 ds
- Glass of orange juice: 3 – 12 ds
- Small pot of mint tea: 6 – 10 ds
- 1 kg/2 lbs apples: 12 ds
- Dinner: 50 – 150 ds
- Moroccan leather slippers: 60 – 150 ds

You will pass many **shops and vendors**. The vendors will urge you to go in and look, and possibly have some tea. If you do not want to, be polite and say no, thank you. If you do go in to look and are interested in buying something, you **MUST** bargain. The starting price you are quoted will be doubled, tripled, or more. Be firm; state your price and haggle. If you do not agree on a price, say thank you and walk out. You can shop around and compare prices, then go back if you want. However, if you do bargain for an item and agree on a price, then decide not to buy it, you will offend many vendors.

Bakeries, restaurants, bookshops, pharmacies, clothing shops in the new city, and supermarkets and local grocery stores have **set prices**. If you see a price tag on an item at any of the above places, do not bargain. Many cities and most towns have a weekly open-air market where you can find fruit, vegetables, spices, clothes, kitchenware, and anything else you can get at bargain prices.

Tippling is expected when anyone does a service for you: waiters, guides, drivers, porters, etc. A standard tip would be 10% of the total bill. Give luggage porters 10-20 dirhams depending on how much luggage you have and how far they have to take it. It is also a nice gesture to leave a tip for hotel help. Taxi drivers are not usually tipped.

You will be able to **exchange money** in most banks in the major cities and towns such as Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakesh, Ouarzazate, Erfoud, Ifrane, Meknes, Fez, and Tangier. **Credit cards** are not widely accepted, except at big hotels, major department stores & supermarkets, and some highly touristy shops. However, you will be able to extract funds with a Visa or MasterCard from ATM machines located almost everywhere. You will not be able to use or cash **traveler's checks**, and it is not wise to exchange money with people on the street or standing outside of banks.

Post offices can also be found in every major city or town, but are sometimes hard to find. Stamp prices are reasonable and you can send packages via regular or express mail.

Public **phone** shops are everywhere and **Internet** cafés are quickly spreading—most are equipped with Skype, MSN messenger and headsets and video cameras! Calling abroad from a pay phone can be expensive. Internet rates range from 5-12 dirhams an hour.

To get around any major city or town, you can use a **small taxi**, which you will see everywhere. They are usually brightly colored and the rates are inexpensive. When you get into a taxi, make sure the meter is working. If it's not, get out and hail another cab. Moroccans don't usually tip taxi drivers. All taxis start out charging you a minimum fare of 2 to 3 dirhams as soon as you get in. The only time you will have to negotiate a price is when hiring a taxi to the airport or from town to town.

You will see many old, white Mercedes zooming to and from any city, town or village; these are the **big taxis**. They transport people back and forth at all hours of the day. Once 6 people are tightly packed in, the taxi will leave. The standard fare is 25 dirhams an hour per spot. This rate does not apply at airports. For a ten-minute drive into downtown Fez or Marrakesh from the *Fez-Saiss* or *Marrakech-Menara* airports expect to pay 120-150 dirhams.

Trains in Morocco are quite comfortable and usually on time. First- and second-class seats are available, and you can easily travel by train to Tangier, Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez, and Meknes. You will not be able to take the train to Essaouira or farther south, or east of Marrakesh to the desert. To get to these places you can take a big taxi or a bus, or rent a car.

There are several **bus** companies that provide service to all cities, most towns, and some villages. Traffic accidents are rampant in Morocco, so make sure you go with a reliable bus company—*CTM* or *Supratours*.

Driving in Morocco can be very challenging for a number of reasons. Once you leave the network of interstate highways that connect Tangier to Marrakesh and Rabat to Fez, the roads and national highways are a narrow and bumpy ride. You can rent a vehicle starting at \$50/day and up in any major city. You can also hire a big taxi for the day for about \$100.

Public **hospitals**, private **clinics**, **pharmacies** and **dentists** are located in every city and town. Hospitals and clinics are open 24 hours and 7 days a week, as are certain pharmacies. Pharmacies are everywhere. Look for the white sign with a green crescent moon on it. You can buy anything from anti-diarrhea to motion-sickness medicine, and the price of medicine is inexpensive. Getting treated at a hospital, clinic or dentist is also very reasonable. An average doctor's check-up in a big city costs between 100-200 ds, and a dental exam is usually under 100 ds.

Most **bathrooms** have squat toilets. You will also find a bucket or other receptacle and a low-to-the-ground faucet. Moroccans wash with their left hand (right hand is used for eating) after going to the bathroom and do not use toilet paper so bring your own. You can buy a roll of toilet paper or a handy pack of tissues at any little grocery store. Do not throw toilet paper or tissue down the toilets. Have a small plastic bag with you in case there is no trash bin. Some public bathrooms will require you to pay a dirham after using the facilities; you will find a saucer with coins on a chair or table near the exit/entrance.

Morocco: A Brief Introduction – 4 of 4

Part VI

Moroccans are very friendly and hospitable. The best way to get to know them is to be able to communicate, and you will have plenty of opportunities to practice!

Moroccan Arabic, also known as **Darija**, is spoken throughout Morocco. It is a dialect of Arabic and only spoken, not written. Books, newspapers, magazines, documents, etc. are written in standard Arabic. News on the TV and radio are also reported in standard Arabic. School subjects are taught in standard Arabic and French. Darija is spoken at home and on the street. Since many Moroccans are of Berber origin, they will also speak one of the three main **Berber** dialects—Tarifit (northern Morocco), Tamazight (central and desert regions), or Tashelheit (Marrakesh and south of Marrakesh). The Western Saharan region of the country speaks **Hassania**—an Arabic dialect spoken by the Bedouin Arab tribes that inhabit the area.

To get around the country, it is helpful to know some French or Moroccan Arabic. Here are some basic words and phrases in Darija to help you on your journey.

Pronunciation guide:

a - as in water

h - as in help

Glottal sounds (formed down the throat in the larynx):

aa - when doctor tells you to stick out your tongue and say "aa"

kh - hacking sound

gh - gurgling sound

q - deep "k"

Greetings and Farewells

English

Hello.

- reponse

Hi.

Goodbye.

How are you?

Fine, thanks.

Moroccan Arabic

Salamoo aalaykoom.

Wa'aalaykoom salam.

Salam.

Bisslama.

La bass?

La bass, l'hamdoolah.

Simple Responses

Yes.

No.

Thanks.

Thank you very much.

No, thanks.

Please.

Okay.

Sorry.

Naam/Eeyeh.

La.

Shookran.

Shookran bzehf.

La, shookran.

Aafak.

Wakha.

Smh(ee)leeya.

*Note: (a) or (ee) refers to when you are speaking to a female or referring to a feminine object.

ALLAHisms

Moroccan Arabic

Bismillah.

Hamdoolah.

Insha'allah.

English Translation

said before eating or doing any activity

said after eating or greeting

said when talking about future plans

Numbers

1 - <i>wahed</i>	11 - <i>hdash</i>	0 - <i>seef</i>
2 - <i>jooj/tneen</i>	12 - <i>tnash</i>	20 - <i>aashreen</i>
3 - <i>tlehta</i>	13 - <i>tltash</i>	30 - <i>tlehteen</i>
4 - <i>rbaa</i>	14 - <i>rbaatah</i>	40 - <i>rbaayn</i>
5 - <i>khmsa</i>	15 - <i>khmstash</i>	50 - <i>khmseen</i>
6 - <i>s'ta</i>	16 - <i>s'tash</i>	60 - <i>s'teen</i>
7 - <i>sbaa</i>	17 - <i>sbaatah</i>	70 - <i>sbaayn</i>
8 - <i>tmineeya</i>	18 - <i>tmntash</i>	80 - <i>tmaneen</i>
9 - <i>tsaaeud</i>	19 - <i>tsaatash</i>	90 - <i>tsaayn</i>
10 - <i>aashra</i>	100 - <i>meeya</i>	1000 - <i>elf</i>

200 - *meeyatayn* 2000 - *elfayn*

300 - *tleht meeya* 5000 - *khams elf*

35 - *xhmsa oo tlehteen* (5 and 30)

146 - *meeya oo s'ta oo rbaayn* (100, 6 and 40)

1792 - *elf oo sbaa meeya oo tneen oo tsaayn* (1000, 7 100, 2 and 90)

Asking for Things

English

this

that

these

those

Do you have these?

Is there any bread?

Yes, there is. / No, there isn't.

Moroccan Arabic

hada(hadee)

hadak(hadeek)

hadoo

hadoo

Wash aandek hadoo?

Wash kayn l khobz?

Kayn(a). / Ma kayn(a)sh.

Shopping

How much (is it/are they)?

very/a lot/too/too much

It's too expensive!

money

I have

I don't have

I don't have any money.

I don't have a lot of money.

I'll give you 100 dirhams.

Bish'hal?

Bzehf

Ghalee Bzehf!

flooss

Aandee

Ma aandeesh

Ma aandeesh l flooss.

Ma aandeesh bzehf dl flooss.

In aatik meeya drhm.

In a Café

English

orange juice
Moroccan mint tea
Espresso
1/2 espresso + 1/2 milk
coffee with milk
I want
I don't want
I want Moroccan tea.
without sugar
big
small
bottled water
I want a small bottle of water.
where
bathroom
Where's the bathroom?

Moroccan Arabic

aaseer d leemoon
atay
qehoowa
nuhss nuhss
qehoowa bil hleeb
Bgheet
Ma bgheetsh
Bgheet atay.
bla sookar
kbeer(a)
sgheer(a)
Seedee Aalee
Bgheet Seedee Aalee sgheera.
feen
twalet
Feen twalet?

At a Restaurant

vegetable(s)
stew
I want vegetable stew.
couscous
without meat
I want couscous without meat.
Moroccan tomato soup
Is there any tomato soup?
chicken, beef, mutton
Is there chicken stew?
Give me
bread
Give me bread, please.

khodra
tajeen
Bgheet tajeen dl khodra.
suksoo
bla l'ham
Bgheet suksoo bla l'ham.
Hareera
Wash kayna l hareera?
djaj, bgree, ghnmee
Wash kayn tajeen deeyal djaj?
Aateenee
khobz
Aateenee l khobz, aafak.

Getting Around

I want to go to
Did you turn the meter on?
Stop.
here, there
right, left
Stop there to the right.
Slow down!
Here you are.
Change/small bills
Sorry. I don't have change.

Bgheet Inmshee L'_____.
Wash dirtee l contour?
Hbiss.
hna, tma
aleeman, aleessar
Hbiss tma aleeman.
Bishweeya!
Hak.
Sserf
Smh'lee. Ma aandeesh sserf.

Communication Breakdown

English

I speak
I don't speak
Arabic
English
French
I speak English.
I don't speak Arabic.
I understand.
I don't understand.
I understood a little.
I didn't understand anything.
Speak slowly, please.

Moroccan Arabic

Kan hdr
Ma kan hdrsh
L'Aarbeeya
L'Eengleezeeya
L'Franssaoweeya
Kan hdr l'eengleezeeya.
Ma kan hdrsh l'aarbeeya.
Kan fhm.
Ma kan fhmsh.
Fhmt shweeya.
Ma fhmt waloo.
Hdr(ee) bishweeya, aafak.

Small Talk

What
What's your name?
My name's _____.
Nice to meet you.
Where... from?
You - masc. (fem.)
Where are you from?
I
from
I'm from the U.S.
Morocco
I'm visiting Morocco.

Shnoo
Shnoo smeeetik?
Smeete _____.
Mutsherfeen
Mneen
Inta(Intee)
Mneen Inta?
Ana
min
Ana min Amreeka.
el Maghreb
Kan zour el Maghreb.

Being Nice

beautiful/pretty/handsome
Morocco is very beautiful!
nice
People
The people are nice.
good
He
She
He's a good person.
She is pretty.

zween(a)
El-Maghreb zween bzehf!
Dreef(a)
nass
Nnass dreefeen.
mizyen(a)
Hoowa
Heeya
Hoowa mizyen.
Heeya zweena.

Not so Nice

not good (people & things)
This is not good!
You're not a good person!
Go away!
Leave me alone!
Get away from me!

mashee mizyen
Hada mashee mizyen!
Inta mashee mizyen!
Seer b'halek!
Aateenee teessa!
Baad minee!

Morocco: Getting Ready & Packing Part VII

When traveling in Morocco, be prepared to do a lot of walking through medinas and busy streets, going up and down stairs, and getting in and out of transportation. If you are staying at a hotel inside any old medina, a taxi will drop you off at the entrance and you will need to walk to wherever you are going.

The three main regions of the country are:

Inland & South: Fez, Marrakesh, Sahara, Todra & Dades Gorges, Ait Ben Haddou, Ouarzazate

Coast: Casablanca, Rabat, Essaouira, Agadir, Asilah

Mountains: Ifrane, Azrou, Meknes, Chefchaouen, Imlil, Arned

Since the weather varies greatly and considerably drops at night, depending on the season you plan to travel, you may need to bring a variety of clothes.

The following will help you plan what type of weather to expect and what to bring.

May - October

Inland & South: Very hot, dry & dusty

Average temperatures: 30-40°C/ 86-104°F

Coast: Hot, humid & mild

Average temperatures: 25-30°C/ 77-90°F

Mountains: Hot, dry, intense sun

Average temperatures: 20-30°C/ 68-90°F

Be sure to bring:

- Light-colored, loose and breathable clothing
- Sunscreen
- Sunburn relief
- Lip protection
- Wide-brim hat
- Comfortable walking shoes or sandals
- Swim clothes
- Waterproof jacket and travel umbrella
- Comfortable, waterproof & breathable walking/hiking shoes or boots

November - April

Inland & South: Warm; rain/floods

Average temperatures: 18-25°C/ 65-77°F

Coast: Cool and rainy

Average temperatures: 16-21°C/ 62-70°F

Mountains: Cold and snowy

Average temperatures: 5-17°C/ 41-65°F

Be sure to bring:

- Warm clothes

* Average temperatures are daytime only. 10°C/ 20°F colder at night.

Packing:

Remember to pack light and bring only what you can easily carry or roll. In addition to the above, below is a packing list suggested by the team at Journey Beyond Travel.

Suggested Packing List:

- Passport, visa, travel insurance, airplane tickets
- Money: cash & credit or debit card, secure money pouch
- Daypack
- 3-4 pairs socks
- 2-3 pairs comfortable walking pants or walking shorts
- 3-4 short- and/or long-sleeve shirts
- 4-5 under garments
- Light, waterproof jacket
- Sweater or fleece
- Travel towel
- Alarm clock
- Flashlight / torch
- Sunglasses (UV protection)
- Travel clothesline
- Sewing kit (travel size)

Recommended First Aid kit:

- Anti-diarrhea, upset stomach, indigestion, heartburn, & motion-sickness medicine
- Pain reliever & antihistamines
- Prescription medicine, as needed
- Sunscreen (SPF30+) & sunburn relief cream
- Antiseptic & topical skin irritation cream
- Anti-bacterial & anti-fungal cream
- Band-Aids, bandages, gauze
- Tweezers & scissors (travel size)
- Insect repellent & eye drops
- Ibis syrup (initiates vomiting in case of poisoning)
- Thermometer

For Mountain Hiking & Trekking:

- Whistle & string or small rope
- First-aid pocket guide
- Weatherproof sports tape & blister pads
- Rehydration salts & foil body-heat emergency blanket
- Water purification tablets or drops (or small water filter)
- Acute mountain / altitude sickness medicine (Acetazolamide)

Winter Gear for Mountain Hiking & Trekking:

- Warm + windproof/waterproof wear
- Scarf, gloves & cap
- 0°-rated sleeping bag & Thermarest sleeping pad
- Headlamp (head torch)
- Collapsible walking poles
- Crampons

Travel Insurance:

If you choose to purchase travel insurance, choose a company that will provide you with at least US \$5,000 for emergency repatriation from land, sea, and air. It is also wise to have insurance for trip cancellation that includes lost or stolen luggage and plane tickets, and to allot at least US \$350 in an emergency account that you can access from Morocco.

Visas to Enter Morocco:

Most foreigners do not need visas to enter Morocco and are allowed to stay for up to three months (except: South Africans, Israelis, Zimbabweans). However, before traveling, make sure your passport is up to date and good for at least 6 months, and has enough blank pages. It is always best to check online or contact your nearest Moroccan Embassy.

Vaccinations:

There are no vaccination requirements needed before entering Morocco. However, it is always a good idea to consult your physician before you travel to make sure your regular inoculations are up to date.

Electronics:

Morocco runs on 220 V and uses the same two-pronged plug-ins as in Europe.

Air conditioning & Heating:

Morocco does get quite hot in the summer and chilly in the winter. Most small hotels do not have air conditioning or heating. Most 3- to 5-star hotel rooms, however, do come equipped with multi-purpose air-conditioning/heating units.

Weights & Measures:

Morocco uses the metric system. Here are some handy conversions to know:

2 pounds = 1 kilogram

1 mile = 2 kilometers

1 inch = 2.5 centimeters

Time:

Morocco uses military time, or a 24-hour clock.

06:00 = 6 am

18:00 = 6 pm