

BIG FIVE
TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

Travel Guide



The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.
Be sure to check the reading listing included here for more information.



Travel quote here

MARRAKECH ~ Elevation: 1528 feet Latitude: 31 37N Longitude: 008 02W

Average Temperature

°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	54	57	61	64	69	75	83	83	79	70	62	56

Average Precipitation

in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.3	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.8	1.5	1.1

AGADIR ~ Elevation: 75 feet Latitude: 30 23N Longitude: 009 34W

Average Temperature

°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	58	60	63	63	66	69	72	73	72	68	65	60

Average Number of Days With Precipitation

Days	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	5	5	5	4	2	1	1	1	2	4	4	5

CLIMATE

The climate varies according to region. The coast has a warm, Mediterranean climate, tempered on the eastern coast by southwest trade winds. Inland areas have a hotter, drier, continental climate. Cooler climate prevails in the mountains. The Atlas Mountains area is very humid, with frequent snows. In the south, the weather is very hot and dry throughout most of the year, with the nights coolest in the months of December and January.

November to March is the rainy season in coastal areas while the summer is mostly dry with high temperatures. Marrakech and Agadir enjoy an average temperature of about 70° F (21°C) in the winter.

Rainfalls are irregular and diminish progressively from the north to the south, and from the west to the east.

TIME ZONES / TRAVEL TIME

Morocco is on Greenwich Mean Time, GMT, or, five hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in New York. Flying time from New York to Casablanca, Morocco is approximately 6 hours and 40 minutes, nonstop.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passports: For international travel, a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing **at least** two blank pages is necessary.

Visas: U.S. and Canadian citizens do not require visas in advance. Citizens from other countries, consult the nearest Morocco consulate.

Important: Please look at your passport prior to travel to insure that:

- 1) Your passport is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Airport Departure Tax: None at this time.

Duty-Free Items: When entering Morocco, you will have to fill out a form that asks for, among other things, your profession. Journalists often complain of hostility or petty inconveniences. Be sure to obtain a police certificate or sworn affidavit in the event that any items are lost or stolen to avoid being faced with a hefty fee. The import and export of Moroccan currency is prohibited, but any amount of foreign currency may be brought in. The following may be imported duty-free: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; one liter of spirits and one liter of wine; 50g of perfume, a camera, a pair of binoculars, a musical instrument, camping equipment, and reasonable amounts of coffee and tea.

Prohibited Items: All narcotics (hemp, opium, cocaine, morphine, heroin, etc.), firearms, obscene literature, pictures, or articles. Penalties for possession, use or trafficking in illegal drugs are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

U.S. Customs: Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. Regulations frequently change, so check with your nearest customs office for a list of restricted and exempt items. You can also write to the U.S. Customs Service at Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044, or visit their web site at www.customs.ustreas.gov.

DEALING WITH JET LAG

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities.

The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag. The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that

processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness. Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored.

But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are some simple things you can do to help minimize its affects.

Consider the following for your next scheduled trip:

- Start your trip well rested with a good night's sleep prior to departure. Getting adequate rest before starting on your journey will help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.
- Drink plenty of fluids -- water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend that you carry a bottle of drinking water with you and drink eight ounces every hour.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to feeling sluggish.
- Once settled onboard, reset your watch to the time zone to which you are traveling. This small act helps you begin adjusting to your destination's local time.
- As much as possible, create a dark environment during flight. Studies have shown that bright lights strongly affect individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eye shades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes that will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.
- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is key in determining how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.
- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. If you have the opportunity, shower. Trans-Pacific pilots report that taking a shower in Hawaii helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag after the flight.

BANKING/CURRENCY

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

Currency exchange: Moroccan Dirhams can be obtained only in Morocco. Travelers can exchange currency at hotel reception desks or at banks. There is no commission charge for exchanging cash. Visitors will be issued with a receipt that they must keep in order to exchange Moroccan currency back into the original national currency before departure. Money can be withdrawn in banks with a credit card or with an ATM card directly from a cash dispenser in most cities. Personal checks will not be accepted.

Credit cards: Most credit cards are accepted. Check with your credit card company for details.

Travelers checks: Travelers checks are accepted but you will be charged a fee.

BUSINESS HOURS

Shopping hours: 0830-1230 and 1500-1900 Monday to Saturday; Friday 0830-1130. Tangiers and northern Morocco: 0900-1300 and 1600-2000, Monday to Saturday; Friday 0900-1130 and 1600-1900.

Office Hours: 0830-1200 and 1430-1830 Monday to Thursday; Friday 0830-1130 and 1500-1830. Some offices are open Saturday morning 0830-1130.

Banking Hours: 0830-1115 and 1430-1630 Monday to Friday. Some banks are open Saturday morning 0830-1130.

LUGGAGE

Traveling light is always the first and best rule! We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions apply for charter flights. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size by major domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit. Obviously, no knives or cutting instruments are allowed in carry-on baggage.

All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside.

Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US. This, however, does not address other international travel issues. We suggest that you lock your luggage and bring a couple of spare locks in the event one or more are cut off. But the choice is up to each individual traveler to make.

COMMUNICATION

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

Mobile telephone: GSM 900 networks exist. Coverage is mainly available in the cities in the west of Morocco.

Fax: Available in hotels.

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

Internet: Access is widely available in business centres, hotels and in Internet cafes.

Post: Airmail to Europe takes up to 1 week and can be unreliable. Post office hours: Mon-Fri 0830-1200 and 1430-1830, Sat 0830-1400.

Languages: Arabic (official); Berber dialects, spoken by large minority; French, often the language of business, government, and diplomacy. Spanish is also spoken in some areas and English is understood, particularly in the north and in main tourist areas.

HEALTH REQUIRMENTS

No vaccination certificate is required for visitors coming from Europe or America. An anti-cholera vaccination certificate may be required of visitors coming from areas where the disease is prevalent.

Anti-malarial treatment is not necessary. There is a minimal malaria risk, exclusively in the benign vivax form, exists from May to October in rural areas in provinces of Beni Mellal, Chefchaouën, El Kelâa Srarhna, Larache, Khouribga, Khénifra, Khémisset, Settât, Taounate and Taza.

Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is present. Avoid swimming in fresh water. Swimming pools that are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe. Soil parasites are also present so wear shoes. Hepatitis A and E also occur.

Healthcare: There are good medical facilities in all main cities, particularly in Rabat and Casablanca. Private clinics and hospitals meet high quality standards. Emergency pharmacies (sometimes in the Town Hall) operate outside normal opening hours. Government hospitals provide free or minimal charge emergency treatment. Full health insurance is essential.

Medical Insurance: U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. Doctors and hospitals in Morocco often expect immediate cash payment for health services. Uninsured travelers, who require medical care overseas, may face extreme difficulties.

Medications: If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip in the original prescription bottle. Be sure to also bring enough of any over-the-counter medications you use as well.

Please check the latest regulations with your doctor, the local health office, or the National Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, GA. Their phone number is 404-332-4559.

SAFETY

As with travel to any destination, common sense should be the prevailing guide to avoid problems.

During the day, take only the indispensable in your backpack or fanny pack. Do not take your passport, airline tickets, or all your money on day trips. Always leave these and other valuables in hotel safes. Take copies of your documents and only the amount of money you think you will need. Leave your jewelry at home! Aggressive panhandling is common.

Pamphlets addressing safety issues abroad are available from the Superintendent of Documents in the U.S. Government Printing Office (Washington, D.C. 20402), or at the Bureau of Consular Affairs' home page at <http://travel.state.gov>. You can also contact the U.S. Department of State at 2201 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20520. (202)647-4000. Web site: at <http://www.state.gov>.

ELECTRICITY

Usually 220 volts. Older buildings and a few areas still use 110 volt sockets, but you are unlikely to be visiting these areas. Two pin, round, plugs are used.

CAMERAS & FILM

Photographers should note that they cannot photograph military establishments, airports, and strategic dams, bridges and buildings. Taking photographs of anything that could be perceived as being of military or security interest may result in problems with authorities. Before photographing any person, religious festival or rural homestead it is courteous to ask permission. Commercial photographers require a permit from the Ministry of Information. Certain tourist sites charge for video photography.

Equipment: Bring cameras and lenses you are comfortable using. If you get new equipment before you go, do so as far in advance as possible. Shoot and develop at least a dozen rolls before departure to work out problems.

Lenses: A combination of fixed and/or zoom lenses with focal lengths from 28 mm to 200 mm is a good for general travel photography, although you can take excellent photographs with only a 50 mm lens. A zoom lens in the 70 to 200 mm range will help you capture the sights. A macro lens is helpful for shooting close-ups, but a good set of extension tubes will work very well. A 2x converter is also a handy. Bring a small cleaning kit and blower brush to keep equipment clean.

Film: We recommend that visitors bring plenty of film. You will undoubtedly shoot more pictures than you planned. Even those not all that interested in photography will probably shoot one 36 exposure roll of film per day, and enthusiastic shooters will far exceed that amount. Be sure film is fresh and, when possible, keep it refrigerated or, at least, cool. A film speed of ASA/ISO 64 is an excellent choice for color slide film. Use this speed when possible rather than higher speed films. There is a noticeable difference in quality that it is worth the extra effort to keep your camera steady at a somewhat slower shutter speed than you would otherwise use. For color prints, there are several good choices, including Kodak and Fuji films (ASA/ISO 100 & 200) for daylight photography, ASA/ISO 400 & 1000 are good for lower light and nighttime situations.

Batteries: Put fresh photo-quality batteries in your camera and other electric equipment before you leave and bring at least two sets of spare batteries with you. Your camera will be useless without them, and batteries can be expensive.

CLOTHING

Lightweight cottons and linens are best during summer, with warm medium weights for evenings during winter and in the mountains. Waterproof materials is advisable in the wet season, particularly on the coast and in the mountains

Whatever the season, it's wise to pack a few warm items of clothing in addition to cool, cotton, summer clothing. In early spring and autumn, a warm jacket or coat is necessary in the evenings, especially in the mountains and areas near the Sahara, where the temperature can drop quite dramatically after sunset.

Along the coast, evenings can be cool and damp throughout the year. During the daytime, however, it gets rather warm, and you would do well to wear lightweight clothes, as well as a good pair of sunglasses and sun protection for your head.

Proper Attire: Please observe appropriate dress codes when visiting religious sanctuaries, buildings, sites, or palaces, where modesty is the rule. If you are inappropriately dressed, you may not be allowed to enter. Casual clothing is acceptable for tourists, but we discourage short shorts, halter-tops, or muscle shirts worn in public.

FOOD & DRINK

Drinking Water: Bottled water is available and is advised for the first few weeks of stay. Drinking water outside main cities and towns may be contaminated and sterilization is advisable. Milk is pasteurized unless you buy it fresh in the countryside, in which case it should be boiled. Powdered or tinned milk is available, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure water.

The national drink is mint tea. Coffee is prepared very strong. Laws on alcohol are fairly liberal for non-Muslim visitors. In cities, bars are open for both locals and tourists. Check with your guide about which are recommended for tourists.

Local Cuisine: Morocco's traditional haute cuisine dishes are excellent, and often elaborate. Specialties include harira, a rich soup; bastella, a pastry stuffed with pigeon and almonds; couscous, an all-in-one dish of semola, meat, and vegetables. Tagine comes in several versions and may include meat, fish, or poultry that is combined with vegetables and other ingredients, and is stewed in terracotta dishes over charcoal fires. Mechoui is roasted lamb. Pastries are delicious, and include kab el ghzal, briouats, beghrir, served with almonds and honey.

To be safe, eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Note: If you have food allergies or are on a special/restricted diet, please notify your travel agent or our office in advance, so that we may try to comply with your needs. Also, please advise your travel agent or our office if you have any mobility restrictions, so that we may inform our representatives accordingly. They will always strive to accommodate you to the best of their ability.

SHOPPING

Crafts are a staple of Morocco. Coopartim, state sanctioned cooperatives sell 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.

Maronquinerie (leatherware) has been highly prized among traders since the 16th century. The country is also known for its production of wool rugs and carpets, pottery, jewelry, brassware, woodwork, silver, copperware; and silk or cotton garments.

Painted and sculpted panels for interior decoration are commonplace, and intricate tiled ornamentation still graces the interior of various medersas and other religious buildings and wealthy homes. The mashrabiyya, screens allowing Muslim women to observe the goings-on in the street unseen, survive also. While these items aren't likely candidates for souvenirs, they do serve to show that Moroccan crafts aren't completely dependent on floods of tourists.

Bargaining is essential, and good buys generally work out at around a third of asking price. In the south there are Berber carpet auctions, especially in Marrakech, Taroudannt, and Tiznit. Visitors will need a guide to make the best of these occasions.

CUSTOMS IN MOROCCO

Greeting: Handshaking is the customary form of greeting. Many of manners and social customs emulate French manners, particularly in the middle class. The visitor may find, in some social situations, that patience and firmness will pay dividends.

Often visitors may find themselves the center of unsolicited attention. In towns, young boys after money will be eager to act as guide, sell goods, or simply charge for a photograph while unofficial guides will always offer advice or services. The visitor should be courteous but wary of the latter.

Normal social courtesies should be observed in someone's home. Casual wear is widely acceptable, although swimsuits and shorts should be confined to the beach or poolside. Smoking is widespread and it is customary to offer cigarettes.

Tipping: Service charges are usually included in hotel bills; it is customary to tip hairdressers, cinema ushers, and waiters between Dh1-2. Tipping is expected in better restaurants. Around 10-15% of your bill is normal. 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. Remember that for many porters, guides, etc., this is how they make a living. On the other hand, aggressive hustling shouldn't be rewarded.

Religious Sites: Non-Muslims are not allowed in any mosques in Morocco with the exception of Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca and Moulay Ismail Mosque in Meknes. Remember to show respect when touring religious sites. In a Muslim mosque, men should wear hats and women should be well covered with slacks or a long skirt, a long-sleeved blouse buttoned to the neck, and a scarf over the hair. All should remove their shoes before entering the mosque and should not be present if there is a religious gathering.

INTRODUCTION TO MOROCCO

Morocco's long struggle for independence from France ended in 1956. The internationalized city of Tangier was turned over to the new country that same year. Morocco virtually annexed Western Sahara during the late 1970s, but final resolution on the status of the territory remains unresolved. Gradual political reforms in the 1990s resulted in the establishment of a bicameral legislature in 1997.

Capital: Rabat **Population:** 30,122,350 (July 2000 est.)

Religion: Muslim 98.7%, Christian 1.1%, Jewish 0.2%
Predominantly Muslim with Jewish and Christian minorities.

Ethnic groups: Morocco's population and culture stems from a cross section of origins, including Berbers, Arabs, Moors and Jews. Arab-Berber 99.1%, other 0.7%, Jewish 0.2%

Government: constitutional monarchy

Independence: March 2, 1956 (from France)

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

Economic Overview: Morocco faces problems typical of developing countries - restraining government spending, reducing constraints on private activity and foreign trade, and achieving sustainable economic growth. Since the early 1980s the government has pursued an economic program toward these objectives with the support of the IMF, the World Bank, and the Paris Club of creditors. The dirham is now fully convertible for current account transactions; reforms of the financial sector have been implemented; and state enterprises are being privatized.

Drought conditions depressed activity in the key agricultural sector, and contributed to an economic slowdown in 1999. Favorable rainfalls have led Morocco to predict a growth of 6% for 2000. Formidable long-term challenges include: servicing the external debt; preparing the economy for freer trade with the EU; and improving education and attracting foreign investment to improve living standards and job prospects for Morocco's youthful population.

Historic Overview: Morocco's strategic location has shaped its history. The Berbers, or Imazighen (men of the land), settled in the area thousands of years ago and at one time they controlled all of the land between Morocco and Egypt. Divided into clans and tribes, they have always jealously guarded their independence.

The early Berbers were little affected by early arrivals beginning with the Phoenicians. Many foreigners have come to this area, some to trade or settle, others as invaders sweeping the land and dominating it. Romans, Vandals, Visigoths, and Byzantine Greeks successively ruled the area. Arab forces began occupying Morocco in the seventh century AD, bringing with them Arab civilization and Islam. Other invasions followed. The Alaouite dynasty, which

has ruled Morocco since 1649, claims descent from the Prophet Muhammad.

Morocco's location and resources led to early competition among European powers in Africa, beginning with successful Portuguese efforts to control the Atlantic coast in the 15th century. France showed a strong interest in Morocco as early as 1830. Following recognition by the United Kingdom in 1904 of France's "sphere of influence" in Morocco, the Algeciras Conference (1906) formalized France's "special position" and entrusted policing of Morocco to France and Spain jointly. The Treaty of Fez (1912) made Morocco a protectorate of France. By the same treaty, Spain assumed the role of protecting power over the northern and southern (Saharan) zones.

Morocco's first French resident-general, Marshal Lyautey, built French villes nouvelles (new towns) alongside established towns. He established Rabat as the new capital and developed the port of Casablanca. By the 1930s, more than 200,000 French had made Morocco home. Allied forces used Morocco as a base during World War II to drive German forces from North Africa.

The first nationalist political parties based their arguments for Moroccan independence on such World War II declarations as the Atlantic Charter (a joint statement issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill that set forth, among other things, the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live). A manifesto of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party in 1944 was one of the earliest public demands for independence. That party subsequently provided most of the leadership for the nationalist movement

Sultan Mohammed V inspired an independence party after he was exiled by France in 1953. His replacement, the unpopular Muhammad Ben Aarafa, whose reign was perceived as illegitimate, sparked active opposition to the French protectorate. France allowed Muhammad V to return in 1955, and negotiations leading to independence began the following year.

The Kingdom of Morocco recovered its political independence from France on March 2, 1956. By agreements with Spain in 1956 and 1958, Moroccan control over certain Spanish-ruled areas was restored.

On October 29, 1956, the signing of the Tangier Protocol politically reintegrated the former international zone. Spain, however, retained control over the small enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in the north and the enclave of Ifni in the south. Ifni became part of Morocco in 1969.

After the death of his father, Muhammad V, King Hassan II succeeded to the throne on March 3, 1961. He recognized the Royal Charter proclaimed by his father on May 8, 1958, which outlined steps toward establishing a constitutional monarchy. A constitution providing for representative government under a strong monarchy was approved by referendum on December 7, 1962. Elections were held in 1963.

In June 1965, following student riots and civil unrest, the king invoked article 35 of the constitution and declared a "state of exception." He assumed all legislative and executive powers and named a new government not based on political parties. In July 1970, King Hassan submitted to referendum a new constitution providing for an even stronger monarchy. Its approval and the subsequent elections formally ended the 1965 "state of exception."

An unsuccessful coup on July 10, 1971, organized by senior military officers at Skhirat, was followed by Morocco's third constitution, approved by popular referendum

in early 1972. The new constitution kept King Hassan's powers intact but enlarged from one-third to two-thirds the number of directly elected parliamentary representatives. In August 1972, after a second coup attempt by Moroccan Air Force dissidents and the king's powerful Interior Minister General Oufkir, relations between the opposition and the Crown deteriorated, due to disagreement on opposition participation in elections. The king subsequently appointed a series of nonpolitical cabinets responsible only to him.

Stemming from cooperation on the Sahara issue, rapprochement between the king and the opposition began in mid-1974 and led to elections for local councils, with opposition party participation, in November 1976. Parliamentary elections, deferred because of tensions with Spain and Algeria over the Sahara dispute, were held in 1977, resulting in a two-thirds majority for the government-backed independent candidates and their allies, the Istiqlal and the Popular Movement. The Constitutional Union finished first in local elections in June 1983, and parliamentary elections in 1984.

The king is head of state, and his son, the crown prince, is heir apparent. Under the 1992 constitution, a prime minister appointed by the king is head of government. Of the 333-seat unicameral parliament, two-thirds of the members are chosen directly by universal adult suffrage; the remaining one-third is indirectly elected by community councils and business, labor, artisan, and farmer groups. The parliament's powers, though limited, were expanded by the 1992 constitution and include budgetary matters, approving bills presented by the King and establishing ad hoc commissions of inquiry to investigate actions by the executive branch. The highest court in the independent judicial structure is the Supreme Court, the judges of which are appointed by the king who also appoints governors of each province. Morocco has divided the former Spanish Sahara into four provinces.

Principal Government Officials Chief of State--King Mohamed VI, son of the late King Hassan II, Prime Minister--Abdellatif Filali, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation-- Abdellatif Filali.

~ From U.S. Department of State resources

MOROCCO'S IMPERIAL CITIES

Casablanca, Rabat, Meknes, Fes, and Marrakech are known as the imperial cities because each served as the country's capital at one time.

Rabat: Rabat, fourth of the imperial cities, became Morocco's capital city during the early days of French occupation. The city dates back to the 12th Century, and was built high on the banks of the Bouregreg River. It became a haven for Muslims driven from Spain in the 1600s. The city's ambience is a mix of Islamic and European influences, and can be seen in the number of European-style cafes as well as religious sites. The city is most famous for the Tour Hassan, the incomplete minaret of the great mosque begun by Yacoub al-Mansour. An earthquake brought construction to a halt in 1755. Nearby 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 that is today a museum of traditional art. The ancient city of Sala, also known as Chella, sits just outside the city and is home to Morocco's finest archaeology museum. Most of the city's hotels and restaurants are between the beautiful central park (Jardins Triangles de Vue) and Rabat's main train station.

Casablanca: In the 1942 classic Casablanca, Hollywood immortalized the name of this city, forever associating it with the quintessential expatriate living in an exotic outpost. But modern Casablanca is far from the quaint and mysterious image painted in this and other films. It is Morocco's largest city and industrial center. This port city was remodeled by the French, who put in place wide boulevards, public parks and imposing Mauresque (Moorish) buildings, including those found in the square known as Place Mohammed V. The city's medina, or ancient quarter, is worth visiting. The Hassan II Mosque is one of the largest in the world. Casablanca shares the Mohammed V airport with Rabat.

Marrakesh: Marrakesh is a lively former capital famed for its markets and festivals, and remains one of the most important cultural centers in the country. The Place Djemaa el-Fna is a huge square in the old city, where rows of open-air food stalls perfume the air with mouth-watering aromas. Jugglers, storytellers, snake charmers, magicians, and acrobats are among the characters you'll see here.

The souqs (markets) here are among the best in Morocco. The old quarter is home to the splendid Almoravid-style Koubba Ba'adiyn mosque annex, the magnificent Koutoubia Mosque and the Palais Dar Si Said (Museum of Moroccan Arts). Trains and buses to this inland city run regularly from Casablanca and Rabat.

Fès: Oldest of the imperial cities, Fès is the symbolic heart of Morocco to many people. The city's founding dates back to the end of the 8th Century, Idriss I founded the city along the right bank of the Oued Fez River after fleeing persecution by the Abbassids of Baghdad.

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. UNESCO has designated the entirety of the Fez Medina a World Monument. Unlike many walled cities of this vintage, Old Fès hasn't burst its banks. The population has instead exploded out towards the southwest 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 specializing in the dye used for coloring 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. Fès is best reached by train from Rabat, Marrakesh or Tangier.

Tangier: While it's a compelling sort of city and a popular port of entry for tourists, Tangier is also home to some of the world's best hustlers. Perched on Morocco's northern tip, its international flavour remains strong; as does its reputation for inspiring shady deals and foreign misfits.

The city's central Petit Socco is the focus of attention. Back in the days when Tangier was a neutral international zone, this area provided the background for the seediest of lifestyles and it hasn't completely lost this air. Paedophile scenes aside, it is the kasbah that interests many visitors. It contains the 17th-century Dar el-Makhzen, the former sultan's palace and now a good museum. The nearby American Legation Museum is a fascinating reminder that Morocco was the first country to recognise American Independence. Tangier is five hours from Rabat by train, and an easy ferry ride from Spain or Gibraltar.

SELECTED READING LIST

In addition to the many comprehensive and readily available guides produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, and others, here are a few other titles that might interest you. These books may be obtained through most bookstores or on the World Wide Web.

The Magic of Morocco

Tahar Ben Jalloun, Alain D'Hooghe

The magic of Morocco has enticed many visitors to its people and places. Delacroix and Matisse created some essential works there. William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac all responded to the magnetic pull of Morocco — its promising smiles, its heady dust and perfume in the air, the curves of the dunes as far as the eye can see. Richly illustrated.

Morocco Modern : World Design

Herbert Ypma, Herbert Ypma

Colorfully ethnic and stylishly urban, Morocco is a visually sophisticated nation. By the time this unique Islamic nation emerged into the modern world, history had begun to recognize the importance of ancient artistic traditions. Emphasizing the basic concept that design has become a marriage of decorative object and architectural space, Morocco Modern highlights the details that lend character to these traditions. 150 full-color photos.

Morocco: Sahara to the Sea

Mary Cross, Preface by Paul Bowles

Morocco: Sahara to the Sea presents photographs of ancient peoples who lead a strongly independent way of life, whose customs have resisted incursions by the modern world but are nonetheless threatened. Choosing subjects in which history impinges on the present, where architecture gives expression to the country's past, and where natural surroundings offer a continuing commentary on the lives of the people within the landscape, Cross has assembled a stunning collection of more than 120 striking images.

Morocco since 1830: A History

C. R. Pennell

The first general history in English of Morocco in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Morocco Since 1830: A History explores the profound changes that have affected

social relations in Morocco over the last 150 years, especially those between the sexes, and between linguistic identities and cultures.

Although the country has returned to roughly its pre-colonial boundaries, Morocco still suffers from the effects of colonization by France and Spain. Its current king, like the sultans of the nineteenth century, claims legitimacy through his leadership of the Islamic community, but there is a long tradition of dissent based on Islamic ideals. Morocco's history is also marked by the enduring presence of a large Jewish community.

This comprehensive political and cultural portrait examines the tactics used by Moroccan rulers to cope with European penetration in the nineteenth century and colonialism in the twentieth, and, since the 1950s, to retain control of the independent state. As Pennell points out, however, the ruling dynasty is not sufficiently representative of modern Morocco, nor are political events the only influence on change. Many Moroccans live in poverty, and Pennell shows how their experiences are shaped by the quality of harvests, access to land and water, and external trade.

The Road to Fez

Ruth Knafo Setton

"After her mother's death, 18-year-old Brit Lek returns to Morocco, her birthplace and memory-house, to fulfill her mother's dying wish that she make a pilgrimage to Fez and the grave of Suleika, a 19th-century Jewish martyr revered by both Arabs and Jews. But Brit gets sidetracked when she falls in love with her Uncle Gaby, her mother's passionate, restless younger brother. Gaby strains to break free from the borders of his life as a Jew in Morocco. Moving easily between the Jewish Mellah and the Arab Medina, Gaby offers a window for Brit to see beyond the confines of their family's life in Morocco.

"As Gaby and Brit's forbidden love deepens, their story is interwoven with that of Suleika, the 17-year-old Jewish woman who was killed because she refused to renounce her faith. Setton provides a backdrop composed of fragments of Suleika's brief, mysterious life - pieces of a puzzle that don't quite fit together. Who was Suleika? Why did she choose death over life? Did she fall in love with a handsome Arab boy, the Sultan, or her own brother?"

~ Book Jacket ~

CLOTHING/PACKING CHECKLIST

Check the items below to be taken with you on your trip. Additional items may be added in the blank spaces provided. This is not intended as an all-inclusive list, but only as a suggested packing guide.

CLOTHING – WOMEN

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
 - Sandals or casual shoes
 - Walking shoes or tennis shoes
 - Rubber thongs (shower)
 - Hat
 - Windbreaker or jacket
 - Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
 - Long pants *
 - Shorts *
 - Socks
 - Short sleeve shirts *
 - Long sleeve shirts *
 - T-shirts
 - Pajamas
 - Light-weight robe/cover-up
 - Swim-suit/cover-up
 - Casual slacks/skirt
 - Blouses
 - Belt(s)
 - Underwear
 - Scarves
 - Costume Jewelry
-
-

CLOTHING - MEN

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
 - Sandals or casual shoes
 - Walking shoes or tennis shoes
 - Rubber thongs (showers)
 - Hat
 - Windbreaker or jacket
 - Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
 - Long pants *
 - Shorts *
 - Socks
 - Short sleeve shirts *
 - Long sleeve shirts *
 - T-Shirts
 - Pajamas
 - Light weight robe/cover-up
 - Swim trunks
 - Casual slacks
 - Shirts
 - Belt(s)
 - Underwear
-
-

TOILETRIES

- Anti-malarial pills
 - Vitamins
 - Aspirin/Tylenol
 - Motion sickness pills
 - Short-acting sleeping pills
 - Decongestant
 - Antibiotic
 - Lomotil / Pepto-Bismol
 - Antacid
 - Antibiotic ointment
 - Insect repellent
 - Sun screen/Sun block
 - Lip balm
 - Shampoo & Conditioner
 - Prescription medications
 - Band-Aids
 - Deodorant
 - Toothpaste & toothbrush
 - Feminine Hygiene supplies
 - Dental floss
 - Mouthwash
 - Hairbrush/comb
 - Razor
 - Q-Tips/cotton balls
 - Nail clippers
 - Nail file
 - Tweezers
 - Make-up
 - Hand lotion
-
-

CAMERA EQUIPMENT

- Camera/Lenses
- Plenty of film
- Lead Protective Film Bags
- Camera bag
- Lens filters
- Cleaning Fluid/Tissues
- Lens Brush/Puffer
- Extra Batteries/Charger
- Flash & Flash batteries
- Zip-lock bags
- Camera instruction book
- Stick-on labels for film
- Video Camera/Charger
- Blank video tapes

SUNDRIES

- Passport
- International Certificate
- Vaccinations-Health Card
- Airline tickets/vouchers
- Money Pouch
- Credit Cards
- Travelers Checks
- Small calculator
- Sunglasses
- Prescription glasses
- Eyeglass case
- Small Alarm Clock
- Converter/plug set
- Binoculars
- Small flashlight
- Sewing kit
- Small scissors
- Kleenex
- Handi-wipes
- Zip-lock bags
- Travel clothes line
- Pillowcase for dirty clothes
- Small notebook or journal
- Pen
- Deck of cards
- Books/Magazines
- Address book for postcards
- Photocopy of passport and airline tickets
- Hard candy
- Bandana
- Extra sm. Collapsible bag
- Neck pillow for airline travel

OTHER

*Clothing should be comfortable

NOTES: