

All About El Badi Palace

Located in the southern part of Marrakech's medina, the splendid **El Badi Palace** — meaning the palace of the incomparable — truly lives up to its name. This historic site is a must-see if you are visiting Marrakech. The vast esplanade, with its sunken gardens, is topped by a terrace offering an **impressive view of the palace and the city of Marrakech**. You can immerse yourself in the tranquility of the place, accompanied by the songs of storks and other singing birds, while admiring the magnificence of the surroundings.

History of the Place

The Creation of the Palace

El Badi Palace, reinforced in 1594, took no less than **16 years to build**. It was erected by Sultan Ahmed al-Mansur Dhahbî near his private apartments. The construction began **after the Battle of the Three Kings to celebrate the victory of the Saadian Empire over the Portuguese army** and the end of Portugal's invasion of Morocco in 1578. The Sultan used the Portuguese ransom to build El Badi, with engineers from Morocco and across the world. This fusion of cultures resulted in a stunning architectural masterpiece, which some historians even regarded as the eighth wonder of the world.

The palace and its gardens attract many visitors. However, its underground tunnels, prisons, and hammam, used by slaves and servants for discreet movement, also allow visitors to **dive into the history of the place**. You can imagine the life of those who walked through the various parts of El Badi Palace for **100 years**.

The Decline of the Palace

In 1603, following the death of the 6th Moroccan Sultan, a **civil war** broke out due to disagreements over his successor. **For 25 years, the palace deteriorated**. Later, **during the reign of Moulay Ismail, El Badi Palace was stripped of all its treasures to build the royal palace in Meknes**. **For 12 years**, its mosaic and all its luxurious materials were removed, and the palace gradually fell into ruins.

Site Structure

During your visit, you will find traces of old water plans that are now filled with orange trees. The palace's main square is crossed by a large pool that spans its entire width. A bridge crossing this pool leads to the city's Museum of Photography and Visual Arts.

Inside the palace, you can access various photographic exhibitions in the underground section.

In the northern corner of the palace, there is an annex housing the Koutoubia Minbar, a wooden pulpit used by the imam during prayer. This piece is a remarkable example of Hispano-Moorish art and was originally located in the Koutoubia Mosque.

If you look up, you will also notice storks nesting on the top of El Badi Palace's walls, adding a magical touch to the place.

Today, the palace is used for festivals, and since 2011, it has served as a stage for the annual Marrakech du Rire festival organized by Jamel Debbouze.

Practical Information

El Badi Palace is located in the southern part of the medina, near the Kasbah, at the following address: Ksibat Nhass, Marrakech, Morocco. The entrance fee was 70 DH in 2022, and visits last between 1 and 2 hours. Be sure to bring cash, either in dirhams or euros, as credit cards are not accepted. We recommend visiting in the morning to avoid the intense heat, as the site is entirely outdoors.

The palace is open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ““