

You will visit sites of antiquity, explore treasures of Morocco, discover the magnificent cities and places off the beaten track; meet local people and partake numerous activities during your Morocco experience. Before you leave for your adventure, it is important that you read this pre-departure information to ensure that your trip begins, and proceeds, as smoothly as possible. While we appreciate that you are embarking on an "adventure holiday" that will produce its own share of surprises, it is also true that forewarned is forearmed. This information is not written with the intention of being anything other than general information that we hope will help you come more prepared for your holiday. The philosophy of Travel Talk is simple: to provide excellent value for money for budget conscious and adventurous travellers without compromising their experiences, and providing quality transportation, accommodation, sight seeing and information services. We hope that our philosophy will exceed your expectations and the following information will help you enjoy a memorable journey in Morocco.

INTRODUCTION

FACTFILE

Full Country Name :
Kingdom of Morocco
Area : 446.550 sq km
(279.093 sq mi)
Population : 33.2 million
Capital City : Rabat
Language : Arabic, French
Religion : Islam 98 %
Government : Constitutional
Monarchy
GDP : US\$ 135 billion
GDP per head : US\$ 4.100
Annual growth : 1.7 %
Inflation : 1 %

VISAS & CUSTOMS

Visa requirements change periodically, therefore you need to check the requirements before travelling.

All visitors to Morocco are required to have a visa. Below stated countries may purchase the visa stamp at the airport upon arrival :

(a) nationals of countries Britian, Australia, Canada, USA, Ireland, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and EU for stays of up to 3 months;
(b) nationals of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Korea (Rep. of), Mexico, Monaco, Norway and Switzerland for stays of up to 3 months.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant documents/visas and Travel Talk will accept no responsibility for being refused entry through incorrect documentation.

You can temporarily import most of your personal effects into Morocco without any formalities in quantities corresponding to normal tourist activity. For example: A camcorder, a camera, a Walkman, a pair of binoculars... If you have any doubts contact the Moroccan Consulate.

Restrictions apply to:

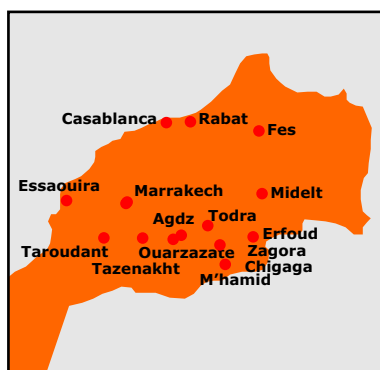
- Alcohol (1 bottle of wine and 1 bottle of spirits or 3 bottles of wine per adult) and tobacco (200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250 g of tobacco per adult).
 - Arms and ammunition for hunting (shotguns are prohibited).
 - Professional photographic equipment.
- But no problem for your souvenir photographs.

DOCUMENTS

Please make sure that you have all the necessary travel documents ready before you leave your country.

PASSPORT

In many countries you'll be required to have a passport valid for 6 months starting from the entry date. If you are



BEFORE YOU GO

While it's your own choice and responsibility regarding what type of clothing, belongings, luggage, bags and other items to take with you, we try to share our experiences with you to help you have a comfortable journey in Morocco.

ESSENTIALS

Before you leave your country, we recommend you to make sure you have the followings with you :

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ Airline or transportation ticket
- ✓ Tour voucher
- ✓ Insurance policy
- ✓ Visas (if necessary)
- ✓ Label on your travel bag
- ✓ Pre-departure information
- ✓ Money (cash and/or travellers cheques)
- ✓ Credit card

PACKING

Please remember that the airline baggage allowance is 20 kilos and you should not pack more than you can comfortably carry.

traveltalk traveltip

When packing, the golden rule is : decide how many clothes you want to take, halve the amount and that's how much you'll need.

We also recommend you to bring a frame backpack or a suitcase. In addition to your main bag, you'll need to have a smaller day pack and a money belt.

What about the souvenirs ? Make sure that you leave some space for souvenirs in your luggage. There are a wide range of fantastic things to buy in the Middle East and in Mediterranean countries, not only for your mates, but also for yourself !

We have also compiled a list of things that you might need on the tour:

Clothing : As a general guideline, clothing should be lightweight, loose fitting, hard-wearing and easily washed. In Morocco's hot summer months, cotton clothing is much more comfortable than man-made materials like nylon. Clothing that will protect you from sunburn is an absolute necessity. Especially in summer months white or light coloured, long sleeve cotton shirts are preferable. You should bear in mind that Morocco has conservative attitudes towards dress, particularly in remote areas. Make sure you allow for climate changes and remember that even in very hot countries, night-time and early morning temperatures can be cold. Therefore we advise you to bring the following clothing with you :

Depending on the season; a warm jacket or wool sweater, a rain jacket, walking/hiking boots, thick socks, pullovers, flip-flops or waterproof sandals, shorts, light slacks (men), loose-fitting pants or long skirts, scarf (women), short sleeves, t-shirts, hat, underwear and socks.

Useful equipment : Water bottle with strap, torch and batteries, international adapter, travel alarm, playing cards, walkman or mp3 player, discs, laundry detergent

Toiletries : Towels, soap, toothbrushes, talcum powder, razors, deodorant, tampons, sunscreens, contact lenses (bring enough extra pairs and solution), glasses (and a copy of your prescription in case you need emergency replacements), sunglasses, sun cream, a roll of toilet paper, hygienic wet wipes.

First-aid kit : Bandages, pain reliever, antibiotic cream, a thermometer, moleskin, decongestant, insect repellent, burn ointment, personal medicine.

Others : Converters and adapters, camera, films, flash, batteries, money belt and additional belongings that you think will be useful during your journey.

traveltalk traveltip

It's vital to take a photocopy of the important pages of your passport (pages of personal data, passport number, visas etc) and keep these copies separate from your passport.

holding a passport with less than 6 month's validity or a few pages remaining, we suggest you to apply for a new one before you depart.

VISA

Check your visa when it's issued to ensure that it contains the correct figures. Please bear in mind that a visa does not guarantee you enter a country as the final decision will be given by the authorities at the immigration.

TOUR VOUCHER

When you book a trip, you'll be provided with a tour voucher showing the details of your tour. You'll need to hand over this voucher to your tour leader to join the tour. The tour leader reserves the right to refuse serving any passenger failing to provide the tour voucher. If you have booked extra services like pre- and post tour accommodation and transfer, please make sure that these services are also shown on your tour voucher.

FLIGHT TICKET / CONFIRMATION

Do not forget to check your name, surname, flight details and other necessary information placed on your flight ticket/confirmation voucher at least 3 days before you leave your country.

ARRIVAL

AIRPORT TRANSFER

The arrival airport transfer is included in the price of the tour (on the start day only).

You'll be met by our local representative at the airport who arranges the transfers from the airport to your hotel.

Please make sure that you inform your agent of your flight details (arrival date, time, flight code and flight number) in order to be picked up from the airport.

Please remember that if you miss your transfer at the airport (due to the rescheduling your flight, delay or any other reason) you'll need to make your own way to the arrival hotel.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Please also note that you can call the following numbers in case of **emergency** : 0090 542 779 04 34 or 0090 544 522 54 74 (Head office).

traveltalk traveltip

If you're taking a taxi to your hotel or around the city, close your ears to the common claims of taxi drivers telling newly arrived travellers that their hotel has closed down, full or poor and that they know a better hotel etc... Just insist on being taken to your hotel and once you arrive, go to the reception desk if you need further assistance.

ARRIVAL HOTEL IN CASABLANCA

Please find below the address details of your arrival hotel in **Casablanca** :

Hotel Anfa Port
Tel: 212 (0) 22 26 77 80
www.hotelanfaport.com
Bd Les Almohades Angle houphouet
Boigny
CASABLANCA

ARRIVAL HOTEL IN MARRAKECH

Please find below the address details of your arrival hotel in **Marrakech** :

Hotel Ryad Mogador Kasbah
Avenue Mohamed VI
MARRAKECH
Telephones :00 212 524 38 83 88

GUIDE MEETING

Please note that your guide will meet and brief you about the next days of your tour at the arrival hotel at 07:00 p.m.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATION

Should you require pre- or post tour accommodation, please notify us (or your agent) at the time of booking. This information has to be also clearly stated on your voucher (check-in date, check-out date, number of travellers etc).

Unless a room is immediately available, most hotels will not allocate your room until at least mid day, it may be later than this if the hotel has had high occupancy the previous night.

Pre and post tour rates are as follows (per person per night including breakfast) :

- Double, twin or triple room GB£ 30
- Single room GB£ 45

LEFT OR LOST LUGGAGE

If you discover upon arrival that your luggage is missing, or has arrived incomplete, you should report this

immediately to the information desk in the baggage hall. The staff will be able to tell you what the procedures are for reclaiming your luggage and advise you on any forms that may need to be filled in and stamped. The airport staff should also be able to explain what will happen next and when you should expect your luggage.

If you experience any problems in dealing with airport officials, your tour leader will be happy to assist you. Please remember that lost luggage is a matter between you and the airline /airport authority and the recovery of your luggage is your own responsibility and at your own expense.

ABOUT THE TOUR

Please remember that the tour price covers specific services offered during your trip, not your entire travel cost. Your expenses will vary depending on your interests and budget and your tour leader will be always ready to inform you of the local prices and possible travel costs.

THE TOUR PRICE AND THE LOCAL PAYMENT

We know that it's not easy to get your cash together to cover the entire travel cost, especially when you book your flight ticket and the tour at once. We ease your cash needs by dividing the tour cost into two payments : tour price and local fund. You just need to pay the tour price to purchase your travel. The compulsory local payment will be done when you join the trip. The local payment is a part of the tour cost (a tool to ease your cash need on booking date) and it does **not** cover any extra costs like meals, entry fees, drinks, tips, personal expenses or other type of travel costs.

SERVICES INCLUDED

We run numerous tours in Morocco and services differ depending on the type, length and character of the trips. As a general rule, the following services are included in your tour price :

- ✓ Accommodation in Superior 4 star hotels, sedentary tents, traditional nomad tents
- ✓ Arrival airport transfer
- ✓ All breakfasts in the hotels
- ✓ Dinner at the sedentary and nomad desert camps on specific tours
- ✓ Jeep safari in M'hamid & Sahara desert on specific tours
- ✓ Jeep safari in Chigaga on specific tours
- ✓ Transportation in air-conditioned non-smoking coaches or mini-buses
- ✓ Transportation in 4x4 jeeps on specific tours
- ✓ Services of experienced tour leaders and local guides

SERVICES NOT INCLUDED

The tour price does not cover the following :

Any flights, insurance, meals not stated in the itinerary (all lunches and dinners), drinks, items of a personal nature, tips, visa fees, entrance fees to the sights and museums, other services not stated in the "services included" section of the relevant tour page of Travel Talk brochure , optional activities and excursions.

ENTRANCE FEES

The entry fees to museums and sights are not included in the tour price. Please bear in mind that the entry fees change periodically and we recommend you to contact us for the latest prices.

Below approximate prices are given in Euro :

Marrakech : Menara Palace Euro 1, Saadian Tumbs Euro 1, Bahai Palace Euro 1, Dar Si Said Mausoleum Euro1
Casablanca : Hassan II Mosque Euro 15
Rabat : Chellah Ruins Euro 1
Fes : Bou Inania Medersa Euro 1, Attarine Medersa Euro1
Ouarzazate : Taourirt Kasbah Euro 1

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Jeep safari to Merzouga is a very popular activity in Morocco (from Erfoud to Merzouga by crossing the desert in West Sahara). The average price per person is 30 Euro.

Joining a traditional evening of entertainment with typical Moroccan cuisine in Marrakech (Fantasia Show) is also one of the major attractions and will cost your around 35 Euros.

If you join an optional dinner with folklore show in Fes, that will cost you Euro 25.

Please contact your tour leader for the details of the above activities.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is recommended to all passengers travelling on Travel Talk tours to have personal insurance to cover all medical and repatriation costs. Please take your insurance policy with you.

While there are no mandatory vaccinations for travellers to Morocco it is advisable to ensure typhoid, polio and tetanus inoculations are up to date. Some travellers feel more confident with hepatitis and meningitis inoculations as well. Rabies exists in Morocco in rural areas although it is very unlikely that you will come in contact with a rabid animal. Immunisation is available in either a series of three injections over a period of one month (lasts 3-5 years) or a single visit booster dose that lasts only 6-12 months. Please consult a medical practitioner for advice.

Bottled water is readily available throughout your tour and we recommend that you purchase this rather than drink the local tap water. While the local water is usually heavily chlorinated and safe many people find they get upset stomachs after drinking these supplies.

traveltalk traveltip

It is advisable to carry some Imodium with you in case you get an upset stomach from the difference in cuisine. The different spices and foods may be a little upsetting to your stomach and it is best to be prepared... just in case.

It is often difficult to find the precise medication that is available in one's home country and for this reason we recommend that you carry all current medication with you.

Toilet paper is rarely provided so it is a good idea to carry a spare roll in your bag. It should be placed in the basket beside the toilet, not flushed away, as you might block the pipes.

Most people find that Morocco is a friendly and hospitable country and feel quite comfortable wandering around alone during the day. However, as with any country you are not familiar with, it is recommended that you exercise more caution at night and generally take taxis rather than walk.

It is wise not to accept gifts of food or drink from any strangers for the risk of possibly being a victim of theft by drugging. Take care with your passport, credit cards and money - a money belt to fit beneath your clothes is highly recommended. It is also recommended that at least one set of modest clothing is taken with you. It is a sign of respect to cover your shoulders and legs when visiting mosques and also attracts less unwanted attention. A headscarf for women is necessary when visiting mosques in Morocco.

MONEY

The local currency is Moroccan Dirham (1 Euro is about 11,00 Dirham, 1 GB£ is around 12 Dirham) divided into 100 centimes. There are 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 DH notes, 1, 5 and 10 DH coins and 5, 10, 20 and 50 centime coins.

You can only obtain Dirham in Morocco. Do not change money in the streets, it is illegal. The best place to change it is at a bank or approved change office (indicated by a golden sign). No commission is charged and you will be given a slip which will be required at the end of your stay to change any remaining Dirham back into the original currency. Please remember that you are not allowed to bring Dirham into the country and to take out with you.

You can withdraw money in banks with a credit card and a cheque book, or directly from a cash dispenser in some large towns. Credit cards are generally accepted in major hotels, shops and restaurants, and sometimes even in the souks!

It is difficult to specify the amount of money that you can spend per day, however as a general rule Euro 22 to Euro 33 or GB £20 to £30 per day can provide you with additional meals and optional entrances.

Should you wish to purchase souvenirs - of which there is a diverse range - and optional activities, you will have to budget for these.

Please do not bring Scottish banknotes as they are not changable abroad.

EATING & DRINKING

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 marinated 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 three-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.

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.

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. Traditional Moroccan entertainment, such as folk dancing, can be seen in every town.

A basic lunch and dinner (main meal + salad) in a local restaurant will cost you between £5 and £8 (Euro 5.5 and Euro 9), a soft drink about £ 0.50 (Euro 0.60).

LUNCH BREAKS

Geographically Morocco is a big country and the distances between the regions do not allow us to give long lunch breaks. Most of the lunch breaks will be given during the day drives at local areas with limited meal options.

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 the asking price. In the south there are Berber carpet auctions, especially in Marrakech.

traveltalk **traveltip**

You need to bear in mind that haggling is a way of life in the Middle East. Haggling should always be relaxed and can be a lot of fun – you will find most shop owners are very friendly and will probably invite you in for a cup of tea to break the ice before the haggling starts.

OPENING HOURS

Normally the shops are open Mon-Sat 0830-1300 and 1430-1930 (Mon-Sat 0830-1200 and 1400-1900 in Tangier); souks (traditional markets) are open 0830-1300 and 1430-1800 seven days a week.

Post offices are open from Mon-Fri 0830-1200 and 1430-1830; Sat 0830-1400.

TIPPING

Tips are a common rewards for service staff in Morocco like everywhere in the world. Your bus driver and guide can especially be honoured with this kind of traditional appreciation at the end of the trip.

Tipping is expected in the fancier eateries. Around 10-15% of your bill is usual. A dirham or two should suffice at the more humble restaurants and cafes. A whole range of other services, some of which you may not notice or want, are also performed with the aim of pocketing a few dirhams.

WEATHER

The rugged mountain ranges and the Atlantic Ocean moderate the tropical heat of Morocco; the mean temperature is 16.4° to 23°C (62°F - 73°F) on the west coast and 10° to 27°C (50° - 81°F) in the interior., Temperature variations are small along the Atlantic coast, while the interior is characterised by extreme variations. The eastern slopes of the Atlas Mountains, which divert the moisture-laden Atlantic winds, have a rigorous pre-Saharan

climate, while the western slopes are relatively cool and well watered. The rainy seasons are from October to November and from April to May. Maximum annual rainfall (30 to 40 inches) occurs in the northwest.

TEMPERATURES

The yearly average temperatures in Morocco are as follows :

Casablanca	21C, 69 F
Fes	19C, 66 F
Marrakech	22C, 71 F
Meknes	20C, 68 F
Ouarzazate	18C, 64 F
Rabat	22C, 71 F
Tangier	19C, 66 F

DISTANCES

The following information will give you a better idea of the times travelled to help you plan your day:

Casablanca-Rabat	93 kms
Rabat-Fes	198 kms
Fes-Midelt	204 kms
Midelt-Erfoud	217 kms
Erfoud-Ouarzazate	385 kms
Ouarzazate-Marrakech	204 kms
Marrakech-Essaouira	176 kms
Essaouira-Taroudant	262 kms
Taroudant-Zagora	468 kms
Casablanca-Marrakech	241 kms

ELECTRICITY

All appliances require a double round pin type plug for 220 volts AC, 50-hertz.

RAMADAN

Ramadan is the most important religious event for Muslims lasting for one month. Around one billion Muslims do not eat and drink from sunrise to sunset which may also effect the usual travel habits of travellers from all over the world. During Ramadan many cafes, restaurants, shops, bazaars and other services may be closed during the day or have limited opening hours. Your tour leader (who will be probably fasting too) will advise you of any changes and will assist you in making plans for your free time.

In 2010 Ramadan is set to begin on 11 August until 9 September.

ACCOMMODATION

Please bear in mind that star ratings utilized in the Middle East are not directly comparable with the European standards. The hotel selection on Travel Talk tours is 4 star locally rated and the main criteria in the hotel selection process is cleanliness, private bathroom facilities, usually but not always air-conditioning and central location.

If you are travelling on your own, you'll be allocated a twin or triple room with other group members of the same gender.

Travellers who have paid a single supplement will stay in single rooms, however we can not guarantee the availability of double beds for couple travellers.

Your Tour Leader will organise the rooming arrangements when checking into the hotels according to the rooming lists sent by the operation department. Therefore we can also not guarantee any last minute changes to suit personal requirements of our passengers.

TOUR LEADER

Your Tour Leader's role is to ensure that all aspects of the trip run smoothly. He/she will share their local knowledge, advise you on how to fill your free time and coordinate the day to day running of the tour – although occasionally your Tour Leader may need your understanding if things do not go according to plan. If you have any problems on the tour, please let your Tour Leader know so that steps can be taken out put it right. Please also bear in mind that, when you travel on any of the combination programs, you will be travelling with different tour groups and different tour leaders during each leg of the combination.

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.

Hello	Selaam
Goodbye	Ma Salama
Yes	Aiwa
No	La
Please	Minfudluk
Thank you	Shokran
Excuse me	Lao Samaht
How are you ?	E-zayak
I'm well, thank you	El Humdoolelaa
How much is it ?	Bekam ?
Too much !	Ketir !
I don't understand	Ana mish fahem
Water	Maya
Coffee	Ahwa
Tea	Shy
The bill	El Hesab

BRIEF INFO ABOUT THE SIGHTS

Before you explore the fantastic sights of this unique country, we hope that the below information will give you a basic idea of the sites you'll visit.

Casablanca

Morocco's largest city and industrial centre, it's a huge brash metropolis where traditional Moroccan burnouses (cloaks) seem out of place among the natty suits and designer sunglasses. This port city was deep in decline until the French decided to remodel it with wide boulevards, public parks and imposing Mauresque (Moorish) civic buildings. Casablanca's medina, or ancient quarter, is worth a look and the Hassan II Mosque here is one of the largest in the world. At the square known as the Place Mohammed V you'll find the country's most impressive examples of Mauresque architecture.

Rabat

The fourth of the imperial cities, Rabat is a curious mix of a long past and a highly modernised present. The city's glory days were in the 12th century, when the then sultan used the kasbah (citadel) as a base for campaigns against the Spanish. It was during this time that the city's most famous landmarks sprang up. A haven for Muslims driven out of Spain in the early 17th century and a capital city only since the days of French occupation, Rabat's ambience comes from Islam and Europe in fairly equal proportions. For every place of worship there are three or four European-style cafes. Few of Rabat's residents are involved in the tourist racket, which means you can stroll through the markets without having to brace yourself against too much high-pressure salesmanship. The city's most famous site is the Tour Hassan, the incomplete minaret of the great mosque begun by Yacoub al-Mansour. An earthquake brought construction to a halt in 1755. Alongside is the Mausoleum of Mohammed V, the present king's father. The Kasbah des Oudaias, built on the bluff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, houses a former palace which is now a museum of traditional art. Beyond the city walls are the remains of the ancient city of

Sala. Also known as Chella, it has Morocco's best Archaeology Museum. Between the city's landmark central park (Jardins Triangle de Vue) and the main train station are most of Rabat's hotels and eating spots. The most obvious cluster of cafes and bars here offer up all the beer, kababs, pizza, olives and ice cream you might need.

Fes

The oldest of the imperial cities, Fès is arguably the symbolic heart of Morocco. Its labyrinthine streets and crumbling grandeur add to its air of intrigue and self-importance. The medina of Fès el-Bali (Old Fès) is one of the largest living medieval cities in the world and the gates and walls that surround it make it all the more magnificent. Unlike many walled cities of this vintage, Old Fès hasn't burst its banks. The population has instead exploded out towards the south-west and spread to the hillsides in an arc stretching north and south of the new city.

Within the old city, tucked among roughly 9,400 streets and alleys, is the towering Medersa Bou Inania, a theological college built in 1350. Not far from here the henna souq is a market specialising in the dye used for colouring hair and tattooing women's hands and feet. Next door to the old walled city is Fès el-Jdid, home to the city's Jewish community and many spectacular buildings. In between the two self-contained cities is the Dar Batha, now the Museum du Batha.

Marrakech

One of Morocco's most important cultural centres, Marrakesh is a lively former capital famed for its markets and festivals. Its wildly beating heart is the Place Djemaa el-Fna, a huge square in the old city

Rows of open-air food stalls are set up here and mouth-watering aromas fill the air. Jugglers, storytellers, snake charmers, magicians, acrobats and assorted benign lunatics take over the rest of the space. The souqs (markets) here are among the best in Morocco and a large budget hotel strip makes exploring the old city area cheap and easy.

Among the many attractions of the ancient quarter is the rare Almoravid-style Koubba Ba'adiyn mosque annex, the magnificent Koutoubia mosque and the Palais Dar Si Said (Museum of Moroccan Arts).

■ Todra Gorge

Near the High Atlas town of Tinerhir, at the end of a lush valley of palms and mud-brick villages hemmed in by barren craggy mountains is one of Morocco's most glorious natural sights. This is the Todra Gorge: some 300m high but only 10m wide at its narrowest point, and with a crystal clear river running through it. Although the main gorge can be explored in half a day, those with more time should head further up the gorge towards Tinerhir. The people here are friendly and there are numerous kasbahs. Rock climbing is becoming increasingly popular on the vertical rock face of the gorge and camping around the base is also an attractive option. There are plenty of hotels in and around the gorge itself. For the more adventurous, a network of difficult pistes links the sporadic villages here in the High and Middle Atlas mountains.

■ Essaouira

Essaouira possesses a classical European 'Grand Place,' beautifully preserved ramparts and naval fortifications, one of the finest remaining fortified ports in the world, and numerous monuments of historical interest left by figures ranging from sixteenth-century Portuguese explorers right up to Orson Welles and Jimmy Hendrix. Its architecture is both harmonious and yet varied, exposing at different times its French, Portuguese, and Berber heritages. Mixing historic buildings with award-winning twentieth century designs lining its long, serene boardwalk, Essaouira is, like Morocco itself, a study in contrasts -- its impressive ramparts and cannon-studded walls enclosing tranquil winding streets, the bustle of the souks giving way to the crumbling grandeur of the ancient Mellah, mosques nestled next to churches and synagogues; and just minutes from the crash of ocean waves one finds the many great riads, their tranquil courtyards and soaring atriums restored to the golden age of Moroccan tilework and woodcraft, offering hospitality once again in the purest Moroccan tradition.

■ Taroudant

Taroudant is a small Moroccan village ideal to soak up the local atmosphere. There are two markets - one selling the usual tourist knick-knacks and the other a Berber market with pots, pans and piles of brightly-coloured spices. The city lies on the Sousse plain, which makes it ideal for cycling (bikes can be hired from two shops in the main square). One popular route is a circuit around the city walls - or you can visit outlying villages such as Tiout.

ENJOY YOUR ADVENTURE !

To the best of our knowledge the above information is accurate. However many things can change after pre-departure information is printed or issued and Travel Talk will not accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses incurred due to such inaccuracies. Should you have a query that is not covered in the following information please contact us for the latest updated information.