

## Key Facts

### *Morocco*



#### Regular entry requirements

**Please check FCDO for the most up to date information.**

**[Entry requirements - Morocco travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/travel-advice/morocco)**

#### Visas

British nationals don't need a visa to enter Morocco for the purpose of tourism for up to 3 months.

When entering the country, make sure your passport is stamped. Some tourists have experienced difficulties leaving the country because their passport bears no entry stamp.

#### Passport validity

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay in Morocco. However, the Moroccan Consulate General in London advise that your passport should be valid for at least 3 months on your date of entry to Morocco. If your passport does not meet this requirement you may face

difficulties and you should check with the Moroccan authorities and your travel provider before travelling.

Before travelling, make sure your passport isn't damaged. Some travellers have been refused entry when travelling on damaged passports.

### **Geography:**

Morocco is located on the westernmost tip of north Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. It sits just 13km (8mi) away from Gibraltar and shares land borders with Algeria and the disputed territory Western Sahara, which is in the south.

The interior of Morocco is mountainous. Like an elongated spine, the Atlas Mountains run from the southwest to the centre of Morocco, before extending eastward to Algeria and Tunisia, while the Rif Mountains run along the north coast. Often snow-covered in winter, Morocco's mountains are home to the country's significant indigenous Berber population, whose unique culture, crafts and costumes make for a fascinating visit.

The long stretch of the Atlantic coast down Morocco's western side features a few vibrant cities – among them Tangier, Rabat, Casablanca, Essaouira and Agadir. The coastal part is separated from the mountainous region by wide swathes of fertile plains.

The Sahara – Africa's largest desert – stretches its toes into southern Morocco. Far from being featureless, it is dotted with palm-fringed oases and traditional villages.

### **Government:**

Constitutional monarchy.

### **Head of State:**

King Mohammed VI since 1999.

### **Head of Government**

Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch since 2021.

### **Electricity**

220 volts AC, 50Hz. European-style plugs with two round pins are standard.

### **Timezone:**

**Western European Time:** GMT/UTC -0 (GMT/UTC +1 from 23 April to 19 March 2023)

### **Currency Information:**

Moroccan Dirham (MAD; symbol Dh), where every 100-unit is called a santim. Notes are in denominations of Dh200, 100, 50, and 20. Coins are in denominations of Dh10, 5 and 1, as well as 20, 10 and 5 santim coins.

### **Credit Cards:**

Cash is preferred in Morocco, but Mastercard and Visa are accepted in most hotels and restaurants. Using other types of credit cards may face some challenges.

### **ATMs:**

Some ATMs in cities accept foreign cards.

### **Travellers Cheques:**

Travellers' cheques are no longer popular and should be avoided.

### **Banking Hours:**

Mon-Fri 0830-1830 (with most shut during lunch hours).

### **Currency Restrictions:**

The Moroccan Dirham is a non-convertible currency, meaning it isn't traded internationally. You may, however, import or export a small amount (below Dh2,000).

There is no limit on the amount of foreign cash you can bring into Morocco.

### **Currency Exchange:**

Euros are the easiest foreign currency to exchange and use licensed bureaux de change only – usually there is one at the airport. Keep the receipt issued as you may need to change your unspent Dirham back into the original national currency upon departure.

Avoid bringing Scottish or Northern Irish banknotes as they can't be exchanged in Morocco.

### **Language**

The official languages are Arabic and Tamazight (which is a combination of three major Moroccan Berber languages).

French is widely spoken, while English is understood in major tourist attractions.

### **Overview:**

Morocco cuisine has a unique blend of Berber, Arab, African, Spanish and French influences. Meals range from a *diffa*, an elaborate multicourse feast featuring spiced salads, couscous and tagines, to quick *brochettes* (meat skewers) from roadside stalls. Produce is seasonally and locally grown.

Tagines, fragrant stews of meat, vegetables or fish, are named after the distinctive conical earthenware vessel they're cooked in, and are a Moroccan

main staple. Flavours revolve around a subtle array of spices, and almost every family has their own secret recipe.

Moroccans drink a copious amount of mint tea (the national drink) which is made with high-caffeine gunpowder green tea, sugar, and fresh mint. Freshly-squeezed orange juice is also popular.

### **Regional Specialities:**

- *Harira*, spicy tomato and lentil soup.
- *Pastilla*, a type of savoury pie, usually chicken wrapped in filo pastry.
- *Couscous*, steamed semolina, often served with a stew.
- *Tajine*, a rich, fragrant stew, can be meat or vegetarian.
- *Méchoui*, slow-roasted lamb.
- *Smen*, fermented butter.
- *Khliif*, preserved meat.

### **Tipping:**

In high-end restaurants, a service charge is usually included. Tipping is expected if no service charge is added. Most people round up the bill or leave a few dirhams. For example, if the meal costs 33 dirhams, it is polite to give 40 dirhams.

### **Drinking Age:**

18 (Non-Muslim visitors).

### **Religion:**

99% of Morocco's population are Muslims (almost all Sunni Muslims). Jewish, Christians and other religions make up the other 1%.

### **Social Conventions:**

Morocco's culture is a blend of religious and ethnic traditions, encompassing Berber, Arab, African, Mediterranean, and Jewish influences. Greetings between men usually start with "Salam Alaikum" (peace be upon you) and may either involve a handshake or kisses on both cheeks, followed by friendly inquiries after health, happiness and family. Females may kiss on the cheeks, usually three times.

Travellers should observe local courtesies. Men and women should not wear revealing clothing in public – beachwear, sleeveless tops, shorts, and clingy clothing are acceptable by the hotel pool but not in public places.

Sexual relations outside marriage and homosexual conduct are punishable by law, yet Morocco has long been a destination favoured by LGBTQ+ travellers given its liberal reputation in the 1950s and 60s. While modern Moroccans are tolerant, displaying affection in public between same-sex couples is best avoided.

Smoking is widespread, though prohibited in enclosed public spaces.

Drinking alcohol in public isn't allowed and should be consumed discreetly indoors.

### **Overview**

Marrakech, which lies inland in the Tensift River valley, has a subtropical semi-desert with very hot summers and warm winters. Temperatures do fluctuate significantly between day and night.

The Atlas Mountains are popular from March to November, although the scorching heat between June and August may make travelling uncomfortable.

### **Required Clothing:**

Lightweight cottons and linens are best worn during summer, with a jacket for cooler evenings. In winter, pack light to medium-weight clothing.

Men and women should not wear revealing clothing in public – beachwear, sleeveless tops, shorts, and clingy clothing are acceptable by the hotel pool but not in public places.