

AFRICA · CULTURE · HISTORY · FOOD · DESERT · ARCHITECTURE · MOUNTAINS

 Morocco

A short flight from the UK, Morocco offers astonishing variety: the labyrinthine medinas of Marrakech and Fez, the blue lanes of Chefchaouen, High Atlas trekking and a night among the Erg Chebbi dunes near Merzouga. Bargaining in the souks is part of the ritual, and mint tea seals almost every deal.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Morocco and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 19 August 2026.

 CAPITAL Rabat	 CURRENCY Moroccan dirham (MAD) £1 ≈ MAD 13.09	 LANGUAGE Moroccan Arabic (Darija), Tamazight (Berber) French, Spanish	 BEST TIME Mar–May, Oct–Nov
 DAILY BUDGET £35–£190 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type C, E 220V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 3h 30m direct ~£70–£300 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

Morocco squeezes Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, the snow-capped Atlas and the edge of the Sahara into a country smaller than France. A classic first loop starts in Marrakech, crosses the High Atlas via the Tizi n'Tichka pass to the ksar of Aït Benhaddou, continues through the Dadès and Todra gorges to the dunes at Merzouga, then heads north to Fez's medieval medina. Trains link Fez with Rabat, Casablanca and Tangier, and Chefchaouen sits in the Rif mountains between Fez and Tangier. Essaouira's breezy ramparts make an easy coastal finish.

Morocco works for almost any budget: riad guesthouses in old courtyard houses range from simple to lavish, street food is cheap, and trains and buses are inexpensive. The medinas can be intense — persistent touts, faux guides and wrong turns are part of the deal — but the hospitality behind closed doors is genuine. First-timers are often surprised by how cold desert and mountain nights get in winter, and how green the north is in spring. It suits culture-lovers, walkers, food fans and families; Ramadan changes the rhythm of daily life, so check its dates.

Top 5 highlights

1 CITY Marrakech medina and Jemaa el-Fnaa The red-walled medina's souks, the Ben Youssef Madrasa and the Bahia Palace fill the day; at dusk, Jemaa el-Fnaa square comes alive with food stalls, storytellers, musicians and snake charmers.	2 HISTORY Fez el-Bali Often called the world's largest car-free urban area: a maze of medieval lanes around the Al-Qarawiyyin mosque-university, the Bou Inania Madrasa and the Chouara tannery's dye pits. A local guide helps on day one.
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3

NATURE

Erg Chebbi dunes at Merzouga

Apricot-coloured dunes rising up to 150 metres on the edge of the Sahara. Ride a camel out at sunset to a desert camp, sleep under the stars and climb a dune for sunrise.

4

CULTURE

Chefchaouen

A Rif mountain town whose medina is washed in shades of blue, with a kasbah, a lively main square and hikes to the Spanish Mosque viewpoint and, further out, Akchour's waterfalls.

5

ARCHITECTURE

Aït Benhaddou

A UNESCO-listed fortified village of earthen kasbahs climbing a hillside above the Ounila river, seen in *Gladiator* and *Game of Thrones*. Visit early or late, when the mud walls glow.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Casablanca

≈ 4 million people

Morocco's commercial capital is modern rather than medieval, but the ocean-front Hassan II Mosque — one of few open to non-Muslims — and the Art Deco downtown justify a day.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Rabat

≈ 1.9 million people

The calm, green capital has the Kasbah of the Udayas above the river mouth, the unfinished Hassan Tower and Mohammed V's mausoleum; Salé's old medina lies across the Bou Regreg.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Tangier

≈ 1.3 million people

Gateway to Europe across the Strait of Gibraltar, with a hilltop kasbah, literary cafés once frequented by Burroughs and Bowles, and a bullet train to Casablanca in just over two hours.

Ranked by urban area: Rabat's figure covers the continuous Rabat–Salé–Témara conurbation. Counted as single municipalities, Tangier and Fez rank second and third after Casablanca.

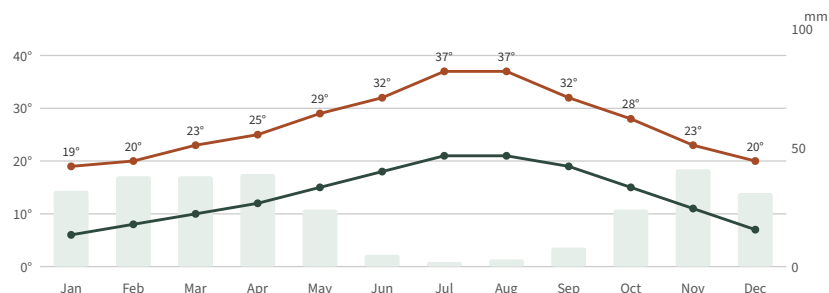
When to go to Morocco

Best time: **Mar–May, Oct–Nov.**



Average climate in Marrakech

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

May–Jun

Fes Festival of World Sacred Music

A week of Sufi chanting, gospel, flamenco and devotional music from around the world, staged in Fez's palace gardens and at the Bab Al Makina.

May	Rose Festival, Kelaat M'Gouna The Dadès Valley town celebrates the Damask rose harvest each May with parades, music, a Rose Queen and stalls selling rosewater and oils.
Jun	Gnaoua World Music Festival Essaouira's festival brings Gnaoua trance musicians together with jazz, blues and world artists on beach and square stages, usually in June.

How much does Morocco cost?

SHOESTRING £35 per person / day ≈ MAD 458 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £80 per person / day ≈ MAD 1,047 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £190 per person / day ≈ MAD 2,488 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Tagine

Slow-cooked stew named after its conical clay pot: try chicken with preserved lemon and olives, or lamb with prunes and almonds.

Couscous

Steamed semolina piled with vegetables and meat in a rich broth, traditionally the Friday lunch eaten after midday prayers.

Pastilla

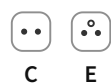
A Fez speciality of flaky warqa pastry filled with spiced pigeon or chicken, almonds and egg, dusted with cinnamon and icing sugar.

Getting around

ONCF trains link Tangier, Rabat, Casablanca, Fez and Marrakech, including the Al Boraq high-speed line from Tangier to Casablanca. CTM and Supratours buses cover the south and the coast. Shared grands taxis run between towns, petits taxis work within cities — insist on the meter — and car hire suits the Atlas and desert loop. Organised tours handle Merzouga for many visitors.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



220V — bring a UK-to-C/E adapter

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance: **150**

Fire: **150**

Police: **190**

Gendarmerie (military police): **177**

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

DIALLING CODE

+212

TIME ZONE

UTC+1 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Varies — bottled or filtered is safer

DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Around 10% in restaurants; keep small coins for car-park guardians, porters, hammam attendants and guides, who rely on tips.

ETIQUETTE

Dress modestly, especially away from beaches; non-Muslims can't enter most mosques. Ask before photographing people, and during Ramadan avoid eating, drinking or smoking in public by day.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Mohammed V International Airport (CMN), Casablanca; Marrakesh Menara Airport (RAK), Marrakech; Agadir–Al Massira Airport (AGA), Agadir

Visas & entry for Morocco

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit Morocco without a visa for up to 90 days for tourism.

To stay longer than 90 days, you must request an extension at a Moroccan police station.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A Tetanus Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Hepatitis B Measles Rabies Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Morocco

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sat 31 Oct 2026	Unity Day
Fri 6 Nov 2026	Green March
Wed 18 Nov 2026	Independence Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Mon 11 Jan 2027	Proclamation of Independence Day
Thu 14 Jan 2027	Amazigh New Year

Tue 9 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Wed 10 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Sun 16 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Mon 17 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Sun 6 Jun 2027	Islamic New Year (date may shift)
Fri 30 Jul 2027	Throne Day
Sat 14 Aug 2027	Oued Ed-Dahab Day · Prophet's Birthday (date may shift)
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Prophet's Birthday (date may shift)
Fri 20 Aug 2027	Revolution Day
Sat 21 Aug 2027	Youth Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Moroccan Arabic (Darija)

ENGLISH	MOROCCAN ARABIC (DARIJA)	SAY IT
Hello	السلام عليكم	<i>as-SA-lam a-LAY-kum</i>
Thank you	شكرا	<i>SHOK-ran</i>
Please	عافاك	<i>AH-fak</i>
Excuse me	سمح ليا	<i>SMEH-lee-ya</i>
How much is this?	بشحال هادا؟	<i>besh-HAL HA-da</i>

Know before you go

- Morocco moves its clocks back an hour, from UTC+1 to UTC+0, during Ramadan; double-check train, bus and flight times if your trip overlaps.
- In the medinas, politely decline unofficial 'guides' who say a street is closed or lead you to a shop; download offline maps, or book a licensed guide through your riad.
- The dirham is a closed currency, so you'll get it in Morocco: airport ATMs work well. Keep exchange receipts if you want to change leftovers back before leaving.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.