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**Morocco** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl); [Template:Lang-ber](/wiki/Template:Lang-ber)[[1]](#cite_note-1) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl); [Template:Lang-fr](/wiki/Template:Lang-fr)[[Notes 1]](#cite_note-2)), officially the **Kingdom of Morocco**,<ref name=CIA>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> is a country in the [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb) region of [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa). Geographically, Morocco is characterized by a rugged mountainous interior and large portions of desert. It is one of only three countries (with [Spain](/wiki/Spain) and [France](/wiki/France)) to have both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines. The Arabic name *al-Mamlakah al-Maghribiyah* ([Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar), meaning "The Western Kingdom") and *Al-*[*Maghrib*](/wiki/Maghreb) ([Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar), meaning "The West") are commonly used as alternate names.

Morocco has a population of over 33.8 million and an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Its political capital is [Rabat](/wiki/Rabat). The largest city is [Casablanca](/wiki/Casablanca). Other major cities include [Marrakesh](/wiki/Marrakesh), [Tangier](/wiki/Tangier), [Tetouan](/wiki/Tetouan), [Salé](/wiki/Salé), [Fes](/wiki/Fes), [Agadir](/wiki/Agadir), [Meknes](/wiki/Meknes), [Oujda](/wiki/Oujda), [Kenitra](/wiki/Kenitra), and [Nador](/wiki/Nador). A historically prominent regional power, Morocco has a history of independence not shared by its neighbours. Its distinct culture is a blend of [Arab](/wiki/Arab_people), [indigenous Berber](/wiki/Berber_people), Sub-Saharan African, and European influences.

Morocco claims the [non-self-governing territory](/wiki/United_Nations_list_of_Non-Self-Governing_Territories) of [Western Sahara](/wiki/Western_Sahara) as its [Southern Provinces](/wiki/Southern_Provinces). Morocco annexed the territory in 1975, leading to a guerrilla war with indigenous forces until a cease-fire in 1991. [Peace processes](/wiki/Western_Sahara_peace_process) have thus far failed to break the political deadlock.

Morocco is a [constitutional monarchy](/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) with an elected parliament. The [King of Morocco](/wiki/List_of_rulers_of_Morocco) holds vast executive and legislative powers, especially over the [military](/wiki/Military_of_Morocco), foreign policy and religious affairs. [Executive power](/wiki/Executive_power) is exercised by the [government](/wiki/Moroccan_government), while [legislative power](/wiki/Legislature) is vested in both the government and the two chambers of parliament, the [Assembly of Representatives](/wiki/Assembly_of_Representatives_of_Morocco) and the [Assembly of Councillors](/wiki/Assembly_of_Councillors). The king can issue decrees called [dahirs](/wiki/Moroccan_Dahir) which have the force of law. He can also dissolve the parliament after consulting the [Prime Minister](/wiki/List_of_heads_of_government_of_Morocco) and the president of the Constitutional court.

Morocco's predominant religion is Islam, and the official languages are [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language) and [Berber](/wiki/Berber_languages). [Moroccan Arabic](/wiki/Moroccan_Arabic), referred to as *Darija*, and [French](/wiki/French_language) are also widely spoken. Morocco is an influential member of the [Arab League](/wiki/Arab_League) and a part of the [Union for the Mediterranean](/wiki/Union_for_the_Mediterranean). It has the sixth-largest economy in Africa.

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The full [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language) name [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)) translates to "Kingdom of the West"; although "the West" in Arabic is [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl). For historical references, medieval Arab historians and geographers sometimes referred to Morocco as [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), meaning "The Farthest West") to distinguish it from neighboring historical regions called [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), meaning "[The Middle West](/wiki/Algeria)") and [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl) ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), meaning "[The Nearest West](/wiki/Tunisia)").[[2]](#cite_note-3) The English name "Morocco" originates from the [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language) name "Marruecos". This, in turn, derived from "[Marrakesh](/wiki/Marrakesh)", the medieval [Latin](/wiki/Latin_language) name for the former [Almoravid dynasty](/wiki/Almoravid_dynasty) and [Almohad Caliphate](/wiki/Almohad_Caliphate) capital from ancient Morocco.[[3]](#cite_note-4) "Marrakesh" (مراكش) remains the current name for Morocco in many south Asian languages such as [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language) (Iran), [Urdu](/wiki/Urdu) (Pakistan), [Punjabi](/wiki/Punjabi_language) (India) and [Pashto](/wiki/Pashto_language) (Afghanistan). Also in Egyptian and Middle Eastern Arabic literature the name for Morocco (as a distinct country/state) was "Marrakesh" (مراكش), until about the 2nd half of the 20th century. In [Turkish](/wiki/Turkish_language), Morocco is still known as "Fas", a name derived from its ancient capital city [Fes](/wiki/Fes).

The word "Marrakesh" is made of the [Berber](/wiki/Berber_language) word combination *Mur N Akush* meaning "Land of God".

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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### Prehistory and antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

The area of present-day Morocco has been inhabited since [Paleolithic times](/wiki/Paleolithic), sometime between 190,000 and 90,000 BC.[[4]](#cite_note-5) During the [Upper Paleolithic](/wiki/Upper_Paleolithic), the [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb) was more fertile than it is today, resembling a [savanna](/wiki/Savanna) more than today's arid landscape.[[5]](#cite_note-6) 22,000 years ago, the [Aterian](/wiki/Aterian) was succeeded by the [Iberomaurusian](/wiki/Iberomaurusian) culture, which shared similarities with Iberian cultures. Skeletal similarities have been suggested between the [Iberomaurusian](/wiki/Iberomaurusian) "[Mechta-Afalou](/wiki/Mechta-Afalou)" burials and European [Cro-Magnon](/wiki/Cro-Magnon) remains. The Iberomaurusian was succeeded by the [Beaker culture](/wiki/Beaker_culture) in Morocco.

[Mitochondrial DNA](/wiki/Mitochondrial_DNA) (MtDNA) studies have discovered a close link between [Berbers](/wiki/Berbers) and the [Saami](/wiki/Sami_people) of Scandinavia. This supports theories that the [Franco-Cantabrian refuge area of southwestern Europe](/wiki/Franco-Cantabrian_region) was the source of late-glacial expansions of hunter-gatherers who repopulated northern Europe after the last [ice age](/wiki/Ice_age).[[6]](#cite_note-7) [thumb|right|The Berber Roman client King](/wiki/File:Ptolemy_of_Mauretania_Louvre_Ma1887.jpg) [Ptolemy of Mauretania](/wiki/Ptolemy_of_Mauretania). [thumb|right|A](/wiki/File:Mosaic-Diana_leaves_her_Bath_(perspective_fixed).jpg) [Roman](/wiki/Roman_Empire) [mosaic](/wiki/Mosaic) of Diana in [Volubilis](/wiki/Volubilis).

North Africa and Morocco were slowly drawn into the wider emerging [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean) world by the [Phoenicians](/wiki/Phoenicians), who established trading colonies and settlements in the early Classical period. Substantial Phoenician settlements were at [Chellah](/wiki/Chellah), [Lixus](/wiki/Lixus_(ancient_city)) and [Mogador](/wiki/Mogador).[[7]](#cite_note-8) Mogador was a Phoenician colony as early as the early 6th century BC.[[8]](#cite_note-9)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)

Morocco later became a realm of the North African civilization of [ancient Carthage](/wiki/Ancient_Carthage) as part of its empire. The earliest known independent Moroccan state was the [Berber kingdom of Mauretania](/wiki/Mauretania) under king [Bocchus I](/wiki/Bocchus_I). This kingdom in northern Morocco (not to be confused with the present state of [Mauritania](/wiki/Mauritania)) dates at least to 110 BC.[[9]](#cite_note-10) The [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire) controlled this region from the 1st century BC, naming it [Mauretania Tingitana](/wiki/Mauretania_Tingitana). [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) was introduced in the 2nd century AD and gained converts in the Roman towns, among [slaves](/wiki/Slaves) and some Berber farmers.

In the 5th century AD, as the Roman Empire declined, the region was invaded from the north first by the [Vandals](/wiki/Vandals) and then by the [Visigoths](/wiki/Visigoths). In the 6th century AD, northern Morocco was nominally part of the East Roman, or [Byzantine Empire](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire). Throughout this time, the Berber inhabitants in the high mountains of the interior of Morocco remained unsubdued.

### Early Islamic era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

In 670 AD, the first Islamic conquest of the [North African](/wiki/North_Africa) coastal plain took place under [Uqba ibn Nafi](/wiki/Uqba_ibn_Nafi), a general serving under the [Umayyads](/wiki/Umayyad) of [Damascus](/wiki/Damascus). The [Umayyad](/wiki/Umayyad) Muslims brought their language, their system of government, and Islam to Morocco. Many of the Berbers slowly converted to Islam, mostly after Arab rule had receded. The first independent Muslim state in the area of modern Morocco was the [Kingdom of Nekor](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Nekor), an emirate in the [Rif Mountains](/wiki/Rif_Mountains). It was founded by [Salih I ibn Mansur](/wiki/Salih_I_ibn_Mansur) in 710, as a client state to the [Rashidun Caliphate](/wiki/Rashidun_Caliphate). After the outbreak of the [Great Berber Revolt](/wiki/Great_Berber_Revolt) in 739, the Berbers formed other independent states such as the [Miknasa](/wiki/Miknasa) of [Sijilmasa](/wiki/Sijilmasa) and the [Barghawata](/wiki/Barghawata).

According to medieval legend, [Idris ibn Abdallah](/wiki/Idris_ibn_Abdallah) had fled to Morocco after the Abbasids' massacre of his tribe in Iraq. He convinced the [Awraba](/wiki/Awraba) Berber tribes to break their allegiance to the distant Abbasid caliphs in [Baghdad](/wiki/Baghdad) and he founded the [Idrisid Dynasty](/wiki/Idrisid_Dynasty) in 788. The Idrisids established [Fes](/wiki/Fes,_Morocco) as their capital and Morocco became a centre of Muslim learning and a major [regional power](/wiki/Regional_power). The Idrissids were ousted in 927 by the [Fatimid Caliphate](/wiki/Fatimid_Caliphate) and their Miknasa allies. After Miknasa broke off relations with the Fatimids in 932, they were removed from power by the [Maghrawa](/wiki/Maghrawa) of Sijilmasa in 980.

### Berber dynasties[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Empire_almohade.PNG) [Almohad](/wiki/Almohad_dynasty) realm at its greatest extent, c. 1212

From the 11th century onwards, a series of powerful Berber[[10]](#cite_note-11)[[11]](#cite_note-12)[[12]](#cite_note-13) dynasties arose. Under the [Almoravid dynasty](/wiki/Almoravid_dynasty) [[13]](#cite_note-14) and the [Almohad dynasty](/wiki/Almohad_dynasty), Morocco dominated the Maghreb, much of present-day Spain and Portugal, and the western Mediterranean region. From the 13th century onwards the country saw a massive migration of [Banu Hilal](/wiki/Banu_Hilal) Arab tribes. In the 13th and 14th centuries the [Merinids](/wiki/Merinid_Dynasty) held power in Morocco and strove to replicate the successes of the [Almohads](/wiki/Almohad_Caliphate) by military campaigns in Algeria and Spain. They were followed by the [Wattasids](/wiki/Wattasid_dynasty). In the 15th century, the [Reconquista](/wiki/Reconquista) ended Muslim rule in central and southern [Spain](/wiki/Spain) and many [Muslims](/wiki/Muslim) and [Jews](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Morocco) fled to Morocco.[[14]](#cite_note-15) [Portuguese](/wiki/Portugal) efforts to control the Atlantic sea trade in the 15th century did not greatly affect the interior of Morocco even though they managed to control some possessions on the Moroccan coast but not venturing further afield inland.

On another note and according to Elizabeth Allo Isichei, "In 1520, there was a [famine](/wiki/Famine) in Morocco so terrible that for a long time other events were dated by it. It has been suggested that the population of Morocco fell from 5 to under 3 million between the early sixteenth and nineteenth centuries."[[15]](#cite_note-16)[thumb|Morocco, Safi ceramic vessel Jobbana](/wiki/File:Morocco,_Safi_ceramic_vessel_Jobbana.JPG)[thumb|Morocco Fez Embroidery Horse Cover](/wiki/File:Morocco_Fez_Embroidery_Horse_Cover.JPG)

### Sharifian dynasties[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|Former Portuguese](/wiki/File:Forteresse_Jadida_03.JPG) [fortress of Mazagan](/wiki/El_Jadida#Fortress_of_Mazagan) in [El Jadida](/wiki/El_Jadida) [thumb|The Sultan](/wiki/File:Ferdinand-Victor-Eugène_DELACROIX_-_Moulay_Abd-er-Rahman,_sultan_du_Maroc,_sortant_de_son_palais_de_Meknes,_entouré_de_sa_garde_et_de_ses_principaux_officiers._-_Musée_des_Augustins_-_2004_1_99.jpg) [Abderrahmane of Morocco](/wiki/Abd_al-Rahman_of_Morocco), by [Eugène Delacroix](/wiki/Eugène_Delacroix). In 1549, the region fell to successive Arab dynasties claiming descent from the [Islamic prophet](/wiki/Prophets_in_Islam), [Muhammad](/wiki/Muhammad): first the [Saadi dynasty](/wiki/Saadi_dynasty) who ruled from 1549 to 1659, and then the [Alaouite Dynasty](/wiki/Alaouite_Dynasty), who remained in power since the 17th century.

Under the Saadi Dynasty, the country repulsed [Ottoman](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) incursions and a [Portuguese](/wiki/Portuguese_Empire) invasion at the [battle of Ksar el Kebir](/wiki/Battle_of_Ksar_el_Kebir) in 1578. The reign of [Ahmad al-Mansur](/wiki/Ahmad_al-Mansur) brought new wealth and prestige to the Sultanate, and a large expedition to West Africa inflicted a crushing defeat on the [Songhay Empire](/wiki/Songhay_Empire) in 1591. However, managing the territories across the [Sahara](/wiki/Sahara) proved too difficult. After the death of al-Mansur, the country was divided among his sons.

In 1666, Morocco was reunited by the [Alaouite Dynasty](/wiki/Alaouite_Dynasty), who have been the ruling house of Morocco ever since. Morocco was facing aggression from [Spain](/wiki/Spain) and the Ottoman Empire lies pressing westward. The Alaouites succeeded in stabilizing their position, and while the kingdom was smaller than previous ones in the region, it remained quite wealthy. Against the opposition of local tribes [Ismail Ibn Sharif](/wiki/Ismail_Ibn_Sharif) (1672–1727) began to create a unified state.[[16]](#cite_note-17) With his Jaysh d'Ahl al-Rif (the [Riffian](/wiki/Riff) Army) he seized [Tangier](/wiki/English_Tangier) from the [English](/wiki/Kingdom_of_England) in 1684 and drove the [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_Empire) from [Larache](/wiki/Larache) in 1689.

Morocco was the first nation to recognize the fledgling United States as an independent nation in 1777.[[17]](#cite_note-18)[[18]](#cite_note-19)[[19]](#cite_note-20) In the beginning of the [American Revolution](/wiki/American_Revolution), American merchant ships in the [Atlantic Ocean](/wiki/Atlantic_Ocean) were subject to attack by the [Barbary pirates](/wiki/Barbary_pirates). On 20 December 1777, Morocco's Sultan [Mohammed III](/wiki/Mohammed_III_of_Morocco) declared that American merchant ships would be under the protection of the sultanate and could thus enjoy safe passage. The [Moroccan–American Treaty of Friendship](/wiki/Moroccan–American_Treaty_of_Friendship), signed in 1786, stands as the U.S.'s oldest non-broken friendship [treaty](/wiki/Treaty).[[20]](#cite_note-21)[[21]](#cite_note-22)

### French and Spanish protectorates[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) As Europe industrialized, North Africa was increasingly prized for its potential for colonization. France showed a strong interest in Morocco as early as 1830, not only to protect the border of its Algerian territory, but also because of the strategic position of Morocco on two oceans.[[22]](#cite_note-23) In 1860, a dispute over Spain's Ceuta enclave led Spain to declare war. Victorious Spain won a further enclave and an enlarged Ceuta in the settlement. In 1884, Spain created a protectorate in the coastal areas of Morocco.

[thumb|Death of](/wiki/File:War_in_Morocco_Death_of_Spanish_general_Margallo.JPG) [Spanish](/wiki/Spain) general [Margallo](/wiki/Juan_García_y_Margallo) during the [Melilla War](/wiki/First_Melillan_campaign). [Le Petit Journal](/wiki/Le_Petit_Journal_(newspaper)), 13 November 1893.

In 1904, France and Spain carved out zones of influence in Morocco. Recognition by the [United Kingdom](/wiki/United_Kingdom) of France's [sphere of influence](/wiki/Sphere_of_influence) provoked a strong reaction from the [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire); and a crisis loomed in 1905. The matter was resolved at the [Algeciras Conference](/wiki/Algeciras_Conference) in 1906. The [Agadir Crisis](/wiki/Agadir_Crisis) increased tensions between European powers. The 1912 [Treaty of Fez](/wiki/Treaty_of_Fez) made Morocco a [protectorate](/wiki/Protectorate) of France, and triggered the [1912 Fes riots](/wiki/1912_Fes_riots).[[23]](#cite_note-24) Spain continued to operate its coastal protectorate. By the same treaty, Spain assumed the role of [protecting power](/wiki/Protecting_power) over the northern and southern [Saharan](/wiki/Sahara) zones.[[24]](#cite_note-25) Tens of thousands of colonists entered Morocco. Some bought up large amounts of the rich agricultural land, others organized the exploitation and modernization of mines and harbours. Interest groups that formed among these elements continually pressured France to increase its control over Morocco – a control which was also made necessary by the continuous wars among Moroccan tribes, part of which had taken sides with the French since the beginning of the conquest. Governor general, Marshall [Hubert Lyautey](/wiki/Hubert_Lyautey), sincerely admired Moroccan culture and succeeded in imposing a joint Moroccan-French administration, while creating a modern school system. Several divisions of Moroccan soldiers ([Goumiers](/wiki/Goumier) or regular troops and officers) served in the [French army](/wiki/French_army) in both [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I) and [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), and in the Spanish [Nationalist Army](/wiki/Franquism) in the [Spanish Civil War](/wiki/Spanish_Civil_War) and after ([*Regulares*](/wiki/Regulares)).[[25]](#cite_note-26) The institution of [slavery](/wiki/Slavery) was abolished in 1925.[[26]](#cite_note-27) Between 1921 and 1926, a [Berber uprising](/wiki/Rif_War) in the Rif Mountains, led by [Abd el-Krim](/wiki/Muhammad_Ibn_'Abd_al-Karim_al-Khattabi), led to the establishment of the Republic of the Rif. The rebellion was eventually suppressed by French and Spanish troops.

In 1943, the [Istiqlal Party](/wiki/Istiqlal_Party) (Independence Party) was founded to press for independence, with discreet US support. That party subsequently provided most of the leadership for the nationalist movement.

France's exile of [Sultan Mohammed V](/wiki/Sultan_Mohammed_V) in 1953 to [Madagascar](/wiki/Madagascar) and his replacement by the unpopular [Mohammed Ben Aarafa](/wiki/Mohammed_Ben_Aarafa) sparked active opposition to the French and Spanish protectorates. The most notable violence occurred in [Oujda](/wiki/Oujda) where Moroccans attacked French and other European residents in the streets. France allowed Mohammed V to return in 1955, and the negotiations that led to Moroccan independence began the following year.[[27]](#cite_note-28) In March 1956 the French protectorate was ended and Morocco regained its independence from France as the "Kingdom of Morocco". A month later Spain ceded most of its protectorate in Northern Morocco to the new state but kept its two coastal enclaves ([Ceuta](/wiki/Ceuta) and [Melilla](/wiki/Melilla)) on the Mediterranean coast. Sultan Mohammed became king in 1957.

### Reign of King Hassan II[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Marokko_011.jpg) [Mausoleum of Mohammed V](/wiki/Mausoleum_of_Mohammed_V) in Rabat. [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Marrocos-Kasbah-Oudaya-Rabat-Luis-Filipe-Gaspar.jpg) [Kasbah of the Udayas](/wiki/Kasbah_of_the_Udayas) in Rabat. Upon the death of King Mohammed V, [Hassan II](/wiki/Hassan_II_of_Morocco) became King of Morocco on 3 March 1961. Morocco held its first [general elections in 1963](/wiki/Moroccan_parliamentary_election,_1963). However, Hassan declared a state of emergency and suspended parliament in 1965. In 1971, there was a failed attempt to depose the king and establish a republic. A truth commission set up in 2005 to investigate human rights abuses during his reign confirmed nearly 10,000 cases, ranging from death in detention to forced exile. Some 592 people were recorded killed during Hassan's rule according to the truth commission.

The Spanish [enclave](/wiki/Enclave) of [Ifni](/wiki/Ifni) in the south was returned to Morocco in 1969. The [Polisario movement](/wiki/Polisario_movement) was formed in 1973, with the aim of establishing an independent state in the Spanish Sahara. On 6 November 1975 King Hassan asked for volunteers to cross into the Spanish Sahara. Some 350,000 civilians were reported as being involved in the "[Green March](/wiki/Green_March)".[[28]](#cite_note-29) A month later, Spain agreed to leave the Spanish Sahara, soon to become Western Sahara, and to transfer it to joint Moroccan-Mauritanian control, despite the objections and threats of military intervention by Algeria. Moroccan forces occupied the territory.[[14]](#cite_note-15) Moroccan and Algerian troops soon clashed in Western Sahara. Morocco and Mauritania divided up Western Sahara. Fighting between the Moroccan military and Polisario forces continued for many years. The prolonged war was a considerable financial drain on Morocco. In 1983, Hassan cancelled planned elections amid political unrest and economic crisis. In 1984, Morocco left the Organisation of African Unity in protest at the [SADR's](/wiki/Sahrawi_Arab_Democratic_Republic) admission to the body. Polisario claimed to have killed more than 5,000 Moroccan soldiers between 1982 and 1985.

Algerian authorities have estimated the number of [Sahrawi refugees](/wiki/Sahrawi_refugees) in Algeria to be 165,000.[[29]](#cite_note-30) Diplomatic relations with Algeria were restored in 1988. In 1991, a UN-monitored ceasefire began in Western Sahara, but the territory's status remains undecided and ceasefire violations are reported. The following decade saw much wrangling over a proposed referendum on the future of the territory but the deadlock was not broken.

Political reforms in the 1990s resulted in the establishment of a bicameral legislature in 1997 and Morocco's first opposition-led government came to power in 1998.

### Reign of King Mohammed VI[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) King Hassan II died in 1999 and was succeeded by his son, [Mohammed VI](/wiki/Mohammed_VI). He is a cautious modernizer who has introduced some economic and social liberalization.[[30]](#cite_note-31) King Mohammed paid a controversial visit to the Western Sahara in 2002. Morocco unveiled an autonomy blueprint for Western Sahara to the United Nations in 2007. The Polisario rejected the plan and put forward its own proposal. Morocco and the Polisario Front held UN-sponsored talks in New York but failed to come to any agreement. In 2010, security forces stormed a protest camp in the Western Sahara, triggering violent demonstrations in the regional capital [El Aaiún](/wiki/El_Aaiún).

In 2002, Morocco and Spain agreed to a US-brokered resolution over the disputed island of Perejil. Spanish troops had taken the normally uninhabited island after Moroccan soldiers landed on it and set up tents and a flag. There were renewed tensions in 2005 as hundreds of African migrants tried to storm the borders of the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta. Morocco deported hundreds of the illegal migrants. In 2006 the Spanish Premier Zapatero visited Spanish enclaves. He was the first Spanish leader in 25 years to make an official visit to the territories. The following year, Spanish [King Juan Carlos](/wiki/King_Juan_Carlos) visited Ceuta and Melilla, further angering Morocco which demanded control of the enclaves.

In February 2003, a Casablanca court jailed three Saudi members of al-Qaeda for 10 years after they were accused of plotting to attack US and British warships in the Straits of Gibraltar. Three months later, more than 40 people were killed in the [2003 Casablanca bombings](/wiki/2003_Casablanca_bombings), when suicide bombers attacked several sites in Casablanca, including a Spanish restaurant and Jewish community centre.

Those responsible were believed to be Salafiya Jihadiya adherents linked to the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group. One of those extremists was Nourredine Nafia, leader of the GICM (Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group), who was sentenced to 20 years in prison for his role in the attacks.

[thumb|Protestors in](/wiki/File:Les_Marocains_manifestent_pour_des_réformes_(5630977929).jpg) [Casablanca](/wiki/Casablanca) demand that authorities honor their promises of political reform.

In the [2007 Casablanca bombings](/wiki/2007_Casablanca_bombings), three suspected suicide bombers blew themselves up, a few weeks after a suicide blast in an internet cafe that injured three. More than 40 people were given long prison sentences for this bombing. Two suicide bombers blew themselves up outside the US diplomatic offices in Casablanca.

In 2008, two Moroccan men, Abdelilah Ahriz and Hicham Ahmidan, were sentenced to 20 and 10 years in jail respectively in Morocco over the [Madrid train bombings](/wiki/Madrid_train_bombings) of 2004. Islamist Saad Housseini was given 15-year sentence in 2009 over the 2003 Casablanca bombings. He was also wanted in Spain over the Madrid bombings. Soon after, the alleged al-Qaeda leader in Morocco, Belgian-Moroccan [Abdelkader Belliraj](/wiki/Abdelkader_Belliraj), was imprisoned for life on being found guilty of leading an Islamist militant group and committing six murders in Belgium.

In the April [2011 Marrakesh bombing](/wiki/2011_Marrakesh_bombing), 17 people, mainly foreigners, were killed in a bomb attack on a Marrakesh cafe. The Maghreb arm of al-Qaeda denied involvement. A man was later sentenced to death for the bombing.

During the [2011–12 Moroccan protests](/wiki/2011–12_Moroccan_protests), thousands of people rallied in Rabat and other cities calling for political reform and a new constitution curbing the powers of the king. In July 2011, the King won a landslide victory in a referendum on a reformed constitution he had proposed to placate the [Arab Spring](/wiki/Arab_Spring) protests.

Despite the reforms made by Mohamed VI demonstrators continued to call for deeper reforms. Hundreds took part in a trade union rally in Casablanca in May 2012. Participants accused the government of failing to deliver on reforms.

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Morocco map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Morocco_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Atlas_Mountains_snow_cover.jpg)[Toubkal](/wiki/Toubkal), the highest peak in North Africa, at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Tabant,_Ait_Bougmez,_Maroc.jpg)[High Atlas](/wiki/High_Atlas) in central Morocco [thumb|](/wiki/File:Chauen.jpg)[Rif](/wiki/Rif) in northern Morocco [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Essaouira_beach.jpg)[Essaouira](/wiki/Essaouira) beach [right||thumb|Cedar Forest in the](/wiki/File:Bosque_de_cedros,_montes_del_Atlas,_Ifran.jpg) [Middle Atlas](/wiki/Middle_Atlas). [thumb|left|Moroccan Mediterranean Coast (West Side) – Air Photo from Bades over](/wiki/File:20141218_-_Marocco_Mediterrane_Coast_(West_Side)_-_Air_Photo_by_sebaso.jpg) [El Jebha](/wiki/El_Jebha) to [Tétouan](/wiki/Tétouan) with [Rif mountains](/wiki/Rif), [Tangier-Tetouan](/wiki/Tangier-Tetouan) region (2014)

Morocco has a coast by the [Atlantic Ocean](/wiki/Atlantic_Ocean) that reaches past the [Strait of Gibraltar](/wiki/Strait_of_Gibraltar) into the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea). It is bordered by [Spain](/wiki/Spain) to the north (a water border through the Strait and land borders with three small Spanish-controlled [exclaves](/wiki/Exclave), [Ceuta](/wiki/Ceuta), [Melilla](/wiki/Melilla), and [Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera](/wiki/Peñón_de_Vélez_de_la_Gomera)), [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria) to the east, and [Western Sahara](/wiki/Western_Sahara) to the south. Since Morocco controls most of Western Sahara, its *de facto* southern boundary is with [Mauritania](/wiki/Mauritania).

The internationally recognized borders of the country lie between latitudes [27°](/wiki/27th_parallel_north) and 36°N, and longitudes 1° and [14°W](/wiki/14th_meridian_west). Adding Western Sahara, Morocco lies mostly between [21°](/wiki/21st_parallel_north) and [36°N](/wiki/36th_parallel_north), and [1°](/wiki/1st_meridian_west) and [17°W](/wiki/17th_meridian_west) (the [Ras Nouadhibou](/wiki/Ras_Nouadhibou) peninsula is slightly south of 21° and west of 17°).

The geography of Morocco spans from the Atlantic Ocean, to mountainous areas, to the Sahara desert. Morocco is a [Northern African](/wiki/Northern_Africa) country, bordering the [North Atlantic Ocean](/wiki/North_Atlantic_Ocean) and the Mediterranean Sea, between Algeria and the annexed Western Sahara. It is one of only three nations (along with [Spain](/wiki/Spain) and [France](/wiki/France)) to have both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines.

A large part of Morocco is mountainous. The [Atlas Mountains](/wiki/Atlas_Mountains) are located mainly in the center and the south of the country. The [Rif Mountains](/wiki/Rif_Mountains) are located in the north of the country. Both ranges are mainly inhabited by the [Berber people](/wiki/Berber_people). At [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), Morocco is the fifty-seventh largest country in the world (after [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan)). Algeria borders Morocco to the east and southeast, though the border between the two countries has been closed since 1994.

Spanish territory in North Africa neighbouring Morocco comprises five enclaves on the Mediterranean coast: [Ceuta](/wiki/Ceuta), [Melilla](/wiki/Melilla), [Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera](/wiki/Peñón_de_Vélez_de_la_Gomera), [Peñón de Alhucemas](/wiki/Peñón_de_Alhucemas), the [Chafarinas](/wiki/Islas_Chafarinas) islands, and the disputed islet [Perejil](/wiki/Isla_Perejil). Off the Atlantic coast the [Canary Islands](/wiki/Canary_Islands) belong to Spain, whereas [Madeira](/wiki/Madeira) to the north is [Portuguese](/wiki/Portugal). To the north, Morocco is bordered by the Strait of Gibraltar, where international shipping has unimpeded [transit passage](/wiki/Transit_passage) between the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

The Rif mountains stretch over the region bordering the Mediterranean from the north-west to the north-east. The Atlas Mountains run down the backbone of the country, from the northeast to the south west. Most of the southeast portion of the country is in the [Sahara Desert](/wiki/Sahara_Desert) and as such is generally sparsely populated and unproductive economically. Most of the population lives to the north of these mountains, while to the south lies the Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony that was annexed by Morocco in 1975 (see [Green March](/wiki/Green_March)).[[31]](#cite_note-32) Morocco claims that the Western Sahara is part of its territory and refers to that as its [Southern Provinces](/wiki/Southern_Provinces).

Morocco's capital city is [Rabat](/wiki/Rabat); its largest city is its main port, [Casablanca](/wiki/Casablanca). Other cities include [Agadir](/wiki/Agadir), [Essaouira](/wiki/Essaouira), [Fes](/wiki/Fes), [Marrakesh](/wiki/Marrakesh), [Meknes](/wiki/Meknes), [Mohammedia](/wiki/Mohammedia), [Oujda](/wiki/Oujda), [Ouarzazat](/wiki/Ouarzazat), [Safi](/wiki/Safi,_Morocco), [Salé](/wiki/Salé), [Tangier](/wiki/Tangier) and [Tétouan](/wiki/Tétouan).

Morocco is represented in the [ISO 3166-1 alpha-2](/wiki/ISO_3166-1_alpha-2) geographical encoding standard by the symbol *MA*.[[32]](#cite_note-33) This code was used as the basis for Morocco's internet domain, [.ma](/wiki/.ma).[[32]](#cite_note-33)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[thumb|right|Fertile plain near Meknès](/wiki/File:Volubilis01.jpg) [|thumb|left|A fertile valley in the Middle Atlas](/wiki/File:Azrou_Morocco.JPG) [|thumb|right|Western High Atlas](/wiki/File:Tizi'n'Toubkal.jpg) [thumb|left|Eastern High Atlas](/wiki/File:village_atlas.jpeg) [thumb|left|Moroccan Sahara](/wiki/File:Merzouga_desert.jpg) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Ifrane_snow.jpg)[Ifrane](/wiki/Ifrane), Middle Atlas, where the lowest temperature in Africa and the Arab world was recorded [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), in 1935 [|thumb||left|Barbary macaque showing signs of adaptation to the cold climate in the Atlas range with its light fur, a rare occurrence among primates](/wiki/File:Macaque_berbère_(Magot).JPG) [thumb|left|Buildings near a forest in the middle atlas](/wiki/File:Ifrane1.jpg)

* **Overview:**

The country's [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean_climate) climate is similar to that of southern [California](/wiki/California), with lush forests in the northern and central mountain ranges of the country, giving way to dryer conditions and inland deserts further south east. The Moroccan coastal plains experience remarkably moderate temperatures even in summer, owing to the effect of the cold [Canary Current](/wiki/Canary_Current) off its [Atlantic](/wiki/Atlantic) coast.

In the Rif, Middle and High Atlas Mountains, there exist several different types of climates: Mediterranean along the coastal lowlands, giving way to a humid temperate climate at higher elevations with sufficient moisture to allow for the growth of different species of oaks, moss carpets, junipers, and atlantic fir which is a royal conifer tree endemic to Morocco. In the valleys, fertile soils and high precipitation allow for the growth of thick and lush forests. Cloud forests can be found in the west of the Rif Mountains and Middle Atlas Mountains. At higher elevations, the climate becomes Alpine in character, and can sustain ski resorts.

South-East of the Atlas mountains, near the Algerian borders, the climate becomes very dry, with long and hot summers. Extreme heat and low moisture levels are especially pronounced in the lowland regions east of the Atlas range due to the rain shadow effect of the mountain system. The south-eastern most portions of Morocco are very hot, and include portions of the [Sahara Desert](/wiki/Sahara_Desert), where vast swathes of sand dunes and rocky plains are dotted with lush [oases](/wiki/Oasis).

In contrast to the Sahara region in the south, coastal [plains](/wiki/Plain) are fertile in the central and northern regions of the country, and comprise the backbone of the country's agriculture, in where 95% of the population live. The direct exposure to the North Atlantic Ocean, the proximity to mainland Europe and the long stretched Rif and Atlas mountains are the factors of the rather European-like climate in the northern half of the country. That's what makes from Morocco a country of contrasts. [Forested areas](/wiki/Forest) cover about 12% of the country while arable land accounts for 18%. Approximately 5% of Moroccan land is irrigated for agricultural use.

In general, apart from the South-east regions (pre-saharian and desert areas), Morocco's climate and geography is pretty identical with the Iberian peninsula. Thus we have the following climate zones:

* **Mediterranean:** It dominates the coastal Mediterranean regions of the country, along the (500 km strip), and some parts of the Atlantic coast. Summers are hot to moderately hot and dry, average highs are between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Winters are generally mild and wet, daily average temperatures hover around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and average low are around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), typical to the coastal areas of the west Mediterranean. Annual Precipitation in this area vary from 600–800 mm in the west to 350–500 mm in the east. Notable cities that fall into this zone: [Tangier](/wiki/Tangier), [Tetouan](/wiki/Tetouan), [Al Hoceima](/wiki/Al_Hoceima), [Nador](/wiki/Nador) and [Safi](/wiki/Safi,_Morocco).
* **Sub-Mediterranean:** it influences cities that show Mediterranean characteristics, but remain fairly influenced by other climates owing to their either relative elevation, or direct exposure to the North Atlantic Ocean. We thus have two main influencing climates:

-*Oceanic:* Determined by the cooler summers, where highs rarely go above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and in terms of Essaouira region are almost always around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The medium daily temperatures can get as low as [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Where winters are chilly to mild and wet. Annual precipitation vary from 400 to 700 mm. Notable cities that fall into this zone: [Rabat](/wiki/Rabat), [Casablanca](/wiki/Casablanca), [Kénitra](/wiki/Kénitra), [Salé](/wiki/Salé) and [Essaouira](/wiki/Essaouira).

-*Continental:* Determined by the bigger gap between highs and lows, that results hotter summers and colder winters, than found in typical Mediterranean zones. In summer, daily highs can get as high as [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) during heat waves, but usually between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). However it's important to note that temperatures drop as sun sets. Night temperatures usually fall below [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and sometimes as low as [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in plain summer. Winters are cooler, it can get below freezing point multiple times between December and February. Also snow can fall occasionally. Fès for example registered [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in winter 2005. Annual precipitations vary between 500 and 900 mm. Notable cities: [Fès](/wiki/Fès), [Meknès](/wiki/Meknès), [Chefchaouen](/wiki/Chefchaouen), [Beni-Mellal](/wiki/Beni-Mellal) and [Taza](/wiki/Taza).

* **Continental** It dominates the mountainous regions of the north and central parts of the country, where summers are hot to very hot, highs clock between [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Winters in the other hand are cold, and lows usually go beyond the freezing point. And when a cold damp air comes to Morocco from the North-West, for few days, temperatures can easily break [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). It often snows abundantly in this part of country. Precipitations vary between 400 and 800 mm. Notable cities: [Khenifra](/wiki/Khenifra), [Imilchil](/wiki/Imilchil), [Midelt](/wiki/Midelt) and [Azilal](/wiki/Azilal).
* **Alpine:** This type of climate is found in some parts of Middl-Atlas Mountain range and the Eastern part of the High Atlas Mountain range. Summers are very warm to moderately hot, and winters are longer, cold and snowy. Precipitations vary between 400 and 1200 mm. In summer highs barely go above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and lows are cool and go well beyond [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). In winters, highs rarely go above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and lows go well below the freezing point. In this part of country, exists many ski resorts, such as Oukaimeden and Mischliefen. Notable cities: [Ifrane](/wiki/Ifrane), [Azrou](/wiki/Azrou) and [Boulmane](/wiki/Boulmane).
* **Semi-arid:** This type of climate is found in the south of the country and some parts of the East of the country, where rainfall is lower and annual precipitations are between 200 and 350 mm. However, It's notable to say that we usually find Mediterranean characteristics in those regions, such as the precipitation pattern and thermal attributes. Notable cities: [Agadir](/wiki/Agadir), [Marrakesh](/wiki/Marrakesh) and [Oujda](/wiki/Oujda).

South of Agadir and East under Jerada near the Algerian borders, arid and desert climate starts to prevail.

**Note:** Due to Morocco's proximity to the Sahara desert and the North Sea of the Atlantic Ocean, two phenomenons occur to influence the regional seasonal temperatures, either by rising temperatures by 7-8 degrees Celsius when [sirocco](/wiki/Sirocco) blows from the east creating heatwaves, or by lowering temperatures by 7-8 degrees Celsius when a cold damp air blows from the north-west, creating a coldwave or cold spell. However, these phenomenons don't last for more than 2 to 5 days on average.

Countries or regions that share the same climatic characteristics with Morocco: [California](/wiki/California) (USA), [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal), [Spain](/wiki/Spain) and [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria).

* **Precipitations:**

Annual rainfall in Morocco is different according to regions. The North-Western parts of the country receive between 500 mm and 1200 mm. Where the North-Eastern parts receive between 350 and 600 mm. North Central Morocco receives between 700 mm and up to 3500 mm. The area from Casablanca to Essaouira on the Atlantic coast, receives between 300 mm and 500 mm. The regions From Essaouira to Agadir, receive between 250 mm and 400 mm. Marrakesh region in central south receives only 250 mm a year. The south-Eastern regions, basically the driest areas, receive between 100 mm and 200 mm only, and consists basically of arid and desert lands.

Botanically speaking, Morocco enjoys vast forms of vegetation, from lush large forests of conifer and oask trees typical to the west Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Algeria, Italy, Spain, France and Portugal), to shrubs and acacias further south. This is due to the diversity of climate and the precipitation patterns in the country.

Morocco's weather is one of the most pristine in terms of 4 season experience. Most regions live distinct seasons where summer is usually not spoiled by rain and winter turns wet, snowy and humid with mild, cool to cold temperatures. Where spring and fall see warm to mild weather characterized by flower blooming in spring and falling leaves in autumn. This type of weather have affected the Moroccan culture and behaviour and played part in the social interaction of the population like many other countries that fall into this type of climate zone.

### Biodiversity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|upright=1.1|An adult male](/wiki/File:Portrait_of_a_father.jpg) [Barbary macaque](/wiki/Barbary_macaque) carrying his offspring, a behaviour rarely found in other primates.

Morocco is known for its [biodiversity](/wiki/Biodiversity); [Avifauna](/wiki/Bird) being the most notable.[[33]](#cite_note-34) The avifauna of Morocco includes a total of 454 species, five of which have been [introduced](/wiki/Introduced_species) by humans, and 156 are rarely or accidentally seen.[[34]](#cite_note-35) The [Barbary lion](/wiki/Barbary_lion), hunted to extinction in the wild, was a subspieces native to Morocco and is a national emblem.<ref name=CIA/> The last Barbary lion in the wild was shot in the Atlas Mountains in 1922.[[35]](#cite_note-36) The other two primary predators of northern Africa, the [Atlas bear](/wiki/Atlas_bear) and [Barbary leopard](/wiki/Barbary_leopard), are now extinct and critically endangered, respectively. Relict populations of the [West African crocodile](/wiki/West_African_crocodile) persisted in the [Draa river](/wiki/Draa_river) until the 20th century.[[36]](#cite_note-37) The Barbary macaque, a primate endemic to Morocco and Algeria, is also facing extinction due to human interruption, urbanization, wood and real estate mafias that help in diminishing forests and thus affecting its habitat.

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Mohammed_VI_of_Morocco_(Denoised).jpg) [King of Morocco](/wiki/King_of_Morocco), [Mohammed VI](/wiki/Mohammed_VI_of_Morocco).

Morocco is an [authoritarian regime](/wiki/Authoritarianism) according to the Democracy Index of 2014. The [Freedom of the Press](/wiki/Freedom_of_the_Press_(report)) 2014 report gives it a rating of "Not Free".

Following the March 1998 elections, a coalition government headed by opposition [socialist](/wiki/Socialism) leader [Abderrahmane Youssoufi](/wiki/Abderrahmane_Youssoufi) and composed largely of ministers drawn from opposition parties, was formed. Prime Minister Youssoufi's government was the first ever government drawn primarily from opposition parties, and also represents the first opportunity for a coalition of socialists, left-of-center, and nationalist parties to be included in the government until October 2002. It was also the first time in the modern political history of the Arab world that the opposition assumed power following an election.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) The current government is headed by [Abdelilah Benkirane](/wiki/Abdelilah_Benkirane).

The [Moroccan Constitution](/wiki/Moroccan_Constitution) provides for a monarchy with a [Parliament](/wiki/Parliament_of_Morocco) and an independent [judiciary](/wiki/Judiciary). With the [2011 constitutional reforms](/wiki/Moroccan_constitutional_referendum,_2011), the King of Morocco retains few executive powers whereas those of the prime minister have been enlarged.[[37]](#cite_note-38)[[38]](#cite_note-39) The constitution grants the king honorific powers; he is both the secular political leader and the "Commander of the Faithful" as a direct descendant of the Prophet [Mohammed](/wiki/Mohammed). He presides over the Council of Ministers; appoints the Prime Minister from the political party that has won the most seats in the parliamentary elections, and on recommendations from the latter, appoints the members of the government.

The previous constitution of 1996 theoretically allowed the king to terminate the tenure of any minister, and after consultation with the heads of the higher and lower Assemblies, to dissolve the Parliament, suspend the constitution, call for new elections, or rule by decree, the only time this happened was in 1965. The King is formally the chief of the military.

### Legislative branch[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[thumb|The legislature's building in Rabat.](/wiki/File:Parliament_of_morocco.jpg) Since the constitutional reform of 1996, the bicameral legislature consists of two chambers. The [Assembly of Representatives of Morocco](/wiki/Assembly_of_Representatives_of_Morocco) (*Majlis an-Nuwwâb/Assemblée des Répresentants*) has 325 members elected for a five-year term, 295 elected in multi-seat [constituencies](/wiki/Constituency) and 30 in national lists consisting only of women. The [Assembly of Councillors](/wiki/Assembly_of_Councillors) (*Majlis al-Mustasharin*) has 270 members, elected for a nine-year term, elected by local councils (162 seats), professional chambers (91 seats) and wage-earners (27 seats).

The Parliament's powers, though still relatively limited, were expanded under the 1992 and 1996 and even further in the 2011 constitutional revisions and include [budgetary](/wiki/Budget) matters, approving [bills](/wiki/Bill_(proposed_law)), questioning ministers, and establishing ad hoc commissions of inquiry to investigate the government's actions. The lower chamber of Parliament may dissolve the government through a [vote of no confidence](/wiki/Vote_of_no_confidence).

The latest parliamentary elections were held on [November 25, 2011](/wiki/Moroccan_parliamentary_election,_2011), and were considered by some neutral observers to be mostly free and fair. Voter turnout in these elections was estimated to be 43% of registered voters.

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[thumb|Mohammed VI, a](/wiki/File:FREMM_Mohammed_VI_-_Lorient_2013-05.JPG) [FREMM multipurpose frigate](/wiki/FREMM_multipurpose_frigate) of the [Royal Moroccan Navy](/wiki/Royal_Moroccan_Navy). [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Compulsory military service in Morocco has been officially suppressed since September 2006, and Morocco’s reserve obligation lasts until age 50. Morocco’s military consists of the Royal Armed Forces—this includes the [Army](/wiki/Royal_Moroccan_Army) (the largest branch), the [Navy](/wiki/Royal_Moroccan_Navy), the [Air Force](/wiki/Royal_Moroccan_Air_Force), the [Royal Guard](/wiki/Moroccan_Royal_Guard), the [Royal Gendarmerie](/wiki/Royal_Moroccan_Gendarmerie) and the [Auxiliary Forces](/wiki/Auxiliary_Forces). Internal security is generally effective, and acts of political violence are rare (with one exception, the [2003 Casablanca bombings](/wiki/2003_Casablanca_bombings) which killed 45 people[[39]](#cite_note-40)).

The UN maintains a small observer force in Western Sahara, where a large number of Morocco’s troops are stationed. The Saharawi group [Polisario](/wiki/Polisario_Front) maintains an active militia of an estimated 5,000 fighters in Western Sahara and has engaged in intermittent warfare with Moroccan forces since the 1980s.

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Morocco is a member of the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) and belongs to the [Arab League](/wiki/Arab_League), [Arab Maghreb Union](/wiki/Arab_Maghreb_Union) (UMA), [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation) (OIC), the [Non-Aligned Movement](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement) and the [Community of Sahel-Saharan States](/wiki/Community_of_Sahel-Saharan_States) (CEN\_SAD). Morocco's relationships vary greatly between African, Arab, and Western states. Morocco has had strong ties to the West in order to gain economic and political benefits.[[40]](#cite_note-41) France and Spain remain the primary trade partners, as well as the primary creditors and foreign investors in Morocco. From the total foreign investments in Morocco, the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) invests approximately 73.5%, whereas, the Arab world invests only 19.3%. Many countries from the [Persian Gulf](/wiki/Arab_states_of_the_Persian_Gulf) and [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb) regions are getting more involved in large-scale development projects in Morocco.[[41]](#cite_note-42) [thumb|A demonstration in](/wiki/File:Manifestation_in_Madrid_for_the_independence_of_the_Western_Sahara_(3).jpg) [Madrid](/wiki/Madrid) for the independence of the [Western Sahara](/wiki/Western_Sahara). Morocco remains the only African state not to be a member of the [African Union](/wiki/African_Union) due to its unilateral withdrawal on 12 November 1984 over the admission of the [Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic](/wiki/Sahrawi_Arab_Democratic_Republic_(SADR)) in 1982 by the [African Union](/wiki/African_Union) (then called Organization of African Unity) as a full member without the organization of a referendum of self-determination in the disputed territory of Western Sahara.

A [dispute with Spain in 2002 over the tiny island of Perejil](/wiki/Perejil_Island_crisis) revived the issue of the sovereignty of [Melilla](/wiki/Melilla) and [Ceuta](/wiki/Ceuta). These small enclaves on the Mediterranean coast are surrounded by Morocco and have been administered by Spain for centuries.

Morocco has been given the status of [major non-NATO ally](/wiki/Major_non-NATO_ally) by the US government. Morocco was the first country in the world to recognize US sovereignty (in 1777).

Morocco is included in the European Union's [European Neighbourhood Policy](/wiki/European_Neighbourhood_Policy) (ENP) which aims at bringing the EU and its neighbours closer.

### Western Sahara status[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Westernsaharamap.png) [Polisario Front](/wiki/Polisario_Front) control the territory east of the [Moroccan *berm* (wall)](/wiki/Moroccan_Wall). Due to the conflict over [Western Sahara](/wiki/Western_Sahara), the status of the [Saguia el-Hamra](/wiki/Saguia_el-Hamra) and [Río de Oro](/wiki/Río_de_Oro) regions is disputed. The [Western Sahara War](/wiki/Western_Sahara_War) saw the [Polisario Front](/wiki/Polisario_Front), the Sahrawi rebel national liberation movement, battling both Morocco and Mauritania between 1976 and a ceasefire in 1991 that is still in effect. A United Nations mission, [MINURSO](/wiki/MINURSO), is tasked with organizing a referendum on whether the territory should become independent or recognized as a part of Morocco.

Part of the territory, the [Free Zone](/wiki/Free_Zone_(Western_Sahara_region)), is a mostly uninhabited area that the Polisario Front controls as the [Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic](/wiki/Sahrawi_Arab_Democratic_Republic). Its administrative headquarters are located in [Tindouf](/wiki/Tindouf), Algeria. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), no [UN member state](/wiki/Member_state_of_the_United_Nations) has recognized Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.[[42]](#cite_note-43) In 2006, the government of Morocco has suggested [autonomous](/wiki/Autonomy_for_Western_Sahara) status for the region, through the Moroccan [Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs](/wiki/Royal_Advisory_Council_for_Saharan_Affairs) (CORCAS). The project was presented to the [United Nations Security Council](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council) in mid-April 2007. The proposal was encouraged by Moroccan allies such as the [United States](/wiki/United_States), [France](/wiki/France) and [Spain](/wiki/Spain).[[43]](#cite_note-44) The Security Council has called upon the parties to enter into direct and unconditional negotiations to reach a mutually accepted political solution.[[44]](#cite_note-45)

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The 12 official administrative Regions of Morocco, with their native names in Berber](/wiki/File:Tasgiwin_n_Murakuc_-_Regions_of_Morocco.png)

Morocco is officially divided into 12 [regions](/wiki/Regions_of_Morocco),<ref name=reg>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) which, in turn, are subdivided into 62 provinces and 13 [prefectures](/wiki/Prefecture).[[45]](#cite_note-46)

Regions

1. [Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima](/wiki/Tanger-Tetouan-Al_Hoceima)
2. [Oriental](/wiki/Oriental_(Morocco))
3. [Fès-Meknès](/wiki/Fès-Meknès)
4. [Rabat-Salé-Kénitra](/wiki/Rabat-Salé-Kénitra)
5. [Béni Mellal-Khénifra](/wiki/Béni_Mellal-Khénifra)
6. [Casablanca-Settat](/wiki/Casablanca-Settat)
7. [Marrakech-Safi](/wiki/Marrakech-Safi)
8. [Draâ-Tafilalet](/wiki/Draâ-Tafilalet)
9. [Souss-Massaur-Zaer](/wiki/Souss-Massaur-Zaer)
10. [Guelmim-Oued Noun](/wiki/Guelmim-Oued_Noun)
11. [Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra](/wiki/Laâyoune-Sakia_El_Hamra)
12. [Dakhla-Oued Ed Dahab](/wiki/Dakhla-Oued_Ed_Dahab)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|350px|A proportional representation of Morocco's exports.](/wiki/File:Morocco_treemap.png) Morocco's economy is considered a relatively [liberal economy](/wiki/Liberal_economy) governed by the [law of supply and demand](/wiki/Supply_and_demand). Since 1993, the country has followed a policy of [privatization](/wiki/Privatization) of certain economic sectors which used to be in the hands of the [government](/wiki/Politics_of_Morocco).[[46]](#cite_note-47) Morocco has become a major player in the African economic affairs,[[47]](#cite_note-48) and is the [5th African economy](/wiki/List_of_African_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)) by GDP (PPP). Morocco was ranked the 1st African country by the [Economist Intelligence Unit'](/wiki/Economist_Intelligence_Unit) [quality-of-life index](/wiki/Quality-of-life_index), ahead of [South Africa](/wiki/South_Africa). However, Morocco has since then slipped into fourth place behind [Egypt](/wiki/Egypt), but ahead of [Angola](/wiki/Angola).

Government reforms and steady yearly growth in the region of 4–5% from 2000 to 2007, including 4.9% year-on-year growth in 2003–2007 helped the Moroccan economy to become much more robust compared to a few years ago. For 2012 the World Bank forecasts a rate of 4% growth for Morocco and 4.2% for following year, 2013.[[48]](#cite_note-49) The [services sector](/wiki/Economy_of_Morocco#Services) accounts for just over half of [GDP](/wiki/GDP) and industry, made up of mining, construction and manufacturing, is an additional quarter. The industries that recorded the highest growth are [tourism](/wiki/Tourism_in_Morocco), telecoms, information technology, and textile.

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Koutbia.jpg) [Koutoubia Mosque](/wiki/Koutoubia_Mosque) in Marrakech. [thumb|right|The](/wiki/File:Cascades_d'Ouzoud.jpg) [Ouzoud Falls](/wiki/Ouzoud_Falls). [EL Menara, Sunset|thumb|The](/wiki/File:MD.BOUALAM_Sunset_El_Menara.jpg) [Menara gardens](/wiki/Menara_gardens) in sunset.

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in Moroccan economy, it is well developed with a strong tourist industry focused on the country's coast, culture, and history. Morocco attracted more than 10 million tourists in 2013. Tourism is the second largest foreign exchange earner in Morocco after the phosphate industry. The Moroccan government is heavily investing in tourism development, in 2010 the government launched its Vision 2020 which plans to make Morocco one of the top 20 tourist destinations in the world and to double the annual number of international arrivals to 20 million by 2020,[[49]](#cite_note-50) with the hope that tourism will then have risen to 20% of GDP.

A large government sponsored marketing campaigns to attract tourists advertised Morocco as a cheap and exotic, yet safe, place for tourists, most of the visitors to Morocco continue to be European, with French nationals making up almost 20% of all visitors. Most Europeans visit in April and the autumn, apart from the Spanish, who mostly visit in June and August In 2013. Morocco's relatively high amount of tourists has been aided by its location, Morocco is close to Europe and attracts visitors to its beaches. Because of its proximity to Spain, tourists in southern Spain's coastal areas take one- to three-day trips to Morocco.

Air services between Morocco and Algeria have been established, many Algerians have gone to Morocco to shop and visit family and friends. Morocco is relatively inexpensive because of the devaluation of the dirham and the increase of hotel prices in Spain. Morocco has an excellent road and rail infrastructure that links the major cities and tourist destinations with ports and cities with international airports. Low-cost airlines offer cheap flights to the country.

Tourism is increasingly focused on Morocco's culture, such as its ancient cities. The modern tourist industry capitalizes on Morocco's ancient Roman and Islamic sites, and on its landscape and cultural history. 60% of Morocco's tourists visit for its culture and heritage. Agadir is a major coastal resort and has a third of all Moroccan bed nights. It is a base for tours to the Atlas Mountains. Other resorts in north Morocco are also very popular.<ref name=Eur>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Casablanca is the major cruise port in Morocco, and has the best developed market for tourists in Morocco, Marrakech in central Morocco is a popular tourist destination, but is more popular among tourists for one- and two-day excursions that provide a taste of Morocco's history and culture. The Majorelle botanical garden in Marrakech is a popular tourist attraction. It was bought by the fashion designer Yves Saint-Laurent and Pierre Bergé in 1980. Their presence in the city helped to boost the city's profile as a tourist destination.[[50]](#cite_note-51) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), activity and adventure tourism in the Atlas and Rif Mountains are the fastest growth area in Moroccan tourism. These locations have excellent walking and trekking opportunities from late March to mid-November. The government is investing in trekking circuits. They are also developing desert tourism in competition with [Tunisia](/wiki/Tunisia).<ref name=Shackley>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

### Agriculture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Agriculture](/wiki/Agriculture_in_Morocco) accounts for around 14% of GDP and employs 40–45% of the Moroccan working population. With a semi-arid climate and an ill-developed irrigation system, it is difficult to assure enough irrigation.

The major resources of the Moroccan economy are agriculture, [phosphates](/wiki/Phosphate_minerals), and tourism. Sales of fish and seafood are important as well. Industry and mining contribute about one-third of the annual GDP. Morocco is the world's third-largest producer of phosphorus after China and the United States,[[51]](#cite_note-52) and the price fluctuations of phosphates on the international market greatly influence Morocco's economy.

Morocco suffers both from unemployment (9.6% in 2008), and a large external debt estimated at around $20 billion, or half of GDP in 2002.[[52]](#cite_note-53) Although Morocco runs a structural trade deficit, this is typically offset by substantial services earnings from tourism and large remittance inflows from the diaspora, and the country normally runs a small current-account surplus.[[53]](#cite_note-54)

### Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Isofoton_Marruecos.JPG)[Solar cell](/wiki/Solar_cell) panels in eastern Morocco In 2008, about 56% of Morocco's electricity supply was provided by coal.[[54]](#cite_note-55) However, as forecasts indicate that energy requirements in Morocco will rise 6% per year between 2012 and 2050,[[55]](#cite_note-56) a new law passed encouraging Moroccans to look for ways to diversify the energy supply, including more [renewable resources](/wiki/Renewable_resources). The Moroccan government has launched a project to build a [solar thermal energy](/wiki/Solar_thermal_energy) [power plant](/wiki/Power_plant)[[56]](#cite_note-57) and is also looking into the use of natural gas as a potential source of revenue for Morocco’s government.[[55]](#cite_note-56) Morocco has embarked upon the construction of large [solar energy](/wiki/Solar_energy) farms to lessen dependence on fossil fuels, and to eventually export electricity to [Europe](/wiki/Europe).[[57]](#cite_note-58)

### Narcotics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

Since the 7th century, [Cannabis](/wiki/Cannabis_(drug)) has been cultivated in the [Rif](/wiki/Rif) Region.[[58]](#cite_note-59) In 2004, according to the UN World Drugs Report, cultivation and transformation of [Cannabis](/wiki/Cannabis_(drug)) represents 0.57% of the national GDP of Morocco in 2002.[[59]](#cite_note-60) According to a French Ministry of the Interior 2006 report, 80% of the cannabis resin (hashish) consumed in Europe comes from the [Rif](/wiki/Rif) region in Morocco, which is mostly mountainous terrain in the north of Morocco, also hosting plains that are very fertile and expanding from Melwiyya River and Ras Kebdana in the East to Tangier and Cape Spartel in the West. Also, the region extends from the Mediterranean in the south, home of the Wergha River, to the north. Also of note, this region hosts more "Riffians" with lighter hair, having a higher percentage of blondism than most other groups of Berbers, though the ancestry is likely mixed and quite similar.[[60]](#cite_note-61) In addition to that, Morocco is a transit point for cocaine from South America destined for Western Europe.[[61]](#cite_note-62)

### Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) There are around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of roads (national, regional and provincial) in Morocco.[[62]](#cite_note-63) In addition to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of highways.[[63]](#cite_note-64) The Tangier-Casablanca high-speed rail link marks the first stage of the [ONCF](/wiki/ONCF)’s high-speed rail master plan, pursuant to which over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of new railway lines will be built by 2035. The high speed train – TGV – will have a capacity of 500 passengers and will carry 8 million passengers per year. The work on the High Speed Rail project was started in September 2011.[[64]](#cite_note-65) Construction of infrastructure and delivery of railway equipment will end in 2014 and the HSR will be operational by December 2015.[[65]](#cite_note-66)

### Water supply and sanitation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Water supply and sanitation in Morocco is provided by a wide array of utilities. They range from private companies in the largest city, [Casablanca](/wiki/Casablanca), the capital, [Rabat](/wiki/Rabat), and two other cities, to public municipal utilities in 13 other cities, as well as a national electricity and water company (ONEE). The latter is in charge of bulk water supply to the aforementioned utilities, water distribution in about 500 small towns, as well as sewerage and wastewater treatment in 60 of these towns.

There have been substantial improvements in access to water supply, and to a lesser extent to sanitation, over the past fifteen years. Remaining challenges include a low level of wastewater treatment (only 13% of collected wastewater is being treated), lack of house connections in the poorest urban neighborhoods, and limited sustainability of rural systems (20 percent of rural systems are estimated not to function). In 2005 a National Sanitation Program was approved that aims at treating 60% of collected wastewater and connecting 80% of urban households to sewers by 2020. The issue of lack of water connections for some of the urban poor is being addressed as part of the [National Human Development Initiative](/wiki/National_Human_Development_Initiative), under which residents of informal settlements have received land titles and have fees waived that are normally paid to utilities in order to connect to the water and sewer network.

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Historical populations](/wiki/Template:Historical_populations)

Most [Moroccans](/wiki/Moroccan_people) are of [Berber](/wiki/Berbers), [Arab](/wiki/Arab), [Moors](/wiki/Moors) or [Gnawa](/wiki/Gnawa) descent. There is a significant minority of Sub-Saharan African and European people. [Arabs](/wiki/Arabs) and [Berbers](/wiki/Berbers) together make up about 99.1% of the Moroccan population.<ref name=CIA/> A sizeable portion of the population is identified as [Haratin](/wiki/Haratin) and [Gnawa](/wiki/Gnawa) (or Gnaoua), black or mixed race descendants of [slaves](/wiki/Arab_slave_trade), and [Moriscos](/wiki/Moriscos), European Muslims expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 17th century.[[66]](#cite_note-67) Berbers are the indigenous people and still make up the bulk of the population, although they have been largely [Arabized](/wiki/Arabized). Morocco is home to more than 20,000 sub-Saharan African immigrants.[[67]](#cite_note-68) Morocco's once prominent [Jewish](/wiki/Jews) minority has decreased significantly since its peak of 265,000 in 1948, declining to around 2,500 today.[[68]](#cite_note-69) Most of foreign residents in Morocco are [French](/wiki/French_people) or [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_people). Some of them are descendants of colonial settlers, who primarily work for European multinational companies, while others are married to Moroccans or are retirees. Prior to independence, Morocco was home to half a million [Europeans](/wiki/European_Moroccans).[[69]](#cite_note-70) Morocco has a large [diaspora](/wiki/Moroccan_diaspora), most of which is located in France, which has reportedly over one million Moroccans of up to the third generation. There are also large Moroccan communities in Spain (about 700,000 Moroccans),[[70]](#cite_note-71) The Netherlands (360,000), and Belgium (300,000).[[71]](#cite_note-72) Other large communities can be found in Italy, Canada, the United States, and Israel, where [Moroccan Jews](/wiki/Moroccan_Jews) are thought to constitute the second biggest Jewish ethnic subgroup.

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Bar box](/wiki/Template:Bar_box) In 2010, the religious affiliation in the country was estimated by the [Pew Forum](/wiki/Pew_Forum) as 99.9% [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim), with all remaining groups accounting for just 0.1% of the population.<ref name=pewrel>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The most recent estimates put the size of the Casablanca Jewish community at about 2,500,[[72]](#cite_note-73) and the Rabat and Marrakesh Jewish communities at about 100 members each. The remainder of the Jewish population is dispersed throughout the country. This population is mostly elderly, with a decreasing number of young persons.<ref name=irfr2011>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Sunnis form the majority at 67% with [non-denominational Muslims](/wiki/Non-denominational_Muslims) being the second largest group of Muslims at 30%.[[73]](#cite_note-74)[thumb|Inside of a mosque in](/wiki/File:Inside_of_a_mosque_in_Fes_(5364764412).jpg) [Fes](/wiki/Fes)

The predominantly [Roman Catholic](/wiki/Roman_Catholic) and [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) foreign-resident [Christian](/wiki/Christianity) community consists of approximately 5,000 practicing members, although some Protestant and Catholic clergy estimate the number to be as high as 25,000. Most foreign resident [Christians](/wiki/Christians) reside in the [Casablanca](/wiki/Casablanca), [Tangier](/wiki/Tangier), and [Rabat](/wiki/Rabat) urban areas. Various local Christian leaders estimate that between 2005 and 2010 there are 5,000 citizen converted [Christians](/wiki/Christians) (mostly ethnically Berber) who regularly attend "house" churches and live predominantly in the south.[[74]](#cite_note-75) Some local Christian leaders estimate that there may be as many as 8,000 [Christian citizens](/wiki/Christianity_in_Morocco) throughout the country, but many reportedly do not meet regularly due to fear of government surveillance and social persecution.<ref name=irfr2011/> According to different estimates, the number of the Moroccans who [converted to Christianity](/wiki/Converted_to_Christianity) (most of them secret worshippers) are estimated between 8,000[[75]](#cite_note-76)-40,000.[[76]](#cite_note-77) The CIA World Factbook estimates that Christians are currently 1% (~380,000) of the Moroccan population.<ref name=CIA/>

There are an estimated 3,000 to 8,000 Shia Muslims, most of them foreign residents from Lebanon or Iraq, but also a few citizen converts. Followers of several Sufi Muslim orders across the Maghreb and West Africa undertake joint annual pilgrimages to the country. The Baha’i community, located in urban areas, numbers 350 to 400 persons.<ref name=irfr2011/>

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [350px|thumb|A map of the ethnolinguistic groups in Morocco.](/wiki/File:Morocco_ethno_1973_all_v2.svg) Morocco's official languages are [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic) and [Berber](/wiki/Berber_language).[[77]](#cite_note-78)[[78]](#cite_note-79) The country's distinctive group of Moroccan Arabic dialects is referred to as [Darija](/wiki/Darija). Approximately 89.8%[[79]](#cite_note-80) of the whole population can communicate to some degree in [Moroccan Arabic](/wiki/Moroccan_Arabic). The Berber language is spoken in three dialects ([Tarifit](/wiki/Riff_language), [Tashelhit](/wiki/Atlas_languages) and [Central Atlas Tamazight](/wiki/Central_Morocco_Tamazight)).[[80]](#cite_note-81) In 2008, Frédéric Deroche estimated that there were 12 million Berber speakers, making up about 40% of the population.[[81]](#cite_note-82) The 2004 population census reported that 28.1% of the population spoke Berber.[[79]](#cite_note-80) [French](/wiki/French_language) is widely used in governmental institutions, media, mid-size and large companies, international commerce with French-speaking countries, and often in international diplomacy. French is taught as an obligatory language at all schools. In 2010, there were 10,366,000 French-speakers in Morocco, or about 32% of the population.[[82]](#cite_note-83) According to the 2004 census, 2.19 million Moroccans spoke a foreign language other than French.[[79]](#cite_note-80) [English](/wiki/English_language), while far behind French in terms of number of speakers, is the first foreign language of choice, since French is obligatory, among educated youth and professionals.

About 5 million Moroccans speak Spanish. Spanish is spoken by some Moroccans, especially in the northern regions.[[83]](#cite_note-84) Spanish is mostly spoken in northern Morocco and the [Spanish Sahara](/wiki/Spanish_Sahara) because Spain had previously occupied those areas. Moroccans in regions formerly controlled by Spain watch Spanish television and have interactions in Spanish on a daily basis.<ref name=Rouchdy71>Rouchdy, [p. 71](https://books.google.com/books?id=WWZvxjoU948C&pg=PA71). ISBN 0700713794, 9780700713790.</ref>

After Morocco declared independence in 1956, French and Arabic became the main languages of administration and education, causing the role of Spanish to decline.<ref name=Rouchdy71/>

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|The Kasbah of](/wiki/File:Kasbahs_in_Aït_Benhaddou.JPG) [Aït Benhaddou](/wiki/Aït_Benhaddou), built by the Berbers from the 14th century onwards.

Morocco is an ethnically diverse country with a rich [culture](/wiki/Culture) and [civilization](/wiki/Civilization). Through [Moroccan history](/wiki/History_of_Morocco), it has hosted many people coming from East ([Phoenicians](/wiki/Phoenicians), [Carthaginians](/wiki/Carthaginians), [Jews](/wiki/Jews) and [Arabs](/wiki/Arabs)), South ([Sub-Saharan Africans](/wiki/Sub-Saharan_Africa)) and North ([Romans](/wiki/Ancient_Rome), [Vandals](/wiki/Vandals), [Andalusians](/wiki/Al-Andalus) and [Moors](/wiki/Moors)). All those civilizations have had an impact on the social structure of Morocco. It hosts various forms of beliefs, from [paganism](/wiki/Paganism), [Judaism](/wiki/Judaism), and [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) to [Islam](/wiki/Islam).

Since independence, a veritable blossoming has taken place in painting and sculpture, popular music, amateur theatre, and filmmaking. The Moroccan National Theatre (founded 1956) offers regular productions of Moroccan and French dramatic works. Art and music festivals take place throughout the country during the summer months, among them the [World Sacred Music Festival at Fès](/wiki/World_Sacred_Music_Festival).

Each region possesses its own specificities, thus contributing to the national culture and to the legacy of civilization. Morocco has set among its top priorities the protection of its diverse legacy and the preservation of its cultural heritage.

Culturally speaking, Morocco has always been successful in combining its Berber, Jewish and Arabic cultural heritage with external influences such as the French and the Spanish and, during the last decades, the Anglo-American lifestyles.

### Architecture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|A Moroccan living room.](/wiki/File:Moroccan_frills.jpg) [thumb|200px|Riad Laksiba, Marrakesh.](/wiki/File:Riad_Laksiba-open-air-courtyard_Marrakech.jpg)

The indigenous Berber people and a series of foreign invaders as well as religious and cultural influences have shaped Morocco's architectural styles. The architecture can range from ornate with bold with colors to simple, clean lines with earth tones.

Influences from the Arab world, Spain, Portugal and France are seen in Moroccan architecture, both on their own and blended with Berber and Islamic styles. Among the buildings, and old Kasbah walls, sit French style-towns left behind by colonization and intersect with intricately detailed mosques and riad-style homes. Sleek, modern designs are being constructed in cities like Rabat and Casablanca that give no particular homage to any of the past Moroccan architecture styles.[[84]](#cite_note-85)

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Sebastiano_del_Piombo_Portrait_of_a_Humanist.jpg)[Leo Africanus](/wiki/Leo_Africanus). Moroccan literature is written in Arabic, Berber and French. Under the [Almohad](/wiki/Almohad) dynasty Morocco experienced a period of prosperity and brilliance of learning. The Almohad built the [Koutoubia Mosque](/wiki/Koutoubia_Mosque) in Marrakesh, which accommodated no fewer than 25,000 people, but was also famed for its books, manuscripts, libraries and book shops, which gave it its name; the first book bazaar in history. The Almohad Caliph [Abu Yakub](/wiki/Yusuf_I,_Almohad_Caliph) had a great love for collecting books. He founded a great library, which was eventually carried to the [Casbah](/wiki/Casbah) and turned into a [public library](/wiki/Public_library).

Modern Moroccan literature began in the 1930s. Two main factors gave Morocco a pulse toward witnessing the birth of a modern literature. Morocco, as a [French](/wiki/French_Morocco) and [Spanish protectorate](/wiki/Spanish_Morocco) left Moroccan intellectuals the opportunity to exchange and to produce literary works freely enjoying the contact of other [Arabic literature](/wiki/Arabic_literature) and Europe. Three generations of writers especially shaped 20th century Moroccan literature.[[85]](#cite_note-86) The first was the generation that lived and wrote during the [Protectorate](/wiki/French_protectorate_of_Morocco) (1912–56), its most important representative being [Mohammed Ben Brahim](/wiki/Mohammed_Ben_Brahim) (1897–1955).

The second generation was the one that played an important role in the transition to independence with writers like [Abdelkrim Ghallab](/wiki/Abdelkrim_Ghallab) (1919–2006), [Allal al-Fassi](/wiki/Allal_al-Fassi) (1910–1974) and [Mohammed al-Mokhtar Soussi](/wiki/Mohammed_al-Mokhtar_Soussi) (1900–1963). The third generation is that of writers of the sixties. Moroccan literature then flourished with writers such as [Mohamed Choukri](/wiki/Mohamed_Choukri), [Driss Chraïbi](/wiki/Driss_Chraïbi), [Mohamed Zafzaf](/wiki/Mohamed_Zafzaf) and [Driss El Khouri](/wiki/Driss_El_Khouri). Those writers were an important influence the many Moroccan novelists, poets and playwrights that were still to come.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Morocco was a refuge and artistic centre and attracted writers as [Paul Bowles](/wiki/Paul_Bowles), [Tennessee Williams](/wiki/Tennessee_Williams) and [William S. Burroughs](/wiki/William_S._Burroughs). Moroccan literature flourished with novelists such as [Mohamed Zafzaf](/wiki/Mohamed_Zafzaf) and [Mohamed Choukri](/wiki/Mohamed_Choukri), who wrote in Arabic, and [Driss Chraïbi](/wiki/Driss_Chraïbi) and [Tahar Ben Jelloun](/wiki/Tahar_Ben_Jelloun) who wrote in French. Other important Moroccan authors include, [Abdellatif Laabi](/wiki/Abdellatif_Laabi), [Abdelkrim Ghallab](/wiki/Abdelkrim_Ghallab), [Fouad Laroui](/wiki/Fouad_Laroui), [Mohammed Berrada](/wiki/Mohammed_Berrada) and [Leila Abouzeid](/wiki/Leila_Abouzeid). It should be noted also, that orature (oral literature) is an integral part of Moroccan culture, be it in Moroccan Arabic or [Amazigh](/wiki/Amazigh).

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Moroccan music is of [Amazigh](/wiki/Berber_music), Arab and sub-Saharan origins. Rock-influenced [chaabi](/wiki/Chaabi_(Morocco)) bands are widespread, as is [trance music](/wiki/Trance_music) with historical origins in [Muslim music](/wiki/Muslim_music).

Morocco is home to [Andalusian classical music](/wiki/Andalusian_classical_music) that is found throughout North Africa. It probably evolved under the Moors in [Cordoba](/wiki/Córdoba,_Spain), and the Persian-born musician [Ziryab](/wiki/Ziryab) is usually credited with its invention. A genre known as Contemporary Andalusian Music and art is the brainchild of [Morisco](/wiki/Morisco) visual artist/composer/[oudist](/wiki/Oud) [Tarik Banzi](/wiki/Al-Andalus_Ensemble), founder of the [Al-Andalus Ensemble](http://www.Andalus.com/).

[Chaabi](/wiki/Chaabi) ("popular") is a music consisting of numerous varieties which are descended from the multifarious forms of Moroccan folk music. Chaabi was originally performed in markets, but is now found at any celebration or meeting.

[*Aita*](/wiki/Aita) is a [Bedouin](/wiki/Bedouin) musical style sung in the countryside.

Popular Western forms of music are becoming increasingly popular in Morocco, such as [fusion](/wiki/Fusion_(music)), rock, [country](/wiki/Country_music), [metal](/wiki/Metal_(music)) and, in particular, [hip hop](/wiki/Hip_hop_music).

Morocco participated in the [1980 Eurovision Song Contest](/wiki/1980_Eurovision_Song_Contest), where it finished in the penultimate position.

### Cinema[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Cinema in Morocco has a long history, stretching back over a century to the filming of *Le chevrier Marocain* ("The Moroccan Goatherd") by [Louis Lumière](/wiki/Louis_Lumière) in 1897. Between that time and 1944, many foreign movies were shot in the country, especially in the [Ouarzazate](/wiki/Ouarzazate) area.

In 1944, the Moroccan Cinematographic Center (CCM), the nation's film [regulatory body](/wiki/Regulatory_agency), was established. Studios were also opened in [Rabat](/wiki/Rabat).

In 1952, [Orson Welles'](/wiki/Orson_Welles) [*Othello*](/wiki/Othello_(1952_film)) won the [Palme d'Or](/wiki/Palme_d'Or) at the [Cannes Film Festival](/wiki/Cannes_Film_Festival) under the Moroccan flag. However, the Festival's musicians did not play the [Moroccan national anthem](/wiki/Hymne_Chérifien), as no one in attendance knew what it was.[[86]](#cite_note-87) Six years later, Mohammed Ousfour would create the first Moroccan movie, *Le fils maudit* ("The Damned Son").

In 1968, the first Mediterranean Film Festival was held in [Tangier](/wiki/Tangier). In its current incarnation, the event is held in [Tetouan](/wiki/Tetouan).

This was followed in 1982 with the first national festival of cinema, which was held in Rabat.

In 2001, the first [International Film Festival of Marrakech](/wiki/International_Film_Festival_of_Marrakech) (FIFM) was also held in [Marrakech](/wiki/Marrakech).

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Moroccan](/wiki/File:Couscous_of_Fes.JPG) [Couscous](/wiki/Couscous). Moroccan cuisine has long been considered as one of the most diversified cuisines in the world. This is a result of the centuries-long interaction of Morocco with the outside world.[[87]](#cite_note-88) The cuisine of Morocco is mainly Berber-Moorish, European, Mediterranean cuisines. The cuisine of Morocco is essentially [Berber cuisine](/wiki/Berber_cuisine) (sometimes referred to as the Moorish cuisine). It is also Influenced by [Sephardic cuisine](/wiki/Sephardic_cuisine) and by the [Moriscos](/wiki/Moriscos) when they took refuge in Morocco after the Spanish [Reconquista](/wiki/Reconquista).

Spices are used extensively in Moroccan food. While spices have been imported to Morocco for thousands of years, many ingredients such as [saffron](/wiki/Saffron) from Tiliouine, [mint](/wiki/Mentha) and [olives](/wiki/Olive) from Meknes, and oranges and lemons from Fez, are home-grown. Chicken is the most widely eaten meat in Morocco. The most commonly eaten red meat in Morocco is beef; [lamb](/wiki/Sheep) is preferred but is relatively expensive. The main Moroccan dish most people are familiar with is [couscous](/wiki/Couscous),[[88]](#cite_note-89) the old national delicacy.

Beef is the most commonly eaten red meat in Morocco, usually eaten in a **Tagine** with vegetables or legumes. Chicken is also very commonly used in Tagines, knowing that one of the most famous tagine is the Tagine of Chicken, potatoes and olives. [Lamb](/wiki/Domestic_sheep) is also consumed, but as North African sheep breeds store most of their fat in their tails, Moroccan lamb does not have the pungent flavour that Western [lamb and mutton](/wiki/Lamb_and_mutton) have. Poultry is also very common, and the use of seafood is increasing in Moroccan food. In addition, there are dried salted meats and salted preserved meats such as kliia/khlia[[89]](#cite_note-90) and "g'did" which are used to flavor tagines or used in "el ghraif" a folded savory Moroccan pancake".

Among the most famous Moroccan dishes are [Couscous](/wiki/Couscous), [Pastilla](/wiki/Pastilla) (also spelled Bsteeya or Bestilla), [Tajine](/wiki/Tajine), [Tanjia](/wiki/Tangia) and [Harira](/wiki/Harira). Although the latter is a [soup](/wiki/Soup), it is considered as a dish in itself and is served as such or with [dates](/wiki/Date_(fruit)) especially during the month of [Ramadan](/wiki/Ramadan). Pork consumption is forbidden in accordance with [Sharia](/wiki/Sharia), religious laws of Islam.

A big part of the daily meal is bread. Bread in Morocco is principally from durum wheat semolina known as [khobz](/wiki/Khubz). Bakeries are very common throughout Morocco and fresh bread is a staple in every city, town and village. The most common is whole grain coarse ground or white flour bread. There are also a number of flat breads and pulled unleavened pan-fried breads.

The most popular drink is "atai", [green tea](/wiki/Green_tea) with mint leaves and other ingredients. Tea occupies a very important place in the culture of Morocco and is considered an art form. It is served not only at mealtimes but all through the day, and it is especially a drink of hospitality, commonly served whenever there are guests. It is served to guests, and it is impolite to refuse it.

### Sport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Moroccan football fans](/wiki/File:Morocco_vs_Algeria,_June_04_2011-10.jpg)

Football is the country’s most popular sport, popular among the urban youth in particular. In 1986, Morocco became the first Arab and African country to qualify for the second round of the [FIFA World Cup](/wiki/FIFA_World_Cup). Morocco was originally scheduled to host the [2015 Africa Cup of Nations](/wiki/2015_Africa_Cup_of_Nations),[[90]](#cite_note-91) but refused to host the tournament on the scheduled dates because of fears over the ebola outbreak on the continent.[[91]](#cite_note-92) At the [1984 Olympic Games](/wiki/1984_Summer_Olympics), two Moroccans won gold medals in track and field. [Nawal El Moutawakel](/wiki/Nawal_El_Moutawakel) won in the [400 metres hurdles](/wiki/400_metres_hurdles); she was the first woman from an Arab or Islamic country to win an Olympic gold medal. [Saïd Aouita](/wiki/Saïd_Aouita) won the [5000 metres](/wiki/5000_metres) at the same games. [Hicham El Guerrouj](/wiki/Hicham_El_Guerrouj) won gold medals for Morocco at the [2004 Summer Olympics](/wiki/2004_Summer_Olympics) in the [1500 metres](/wiki/1500_metres) and 5000 metres and holds several [world records](/wiki/List_of_world_records_in_athletics) in the [mile run](/wiki/Mile_run).

[Spectator sports](/wiki/Spectator_sports) in Morocco traditionally centered on the art of [horsemanship](/wiki/Horsemanship) until European sports—[football](/wiki/Association_football), [polo](/wiki/Polo), [swimming](/wiki/Swimming_(sport)), and [tennis](/wiki/Tennis)—were introduced at the end of the 19th century. [Tennis](/wiki/Tennis) and [golf](/wiki/Golf) have become popular.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Several Moroccan professional players have competed in international competition, and the country fielded its first [Davis Cup](/wiki/Davis_Cup) team in 1999. [Rugby](/wiki/Rugby_football) came to Morocco in the early 20th century, mainly by the French who occupied the country.<ref name=Completerugby>Bath, Richard (ed.) The Complete Book of Rugby (Seven Oaks Ltd, 1997 ISBN 1-86200-013-1) p71</ref> As a result, [Moroccan rugby](/wiki/Rugby_union_in_Morocco) was tied to the fortunes of France, during the first and second [World War](/wiki/World_War), with many Moroccan players going away to fight.<ref name=Completerugby/> Like many other [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb) nations, Moroccan rugby tended to look to Europe for inspiration, rather than to the rest of Africa.

[Kickboxing](/wiki/Kickboxing) is also popular in Morocco.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) The Dutch [Badr Hari](/wiki/Badr_Hari), heavyweight kickboxer and martial artist, is a former K-1 heavyweight champion and K-1 World Grand Prix 2008 and 2009 finalist.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

## Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Al_Akhawayn_Campus.jpg)[Al Akhawayn University](/wiki/Al_Akhawayn_University) in [Ifrane](/wiki/Ifrane).

Education in Morocco is free and compulsory through primary school. The estimated [literacy](/wiki/Literacy) rate for the country in 2012 was 72%.[[92]](#cite_note-93) In September 2006, UNESCO awarded Morocco amongst other countries such as [Cuba](/wiki/Cuba), [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan), [India](/wiki/India) and [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey) the "UNESCO 2006 Literacy Prize".[[93]](#cite_note-94) Morocco has more than [four dozen universities](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Morocco), institutes of higher learning, and polytechnics dispersed at urban centres throughout the country. Its leading institutions include [Mohammed V University](/wiki/Mohammed_V_University) in Rabat, the country’s largest university, with branches in Casablanca and Fès; the Hassan II Agriculture and Veterinary Institute in Rabat, which conducts leading social science research in addition to its agricultural specialties; and [Al-Akhawayn University](/wiki/Al-Akhawayn_University) in Ifrane, the first English-language university in North Africa,[[94]](#cite_note-95) inaugurated in 1995 with contributions from Saudi Arabia and the United States.

The [al-Qarawiyin University](/wiki/University_of_Al-Karaouine), founded in the city of Fez in 859 as a [madrasa](/wiki/Madrasa),[[95]](#cite_note-96) is considered by some sources, including [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO), to be the "oldest university of the world".[[96]](#cite_note-97) Morocco has also some of prestigious postgraduate schools, including: École Nationale Supérieure d'Électricité et de Mecanique (ENSEM), [EMI](/wiki/École_Mohammadia_d'ingénieurs), [ISCAE](/wiki/ISCAE), [INSEA](/wiki/National_Instistute_of_Statistics_and_Applied_Economics), [National School of Mineral Industry](/wiki/National_School_of_Mineral_Industry), [École Hassania des Travaux Publics](/wiki/École_Hassania_des_Travaux_Publics), Les Écoles nationales de commerce et de gestion, École supérieure de technologie de Casablanca.[[97]](#cite_note-98)

## Healthcare[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Expand section](/wiki/Template:Expand_section)

In 2010, spending on healthcare accounted for 5.19% of the country's GDP. In 2009, there were 6.46 physicians and 9.28 nurses per 10,000 inhabitants.[[98]](#cite_note-99) The life expectancy at birth was 74 years in 2013, or 72 years for males and 76 years for females.[[99]](#cite_note-100)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

* [Human rights in Morocco](/wiki/Human_rights_in_Morocco)
* [Index of Morocco-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Morocco-related_articles)
* [Outline of Morocco](/wiki/Outline_of_Morocco)

[Template:Portalbar](/wiki/Template:Portalbar)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Official website of the government of Morocco](http://www.maroc.ma/PortailInst/An/)
* [Official bulletins of the government of Morocco](http://www.sgg.gov.ma/)
* [Parliament of Morocco](http://www.parlement.ma/)
* [Census results of 1994 and 2004](http://www.lavieeco.com/documents_officiels/Recensement%20population.pdf)
* [Forum press Morocco](http://www.press-maroc.com/)
* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Template:GovPubs](/wiki/Template:GovPubs)
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Morocco profile](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14121438) from the [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News)
* [Maroc Paradise, Beauty of Morocco](http://www.marocparadise.com/)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)
* [Tribes of Morocco](http://moroccan.tribes.free.fr/)
* [Key Development Forecasts for Morocco](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=MA) from [International Futures](/wiki/International_Futures)
* [EU Neighbourhood Info Centre: Morocco](http://www.enpi-info.eu/countrymed.php?country=6)
* [World Bank Summary Trade Statistics Morocco](http://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/Country/MAR/Year/2012/Summary)

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