

Morocco, fact file

Moroccan embassy in UK:

Website: www.mincom.gov.ma
Address: 49 Queen's Gate Gardens, London, SW7 5NE
Telephone: (020) 7581 5001/4
Facsimile: (020) 7225 3862
Office Hours (GMT): Mon–Fri: 09.30–17.00

British embassy in Morocco:

Website: consular.rabat@fco.gov.uk
Address: 17 Boulevard de la Tour Hassan, Rabat.
Telephone: (212) (0) (37) 238600

Area: 710,000 square kilometres

Population: 31 million (Oct 2004)

Capital: Rabat

Language: Arabic is the official language but French and, to a lesser degree Spanish is also spoken in the cities. English is also spoken in many places.

Tippling: Tip at your own discretion. Tips can vary but on average around 200DH is advised.

Bank opening hours: Monday to Friday 08.00 – 16.00

Post office hours: Monday to Friday 08.30 – 18.30

Office opening hours: Monday to Saturday 08.00 – 19.00

Shops opening hours:

Monday to Friday 08.00 – 21.00 and 10.00 – 14.00 & 16.00 – 20.00 at weekends

Time (+/- GMT): Morocco is in the same time zone as the UK therefore there is no time difference.

Electricity: 220v – European Standard, 2 round pin plug

Public holidays:

- 3rd March
- 1st May
- 23rd May - National Day
- 9th July - Youth Day
- 14th August
- 6th November
- 18th November – Independence Day
- variable Islamic Holidays.
- The holy month of Ramadan starts in late November. All street café's close daily during the month until about 17.30 when the fast is broken. It is not possible to buy alcohol in the shops during Ramadan.



Telephone: The system is all right but international lines are often bad. Phone cards for the phone boxes are available from post offices and some street kiosks. Please check with your mobile phone provider if your network & contract enable you to have coverage in Morocco; this will however be sporadic in the mountains. Charity Challenge also has an emergency Satellite Phone available on all expeditions at a cost of £3 per minute.

Photograph: Always ask permission before taking a picture of someone.

Postal: Reasonably good letters between Morocco and Western Europe Western Europe generally take around a week to ten days, around two weeks for North America or Australasia. You will need to take your passport with you when collecting mail and there is often a small holding charge. Parcels have to be inspected by customs (at post office) before you seal them and pay for postage, so don't turn up at a post office with a sealed parcel.

Currency: The national currency is the dirham, which is divided into 100 centimes. As of May 2007, £1 was worth 11 Dirhams.

Currency regulations: Import and export of local currency is strictly prohibited. It is not possible to exchange Scottish or Irish bank notes.

Cash: There are ATMs available at the airport near to the hotel in Marrakech. This is the best source of obtaining currency whilst you are in Morocco.

Credit cards: Widely accepted in the larger urban centres, although a 5% charge is often charged.

Travellers cheques: The only point on the trip to change travellers cheques is at the airport. The Banque Marocaine du Commerce Exterieur (BMCE) appears to be the only bank that charges commission on travellers' cheques – about \$USD0.50 per cheque. A lot of travellers have run into problems when changing travellers cheques at the airports, where in some cases only cash is accepted.

Passport/visas: A full passport is required but no Visa. You must have at least six months to run on your passport from the end of the expedition. Ensure your passport is stamped on arrival.

Gifts and souvenirs For centuries, Moroccan crafts have been world-famous for their variety and quality. The best thing to remember is that hard bargaining is essential.

Vaccinations and health:

Nomad Travel Stores Medical Centre recommended the following vaccinations: tetanus; poliomyelitis; hepatitis A. They also suggest taking advice from your GP about: typhoid; diphtheria; hepatitis B; rabies; tuberculosis. The risk of malaria is limited to eastern parts of the country in rural valleys, west of the Atlas mountains (Al Hoceima, Taounate and Taza provinces) from May-October. Malaria precautions are essential. Avoid mosquito bites by covering up with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers especially after sunset, using insect repellents on exposed skin and, when necessary, sleeping under a mosquito net. Please consult your GP or local travel clinic. Also see Health notes.

Risks: Crime is not a major problem in Morocco, but it is growing. Visitors should avoid streets in badly lit or run-down areas late at night if unaccompanied. Visitors should ensure that when entering the country that their passports are stamped. Some tourists have experienced difficulties leaving the country because their passports bear no entry stamp.



researching the cure

Hospitals/pharmacies: Hospitals exist in all major cities and pharmacies can be found in many smaller towns and villages.

Water: Water will be provided for you whilst you are trekking however if you want extra, always sterilise drinking water or buy bottled water. Also see Health notes.

Climate: Winter in the higher regions demands clothing suitable for Arctic conditions; this is true of anywhere in the vicinity of the High Atlas. In summer, it's hot during the day and cool at night. Also see Q&A's for your chosen expedition.

Temperature: In the winter the lowlands are pleasantly warm to hot (around 30c) during the day and cool to cold (around 15c) at night. In summer, it's very hot during the day (around 45c) and uncomfortably warm at night (around 23c).

Geography: One of Africa's most geographically diverse and spectacularly beautiful countries. The country is covered by four distinct ranges of mountains: the Rif, Middle Atlas, High Atlas and Anti Atlas. Punctuated by large eroded gorges, which peter out to the endless sands and stony wastes of the Sahara desert.

Culture/customs: A fascinating mixture of Arab, African, Islamic, Berber and European cultures, customs and beliefs.

Do's & don'ts:

- Do avoid large gatherings, do not be provocative and keep a low profile.
- Do report incidents to the nearest police station.
- Do not carry a Bible in Arabic, attempt to distribute any evangelical literature or be involved in any such activity.
- Do minimise hassle; women will attract attention; dress modestly and avoid wearing short skirts and low-necked strappy tops (other than on the beach).
- Do bring enough funds for your stay and your return. Bank transfers can take up to six weeks and if you miss your return charter flight you may need to buy another ticket.
- Do take care of your belongings at all times. Carry your passport with you, take a photocopy of it and leave it somewhere safe; avoid carrying too much cash. Traveller's cheques are safer.
- Do beware of con men, although shopping is a great experience it can involve a lot of haggling.
- Don't get involved with drugs. The penalties for possession of even small amounts of drugs are severe: up to 10 years' imprisonment with no remission for good behaviour.

NB: The information provided above was correct at the time of going to print.