

Volunteer Travel Guide Morocco - Volunteering Abroad Morocco www.abroaderview.org

By A Broader View Volunteers Corp

Dated: Nov 04, 2008

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Morocco is just a step away from Europe, across the narrow straits of Gibraltar, but it is a world away in culture and experience, brimming over with contrasts, color and mystery. This is due partly to its geographical position, sited at the crossroads where the East meets the West, Africa shakes hands with Europe, and the Mediterranean merges with the Atlantic.

Whether you visit Morocco for the sunshine, or to trek through the mountains or the hot desert sands, it is a sure bet you will also be enchanted by the timeless Medieval medinas of the cities, particularly in Fez and Marrakech, where the souks and squares plunge visitors into a fascinating foreign world. Snake charmers weave their magic; the stench of the tanners' yards pervades the air; and the call of the muezzins wafts from the ancient minarets. The overall memory will be one of sweetened mint tea, brightly colored slipper feet and big smiles.

<http://www.abroaderview.org/morocco.php>

Although most of its suburban enclaves are ultra-modern, Morocco has more than its share of ancient monuments and magnificent buildings, reflecting a turbulent history shaped by its strategic location. Since the days of the Phoenicians, Morocco has attracted foreign interest, from the Romans, Vandals, Visigoths and ancient Greeks until the coming of the Arabs in the 7th century, who brought Islam and the Alaouite Dynasty. European powers have had their day, too, trying to control this northern tip of Africa. France and Spain battled for control, until nationalism triumphed and the Kingdom of Morocco gained independence in 1956 (except for the two small enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in the north which are still controlled by Spain). This rich past, coupled with a timeless present, makes Morocco a magical mystery tour of surprises and enchantment for thousands of visitors every year.

The Basics

Time:

Local time is GMT.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 220 volts, 50Hz. Two-pin round plugs are in use.

Language:

Arabic is the official language, but eight other languages are also spoken including Berber, French and Spanish. English is generally understood in the tourist areas, but French is the most widely spoken.

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Health:

No vaccinations are required to enter Morocco, but most travelers to Morocco will need vaccinations for hepatitis A and typhoid fever, as well as medications for travelers' diarrhea. It is advisable to drink bottled water outside the main cities and towns, and avoid street food. Medical facilities are good in all main

towns. Health insurance is essential.

Customs:

Morocco is a Muslim country and it is preferable to keep the wearing of swimsuits, shorts and other revealing clothing to the beach or poolside. Smoking is practiced widely, and it is customary to offer cigarettes in social situations. Religious customs should be respected, particularly during the month of Ramadan when eating, drinking and smoking during daylight hours should be discreet as it is forbidden by the Muslim culture. The giving and receiving of things, and the eating of food, should only be done with the right hand, as the left is considered unclean.

Communications:

The international access code for Morocco is +212. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom). City/area codes are in use, e.g. (0)44 for Marrakech and (0)37 for Rabat. Hotels can add a hefty surcharge to their telephone bills; it is best to check before making long international calls. Two mobile GSM 900 networks cover the north of the country. Internet cafes are widely available in tourist areas.

Contacts

Visa Agencies

Travel Visa Pro, San Francisco, USA. 1-888-470-8472 or www.TravelVisaPro.com

Morocco Embassies

Moroccan Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 462 7980.
Moroccan Embassy, London, United Kingdom: +44 (0)20 7581 5001/4.
Moroccan Embassy, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 236 7301.
Moroccan Embassy, Canberra, Australia: +61 (0)2 6290 0755.
Moroccan Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 343 0230.
Moroccan Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 (0)1 660 9449.
Moroccan Consulate-General, Auckland, New Zealand: +64 (0)9 520 3626.
Foreign Embassies in Morocco

<http://www.abroaderview.org/morocco.php>

American Embassy, Rabat: +212 37 76 2265.
British Embassy, Rabat: +212 37 63 3333.
Canadian Embassy, Rabat (also responsible for Australia): +212 37 687 400.
South African Embassy, Rabat: +212 37 706 760.
Honorary Consul of Ireland, Casablanca: +212 22 660 306.
New Zealand Embassy, Madrid, Spain (also responsible for Morocco): +34 915 230 226.
Morocco Emergency Numbers

Emergencies: 19 (Police); 15 (Ambulance)

Airports

Casablanca, Mohammed V Airport (CMN)

Location:

The airport is situated 16 miles (25km) south of Casablanca.

Time:

GMT.

Contacts:

Tel: +212 (0)2 253 9040.

Facilities:

The airport has shops, restaurants and bars, ATMs and currency exchange services and a post office. There is a Tourist Help desk, a VIP Lounge, business centre, car rental service and disabled facilities, although it is recommended that those with special needs should contact their airline in advance.

Departure Tax:

None.

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Climate

Morocco's climate is moderate and subtropical, cooled by breezes off the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. In the interior the temperatures are more extreme, winters can be fairly cold and the summers very hot. Marrakech has an average winter temperature of 21°C (70°F) and 100°F (38°C) in summer. In the Atlas Mountains temperatures can drop below zero and mountain peaks are snow capped throughout most of the year. The winter in the north of the country is wet and rainy, while in the south, at the edge of the Moroccan Sahara, it is dry and bitterly cold.

The weather in Marrakech is sunny nearly all year round, with pleasantly warm summers and mild winters. The hottest months of the year are July, August and September, but there is no humidity so temperatures are generally bearable. Winter can bring heavy downpours of rain, which leave the streets of the old town very muddy, and winter nights can be cold.

Passport & Visa

Visa Agencies:

Avoid the stress and queues, get a visa agency to arrange your visa.

Travel Visa Pro, San Francisco, USA. 1-888-470-8472 or www.TravelVisaPro.com

Global Visas, London, UK. 0207 190 3903 or www.globalvisas.com

Entry requirements for Americans: United States citizens require a passport, but no visa for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for UK nationals: British citizens require a passport, but no visa for a stay of up to three months, providing the passport is endorsed British Citizen.

Entry requirements for Canadians: Canadian citizens require a passport, but no visa for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for Australians: Australians must have a valid passport. No visa is required for a stay of

up to three months.

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Entry requirements for South Africans: South African passport holders must apply for a visa to travel to Morocco.

Entry requirements for New Zealanders: New Zealand nationals require a valid passport, but no visa is necessary for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals: Irish nationals require a valid passport, but no visa is necessary for a stay of up to three months.

Passport/Visa Note: Sufficient funds, as well as return or onward tickets, are required. Entry may be refused to travelers with a 'hippy' appearance. An extension of six months is available for visa-exempt nationals.

Note: Passport and visa requirements are liable to change at short notice. Travelers are advised to check their entry requirements with their embassy or consulate.

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