



## Morocco

### Destination Guide and FAQs



First time in Morocco?

You're in for a treat. We keep hearing from our travellers that Morocco is one of their favourite countries or that their trip holds some of the best memories for them.

*"Morocco is a land of beauty and wonder and our stay was all too brief. There is so much history, so much culture, so many landscapes, and so much amazing food that every day was a new adventure." – Peg*

Where else can you stay the night in a Berber tent in the Sahara Desert under more stars than you have ever seen before and then the next day sleep in a luxurious boutique hotel (called a riad)?

Where else can you walk through an ancient city and see a way of life that has been around for centuries combined with modern comforts?

This isn't a "beach vacation" destination (though there are some great beaches available!) It's not a European city with fancy cafes and cathedrals. It is truly unique. You get a combination of Arab culture with a European flavour. There's unforgettable and delicious food, some truly memorable sights, and the people are warm and hospitable.

If you have been lucky enough to visit Morocco, you're already in love, but do read on because a few things may have changed.

*"We have traveled the world by way of backpacking to luxurious cruises and we can both honestly say that Morocco will forever be one of our favourite destinations." – Laura and Natalie*

### First off, is Morocco safe for travellers?

Your perception of safety is important, and we urge you to visit your country's travel advisory consular site. These days, only a few countries do not carry an advisory. We have chosen an affiliate office based in the U.S. that has arranged over 1600 tours in Morocco over the past 10 years without incident. Morocco is considered to be a politically stable country in North Africa. It is a constitutional monarchy, and promotes religious peace between Muslims, Christians and Jews. As with any destination, travellers should exercise caution in being out in the dark and carrying valuables. A bonus of group travel is you can always be with a travel companion. Additionally our local office is on hand 24/7 to address any concerns.

### Do I need a Visa for Morocco?

Most visitors do NOT need a visa to Morocco. Check this guide for more info.  
[http://www.consulatdumaroc.ca/visa\\_en.htm#pays](http://www.consulatdumaroc.ca/visa_en.htm#pays) (If link does not work, copy and paste in your browser's search function)

Canadian and U.S. nationals do not need a visa. In order to gain entry, you will need a passport valid for 6 months.

If you do need a visa, bear in mind that processing can take 4 to 5 weeks. Please understand that it is your sole responsibility to possess a valid passport and visa prior to embarking on this tour.

### What is the Time Zone in Morocco?

Morocco is on Western Europe Summer time, +1hr GMT until Oct 28. It's 5 hrs ahead of EST.

Even during the Arab Spring Morocco was one

of the only countries in North Africa that remained secure.

### What is the weather like in October?

Fall in Morocco is mild, and you'll enjoy the temperatures of 23-25C/70F. You'll experience lots of sunshine and cooler nights. You won't get much rain during October. A great month to visit Morocco!

### How strenuous is this tour?

If you can walk comfortably at a moderate pace for one-hour stretches, you can do this tour. In addition we have private bus transfers on crowded urban roads. The longest transfer on is 5-6 hrs with 3-4 breaks for lunch and toilets. There is also a camel ride (optional) and a jeep transfer. Additionally, if you like to hike, we can arrange a guide to accompany you. Please enquire.



I hear only 5\* hotels are good enough for travel in Morocco. Correct?

Incorrect. One of the best ways to experience Morocco is to stay in atmospheric riads (heritage houses) for architecture, cultural relevance, comfort, safety, and personal service. In all cases, we selected the best available. All riads are clean, comfortable, and

have private bathrooms and western-style toilets. But please be aware that for part of the trip we go into an untrampled part of Morocco in search of unique experiences, and accommodations may be different to what you are used to.

### Will Ramadan affect my travels?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar that follows a lunar year, so every year the exact dates change. In 2018, it will be in June-July, and therefore will not affect our tour.



### What about clothes and valuables?

A comprehensive packing list will be supplied. Consider layering clothes. Pack a light windbreaker and fleece hoodie, as well as warm socks, toque, and mitts. A hot water bottle comes in handy for warm toes at bedtime. Comfortable closed-toed walking shoes are recommended. Dresses below the knees, and trousers, tops/dresses with some sleeve are acceptable. Stay away from strappy tank tops. Wear a longer shirt if wearing pants, and you may want to stay away from low cut shirts. For men, Moroccans are stylish and favour polo shirts over t-shirts. Longish shorts and cargo pants are fine.

It's best to leave expensive jewelry and valuables at home.

### What is the voltage in Morocco?

Power sockets are of type C and E as in Europe. The standard voltage is 220 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. Your adaptor will need to fit into these sockets.



### Where to fly in and out of? What are the best international flight options?

Our tour starts and ends in Casablanca. How you get there depends on from where you will travel. Basically, the Mohammed V International Airport in Casablanca (CMN) provides the most flight options for this airport, with even a direct flight from JFK! Depending on your arrival, we can either include you in the group transfer or arrange a private transfer. Do give yourself ample time to settle in after your long flight.

We'd be happy to advise on individual options. Please contact [shila@eyhotours.com](mailto:shila@eyhotours.com)

### Can I get a local SIM card?

Morocco uses 4G, 3G and GSM frequency bands 900/1800. If your phone is an unlocked GSM with multi band, it will usually work with a local SIM card (Make sure to check the frequency band your phone uses for compatibility in Morocco). The main networks are the leader, Maroc Telecom (a.k.a. Itissalat Al-Maghrib, IAM), followed by Orange (rebranded from Méditel ), and Inwi. 4G is open to prepaid, where available. SIM cards can be purchased in the agencies of the network operators and their sales outlets. Be prepared to show your passport.

### My big fear is getting sick in Morocco.

The main reasons why travelers get sick in Morocco eating unwisely. Safe bottled water is readily available all over Morocco. The food in Morocco is delicious and generally well prepared. \*\*Only eat foods that have been cooked, and are piping hot upon serving, and eat fruit that can be peeled\*\*. The prices of meals on your own will range from \$3 - \$15, without alcohol.

Don't use ice cubes in drinks. Brush teeth with bottled water.

### Will drinking water be provided while travelling?

We provide bottled drinking water while on the road. In interests of reducing plastic waste, please consider bringing your own refillable water bottle. Hotels will supply bottled water.

### What about the currency?

The Moroccan Dirham (MAD) is the currency of Morocco. The most popular Morocco Dirham exchange rate is the EUR to MAD rate, but USD is widely accepted and changed. Current rate is around 9 MAD to one USD. Coins frequently: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50. Rarely Used: 5. Banknotes frequently used: 20, 50, 100, 200

Travelers' checks are not recommended. ATMs are readily available in major urban areas. Carry smaller denomination bills to use at trip-end so you don't have to change more than you need. Also carry the equivalent of \$50 in rupees for the first couple of days when you may not access an ATM. Credit cards are widely accepted in urban areas.

### What about tipping?

We run an additional \$120 tipping kitty for

drivers, guides, hotel wait staff and porters. You may supplement if you wish. Any unused amounts at the end will be democratically disposed of.

### And shopping . . . ?

Morocco is a shopper's paradise. From clothes to jewelry in gold and silver; artifacts, carpets, rugs, embroidery...the list goes on. Quality and the price vary widely. Be sure to check the quality of what you buy. Bargaining is expected unless shopping at nonprofit co-ops or directly from artisans.

### Do I need any vaccinations?

Shots for hepatitis A/B and typhoid are recommended for any travel to developing countries, in addition to normal ones such as Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Polio. Please follow the recommendations of your travel health clinic.

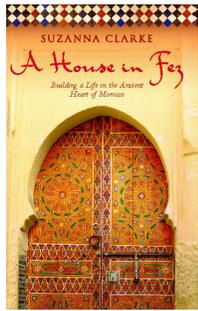


### Great! How do I sign up?

We'd be delighted to welcome you on board! Please [contact](#) us.

Reading list follows.

## Suggested Reading List



### **A House in Fez – Building a Life in the Ancient Heart of Morocco by Suzanna Clarke**

In this book, Suzanna Clarke discusses her experience of buying and restoring an old Moroccan riad in Fez. Shows her love for the city of Fez and the community that she and

her husband found during their year there.

### **The Caliph's House – A Year in Casablanca by Tahir Shah**

Tahir Shah trades in London for the caliph of Casablanca's old house, and discovers the adventures that come along with the territory. He is amazed to learn that the house is haunted by jinns, or spirits. Shah sticks out his time in Casablanca, despite the remarkable and sometimes bizarre experiences he has in the process.

### **In Morocco – Edith Wharton**

In this book from 1920, Edith Wharton writes about her time traveling through Morocco as the guest of Hubert Lyautey, French Governor General of the Protectorate. She writes about the interactions she has in Morocco and with Moroccan culture with deep description.

### **Dreams of a Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood by Fatima Mernissi**

Fatima Mernissi writes this story about a girl who grew up in a harem in Fez in the late 1940's. In this compelling story, she recounts what it meant to be in a harem based on some of her own memories and discusses issues of progression, gender and sex in the situation she was born into.

### **The Secret Son – Laila Lalami**

Of course, the most accurate descriptions of Morocco will come from Moroccan authors. Laila Lalami writes about a poor boy, Youssef



who realizes that he is the illegitimate child of a rich businessman. He longs to spend time with his father, but becomes susceptible to the ideas of a Islamist extremist group.

### **Also by Laila Lalami: Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits**

### **The Sand Child – Tahar Ben Jelloun**

This 1985 novel is written by the first Maghreb winner of the Prix Goncourt award. He writes about post-colonial Morocco through a story told of Mohammed Ahmed, a girl who was raised as a boy due to the father's desires.

### **Also by Tahar Ben Jelloun: The Sacred Night, This Blinding Absence of Light**

White Gold by Giles Milton

A Wedding by the Sea by Abdelkader Benali

Mother Comes of Age by Driss Chraïbi

Morocco That Was by Walter Harris

The Last Storyteller: Tales from the Heart of Morocco by Richard Hamilton

All of Peter Bowles' books, particularly *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*

### **Travel Books:**

Morocco That Was (1921) by Walter Harris

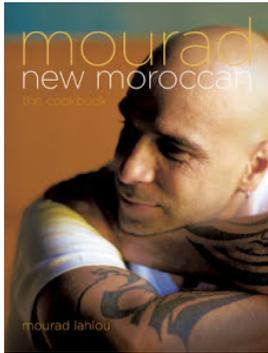
The Voices of Marrakech by Elias Canetti

Culture Shock! Morocco: A Survival Guide to Customs & Etiquette by Orin Hargraves

Morocco: The Collected Traveler Ed. Barrie Kerper

### **Cookbooks:**

Mourad: New Moroccan



We hope you enjoy these titles! Let us know your opinions or your favourites. If you are looking for specific information on a certain subject – [contact us](#)

*Flavors of Morocco* by Ghillie Basan  
*The Food of Morocco* by Paula Wolfert  
*The Scent of Orange Blossoms: Sephardic Cuisine from Morocco* by Kitty Morse & Danielle Mamane

### **Films**

*Horses of God* : Highly controversial, beautifully shot drama set in shanty towns of Casablanca and based on the 2003 terrorist attacks across the city.

*Marock*: (French) by female director Laila Marrakechi explores the romantic relationship between two teenagers, one Muslim and the other Jewish.

Of course, the famous *Casablanca*, set in Morocco.

*The Sheltering Sky*: Bernardo Bertolucci's interpretation of Peter Bowles' 1949 novel is a dark, romantic comedy with stunning images of North Africa.

Blockbusters set elsewhere but shot in Morocco include a long list: *Othello*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Kundun*, *Gladiator*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Alexander*, *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *Hanna*.