

Marrakech: Comprehensive Tourist Guide

1. General Presentation and History

- Nicknamed "Land of Joy", "Land of Bahja (البهجة)", and the "Red City"
- Former imperial capital of Morocco for 350 years
- Located at the foot of the Atlas Mountains and near the desert
- Top tourist destination in Morocco
- Rich history with a blend of Berber, Arab, and French influences

2. Tourist Sites and Attractions

- Historic Medina: millennial center, labyrinth of alleys (UNESCO World Heritage)
- Jemaa el-Fna Square: vibrant heart of the city, especially lively in the evening
- Traditional souks
- Ben Youssef Madrasa: former Koranic school with Arab-Andalusian architecture
- Le Jardin Secret: palace with botanical and Islamic gardens
- Jardin Majorelle: art deco villa and botanical garden, Berber museum
- Numerous palaces, mosques, lush gardens

3. Districts and Architecture

- Medina: old Arab town surrounded by ramparts
- Gueliz: modern district developed under the French protectorate

4. Activities and Experiences

- Discovering local crafts
- Moroccan gastronomy
- Traditional hammams and spas
- Excursions to the Agafay desert and Atlas Mountains
- Water parks (e.g., Oasiria, Aqua Fun Club)
- Sports and leisure (e.g., paintball, virtual reality)
- Activities for children (e.g., educational farms)

5. Shopping and Crafts

- **Modern shopping centers (e.g., Menara Mall, Almazar, M Avenue)**
- **Craft complexes (in Marrakech, El Kelaâ des Sraghna, Essaouira)**
- **Boutiques and art galleries**
- **Traditional souks in the Medina**

6. Events and Festivals

- **Marrakech International Marathon (January)**
- **Marrakech International Film Festival (November-December)**
- **International congresses and conferences**
- **Cultural events throughout the year**

7. Accommodation and Practical Information

- **Wide range of options, from youth hostels to luxury hotels**
- **Many traditional riads in the Medina**
- **Well-served international airport**
- **Semi-arid Mediterranean climate**
- **Best times to visit: spring (March-May) and autumn (September-November)**
- **3-5 days recommended for a complete visit**
- **Languages: Arabic, French, and Tamazight**

8. Excursions and Surroundings

- **Ourika Valley: waterfalls and Berber villages**
- **Agafay Desert: desert experience close to the city**
- **Essaouira: historic coastal town**
- **Ouzoud Waterfalls: highest waterfalls in Morocco**
- **Ait Benhaddou: UNESCO-listed kasbah**

9. Culture and Art

- **Cultural capital of Morocco with many unique museums**

- **Mix of Berber, Arab, and French traditions**
- **Dynamic contemporary art scene**
- **Numerous museums and art galleries**